

The opinion in support of the decision being entered today was *not* written for publication and is *not* binding precedent of the Board.

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

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BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS  
AND INTERFERENCES

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*Ex parte JIN LI*

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Appeal 2007-0436  
Application 10/125,620  
Technology Center 2100

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Decided: April 17, 2007

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Before JAMES D. THOMAS, MAHSID D. SAADAT, and  
JAY P. LUCAS, *Administrative Patent Judges*.

SAADAT, *Administrative Patent Judge*.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE

Appellant appeals under 35 U.S.C. § 134(a) from the Examiner's final rejection of claims 1-2, 4-12, 14-18, 20-24, and 26-28. Claims 3, 13, 19, and 25 have been canceled. We have jurisdiction under 35 U.S.C. § 6(b).

Appellant's disclosure relates to an automatic display of a popup window containing a message resulting from a combination of values in a plurality of areas of a graphical user interface (GUI). (Specification 2). The

configuration of the displayed popup window indicates association with the areas of the GUI containing the values whose combination provokes a message to appear. The window's position relates to the GUI portion of most recent user interaction. (Specification 2). Once the GUI user addresses the message, the popup window is automatically dismissed. (Specification 2).

As an example, Figure 2C of the application provides an illustration of a GUI 200 displaying a popup 210 containing a textual error message. Popup 210 is displayed to indicate an invalid combination in the context of the application associated with the GUI. (Specification 7). Here, the numeric value "25" in text box 202 corresponding to "water temperature" and the radio button selection corresponding to the scale 206 are invalid "Liquid Water Temperature[s]" since water typically freezes at 32 degrees Fahrenheit. (*Id.*) Context-providing indicator portions 211 and 213 of popup 210 point to text-entry box 202 and radio button 206 to indicate that the error message displayed in popup 210 arises from the combination of values taken from these two fields. (Specification 7).

As the arguments set forth in Appellant's Brief focus on no particular claim, the claims stand or fall together. 37 C.F.R. § 41.37(c)(1)(vii). Claim 1 is representative of the claim limitations argued and provides a basis for our analysis:

1. A method of displaying a message to a user in a graphical user interface (GUI), comprising:

displaying said message in a popup shaped to indicate association with a plurality of areas of the GUI forming a context for said message, said message resulting from a combination of values in said plurality of areas of said GUI, said popup being located, at least

in part, proximately to a GUI control or field of most recent user interaction;

allowing at least some GUI interaction to occur while said popup is displayed; and

automatically dismissing said popup when said message has been addressed.

The Examiner relies on the following prior art references in rejecting the claims:

Evans	US 6,799,286 B1	Sep. 28, 2004 (filed Apr. 21, 2000)
Grillo	US 6,717,589 B1	Apr. 6, 2004 (filed Mar. 16, 2000)

The Examiner rejected claims 1-2, 4-12, 14-18, 20-24, and 26-28 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over Evans in view of Grillo.

Rather than repeat the arguments here, we make reference to the Brief and the Answer for the respective positions of Appellant and the Examiner.

We affirm.

## ISSUES

The issue is whether Evans discloses an error message resulting from a combination of values and whether the teachings of Evans and Grillo may be properly combined to render the present claims obvious.

## FINDINGS OF FACT

Evans discloses an error message “resulting from a combination of values in [a] plurality of areas of [the] GUI” which is actually the same as providing multiple selections and input processes (See figure 2).

Figure 2 of Evans shows GUI 100 where the user changes the value of a user identifier prompt 102 in one field and inputs a password value into input field 110. If the password value fails to correspond to the user identifier value, error information 116 is then displayed (col. 3, ll. 65-67, col. 4, ll. 23-40).

Thus, Evans discloses error information, in a plurality of selectable areas of the GUI, resulting from a combination of values, i.e., a user identifier and a password, that do not correspond.

Grillo discloses popups with multiple arrows and different messages relating to different areas of the GUI (col. 9, ll. 39-45; col. 9, l. 59 through col. 10, l. 7; Figs. 7B, 9B, and 10B).

## PRINCIPLES OF LAW

As a general proposition, in rejecting claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103, the Examiner bears the initial burden of presenting a *prima facie* case of obviousness. *See In re Rijckaert*, 9 F.3d 1531, 1532, 28 USPQ2d 1955, 1956 (Fed. Cir. 1993) and *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 1074, 5 USPQ2d 1596, 1598 (Fed. Cir. 1988). A *prima facie* case of obviousness is established when the teachings of the prior art itself would appear to have suggested the claimed subject matter to one of ordinary skill in the art. *See In re Bell*, 991 F.2d 781, 783, 26 USPQ2d 1529, 1531 (Fed. Cir. 1993).

A motivation to combine prior art references may be found in the nature of the problem to be solved. *Ruiz v. A.B. Chance Co.*, 357 F.3d 1270, 1276, 69 USPQ2d 1686, 1690 (Fed. Cir. 2004). Additionally, motivation or suggestion is not merely what the references disclose, but whether a person of ordinary skill in the art, possessed with the understanding and knowledge reflected in the prior art, and motivated by the general problem facing the inventor, would have been led to make the combination recited in the claims. *See In re Kahn*, 441 F.3d 977, 989, 78 USPQ2d 1329, 1337 (Fed. Cir. 2006).

## ANALYSIS

As noted above, the Examiner correctly argues that the error balloon in Evans prompting the user to enter the password is based on the combination of the values entered in the fields of user identification and password (Answer 18-19). Namely, Evans teaches displaying a popup message to a user in a GUI where the popup is shaped to indicate association with at least one area of the GUI. The popup in Evans is located, at least in part, proximately to a GUI control or field related to the most recent user interaction. Evans further teaches allowing at least some GUI interaction to occur while said popup is displayed and automatically dismissing the popup when said message has been addressed.

We also agree with the Examiner (Answer 6) that one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the claimed invention would have found it obvious to combine Grillo with Evans to indicate error and help messages in a clear way that would also relate to multiple values or entries leading to an error message.

We remain unconvinced by Appellant's argument (Br. 7) that the references "are directed to two different and opposite approaches" since the distinction made by Appellant between the operating system and the GUI in generating the error message is merely in the style of the user interface. In that regard, the operating system controls the entire computer operation including the GUI operation.

#### CONCLUSION

Thus, in light of these findings and since Appellant presents no additional arguments related to any other claim, we find that the combination of Evans and Grillo suggests the subject matter of Claim 1 as well as claims 2, 4-12, 14-18, 20-24, and 26-28.

#### DECISION

In view of the foregoing, the Examiner's decision rejecting claims 1-2, 4-12, 14-18, 20-24, and 26-18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 is affirmed.

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No time period for taking any subsequent action in connection with this appeal may be extended under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a)(1)(iv).

AFFIRMED

tdl/gw

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