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(54) **NOTEBOOK COMPUTER AND CELL PHONE ASSEMBLY**

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(60) Provisional application No. 61/108,610, filed on Oct. 27, 2008, provisional application No. 61/043,179, filed on Apr. 8, 2008, provisional application No. 61/069,987, filed on Mar. 19, 2008.

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(52) **U.S. Cl.** **455/557**; 455/556.1; 375/222

(58) **Field of Classification Search** 455/556.1; 375/222

See application file for complete search history.

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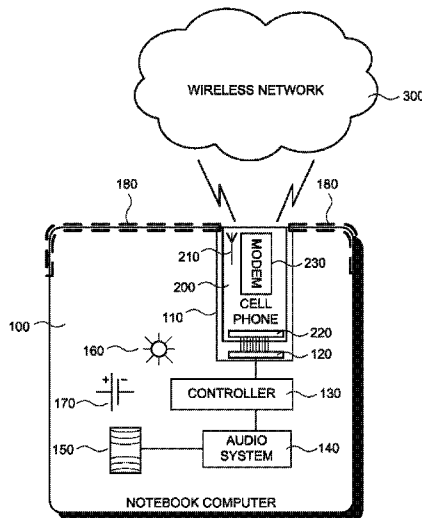
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A computer and cell phone assembly, including a communicator including a modem for communicating over a wireless network, and a notebook computer, including a pouch for physically attaching the communicator to the notebook computer, and a connection indicator for indicating arrival of an incoming phone call from the wireless network when the communicator is attached to the notebook computer, wherein the communicator is operative to receive the incoming phone call whether it remains attached to the notebook computer or whether it is subsequently detached from the notebook computer. A method is also described and claimed.

10 Claims, 7 Drawing Sheets



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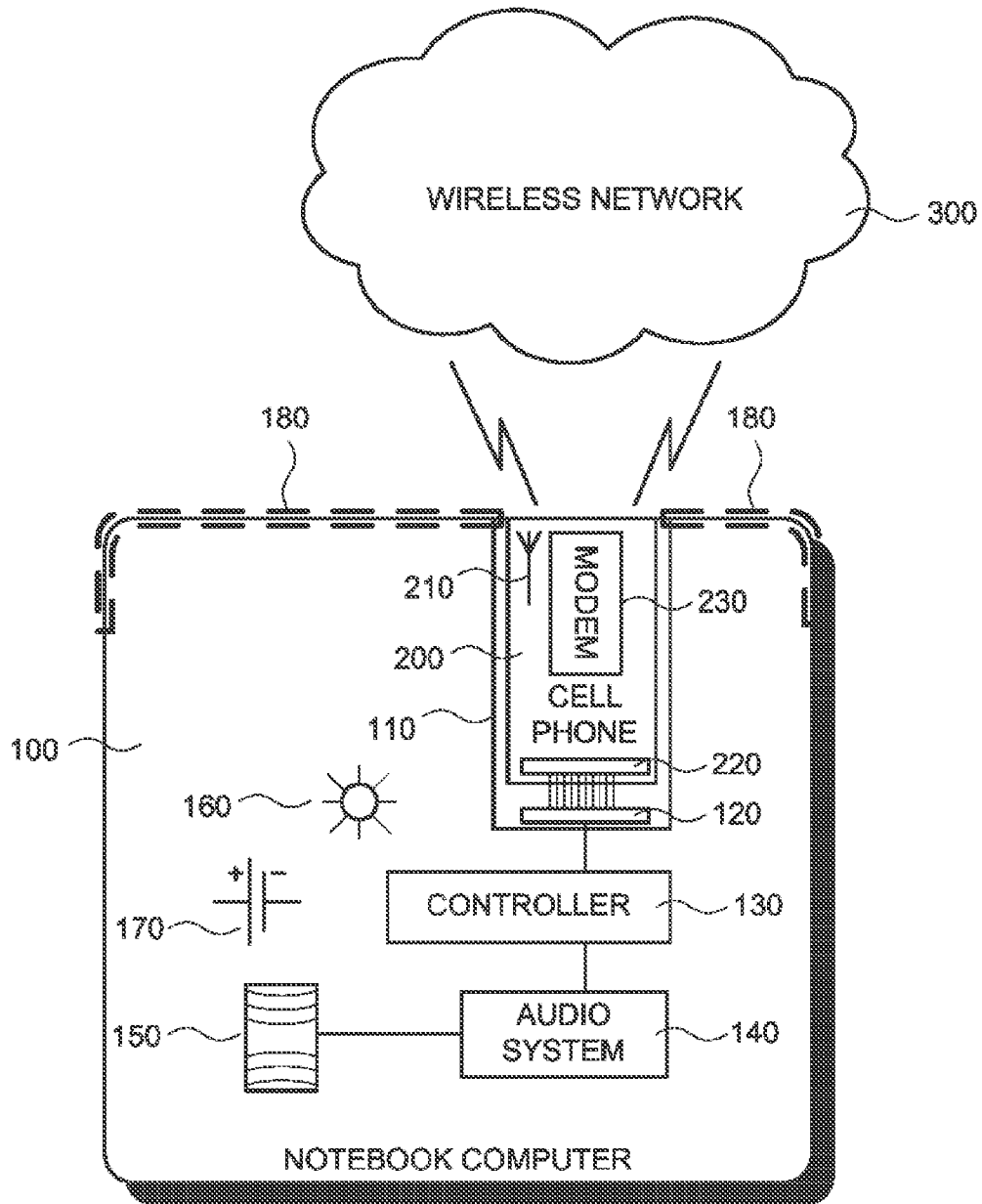


FIG. 1

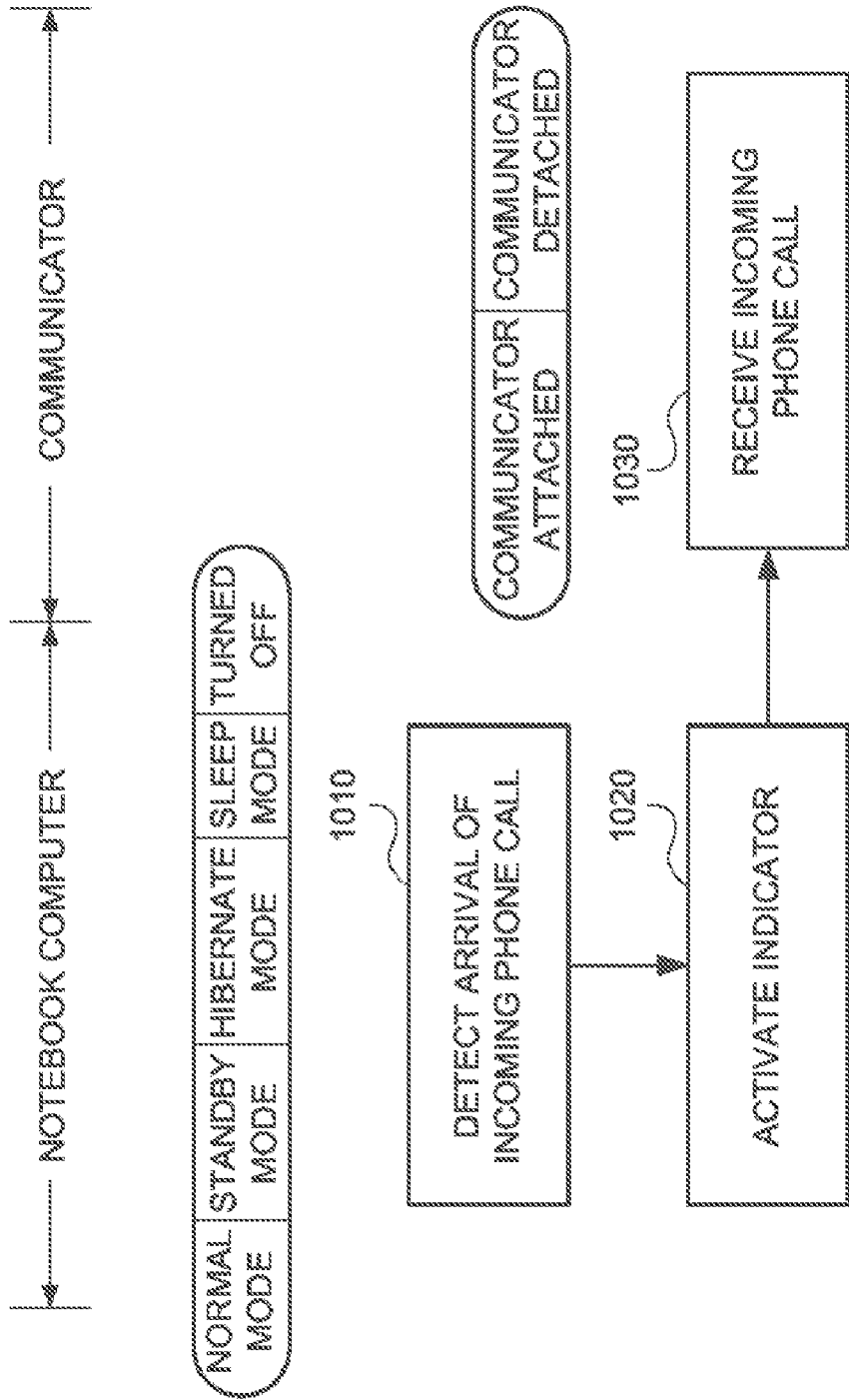


FIG. 2

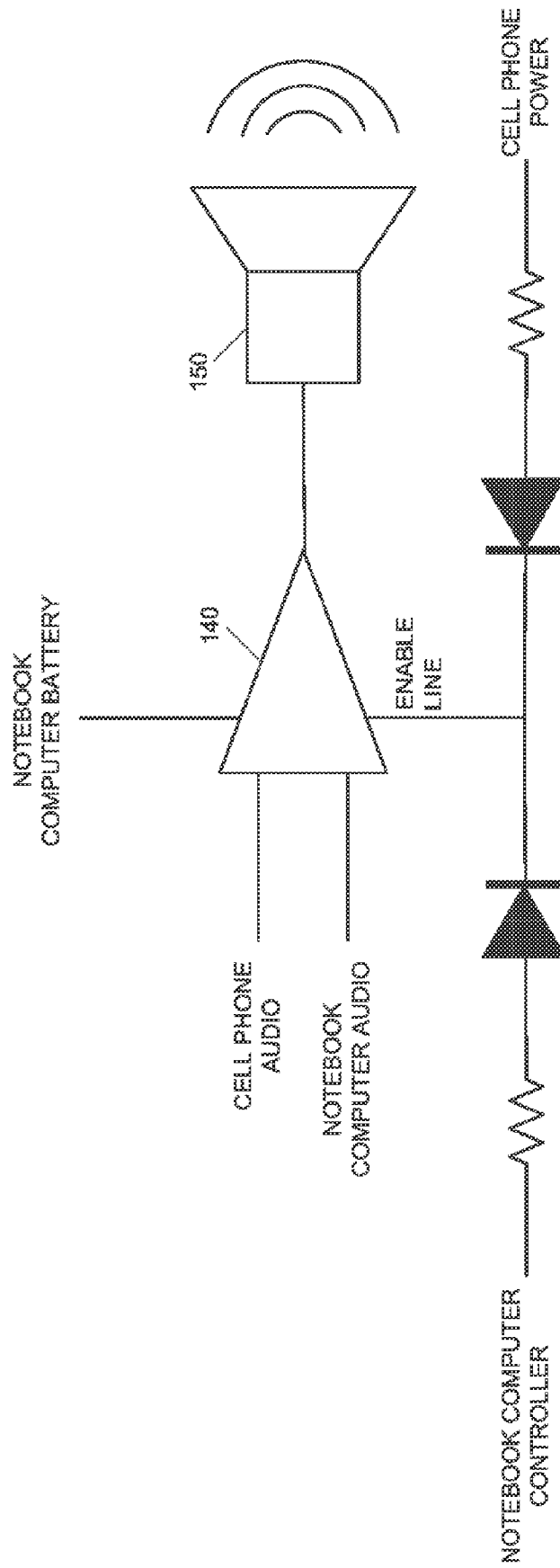


FIG. 3

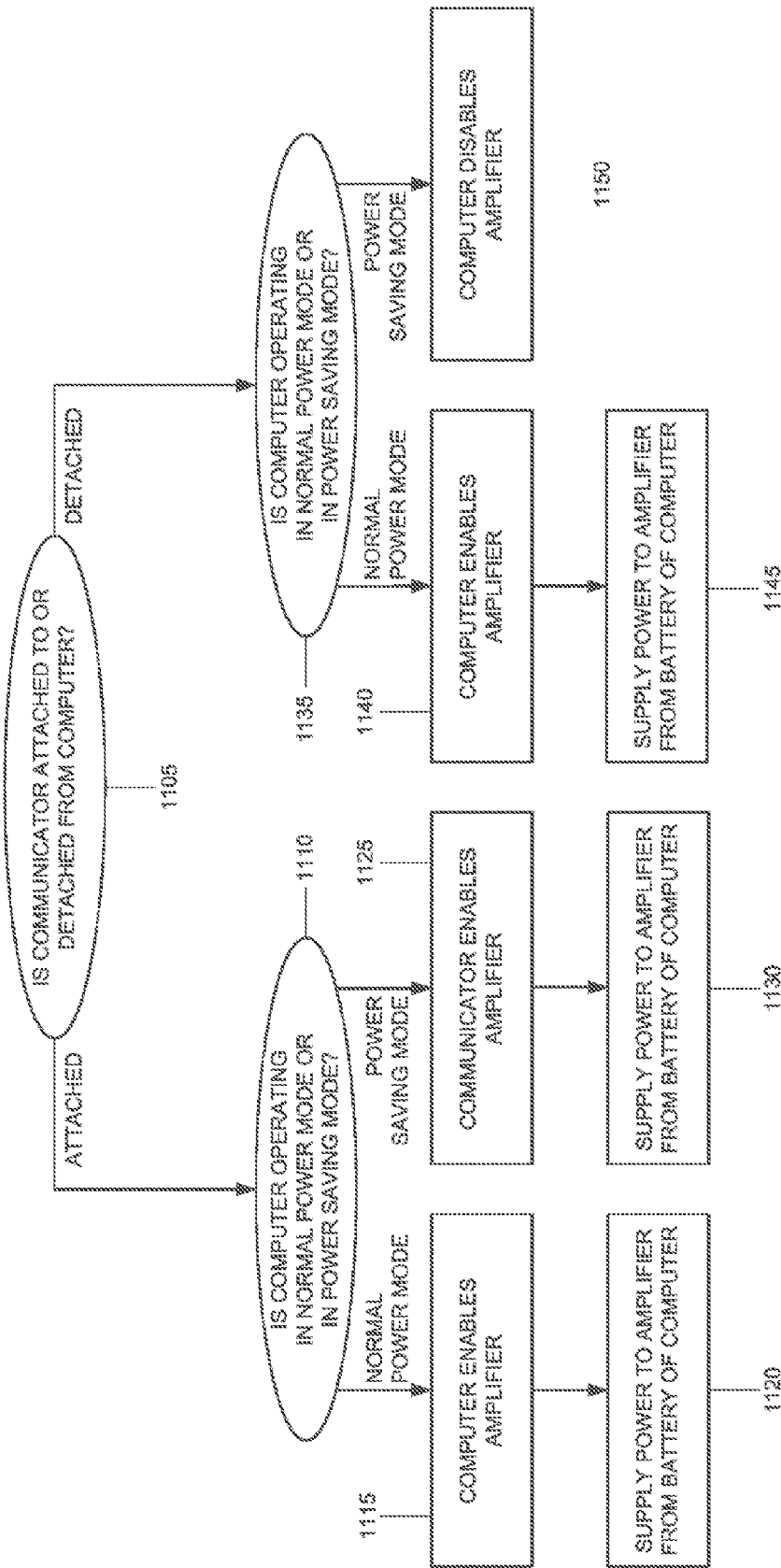


FIG. 4

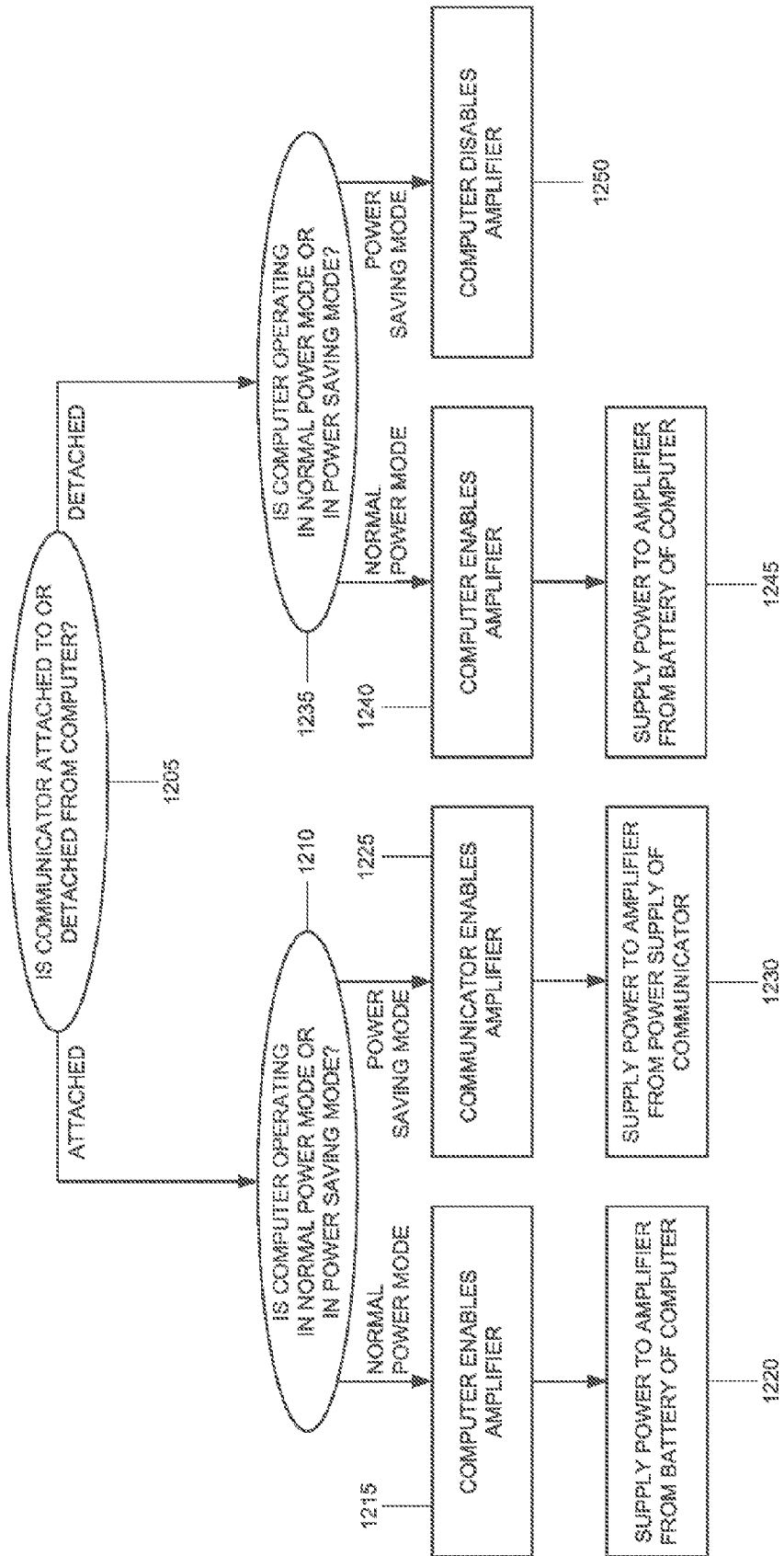


FIG. 5

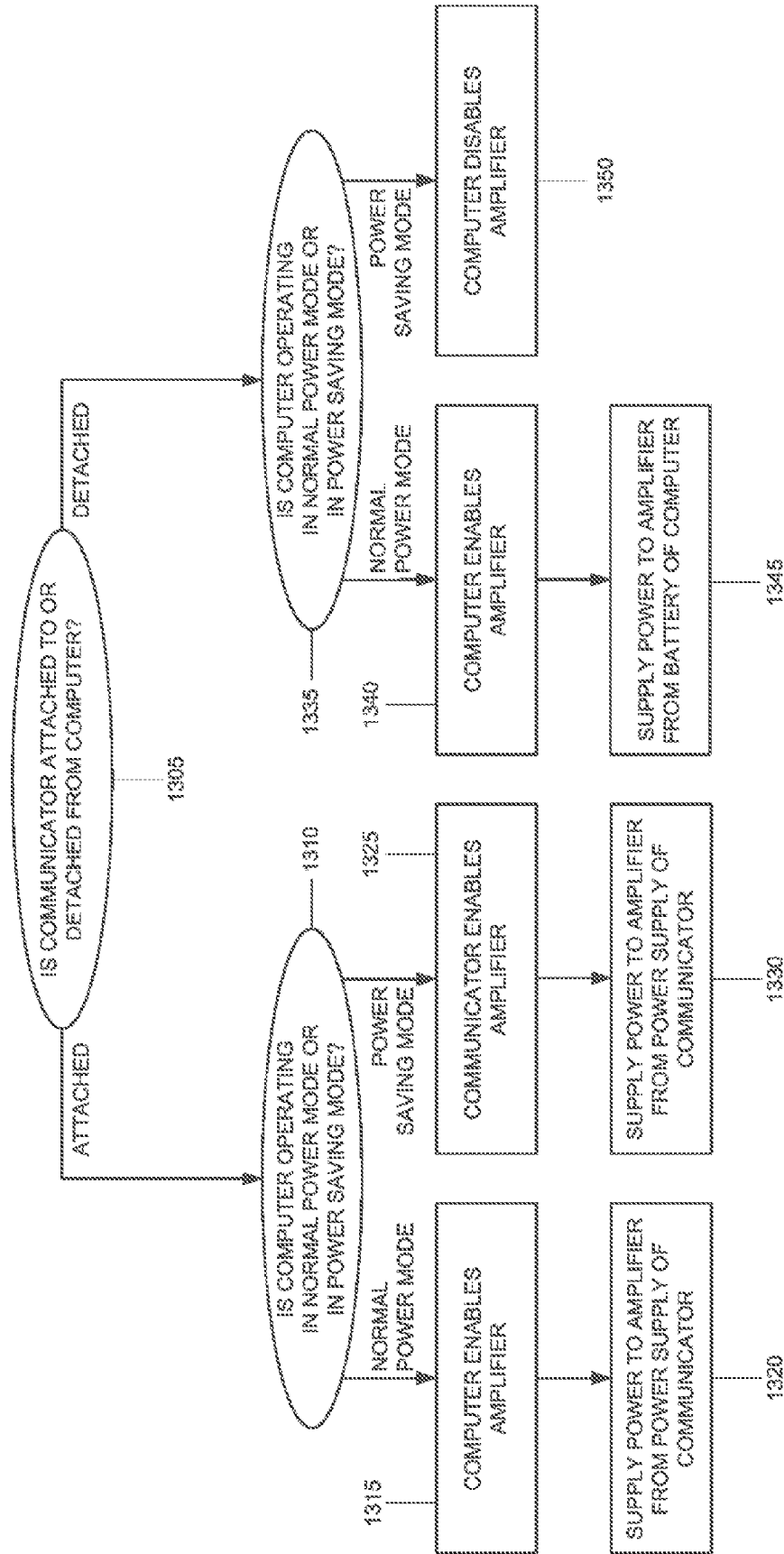


FIG. 6

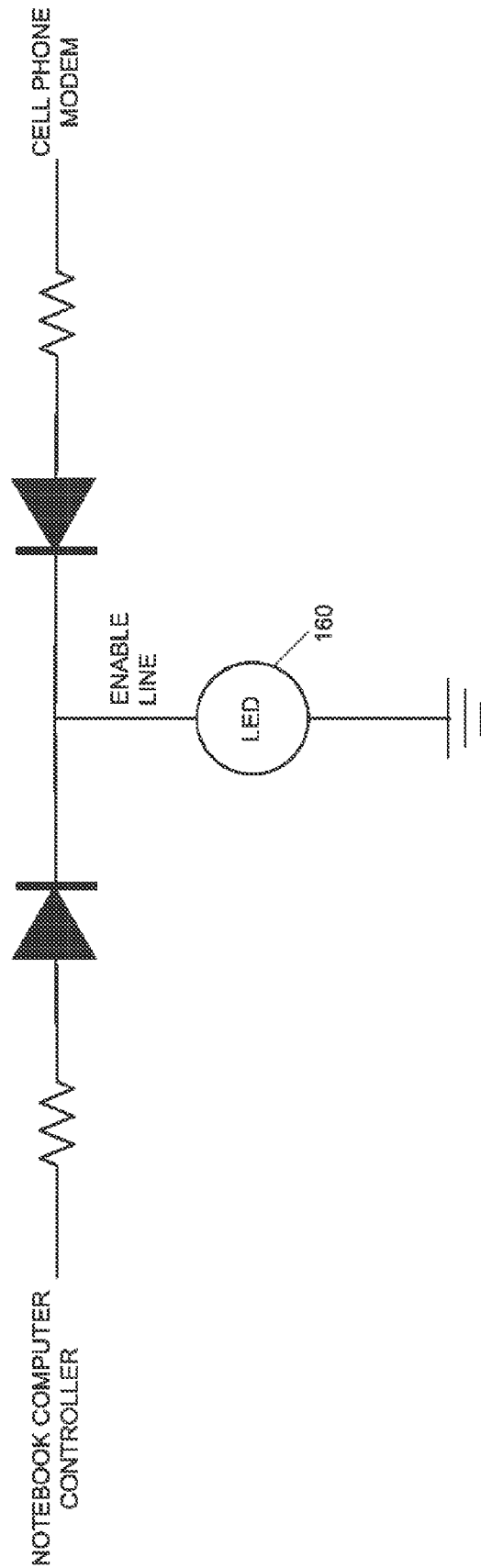


FIG. 7

NOTEBOOK COMPUTER AND CELL PHONE ASSEMBLY

CROSS REFERENCES TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation-in-part of assignee's pending application U.S. Ser. No. 12/415,116, entitled MODULAR CELL PHONE FOR FIXED MOBILE CONVERGENCE, filed on Mar. 31, 2009 by inventors Itay Sherman, Eyal Bychkov and Uri Ron, which claims priority from U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/043,179, entitled MODULAR CELL PHONE FOR FIXED MOBILE CONVERGENCE, filed on Apr. 8, 2008 by inventors Itay Sherman, Eyal Bychkov and Uri Ron.

This application is also a continuation-in-part of assignee's pending application U.S. Ser. No. 12/151,079, entitled MODULAR CELL PHONE FOR LAPTOP COMPUTERS, filed on May 3, 2008 by inventor Itay Sherman, which claims priority from U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/069,987, entitled MODULAR CELL PHONE FOR LAPTOP COMPUTERS, filed on Mar. 19, 2008 by inventor Itay Sherman.

This application claims benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/108,610, entitled NOTEBOOK COMPUTER AND CELL PHONE ASSEMBLY, filed on Oct. 27, 2008 by inventors Dov Moran, Eyal Bychkov and Uri Ron.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to computers with cell phone functionality.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

People often travel with small computers, such as notebook computers, for mobile access to their data files and applications. People also often travel with cell phones, for cellular communication. It is thus of advantage to have one assembly that combines the notebook computers with the cell phone. Currently notebook computers have wireless modems, which are used to provide voice over IP services, such as Skype. Some notebook computers have small built-in cameras, which are used to provide video conferencing services. However, when conducting private conversations, users prefer to hold a small handheld device that can be conveniently held close to their ears and used quietly.

SUMMARY OF THE DESCRIPTION

Aspects of the present invention relate to a notebook computer that includes a small cell phone which can be detached from the notebook computer and used in private quiet conversation. When the cell phone is attached or otherwise in communication with the notebook computer, the notebook computer enables voice over IP, instant messaging, and other communication applications; and if the notebook computer includes a camera, then the cell phone further enables video conferencing.

As such, embodiments of the present invention provide a notebook computer and cell phone assembly, with a cell phone that "pops out" of the computer for use as a standalone handset. Moreover, there is a seamless transition with no interruption of cellular service when the cell phone is detached from or re-attached to the computer.

Further aspects of the present invention relate to enabling and powering an amplifier of the notebook computer when the cell phone is attached to the notebook computer, regard-

less of whether the notebook computer is in a normal power mode or in a power saving mode such as standby mode, hibernate mode, sleep mode or turned off. The amplifier is used to provide speaker output for a phone call, and to indicate that a call is incoming, or such other call status.

Three alternative embodiments for enabling and powering the amplifier, when the cell phone is attached to the notebook computer, may be used; namely,

- (i) powering the amplifier from the notebook computer battery regardless of the power state of the notebook computer,
- (ii) powering the amplifier from the notebook computer battery when the notebook computer is in a normal power mode, and powering the amplifier from the cell phone power supply when the notebook computer is in a power saving mode, and
- (iii) powering the amplifier from the cell phone power supply regardless of the power state of the notebook computer.

Similar embodiments are used for powering an LED indicator of the computer, when the cell phone is attached to the computer. The LED indicator is lit to indicate an incoming call, an ongoing call, or such other call status.

There is thus provided in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention a computer and cell phone assembly, including a communicator including a modem to communicate over a wireless network, and a notebook computer, including a pouch for physically to attach the communicator to the notebook computer, and a connection indicator to indicate arrival of an incoming phone call from the wireless network when the communicator is attached to the notebook computer, wherein the communicator is operative to receive the incoming phone call whether it remains attached to the notebook computer or whether it is subsequently detached from the notebook computer.

There is additionally provided in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention a method for communication, including indicating, by a notebook computer having a communicator attached thereto, arrival of an incoming phone call from a mobile network, and receiving, by communicator, the incoming call whether the communicator remains attached to the notebook computer or whether the communicator is subsequently detached from the notebook computer.

There is further provided in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention a communication system including a computer including a controller operable to transition between a plurality of power modes, including a normal power mode and at least one power saving mode, an amplifier that may be enabled or disabled by the controller, to receive audio data from said controller, and a battery to supply power to the controller and to the amplifier, and a communicator coupled to the computer, including a modem to communicate over a wireless network, to enable the amplifier, and to transmit audio data to the amplifier, and a power supply to supply power to the modem.

There is yet further provided in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention a method for enabling and powering an amplifier of a computer when a communicator is attached to the computer, including if the computer is operating in a normal power mode, then enabling, by the computer, the amplifier, if the computer is operating in a power saving mode, then enabling, by the communicator, the amplifier, and supplying power from a battery of the computer to the amplifier.

There is moreover provided in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention a method for enabling and powering an amplifier of a computer when a communicator is

attached to the computer, including if the computer is operating in a normal power mode, then enabling, by the computer, the amplifier, and supplying power from a battery of the computer to the amplifier, and if the computer is operating in a power saving mode, then enabling, by the communicator, the amplifier, and supplying power from a power supply of the communicator to the amplifier.

There is additionally provided in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention a method for enabling and powering an amplifier of a computer when a communicator is attached to the computer, including if the computer is operating in a normal power mode, then enabling, by the computer, the amplifier, if the computer is operating in a power saving mode, then enabling, by the communicator, the amplifier, and supplying power from a power supply of the communicator to the amplifier.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The present invention will be more fully understood and appreciated from the following detailed description, taken in conjunction with the drawings in which:

FIG. 1 is a simplified block diagram of a notebook computer and cell phone assembly, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a simplified flowchart of a method for operation of a notebook computer and cell phone assembly, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 3 is a simplified diagram of a circuit for activating a speaker of a notebook computer regardless of the power mode of the computer, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention; and

FIG. 4 is a simplified flowchart of the logic of the circuit of FIG. 3 for enabling and powering a speaker amplifier, in accordance with a first embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 5 is a simplified flowchart of the logic of the circuit of FIG. 3 for enabling and powering a speaker amplifier, in accordance with a second embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 6 is a simplified flowchart of the logic of the circuit of FIG. 3 for enabling and powering a speaker amplifier, in accordance with a third embodiment of the present invention; and

FIG. 7 is a simplified diagram of a circuit for activating an LED of a notebook regardless of the power mode of the computer, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Aspects of the present invention relate to a notebook computer and cell phone assembly. The cell phone is used in conjunction with the computer for telecommunication applications, including inter alia Skype, Instant Messenger and video conferencing. In addition the cell phone detaches from the computer for use as a standalone handset in private quiet conversation.

When the cell phone is attached to the notebook computer, incoming calls to the cell phone are detected by the computer, and the computer activates an indicator to notify a user of the call. The indicator may be inter alia a blinking LED or such other visual indicator, or a ringing speaker or such other audio indicator, or both. Activation of the indicator occurs whether the computer is in normal power mode, standby mode, hibernate mode, sleep mode, or turned off.

Reference is made to FIG. 1, which is a simplified block diagram of a notebook computer and cell phone assembly, in

accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. Shown in FIG. 1 is a notebook computer **100** with a pouch **110** for inserting a cellular communicator **200**, a connector **120** for connecting to a corresponding communicator connector **220**, a controller **130**, an amplifier **140** with a speaker **150** for an audio system of the computer, a visual indicator **160** such as an LED indicator, and a battery **170**. Communicator **200** includes an antenna **210** for signal reception and transmission, and a modem **230** for communicating over a wireless network **300**. Modem **230** is generally both a modem and a controller for communicator **200**.

Notebook computer **100** includes conventional memory units for storing programs and data, input devices including inter alia a mouse and keyboard, and an output display device (not shown). The memory units and the device drivers for the mouse, keyboard and display are coupled communicatively with controller **130** using a conventional data bus. It will be appreciated, however, from the description hereinbelow, that the present invention may also be implemented with computing devices other than notebook computers, provided that such devices include processing means, program and data storage means, and input and display means that inter-communicate. The present invention may be implemented within a standalone computer or within one or more networked computers.

In an embodiment of the present invention, pouch **110** is sufficiently deep so that communicator **200** is encased within notebook computer **100** when fully inserted in pouch **110**. Pouch **110** includes a push-pop mechanism to eject communicator **200** for detachment from notebook computer **100**. In order not to interfere with signal reception of communicator **200**, the housing of notebook computer **100** is manufactured using non-intrusive material that does not interfere with reception, at least for portions of the housing surrounding antenna **210**, such as the portions designated as **180** in FIG. 1.

In accordance with an embodiment of the present invention, notebook computer **100** is operative to detect an incoming call for communicator **200**, and to activate an indicator, such as blinking of visual indicator **160**, to notify a user of the incoming call. Alternatively or additionally, the indicator may be ringing of speaker **150**. Communicator **200** is able to receive the incoming call whether it is attached to or detached from notebook computer **100**.

A feature of this embodiment of the present invention is the capability of activating the indicator, regardless of whether notebook computer **100** is in normal power mode, standby mode, hibernate mode, sleep mode, or turned off. As such, communicator **200** is operative to receive incoming calls and to notify the user of the calls, regardless of the power saving mode of notebook computer **100**. According to one embodiment of the present invention, such operation is accomplished by using battery **170** as a power source, when communicator **200** is attached to notebook computer **100**, regardless of the power mode of notebook computer **100**.

Generally today, notebook computers, including those that run Windows XP and Vista, have power saving modes, such as "standby mode", "hibernate mode" and "sleep mode". Standby mode shuts down all but the essential components of notebook computer **100**. When in standby mode, the monitor of notebook computer **100** is blank and notebook computer **100** is unusable.

However, notebook computer **100** quickly comes out of standby mode, in a matter of a few seconds, when a button is pressed. For some computers, any button on the keyboard may be pressed to bring the computer back from standby mode to normal operation. For other computers, the power button must be pressed to bring the computer back to normal

operation. When notebook computer **100** transitions from standby mode to normal operation, notebook computer **100** is in the same condition that it was prior to entering standby mode.

While in standby mode, notebook computer **100** consumes a small amount of power. If battery **170** were to fail while notebook computer **100** is in standby mode, all unsaved data is lost.

Hibernate mode saves a snapshot of the state of notebook computer **100**, and then shuts the computer completely off. Currently unsaved data is saved, as during a normal shut down. When notebook computer **100** is turned back on, it appears the same as it did before entering hibernate mode.

Notebook computer **100** comes slowly out of hibernate mode, often lasting several minutes, since it was completely shut down. While in hibernate mode, notebook computer **100** consumes no power.

Sleep mode puts notebook computer **100** into standby mode, and subsequently into hibernate mode if one or both of the following events occur:

- i. battery **170** becomes critically low;
- ii. a pre-specified user configurable time delay is reached.

In accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, irrespective of its power mode, notebook computer **100** is powered by battery **170** when communicator **200** is attached to notebook computer **100**. Optionally, visual indicator **160** and amplifier **140** are also powered when communicator **200** is attached to notebook computer **100**, irrespective of the power mode of notebook computer **100**.

Reference is made to FIG. 2, which is a simplified flowchart of a method for operation of a notebook computer and cell phone assembly, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. The flowchart of FIG. 2 is divided into two columns, the left column indicating steps performed by a notebook computer and the right column indicating steps performed by a cellular communicator that attaches to and detaches from the notebook computer.

At step **1010**, while the communicator is attached to the notebook computer, the notebook computer detects an incoming call intended for the cell phone. Step **1010** is performed when the notebook computer is in normal power mode or power saving mode. At step **1020** the notebook computer activates an indicator, such as a blinking LED or a ringing speaker, notifying the user of the incoming call. At step **1030**, the communicator receives the incoming call, whether the communicator is attached to the notebook computer or detached from the notebook computer.

Reference is made to FIG. 3, which is a simplified diagram of a circuit for activating speaker **150** of notebook computer **100** regardless of the power mode of computer **100**, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. The circuit shown in FIG. 3 enables speaker **150** to operate in conjunction with communicator **200** when computer **100** is in normal power mode, or in a power saving mode such as standby mode, hibernate mode, sleep mode, or turned off.

Shown in FIG. 3 is amplifier **140** and speaker **150** of notebook computer **100**. Computer **100** and communicator **200** are each able to transmit input to amplifier **140**. Also shown in FIG. 3 is an enable line, via which computer **100** and communicator **200** can each enable or disable amplifier **140**. In accordance with an embodiment of the present invention, when communicator **200** is attached to computer **100**, amplifier **140** is automatically enabled.

When communicator **200** is detached from computer **100**, then amplifier **140** is powered by battery **170** whenever computer **100** enables amplifier **140**. Typically, computer **100**

enables amplifier **100** when operating in normal power mode, and computer **100** disables amplifier **140** when operating in power saving mode.

Regarding the source of the power supplied to amplifier **140** when communicator **200** is attached to computer **100**, one of three alternative embodiments may be used in accordance with the present invention. In the first embodiment, amplifier **140** is powered from battery **170** whenever amplifier **140** is enabled.

In the second embodiment, amplifier **140**, when enabled, is powered from battery **170** when computer **100** is operating in normal power mode, and is powered from a power supply of communicator **200** when computer **100** is operating in standby mode, in hibernate mode, in sleep mode, turned off or in such other power saving mode.

In the third embodiment, amplifier **140** is powered from the power supply of communicator **200** whenever amplifier **140** is enabled.

Reference is made to FIG. 4, which is a simplified flowchart of the logic of the circuit of FIG. 3 for enabling and powering amplifier **140**, in accordance with the first embodiment of the present invention. As shown in FIG. 4, at step **1105** a determination is made as to whether or not communicator **200** is attached to or detached from computer **100**. If communicator is attached to computer **100**, then at step **1110** a further determination is made as to whether computer **100** is operating in a normal power mode, or in a power saving mode. If computer **100** is operating in a normal power mode, then at step **1115** amplifier **140** is enabled by computer **100**, and at step **1120** power is supplied to amplifier **140** from battery **170**. Otherwise, if computer **100** is operating in a power saving mode, then at step **1125** amplifier **140** is enabled by communicator **200**, and at step **1130** power is supplied to amplifier **140** from battery **170**.

If communicator **200** is detached from computer **100**, as determined at step **1105**, then at step **1135** a further determination is made as to whether computer **100** is operating in a normal power mode, or in a power saving mode. If computer **100** is operating in a normal power mode then at step **1140** amplifier **140** is enabled by computer **100**, and at step **1145** power is supplied to amplifier **140** from battery **170**. Otherwise, if computer **100** is operating in a power saving mode, then at step **1170** amplifier **140** is disabled by computer **100**.

Reference is made to FIG. 5, which is a simplified flowchart of the logic of the circuit of FIG. 3 for enabling and powering amplifier **140**, in accordance with a second embodiment of the present invention. The steps of FIG. 5 are similar to the corresponding steps in FIG. 4, except for step **1230**. In the case where communicator **200** is attached to computer **100** and computer **100** is operating in a power saving mode, then a power supply of communicator **200** supplies power to amplifier **140**.

Reference is made to FIG. 6, which is a simplified flowchart of the logic of the circuit of FIG. 3 for enabling and powering amplifier **140**, in accordance with a third embodiment of the present invention. The steps of FIG. 6 are similar to the corresponding steps in FIG. 5, except for step **1320**. In the case where communicator **200** is attached to computer **100**, amplifier **140** is always powered by the power supply of communicator **200**, regardless of whether computer **100** is operating in normal or power saving mode.

Reference is made to FIG. 7, which is a simplified diagram of a circuit for activating an LED of a notebook regardless of the power mode of the computer, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. The circuit shown in FIG. 7 enables LED **160** to operate in conjunction with communicator **200** when computer **100** is in a normal power

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mode, or in a power saving mode such as standby mode, hibernate mode sleep mode, or turned off.

Shown in FIG. 7 is indicator 160 of computer 100. Computer 100 and communicator 200 are each able to light indicator 160. Also shown in FIG. 7 is an enable line, via which computer 100 and communicator 200 can each enable or disable indicator 160. When communicator 200 is attached to computer 100, indicator 160 is automatically enabled.

When communicator 200 is detached from computer 100, then indicator 160 is powered by battery 170 whenever computer 100 enables indicator 160. Typically, computer 100 enables indicator 160 when operating in normal power mode, and computer 100 disables indicator 160 when operating in power saving mode.

Regarding the source of the power supplied to indicator 160 when communicator 200 is attached to computer 100, the same three alternative embodiments described hereinabove with reference to the system of FIG. 3 for enabling and powering amplifier 140, may be used with the system of FIG. 7 for enabling and powering indicator 160. These embodiments correspond to the flowcharts of FIGS. 4-6.

Since indicator 160 generally requires only a small amount of power for its operation, the embodiment of FIG. 6 may be more practical for powering indicator 160 when communicator 200 is attached to computer 100.

In the foregoing specification, the invention has been described with reference to specific exemplary embodiments thereof. It will, however, be evident that various modifications and changes may be made to the specific exemplary embodiments without departing from the broader spirit and scope of the invention as set forth in the appended claims. Accordingly, the specification and drawings are to be regarded in an illustrative rather than a restrictive sense.

What is claimed is:

1. A computer and mobile phone assembly, comprising:
 - a communicator comprising a modem to communicate over a wireless network, the communicator being operative in cooperation with a notebook computer when attached to the notebook computer, and being operative by a user as a standalone mobile phone when not attached to a notebook computer; and
 - a notebook computer, comprising:
 - a pouch to physically attach said communicator to the notebook computer; and
 - a connection indicator to indicate arrival of an incoming phone call from the wireless network when said communicator is attached to the notebook computer,

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wherein said communicator is operative for a user to receive the incoming phone call while said communicator is attached to the notebook computer and to continue the phone call without interruption of wireless service when said communicator is subsequently detached from the notebook computer.

2. The computer and cell phone assembly of claim 1 wherein said notebook computer further comprises an LED display, and wherein said connection indicator indicates arrival of the incoming phone call by causing said LED display to blink.

3. The computer and cell phone assembly of claim 1 wherein said notebook computer further comprises a speaker, and wherein said connection indicator indicates arrival of the incoming phone call by causing said speaker to ring.

4. The computer and cell phone assembly of claim 1 wherein said connection indicator is operative to indicate arrival of an incoming phone call whether the notebook computer is turned on or turned off.

5. The computer and cell phone assembly of claim 1 wherein said connection indicator is operative to indicate arrival of an incoming phone call whether the notebook computer is in normal mode or in power saving sleep mode.

6. A method for communication, comprising:

- indicating, by a notebook computer having a communicator attached thereto, arrival of an incoming phone call from a wireless network, the communicator being operative in cooperation with the notebook computer when attached to the notebook computer, and being operative by a user as a standalone mobile phone when not attached to a notebook computer; and
- receiving, by communicator, the incoming call while the communicator is attached to the notebook computer, and continuing the phone call without interruption of wireless service when the communicator is subsequently detached from the notebook computer.

7. The method of claim 6 wherein said indicating arrival of an incoming phone call is performed whether the notebook computer is turned on or turned off.

8. The method of claim 6 wherein said indicating arrival of an incoming phone call is performed whether the notebook computer is in normal mode or in power saving sleep mode.

9. The method of claim 6 wherein said indicating arrival of an incoming phone call comprises causing an LED display to blink in response to said receiving.

10. The method of claim 6 wherein said indicating arrival of an incoming phone call comprises causing a speaker to ring in response to said receiving.

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