METHOD OF PACKAGING ARTICLES

Figure 1

Abstract: A method for creating packaging articles is provided, comprising providing a template layout of a package, applying artwork to the template layout to create an artwork layout, referencing selected areas of the template layout, exporting information content of the selected areas along with their respective references to a database, and reviewing said artwork layout.
Method of Packaging Articles

REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

[001] This application claims the benefit of priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) of U.S. provisional application serial number 60/950,530, filed on July 18, 2007, which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety.

Field of Invention

[002] The present invention relates to a method and apparatus for packaging articles, in particular to localisation of the packaging.

[003] The use of packaging for presentation and protection of a product is a global industry in which many of the products are disposed of on a worldwide basis.

[004] It is desirable to provide the packaging for such products in local languages and in formats which meet the legal requirements relevant to the particular territory in which they are disposed.

Summary of the Invention

[005] A first aspect of the invention provides a method of packaging articles comprising:

- providing a template layout of a package;
- applying artwork to the template layout to create an artwork layout;
- referencing selected areas of the template layout;
- exporting information content of the selected areas along with their respective references to a database;
- and reviewing said artwork layout.
[006] An optional feature of this aspect of the invention comprises creating a template layout.

[007] An optional feature of this aspect of the invention provides a method of packaging wherein the selected areas of the template layout are referenced with generic labels.

[008] An optional feature of this aspect of the invention comprises generating an instruction to amend the artwork layout.

[009] This optional feature may also include altering the information content in the database associated with at least one of the selected areas.

[010] This optional feature may further include applying the changes in the information content to the artwork layout.

[011] This optional feature may additionally include altering the design of the artwork associated with at least one of the selected areas.

[012] A further optional feature of this aspect of the invention comprises applying the design changes to the artwork layout.

[013] This optional feature may also include reviewing the amended artwork layout.

[014] This optional feature may further include exporting the information content of the selected areas.

[015] This optional feature may additionally include generating instructions to construct a package and constructing the package.

[016] A second aspect of the invention provides a method of providing localised packaging for articles comprising providing a template layout of a package, applying artwork to the template suitable for a first territory of distribution, thereby creating an
artwork layout, selecting areas of the artwork layout requiring amendment for distribution of the packaged articles in a second territory, referencing said selected areas such that said referenced area is readily indexable to facilitate amendment of the selected areas in order to prepare an artwork layout of the package for distribution in the second territory.

[0017] A third aspect of the invention provides a method of packaging articles for use in a plurality of territories comprising providing a template layout, applying artwork to the template layout to create an artwork layout for a territory wherein said artwork layout comprises permanent and non-permanent features, referencing said non-permanent features such that an index is created whereby said non-permanent features are readily identified such that they can be amended to correspond to the features in a pre-selected one of the plurality of territories of distribution of the packaged articles.

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Brief Description of the Drawings

[0018] Embodiments of the present invention will now be described with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

[0019] FIGURE 1 is a schematic flow diagram which illustrates a first method for implementation in accordance with the present invention.

[0020] FIGURE 2 is a schematic flow diagram which illustrates a second method for implementation in accordance with the present invention.

[0021] FIGURE 3 is a schematic flow diagram which illustrates a third method for implementation in accordance with the present invention.

[0022] FIGURE 4 is a schematic flow diagram which illustrates a fourth method for implementation in accordance with the present invention.
FIGURE 5 is a schematic flow diagram which illustrates the interaction of the methods of Figures 1 to 4 to form a localisation process in accordance with the present invention.

Detailed Description of Preferred Embodiments of the Present Invention


[0025] It will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that other transportation media may be used such as: Solid State Storage Media commonly known as flash memory or memory sticks, Magnetic Storage Media such as hard disc drives.

[0026] It is envisaged that the transport medium may be a telecommunications link wherein a suitable communications protocol, such as, but not limited to hyper text transfer protocol (http) or file transfer protocol (ftp), in such instances the packaging may be some form of electronic interface via which an individual accesses an electronic product in the form of a software file.

[0027] It is also envisaged that, regardless of the transport medium used, the product may be used to transport or transfer an electronic file for distributing music or film, software products for controlling a personal computer or similar electronic devices or other electronic data.

[0028] The term packaging includes sleeves, cartons, cases or other containers designed to hold media discs; it also includes other packaging such as display packaging or point of sale packaging which includes posters and other marketing materials.
Whilst the present invention will be described hereinafter with reference to media disc packaging, it is envisaged that the present invention could be applied in other areas of packaging such as food and beverage packaging or pharmaceutical packaging. The present invention will be described with reference to media packaging but it will be appreciated by one skilled in the art that the present invention could be applied to other types of packaging or other products for not limited to but including posters or website design where it is desirable to localise the information presented to conform with local language and/or legal requirements in a particular territory.

Figure 1 illustrates a first method forming part of a process for localisation of product packaging.

In step A1 of the method illustrated in Figure 1, a template layout of a product packaging is produced. In one embodiment of the invention the product package may be a booklet, sleeve, cover, stand, advert, banner, or a Media Case or licensed media packaging such as an AGI Amaray™, Digistak® or Digipak® product packages. Such product packages typically have printed areas for receiving Graphic Artwork pertaining to a product to be packaged and also require other information to be displayed including 'point of sale' information and/or legal information including but not limited to Barcodes, Age Restriction Certification, Running Time, copyright statements, strap line, release date and synopsis. Typically the packaging also includes areas for receiving a product; such areas may or may not be printed with information pertaining to the product.

A layout is a generic term for a computer based structured image that is manipulated in graphic software. Such graphic software includes Desktop Publishing (DTP) Applications or graphic manipulation software tools such as Quark Xpress, Quark or InDesign ®, Adobe ®
A template layout is a layout that contains product packaging specific structure ready for customisation with client artwork.

A template layout may have areas which are "tagged" or "labelled", built into its structure for information content which is commonly used with a particular product packaging regardless of the product to be packaged. Such tags will be referred to hereinafter as generic tags.

In step A2 areas of the product packaging which will receive information which may be subject to variation depending on territory of use are then "tagged" or "labelled". These tagged areas will receive formatted text of graphic content reference. Tags that are generic to all product packages are inserted at this stage. In this way a library of known product packages can be developed in which the design specification of the product packaging is known.

A tag is a named reference point on a layout where graphic software places the information content associated with that tag. Tagged areas can receive information content such as the synopsis, the age restriction certificate, running time, strap line, release date, however many others are contemplated to fall within the scope of the present invention. Tagged areas may receive either graphic or text terms or both. This provides a simple and rapid way to identify a particular area of the product packaging which is to be printed with content information or artwork.

An example of a generic tag that may be applied to the template is a product definition tag which is a tag that contains information pertinent to a particular job ticket, for example, client name, product type, region or territory of intended distribution, and product name. The provision of this information with the template layout assists in identification and tracking of jobs carried out in relation to a particular job ticket.

By tagging an area of the template layout with a product definition tag, each time the template layout is used the relevant product definition information can be
inserted onto the tagged area assigned to receive the information content pertaining to
the product definition, such that the product definition information appears at the
same place on all layouts using the same template layout.

[0039] It will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that the method illustrated in
Figure 1 may be carried out independent of the methods described in Figure 2 to 5.

[0040] A library of template layouts may be generated such that each time a job
requires a product package for which a template has already been created it is not
necessary to generate a new template layout.

[0041] Figure 2 illustrates a method in which a job ticket and job instructions are
created. The first step A3 is triggered when a product definition is acquired from a
client. The product definition is inserted into a database. The product definition is a
set of descriptive attributes that collectively define a unique product and its
packaging. This information is acquired from a client interface system for example
by electronic mail, spreadsheet or alternatively may be manually acquired.

[0042] The information regarding the product definition may be entered into the
database automatically or manually depending upon the transmission mode and
medium used. The product definition may include details of the packaging type,
product name, e.g. movie title, client name, product type for example a media disc
including but not limited to DVD, VCD, Bluray.

[0043] Once the product definition has been acquired a job ticket is created in a
database, at step A4. The job ticket defines a project of work and comprises all
information relating to the product definition. The database comprises an interface
such that a client manager may interact with the database. A job ticket is a unit of
work that is applied to a specific product as defined by its product definition. The
unit of work starts with a brief from the client to create a new set of layouts or alter
pre-existing layouts for the specific product. The unit of work is complete once the
client has approved all layouts relating to that product. A job ticket comprises a collection of job instructions.

[0044] The client manager then generates job instructions, at step A5. Job instructions are units of work within the project of a particular job ticket which need to be completed.

[0045] An example of a job instruction may be to "acquire artwork from the client", as shown in Figure 3 at step A6. The artwork provided by the client may be a collection of electronic files which are used to decorate the template layout. Typically, client artwork is a collection of files from a Desktop Publishing Application, image files, fonts and instructions on their use in any template layout.

[0046] A job instruction contains a set of specific modifications that are to be made to any or all layouts pertaining to any particular job ticket. The job instruction may include instructions to make insertions or amendments to the tag content and apply them to the appropriate layout.

[0047] A job instruction is required to effect any action upon any layout. The job instructions are stored in the database and can be used to track all actions carried out.

[0048] Turning now to Figure 3, there is shown a method for creating a product layout using the artwork received for creating a product layout. Using the artwork from the client at step A6, the artwork is applied to a template layout at step A7.

[0049] This template layout is received from step A2 of Figure 1. This may involve selection for a template layout from the library, creation of a new template layout or modification of a client supplied template layout. The client artwork is applied to the template layout, step A7, to produce a template layout customised with the client artwork according to client instruction. Hereinafter this customised layout will be sometimes referred to as the "client art layout" or "client artwork".
Areas of the client artwork can be divided into two types: permanent features and non-permanent features.

In the context of the present invention, permanent information is that which is not subject to change as a consequence of changing the territory of distribution of the packaged articles. Non-permanent information is that which requires amendment as a consequence of changing the territory of distribution. The non-permanent feature may require change as a consequence of, for example, a change in language in the territory of distribution or local legal requirements pertaining to copyright or trademark information or local censorship or film classification requirements such as age restrictions. Alternative embodiments where the packaged articles are food stuff or beverages or pharmaceutical products are also envisaged and these may have different marking requirements depending upon the territory of distribution.

It is also envisaged that the non-permanent features may have a temporal nature in addition or alternative to the geographical nature, for example, in the case of promotional packaging which may change with time.

Selected areas containing information content of the client artwork layout produced at step A7 are "tagged" at step A8. Examples of the types of information content which may be tagged are the synopsis, the age certification, strap lines, release date, copyright statements, running time. In fact any areas comprising information content and its packaging which may be subject to change as a result of changing the territory of sale of the product may be tagged at this step.

Tagging these areas of the client artwork that may be subject to change or amendment either as a consequence of design changes or a change in the territory of sale allows those areas to be rapidly identified and changes rapidly implemented.

The information content of the tagged areas may be in the form of formatted text or graphical in nature or a combination of both; hereinafter referred to as "information content".
[0056] The information content of a tag may be formatted text and/or graphic content references which are placed at the associated tag's reference point upon the layout.

[0057] At step A9, all the tags created are exported with the information content from the client art layout into the database. The exported tags and their associated information content are references to the job ticket and stored in the database as part of that job ticket.

[0058] Formatted text in the tag's information content is text which is marked up with a graphic software specific formatting mark up language.

[0059] Mark up language is a set of instructions that embody typographical rules that instruct the graphic software how the test should be presented. Typical graphic software such as Quark Xpress™ and InDesign™ use a mark up language which is similar to the HTML mark up language used for web pages, although it is envisaged to be within the scope of invention to use any mark up language.

[0060] At step A10 the completed product layout is reviewed first by the client manager, and then subsequently by the client.

[0061] If the product layout meets the client's requirements then the client approves the product layout at step A4.

[0062] If the client manager or client rejects the product layout and regular modifications or amendments to be made then the client manager generates a job instruction to carry out the desired amendments shown at step A11.

[0063] Alterations to the product layout are applied using the graphic software at steps A12 and A13. This may include replacement of English language text with a suitable localised language for the intended territory of sale of the product.
[0064] It will of course be appreciated that the source text need not be English, but could be any language, for example it may be desired to translate Spanish text to Portuguese.

5 [0065] These amendments to the information content of a tagged area, either to correct an error or to effect other changes in the text or graphics presented, are effected at step A12. Design changes to the product layout of an aesthetic nature are effected at step A13.

10 [0066] The product layout as amended is reinforced again, first by the client manager. If the client manager approves the product layout then the product layout is sent to the client for review. If either the client manager or client determines that further amendment is necessary steps A11, A12, A13 and A10 are repeated until such time that the product layout is approved by both the client manager and the client.

15 [0067] Optionally, upon approval of the product layout the unformatted text of the information content of the tagged areas may be exported to the clients system interface if so desired as shown in step A14.

20 [0068] Although specific embodiments have been illustrated and described herein, it will be appreciated by those of ordinary skill in the art, that alternative arrangements may be employed without departing from the scope of the present invention.
CLAIMS

1. A method for creating packaging articles comprising the steps of:
   providing a template layout of a package;
   applying artwork to the template layout to create an artwork layout;
   referencing selected areas of the template layout;
   exporting information content of the selected areas along with their respective references to a database; and
   reviewing said artwork layout.

2. A method for creating packaging articles according to claim 1 further comprising;
   creating a template layout.

3. A method for creating packaging articles according to claim 2 wherein the selected areas of the template layout are referenced with generic labels.

4. A method for creating packaging articles according to claim 1 comprising generating an instruction to amend the artwork layout.

5. A method for creating packaging articles according to claim 4 comprising altering the information content in the database associated with at least one of said selected areas.

6. A method for creating packaging articles according to claim 6 comprising applying the changes in the information content to the artwork layout.

7. A method for creating packaging articles according to claim 4 comprising altering the design of the artwork associated with at least one of said selected areas.

8. A method for creating packaging articles according to claim 7 comprising applying the design changes to the artwork layout.
9. A method for creating packaging according to either of claims 6 or 8 comprising reviewing the amended artwork layout.

10. A method for creating packaging according to either of claims 1 or 9 comprising exporting the information content of the said selected areas.

11. A method for creating packaging according to claim 1 comprising generating instructions to construct a package and constructing said package.

12. A method of providing localised packaging articles comprising providing a template layout of a package, applying artwork to the template suitable for a first territory of distribution, thereby creating an artwork layout, selecting areas of the artwork layout requiring amendment for distribution of the packaged articles in a second territory, referencing said selected areas such that said referenced area is readily indexable to facilitate amendment of the selected areas in order to prepare an artwork layout of the package for distribution in the second territory.

13. A method of packaging articles for use in a plurality of territories comprising providing a template layout, applying artwork to the template layout to create an artwork layout for a territory, wherein said artwork layout comprises permanent and non-permanent features, referencing said non-permanent features such that an index is created whereby said non-permanent features are readily identified such that they are amendable to the corresponding features in a pre-selected one of the plurality of territories of distribution of the packaged articles.
Figure 1
Figure 3

A9: Export label/tags to database
A8: Label/Tag selected areas
A7: Provide template layout
A6: Receive artwork and instructions
Figure 4

A12: Apply information content changes
A13: Apply design changes
A10: Review artwork layout
A11: Create job instruction
A14: Export tag content