

**An electronic menu system for
ordering entre at restaurants**

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Abstract: In this new millennium many new inventions have taken place. To name a few iPods, Personal Video recorders, advanced digital camera and Cellular phones. This invention is about next generation of entre ordering systems, abbreviated as E-menu systems. Often restaurant customers like to know description of items in menu and information on ingredients. Occasionally they are interested in knowing recipe of the menu items. We at MicroLink, Inc. have developed a perfect solution E-menu to address those needs.

Background: In restaurants and motels customers wish to know more information before they order entre. Often the waiters who sit customers on the table lack the knowledge of ingredients of food items. Also, in fancy eating places such as steak house during rush hours, waiters have less time to listen to customer needs. Therefore an electronic ordering system will ease the tasks of staff members at major restaurants. The E-menu proposed by us alleviates the bulk of these issues with a small investment. Many motel customers like to order items from nearby restaurants. Our E-menu system has capability to store detailed information of entre from one or more restaurants. The enhanced version of the system will allow placing order to the restaurant and also make payment electronically. For customer ease the payment can be lumped with room bills using Smart credit cards.

Summary: E-menu system developed by MicroLink, Inc has many advanced features. First one could select the language of communication at a touch of a button. Pressing a language button allows one to see the languages in which descriptions of items are available and lock selected language. Then the audible description and language in video description is changed to the selected language. Next either a textual description of item appears on a screen or video is played. Further, audible description in selected language may be played as described by pressing buttons in Figure 1. The great feature of the system is one can update the list of menu items and description using a wired or wireless WIFI intranet or internet connection with a gateway at any time. Thus schedule of items may be updated periodically. An advanced design of the system includes a digital card reader so that customer can make payment electronically at the dining table if he is in a rush. The system has special function buttons to order items from menu and compute the invoice amount including applicable tips. Also, the system includes a plasma display for visuals and a pair of miniature speakers for audio.

Brief description of drawings: For a specific illustration a pictorial view of the system is displayed in Figure 1. The system comprises of a box with a Plasma Display, a slot to swipe or read a smart card device and audio components speakers. At the heart of the box is powerful Microprocessor chip. Block diagram of the functions integrated on the chip are shown in Figure 2. The main functional blocks are a display driver to display video data, audio driver to drive speakers, memory sections to store audio and video data, Smart card reader and Central processing unit. Further, the processor has a communication section to support wired and wireless WIFI connection.

Detailed description of embodiment: As discussed before, the system consists of Plasma display, card reader, a set of buttons and speakers for audio output. A diagram of the system is displayed in Figure 1 on next page. The functions of every hardware components are identified. Also a detailed block diagram of Microprocessor chip is indicated in Figure 2. In Figure 1, the top button on the right side is a mode button that configures display for modes such as video, text data, order and invoice. The button below the mode button allows selecting language of communication. The button below that when pressed results in update of menu information. The button at the center of scroll button when depressed selects entre and plays (audio out) description of selected item from the list displayed. The default display shows list of menu items served or entire list of entre. The display may be scrolled up or down and left or right by four page pan buttons with arrow head located below the plasma display. In the text mode by selecting an item by highlight and pressing a print/detailed button on left hand side will display a description of the selected item. The items can be selected by pressing up and down arrow buttons by viewing selection list in display and pressing button at the center. The button below print/detail provides

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function of volume control for audio out. Finally, the function of button below volume control is to play video clips for selected entre. More advanced version of the design may include a thermal printer to print receipts and confirmation code for electronic payment. The payment may be made by charging amount to Smart Credit Card when swiped through card reader. The card reader is an essential component of the system.

What is claimed?

1. E-menu system to order entre based on user selection.
2. Additional information on entre available upon user request in the language of selection.
3. The ordering system facilitates payment and provides hard copy records of transactions.
4. The system provides audio, textual and visual description of items as requested by client

Advantages of novel invention:

1. The deployment of E-menu system improves privacy of customers for discussion during lunch and dinner.
2. The service time is expedited and confusion about orders and ingredient is eliminated.
3. Results in increase of customer satisfaction.
4. Simplifies ordering for repeat customers because the prior order records are saved on computer.

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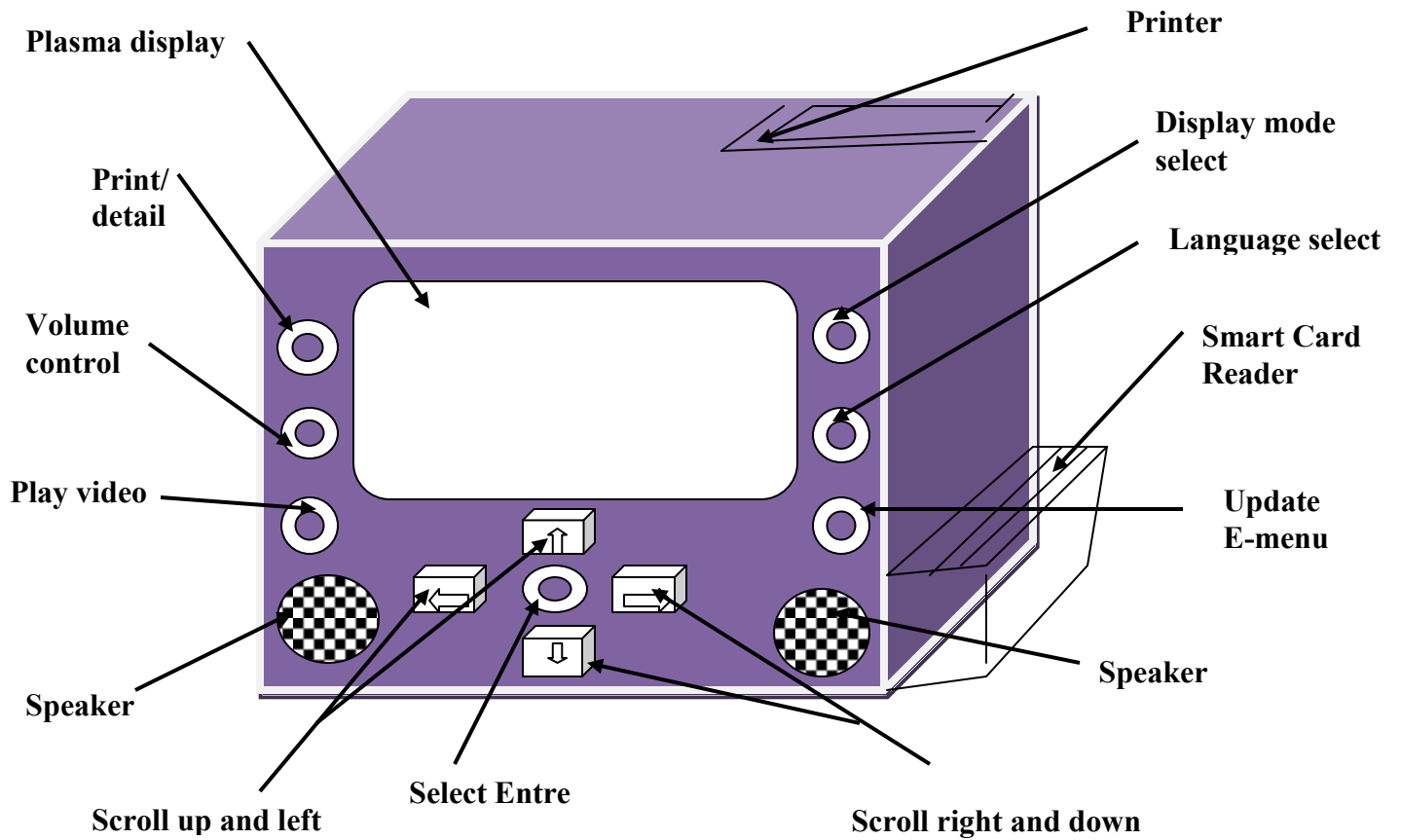


Figure 1 Functional description of main components of a typical E-menu system.

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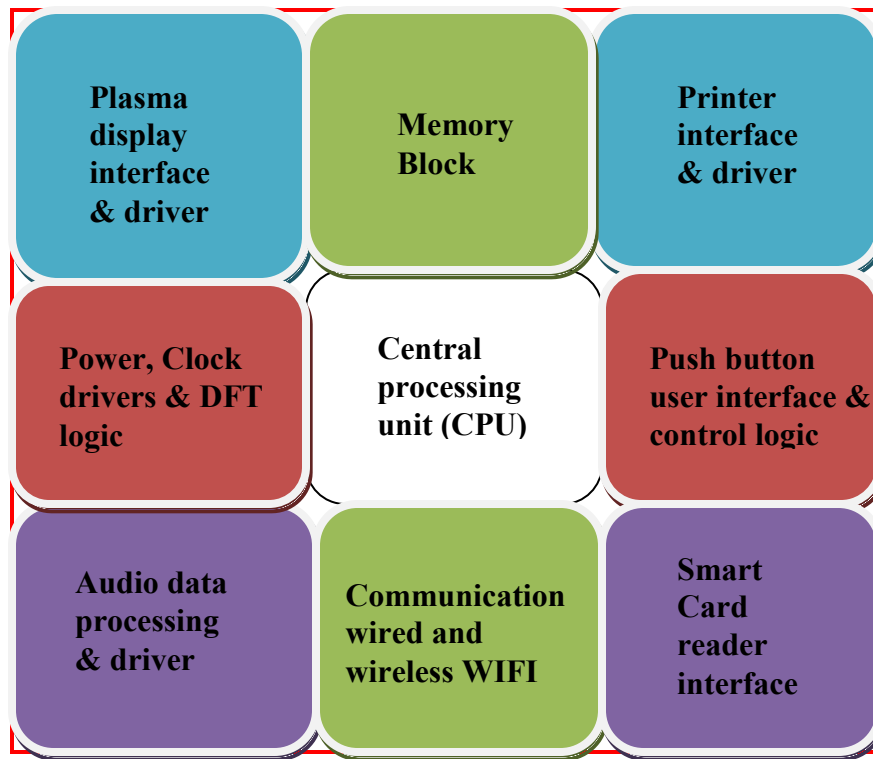


Figure 2 Functional block diagram of microprocessor chip for E-menu system

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