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[54] **PROTECTED HOT KEY FUNCTION FOR MICROPROCESSOR-BASED COMPUTER SYSTEM**

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[52] U.S. Cl. **395/275; 364/709.09**

[58] Field of Search **395/275; 364/709.09, 364/709.12**

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[57] ABSTRACT

An ISA-compatible computer system includes an additional function key on its keyboard. The additional function key does not have a defined function for conventional ISA-standard computers. When a conventional alphanumeric key or function key is activated on the keyboard, the computer system is interrupted using IRQ1 and the key information is communicated to the computer system so that the computer system can respond in a conventional manner using a conventional keyboard interrupt handling routine. When the additional function key and an alphanumeric key are activated in combination, a second interrupt different from the IRQ1 interrupt is activated (e.g., IRQ15). The computer system responds to the second interrupt by inputting an identification of the activated alphanumeric key and performing a selected predetermined function in response thereto. The handling of the second interrupt is performed by a separate interrupt handling routine within the computer system so that conventional terminate and stay resident (TSR) programs that intercept conventional keyboard inputs cannot readily intercept keyboard input initiated by the additional function key.

7 Claims, 11 Drawing Sheets

