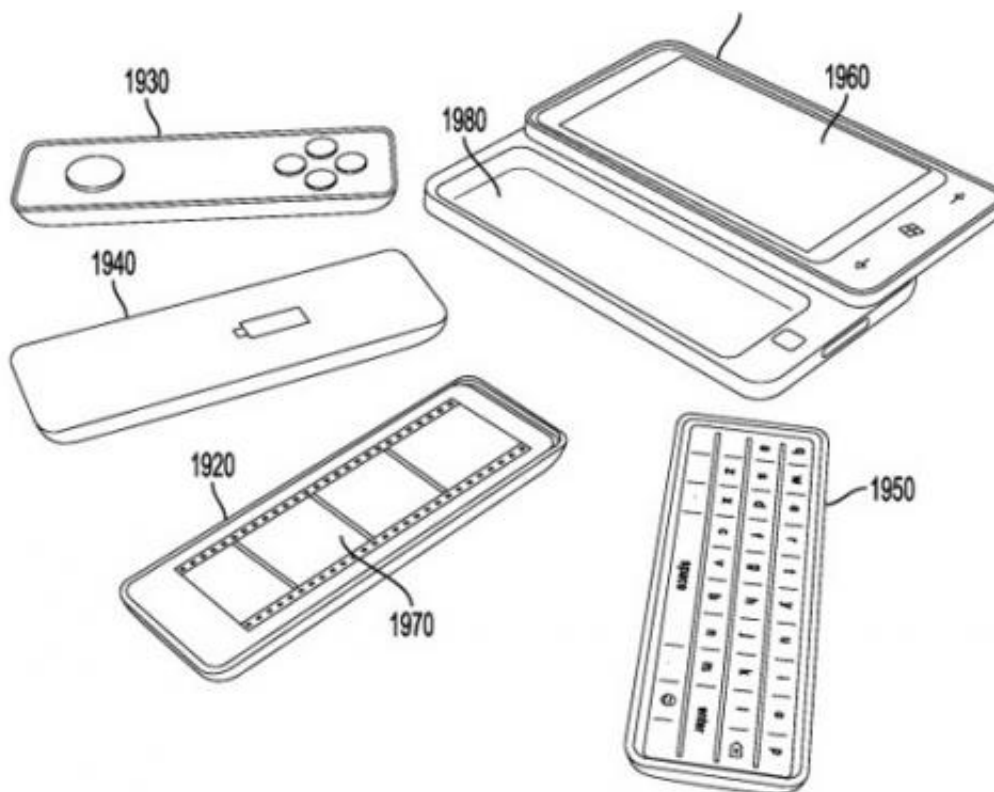


Microsoft files patent for interchangeable- devices phone

September 26 2011, by Nancy Owano



(PhysOrg.com) -- Microsoft has filed for a patent featuring slider smartphones designed to also carry interchangeable modules such as game controller, a spare battery or keyboard. The Microsoft [patent](#) is entitled "Mobile communication device having multiple, interchangeable

second devices." The patent describes Microsoft's handheld mobile communication device with interchangeable parts. The key advantage is that the phone would allow a user to make fuller use of technical capabilities in a single mobile device.

According to the patent, it is desirable to provide a mobile communications device sized for convenience yet allowing the user full functionality of the device.

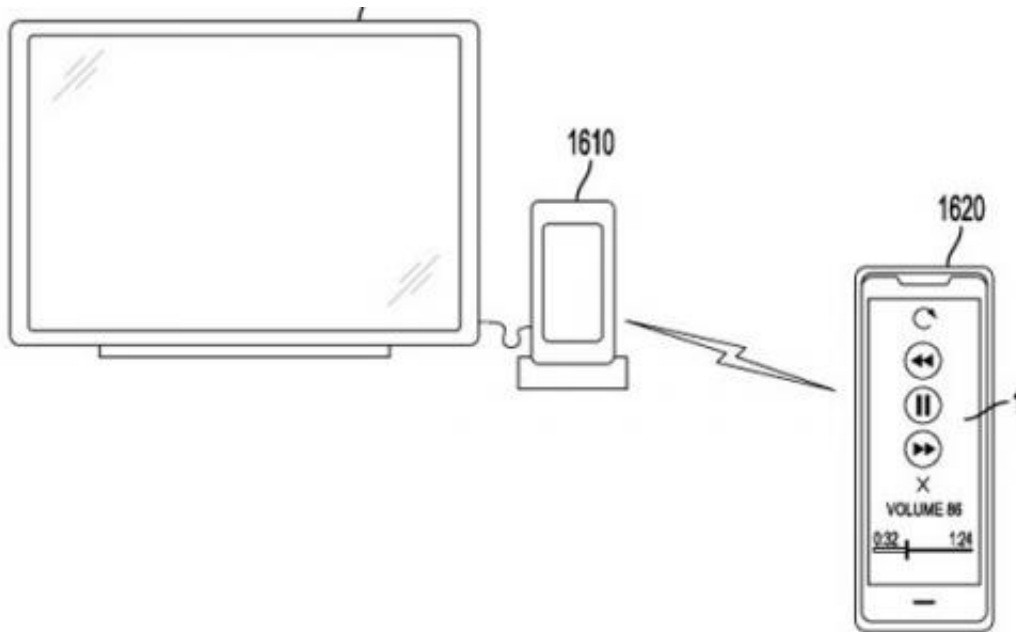
"Modern mobile phones have evolved over recent years to the point where they now possess a broad range of capabilities. They are not only capable of placing and receiving [mobile phone](#) calls, multimedia messaging (MMS), and sending and receiving email, they can also access the Internet, are GPS-enabled, possess considerable processing power and large amounts of memory, and are equipped with high-resolution color liquid crystal displays capable of detecting touch input. As such, today's mobile phones are general purpose computing and telecommunication devices capable of running a multitude of applications. For example, modern mobile phones can run web browser, navigation system, media player and gaming applications," says the patent application.

The patent was filed in March 2010 but published last week by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. The patent was filed by Gregory Jones, Lisa Hanson and Thomas Kleist.

Market reactions to the patent news were mixed. Some [Microsoft](#) watchers thought the patent concept as described seemed quirky and burdensome. Others thought Microsoft's idea was impressive and capable of becoming a market success, as a high-end mobile device housing varied accessories that could be swappable according to user moods and needs. One frequent comment, though, has been the reminder that Microsoft is not the first company to have explored the idea of

multifunctioning smartphones.

Modu attempted a phone module that could be plugged into different jackets. Modu ceased operations earlier this year. Google bought its patents.



Last year, NTT Docomo introduced a Separable Phone as the world's first handset that separates into two functional units for multitasking.

As for Microsoft's endeavor, "The company clearly sees the potential, though, hence the push for a patent. We won't hold our breath," wrote Caleb Cox of *Register Hardware*.

[SlashGear](#) posed the question of whether Microsoft was directly working on such a phone or whether it simply sought additional [patent](#) clout, as in

keeping other firms from making something without paying fees to Microsoft.

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