

# **Guidelines for Design Applications Involving Graphical User Interface**

December 2025

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Since the establishment of graphic user interface product design system, innovation entites can effectively protect their graphical user interface design innovation results through design patents. This guideline aims to guide innovators to accurately understand the rules and regulations of product designs involving graphical user interfaces, promote the improvement of design patent application writing and reply quality, and promote the development of design patent system with high quality by introducing the characteristics of product designs involving graphical user interfaces, the requirements of application documents and typical cases.

## **Chapter I General Conditions for Grant of Patents**

### **1.Relevant laws and regulations**

Article 2, Paragraph 4 of the Patent Law of the People's Republic of China (hereinafter referred to as the Patent Law), "Design" means an aesthetic new design of the overall or partial shape, pattern or their combination, and the combination of colors, shapes and patterns of a product, which is suitable for industrial application.

Patent Examination Guidelines 2023 (hereinafter referred to as Examination Guidelines), Part 1, Chapter 3, Section 4.5 stipulates that product design involving graphical user interface refers to the key points of product design including graphical user interface design.

In the case of non-granting patent rights for design stipulated in Section 7.4, Chapter III, Part 1 of the Guide for Examining the GUIs, the contents related to the GUI mainly include:

1. Designs constructed solely in geometric shapes and patterns customary in the field of their products.
2. Game interfaces, and patterns that do not relate to human-computer interaction which are displayed by display devices. For example, electronic screen wallpaper, power on/off scene, Graphic text composition web page not related to human-computer interaction.

3. The GUI which does not create a relatively independent area on the product or a partial design that cannot constitute a relatively complete design unit.

According to the above-mentioned relevant provisions, product design patent applications involving graphical user interfaces, like general product design patent applications, should also use the product as the carrier and be new designs. In addition, they should also be related to human-computer interaction and cannot be game interfaces. If a partial design of a graphical user interface is claimed, relatively separate areas should be formed and constitute a relatively complete design unit.

## **2. Subject matter of protection granted by patent right**

### **2.1 Should have a Product as Carrier**

Design is for product design, its carrier should be product. The carrier of the design involving the graphical user interface should also be a product, which can be, for example, a mobile phone, a computer, a tablet, VR glasses, a projection device, a home appliance, a car, an instrument meter, etc.

The icon shown in Figure 1.1 is a simple pattern design and does not use any product as a carrier, so it does not belong to the protection object of design patents.

The icon control graphical user interface of the electronic device as shown in Figure 1.2 uses the electronic device as a carrier, and can make the electronic device realize corresponding functions by clicking the icon, which belongs to the object of design patent protection.



Figure 1.1 Icons<sup>1</sup>



Fig. 1.2

Figure 1.2 Icon control graphical user interface of the electronic device<sup>2</sup>

## 2.2 Should be New Design

A product design involving a graphical user interface cannot be a geometric shape and pattern design as is commonly known in the field.

As shown in Figure 1.3, the digital password unlocking graphical user interface of the mobile phone is a common design, and the design of the graphical user interface only consists of common circular numeric keys and text with conventional fonts in a conventional layout. Therefore, the design is obviously not a new design.

Where a partial design is requested to be protected, the new design requirements should also be met. As shown in Fig. 1.4, the claimed partial design of the dial-pad of the telephone GUI of the electronic device is composed only of the usual circular numeric keys, English letters and \* and # symbols in the usual layout, and the position and proportion in the overall product are also the usual design, so the partial design is obviously not a new design.

Since both of the above designs are obviously not new designs, they are not subject to design patent protection.

<sup>1</sup> Picture source: patent document WOD219649-0004.

<sup>2</sup> Picture source: patent document CN307638669S.



Fig. 1.3



Fig. 1.4

Figure 1.3 Graphical User Interface of Mobile Phone for Digital Password Unlocking<sup>3</sup>; Figure 1.4 Dial pad for a telephone graphical user interface of an electronic device<sup>4</sup>

### 2.3 Should be relevant to human-computer interaction

Product designs involving graphical user interfaces protected by design patents should be interface designs related to human-computer interaction. Interaction can be achieved through input devices such as keyboards, or through clicks, touches, slides, gestures, voice, etc.

The screen wallpaper of the mobile phone shown in Figure 1.5, the power on/off scene of the mobile phone shown in Figure 1.6, and the software welcome interface of the mobile phone shown in Figure 1.7 are all patterns displayed by display devices that are not related to human-computer interaction, and are not subject to design patent protection.

<sup>3</sup> Picture source: patent document CN305166496S, with modifications.

<sup>4</sup> Picture source: patent document USD0798896, with modifications.



Fig. 1.5



Fig.1.6



Fig.1.7

Figure 1.5 Mobile phone screen wallpaper<sup>5</sup>; Figure 1.6 Boot Screen of Mobile Phone<sup>6</sup>; Figure 1.7 Software Welcome Interface for Mobile Phone<sup>7</sup>

The graphic user interface of the travel web page of the computer as shown in Figure 1.8 is purely graphic and text typesetting. It belongs to the pattern displayed by the display device that are not related to human-computer interaction. It is not the object of patent protection for appearance design.



Figure 1.8 Graphical User Interface of Travel Webpage

Where a patent is applied for a design as part of a graphical user interface, the part of the design requested for protection shall also be related to human-computer interaction.

<sup>5</sup> Picture source: Huawei phone screen wallpaper.

<sup>6</sup> Picture source: Huawei mobile phone booting screen.

<sup>7</sup> Picture source: Huawei Mobile Browser Welcome Interface.

## 2.4 Relatively independent areas shall be formed and constitute relatively complete design units

For patent applications for partial design of a graphical user interface, the claimed partial design should be visually able to form a relatively independent area and constitute a relatively complete design unit.

As shown in Figure 1.9, the right side of the information display box of the course management graphical user interface of the electronic device is obviously arbitrarily truncated or divided, and cannot constitute a relatively complete design unit and does not belong to the object of design patent protection.

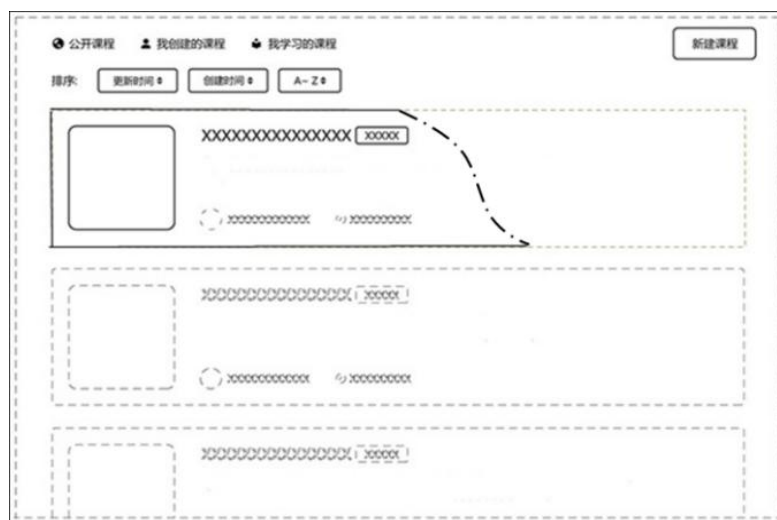


Figure 1.9 Information display box of the course management graphical user interface of the electronic device<sup>8</sup>

## 2.5 Cannot Be a Game Interface

The entire design and partial design of game interface are not protected by design patent.

The game interface of the electronic device shown in Figure 1.10 obviously contains a game scene screen, which is not the object of design patent protection.

<sup>8</sup> Picture source: patent document CN308576185S, with modifications.

Although the function setting window of the game interface of the electronic device shown in FIG. 1.11, the protected partial design is designed as a function setting module in the game interface, it is not protected.

The game scene screen, but since its overall interface is the game interface, the partial design requested for protection is not the object of design patent protection.



Fig. 1.10

Figure 1.10 Gaming Interface of Electronic Device<sup>9</sup>

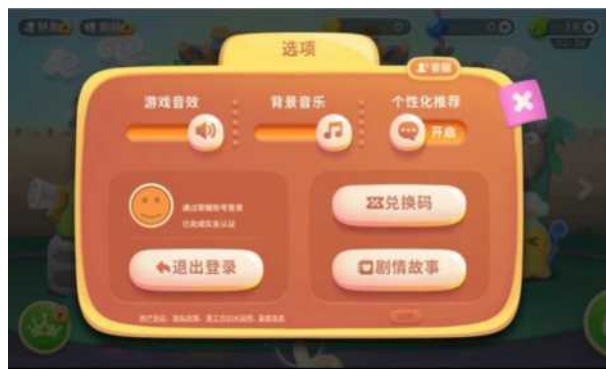


Fig. 1.11

Figure 1.11 Function Setting Window of Game Interface of Electronic Device<sup>10</sup>

## Chapter II Requirements for Application Documents

### 1. Relevant laws and regulations

Paragraph 2 of Article 27 of the Patent Law provides that the relevant pictures or photographs submitted by the applicant shall clearly show the design of the product for which patent protection is claimed.

The second paragraph of Article 64 of the Patent Law stipulates that the scope of protection of the patent right for design shall be limited to the design of the product represented in the picture or photograph, and the brief explanation shall be used to explain the design of the product represented in the picture or photograph.

Chapter 3, Section 4.5 of Part 1 of the Examination Guideline stipulates that product design involving graphical user interface means the main points of product

<sup>9</sup> Photo source: Beijing Kailuo World Technology Co., Ltd. game "Radish Guard".

<sup>10</sup> Photo source: Beijing Kailuo World Technology Co., Ltd. game "Radish Guard".

design including the design of graphical user interface. The applicant can submit the application in the form of entire product design or partial product design.

According to the above provisions, for product designs involving graphical user interfaces, in terms of application documentation, the applicant needs to pay attention to the requirements for the name of the product using the design, the picture or photograph of the design, and a brief description; in terms of submission methods, the applicant may submit the application in the form of overall product design or partial product design.

## **2. Basic Requirements for Application Documents**

The product name, design picture or photograph and brief description of product design involving graphic user interface shall besides conforming to the provisions of general product design application documents, the following points shall be noted.

### **2.1 Name of product using design**

The product name should include the specific purpose of the graphical user interface, the word "graphical user interface" and the product to which the graphical user interface is applied, such as "robot with motion control graphical user interface" and "mobile payment graphical user interface for mobile phone".

Product names must not lack graphical user interface products and specific functions, nor should they be overly generic and abstract. Examples such as "Graphical User Interface for Calling" lack products to which graphical user interfaces are applied; "Electronic equipment software graphical user interface" "Mobile phone graphical user interface" lack of specific use; the purpose of "graphical user interface for electronic device operation" and "interactive graphical user interface for mobile phone" is too general.

If you request dynamic graphical user interfaces, "dynamic" shall be added to product name. If a partial design of the graphical user interface is requested, the name of the claimed part should also be stated in the product name. If the graphical user

interface can be used with any electronic device, the product to which it is applied can be written as "electronic device".

## **2.2 Pictures or Photographs of Design**

In order to clearly display the graphic user interface and the design of the applied product, especially the content of the design essentials, a sufficient number of views, such as six-sided orthographic views, perspective views, change state views, reference drawings, etc., and if necessary, enlarged views should be submitted.

### **2.2. 1 Requirements for view names**

For the view name, the view involved in the starting state of the graphical user interface should be named as front view. If there are multiple graphical user interfaces, the view name should be named change state view or interface change state view, and should be based on the change process. Mark the sequence number in order. If there is a reference view in the graphical user interface, the view name is correspondingly named as the reference view of front view or the change state reference view.

### **2.2. 2 Explicitly expressed requirements**

If the graphical user interface occupies a small proportion in the picture or photo, resulting in the graphical user interface being unclear, it is necessary to submit a partially enlarged view that clearly displays the content of the graphical user interface or a picture or photo that displays the graphical user interface alone.

As shown in Figure 2.1, the key point of the design of the microwave oven with cooking function selection graphical user interface is only the graphical user interface. The graphical user interface area in the front view is smaller. An enlarged view of the graphical user interface should be submitted to clearly express the design content of graphical user interface.



Front view



Interface Enlargement

Figure 2.1 Microwave oven with cooking function selection graphical user interface<sup>11</sup>

If it is difficult to determine the area of the graphical user interface from the view, it is also necessary to describe the area of the graphical user interface in the brief description.

As shown in Figure 2.2, the detection time graphical user interface of the tablet computer, it cannot be determined from the view alone whether the area of the graphical user interface is the rectangular frame area drawn with solid lines or the rectangular frame area drawn with dotted lines. Therefore, it should be stated in the brief description "The rectangular frame drawn with solid lines in the front view is the display screen area".

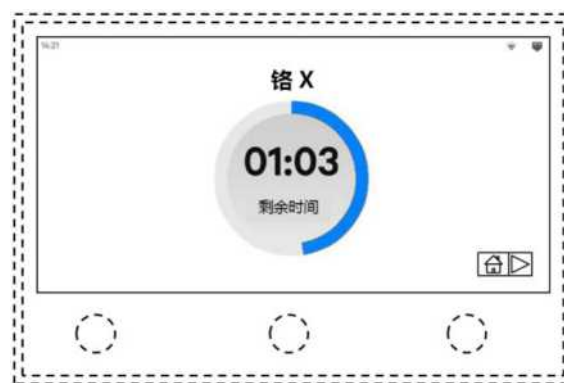


Figure 2.2 Detection Time Graphical User Interface for Tablet Product<sup>12</sup>

For the text in the graphical user interface, you can express it as it is, or you can use "X" to represent the position and arrangement of the text. However, the text

<sup>12</sup> Picture source: CN 308727288 S, with modifications.

necessary for clear expression must be retained and must not be represented by "X".

As shown in Figure 2.3, some necessary text information should be shown as it is in Figure 1 and cannot be represented by "x". If the graphic user interface of the network setting of the electronic device is completely changed to be represented by "x" in Figure 2, the specific purpose of the graphic user interface and the human-computer interaction are not clear.



Figure 2.3 Network Setup Graphical User Interface of Electronic Device<sup>13</sup>

## 2.3 Brief description

For product design involving GUI, the brief description shall include product name, product usage, GUI usage, key point of design, a picture or photograph that best shows design essentials, etc. Among them, the purpose of the graphical user interface should correspond to the purpose embodied in the product name. If a partial design of the graphical user interface is requested, the purpose of the part should also be stated. The key point should include a graphical user interface.

If necessary, the area of GUI in the product, the human-computer interaction mode and the change process of GUI should also be stated in the brief description. The brief description should be concise, and should not introduce graphic user interface design content, design ideas and design methods.

<sup>13</sup> Picture source: patent document CN 306336524 S, with modifications.

### 3. Requirements for submitting applications in different ways

For product design involving graphical user interface, you can choose different submission methods based on the design points, whether to protect the product design to which the graphical user interface is applied, or whether to request protection of the complete graphical user interface or partial graphical user interface design.

As shown in Figure 2.4, the applicant can submit the application in the form of overall product appearance design or partial appearance design.

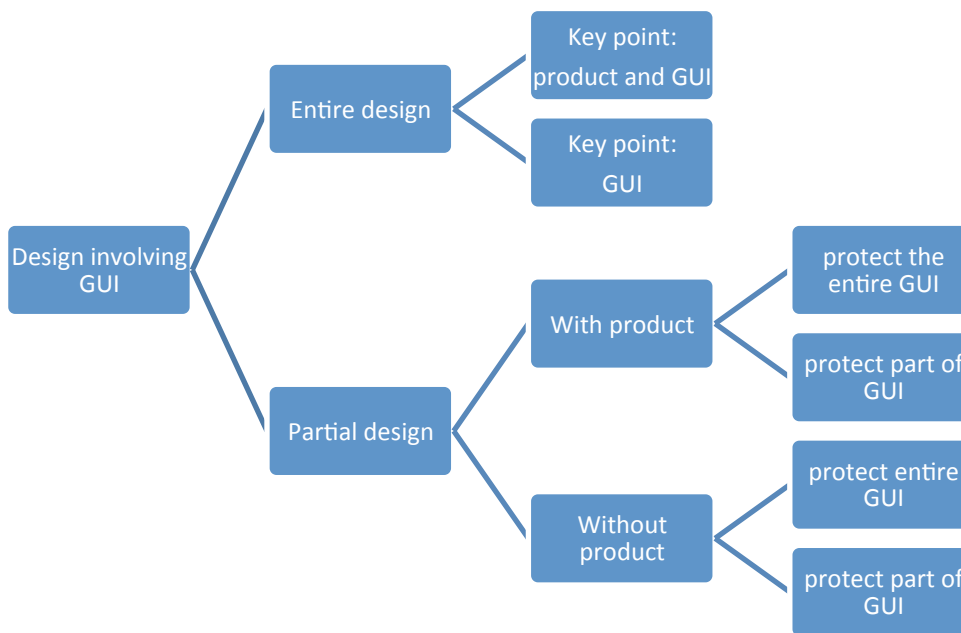


Figure 2.4 Product Design Submission Involving Graphical User Interface

If the design essentials of a design involving graphical user interfaces are only graphical user interfaces, it is recommended to consider submitting the application as a partial design. If the graphical user interface is applicable to any electronic device, it is recommended to consider submitting the application without the product to which the graphical user interface is applied.

### 3.1 Submission of Application by entire Product Design

#### 3.1.1 The design essentials include the design of graphic user interface and the design of the applied products

The product name shall indicate the specific function of the GUI, the product to which it applies, and the word "GUI".

Design pictures or photos shall include, in addition to orthographic views of products involved in graphical user interface, views clearly expressing the product design to which they are applied, such as six-sided orthographic views and perspective views.

The brief description shall state that the key point of design lie in the graphical user interface and the product to which the graphical user interface applies.

As shown in Figure 2.5, the design of the mobile phone with shooting mode selection graphic user interface is based on the graphic user interface design and the mobile phone design. The design pictures or photos and brief explanations can be submitted as follows.

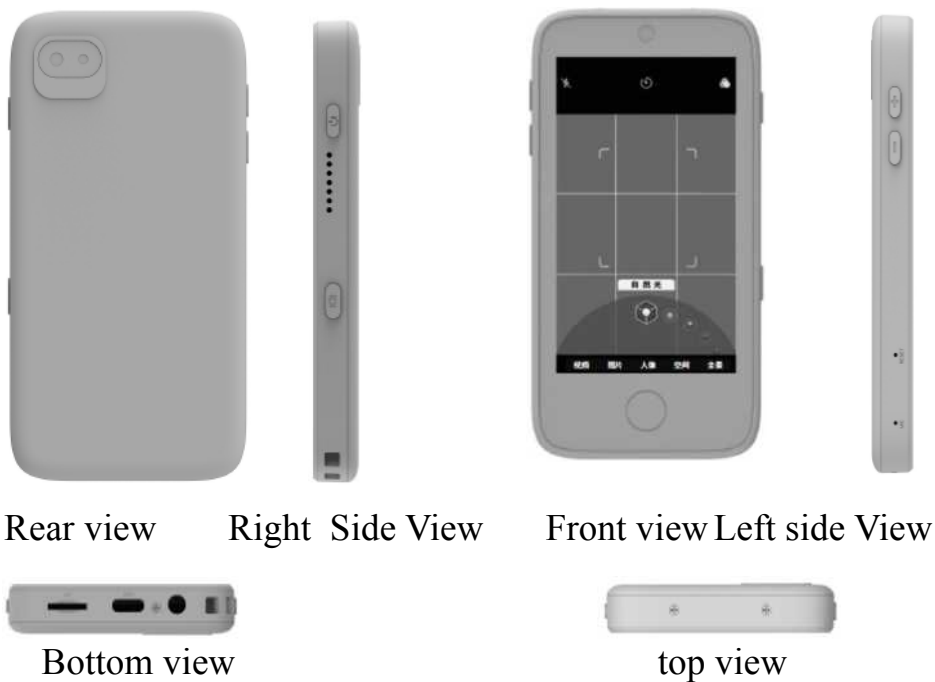


Figure 2.5 Mobile phone with shooting mode selection graphical user interface<sup>14</sup>  
[Brief description]

1. Product name of this design: mobile phone with shooting mode selection graphical user interface.
2. The use of this design product: communication and system operation.
3. Graphical User Interface Purpose: Used for mode selection when shooting.
4. Key point of the design: The graphic user interface and the shape of the mobile phone.
5. Pictures or photographs that best demonstrate design essentials: front view.

### **3.1.2 The key point of design only lies in the design of graphic user interface**

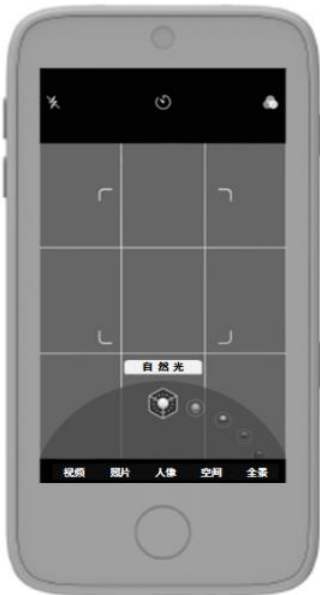
The product name shall indicate the specific purpose of graphic user interface, the product to which it applies and the word "graphic user interface".

The design picture or photograph should at least include an orthographic view of the product on the side of the GUI and clearly express the design of the GUI. The brief description should state that the design point lies only in the graphical user interface.

As shown in Figure 2.6, the design point of the mobile phone with shooting mode selection graphical user interface only lies in the graphical user interface. It can submit design pictures or photos and brief instructions in the following manner.

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<sup>14</sup> Picture source: patent documents CN 305250344 S and CN 309281455 S, with modifications.



Front view

[Brief description]

1. Product name of this design: mobile phone with shooting mode selection graphic user interface.
2. Application of this design product: communication and system operation.
3. Graphical User Interface Purpose: For shooting mode selection.
4. The key point of design of this design: Graphical user interface only.
5. Pictures or photographs that best demonstrate design essentials: front view.

Fig. 2.6 Mobile phone with graphic user interface for shooting mode selection<sup>15</sup>

### 3.2 Submission of Application for Partial Design

Product design only for graphical user interface, the applicant may submit the application as partial design. Submitting an application as a partial design includes both views with or without the product to which the graphical user interface is applied.

#### 3.2.1 Submission of the Application with the Product to which the GUI is applied

If it is desired to clearly show the location and proportion of the GUI in the final product, the application may be submitted with the product to which the GUI is applied.

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<sup>15</sup> Picture source: patent documents CN 305250344 S and CN 309281455 S, with modifications.

### 3.2. 1.1 Requesting protection of a complete graphical user interface

The product name shall indicate the specific use of the GUI, the product to which it is applied and the word "GUI".

The design pictures or photographs shall include orthographic views of the product of the graphic user interface involved, with the product drawn in dashed lines to clearly show the graphic user interface position and proportion within the product.

The brief description should state that the design point lies only in the graphical user interface.

As shown in Figure 2.7, the design point of the Timing GUI of the smart watch is only the GUI, and when requesting protection of the complete GUI, you can submit the design picture or photo and brief explanation as follows.

[Brief description]



Front view

design essentials: front view.

1. Product Name: Timing Graphical User Interface of Smart Watch.
2. The purpose of this design product: timing, running program, communication, etc.
3. Usage of GUI: Display time, exercise data, date, weather, etc.
4. The key point of design: Graphical user interface only.
5. Pictures or photographs that best demonstrate

Figure 2.7 Timing GUI of the smartwatch <sup>16</sup>

### 3.2. 1.2 Requesting protection of a portion of a graphical user interface

The product name shall indicate the use of the GUI, the product to which it is applied, the word "GUI", and the part for which protection is claimed.

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<sup>16</sup> Picture source: patent document CN 306010160 S, with modifications.

The design pictures or photographs shall include orthographic views of the product of the graphic user interface involved, with the product drawn in dashed lines to clearly show the graphic user interface position and proportion within the product.

The brief description shall include, in addition to stating the use of the product and the use of the graphical user interface, the use of the claimed part of the graphical user interface, and only the graphical user interface or parts of the graphical user interface shall be stated as the design points .

As shown in Figure 2.8, the design point of the parameter setting module of the mobile phone's shooting graphical user interface is only the graphical user interface. Request to protect part of the graphical user interface,you can submit design pictures or photos and brief explanations in the following manner.



Front view

[Brief description]

1. Product name of this design: Parameter setting module of mobile phone's shooting graphic user interface.
2. Usage of this design product: communication and system operation.
3. Usage of graphical user interface: For shooting.
4. Purpose of part claimed: For shooting parameter settings.
5. The key point of this design: Only in the graphical user interface drawn with solid lines.
6. Pictures or photographs that best demonstrate design essentials: front view.

Figure 2.8 Parameter Setting Module of Photography Graphical User Interface of Mobile Phone<sup>17</sup>

If the product to which the graphical user interface is applied is drawn with a dotted line in the view or the product is expressed in other forms, the specific product should be reflected in the product name and should not be named as "electronic

<sup>17</sup> Picture source: patent document CN 309210977 S, with modifications.

device", as shown in Figure 2.8 for the parameter setting module of the shooting graphical user interface of the mobile phone shown, the product name cannot be written as "parameter setting module of the shooting graphical user interface of the electronic device".

### 3.2. 2 Submit the application without the product to which the GUI is applied

For a graphical user interface applicable to any electronic device, the application may be submitted without the product to which the graphical user interface is applied.

#### 3.2. 2.1 Request protection of a complete graphical user interface of an electronic device

Product names should include Graphical User Interface (GUI) usage, "electronic device" and "GUI".

It is sufficient that the design picture or photograph only include a view of the graphical user interface.

The use of the product in the brief description can be summarized as "an electronic device", and should also include the use of a graphical user interface, stating that the design point only lies in the graphical user interface. It is not necessary to list specific electronic device names or types in the brief description.

As shown in Figure 2.9, the shooting graphical user interface of the electronic device can request protection of the complete graphical user interface. You can submit pictures or photos of the design and brief instructions as follows.



- [Brief description]
1. Product name of this design: electronic equipment shooting graphic user interface.
  2. The purpose of this design product: an electronic device.
  3. Usage of graphical user interface: For shooting.

4. The key point of this design : Graphical user interface only.
5. Pictures or photographs that best demonstrate design essentials: front view.

Fig. 2.9 Photographing graphical user interface of the electronic device<sup>18</sup>

### 3.2. 2.2 Requesting protection of a portion of a graphical user interface of an electronic device

The product name shall indicate the specific use of the GUI, the words "electronic device", "GUI", and the protection sought.

It is sufficient that the design picture or photograph only include a view of the graphical user interface.

The use of the product in the brief description can be summarized as "an electronic device" and should also include the use and partial use of the claimed graphical user interface, where the design point is only the graphical user interface or the partial portion of the graphical user interface.

As shown in Figure 2.10, the parameter setting module of the shooting graphical user interface of the electronic device requests protection of part of the graphical user interface and can submit design pictures or photos and brief descriptions in the following manner.

[Brief description]



1. Product name of this design: Electronic equipment shooting graphic user interface parameter setting module.
2. The purpose of this design product: an electronic device.
3. Usage of graphical user interface: For shooting.
4. Purpose of part claimed: For setting of shooting parameters.

ment CN 309210977 S, with modifications.

5. The design essentials of this appearance design: the graphical user interface solid line drawing part.

6. Pictures or photographs that best demonstrate design essentials: front view.

Front view  
Fig. 2.10 Parameter Setting Module of the Shooting Graphical User Interface of the Electronic Device<sup>19</sup>

### 3.3 Application for Dynamic Graphical User Interface

Dynamic GUI (Graphical User Interface) refers to a GUI that displays a continuous changing pattern after user interaction. The changes are usually continuous, non-random and directional.

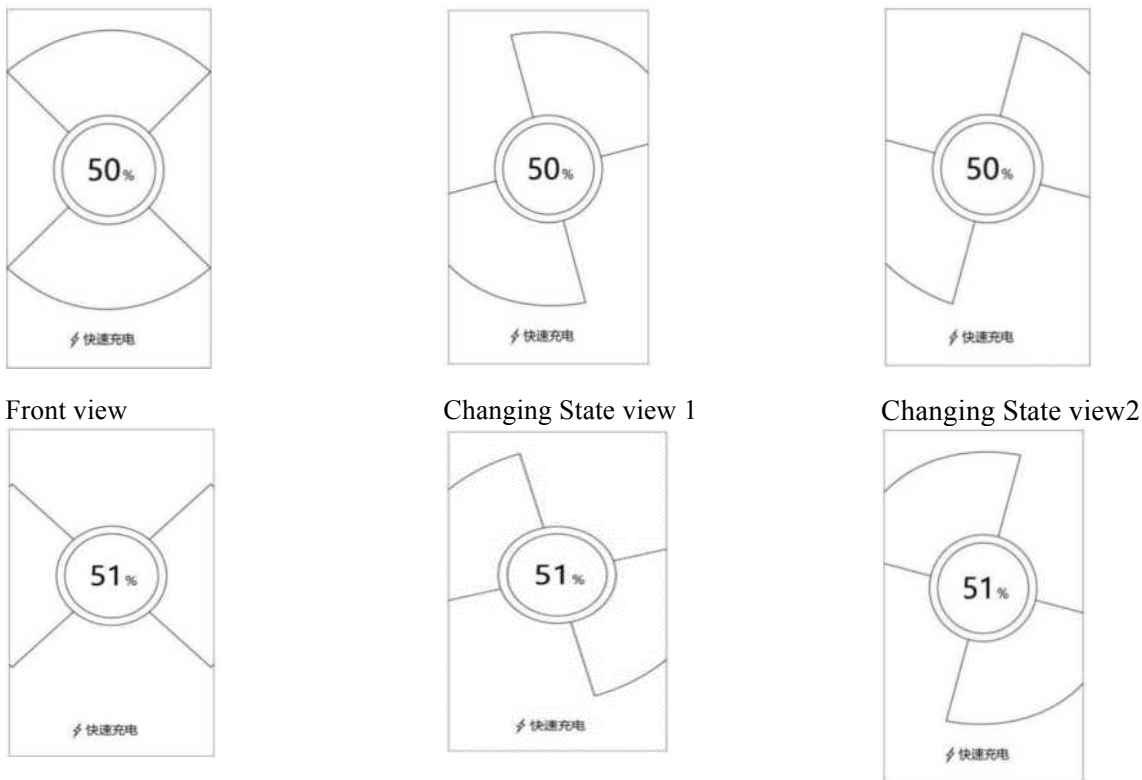
The product name of the dynamic graphical user interface must have the word "dynamic", such as "dynamic graphical user interface of charging information for mobile phones" and "dynamic graphical user interface of file display for electronic devices."

For dynamic GUI, the applicant shall submit the start view involved surface as front view. The view of GUI key frame can be submitted as change state view. The submitted view should uniquely determine the complete change process of dynamic GUI. The view name of change status view should be labeled according to the sequence of dynamic change process.

As shown in Figure 2.11, the dynamic graphical user interface of the charging information of the electronic device can submit pictures or photos and brief descriptions of the design in the following manner.

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<sup>19</sup> Picture source: patent document CN 309210977 S.



Changing State view 3

Changing State view 4

Changing State view 5

Figure 2.11 Dynamic Graphical User Interface for Charging Information of Electronic Equipment<sup>20</sup>

[Brief description]

1. Name of the product with this design: charging information dynamic graphic user interface of electronic equipment.
2. The purpose of this design product: an electronic device.
3. Usage of graphical user interface: dynamic display of charging status of electronic equipment.
4. This key point of design: Graphical user interface only.
5. Pictures or photographs that best demonstrate design essentials: front view.
6. Human-computer interaction mode of graphical user interface: when the device is located in the wireless charging area, the graphical user interface changes sequentially in the order of front view and changing state views 1-5.

Upon request by the Patent Office, the applicant may submit a video-like file

<sup>20</sup> Picture source: patent document CN 305928378 S.

showing the dynamic graphical user interface changes.

## **Chapter III Situations Possible as one Application**

### **1. Relevant laws and regulations**

Article 31, paragraph 2, of the Patent Law provides that an application for a patent for design shall be limited to one design. Two or more similar designs of the same product, or two or more designs of products used in the same category and sold or used in sets, can be filed as one application.

Article 40 of the Detailed Rules of the Patent Law stipulates that, in accordance with the provisions of the second paragraph of Article 31 of the Patent Law, a plurality of similar designs of the same product are filed as one application, the other designs of the product shall be similar to the basic design specified in the brief description. No more than 10 similar designs may be included in an application for a design patent. Section 9, Chapter 3, Part 1 of the Examination Guidelines stipulates that two or more non-connected partial designs of the same product can be regarded as a single design if they are functionally or designed related to form a specific visual effect.

According to the above provisions, a patent application for design should be limited to one design, and multiple similar designs for the same product can also be filed as one application. Product design involving graphical user interface (GUI) as a patent application for design should also consider the features of GUI, logic relationship between GUI and implemented functions.

### **2. One design**

Graphical user interfaces can be divided into single interface and multi-interfaces. Single interface refers to interface that contains only one front view. Multi-interfaces refer to interfaces that contain one or more interface change status views in addition to the front view.

## 2.1 Product Design with Single Interface

Single-interface product designs often contain multiple functional partitions, and these partitions usually have certain functional or design relationships, so whether the entire GUI or one or more parts of the GUI is claimed, can be used as one design.

As shown in Figure 3.1, the main body of the graphical user interface for air conditioning control of the electronic device is claimed to include a temperature adjustment display bar, five mode selection controls and a switch control, which together form the main body interface for realizing the air conditioning control function, and have functional and design associations, so that the graphical user interface design can be used as one design.



Fig. 3.1 Main body of the graphical user interface for air conditioning control of the electronic device<sup>21</sup>

## 2.2 Multi-interface product design

Multiple interfaces include dynamic interfaces, vertical interfaces, parallel interfaces and hybrid interfaces. Hybrid interfaces include two or more of dynamic interfaces, vertical interfaces, and parallel interfaces. Multi-interface product design has many views and complex logic relations.

Vertical interfaces are several interfaces that the user enters from one interface to

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<sup>21</sup> Picture source: patent document CN 308585533 S, with modifications.

the next level through interactive operations. A simple dynamic interface or vertical interface usually achieves the same function, has a clear logical change direction and has a unique change direction, and can be used as one design.

For the graphical user interface of adding friends of the electronic device as shown in Figure 3.2, click the "Add Friends" control in the front view to enter the change state Figure 1, click the "Radar" control in the change state Figure 1 to enter the change state Figure 2, and complete adding friends through the "Radar" search. The above three interfaces are sequential interfaces, belong to vertical interfaces, have clear logical change directions and unique change directions, and jointly realize the function of adding friends, which can be used as one design.



Front view



Changing State view 1



Changing State view 2

Figure 3.2 Add Friend Graphical User Interface of the Electronic Device<sup>22</sup>

Parallel interfaces are several interfaces of the same level with different functions that users enter through interactive operations. The above-mentioned multiple interfaces are in a side-by-side relationship. Usually the direction of change between interfaces is uncertain and different functions are realized. Generally, they cannot be filed as one design.

As shown in Figure 3.3, the network conference graphical user interface of the electronic device is shown. Figures (1) to (3) are respectively the "meeting", "address

<sup>22</sup> Picture source: Tencent WeChat App, modified.

book" and "my" interfaces of the network conference. They are interfaces with different function options at the same level and belong to parallel interfaces. Figures (1) to (3) realize three different functions. Any jump can be realized between the three interfaces, and the direction of change is uncertain and cannot be filed as one design.



Figure 3.3 Webconferencing Graphical User Interface of Electronic Device<sup>23</sup>

If parallel interfaces meet similar design requirements, they can be filed as similar designs, otherwise they should be filed separately.

In addition, two or more partial designs without connection in a multi-interface should also have functional or design associations and form specific visual effects in order to be used as one design.

As shown in Figure 3.4 of the driving data column of the driving assistance graphical user interface of the electronic device, the part covered by the green translucent layer is an unclaimed part. After clicking on the driving data in the front view, it enters the changing state view to display the detailed data. The part requested for protection is composed of two parts in the two interfaces. It can be seen through the interface interaction process and view representation content that the two parts are

<sup>23</sup> Picture source: Tencent Conferencing App, Tencent Conferencing App, with changes.

functionally related, both are used for data display, and have unique visual effects, and also have clear logical change directions and unique change directions can be deemed as one design.

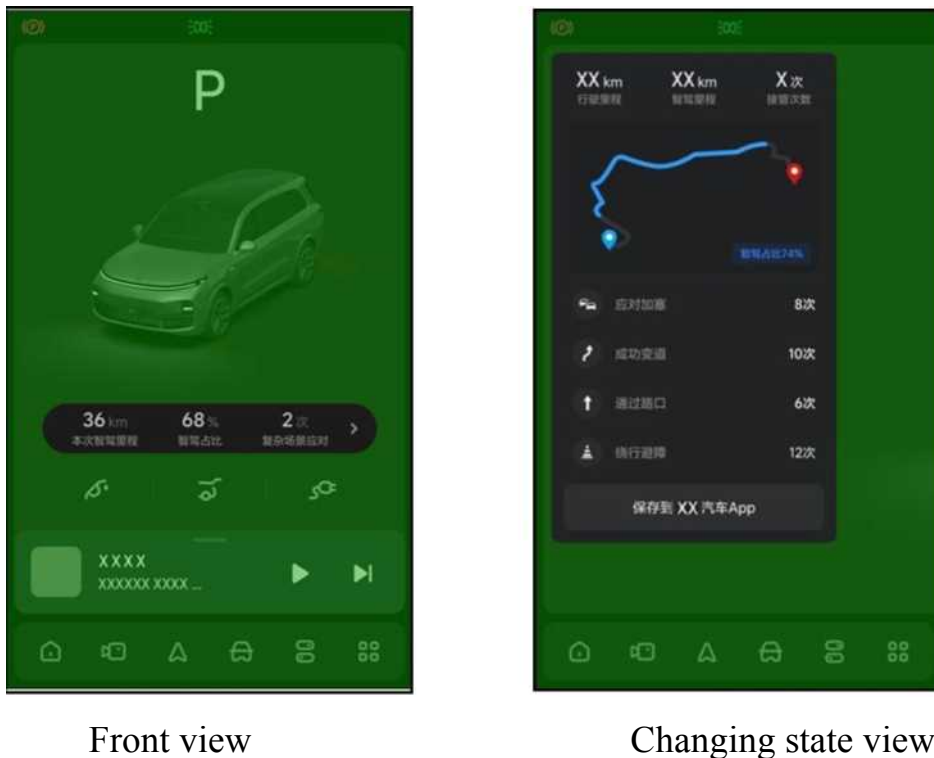


FIG. 3.4 Driving Data Column of the Driving Assist Graphical User Interface of the Electronic Device<sup>24</sup>

### 3. Multiple Similar Designs of the Same Product

For multiple similar designs including graphical user interfaces, in addition to no more than 10 similar designs in one application, two conditions should also be met: first, the product to which each design is applied should belong to the same product, and second, other designs in multiple designs should belong to similar designs compared with the basic design.

#### 3.1 Should belong to the same product

For multiple product designs containing graphical user interfaces, the primary

<sup>24</sup> Picture source: patent document CN 309368599 S, with modifications.

condition for similar designs is that the products to which the graphical user interfaces are applied belong to the same product.

As shown in Figure 3.5, the classification label management GUI for computers and mobile phones. The products of the GUI in the two designs are computers and mobile phones respectively which do not belong to the same product.



Figure 3.5 Graphical User Interface for Category Label Management for PC and Mobile Phone<sup>25</sup>

The manner of presentation of the products applied by the graphical user interface does not affect the determination of whether they belong to the same product. As shown in Figure 3.6, the mobile phone with a motion recording graphical user interface is drawn with dotted lines or solid lines. Although the expression methods are different, the products to which the above graphical user interfaces are applied are all mobile phones and belong to the same product.

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<sup>25</sup> Picture source: patent document CN307119398S, with modifications.



Figure 3.6 Mobile phone with graphical user interface for motion recording<sup>26</sup>

Please note that the same product only has the same product name and type, and does not mean that its shape, pattern and other designs must be the same.

For a design patent application submitted without the product to which the graphical user interface is applied, that is, when the product name includes "electronic device", since the products to which the graphical user interface is applied are all electronic devices, they belong to the same product. As shown in Figure 3.7, although the aspect ratios of the two designs are significantly different, they still belong to the same product because they are all electronic devices.

<sup>26</sup> Picture source: patent document CN308770966S, with modifications.



Design 1 Front View



Design 2 Front View

Figure 3.7 Graphical User Interface for Program Control of Electronic Equipment<sup>27</sup>

### 3.2 Should belong to similar designs

Whether product designs containing graphical user interface belong to similar designs should be considered comprehensively in combination with the design of graphical user interface and the product design it applies, focusing on whether the overall visual effects of the claimed designs are similar.

#### 3.2.1 Design involving both graphical user interface and the applied product

For a design that includes both a graphical user interface and the applied product, whether other designs and the basic design belong to similar designs must consider both whether the products and the graphical user interfaces are similar.

As shown in Figure 3.8, the graphical user interface of the rice cooker operation of the mobile phone is the basic design. Compared with Design 1, Design 2 has exactly the same graphical user interface design, and the overall outline of the mobile phone is similar. However, the overall visual effects such as the shape of the front buttons and speakers of the mobile phone, the shape and layout of the back camera components are significantly different, so Design 2 and Design 1 do not belong to

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<sup>27</sup> Picture source: Huawei tablet desktop, modified.

similar appearance designs; compared with Design 1, Design 3 has exactly the same mobile phone design, and the partial layout of the graphical user interface design is close to the icons. However, the overall visual effects such as the overall graphic layout and background pattern of the interface design are significantly different. Therefore, Design 3 and Design 1 are similar designs.



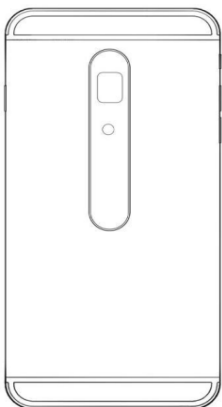
Design 1 Front View



Design 2 Front View



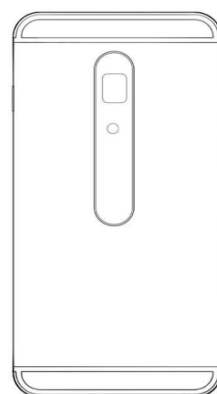
Design 3 Front View



Design 1 Rear View



Design 2 Rear View



Design 3 Rear View

### 3.8 Graphical User Interface of Rice Cooker Based on Mobile Phone<sup>28</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Picture Source: Patent documents CN 303841800 S, CN 306190062 S, CN 305697687S, with modifications.

### 3.2.2 Product design involving multiple interfaces

For multi-interface product design, the graphic design and interface change process of each interface should be taken as a whole, consider whether the whole visual effect is similar to basic design.

As shown in Figure 3.9, the welfare collection graphical user interface of the electronic device, design 1 is the basic design. The interface arrangement and graphic and text design of each view of Design 2 are similar to the overall visual effect of the front view of Design 1. Therefore, Design 2 and Design 1 belong to similar designs, but the overall visual effect of the change state view of Design 3 and the front view interface of Design 1 are obvious different, so Design 3 and Design 1 do not belong to similar designs. If Design 2 is the basic design, Design 1 and Design 2 belong to similar designs, and Design 3 and Design 2 still do not belong to similar designs.



Design 1 Front View



Design 2 Front View



Design 3 Front View



Design 2 Change State view



Design 3 Change State view

Figure 3.9 Benefits Claim Graphical User Interface of the Electronic Device<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Picture source: patent document CN305280900S.

As shown in Figure 3.10, the dynamic graphical user interface of the oil smoke control of the electronic device is designed. Design 1 is the basic design, and Design 2 is the dynamic graphical user interface, including two change state views, and the graphical user interface design of the three key frames of Design 2 are very similar to Design 1. Comparing the dynamic change status and change trend of Design 2 as a whole with Design 1, the overall visual effect of the two designs is similar, so the two designs belong to similar appearance designs.



Design 1 Front View



Design 2 Front View



Design 2 Change State view 1



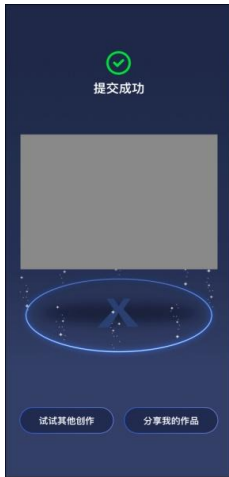
Design 2 Change State view 2

Figure 3.10 Dynamic GUI for Fume Control of Electronic Equipment<sup>30</sup>

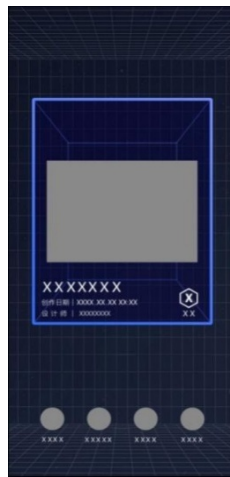
As shown in Figure 3.11, the clothing work sharing graphical user interface of the electronic device. In the figure, the gray color block area is the content screen, and design 1 is the basic design. Compared with Design 1, Design 2 has a close graphic and text arrangement of the overall interface design, and a similar change

<sup>30</sup> Picture source: patent document CN 307842104 S.

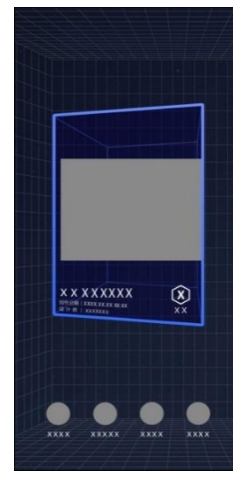
process between each interface. The only difference lies in the shape of the blue frame in the third interface, and the difference in text arrangement and icon design at the bottom of the blue frame, the overall visual effects of the two are similar, so Design 2 and Design 1 are similar designs.



Design 1 Front View



Design 1 Change State view 1



Design 1 Change State view 2



Design 2 Front View



Design 2 Change State view 1



Design 2 Change State view 2

Figure 3.11 Graphical User Interface for Clothing Work Sharing of Electronic Device<sup>31</sup>

### 3.2.3 Partial design involving graphical user interface

Whether partial design of graphical user interface is similar, mainly consider the partial design claimed, the shape, pattern and color of the unclaimed part are not compared and the unclaimed parts are used only to indicate the location and proportion of the claimed part in the overall product. The overall design and partial design of the same product usually cannot be filed as one application, except that the two belong to similar designs.

As shown in Figure 3.12 of the graphical user interface for event management, the main portion and bottom navigation bar of the electronic device, Design 1 is the basic design, and the parts covered by the red translucent layer in Designs 2 and 3 are not claimed. The overall layout of the three designs is the same. Design 1 requests to protect the overall interface, Design 2 requests to protect the main body of the interface and does not protect the bottom navigation bar. Design 3 only requests to protect the bottom navigation bar. The difference between Design 2 and Design 1 is partial and there are slight changes, so Design 2 and Design 1 belong to similar designs. Compared with Design 1, Design 3 requests a clear difference in the overall visual effect of the interface, so Design 3 and Design 1 do not belong to similar designs.

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<sup>31</sup> Picture source: patent document CN 307804423 S, with modifications.



Design 1



Design 2



Design 3

Figure 3.12 Event Management Graphical User Interface, Body and Bottom Navigation Bar of the Electronic Device<sup>32</sup>

## Chapter IV Points for Attention

Product design involving graphical user interface also needs to meet the requirements of normative expression of content screen, normative expression of map, legal use of special signs and avoid conflicts with other people's previously acquired legal rights.

### 1 • canonical representation of content screen

#### 1.1 Meaning of content screen

The content screen is a part of the graphical user interface that is not part of the interface design itself. For example, movie pictures appearing in playback software, movie posters appearing when viewing software selects movies, news pictures appearing in news browsing software, product pictures appearing in shopping software, scene pictures photographed by shots appearing in photos or photography

<sup>32</sup> Picture source: patent document CN 308727303 S, with modifications.

software, etc. Pushed, externally ingested or unfixed content does not necessarily belong to the content screen, and whether it belongs to the content screen should take into account whether the corresponding content is part of the graphical user interface design.

As shown in Figure 4.1, the video screen in the video playback interface is not the design content of the interface itself, but belongs to the content screen.



Figure 4.1 Video Playback Graphic User Interface for Computer<sup>33</sup>

## 1.2 Representation of content screen

Generally, content screens should not appear in pictures such as front view and change state views of graphical user interfaces, and content screens are usually only allowed to appear in reference pictures.

The content screen in the graphical user interface can be expressed in the form of blank, "×", a single color block or a translucent layer overlay as shown in Figure 4.2, and it should be stated in the brief description that the corresponding part changes or belongs to the content screen, or submit a reference view containing the content screen to indicate the usage method, usage scenario, etc. of the graphical user interface, so that the claimed graphical user interface can be displayed more clearly and accurately.

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<sup>33</sup> Picture source: patent document CN308292254S.



Blank representation of content screen



Use × to represent the content screen



The content picture is represented by a single color block      Use a translucent mask to represent the content screen

### Figure 4.2 Presentation Form of Content Screen<sup>34</sup>

As shown in Fig. 4.3 for navigation graphical user interface of electronic device, picture (1) can be submitted as front view, while picture (2) can be submitted as a use state reference view for explanation of the front view. It is also possible to submit only picture (2), the real scene in picture (2) is a street view picture taken in real time, but is an auxiliary display necessary for clearly expressing the navigation function, and can be a special case of a reserved content picture. In this case, it should be stated in the brief description that the real scene is only used for display and does not belong to the claimed design content.



<sup>34</sup> Picture source: patent document CN306203878S, with modifications.

## **2. Canonical representation map**

It is recommended that the applicant introduce maps in the graphical user interface only when necessary. When introduction is required, use standard maps. Focus should note: The People's Republic of China national boundaries should be approved by the State Council promulgated China national boundary drawing standard sample drawing.

The content of the map representation should comply with "Open Map Content" published by the Ministry of Natural Resources

Representation Specification "(Nature Zi Rui (2023) No. 2). For obtaining a standard map, it is recommended to use the standard map service of the Ministry of Natural Resources.

## **3. Legal and Compliance Use of Special Marks**

Special signs refer to names, abbreviations, emblems and mascots composed of characters and graphics for national and international cultural activities, sports activities, scientific research activities and other social welfare activities approved by the State Council.

Where the graphic user interface involves special signs, etc., it shall comply with relevant national laws and regulations, and shall provide proof documents for obtaining the permission of the special sign owner.

Official signs may not be used in applications for patent applications for graphical user interfaces, except as permitted by laws and regulations.

## **4. Avoid conflict with previous legal rights acquired**

An application for a design patent shall not contain any design which conflicts with the legal rights it had acquired before the filing date (priority date if priority is given).

Other persons refer to civil subjects other than the patentee, including natural persons, legal persons or other organizations.

Legal rights refer to rights or interests enjoyed in accordance with the laws of the People's Republic of China and still in force on the date of application, including trademark rights, copyright, enterprise name rights (including trade name rights), portrait rights, and special packaging or decoration rights for famous commodities, etc.

Having been obtained before the filing date means that the date of acquisition of the prior legal right was before the filing date.

Conflict means that, without the permission of the right holder, the design patent uses the object of the prior legal right, so that the implementation of the patent right will damage the relevant legal rights or interests of the prior right holder.

When the graphical user interface uses portraits of people, trademarks, or copyright related content, care should be taken not to conflict with the legal rights acquired before the filing date (if priority, refers to the priority date). Where necessary, submit documentation supporting authorization. For portraits and personal privacy information in the reference image, blurring processing is recommended.