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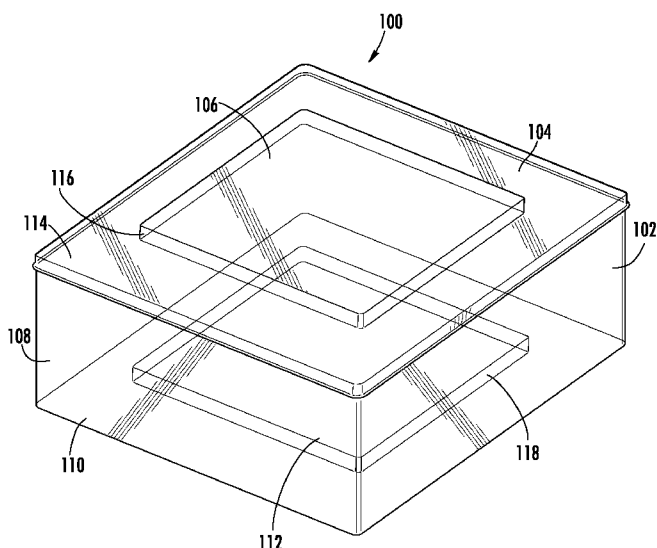


FIG. 1

(57) Abstract: A series of interlocking or non-interlocking stackable containers have an identical size and shape. The containers may include transparent sides and a transparent cover. The cover may include a raised area. The bottom of container may include an inward recess sized to accept the raised area of the cover of a lower container. Each container may include an interchangeable faceplate that affixes to the transparent cover. The interchangeable faceplate may be used to accessorize the containers for visual recognition and cover an outer area of the cover, leaving an inner area of the cover exposed for viewing contents. The transparent cover may have a downwardly extending lip that snaps onto a protrusion on a container base. The faceplate may cover both horizontal and vertical surfaces of the cover. The cover may have a depressed perimeter configured to accept the faceplate. An insert may be provided that holds contents in place.

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CUSTOMIZABLE STORAGE CONTAINER SYSTEM

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] This patent application claims priority to U.S. Patent Application No. 12/826,405, filed June 29, 2010, the entirety of which is incorporated by reference herein.

BACKGROUND OF INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

[0002] The present invention relates to stackable containers, and more particularly to customizable and interchangeable, stackable containers.

2. Description of the Related Art

[0003] Conventional jewelry boxes or jewelry armoires may be used to display, protect, and organize jewelry. These storage systems may have a lid that opens to a compartment with divided organizers, and multiple drawers with additional dividers. In some cases, hooks or other organizing features may be offered to hang necklaces or earrings, or hold rings, watches and bracelets.

[0004] However, matching sets of jewelry may be separated (*i.e.*, earrings may be placed in one area; a necklace in another; and a bracelet in another), making it difficult to find desired items. There may be insufficient compartments for all of the items, non-matching jewelry may be grouped together, and the pre-configured divisions within the jewelry box may not be suited for the consumer's personal inventory. Some armoires or jewelry boxes offer many rows of earring notches (or small sets of holes) to attach earring sets and "arms" to attach bracelets and watches for storage. This type of arrangement may be impractical and time-consuming for a consumer to return his/her jewelry to after use. Further problems ensue when an owner travels and desires to transport various jewelry combinations. The owner may decide to either (1) forego taking the jewelry altogether; (2) endanger the jewelry by dropping all of the desired items together in one pouch; or (3) place the jewelry, piece by

piece, in a travel or compartmentalized container - travel containers taking time to pack and unpack each piece and not necessarily preventing jewelry from entanglement or damage.

[0005] A known stackable tray system is provided by Neatnix® and available for jewelry storage. However, these stackable trays may have pre-configured dividers that are not adjustable, much like a jewelry box or jewelry armoire that may have pre-set divisions. There may be other constraints, such as multiple, non-matching items may be grouped together; there may be no ability to easily pack for travel; and the trays may be toppled over as one stacked tray is moved to get to another, which may present risk of loss if the jewelry tray is dropped or not carefully moved. Further, these trays may not stack well.

[0006] Retail jewelry stores or manufacturers may house fine jewelry offerings in individual square or rectangular containers. These containers may include a container with a velvet or cloth lining, anti-tarnish protection, and the element of surprise. However, these jewelry containers may not be transparent or even translucent. As a result, once the jewelry has been delivered as a gift, the box may not be user-friendly.

[0007] In recent years, jewelry pouches have become fashionable for use in jewelry storage. These pouches may be manufactured from cloth, velvet, velour-texture, leather, and other materials. However, pouches may not offer much protection or facilitate the ability of the owner to discern the contents. Pouches may be even less effective when the owner's personal jewelry collection includes multiple same-color pouches from a favorite jewelry company. Some jewelry owners resort to using plastic sandwich baggies in order to contain their jewelry items in individual-unit containers that provide airtight, visible storage for their precious items.

[0008] The craft industry provides storage solutions for beads, sewing and other crafts, such as scrap booking. These containers may be manufactured from acrylic or low-cost material, and may not offer the ability to personalize or create a more upscale look. These containers also may not offer the consumer optional inserts that may allow for better care of jewelry being stored. The containers may be manufactured from material that is not as impact resistant as desirable for fine jewelry, and may not present an elegance associated

with jewelry or treasured items. Additionally, many of these container offerings may be very tall and cylindrical, and not configured to work with pre-existing jewelry armoires or jewelry boxes.

[0009] The craft industry may also employ metal tin containers with clear tops. These containers may have a more elegant look than acrylic. However, the container material may easily dent and the clear top may be made of material that is easily cut or otherwise breached.

[0010] Specific examples of traditional storage containers are disclosed by U.S. Patent No. 5,699,925 (entitled "Interlocking Stackable Container Storage System") and U.S. Patent No. 5,799,792 (entitled "Nestable and Stackable Storage Unit"). More recent conventional storage containers are disclosed by U.S. Pub. No. 2005/0082176 (entitled "Jewelry Box"), U.S. Pub. No. 2008/0000795 (entitled "Stackable Containers"), and U.S. Patent No. 7,159,733 (entitled "Tamper Evident Container-Lid Combination").

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0011] The present embodiments are directed to a customizable storage container system. The system may include a number of customizable and interchangeable stackable containers. Each stackable container may be intended for use with other identical or substantially identical stackable containers. Each stackable container may include a removable cover with a raised portion. Each stackable container may also include a bottom having a recess portion with a substantially similar shape as the raised portion of the cover. During use, the raised portion of the cover of a bottom stackable container may be configured to fit into the recess of the bottom of a top stackable container such that the bottom and the top stackable containers may be interlocked or inter-connected with each other.

[0012] Each stackable container may have transparent sides to allow viewing of the contents stored without opening the cover. Each stackable container may include a transparent cover, and a non-transparent, interchangeable faceplate. The faceplate may fit over the raised portion of the cover and be firmly and removably affixed to the cover, such as via screws or other fasteners. As a result, both the top side of the faceplate, and the contents

of the container (through the transparent raised portion of the cover) may be viewable when looking at the stackable container from the top. The containers may be used for storing jewelry or other items.

[0013] In one aspect, a series of stackable containers may be provided. The series of stackable containers may include a top stackable container and a bottom stackable container having identical shapes. Both the top stackable container and the bottom stackable container may have transparent sides; a bottom having an inward recess, the inward recess having a first surface area; and a cover having a raised area, the raised area being transparent and having a second surface area and a height of a first length. The second surface area of the raised area of the cover of the bottom stackable container may be sized to be accepted by the first surface area of the inward recess on the bottom of the top stackable container. Once the top stackable container is stacked on top of the bottom stackable container, side surfaces associated with or defining the second surface area of the raised area of the cover of the bottom stacker container may make one or more interference fits with side surfaces associated with or defining the first surface area of the inward recess on the bottom of the top stackable container such that the top stackable container is inter-connectively stacked on top of the bottom stackable container.

[0014] In another aspect, a stackable container may be provided. The stackable container may include a cover with a double raised area sized to be inserted into a second recess on a second bottom of a second stackable container, the double raised area having a height and the second stackable container being shaped similarly to the stackable container. The stackable container may include a bottom with a recess sized to accept at least a portion of a third double raised area on a third cover of a third stackable container, the third stackable container being shaped similarly to the stackable container. The stackable container may include a faceplate for visual recognition of a type of contents being stored by the stackable container. The faceplate may be configured to slide over the double raised area of the cover and be removably affixed to the cover of the stackable container. The faceplate may have a second height of approximately half the height of the double raised area of the cover such that a top portion of the double raised area of the cover protrudes from the faceplate after the

faceplate is removably affixed to the cover of the stackable container. During use, the top portion of the double raised area of the cover of the stackable container that protrudes from the faceplate is slid into the second recess on the second bottom of the second stackable container such that second stackable container is held in place with respect to the stackable container via the inter-connection between the top portion of the double raised area of the cover of the stackable container that protrudes from the faceplate after the faceplate is removably affixed to the cover of the stackable container and the second recess on the second bottom of the second stackable container.

[0015] In another aspect, a method of selling customizable, stackable containers may be provided. The method may include selling a first content of a certain type along with an initial customizable and stackable container that is displaying the first content of the certain type at a merchant location during a first shopping event. The initial customizable and stackable container may be at least partially transparent such that the first content of the certain type within the initial customizable and stackable container may be viewed without removing a cover associated with the initial customizable and stackable container. The initial customizable and stackable container may be configured to be accessorized by a first accessory of a certain kind. The method may include subsequently selling a second content of the certain type along with a second customizable and stackable container that is displaying the second content of the certain type at the merchant location during a second shopping event. The second customizable and stackable container may be at least partially transparent such that the second content of the certain type within the second customizable and stackable container may be viewed without removing a cover associated with the second customizable and stackable container. The second customizable and stackable container may be configured to have a substantially identical size and shape as the initial customizable and stackable container, and be accessorized by a second accessory of the certain kind. As a result, the second customizable and stackable container may be (1) inter-connectively stacked with the initial customizable and stackable container, and (2) accessorized in conformity with the first accessory of the certain kind associated with the initial customizable and stackable container.

[0016] In another aspect, a stackable container may be provided. The stackable container may include a cover with a double raised area sized to be inserted into a second recess on a second bottom of a second stackable container. The double raised area may have a height and the second stackable container may be shaped similarly to the stackable container. The stackable container may include a bottom with a recess sized to accept at least a portion of a third double raised area on a third cover of a third stackable container that may be shaped similarly to the stackable container. The stackable container may include a faceplate for visual recognition of a type of contents being stored by the stackable container. The faceplate may be configured to slide over the double raised area of the cover and be removably affixed to the cover. The faceplate may have (1) a first horizontal portion configured to cover a corresponding second horizontal portion on the cover, and (2) a first vertical portion configured to cover a corresponding second vertical portion on the cover. During use, the top portion of the double raised area of the cover of the stackable container that protrudes from the faceplate may be slid into the second recess on the second bottom on the second stackable container such that the second stackable container is held in place with respect to the stackable container via the inter-connection between the top portion of the double raised area of the cover of the stackable container that protrudes from the faceplate after the faceplate is removably affixed to the cover of the stackable container and the second recess on the second bottom of the second stackable container.

[0017] In another aspect, a stackable container may be provided. The stackable container may include a container base having a frame configured to hold contents. A top portion of the frame may have a protrusion. The stackable container may include a transparent lid having a downwardly extending exterior lip. The downwardly extending exterior lip may be configured to snap over the protrusion of the container base to hold the transparent lid onto the container base during use. The transparent lid may have a centrally-located plateau. The stackable container may include a removable faceplate having an interior cut-out portion sized to fit snugly over the centrally-located plateau of the transparent lid. The removable faceplate may further have (1) a horizontal portion configured to cover a corresponding horizontal exterior portion of the transparent lid, and (2) a vertical portion configured to

cover a corresponding vertical exterior portion of the transparent lid. The centrally-located plateau of the transparent lid of the stackable container may also be transparent such that after the faceplate is removably attached to the transparent lid, the contents of the stackable container remain viewable through the centrally-located plateau.

[0018] In another aspect, a stackable container may be provided. The stackable container may include a container base having a frame configured to hold contents. The top portion of the frame may have a protrusion. The stackable container may include a transparent lid having a downwardly extending exterior lip. The downwardly extending exterior lip may be configured to snap over the protrusion of the container base to hold the transparent lid onto the container base during use. The transparent lid may have a depressed perimeter between a centrally-located plateau and an upwardly extending exterior lip. The stackable container may include a removable faceplate having (1) a horizontal portion configured to cover a corresponding horizontal exterior portion of the transparent lid, and (2) an interior cut-out portion sized to fit snugly over the centrally-located plateau of the transparent lid such that the removable faceplate may be mounted onto the transparent lid within the depressed perimeter and between the upwardly extending exterior lip and the centrally-located plateau of the transparent lid. The centrally-located plateau of the transparent lid of the stackable container may also be transparent such that after the removable faceplate is removably attached to the transparent lid, the contents of the stackable container remain viewable through the centrally-located plateau of the transparent lid.

[0019] The present invention is defined by the following claims. Nothing in this section should be taken as a limitation on those claims. Further aspects and advantages of the invention are discussed below in conjunction with the preferred embodiments and may be later claimed independently or in combination.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0020] The present embodiments will become more fully understood from the detailed description given herein below and the accompanying drawings which are given by way of illustration only, and are not limitative of the present invention, and wherein:

[0021] Figure 1 illustrates an exemplary interchangeable, stackable container;

[0022] Figure 2 illustrates an exemplary faceplate;

[0023] Figure 3 illustrates an exemplary cover and case;

[0024] Figure 4 illustrates an exemplary bottom of an interchangeable, stackable container;

[0025] Figure 5 illustrates a perspective view of an exemplary faceplate;

[0026] Figure 6A illustrates an exemplary cross-sectional view of a double raised area of an exemplary cover without a faceplate;

[0027] Figure 6B illustrates an exemplary cross-sectional view of a double raised area of an exemplary cover with a faceplate;

[0028] Figure 7 illustrates an exemplary method of use of customizable and interchangeable stackable containers;

[0029] Figures 8 through 10 illustrate additional exemplary covers and removable faceplates; and

[0030] Figures 11A and 11B illustrate an exemplary container insert.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0031] The present embodiments relate to a series of customizable and interchangeable stackable containers and a method of using the same. Each of the stackable containers may have transparent sides and a transparent or partially transparent cover. The cover for each stackable container may have an interchangeable or customizable faceplate. Each of the containers may be of the same size and shape, and be configured to be stacked on top of another container. A series of the stackable containers may form a vertical stack of individual containers.

[0032] The cover for each stackable container may include a protruding plateau or other raised area. Each container may include a recess, such as a receding plateau, on its bottom surface. The raised area of the cover of a bottom container may be sized to fit within, mate with, or otherwise be sized to be matingly accepted by the recess on the bottom surface of a top container. The surfaces of the protruding raised area of the cover of a bottom stackable container may form one or more interference or otherwise snug fits with surfaces of the recess on the bottom of a top stackable container so that the bottom and top stackable containers may be firmly inter-connected or interlocked with each other.

[0033] The present embodiments may include any stackable design. The containers may be stacked one on top of another, or side-by-side, or front-to-rear, or back-to-front. Raised areas, receding areas, and other means of interconnection may be on the sides of the containers, such as on the left and right sides, in addition to being on the top and bottom surfaces. Alternatively, the present embodiments may not include any means of direct interconnection between surfaces of adjacent containers.

[0034] In one embodiment, the stackable containers may be transparent, or partially transparent, plastic storage and display boxes. The display boxes may have rectangular, square, or circular cross-sections. The display boxes may have removable covers. The covers may have a central transparent and raised area. The covers may also have a border area that may be recessed with respect to the raised area so that another box may be stacked

on top of the cover of the first box. The border area of the cover may also include a replaceable informative, protective, and/or decorative faceplate.

[0035] Different sizes of display boxes may be supplied, and the boxes may be shaped such that two rectangular boxes may be stacked above or below a square box, and vice versa. This may provide flexibility as to how the boxes may be stacked and stored. Additionally, the transparent sides and cover center permit viewing of the internal contents of the box without opening it, facilitating selection of a desired item being displayed at a merchant location or from storage, either at the merchant location or a customer location/home.

[0036] The display boxes may be part of an overall system designed so that the boxes may be used both during retailing, and for storage at a customer's home. As a result, waste may be reduced, and a more environmentally friendly way to package items may be provided. The customer also may not have to purchase a separate storage box for display, and the transparent sides and/or cover or top may facilitate finding a desired article. The display boxes may be suited for items such as jewelry, shoes, craft and hobby items, small tools, articles of clothing, and the like.

[0037] When used as the original packaging for an item, the box may be customized or personalized with appropriate border inserts and/or a faceplate on the cover to identify the store, manufacturer, or contents. The borders may be colored to match the store or manufacturer logo. Appropriate text may be supplied on the border, or in an insert inside the box, as agreed with the provider of the item. Additional labels may be supplied, for example at the end of a box. By signing up to participate in the system, the store or manufacturer may show that they are adopting re-usable packaging, which is more environmentally friendly than disposable containers. At the merchant level these containers may be suitable to replace current packaging for jewelry and technology such as iphones, ipods, and shoes where current packaging is not conducive to reuse.

[0038] The system of the present embodiments may include replacement inserts or faceplates for the cover borders. The faceplates may be purchased by consumers to replace

the store or manufacturer provided border to match their home decor, or to provide for another purpose, such as for color-coding items. Purchase of the faceplates or other inserts may be optional, and the boxes may be stored with their original logo inserts if desired.

[0039] The system may include larger containers into which the stackable boxes may be inserted to form a customizable system. Empty boxes may be sold such that the consumer may transfer one or more items they already own or items bought from non-participating merchants into the system. Thus, the system may provide flexibility to allow the consumer to build their own storage system for jewelry or other articles. As their collection grows, consumers may simply reconfigure or restack the boxes into any suitable configuration, either by buying larger outer containers or by stacking the boxes on a shelf or in a drawer. The boxes may easily be removed for travel, or to gain access to the item, such as an item of jewelry, inside for wear. The transparency of the boxes may make it easy for the consumer to locate and access the correct item quickly.

[0040] In one embodiment, a customer may purchase a series of individual stackable containers over a period of time. The customer may initially purchase one or more of the stackable containers storing a certain type of article. Subsequently, the customer may purchase an additional article of the same type in a similarly shaped stackable container. The newly purchased stackable container containing the new article may be stacked upon the customer's previously purchased stackable containers containing articles of the same type, for both storage and easy viewing of the stored contents.

I. Customizable Storage Container System

[0041] In one aspect, the present embodiments relate to containers for storing and transporting articles. More specifically, the present embodiments may relate to a primarily or partially transparent container which is suitable for storing small items or sets of items such as jewelry and fashion accessories. The present embodiments may be applied to the storage of other small items such as, but not limited to, crafts, small tools, small fishing equipment and lures, stamp collections, coin collections, rock and gem collections, and beads. Alternatively, the present embodiments may be used for storage of large items.

[0042] The present embodiments may provide an improved organization and storage system for fine jewelry and fashion accessories. The system may include an enhanced individual container which may house an item or set of fine jewelry or fashion accessories, meant to be worn together as a set. The container, when used in plurality and/or in various sizes, may allow for a much more functional 'system' of storing fine jewelry or accessories as compared to existing techniques.

[0043] The individual containers may be used in various sizes and/or in plurality to create an enhanced jewelry storage system that may then be contained in re-designed stackable trays, jewelry boxes, jewelry armoires, transportable cases, or other storage systems, or stacked within someone's existing furniture, drawer or container. The individual containers may be made available in various sizes, stackable, transparent or partially transparent, light-weight, impact-resistant (such as for protection of the jewelry during transport). The individual containers may have a secure cover that is sealed in a manner that may not accidentally open on its own during transport, as the contents may be valuable and preferably be secured.

[0044] The individual containers may be designed to allow certain user-desired options for personalization that may include, but is not limited to: the ability to attach an informative, protective, or decorative plate to the top and/or bottom of the container and still retain the stackability feature; the ability to insert removable dividers, stabilizers, cushions, or other container - specific inserts or dividers such as anti-tarnish material, and/or inserts that may allow for the use of wireless, digital or other automated technology in connection with inventory, security, or other needs. Other options for personalization and/or faceplates may optionally be used.

[0045] The organizational features of the present embodiments may include a stackable design on like, closed containers. The container body, configured to hold content, may nest into another open container body of like size. A body of the container may nest on top of an upside down cover when open, if constructed with a completely removable cover. The containers may be inter-connective.

[0046] In one embodiment, a container cover may be completely removable from a container body. The container cover may have a secure closure to the container body in order to protect contents from accidentally dislodging from the container body. The container cover may be constructed to close in various ways including, but not limited to: snap closure, sliding closure, hinge and snap, hinge and lock, and other fasteners.

[0047] The container body and cover may be made out of plastic or various plastics combined together. The containers may be used in plurality to organize items. Each container may include a non-digital label (written or typed) for identifying a stored item for the item's proper replacement to a correct container after use.

[0048] The container may include a handle or attachable wheels. The container may include 'feet' that would allow the container to rest on its side. The container may be shaped as a square, rectangle, oval, circular, cylindrical or other traditional or non-traditional, recognizable or non-recognizable shape.

[0049] The container cover and/or container bottom may have ability to attach a removable faceplate perimeter or casing made from rigid or flexible material such as, but not limited to, plastic, wood, metal, fabric or any other material suitable for faceplate purposes. The container cover and/or container bottom may retain its stackability feature whether or not the removable faceplate perimeter or casing is attached. The container body is preferably made of transparent or translucent material, and may be completely solid or solid in part.

[0050] The container cover may be manufactured from transparent material for maximum or partial visibility of stored contents. The container cover may be translucent or solid around the perimeter of the cover.

[0051] The container may include a number of organizational tools, such as dividers or hooks. For instance, the container may include removable inserts or dividers that may allow a user to maximize container space by separating items. The container may include removable inserts to stabilize items which may be stored within the container by reducing space or to decrease the likelihood of the item's entanglement with itself or other items. The

container may reserve a defined area to affix, attach or insert a keepsake or other note that pertains to the item stored in the container. The organizing tools may alternatively or additionally include hooks to hang necklaces, affix earrings to, and to hold rings, watches and bracelets.

II. Durability and Content-Protective Features

[0052] The container may include durability and content-protective features. The container cover may connect to the bottom of another container in various ways that afford the contents of the container to be secure when the container is turned on its side or upside down. The container and cover may be scratch resistant, anti-scratch, or scratchproof, as well as impact resistant. The container and cover may offer ultra-violet (UV) protection, and may be heat resistant and dishwasher safe.

[0053] The container and cover may be constructed with food-grade material. The container and cover seal may have an airtight seal design (airtight = tarnish resistance). The container and cover may be constructed from water-resistant material, such as plastic, and may have a waterproof seal design. The container may be constructed to contain liquids and/or to be re-usable. The container may include a removable anti-tarnish tab, strip, material, or fabric.

III. Security and Inventory Features

[0054] The container may include one or more locking mechanisms. The container may be tamper evident when the cover is in place and appropriately closed onto the container body. Tamper evidence may be the result of hinged locking mechanisms being moved to the 'open' position or a locking member position change.

[0055] Magnets, neodymium or super magnets may be used to assist in closure of the container. Super magnets may be spaced around a perimeter of a cover. A corresponding spacing of super magnets may be placed along a top ridge of a case, such that super magnets hold the cover in place and over the top of the base of the container. Magnets or super

magnets may also be used to hold the faceplates onto the covers, or instead of or in conjunction with the fasteners described herein.

[0056] The container may incorporate bar code or a technology device, such as a wireless remote receiver or transmitter. The container may include a technology component designed to be used in conjunction with an inventory security software program, security system, wireless remote technology, or other computer-based technology. The container may be suited to interact with wireless technology. The container may include other security devices, such as processing units or receivers, to be used with higher technology security, camera, and digital storage software. The container may include a battery and electronic devices to transmit information.

[0057] Each container and/or faceplate may include a Universal Product Code (UPC) bar code tag, label, identifier or other related UPC, source code or global source code feature. Each container and/or faceplate may include a radio frequency tag, label, chip, coil, transmitter, receiver or other radio frequency related feature. For instance, each container and/or faceplate may include (1) a Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) or "Smart Labels" tag, label, chip, coil, transmitter, receiver or other RFID-related feature; (2) an electromagnetic (EM) tag, strip, chip, coil, transmitter, receiver or other EM-related feature; (3) an acousto-magnetic tag, strip, chip, coil, transmitter, receiver or other acousto-magnetic related feature; and/or (4) a power source such as a battery or other power source, including energy-harvesting devices. The technology components may be 'built' into the construction of the container so as to avoid tampering or the ability to remove components. In one embodiment, the technology components may be read-only and/or reprogrammable.

IV. Multi-Container System for Storage

[0058] The container may be designed to be used with a plurality of other containers and stored in a portable and larger container with a handle. The container may be stored in stackable and/or nestable trays, armoires, furniture, pouches or other containers specifically designed for multiple container units. The container may be stored in larger storage containers or furniture such as jewelry armoires, drawers or other containers that are not

necessarily designed for the container. The container may be stored in a container that requires power operation where individual containers may or may not draw on power supplied directly or indirectly by the larger container. The container may include a label for wireless and/or digital identification of one or more items stored in the container. In one aspect, the larger storage containers and/or other housing units for housing the stackable containers may be part of the multi-container system for storage of the present embodiments.

V. Accessories

[0059] The system may include a number of accessories to be used with the containers. Accessories may include: (1) keepsake note cards; (2) foam padding, or memory foam; (3) anti-tarnish material or (LusterLoc®); (4) decorative plates for container bottom or container cover; (5) inventory system - technology-based or manual label and ledger; (6) pouches, bags, or containers - to insert into the individual containers for travel, mobility and/or gifting; (6.5) pouches, bags or containers for packing one or multiple containers for travel, mobility or gifting; (7) organizer for un-used containers and accessories; (8) divider inserts - so multiple items may be stored in one container, but separated; (9) anti-tangle clips, stays, or inserts that may prevent chains from tangling; (10) stackable, nestable trays with adjustable dividers (slats) that may hold the containers in rows; (11) magnets that may be applied to containers; (12) anti-slip material that may be applied to the bottom of each container; (13) theft deterrent systems or lock systems for the larger storage containers that may hold the smaller containers; (14) inventory software; and (15) jewelry boxes, cases, armoires, and furniture or other organizers specifically designed to work with the system of containers described herein.

[0060] Generally, the present embodiments may be used for a variety of applications. Exemplary applications may include jewelry organization, craft organization, small items organization, small hardware storage, fishing hardware storage, stamp collection storage, coin collection storage, and money (bills) collection storage. The present embodiments may also be used with a variety of container holders, including jewelry armoires; flanging shelf

systems; over-the-door holders or display cases; lazy-susan display cases; spice rack storage systems; jewelry boxes; jewelry armoires (furniture) to utilize containers; and travel pouches.

[0061] The present embodiments may be provided as a package or kit. An exemplary package may include divider inserts, a necklace logo piece concept, sample decorative faceplates, label inserts for numbering inventory, foam or padding inserts to take up space, containers of various sizes, keepsake notes, and anti-tarnish strips or tabs of material.

VI. Customizable Container/Removable Faceplate For Content Recognition

[0062] In another aspect, the present embodiments may relate to containers for storing items and concerns a removable protective and/or informative faceplate; casing; housing; cover; skin or other removable element that may not interfere with the general utility of container. The present embodiments may provide the ability to customize or personalize the container with the removable or interchangeable faceplate protective or informative attachment such that a user is able to customize the exterior of the storage containers to his or her desired preference(s).

[0063] Customizing or personalizing storage containers may serve functional, informative, and/or cognitive aspects. For example, a consumer may wish to color-code certain stored items in order to distinguish a particular stored item from another. With conventional containers, when looking for a stored item, a user may reach for one box amongst a stack of like boxes only to learn it does not contain the desired contents. Therefore, the ability to distinguish contents of containers by the container itself may be useful, and the present embodiments may provide a system having the ability to change the look of storage boxes or containers in order to aid in identifying a particular item from other items.

[0064] The system of containers may be used to organize a variety of items across the house: for example the container may house shoe sets in closets; pens in the office; makeup in the bathroom; flashlights in the laundry room; batteries in the office; and tools in the garage. The system of containers maybe used to organize a variety of items across business; for example, files, office supplies and inventories. The system of containers may be used to

organized a variety of items across the medical industry: for example pharmaceuticals, medical devices, medical storage. The system of containers may be used to organize a variety of items across the technology industry: for example iPads, iPods, DVDs, earphones, cords, and accessories. The system may color code: shoes that are stored; craft boxes; store beads; children shoe containers for their respective rooms, and so on. The system may upgrade the look of a plastic storage container so that it coordinates with a room decor, *i.e.*, a faceplate or insert may be manufactured and then used with other containers that already exist.

[0065] The faceplate or other attachment or skin may be interchangeably used with other, already existing storage containers. The faceplates may have sports, holiday, movie, character, and other themes. The faceplates may be color-coded, such as a blue-box series for one type of content or matching set and a red-box series for another type of content or matching set.

VII. Exemplary Embodiments

[0066] Figure 1 illustrates an exemplary interchangeable, stackable container 100. The stackable container 100 may include a case 102 and a cover 104. The case may include four sides 108 and a bottom 110. The bottom 110 may include a recess 112 or raised area into the body of the case 102. The cover 104 may include a raised area 106 and a border area 114 surrounding the raised area 106. The stackable container 100 may include additional, fewer, or alternate components.

[0067] The raised area 106 of the cover 104 may have a first surface area and a first height or depth 116. The recess 112 of the bottom of the case 102 may have a second surface area and a second height or depth 118. The first surface area and first depth 116 of the raised area 106 of the cover 104 may be sized to fit within the second surface area and second height or depth 118 of the recess 112 of the bottom 110 of a similarly sized stackable container. In one aspect, the first height 116 of the raised area 106 may be approximately twice the size of the second height 118 of the recess 112 - to accommodate the stacking of a faceplate onto

the raised area 106 prior to stacking one container on top of another (as described elsewhere herein).

[0068] In one embodiment, the surfaces of, associated with, defining, and/or extending into or from the raised area 106 may form one or more interference fits with corresponding surfaces of, associated with, defining, and/or extending into or from the recess 112 of the bottom of another stackable container. Snug fits between the adjoining surfaces may facilitate a firm inter-connection between a top container and a bottom container during use. Fasteners may also be used to facilitate inter-connection between containers.

[0069] Alternatively, the surfaces of, associated with, defining, and/or extending into or from the raised area 106 may make clearance fits with one or more surfaces of, associated with, defining, and/or extending into or from the recess 112 of the bottom of another stackable container. For instance, the top and bottom containers may be held together via snaps, screws, or other fasteners associated with either or both the raised area 106 and the recess 112.

[0070] The border area 114 of the cover 104 may be configured to accept an interchangeable faceplate that may include an interior opening sized to fit over the surface area of the raised area 106. The cover 104 and/or the raised area 106 may be transparent such that the contents of the case 102 may be viewed from above through the raised area 106 after the non-transparent faceplate is removably affixed to the cover 104. The sides 108 of the case 102 and the bottom 110 of the case 102 may also be transparent to facilitate viewing of the contents of the case 102 without opening the cover 104.

[0071] Figure 2 is a top view of an exemplary faceplate 200. The faceplate 200 may have an outer dimension 204 sized to substantially extend to the outer edges of the cover. The faceplate 200 may include a solid portion 202 for covering an outer area of the cover with a means for visual recognition by a viewer, such as via information or color-coding. The faceplate 200 may have an interior 208 having an inner dimension 206 sized to fit over or snap onto the raised area of the cover. The raised area of the cover and/or the inner dimension 206 of the faceplate 200 may have one or more fasteners 212. The fasteners 212

may be snaps, screws, tabs, or other fasteners that firmly, removably affix the faceplate 200 to the cover. The faceplate 200 may include additional, fewer, or alternate components.

[0072] Figure 3 illustrates an exemplary cover and case pair 300. The pair 300 may include a cover 302 and a case 304. The cover 302 may include a raised area 306, a border area 308, a thumb tab 210, an external ridge 312, and tabs 314. The case may include sides 316, a top ridge 318, and indentations 320. The pair 300 may include additional, fewer, or alternate components.

[0073] The cover 302 may include a thumb tab 310 for facilitating opening and closing of the cover 302. The external ridge 312 of the cover 302 may include tabs 314 or other fasteners. The top ridge 318 of the case 304 may include indentations 320 or other fasteners. The tabs 314 may be configured to snap into or over the indentations 320 on the case 304 such that tabs 314 and indentations 320 facilitate firmly and removably affixing the cover 302 to the case 304. In one embodiment, the cover 302 may form an airtight connection with the case 304.

[0074] Figure 4 illustrates an exemplary bottom 400 of a interchangeable, stackable container. The bottom 400 may include a recess or inwardly raised area 402. The recess 402 may have a square or rectangular outer surface area 404. The size of the surface area 404 of the recess 402 may be configured to accept a corresponding surface of a raised area of the cover of another container during use. The recess 402 and raised area of a cover may have alternative corresponding surface shapes, such as circular or oval. The bottom 400 may include additional, fewer, or alternate components.

[0075] Figure 5 illustrates a perspective view of an exemplary faceplate 500. The faceplate 500 may include a top surface 502 and an interior portion 504. The top surface 502 may be color coded or have other designs to facilitate recognition of a type of contents that the associated container contains. The interior portion 504 may be sized to be fit over a raised portion on a cover of the container.

[0076] The faceplate 500 may include fasteners 510 on a side 508 defining in part the interior portion 502. The surfaces of the sides 508 may make interference or clearance fits with corresponding surfaces of sides defining a raised area on a cover of the container.

[0077] The fasteners 510 may include tabs, indentations, snaps, screws, grooves, or other fasteners. The fasteners 510 may be configured to work in unison with surfaces on the exterior of one or more surfaces on the raised area of a cover. The fasteners 510 may be configured such that the faceplate 500 may snap onto the raised area of a cover and be held in place. The faceplate 500 may have a faceplate height 506 that is less than a height of the raised area of a cover of the container such that at least a portion of the raised area protrudes from the faceplate 500 for acceptance by a recess on the bottom of another container.

[0078] Figure 6A illustrates an exemplary cross-sectional view of an exemplary cover 600 without a faceplate. The cover 600 may include a substantially flat lid portion 604 and a raised area 606. The raised area 606 may have a height 608 of a first size and a surface area 610 of a first area.

[0079] Figure 6B illustrates an exemplary cross-sectional view of an exemplary cover 600 with a faceplate 616. The faceplate 616 may have a faceplate height that is approximately half the height of the raised area 606. In other words, the raised area 606 may have a height that is approximately twice the height or thickness of the faceplate 616. As a result, the raised area 606 may be characterized as a "double raised area."

[0080] As shown, after the faceplate 616 is removably affixed to the cover 600, a top portion of the raised area 606 protrudes from the faceplate 616. The top portion of the raised area 606 that protrudes from the faceplate 616 may be configured to fit in within the recess area of a bottom of another container to facilitate inter-connecting the containers together during use.

VIII. Exemplary Method

[0081] Figure 7 illustrates an exemplary method of selling customizable and interchangeable, stackable containers 700. The method may include selling a first content of

a certain type along with an initial customizable and stackable container that is displaying the first content of the certain type at a merchant location during a first shopping event 702; selling one or more accessories to accessorize the initial stackable container 704; subsequently selling a second content of the certain type along with a second customizable and stackable container that is displaying the second content of the certain type at the merchant location during a second shopping event 706; subsequently selling one or more similar accessories to accessorize the second stackable container 708; and subsequently selling another type of accessory to accessorize both the initial and second stackable containers in a like manner that is different from the original manner of accessorizing 710. The method may include additional, fewer, or alternate actions.

[0082] The method 700 may include selling a first content of a certain type along with an initial customizable and stackable container that is displaying the first content of the certain type at a merchant location during a first shopping event 702. The initial customizable and stackable container may be at least partially transparent such that the first content of the certain type within the initial customizable and stackable container may be viewed without removing a cover associated with the initial customizable and stackable container. The initial customizable and stackable container may be configured to be accessorized by a first accessory of a certain kind, such as the faceplates and inserts discussed herein.

[0083] The initial stackable containers sold may include those described herein. The initial stackable containers may include transparent sides and/or a partially transparent cover. The initial stackable container(s) may be intended for home use, such that the customer does not discard or throw away an initial jewelry or other store display box that may house contents such as technology, shoes and other items. Thus, the method 700 may reduce waste by providing a method of using the same container for both selling the contents of the container, as well for home storage of the container and home display of the contents purchased. Alternatively the consumer may transfer one or more items they already own or items bought from non-participating merchants into the container.

[0084] The method 700 may include selling one or more accessories to accessorize the one or more initial stackable containers 704. A number of faceplates, covers, inserts, dividers, and other accessories may be sold for home-use of the stackable containers 704. The accessories may be used to customize the stackable containers to the preferences of the user, such as by color or theme. The method may include selling additional empty containers to facilitate transfer and storage of items already owned by a consumer or items purchased at non-participating merchants.

[0085] The method 700 may include subsequently selling a second content of the certain type along with a second customizable and stackable container that is displaying the second content of the certain type at the merchant location during a second shopping event 706. The second customizable and stackable container may be at least partially transparent such that the second content of the certain type within the second customizable and stackable container may be viewed without removing a cover associated with the second customizable and stackable container.

[0086] The second container may be identical or substantially identical to the original container(s) sold. As a result, the user may employ the subsequently bought associated container as part of a customizable system intended for home use. Similar to the original containers, the secondary containers may be transparent or partially transparent and be suitable for both store display and home use, such that waste (such as discarding unwanted containers at home after purchase) may be alleviated.

[0087] In one embodiment, the second customizable and stackable container may be configured to have a substantially identical size and shape as the initial customizable and stackable container, and be accessorized by a second accessory of the certain kind such that the second customizable and stackable container may be (1) inter-connectively or non-interconnectively stacked with the initial customizable and stackable container, and (2) accessorized in conformity with the first accessory of the certain kind associated with the initial customizable and stackable container.

[0088] In another embodiment, the containers may not be stackable, but a faceplate may be provided that allows for stackability. Faceplates may convert non-stackable containers into a set of stackable containers. Faceplates may be attached to the top, bottom, left, right, front, and/or back of the containers. Corresponding faceplates may be attached to adjacent containers. A corresponding set of faceplates, *i.e.*, a faceplate on the left side of a first container, and a faceplate on the right side of a second container, may be configured to be interconnected with each other, such as via raised areas, receding areas, snap-on means, or other surfaces for interconnection.

[0089] The method 700 may include subsequently selling one or more similar accessories to accessorize the second stackable container 708. The method may include selling the second accessory of the certain kind during the second or a subsequent shopping event to accessorize the second customizable and stackable container in conformity with the first accessory of the certain kind. The initial and second customizable and stackable containers may facilitate display of the first and second content of the certain type, and visual recognition of the certain type of content that is being stored by each customizable and stackable container may be facilitated via the corresponding first and second accessories of the certain kind.

[0090] In other words, the method of selling stackable containers may be user-customized to make new containers uniform with pre-existing containers of the same size at the user's location. The user may stack at home a store bought container for use with other containers, and interchange one or more faceplates at home to match with other containers.

[0091] In one embodiment, the certain type of content sold may be jewelry, and the method may further comprise selling dividers for dividing pieces of jewelry within each customizable and stackable container. In another embodiment, the certain kind of accessory may be a faceplate configured to be removably affixed to the cover of an individual customizable and stackable container. In another embodiment, the customizable and stackable containers may be generally cubical in shape, with either four or six (including top and bottom) sides each sized to be approximately equal to or less than 4.0 inches in length,

preferably approximately equal to or less than 2.0 inches in length. Other sized containers may be used for jewelry storage purposes. Additionally, containers used for other purposes may have larger and/or smaller sizes.

[0092] The method 700 may include subsequently selling another type of accessory to accessorize both the initial stackable container(s) and the subsequently sold stackable container(s) in a new and different manner 710. As the system of a user grows, they may wish to visually identify certain types of articles or matching articles via color, such as green for matching earrings, rings, and bracelets, and red for a second set of like matching articles. Once the user collects enough items, it may be useful to color code matching sets with new and different faceplates or inserts, or color code the same type of content with new and different faceplates or inserts.

[0093] The method 700 may include manufacturing, selling, or using stackable or non-stackable containers. The containers may be fully or partially transparent. For instance, preferably a minimum of one side, or a cover, or a bottom may be transparent. Combinations of transparent sides and covers may be used. Additional, fewer, or alternative transparent surfaces may be used.

[0094] The method 700 may include various types of faceplates. Preferably, when a faceplate is attached to a container, the faceplate may not hinder stackability. Further, the faceplate itself may be transparent or partially transparent to alleviate hindering the transparency of the container.

[0095] The method 700 may include various forms of packaging. The method 700 may include using re-closable, re-usable, non-disposable, and/or recyclable containers, faceplates, and other components. The present embodiments may be offered for sale as products in re-closable and/or re-usable packaging. Alternatively or additionally, disposable packaging may be used for transporting and selling the component parts of the present embodiments.

[0096] Preferably, the containers may be stackable and/or interlocking. However, the containers may be non-stackable and/or non-interlocking. For instance, the containers may be non-stackable, re-usable, and partially-transparent.

[0097] The method 700 may include stacking the containers one on top of another. Alternatively, the method 700 may include stacking the containers side-by-side, left-to-right, or back-to-front. The method 700 may include stacking the containers within one or more larger containers, dressers, drawers, or other containers. Other manners of stacking may be used.

[0098] The method 700 may include containers that lend themselves to re-use, re-cycling, and re-closing satisfactorily during use. For instance, current polycarbonate containers for small electronic devices or players may not be re-usable and may be sold with wasteful packaging. On the other hand, the present embodiments may include containers that may conveniently and effectively store small electronic devices, players, cameras, cell phones, components, and accessories.

[0099] The containers may each include a wireless transceiver attached to or embedded within the walls of each container. The wireless transceiver may be used for location tracking for both in-store and at-home use. The containers may be customizable and may be made stackable via a faceplate or other accessorizing attachment, including faceplates or attachments with processors, transceivers, or other wireless communication devices for communicating to a remote controller or system.

[00100] The customizable and stackable containers may contain a re-programmable electronic device attached to or embedded within walls of each customizable and stackable container. For instance, a processor with a re-programmable memory may be attached to each container. The processor may include a transmitter, a receiver, a transceiver, or other means of wireless communication. The processor may include a power supply such as a battery, solar panel, a MEMS (Microelectromechanical system) device, or an energy-harvester that harvests environmental energy to power the processor. Alternatively or additionally, the containers may include a RFID (radio frequency identification) device or a

processor with embedded memory or read-only memory. The containers may include processors or electronic devices with additional, fewer, or alternate components.

[00101] The processor may be configured to communicate with a remotely located controller (such as a remotely located controller associated with a merchant, manufacturer, or supplier) via wireless communication. The wireless communication may permit remote and automatic inventory tracking of the containers and/or their contents. Alternatively, the containers may include RFID devices or other tags that may be wanded by hand for manual data entry into a central system for inventory and/or container tracking, and generation of inventory reports.

[00102] In one aspect, a customer may return a container to a store sometime after original purchase. The processor or tag associated with the container may be used by a computer system associated with the store to track the container and/or automatically identify that the container has been returned. After which, the processor and/or tag may be reprogrammed for various purposes. For instance, the processor may be reprogrammed to include a new identification number. Upon resale, the processor may be reprogrammed with a new customer identifier associated with the different consumer that purchases new contents sold within the container. Additionally, the processor may be re-programmed with data identifying the new contents sold. The processor may be re-programmed with additional, fewer, or different types of data and/or instructions.

IX. Exemplary Covers and Removable Faceplates

[00103] The present embodiments may include stackable containers with removable faceplates, as discussed above. Additional exemplary embodiments may include a container with a removable faceplate attached to a lid, such as either on the exterior or the interior of the lid. The removable faceplate may be on the inside or on the outside of the container during use.

[00104] In one aspect, the container may be used with several different removable faceplates, *i.e.*, the faceplates may be interchangeable. As a result, consumers may use the

container, as well as the faceplates, for a longer period of time. For instance, instead of throwing away containers after being in use for awhile, new faceplates may be purchased to give a set of old containers a new or updated look. Extending the useful lifetime of the containers may be environmentally friendly.

[00105] Another embodiment may include a clear, transparent, and/or translucent container with a removable faceplate. The removable faceplate may not inhibit partial viewing of the container contents. During use, the removable faceplate may "frame" the contents of the container, such as when a viewer views the contents of the container from above and through the transparent cover. The removable faceplate may provide a colored frame, and may allow the user to view the contents of the container through a transparent lid portion via a central cut-out portion of the removable faceplate.

[00106] In one embodiment, the stackable container may include a container base having a frame configured to hold contents. A top portion of the frame may have a protrusion. The stackable container may include a transparent lid having a downwardly extending exterior lip. The downwardly extending exterior lip may be configured to snap over the protrusion of the container base to hold the transparent lid onto the container base during use. The transparent lid may have a centrally-located plateau. The stackable container may include a removable faceplate having an interior cut-out portion sized to fit snugly over the centrally-located plateau of the transparent lid. The removable faceplate may further have (1) a horizontal portion configured to cover a corresponding horizontal exterior portion of the transparent lid, and (2) a vertical portion configured to cover a corresponding vertical exterior portion of the transparent lid. The centrally-located plateau of the transparent lid of the stackable container may also be transparent such that after the faceplate is removably attached to the transparent lid, the contents of the stackable container remain viewable through the centrally-located plateau. Further, the vertical portion of the removable faceplate may be flush or substantially flush with an exterior wall of the container base.

[00107] In another embodiment, instead of having the vertical portion noted above, the faceplate may have only a horizontal portion for covering a corresponding horizontal surface

of the transparent lid. For instance, the transparent lid may include a depressed perimeter into which the removable faceplate is mounted between an exterior lip of the transparent lid and the centrally-located plateau of the transparent lid.

[00108] The stackable container may be configured to have a bottom with an outer surface area of approximately 2.0 inches by approximately 2.0 inches, and a height of approximately 2.0 inches. The stackable container may be configured to have an internal means for organizing jewelry, as well as other features discussed elsewhere herein.

[00109] The stackable container may further include a removable insert. The removable insert may include a base made of female material and one or more flaps made of male material. The flap may be affixed to the base and hold an item in place with respect to the base, after which the item held in place may be visible through the centrally-located plateau.

[00110] Other exemplary embodiments are depicted in Figures 8 through 10. Figure 8 illustrates a nestable container 800 with a removable faceplate 806. The nestable container 800 may include a container base 802, a lid 804, and a removable faceplate 806. The nestable container 800 may include additional, fewer, or alternate components.

[00111] The container base 802 may have an interior that extends outward moving vertically upward. The lid 804 may be configured to attach onto a top portion of the container base 802. The lid 804 may have a plateau shaped exterior having a centrally-located raised portion 808. The lid 804 may snap onto the container base 802.

[00112] The removable faceplate 806 may have a cut-out portion sized to snugly fit over, or snap onto, the plateau 808 of the lid 804. The removable faceplate 806 may have a horizontal portion 810 that extends horizontally over a corresponding horizontal portion of the exterior of the lid 804. The removable faceplate 806 may also have a vertical portion 812 that extends vertically over a corresponding vertical portion of the exterior of the lid 804.

[00113] A removable faceplate 806 may be colored in accordance with a coloring scheme that provides the user with an indication of the type of contents of the container. As a result, the removable faceplate 806 may provide a visual indication of the contents, or the type of

contents, of the container when the container is viewed directly from above and/or directly from the side.

[00114] Figure 9 illustrates another exemplary nestable container 900. The nestable container 900 may include a container base 902, a lid 904, and a removable faceplate 906. The nestable container 900 may include additional, fewer, or alternate components.

[00115] The removable faceplate 906 may be attached to the lid 904 in such a manner as to create a flush, or substantially flush, perimeter with the container base 902. The flush exterior of the nestable container 900 may facilitate ease of stacking and maximizing storage space during use.

[00116] The container base 902 may include a horizontal bottom with an indentation portion 920 configured to accept a corresponding raised or plateau portion on the lid 904. The container base 902 may include substantially straight and flat walls 914 that extend vertically upward. The top of the walls of the container base 902 may include a protrusion or bulge 916.

[00117] The lid 904 may have a generally horizontal body once attached to the container base 902. The lid 904 may have a vertically downward extending lip 918. The lip 918 may include an interior surface configured to fit or snap over the protrusion 916 on the top portion of the container base 902. The lid 904 may include a centrally-located raised or plateau portion 908.

[00118] The removable faceplate 906 may have a cut-out portion sized to snugly fit over, or snap onto, the plateau 908 of the lid 904. The removable faceplate 906 may have a horizontal portion 910 that extends horizontally over a corresponding horizontal portion of the exterior of the lid 904. The removable faceplate 906 may also have a vertical portion 912 that extends vertically over a corresponding vertical portion of the exterior of the lid 904. As shown, the exterior of the vertical portion 912 of the removable faceplate 906 may be flush, or substantially flush, with the exterior of the wall portion 914 of the container base 902.

[00119] Figure 10 illustrates another exemplary nestable container 1000. The nestable container 1000 may include a container base 1002, a lid 1004, and a removable faceplate 1006. The nestable container 1000 may include additional, fewer, or alternate components.

[00120] The lid 1004 may include a raised portion or plateau 1008 and an exterior-located, vertically rising lip 1030. The faceplate 1006 may comprise only a horizontal portion for covering a corresponding horizontal surface on the lid 1004. The faceplate 1006 may be set into a depressed perimeter on the top of the lid 1004, such as between the exterior perimeter "lip" 1030 and a centered elevated area or plateau 1008.

[00121] In one embodiment, the removable faceplate 1006 may be configured to snugly fit between the surfaces of the plateau 1008 and the vertical lip 1030. For instance, there may be interference fits between the surfaces on the removable faceplate 1006 and the corresponding surfaces on the lid 1004.

[00122] The lid 1004 may have an downwardly extending lip 1032. The downwardly extending lip 1032 may be configured to snap over an upwardly extending protrusion 1034 on a top portion of the container base 1002.

[00123] In another embodiment, a stackable container may be provided. The stackable container may include a cover with a double raised area sized to be inserted into a second recess on a second bottom of a second stackable container. The double raised area may have a height and the second stackable container may be shaped similarly to the stackable container. The stackable container may include a bottom with a recess sized to accept at least a portion of a third double raised area on a third cover of a third stackable container that may be shaped similarly to the stackable container. The stackable container may include a faceplate for visual recognition of a type of contents being stored by the stackable container. The faceplate may be configured to slide over the double raised area of the cover and be removably affixed to the cover. The faceplate may have (1) a first horizontal portion configured to cover a corresponding second horizontal portion on the cover, and (2) a first vertical portion configured to cover a corresponding second vertical portion on the cover. During use, the top portion of the double raised area of the cover of the stackable container

that protrudes from the faceplate may be slid into the second recess on the second bottom on the second stackable container such that the second stackable container is held in place with respect to the stackable container via the inter-connection between the top portion of the double raised area of the cover of the stackable container that protrudes from the faceplate after the faceplate is removably affixed to the cover of the stackable container and the second recess on the second bottom of the second stackable container.

[00124] The stackable container may further include other features discussed elsewhere herein. Additionally, instead of having the vertical portion noted directly above, the faceplate may have only a horizontal portion for covering a corresponding horizontal surface of the transparent lid, and the transparent lid may include a depressed perimeter into which the removable faceplate is mounted between an exterior lip and centrally-located plateau.

X. Exemplary Container Inserts

[00125] In another aspect, a container insert may be created using interconnective fabric or other materials. The insert may be a male and female connective version (either hook and loop or other alternative material having a male/female version that may act as a fastener). The insert may be partly or wholly covered with the female or male material and assembled with extruding flaps made of the alternate (male or female) material. The flaps may fold over to interconnect with the matching material so as to hold in place those contents placed under the flap.

[00126] Figures 11A and 11B depict an exemplary container insert 1100 having interconnective fabric. The insert 1100 may include a base 1104, a small flap 1102 and a large flap 1106. The insert 1100 may include additional, fewer, or alternate components.

[00127] Figure 11A depicts a front view of the exemplary container insert 1100. The base 1104 may be made from female material. The small flap 1102 and the large flap 1106 may be made from flexible, male material. The small flap 1102 and the large flap 1106 may be flexible enough to be folded over onto the female material of the base 1104. The male and

female material may interlock with each other, such as with hook and loop fastening materials.

[00128] Contents placed under either the small flap 1102 or large flap 1106 may be held in place by the insert 1100. The insert 1100 may be placed inside of a container, and the contents may be viewed by a user during use through a transparent lid or container walls. The insert 1100 may be sized to fit snugly within a container base, such that the contents being held by the insert 1100 remain firmly in place within the container during movement, such as while the container is being stacked on another container.

[00129] Figure 11B depicts a back view of the exemplary container insert 1100. The base 1104 may be made from female material, and the flaps 1102, 1106 may be made from flexible, male material. Alternatively, the base 1104 may be made from male material and the flaps 1102, 1106 may be made from female material. Other inserts may be used.

[00130] While several arrangements of the invention have been described, it will be understood that it is capable of still further modifications and this application is intended to cover any variations, uses, or adaptations of the invention, following in general the principles of the invention and including such departures from the present disclosure as to come within knowledge or customary practice in the art to which the invention pertains, and as may be applied to the essential features hereinbefore set forth and falling within the scope of the invention or the limits of the appended claims. It should be understood that many changes and modifications may be made without departing from the scope of the invention. The description and illustrations are by way of example only. Many more embodiments and implementations are possible within the scope of this invention and will be apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art. The various embodiments are not limited to the described environments and have a wide variety of applications.

[00131] It is intended in the appended claims to cover all such changes and modifications which fall within the true spirit and scope of the invention. Therefore, the invention is not limited to the specific details, representative embodiments, and illustrated examples in this

description. Accordingly, the invention is not to be restricted except in light as necessitated by the accompanying claims and their equivalents.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A series of stackable containers, the series of stackable containers comprising:
 - a top stackable container and a bottom stackable container having identical shapes, both the top stackable container and the bottom stackable container having:
 - transparent sides;
 - a bottom having an inward recess, the inward recess having a first surface area; and
 - a cover having a raised area, the raised area being transparent and having a second surface area and a height of a first length,
 - wherein the second surface area of the raised area of the cover of the bottom stackable container is sized to be accepted by the first surface area of the inward recess on the bottom of the top stackable container, and once the top stackable container is stacked on top of the bottom stackable container, side surfaces associated with or defining the second surface area of the raised area of the cover of the bottom stacker container make one or more interference fits with side surfaces associated with or defining the first surface area of the inward recess on the bottom of the top stackable container such that the top stackable container is inter-connectively stacked on top of the bottom stackable container.
2. The series of stackable containers of claim 1, wherein the cover of the top stackable container includes a faceplate configured to cover an outer portion of the cover, the faceplate having a cut-out interior sized to fit around the second surface area of the raised area of the cover such that the contents of each stackable container is viewable through the raised area of the cover.

3. The series of stackable containers of claim 2, wherein the faceplate is configured to have a second height of a second length, the second length of the second height of the faceplate being less than the first length of the height of the raised area such that after the faceplate is slid over the second surface area of the raised area of the cover of the bottom stackable container, at least a portion of the raised area of the cover of the bottom stackable container protrudes from the faceplate for acceptance by the inward recess on the bottom of the top stackable container to facilitate inter-connectively stacking the top and bottom stackable containers together.
4. The series of stackable containers of claim 3, wherein the faceplate is attachable to and removable from the cover of the top stackable container, the faceplate having a user-selected color.
5. The series of stackable containers of claim 4, wherein both the top stackable container and the bottom stackable container have:
 - a generally rectangular or square shape;
 - four transparent sides; and
 - a transparent bottom.
6. The series of stackable containers of claim 5, wherein each of the four transparent sides is approximately equal to or less than 4.0 inches in dimension.
7. The series of stackable containers of claim 6, wherein the top stackable container is configured to have an internal means for organizing jewelry.
8. A stackable container, the stackable container comprising:
 - a cover with a double raised area sized to be inserted into a second recess on a second bottom of a second stackable container, the double raised area having a height, the second stackable container being shaped similarly to the stackable container;

a bottom with a recess sized to accept at least a portion of a third double raised area on a third cover of a third stackable container, the third stackable container being shaped similarly to the stackable container; and

a faceplate for visual recognition of a type of contents being stored by the stackable container, the faceplate being configured to slide over the double raised area of the cover and be removably affixed to the cover, the faceplate having a second height of approximately half the height of the double raised area of the cover of the stackable container such that a top portion of the double raised area of the cover protrudes from the faceplate after the faceplate is removably affixed to the cover of the stackable container,

wherein, during use, the top portion of the double raised area of the cover of the stackable container that protrudes from the faceplate is slid into the second recess on the second bottom on the second stackable container such that second stackable container is held in place with respect to the stackable container via the inter-connection between the top portion of the double raised area of the cover of the stackable container that protrudes from the faceplate after the faceplate is removably affixed to the cover of the stackable container and the second recess on the second bottom of the second stackable container.

9. The stackable container of claim 8, wherein surfaces associated with or defining the double raised area of the cover of the stackable container and corresponding surfaces associated with or defining the second recess on the bottom of the second stackable container form one or more interference fits.
10. The stackable container of claim 9, wherein the surfaces associated with or defining the double raised of the cover of the stackable container and corresponding surfaces on the faceplate form one or more interference fits, the faceplate further being removably affixed to the cover via one or more fasteners.

11. The stackable container of claim 8, wherein the recess on the bottom of the stackable container fits over the third double raised area on the third cover of the third stackable container such that stackable container is held in place on top of the third stackable container via one or more interference fits between surfaces associated with or defining the recess on the bottom of the stackable container and corresponding surfaces associated with or defining the third double raised area on the third cover of the third stackable container, so that the stackable container is vertically stacked with respect to both the second and third stackable containers.
12. The stackable container of claim 8, wherein the double raised area of the cover of the stackable container is transparent such that after the faceplate is removably attached, the contents of the stackable container remain viewable through the transparent double raised area of the cover.
13. The stackable container of claim 11, wherein the stackable container is configured to have an organizing tool for jewelry and a velvet interior, and further configured to have a bottom with an outer surface area of approximately 2.0 inches by approximately 2.0 inches.
14. A method of selling customizable, stackable containers, the method comprising:
 - selling a first content of a certain type along with an initial customizable and stackable container that is displaying the first content of the certain type at a merchant location during a first shopping event, the initial customizable and stackable container being at least partially transparent such that the first content of the certain type within the initial customizable and stackable container may be viewed without removing a cover associated with the initial customizable and stackable container, the initial customizable and stackable container being configured to be accessorized by a first accessory of a certain kind; and
 - subsequently selling a second content of the certain type along with a second customizable and stackable container that is displaying the second content of the

certain type at the merchant location during a second shopping event, the second customizable and stackable container being at least partially transparent such that the second content of the certain type within the second customizable and stackable container may be viewed without removing a cover associated with the second customizable and stackable container,

wherein the second customizable and stackable container is configured to have a substantially identical size and shape as the initial customizable and stackable container, and be accessorized by a second accessory of the certain kind such that the second the second customizable and stackable container can be (1) inter-connectively stacked with the initial customizable and stackable container, and (2) accessorized in conformity with the first accessory of the certain kind associated with the initial customizable and stackable container.

15. The method of selling customizable, stackable containers of claim 14, the method further comprising selling the second accessory of the certain kind during the second or subsequent shopping event to accessorize the second customizable and stackable container in conformity with the first accessory of the certain kind, such that the initial and second customizable and stackable containers facilitate display of the first and second content of the certain type, and visual recognition of the certain type of content being stored by each customizable and stackable container via the corresponding first and second accessory of the certain kind.
16. The method of selling customizable stackable containers of claim 14, wherein the certain type of content is jewelry, the method further comprising selling dividers for dividing pieces of jewelry within each customizable and stackable container.
17. The method of selling customizable stackable containers of claim 14, wherein the certain kind of accessory is a faceplate configured to be removably affixed to the cover of an individual customizable and stackable container.

18. The method of selling customizable stackable containers of claim 14, wherein the initial customizable and stackable container includes a case and a cover both having a generally cylindrical shape.
19. The method of selling customizable stackable containers of claim 14, wherein the initial customizable and stackable container contains a re-programmable electronic device attached to or embedded within walls of the initial customizable and stackable container.
20. The method of selling customizable stackable containers of claim 14, the method further comprising remotely tracking a location of the initial customizable and stackable container via a wireless transceiver or other electronic communication device attached to or embedded within walls of the initial customizable and stackable container.

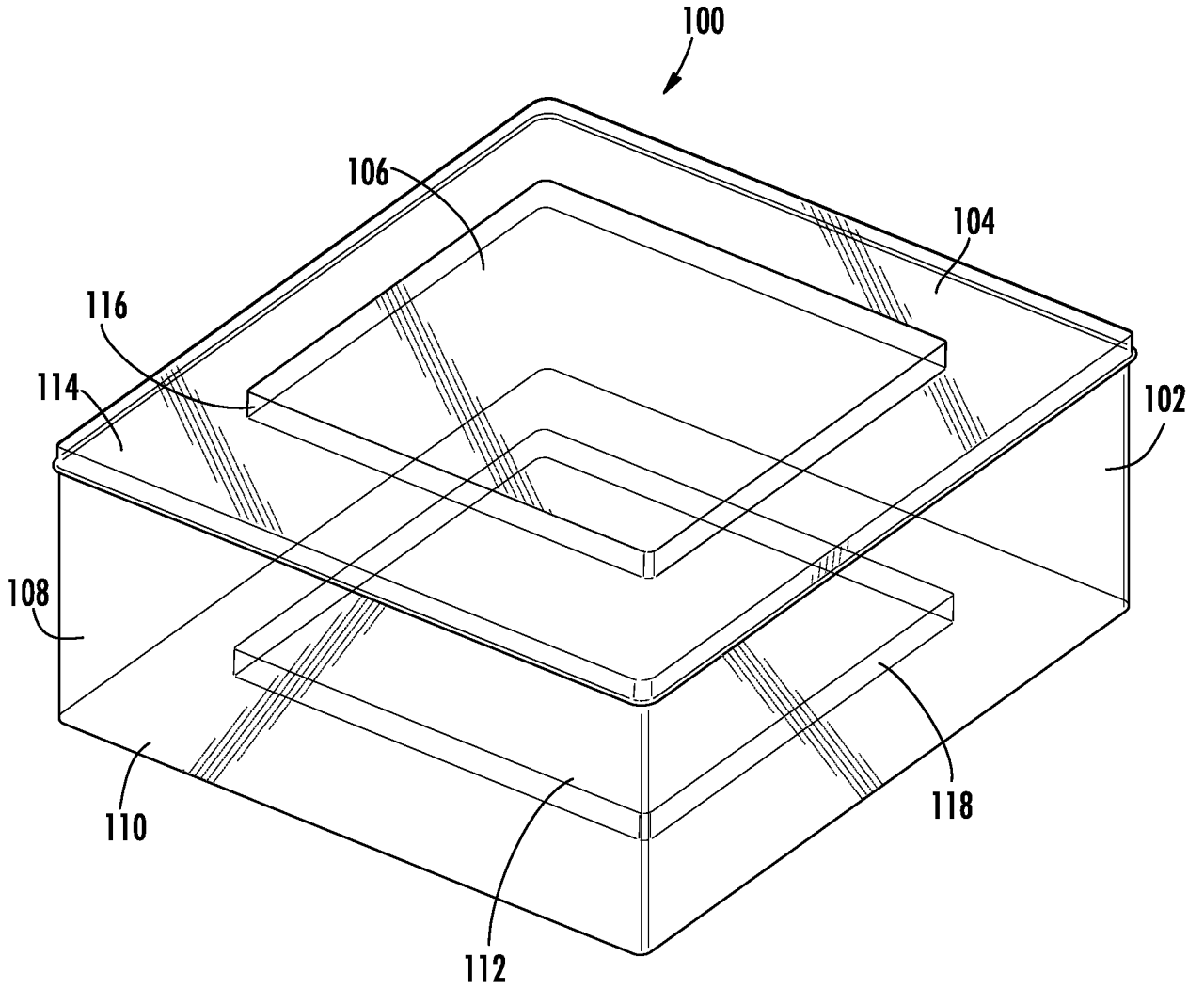


FIG. 1

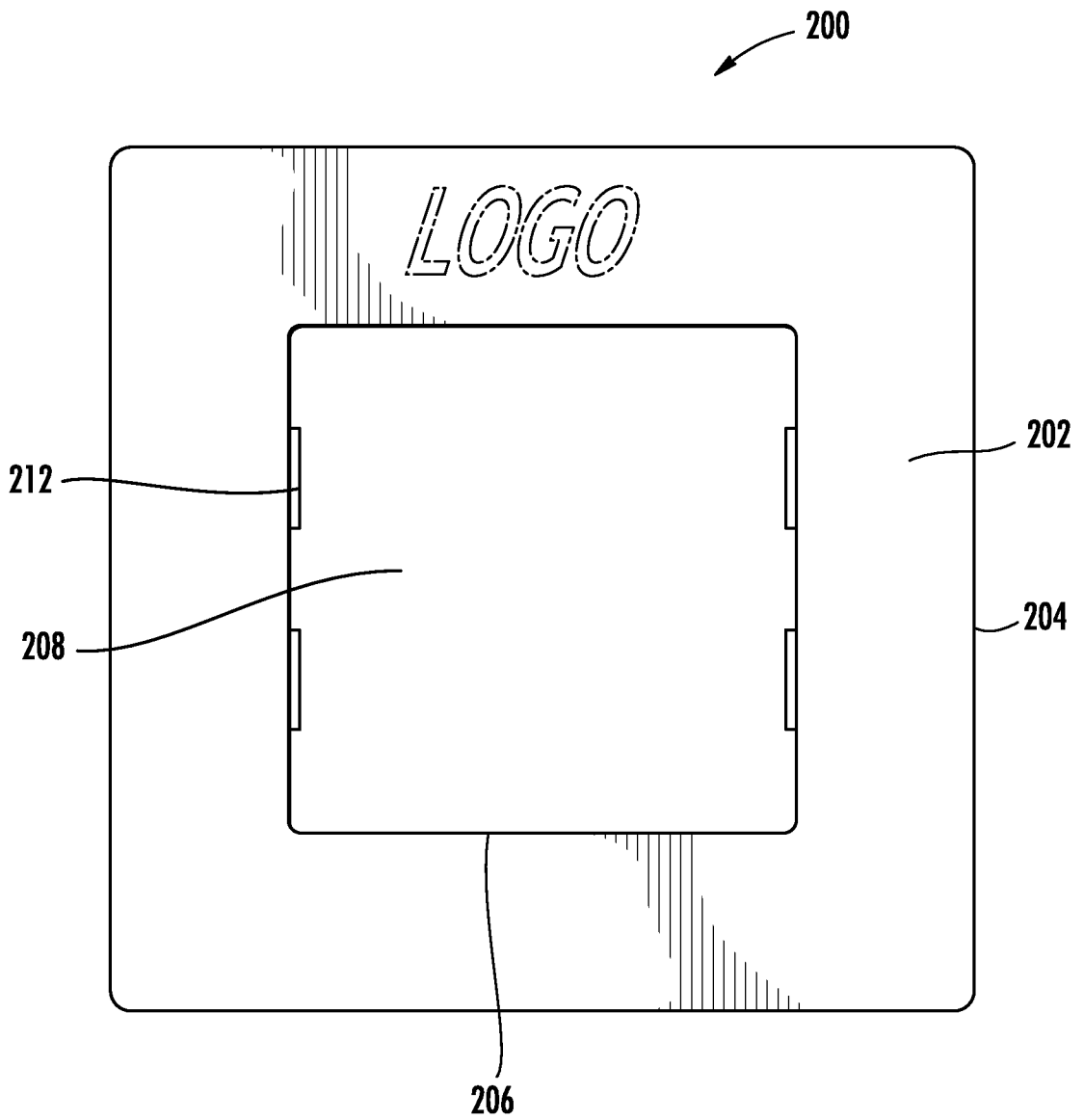
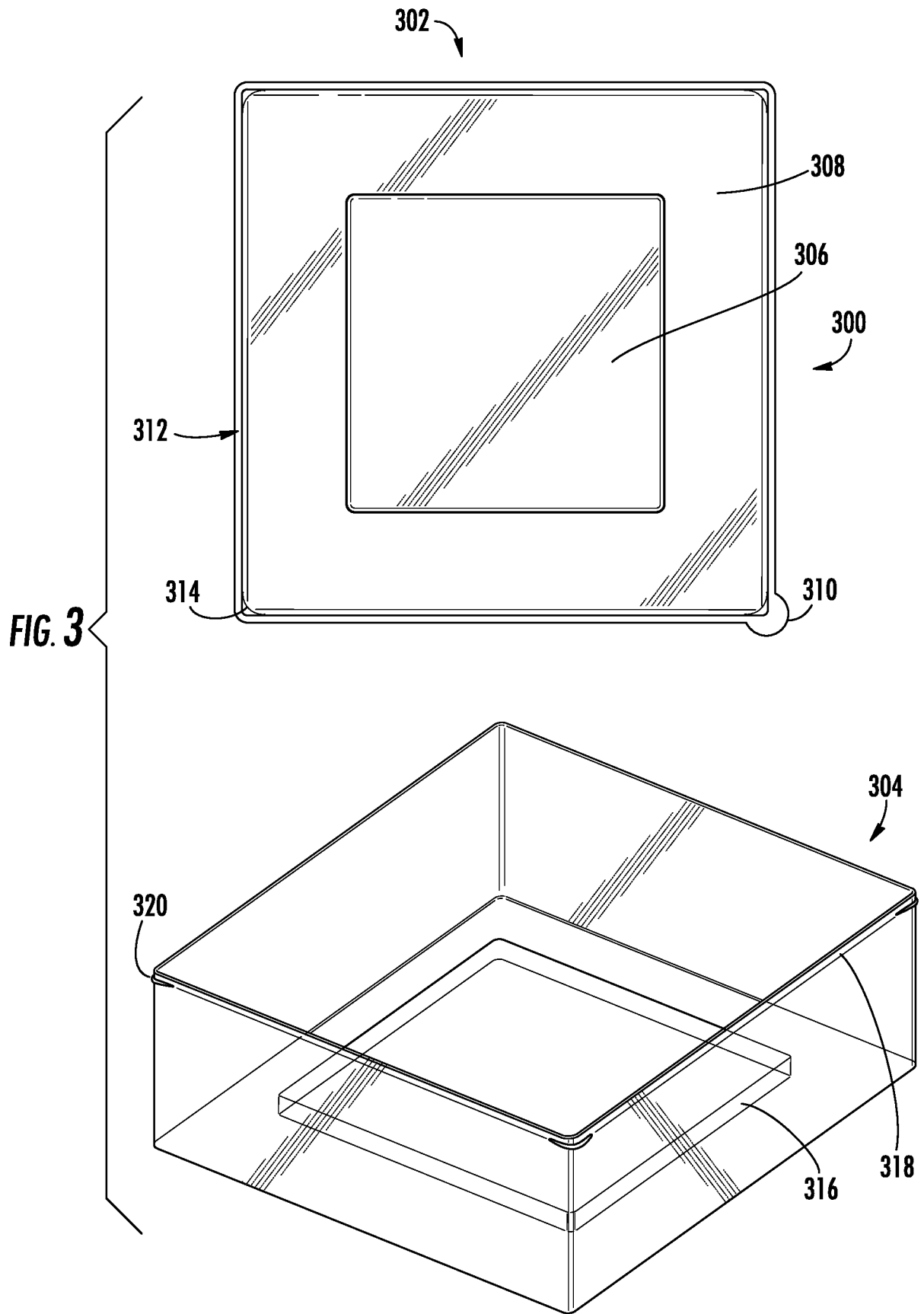


FIG. 2



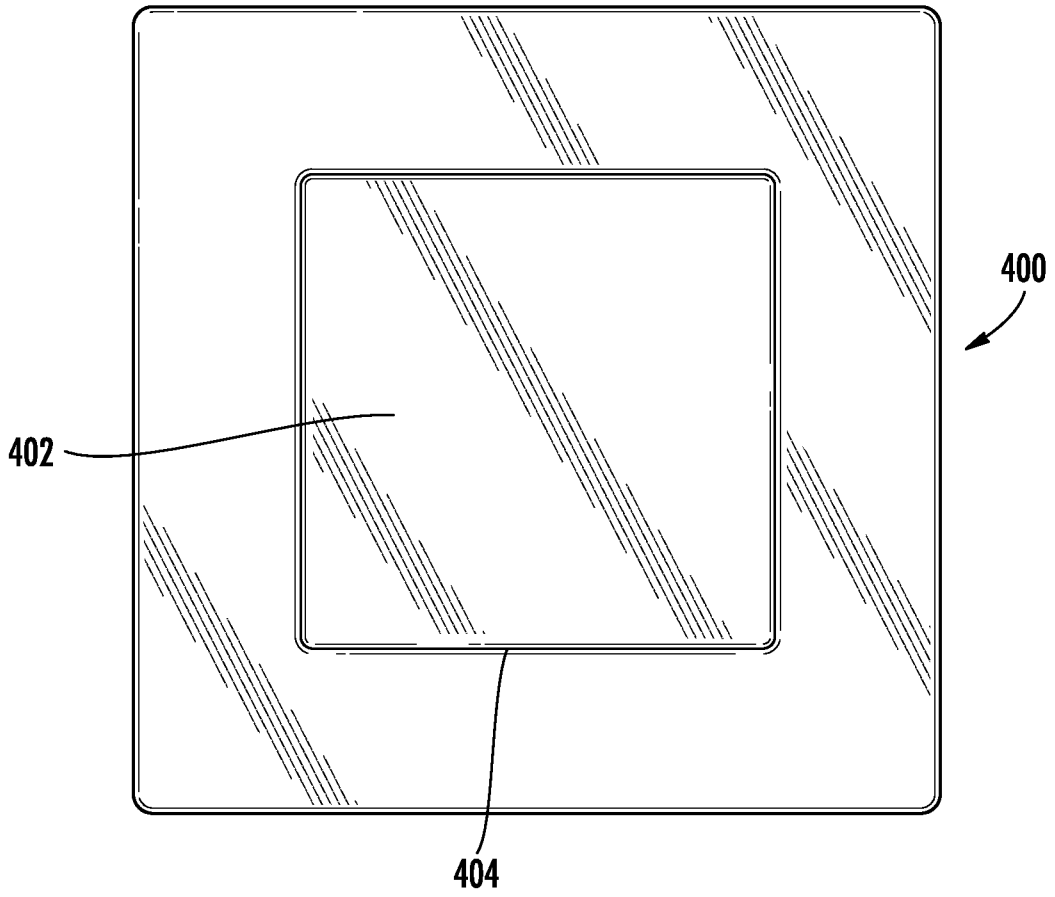


FIG. 4

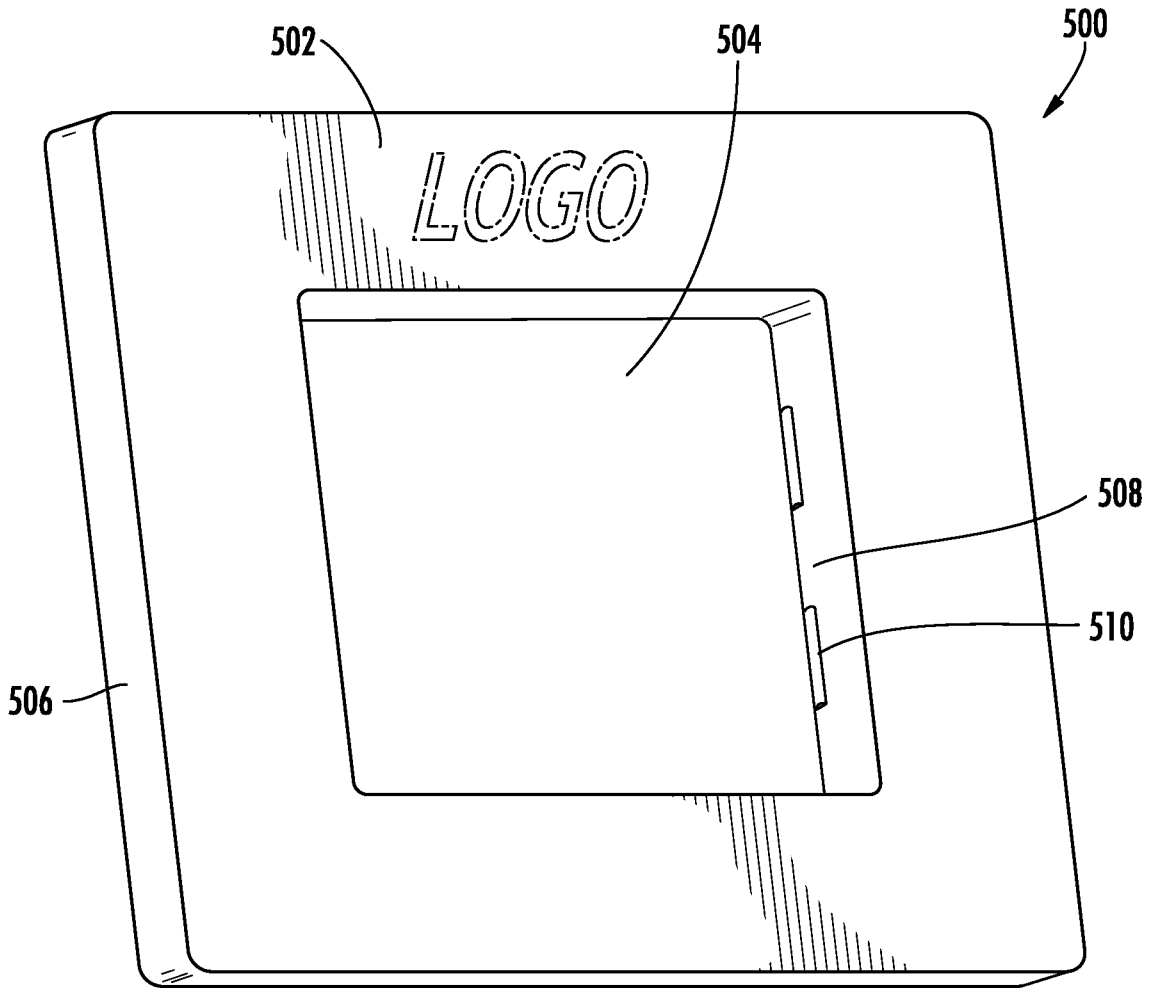


FIG. 5

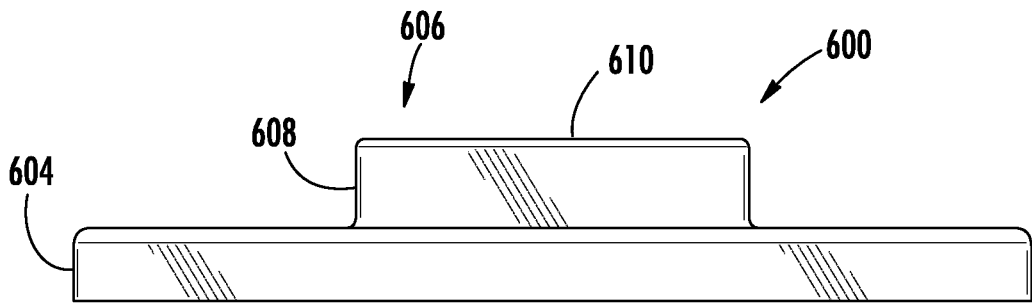


FIG. 6A

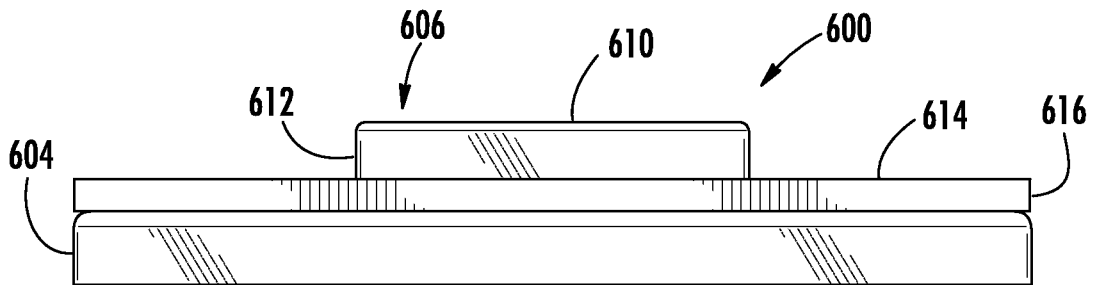
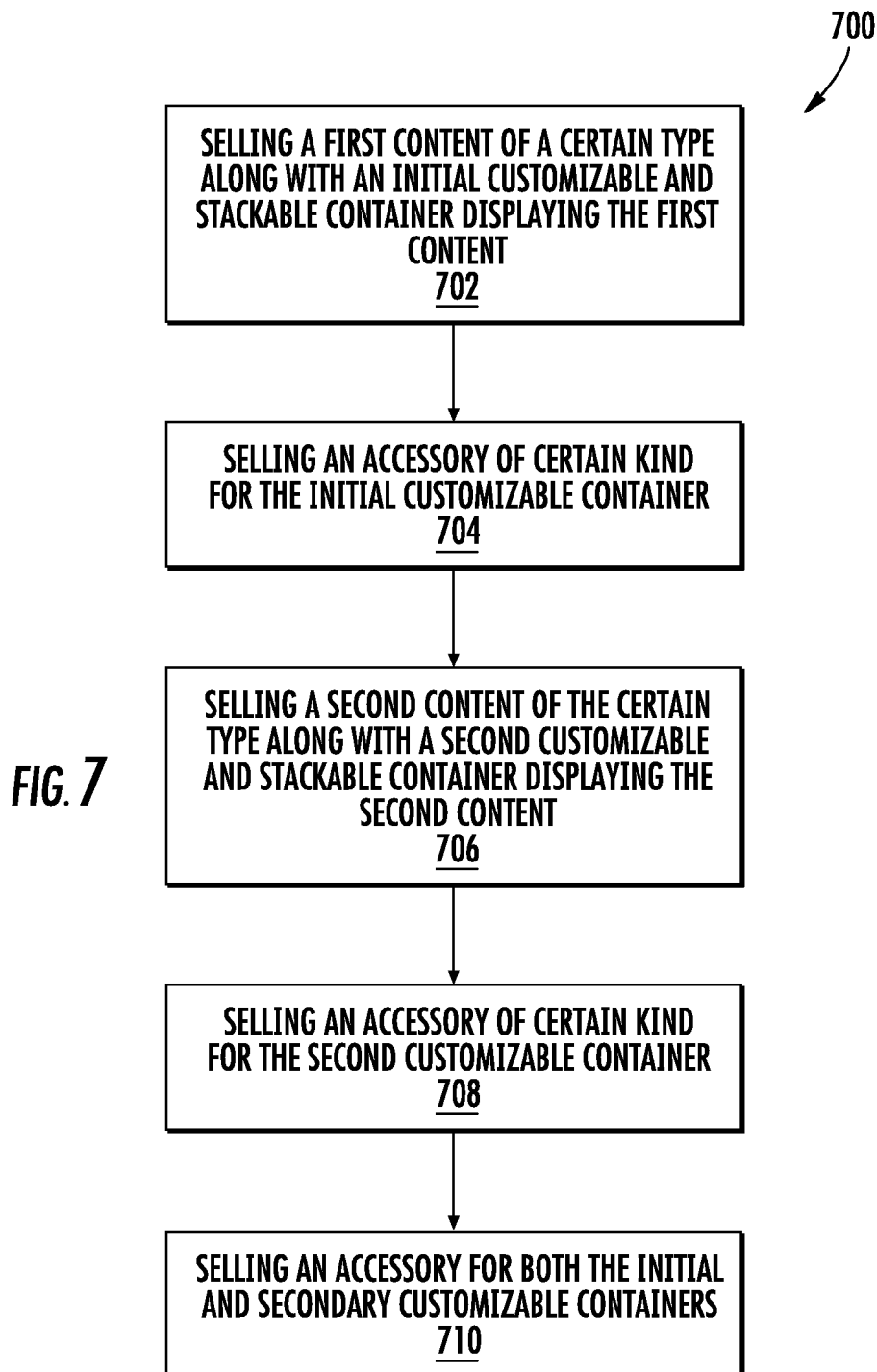
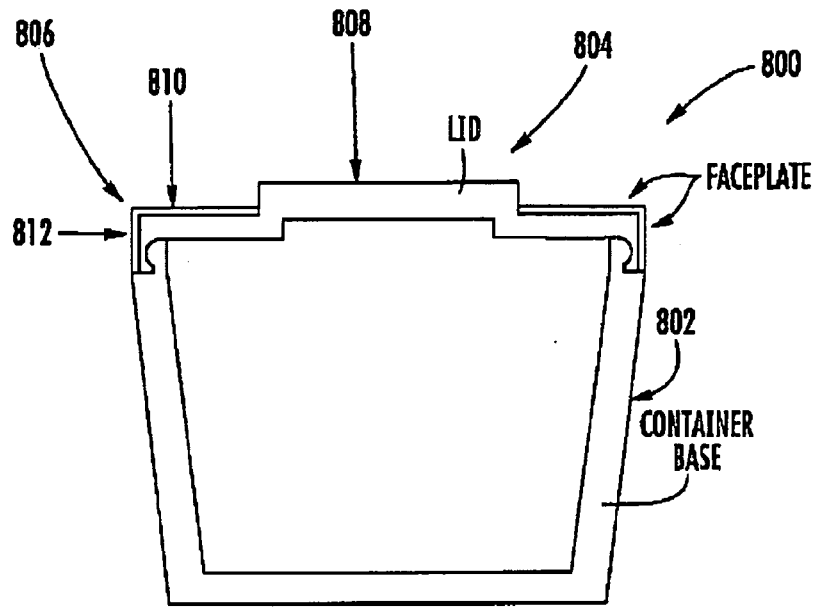


FIG. 6B

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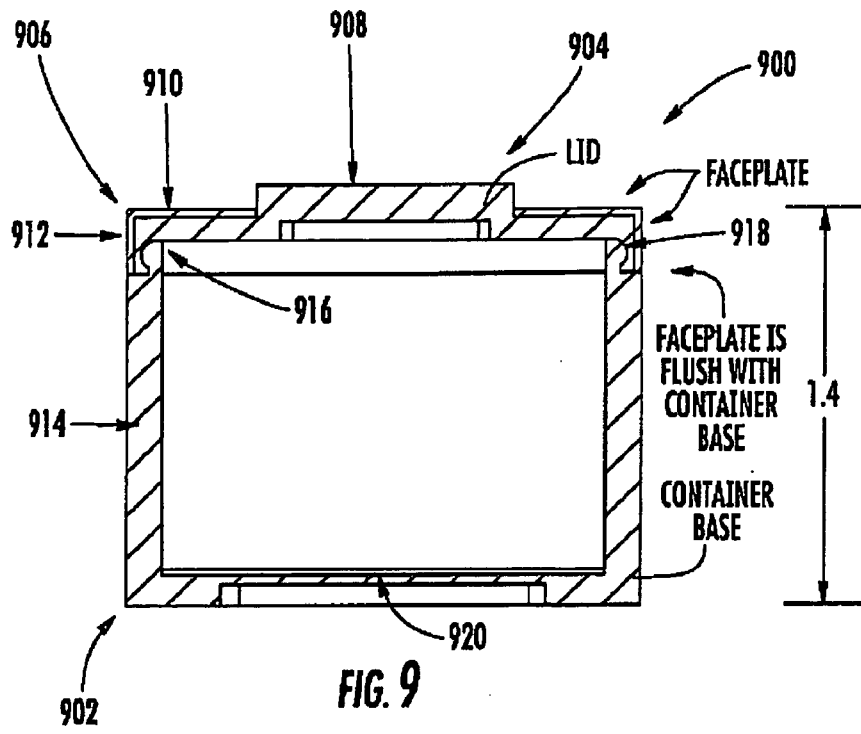
8/11



NESTABLE / FACEPLATE

FIG. 8

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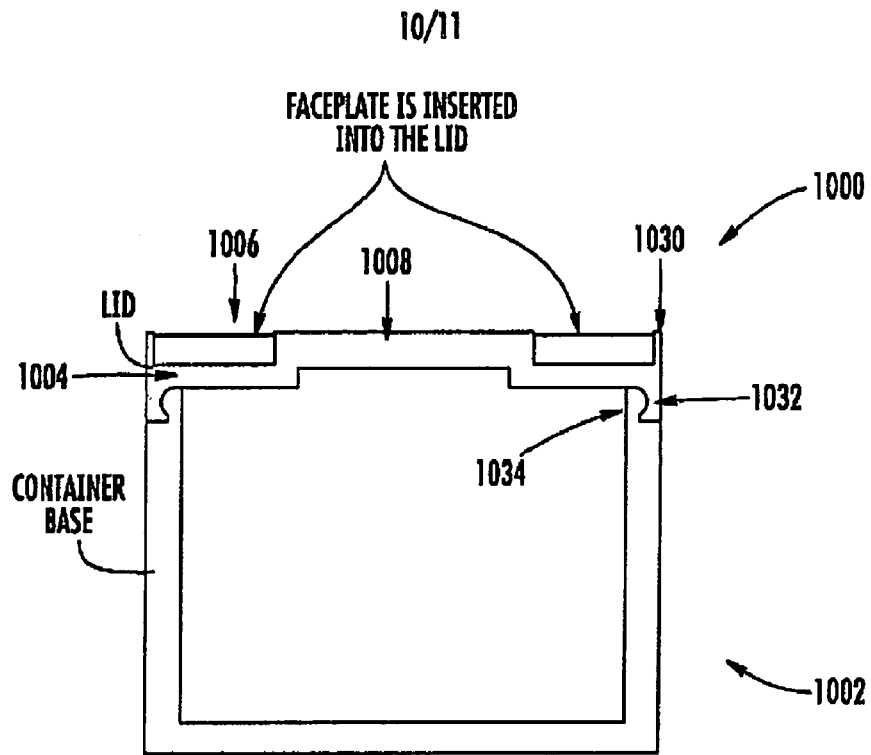


FIG. 10

11/11

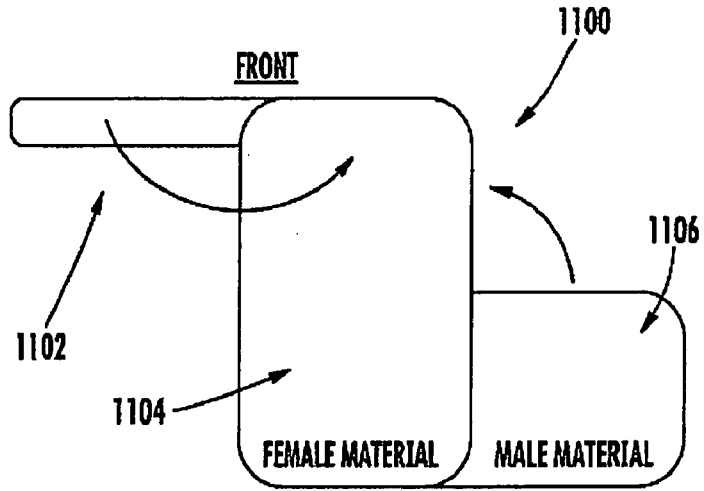


FIG. 11A

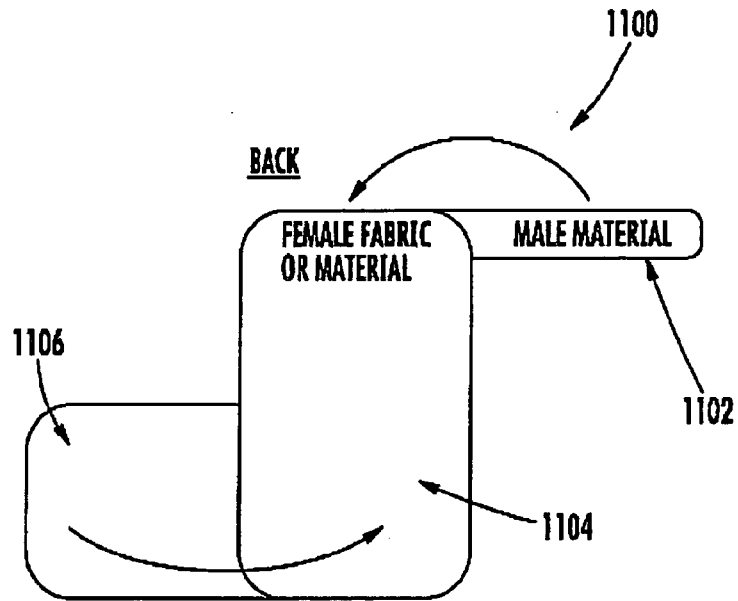


FIG. 11B

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US201 1/042391

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC(8) - B65D 21/00 (201 1.01)

USPC - 206/508

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC(8) - B65D 21/00 (201 1.01)

USPC - 40/306, 307, 776, 789; 206/499, 501, 503, 508, 509, 514, 515, 821; 220/4.26; 312/234.1, 234.2, 234.3; 428/192; D09/435, 457, 529, 743, 744, 745

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

PatBase, Google Patents

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 2006/0186014 A1 (RAMANUJAM et al) 24 August 2006 (24.08.2006) entire document	1
A	US 2007/0187277 A1 (FURLONG) 16 August 2007 (16.08.2007) entire document	1-20
A	US 2003/0155267 A1 (MERCIER et al) 21 August 2003 (21.08.2003) entire document	1-20
A	US 1,669,875 A (KUCK) 15 May 1928 (15.05.1928) entire document	1-20

Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.

* Special categories of cited documents:	"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance	"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
"E" earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date	"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art
"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)	"&" document member of the same patent family
"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means	
"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed	

Date of the actual completion of the international search	Date of mailing of the international search report
03 November 2011	17 NOV. 2011

Name and mailing address of the ISA/US Mail Stop PCT, Attn: ISA/US, Commissioner for Patents P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450 Facsimile No. 571-273-3201	Authorized officer: Blaine R. Copenheaver PCT Helpdesk: 571-272-4300 PCT OSP: 571-272-7774
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