

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

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BEFORE THE PATENT TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD

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SAMSUNG ELECTRONICS CO., LTD. and  
SAMSUNG ELECTRONICS AMERICA, INC.,  
Petitioner,

v.

NEODRON LTD.,  
Patent Owner.

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IPR2020-00267  
Patent 8,432,173 B2

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Before MIRIAM L. QUINN, PATRICK M. BOUCHER, and  
CHRISTOPHER L. OGDEN, *Administrative Patent Judges*.

OGDEN, *Administrative Patent Judge*.

DECISION  
Granting Institution of *Inter Partes* Review  
35 U.S.C. § 314

## I. INTRODUCTION

Samsung Electronics Co., Ltd. and Samsung Electronics America, Inc. (“Samsung” collectively) filed a Petition (Paper 3, “Pet.”) under 35 U.S.C. §§ 311–319 for *inter partes* review of claims 1–3, 5–12, and 14–19 of U.S. Patent No. 8,432,173 B2 (Ex. 1001, “the ’173 patent”). Neodron Ltd. (“Neodron”) did not file a preliminary response.

At our discretion, we may institute an *inter partes* review when “the information presented in the petition . . . and any response . . . shows that there is a reasonable likelihood that the petitioner would prevail with respect to at least 1 of the claims challenged in the petition.” 35 U.S.C. § 314(a) (2018). Applying that standard, we institute an *inter partes* review of all asserted grounds and all challenged claims of the ’173 patent for the reasons explained below. This is a preliminary decision, and we will base our final written decision on the full trial record, including any timely response by Neodron.

## II. BACKGROUND

### A. REAL PARTIES IN INTEREST

The parties identify only themselves as real parties in interest. *See* Pet. 3; Paper 6, 1.

### B. RELATED PROCEEDINGS

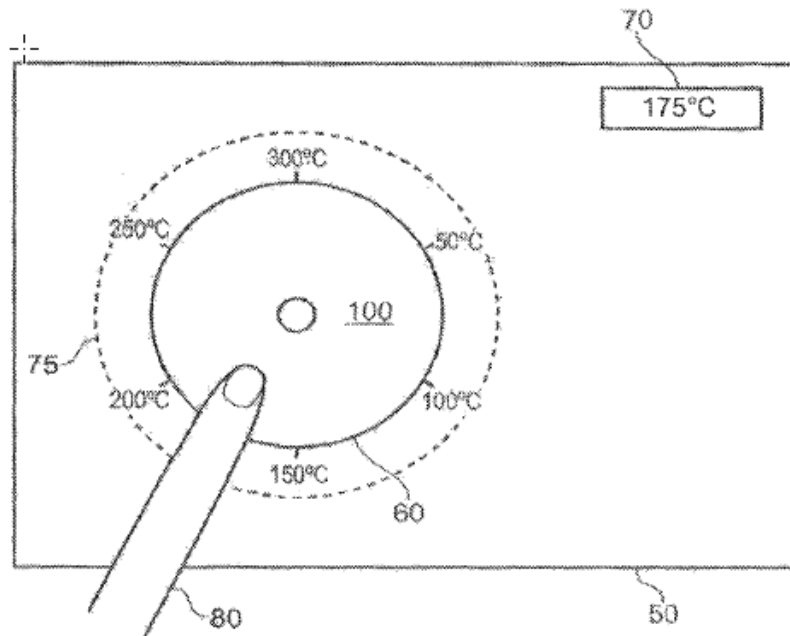
The parties identify the following as related matters: *Neodron Ltd. v. Amazon.com, Inc.*, No. 6:19-cv-00317-ADA (W.D. Tex. filed May 21, 2019); *Neodron Ltd. v. Dell Technologies Inc.*, No. 6:19-cv-00318-ADA (W.D. Tex. filed May 21, 2019); *Neodron Ltd. v. HP Inc.*, No., 6:19-cv-

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00319-ADA (W.D. Tex. filed May 21, 2019); *Neodron Ltd. v. Lenovo Group Ltd.*, 6:19-cv-00320-ADA (W.D. Tex. filed May 21, 2019); *Neodron Ltd. v. Microsoft Corp.*, No. 6:19-cv-00321-ADA (W.D. Tex. filed May 21, 2019); *Neodron Ltd. v. Motorola Mobility LLC*, 6:19-cv-00322-ADA (W.D. Tex. filed May 21, 2019); *Neodron Ltd. v. Samsung Electronics Co., Ltd.*, 6:19-cv-00323-ADA (W.D. Tex. filed May 21, 2019); *Neodron Ltd. v. Samsung Electronics Co., Ltd.*, No. 6:19-cv-00398-ADA (W.D. Tex. filed June 28, 2019); and *In re Certain Touch-Controlled Mobile Devices, Computers, and Components Thereof*, Inv. No. 337-TA-1162 (filed May 21, 2019) (“related ITC proceeding”). Pet. 3; Paper 6, 2–3.

C. THE '173 PATENT (EX. 1001)

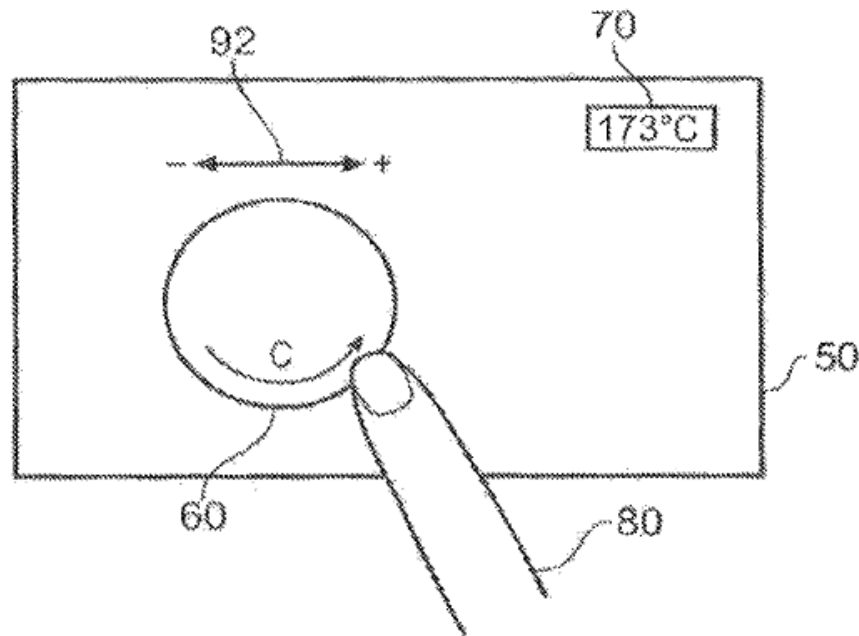
The '173 patent relates to “capacitive position sensors for detecting the position of an object around a curved path.” Ex. 1001, 1:21–22. The sensor can operate in two modes. The first mode is shown in Figure 1, reproduced below:



**FIG. 1**

Figure 1 shows “part of a control panel 50 having a capacitive sensor 60 and a digital readout display 70.” Ex. 1001, 7:38–39. As shown in the sensor’s first operating mode, “a user’s finger is used to select a cooking temperature.” *Id.* at 7:61–63. Finger 80 is near a portion of sensing element 100 corresponding to a temperature of 175 °C, which also appears on readout display 70. *Id.* at 7:63–66.

Because the sensor resolution is limited, the initial temperature selected in the first operating mode may only be an approximation of the intended temperature. *See* Ex. 1001, 7:66–8:8. Therefore, the sensor automatically enters a second mode of operation to allow the user to fine-tune the selected temperature, as shown below in Figure 2A:



**FIG. 2A**

Ex. 1001, 8:9–10. Figure 2A depicts capacitive sensor 60 in a second operating mode. *Id.* at 8:10–12. In this mode, “a user is able to increase or decrease the temperature selected in the first mode by a pre-determined increment” by displacing finger 80 “by a pre-determined threshold angle.” *Id.* at 8:13–17. In this example, the user has rotated finger 80 counterclockwise, as represented by arrow C, to decrease the temperature from 175 °C to 173 °C, with the updated temperature shown on display 70. *See id.* at 8:21–27.

D. CHALLENGED CLAIMS AND GROUNDS

Independent claim 1, which exemplifies the other challenged claims, is as follows:

- [pre] 1. A method comprising:
- [a] receiving one or more first signals indicating one or more first capacitive couplings of an object with a sensing element that comprises a sensing path that comprises a length, the

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