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(54) **STRETCHABLE NOTEBOOK COMPUTER CASE**

**Related U.S. Application Data**

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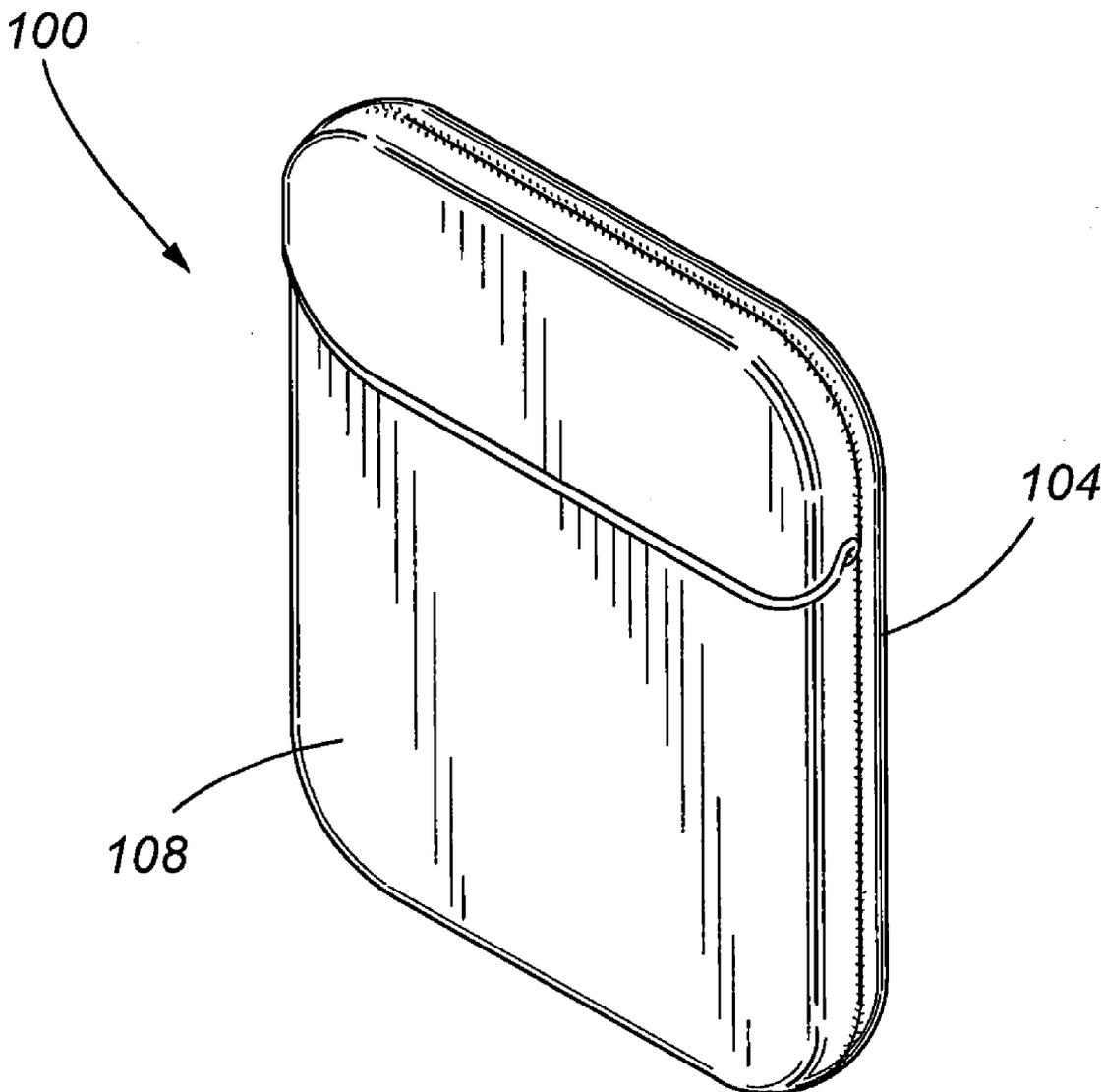
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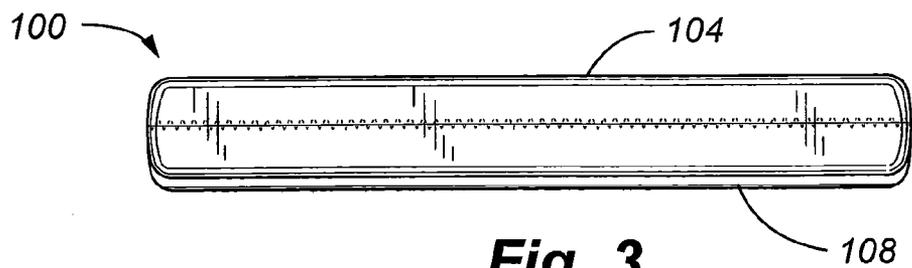
(57) **ABSTRACT**

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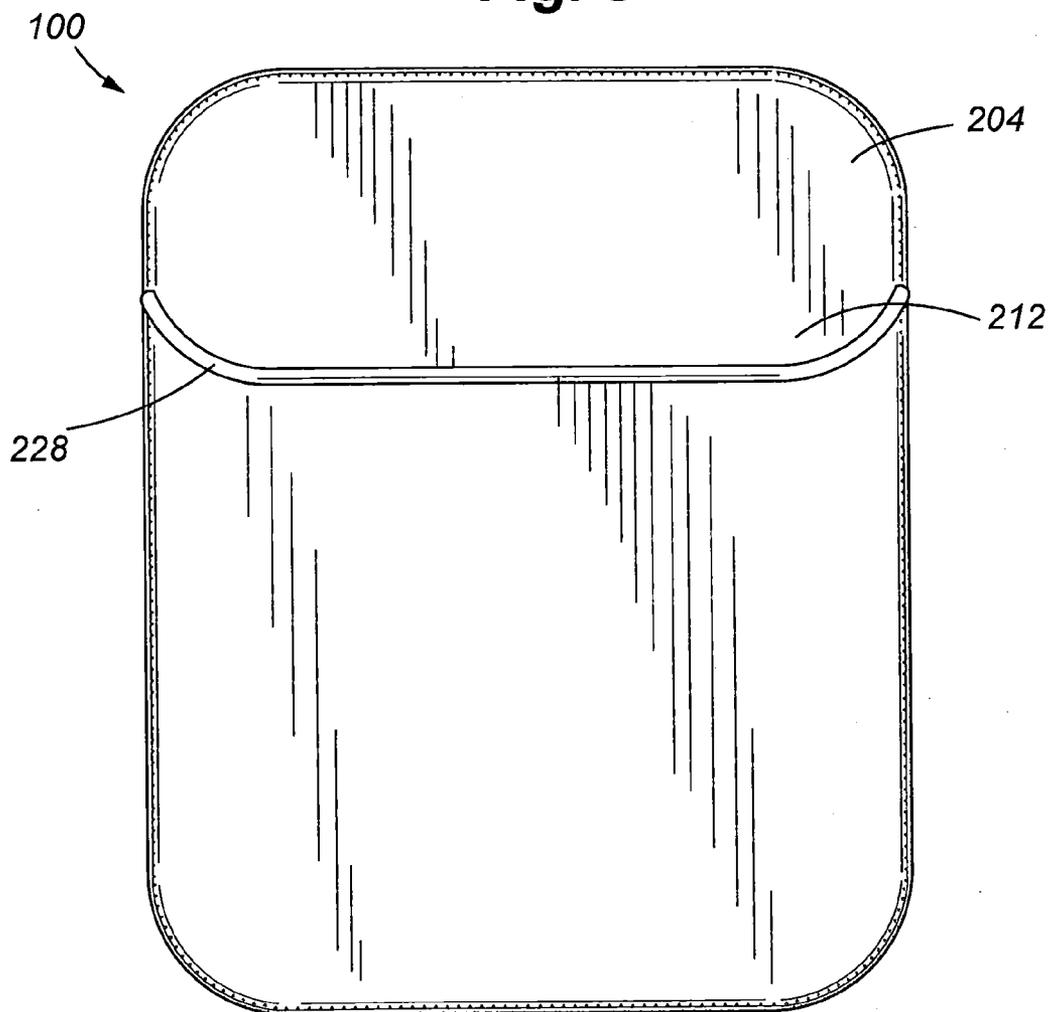
A stretchable storage case is provided that is adapted to receive an electronic device. More specifically, a stretchable storage case comprising resiliently deflectable panels is provided that is adapted to selectively deflect to receive various electronic devices and conform thereto.



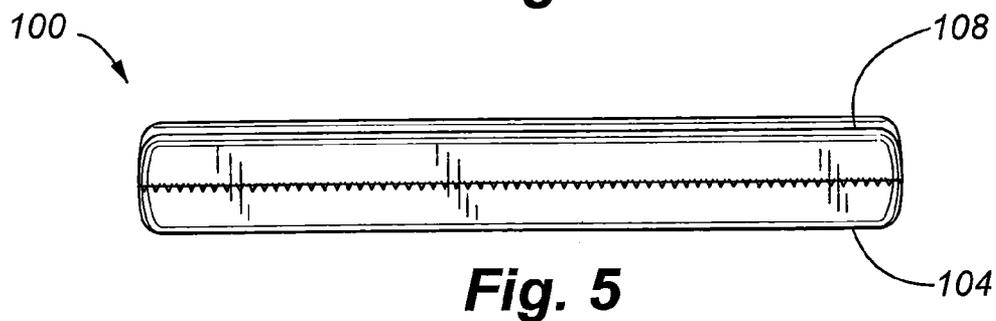




**Fig. 3**



**Fig. 4**



**Fig. 5**

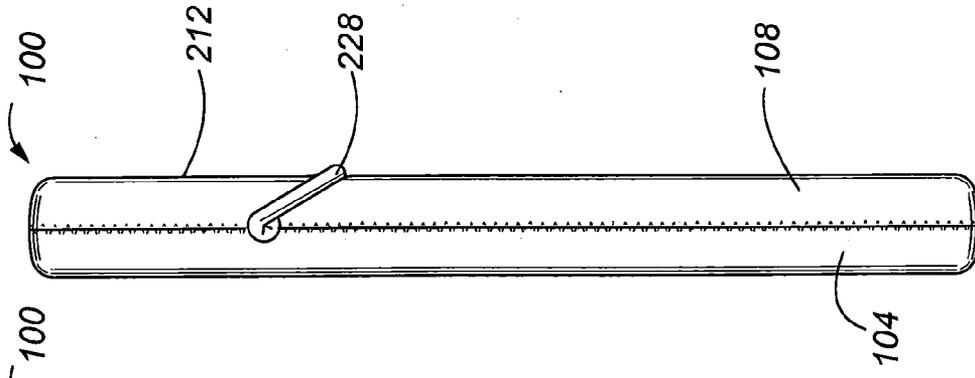


Fig. 6

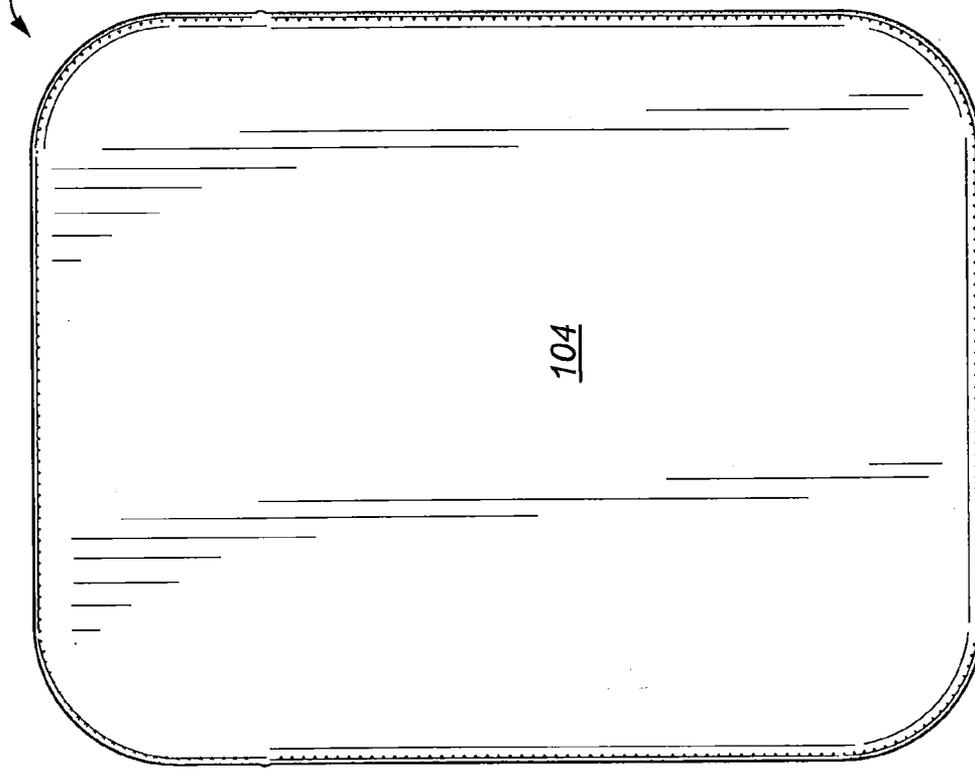


Fig. 7

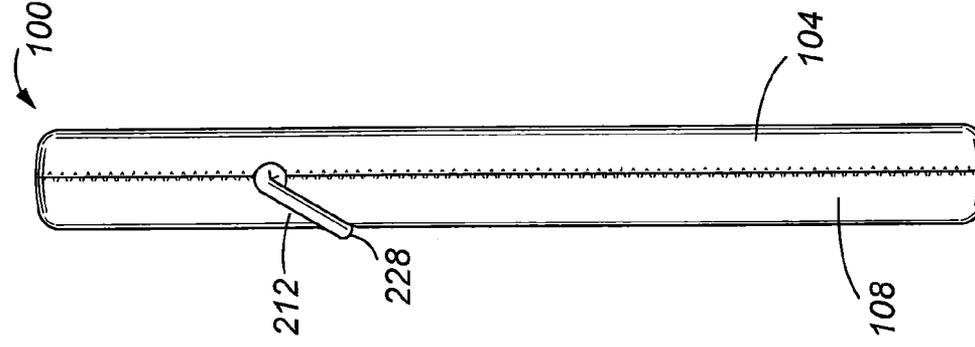


Fig. 8

**STRETCHABLE NOTEBOOK COMPUTER CASE**

[0001] This application is a Continuation-In-Part of U.S. Design patent application Ser. No. 29/297,025, filed Nov. 1, 2007, the entire disclosure of which being incorporated by reference herein.

**FIELD OF THE INVENTION**

[0002] Embodiments of the present invention are generally related to protective storage devices. More specifically, one embodiment of the present invention is a storage case for a notebook computer.

**BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

[0003] Often, it is desirable to protect delicate electronic devices due to their fragile nature. Thus it is common to provide protective storage cases comprised of rigid or compliant material. The cases of the prior art are of a fixed size, however. Storage cases of the prior art are designed to prevent shock loads from damaging the stored device. It is also desirable to protect stored electronic devices from debris, water, etc. Further, it is often desirable to construct cases in a manner to make them less bulky and conforming, thereby facilitating storage and transport.

[0004] U.S. Pat. No. 6,305,538 to Jackson (“Jackson”), entitled “Protective Casing Having an Improved Closure”, which is incorporated by reference in its entirety herein, discloses a compliant case. More specifically, Jackson discloses a conformable case made of a resilient material for the receipt of a fragile item, such as a pair of binoculars. The case of Jackson is adapted to selectively stretch to allow insertion of the device to be stored. After insertion, the Jackson case conforms to the item stored therein. Jackson, however, requires that a portion of the case be shaped similar to the articles to be stored, thus limiting the type of device to be stored within the case. In addition, Jackson discloses a storage case that remains opened after the item is stored, which exposes the stored electronic device. Another drawback of Jackson is that portions of the case are permanently shaped as the item to be stored, which makes packaging and storage difficult.

[0005] Thus, it is a long felt need to provide a storage case that is adapted to receive objects of various sizes and completely cover them in a conforming manner.

**SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

[0006] It is one aspect of the present invention to provide a stretchable case for a square or rectangular object, such as a notebook computer. The case, preferably includes interconnected front and back panels. At least one of the front panel or the back panel includes an opening that provides selection access into a storage area of the case that is defined by the front panel and the back panel. In one embodiment the opening is disposed between an upper front panel and a lower front panel. The upper and lower front panels may each include flaps that overlap when the opening is closed to generally seal the case. The perimeter of the opening may include a lining, which distinguishes the opening from the remainder of the case. Further, the case may be reversible, wherein the inside surface of the front and/or back panels may possess different surface texture, color, etc.

[0007] It is still yet another aspect of the present invention to provide a case made of a compliant material, that conforms to the shape of and size of the items stored. Materials of this type by their very nature are often shock resistant, thereby helping to protect the stored item. It is further contemplated that additional shock absorption or cushioning materials be added to the case to enhance the protection provided by the storage case. As will be appreciated, compliant materials are water resistant, which enhance the protective nature of the storage case.

[0008] It is still yet another aspect of the present invention to provide a storage case that is suited to accommodate various types of electronic devices. More specifically, the device of embodiments of the present invention are adapted to be selectively scaled in size and shape to accommodate computers, MP3 players, CD players, tape players, cell phones, I-pods, and any other electronic device. The invention described herein is not necessarily limited to electronic devices wherein one of skill in the art will appreciate that other devices or items, such as keys, cigarettes, credit cards, mirrors, make-up, etc. maybe accommodated by a flexible storage case that is adapted to conform to the items stored therein.

[0009] It is another aspect of the present invention to provide a storage case that is aesthetically pleasing. More specifically, embodiments of the present invention are, due to their material of manufacture, well suited for the addition of indicia or company logos, for example. Further, embodiments of the present invention include a slot or other means that accept pictures, photographs, business cards or other items to allow user to selectively customize the storage case.

[0010] It is yet another aspect of the present invention to provide a storage case that has a selectively openable flap that may be configured to various shapes. It is preferred that the flap be suited to prevent fluid and/or debris from entering into the storage area. However, one skilled in the art will appreciate that other shapes may be used. For example, one embodiment of the present invention employs a flap that includes representations of teeth. The remainder of the storage case may be fashioned as an animal, wherein items such as ears or simulated fur may be added to the case thereby making it appeal to children.

[0011] It is another aspect of the present invention to provide a storage case that is water resistant or water proof. More specifically, as briefly mentioned above, the flap may be fastened to the body of a case via a ziploc, buttons, snaps or other members that will maintain the flap closed and prevent water and/or debris from entering into the storage area of the case.

[0012] It is still yet another aspect of the present invention to provide a storage case that has rigid or semi-rigid portions. One embodiment of the present invention includes an external surface (or an internal surface) that is made of a rigid material that protects the items stored. The rigid material may be metal, hard plastic, composites, or any similar material. The rigid material may be added directly onto the flexible material or in place thereof where flexible material is integrated thereto.

[0013] It is another aspect of the present invention to provide a flexible storage case with auxiliary storage. More specifically, embodiments of the present invention provide a flexible storage case that includes the addition of auxiliary storage pockets integrated into the inside and/or outside of the storage case. The auxiliary storage may be in the form of a secondary case for the securement of a pager, cell phone,

I-pod, etc. Further, the auxiliary storage pockets may be adapted to secure at least one CD or DVD for use with the stored electronic device.

[0014] It is another aspect of the present invention to provide a storage case that is adapted to receive various electronic devices. More specifically, one embodiment of the present invention is adapted to lie generally flat when no items are stored therein, wherein an inner surface of the front panel and an inner surface of the back panel are operatively engaged. A storage device is provided that possesses a thickness less than the item being stored. In order to store an item within the case, the front panel and the back panel are deflected to provide a storage area for the receipt of an electronic device, for example. The front panel and rear panel are then released to conform to the items being stored. This embodiment of the present invention has the advantage of being relatively thin when no items are stored therein, thereby facilitating storage and packaging of the storage case.

[0015] It is yet another aspect of the present invention to provide at least one handle or strap interconnected to the storage case to allow users to easily carry the case.

[0016] The Summary of the Invention is neither intended nor should it be construed as being representative of the full extent and scope of the present invention. The present invention is set forth in various levels of detail in the Summary of the Invention as well as in the attached drawings and the Detailed Description of the Invention and no limitation as to the scope of the present invention is intended by either the inclusion or non-inclusion of elements, components, etc. in this Summary of the Invention. Additional aspects of the present invention will become more readily apparent from the Detail Description, particularly when taken together with the drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0017] The accompanying drawings, which are incorporated in and constitute a part of the specification, illustrate embodiments of the invention and together with the general description of the invention given above and the detailed description of the drawings given below, serve to explain the principles of these inventions.

[0018] FIG. 1 is a front perspective view of a stretchable notebook computer case in accordance with embodiments of the present invention;

[0019] FIG. 2 is a front perspective view of the invention illustrated in FIG. 1, shown in a partially open position;

[0020] FIG. 3 is a top plan view of the invention illustrated in FIG. 1;

[0021] FIG. 4 is a front elevation view of the invention illustrated in FIG. 1;

[0022] FIG. 5 is a bottom plan view of the invention illustrated in FIG. 1;

[0023] FIG. 6 is a right elevation view of the invention illustrated in FIG. 1;

[0024] FIG. 7 is a rear elevation view of the invention illustrated in FIG. 1; and

[0025] FIG. 8 is a left elevation view of the invention shown in FIG. 1.

[0026] It should be understood that the drawings are not necessarily to scale. In certain instances, details that are not necessary for an understanding of the invention or that render other details difficult to perceive may have been omitted. It

should be understood, of course, that the invention is not necessarily limited to the particular embodiments illustrated herein.

[0027] To assist in the understanding of the present invention, the following listing of components and associated numbering found in the drawings is provided herein:

#	Component
100	case
104	back panel
108	front panel
204	upper front panel
208	lower front panel
210	opening
212	upper front panel flap
216	lower front panel flap
220	top end
224	bottom end
228	lining

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0028] Referring now to FIGS. 1-8, a storage case in accordance with the embodiments of the present invention is generally identified by reference numeral 100. The case 100 includes a plurality of walls or panels adapted to enclose a square or rectangular object. Preferably, embodiments of the present invention are adapted to enclose a notebook computer. However, it is contemplated that other items such as digital music players, CD players, tape players, games, etc., may also be all modeled by cases similar to those provided herein. In accordance with embodiments of the present invention, the panels of the storage case are made from a stretchable compliant material. The stretchable compliant material may also provide a cushion for an object contained in the case. Additionally, the stretchable compliant material deforms, allowing entry of the object into the interior of the case 100. After the object is stored, the stretchable compliant material will conform to the object.

[0029] Embodiments of the present invention include a back panel 104 and a front panel 108. Together, the back panel 104 and the front panel 108 define the storage volume of the case. The back panel 104 and the front panel 108 may be sewn or otherwise interconnected to each other along the perimeters of the front 108 and back 104 panels.

[0030] As an alternative to sewing, other interconnection mechanisms such as adhesive, head welding, snaps, clasps, Ziplocs, etc. may be used. In yet another alternative embodiment, the front 108 and back 104 panels may be part of the same continuous piece of material.

[0031] The front panel 108 includes an upper front panel 204 that overlaps a lower front panel 208. In use, the upper front panel 204 and the lower front panel 208 are separated to form an opening 210 in the case 100 through which an object may be placed inside the case 100. To facilitate insertion, the front panel 108 stretches to allow the opening 210 to expand. As the opening 210 expands, an object, such as a notebook computer, is more easily accommodated.

[0032] After the object is inserted, the upper front panel 204 and lower front panel 208 are generally engaged, wherein the upper front panel 204 and the lower front panel 208 panel overlap. In particular, both the upper front panel 204 and the lower front panel 208 each include an unconnected portion or

flap. In the closed position, the upper front panel flap 212 overlaps or extends over a portion of the lower front panel 208, including the lower front panel flap 216. Preferably, the lower front panel flap 216 extends underneath a portion of the upper flap panel 204, one of skill in the art will appreciate that the reverse is possible

[0033] In accordance with embodiments of the present invention, the upper front panel 204 is smaller than the lower front panel 208. In this regard, the opening of the case 100 is disposed in a position closer to the top end 220 of the case 100. In accordance with an alternative embodiment of the invention, the upper front panel 204 and the lower front panel 208 are the same size. Here, the opening 210 of the case 100 is disposed at a midway point between the top end 220 and the bottom end 224 of the case 100. In accordance with yet another embodiment of the present invention, the upper front panel 204 is larger than the lower front panel 208. Here, the opening 210 of the case 100 is disposed in a position closer to the bottom end 224 of the case 100.

[0034] In accordance with embodiments of the present invention, a lining 228 may be included along the perimeter of the opening 210. Here, the lining 228 is disposed on the ends of both of the upper front panel flap 212 and the lower front panel flap 216. In order to distinguish the opening 210 from other parts of the case 100, the lining 228 may include a different color, material, or texture than that of the remainder of the case 100.

[0035] In accordance with embodiments of the present invention, the case 100 is reversible. In particular, the stretchable compliant material, of which the case 100 is made, allows the case 100 to be reversed or turned inside out. Preferably, the case 100 includes different colors, a first color associated with the outward facing side of the case 100 and a second color associated with the inward facing side of the case 100. In that regard, reversing the case 100 causes the second color to be displayed on with the outside of the case 100.

[0036] Embodiments of the present invention are sewn together with known techniques and employ lycra, closed cell

foam, low-density brushed lycra, nylon, and other material that may be water-resistant or water-proof.

[0037] While various embodiments of the present invention have been described in detail, it is apparent that modifications and alterations of those embodiments will occur to those skilled in the art. However, it is to be expressly understood that such modifications and alterations are within the scope and spirit of the present invention, as set forth in the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A storage case adapted to receive a rectangular object, comprising:

a back panel comprised of a stretchable, compliant material;

a front panel comprised of a stretchable, compliant material interconnected to the back panel, the front panel including a upper front panel and a lower front panel; and

wherein the upper front panel may be separated from the lower front panel to form an opening the case to provide a conforming storage area for said rectangular object, and wherein with the opening closed the upper and lower front panels overlap.

2. The storage case of claim 1 wherein said front panel and back panel are in operative engagement when the storage case is empty.

3. The storage case of claim 1 wherein said front panel and back panel are sufficiently resilient to accommodate a plurality of electronic devices.

4. The storage case of claim 1 wherein said conforming storage area is adapted to receive at least one of a computer, music player, radio, MP3 player, digital music player, TV, cell phone, dictaphone, and a pager.

5. The storage case of claim 1 further comprising at least one auxiliary pocket integrated to at least one of said front panel and said back panel for receipt of at least one of a compact disk, a picture, a business card, and an electronic device.

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