

(19) United States

(12) Patent Application Publication (10) Pub. No.: US 2007/0294953 A1 Guillen

Dec. 27, 2007 (43) **Pub. Date:**

(54) CUBICLE WORK SPACE ORGANIZER

Ruby Guillen, La Palma, CA (US) (76) Inventor:

> Correspondence Address: ADVANTAGE IP LAW FIRM 3020 OLD RANCH PARKWAY, SUITE 340 **SEAL BEACH, CA 90740**

11/474,874 (21) Appl. No.:

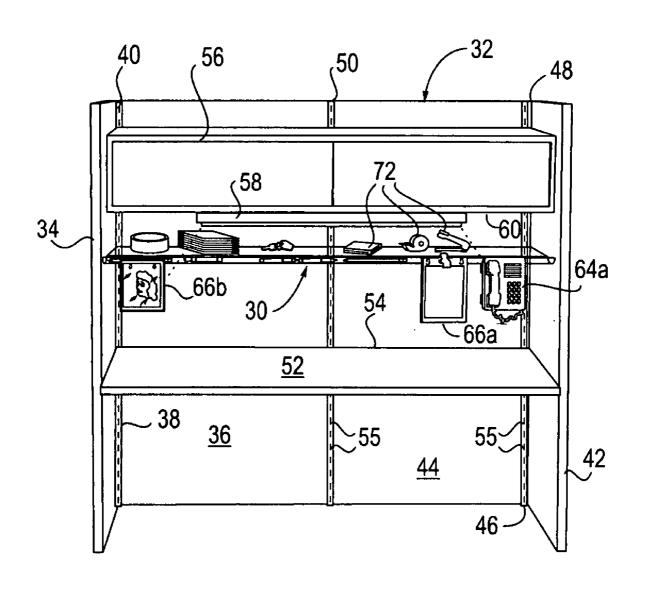
(22) Filed: Jun. 26, 2006

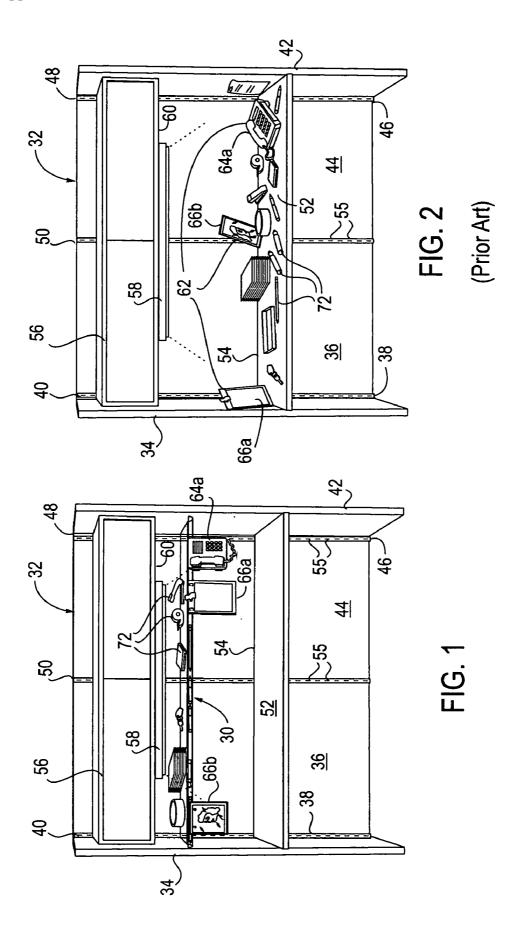
Publication Classification

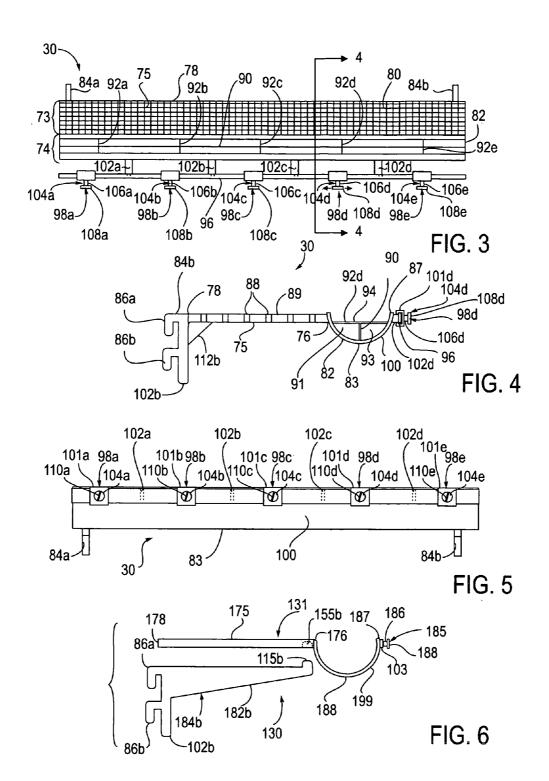
(51) Int. Cl. A47F 10/00 (2006.01) U.S. Cl. 52/36.1

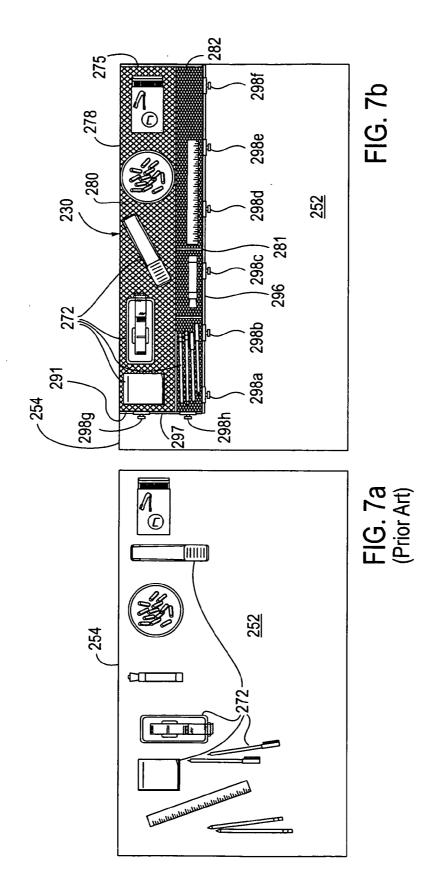
(57)ABSTRACT

A cubicle work space organizer is provided in the form of an accessory support surface having a first portion defined by a shelf with leading and trailing edges and a light transmissible region therebetween and a second portion defined by an outwardly projecting tray with both portions being supported from a cubicle wall by the releasable coupling of a rearwardly projecting mounting bracket to a set of vertically aligned, cubicle wall retention slots to position the accessory support surface between a desktop and a lighting source for selectively removing accessories from the desktop and organizing them on the accessory support surface while enabling the transmission of light onto the desktop through at least a portion of the shelf.









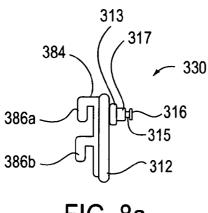


FIG. 8a

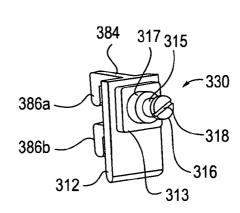


FIG. 8b

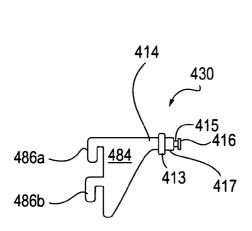


FIG. 9a

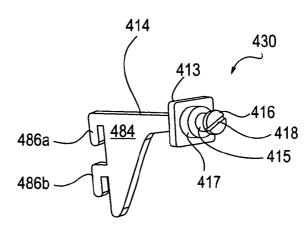
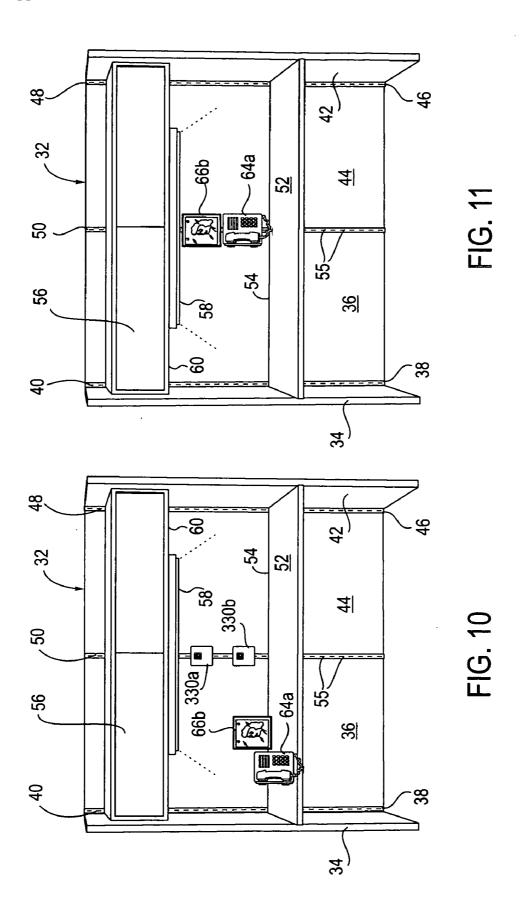
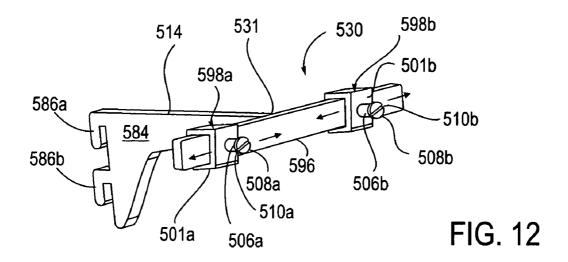
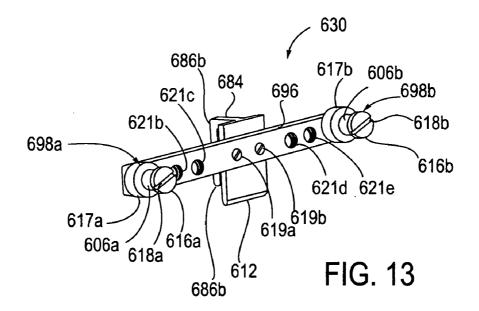


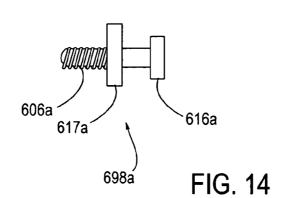
FIG. 9b

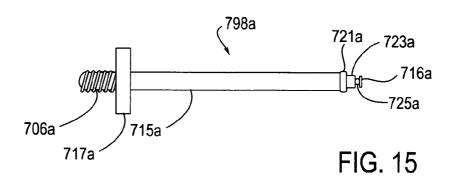


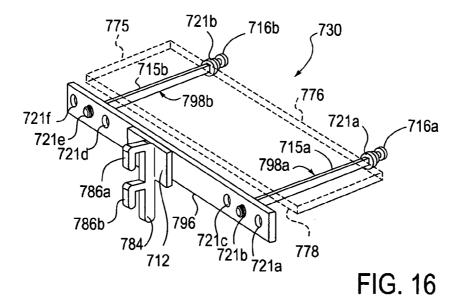


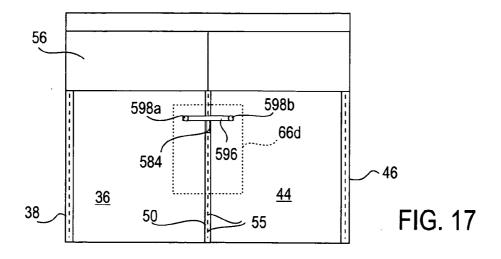


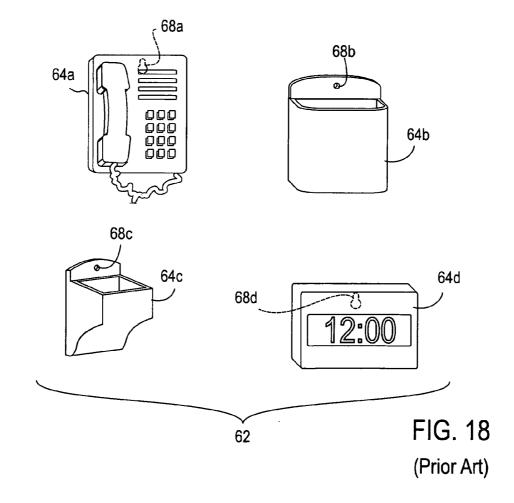












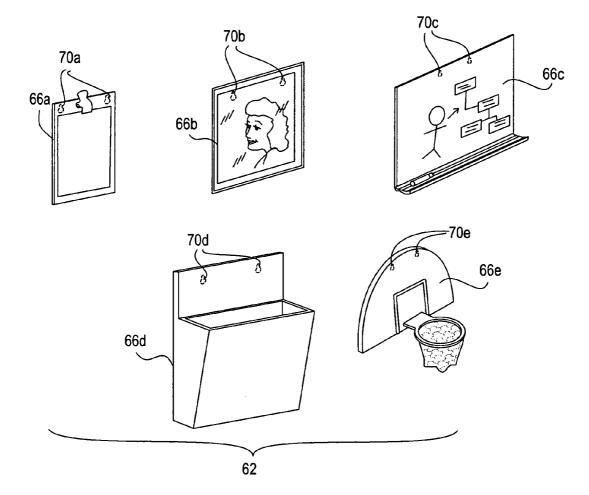


FIG. 19 (Prior Art)

US 2007/0294953 A1 Dec. 27, 2007 1

CUBICLE WORK SPACE ORGANIZER

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] 1. Field of the Invention

[0002] This invention generally relates to accessories for organizing an office workspace and more particularly to accessories for suspending from a set of partitions defining a work space commonly called a cubicle for organizing the office supplies and working files commonly used in a cubicle environment.

[0003] 2. General Background and State of the Art:

[0004] A typical office floor plan includes a ring of outer offices surrounding a large central common area. As an alternative to using an open bullpen workspace, the central area is commonly partitioned using a wall system such as that found in U.S. Pat. No. 6,442,909 to Waalkes et al. to give office workers a bit of privacy, reduce noise, and cut down on distractions. The individual partitions typically include a framework with a fabric material covering the open area of the framework and a set of fasteners such as hooks extending from the vertical ends of the framework. Multiple partitions are joined together with a rectangular connector post having a number of vertically aligned, spaced apart, retention slots. Typically the set of retention slots run throughout the length of the post and appear on all four sides so that the connector post is universal. The retention slots are constructed to receive and retain the partition hooks and facilitate the joining of multiple partitions from any side of the post. Multiple partitions cooperate to form a cubicle or work space. The typical cubicle environment is three sided and defined by at least one front wall and two side walls and includes a desk and a chair, an overhead light source, and possibly a file cabinet and a table or other flat workspace for each occupant. In some instances, an overhead storage compartment is hung from the top edge of one or more partitions to provide additional storage space and complement any files cabinets in the work space. Commonly, the overhead storage compartment is only accessible when the worker is standing. In addition to overhead lighting being provided by ceiling lights, a supplemental overhead lighting source such as a fluorescent lamp may be mounted to the underside of the storage compartment when the compartment is mounted above the desktop. This cubicle arrangement provides the office worker with a designated work space in which to conduct his or her daily business.

[0005] As part of this daily business, today's office workers are required to juggle numerous projects, often with short term deadlines, and thus a number of files and documents are worked on throughout the day. Time is primarily spent moving a number of the immediate tasks forward simultaneously to meet deadlines and then starting on new projects. This leaves little time for organizing the documents and files typically associated with these projects and, under these circumstances, the office work space eventually becomes a cluttered area with files and office accessories strewn about the desktop, table space, or any free space found in the work space. Where cubicle space is at a premium, overloaded workers spread working documents over any available flat surface thus leaving little or no room on the primary working space, that is, the desktop. Other non-working files and documents are typically stored in a file cabinet or the overhead storage bin.

[0006] To remain somewhat organized, office workers frequently purchase or are supplied with office accessories to help them organize the work space and get their tasks accomplished. Exemplary office accessories include pens, pencils, note pads, letter openers, tape dispensers, staplers, paper clips, binder clips, in/out boxes, pencil holders, filing racks, and other well known office supplies. Each office worker is also typically provided with a telephone and a computer monitor on the desktop. In addition, personal items such as pictures, calendars, and awards, may take up valuable work space. While these office supplies assist in organizing some of the clutter they also tend to take up a significant amount of working desk top space, leaving the cubicle user with little room to work.

[0007] To further reduce the office clutter, cubicle users often get creative and rely on items such as paper clips and push-pins to secure documents to the fabric wall of the partitions. Other devices such as hook and loop backed products are often attached to the walls as well. However, only relatively lightweight products such as note papers may be supported using these alternatives. In addition, this type of activity leads to damaging the fabric wall coverings over time. Other work space accessories such as document or file baskets may be hung from the top end of the partition walls but supporting these accessories from the top of the cubicle walls usually places them well out of reach of a cubicle user sitting at his or her desk. In addition, these types of hanging accessories are typically constructed to hold only one kind of office accessory such as a file folders or documents and thus lack a certain versatility.

[0008] While each of these existing office accessories has their uses, an enormous amount of potential storage and organizational capacity of the cubicle is wasted. For instance, the connector posts between the partitions are commonly universal to accommodate two-way, three-way, and four-way panel connections and thus include a series of vertically spaced retention slots on each side of the rectangular post. Where no partition is joined, a number of these slots face inwardly into the cube space. These unused retentions slots may appear between partitions in the middle of the wall or at the corners and typically a desk is arranged and centered on at least one vertical connector post. More unused slots are located elsewhere in the cube. Even if an overhead storage compartment is used, usually a couple of feet or more exists between the bottom of the overhead bin and the desktop with exposed retention slots. Should a simple conventional shelf be placed therein, such shelf would provide limited organizational capabilities and would further block the light from the overhead lighting source making it a poor alternative.

[0009] What is needed and heretofore unavailable is a versatile cubicle work space organizer providing alternative work space support surfaces for office accessories and documents to facilitate the clearing and organization of the primary cubicle work space surface while taking advantage of the number of unused mounting slots in a conventional cubicle system.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0010] In accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, an organizer for use in a cubicle work space generally comprises an accessory support surface having an elongated planar shelf with a trailing edge and a leading edge and a light transmissible region therebetween and a tray projecting outwardly from one side of the shelf and at least one mounting bracket projecting rearwardly

from the other side shelf with the shelf and tray cooperating to define an accessory mounting surface whereby the mounting bracket may be releasably coupled to an existing connector post having a set of retention slots to position the accessory support surface between a desktop and an overhead lighting so that a cubicle user may selectively remove office supply accessories from the desktop and place them on the accessory support surface while light from said overhead lighting source may still pass through at least a portion of said light transmissible region to illuminate said desktop below.

[0011] In one aspect of the present invention, the accessory support surface is extended to include a plurality of adjustable hooks for suspending a plurality of mountable office supply accessories.

[0012] Another feature of the present invention is the subdivision of the tray section to provide additional organizational capabilities.

[0013] In yet another embodiment of the present invention, the shelf and tray section are integrally formed and may be releasably secured to at least one elongated mounting bracket.

[0014] Another embodiment of the present invention is directed to a supplemental accessory support surface with a bracket mounted to a cross bar with adjustable or exchangeable hangers mounted thereto.

[0015] A method of organizing a cubicle work space using a cubicle work space organizer in accordance with the present invention is also disclosed herein.

[0016] Other aspects of the present invention will become apparent with further reference to the following drawings and specification.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0017] FIG. 1 is a front schematic view of an exemplary cubicle work space having a set of conventional partitions, connector posts, overhead storage cabinet, and lighting source, along with an exemplary embodiment of a cubicle work space organizer in accordance with the present invention installed therein with the organizer supporting a number of exemplary office supply accessories normally found on a conventional desktop;

[0018] FIG. 2 is a similar view to FIG. 1 illustrating the typical work space clutter of a conventional cubicle work space with a desktop bearing the exemplary office supply accessories of FIG. 1 and prior to the installation and use of the cubicle work space organizer;

[0019] FIG. 3 is a top view, in enlarged scale, of the cubicle work space organizer installed in FIG. 1 in accordance with the present invention without the exemplary office supply accessories;

[0020] FIG. 4 is a cutaway end view, in enlarged scale, taken along lines 4-4 of FIG. 3;

[0021] FIG. 5 is a front view, in enlarged scale, of the cubicle work space organizer of FIG. 3;

[0022] FIG. 6 is a side view, of an unassembled alternative embodiment of the cubicle work space organizer in accordance with the present invention;

[0023] FIG. 7a is a top view of a representative desktop with exemplary office supply accessories placed thereon;

[0024] FIG. 7b is a top view of another alternative embodiment of the cubicle work space organizer in accordance with the present invention and supporting the office supply accessories of the desktop of FIG. 7a;

[0025] FIG. 8a is a side view an alternative embodiment of the cubicle work space organizer in accordance with the present invention;

[0026] FIG. 8b is a forward perspective view, in enlarged scale, of the cubicle work space organizer of FIG. 8a;

[0027] FIG. 9a is a side view of an alternative embodiment of the cubicle work space organizer in accordance with the present invention;

[0028] FIG. 9b is a forward perspective view, in enlarged scale, of the cubicle work space organizer of FIG. 9a;

[0029] FIG. 10 is a front schematic view of a conventional cubicle work space with a pair of cubicle work space organizers as shown in FIGS. 8a and 8b installed therein and with a couple of conventional office supply accessories shown on the desktop;

[0030] FIG. 11 is a similar view to FIG. 10 with the office supply accessories supported by the cubicle work space organizers and depicting a cleared off desktop;

[0031] FIG. 12 is a forward perspective view of an alternative embodiment of the cubicle work space organizer with adjustable hangers in accordance with the present invention; [0032] FIG. 13 is a forward perspective view of an alternative embodiment of the cubicle work space organizer with exchangeable hangers in accordance with the present invention:

[0033] FIG. 14 is a side view, in enlarged scale, of an exemplary exchangeable hanger for use with the cubicle work space organizer of FIG. 13;

[0034] FIG. 15 is a side view of an alternative exchangeable hanger for use with the cubicle work space organizer of FIG. 13;

[0035] FIG. 16 is a rear perspective view of the cubicle work space organizer of FIG. 13 with a pair of exemplary exchangeable hanging posts of FIG. 15 installed thereon and supporting a removable shelf placed shown in phantom lines;

[0036] FIG. 17 is a front view of a conventional cubicle partition with a central connecting post with a schematic representation of a cubicle work space organizer of FIGS. 12, 13, or 16 installed thereon and showing a mounted office accessory in phantom lines;

[0037] FIG. 18 is a set of exemplary conventional office supply accessories, each having a single mounting receptacle; and

[0038] FIG. 19 is a set of exemplary conventional office supply accessories, each having a pair of mounting receptacles.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0039] Referring initially to FIGS. 1-2, a first exemplary embodiment of a cubicle work space organizer in accordance with the present invention is illustrated. In FIG. 1, the cubicle work space organizer, generally designated 30, is installed in a conventional cubicle work space, generally designated 32, and supports a number of typical office supply or work space accessories normally found on a desktop thereby clearing off that primary work surface for the cubicle user. FIG. 2 is a prior art view of the same cubicle work space, without the benefit of the cubicle work space organizer, schematically depicting a typical desktop clutter of office accessories. As viewed in FIGS. 1-2, the conventional cubicle work space 32 includes a left side partition 34 coupled to a front left partition 36 by a left side connection

post 38 forming a ninety degree left hand corner 40. Similarly, a right side partition 42 is coupled to a front right partition 44 by a right side connection post 46 forming a ninety degree right hand corner 48. The front partitions 36 and 44 are connected by a central connector post 50. The partitions cooperate to form a three-sided, channel shaped, work space. Within the work space, a rectangular desktop 52 or table top work space spans the width between the left and right side partitions and has a rear edge 54 that abuts the front partitions and connecting posts. The desktop normally defines the primary work space or working surface for the cubicle user. Facing into the cubicle work space from each connecting post is a number of unused, vertically aligned, spaced apart, exposed, retention slots 55 from which the cubicle work space organizer 30 may be hung as will be described below.

[0040] With continued reference to FIGS. 1-2, positioned above the desktop 52 and anchored to the connecting posts 38, 46, 50 is an overhead storage compartment 56 divided into left and right sides. An overhead lighting source 58 such as a fluorescent lamp is connected to the underside 60 of the storage compartment. When activated, the lamp normally illuminates the desktop 52 below. Even with the overhead bin 56 installed in the cubicle work space a large number of unused retention slots 55 remain between the desktop and the underside of the overhead bin and throughout the remainder of the cubicle work space. The bottom portion of the desk and an exemplary desk chair have been omitted in FIGS. 1-2 for ease of description. It will be appreciated that the construction and assembly of such a conventional cubicle work space 32 as shown in FIG. 2 is well known and other cubicle configurations may be used as well.

[0041] With continued reference to FIG. 2, strewn about the representative conventional desktop 52 are a variety of work space accessories generally found at an office supply retailer. These work space accessories may generally be divided into two categories, mountable accessories, generally designated 62, and non-mountable accessories may further be categorized into those with single mounting receptacles and those with multiple mounting receptacles.

[0042] Exemplary mountable work space accessories 62 with single mounting receptacles are shown in FIG. 18 and include a telephone 64a, a file bucket 64b, a utensil holder 64c, and a clock 64d. Each of these work space accessories 62 includes a corresponding mounting receptacle 68a, 68b, 68c, and 68d.

[0043] Exemplary work space accessories 62 with multiple mounting receptacles are illustrated in FIG. 19 and include a clipboard 66a, a picture 66b, a dry marker board 66c, an enlarged file bin 66d, and a toy basketball hoop 66e. Each of these accessories includes dual mounting receptacles 70a, 70b, 70c, 70d, and 70e, respectively. The mounting receptacles provided in the work space accessories 62 are provided by the manufacturer of the office accessory using known techniques and typically appear on the rear surface of the accessory with a lower enlarged circular section and a reduced diameter upper elongated section forming a keyhole configuration. Other receptacle shapes are well known.

[0044] Exemplary non-mountable accessories 72 may include such items as rulers, staplers, pens, pencils, markers, paper clips, writing and note pads, tape dispensers, file folders, and documents some of which are schematically

represented in FIGS. 1-2 and under reference designation 272 in FIGS. 7a and 7b. FIGS. 1-2 depict mountable accessories 62 and non-mountable accessories 72 generally mixed together. The examples of office accessories described herein are not meant to be exclusionary and other work space accessories such as those commonly found in a conventional office supply catalog and useful in a cubicle work space setting will occur to one of ordinary skill in the art

[0045] Referring now to FIGS. 1 and 3-5, the exemplary cubicle work space organizer 30 for installing in a conventional cubicle work space 32 generally includes a shelf region 73 adjacent an outwardly extended tray region 74. Both regions cooperate to form an accessory support surface for organizing and carrying work space office accessories 62, 72 normally found on the desktop 52. The shelf region includes an elongated rectangular planar shelf 75 with a leading edge 76 and a trailing edge 78 and a light transmissible region 80 extending therebetween. The light transmissible region includes a large number of perforations 88 projecting all the way through the shelf to facilitate the passage of light therethrough. A light transmissible region that is substantially coextensive with the shelf region is preferred so as to maximize the amount of light that may pass through the shelf, especially when a substantial portion of the shelf is covered with work space accessories 62, 72 when in use. The light transmissible region may be formed of a translucent or transparent material as well in place of or in combination with the perforations. A practical shelf will have sufficient depth to carry a number of commonly used office space accessories. Shelves having a depth from 6 to 24 inches have been found to be practical for most cubicle settings. The length of the shelf may span across the entire desktop or underlying workspace or a shorter or longer shelf may be used as desired within the constraints of the cubicle wall configuration. Other suitable dimensions will occur to one of ordinary skill in the art. The shelf 75 may be coextensive with the shelf region 73 or merely form a portion thereof.

[0046] With continued reference to FIGS. 3-5, the tray region 74 includes a tray 82 that curves downwardly and forwardly from the leading edge 76 of the shelf 75 into a trough 83 and then curves upwardly and forwardly to terminate in a distal lip 87, relative to the trailing edge 78 of the shelf, to form an open topped, bowl shaped tray. Other suitable tray shapes including three sided channel shapes will occur to one of ordinary skill in the art. The uppermost extent of the distal tray lip may be flush with or lower or higher than the upper surface 89 of the shelf 75. In the illustrative example shown in FIG. 4, the lip is slightly higher than the upper shelf surface. That configuration may be useful for inhibiting office accessories stored on the shelf from accidentally slipping off the shelf in a forward direction toward the cubicle user. In this example, the tray 82 is coextensive with the leading edge 76 of the shelf 75. However, this is not meant to be limiting and the tray may be span more or less of the length of the shelf region or multiple trays may be spaced apart on the leading edge or sides of the shelf.

[0047] As shown in FIGS. 3-4, within the tray 82 a transverse divider 90 runs along the trough 83 of the tray parallel to the leading edge 76 of the shelf 75 thereby subdividing the tray into a rear section 91 and a front section 93. Running perpendicularly to the transverse divider is a set

of five stiffening ribs 92a, 92b, 92c, 92d, and 92e having an arcuate lower edge following the curvature of the tray and a straight upper edge 94 terminating at or below the lip 87 of the tray although the upper edge of stiffening rib may project above the upper lip of the tray if desired. The stiffening ribs add structural integrity to the tray and resist bending moments applied to the forward lip of the tray. The intersection of the transverse divider with the five stiffening ribs also subdivides the tray into ten sub-compartments for organizing the non-mountable accessories 70. These compartments may be the same size or differ in dimensions and are preferably sized to accommodate office supplies such as pens, pencils, markers, paper clips, binder clips, small note pads, staple removers and other small office supplies commonly used throughout the day.

[0048] Referring now to FIGS. 3-5, a transversely projecting slider bar 96 is connected to a set of four short extension ribs 102a, 102b, 102c, 102e projecting from the front surface 100 of the tray 82. In this exemplary embodiment, the extension ribs are evenly spaced along the length of the slider bar. The slider bar may be welded to, adhered to, or formed integrally with the extension ribs or otherwise suitably connected to the forward facing surface of the tray. The slider bar spans the length of the tray but may span more or less of that length as desired. In this exemplary embodiment, a set of five adjustable accessory hangers 98a, 98b, 98c, 98d, and 98e are mounted on the slider bar. The hangers extend the carrying and organizational capacity of the work space organizer 30 and complement and form a portion of the accessory support surface. Each hanger includes a collar 101a, 101b, 101c, 101d, 101e slidably attached to the slider bar from which is supported a corresponding accessory mounting hook and extension post 104a, 104b, 104c, 104d, and 104e, respectively.

[0049] With continued reference to FIGS. 3-5, a representative hanger 98d will now be described. As shown in FIG. 4, the collar 101d of hanger 98d is channel shaped and wraps around the top and bottom surfaces of the slider bar 96 but is open on the left and right sides so that the collar may slide back and forth along the slider bar. The rear surface of the collar includes an open section so the collar may slide over the nearby support ribs such as the rib designated 102d. The forward facing surface of the collar includes a centrally located threaded aperture (not shown) to receive an exchangeable accessory mounting hook and post 104d. The hook and post includes a cylindrical post 106d having a threaded section that may be screwed into the threaded aperture of the collar. At the opposing end of the threaded section, the post transitions into an enlarged circular disk **108***d* with an outwardly facing slot **110***d* to form the hook. The disk is preferably sized to fit within the mounting receptacles of the receptacled accessories 62.

[0050] Still referring to FIG. 305, the hook and post 104d may be screwed into the corresponding collar 101d using a conventional flathead screwdriver in the slot 110d so that the innermost end of the post 106d abuts the slider bar 96 and releasably locks the collar in place on the slider bar similar to the use of a set screw. If a new hanger position is desired on the slider bar, a user may use the screwdriver to loosen the hook and post until the innermost end of the post no longer engages the slider bar. The collar of the associated hanger 98d may then be slid along the length of the slider bar to a new location and locked into place by screwing the hook and post back into the aperture to engage the slider bar. Each

of the other hangers 98a-c and 98e are constructed identically and operate in the same manner as the hanger designated 98d. By adjusting the hangers on the slider bar, the user may align a single hanger to mate with the single receptacle mounting accessories 64a-d (FIG. 18) and align two hangers to mate with a dual receptacle mounting accessory 70a-e (FIG. 19) taking into account the overall size of each accessory to maximize the number of accessories that may be hung from the slider bar.

[0051] While this exemplary embodiment includes ten sub-compartments in the tray 82 and five accessory mounting hangers 98a-e on a forwardly disposed slider bar 96, these numbers are not meant to be limiting and other suitable configurations will occur to one of ordinary skill in the art. One suitable alternative in accordance with this invention would be to provide transversely or longitudinally projecting slots in the outward facing surface of the tray with the adjustable hangers slidably engaged with the walls of the slots. Such a configuration would omit the slider bar.

[0052] Still referring to FIGS. 3-5, the cubicle work space organizer 30 includes a pair of mounting brackets 84a, 84b projecting rearwardly from the trailing edge 78 of the shelf 75 near the opposing short ends of the shelf. As shown in FIG. 4, the exemplary right hand bracket 84b includes an upper retention hook 86a and a lower retention hook 86b projecting from an upright 102b. A triangular brace 112b connects the upright to the shelf 75 and lends additional structural integrity to the organizer 30. The left hand bracket 84a is constructed in a similar manner with similar components. The retention hooks of each brace may be releasably coupled to the cubicle wall 36, 44 by inserting the hooks into a corresponding number of the existing retention slots 55 in the connecting posts 38, 46, 50 as would be understood by one of ordinary skill in the art when mounting a conventional bracketed shelf. The retention hooks releasably retain and anchor the organizer on the cubicle wall. The upright of each bracket adds additional stability acting as a brace to maintain the shelf in a horizontal position projecting straight out from the cubicle wall. In this exemplary embodiment, the brackets 84a, 84b would align with and attach to the left and right connector posts 38, 46, respectively. The brackets should be mated with the connecting posts at the same height to provide a level shelf surface. A third bracket (not shown) projecting from the trailing edge of the shelf and aligned with the central connecting post 50 may be used for additional structural rigidity. A single bracket may also be used provided that the shelf and the anticipated weight of the work space accessories, especially at the outer ends of the shelf, may be held up safely. Alternatively, other suitable connections will occur to one of ordinary skill in the art. The organizer 30 may be moved to another location by simply removing all objects from the apparatus and lifting the unit upwardly and outwardly while rotating the front end of the organizer downwardly to disengage the bracket hooks from the connecting posts. The organizer may then be reinstalled at another convenient location within the cubicle. The brackets may also be adjustable relative to the trailing edge 78 of the shelf to accommodate different connector post spacings. If the shelf 75 is not coextensive with the shelf section 73, the mounting brackets may alternatively be connected or made integral with the rear portion of the shelf section.

[0053] Referring now to the cluttered work space configuration as shown in FIG. 2 and also to the organizer 30 in FIGS. 3-5, a cubicle user selects a desired organizer 30

having a mounting bracket 84a, 84b spacing matching the connecting post 36, 46, 50 spacing of the cubicle work space 32. In this example, the organizer is mounted on the cubicle walls 36, 44 by inserting the hooks 86a, 86b of mounting bracket 84b through a corresponding number of retention slots 55 in connecting post 46 while similarly engaging the retention hooks of mounting bracket 84a with the connector post 36 at a location between the desktop 52 and overhead lighting source 58. The mounting brackets 84a, 84b should be mounted to the connecting posts at the same height to ensure a substantially level shelf surface. The installation and removal of the organizer from the connector posts is similar to mounting a conventional shelf in a partition wall system.

[0054] With the organizer 30 mounted across the cubicle walls 36, 44 and above a desktop 52 filled with work space accessories such as those shown in FIG. 2, the cubicle user may selectively remove the non-mountable accessories, generally designated 72, such as the pens, pencils, staplers, markers, and notepads from the desktop 52. Smaller nonmountable accessories may be placed in the tray region 74 of the organizer within the various sub-compartments of the tray 82. Larger non-mountable accessories may be placed in the shelf region 73 on the shelf 75 in a manner befitting the cubicle user. The cubicle user may also adjust the hangers 98a-e by unscrewing the threaded posts 106a-e and sliding the collars 101a-e of each hanger to a position to align the hangers with the expected hanging position of the mountable accessories, generally designated 62. For example, in this illustration, there is a telephone 64a with a single mounting receptacle 68a, a clipboard 66a with a dual mounting receptacle 70a, and a picture 66b, also with a dual mounting receptacle 70b. As an exemplary arrangement, the cubicle user may dedicate hangers 98a and 98b to the clipboard, hangers 98c and 98d to the picture, and hanger 98e to the telephone. Once the desired hanger spacing is determined by the cubicle user, the hangers 98a-e are locked in place by screwing in their respective posts 106a-e. The cubicle user may then selectively remove each of the mountable accessories 64a, 66a, and 66b and hang them on their dedicated hangers by inserting the hooks 108a-e into the receptacles of the mountable accessories thereby removing them from the desktop 52 as well. With all the non-mountable accessories 72 and mountable accessories 62 carried on the accessory support surfaces 73, 74, and 98a-e of the organizer 30, the desktop 52 is clear as shown in FIG. 1. As the desktop is the primary working surface of the cubicle user, the removal and organization of the office accessories from the desktop will allow the user to focus on a current set of files to avoid mixing files or documents and restores the space for use in working on projects with oversized documents.

[0055] With a typical conventional shelving unit, light transmission would be obstructed from reaching the area of the desktop 52 beneath the shelf. However, even with the office accessories 62, 72 supported from the organizer 30, light from the overhead lighting source 58 may pass through areas of the light transmissible section 80 of the shelf region 73 where no accessories are located to illuminate the desktop 52 below (FIG. 1). The tray may also be perforated providing a secondary light transmissible region so that the cubicle user may see the outline of the contents in each sub-compartment from below to prevent guesswork in selecting the desired accessory from the tray (FIGS. 1 and 7b).

[0056] With continued reference to FIG. 1, it will also be appreciated that the organizer 30 is ergonomically devised. For example, while seated, the cubicle user may easily reach office accessories 72 located in the rear or front tray sections 91, 93, respectively, and grasp a pen, pencil, paper clip or other non-mountable office accessory. In addition, the mounted accessories 62, hanging from the front side of the tray 82 are well within the reach of the typical cubicle user. The cubicle user may also leave the hangers 98a-e loose on the slider bar 96 so that the mountable work space accessories may be slid along the slider bar to a more convenient position, if desired. The organizer may also be raised or lowered on the connecting posts 38, 46, 50 to facilitate different users. In addition to the desk front area partitions 36, 44 of the cubicle work space 32, other cubicle walls typically include connector posts with retention slots such as those described above. An organizer 30 may be mounted on those walls as well for additional storage and organization of the cubicle work space.

[0057] The shelf region 73, tray region 74, and mounting brackets 84a, 84b may be integrally formed of a rigid metal or hard plastic material or may be assembled from separate components. As an illustrative example, the mounting brackets 84a, 84b may extend forwardly to terminate in the tray region and a separate shelf unit may be placed over the top of the opposing brackets similar to FIG. 16 discussed below. As another alternative, as in FIG. 6, the organizer, generally designated 130, wherein like components are like numbered, includes an integral shelf and tray unit, generally designated 131. The shelf and tray unit includes a shelf 175 that extends into a bowl shaped tray 188 that terminates in a forward lip 187. A hanger 185 extends from a short rib 103 on the front side 199 of the tray near the forward lip. The hanger includes a short post 186 that extends forwardly from the short rib and terminates in an enlarged circular hook 188. The hook may be fixed or adjustable as in the first embodiment. A modified mounting bracket 184b includes an elongated support 182b that terminates a locking boss 115b. The locking boss fits within an anchoring notch 155b in the bottom surface of the shelf 175 near the leading edge 176 of the shelf to inhibit the shelf from sliding relative to the bracket 184b. The shelf and tray unit 131 may be coupled to the bracket using clamps or suitable fasteners. Use of this organizer 130 is similar to the first embodiment. The mounting bracket 184b may be installed on a connector post first and then the shelf and tray unit 131 mounted on the bracket or the shelf and tray unit may be assembled on the mounting bracket and entire assembly mounted to the connector post or posts.

[0058] Referring now to FIGS. 7a and 7b, another embodiment of the cubicle work space organizer, generally designated 230 is shown. In FIG. 7a, a prior art desk top 252 bearing a number of non-mountable accessories, some of which have been designated 272, is shown reducing the usable primary work space of the cubicle user. In FIG. 7b, the organizer is 230 is hung above the desktop with the trailing edge 278 of the organizer aligned with the rear edge 254 of the desktop. As with the first embodiment, the organizer 230 includes a shelf 275 and tray 282 and a set of forwardly extending adjustable hangers 298a-f suspended on a front slider bar 296. In addition to the front slider bar 296, a lateral slider bar 297 is provided with two lateral adjustable hangers 298g and 298h suspended therefrom. In this exemplary embodiment, the organizer 230 does not

extend the entire length of the desktop and incorporates a pair of accessory hangers on the exposed lateral side 291 of the shelf 275. Also, both the shelf and tray include a light permissible region, 280 and 281, respectively, so that more light from the overhead lighting source passes through the organizer 230 to the desktop below. In addition, this feature allows the cubicle user to see the outline of the accessories in the tray from below thus saving time in retrieving the desired work space accessory when sitting.

[0059] Referring now to FIGS. 8a and 8b, in addition to or

as an alternative to using the work space cubicle organizers

30, 130, or 230 of the prior embodiments to organize the

cubicle work space, a supplemental work space accessory

organizer, generally designated 330, may provide a primary or complementary accessory support surface for hanging mountable office accessories 62 (FIG. 18-19) and take advantage of other unused retention slots 55 around the cubicle. The supplemental accessory organizer 330 includes a single mounting bracket 384 with a single pair of vertically aligned upper and lower retention hooks 386a, 286b, respectively connected to an oversized rectangular brace plate 312. Welded onto the brace plate is a rectangular mounting block 313 with a protruding cylindrical collar 317 having a central threaded bore (not shown) into which is received one end of a threaded post 315. At the other end or distal end of the post is an enlarged circular accessory mounting hook 316 with a tool engaging slot 318 in its end surface. The hook may be inserted into a mounting receptacle 68a-d of a single mounting receptacle accessory 64a-d, respectively (FIG. 18). The enlarged hook can slip into the mounting receptacle and the reduced collar allows the hanger to slide up into a reduced diameter section of the mounting receptacle restraining the accessory from slipping off the hanger. The post and hook are exchangeable and may be unscrewed and removed from the collar 317 so that other hook configurations may be used. [0060] Turning now to FIGS. 10-11, a cubicle user of a conventional cubicle work space 32 similar to that shown in FIG. 2, wherein like components are like numbered, may use one or more supplemental organizers 330a, 330b for organizing and hanging work space accessories such as the telephone 64a and picture frame 66b. In this example, a first supplemental organizer 330a is hung above a second supplemental organizer 330b on the central connecting post 50 by inserting their respective retention hooks 386a, 386b into available retention slots 55. The supplemental organizers are located above the desktop 52 and below the overhead lighting source 58 and are substantially flush to the surrounding partition walls 36, 44. Then, the user may select one of the single mounting receptacle accessories 64a, 66b and insert the mounting receptacle over the enlarged accessory mounting hook 316 and to rest on the post 315 to suspend the work space accessory over the desktop. Likewise, the other work space accessory may be hung from the other available supplemental organizer. As shown in FIG. 11, the desktop 52 is clear of all work space accessories 64a, 66b which are suspended from a pair of vertically aligned supplemental organizers 330a, 330b. The brace plate and hook may be angled to the retention hooks to maintain the suspended accessory in a slanted orientation. An upwardly angled brace plate and hook may be useful in maintaining a telephone on a receiver base for instance. The brace plate may also be extended downwardly to provide additional support for the work space accessory when suspended from

the supplemental organizer.

[0061] The relatively short post 315 of this type of supplemental organizer 330 maintains the work space accessory 64a, 66b relatively flush with the surrounding cubicle wall 36, 44. In some instances, however, it may be desirable to locate the work space accessory further from the cubicle wall and closer to the cubicle user. In those instances, an alternative supplemental accessory, generally designated 430, as shown in FIGS. 9a, 9b may be used. This supplemental organizer 430 is constructed similarly to the embodiment designated 330 except that there is no oversized brace plate. Instead the mounting bracket 484 includes an elongated neck 414 connected to the rear surface of the mounting block 413. As in the prior embodiment, a cylindrical collar 417 with a threaded bore receives the threaded end of the post 415 that terminates at its opposing end in an enlarged circular accessory mounting hook 416. The hook includes a slot 418 for receipt of the working end of the flathead screwdriver. Use of this extended supplemental organizer 430 is similar to the organizer designated 330 above except that the mounted accessory will be spaced further away from the cubicle wall and closer to the cubicle user. This may bring the work space accessory closer to the cubicle user and may also accommodate an odd-shaped accessory that will not lay flush against the cubicle wall. A suitable length for the neck 414 section of the supplemental organizer will be within the skill of one of ordinary skill in the art. The neck may also be constructed as a two-piece assembly wherein one piece may be extended relative to the other to provide a variable length neck section.

[0062] The prior supplemental organizers 330, 430 are primarily used for suspending mountable accessories 62 having single mounting receptacles such as the set pictured in FIG. 18. However, many work space accessories are manufactured with dual mounting receptacles such as those pictured in FIG. 19. Thus, another modification of supplemental organizer, generally designated 530, is shown in FIG. 12. The supplemental organizer 530 includes similar features to the previously described embodiments and like components are like numbered. Similar features include a rear mounting bracket 584 with an upper retention hook **586***a* and lower retention hook **586***b* disposed in a spaced apart vertical relationship. The bracket includes an elongated neck 514 that extends forwardly to join a slider bar 596 similar to the slider bar 96 of the first embodiment. The neck and slider bar are joined at right angles to one another and form a T-joint 531. Slidably coupled to the slider bar is a left hanger 598a and a right hanger 598b relative to the T-joint 531 and as viewed in FIG. 12. Each hanger 598a, 598b includes a slide collar 501a, 501b, respectively, having a central threaded bore (not shown) constructed as with the first embodiment. Each hanger includes a threaded post 506a, 506b that screws into the bore of the respective collar and terminates at its distal end in an enlarged circular disk 508a, 508b, respectively that provide accessory mounting hooks. The outwardly facing surface of each disk includes a slot 510a, 510b for a flathead screwdriver. The post provides a set screw for locking and unlocking the corresponding collar at a desired location on the slider bar 596 and the hangers may be adjusted in the same manner as the hangers 98a-e in the first embodiment. Such a supplemental organizer is useful for hanging two single mounting receptacle accessories or one dual mounting receptacle accessory.

[0063] Referring now to FIGS. 12 and 17, a simplified front view of the cubicle of FIG. 1 is illustrated with the

cubicle side walls, desktop, and overhead lighting source removed. In use, assuming a dual mounting receptacle accessory, such as the file bucket 66d (FIG. 19), for example, is selected to be suspended from the supplemental organizer 530, the cubicle user couples the bracket 584 to the connector post 50 via the retention slots 55 as described above for previously described brackets. The set screws 506a, 506b of each slide collar 501a, 501b, respectively, may be loosened and the collars slid along the slider bar 596 to match the distance between the dual mounting receptacles 70d of the mountable accessory 66d selected. The set screws may then be tightened to lock the collars in place on the slider bar to pre-position the hooks 508a, 508b on each hanger 598a, 598b, respectively, to align with the dual mounting receptacles 70d. The mountable accessory is then hung from the supplemental organizer 530 as represented by a dotted outline in FIG. 17. Again, the cubicle user has taken advantage of pre-existing and available retention slots 55 around the cubicle work space 32 and freed up space on the primary work surface 52 normally occupied by one or more work space accessories 62.

[0064] Referring now to FIGS. 13-16, another embodiment of the supplemental organizer, generally designated 630, is shown. This supplemental organizer includes a bracket 684 with rearwardly projecting upper and lower retention hooks 686a, 686b connected perpendicularly to an oversized brace plate 612 similar to the construction of the embodiment designated 330. An elongated cross bar 696 is fastened to the brace plate using a pair of screws **619***a*, **619***b*. It will be appreciated that the cross bar may be welded, adhered to, integral with, or otherwise suitably connected to the brace plate. Within the cross bar are a set of six spaced apart and threaded apertures 621a-f (621a and 621f are shown occupied). Each aperture may receive an exchangeable hanger 698a, 798a such as those illustrated in FIGS. 14-15 for suspending work space accessories from the supplemental organizer 630.

[0065] In FIG. 14, the side view of a representative exchangeable hanger, generally designated 698a (also shown on the left side of the cross bar 696 in FIG. 13), depicts the hanger with a short post 606a that extends through a stop 617a and terminates in an enlarged circular accessory mounting hook 616a with an outwardly facing slot 618a for receiving the working end of a flathead screwdriver. The section of the post to the left of the stop, as viewed in FIG. 14, is threaded for engaging the threads in any one of the apertures 621a-f. The stop prevents the post from threading all the way through the cross bar 696. The hook and section of the post next to the hook fit the mounting receptacle of the work space accessory with the hook resisting outward movement of the accessory. The right side exchangeable hanger 698b is constructed in the same manner. Multiple exchangeable hangers 698a, 698b may be screwed into the cross bar as shown in FIG. 13 to accommodate multiple single receptacled accessories 66a-d (FIG. 18) or dual receptacled mounting accessories 68a-e (FIG. 19). The use of supplemental organizer 630 with exchangeable hangers 698a, 689b is similar to the prior embodiments wherein the organizer 630 may be hung from the connector post 38, 46, 50 by inserting the mounting bracket 684 into available retention slots 55 and then a receptacled work space accessory 62 may be hung from one or a pair of the hooks 616a, 616b.

[0066] Other suitable exchangeable hangers may be used as well with the threaded cross bar embodiment 630. Referring now to FIG. 15, an exchangeable hanger 798a includes a threaded post 706a and a stop 717a as described above with the prior exchangeable hanger 698a but also includes an extended shelf supporting section 715a that terminates in a ridge 721a and an accessory mounting hook 716a. Between the ridge and the hook is a cylindrical collar 723a with a threaded bore for receiving a reduced diameter section 725a of the hook that has complementary threading to that of the bore. Thus, the accessory mounting hooks may be exchanged as well. As shown in FIG. 16, a supplemental organizer, generally designated 730, may employ a pair of such exchangeable hangers 798a, 798b that are screwed into two of the threaded apertures 721a-f of the cross bar 796 on either side of the mounting bracket 784. A shelf 775 may be placed over the shelf support sections 715a, 715b of the exchangeable hangers with the trailing edge of the shelf abutting the cross bar 796 and leading edge 776 of the shelf abutting the interior surface of the ridges 721a, 721b of the respective hangers 798a, 798b to prevent the shelf from sliding inwardly or outwardly relative to the mounting bracket. A clamp or clamps (not shown) on the undersurface of the shelf may further couple the shelf to the extensions to prevent lateral movement of the shelf if desired.

[0067] In use, the supplemental organizer 730, with shelf supporting surfaces is mounted to a desired connector post 38, 44, 50 in the cubicle work space. A set of suitable hangers 798a, 798b is screwed into two of the selected apertures 721a-f of the cross bar 796. The removable shelf 775 is placed over the shelf supporting sections 715a, 715b of the hangers. The user may then suspend work space accessories from the hooks 716a, 716b as described above. [0068] For both of the exchangeable cross bar organizers 630, 730, it will be appreciated that one or more exchangeable hangers may be selectively attached to the cross bar and that more or less than six apertures may be used. In addition, the apertures may simply form a sleeve without threads and the posts of the exchangeable hangers may be unthreaded as well and simply inserted into the selected apertures so that the hangers are retained by frictional means. Other suitable exchangeable connections will occur to one of ordinary skill

[0069] With a number of organizers 30, 130, 230, 330, 430, 530, 630, 730 available for use, the cubicle user may conduct a survey of the work space office accessories 62, 72 to be organized. Then, once a primary organizer 30, 130, 230 is installed in the cubicle and filled up with work space accessories, various supplemental organizers 330, 430, 530, 630, 730 may be positioned about the cubicle work space 32 at other convenient locations using free retention slots 55 to suspend the remaining work space accessories. As a typical cubicle includes a three or more partitions with connector posts between each or between elongated sections of wall, free retention slots are usually readily available. The organizers also save wear and tear on the fabric coverings of the partitions.

in the art.

[0070] The organizer embodiments discussed herein are preferably constructed of a lightweight metal such as aluminum or an aluminum alloy, other suitable metal, or a rigid plastic material. Other suitable materials may be used as well. Non-moving components may be manufactured as an integral unit using conventional metalworking or plastics technology and, if the organizer is assembled from separate

components, well known welding, adhesion, and coupling manufacturing and assembly techniques may be used to assemble the organizer.

[0071] The set screws or threaded posts and accessory mounting hooks may alternatively be constructed with a ridged or knurled peripheral surface so as to allow hand tightening thus omitting the need for a screwdriver. Other suitable locking and release mechanism will occur to one of ordinary skill in the art.

[0072] In the preceding detailed description, the invention is described with reference to a number of specific exemplary embodiments thereof. It will, however, be evident that various modifications and changes may be made thereto without departing from the broader spirit and scope of the invention as set forth in the claims. The specification and drawings are, accordingly, to be regarded in a illustrative rather than a restrictive sense.

What is claimed is:

- 1. An organizer for use in a cubicle work space including an overhead lighting source and at least one cubicle wall with a plurality of vertically aligned retention slots positioned proximate a desktop bearing a plurality of work space accessories, the organizer comprising:
 - an accessory support surface having a first portion defined by an elongated planar shelf with a trailing edge and a leading edge, said shelf including a light transmissible region operable to transmit light from said overhead lighting source therethrough;
 - a tray projecting outwardly from said leading edge of said shelf and projecting along at least a portion of the length of said shelf and defining a second portion of said accessory support surface; and
 - at least one mounting bracket projecting rearwardly from said trailing edge of said shelf and including at least one retention hook operable to releasably couple said accessory support surface to a corresponding number of said retention slots at a first location disposed between said overhead lighting source and said desktop in a horizontal orientation whereby said work space accessories may be selectively removed from said desktop and placed on said accessory support surface and light from said overhead lighting source may pass through at least a portion of said light transmissible region to illuminate said desktop.
 - 2. The organizer as set forth in claim 1 wherein:
 - said light transmissible region is defined by a perforated section of said shelf between said leading and trailing edges.
 - 3. The organizer as set forth in claim 1 further including:
 - at least one partition projecting perpendicularly to said leading edge of said shelf within said tray to subdivide said tray along its length.
 - 4. The organizer as set forth in claim 1 further including:
 - a first partition projecting parallel to said leading edge of said shelf within said tray to subdivide said tray along its width
 - 5. The organizer as set forth in claim 4 further including:
 - a second partition intersecting said first partition within said tray to subdivide said tray along its width and length.

6. The organizer as set forth in claim 1 further including: at least one hook projecting outwardly from an edge of said accessory support surface, said hook being operable to releasably retain one of said work space accessories.

Dec. 27, 2007

- 7. The organizer as set forth in claim 6 wherein:
- the position of said hook may be adjusted along said edge of said accessory support surface.
- 8. The organizer as set forth in claim 6 wherein:
- a plurality of hooks project outwardly from a distal edge of said tray and at least one of said hooks is adjustable along the length of said distal edge of said tray.
- 9. The organizer as set forth in claim 1 wherein:
- said mounting bracket includes an upper retention hook and a vertically spaced apart lower brace operable to releasably couple said accessory support surface to said cubicle wall within a corresponding number of said retention slots.
- 10. The organizer as set forth in claim 1 further including: a supplemental accessory support surface including at least one accessory hanger having a rearwardly facing mounting bracket with at least one anchoring hook operable to releasably couple said hanger to a corresponding number of said retention slots at a second location on said cubicle wall, said accessory hanger further including at least one post member extending outwardly from said mounting bracket and terminating in an accessory mounting hook operable to releasably suspend a work space accessory having a mounting receptacle.
- 11. The organizer as set forth in claim 10 wherein:
- said accessory hanger includes a plurality of spaced apart accessory mounting hooks operable to releasably suspend a work space accessory having a corresponding number of mounting receptacles.
- 12. The organizer as set forth in claim 10 wherein: said accessory hanger includes a horizontally projecting slider bar; and
- said accessory mounting hook is slidably adjustable along the length of said slider bar.
- 13. The organizer as set forth in claim 10 wherein:
- said accessory hanger includes an enlarged brace section between said retention bracket and said accessory mounting hook.
- 14. The organizer as set forth in claim 10 wherein:
- said accessory hanger includes an elongated neck disposing said accessory mounting hook distally from said retention bracket.
- 15. The organizer as set forth in claim 10 wherein:
- said accessory hanger includes a horizontally projecting cross bar having a pre-determined number of apertures; and
- said accessory mounting hook is selectively insertable into one or more of said apertures along said cross bar.
- 16. The organizer as set forth in claim 10 wherein:
- said mounting bracket includes a pair of retention hooks coupled to a horizontally projecting cross bar with a plurality of alignment apertures;
- at least two elongated hangers terminating in said accessory mounting hooks are coupled to said bar; and
- a second shelf rests on top of said elongated hangers.
- 17. The organizer as set forth in claim 1 wherein:
- said mounting bracket includes an elongated cross bar with a set of spaced apart apertures;

- a first hanger having a post member selectively insertable into one of said apertures to dispose a first hook distally from said mounting bracket;
- a second hanger having a post member selectively insertable into another of said threaded apertures to dispose a second hook distally from said mounting bracket; and said shelf and tray are supported on said elongated hangers.
- 18. An organizer for use in connection with a cubicle wall including at least one connecting post with a series of vertically aligned and spaced apart retention slots and further including an adjacent primary work space bearing a plurality of work space accessories and having an overhead lighting source for illuminating the work space, the organizer comprising:
 - an accessory support surface including a first portion with an elongated shelf having a trailing edge and a leading edge and a second portion having a plurality of adjustable accessory mounting hooks coupled to an outer edge of the first portion, the mounting hooks being selectively movable to alternate positions along the outer edge of the first portion; and
 - at least one anchoring hook projecting from one edge of the accessory support surface and constructed to removably couple the accessory support surface to a corresponding number of retention slots on at least one connecting post whereby the accessory support surface may be coupled to the cubicle wall and work space accessories may be selectively removed from the working surface and placed on the accessory support surface.
- 19. The organizer as set forth in claim 18 further including:
 - an upwardly facing tray interposed between the leading edge of the shelf and at least one of the accessory mounting hooks and forming a third portion of the accessory mounting surface; and
 - a light passage section disposed within the accessory support surface, the light passage section being constructed to allow light from the overhead light source to illuminate the work space below the accessory support

surface when the accessory support surface is coupled to the connecting post and the overhead light source is activated.

Dec. 27, 2007

- 20. A method of organizing a cubicle work space having at least one cubicle wall with a connector post having a set of vertically aligned retention slots, the work space further including an overhead lighting source and a desk bearing a plurality of mountable office accessories having at least one rearwardly facing mounting receptacle and a plurality of non-mountable accessories, the method comprising the steps of:
 - providing at least one accessory support surface having an elongated shelf section with a trailing edge and a leading edge and a light transmissible region therebetween, an organizer tray on the leading edge of the shelf with at least one outwardly extending adjustable accessory mounting hook, and a mounting bracket projecting rearwardly from the trailing edge of the shelf and including a set of retention hooks for releasable coupling the accessory support surface to the connector post;
 - inserting the set of retention hooks into a corresponding number of retention slots on the connector post at a position between the desktop and the overhead lighting source to position the shelf in a parallel orientation with the desktop to releasably couple the accessory mounting surface to the cubicle wall whereby light may pass through the light transmissible region to the desktop below when the overhead lighting source is activated;
 - selectively placing the non-mountable accessories from the desktop on the shelf or in the tray of the accessory support surface;
 - selectively positioning the adjustable hook along the outer edge of the tray;
 - selectively hanging a mountable office accessory from the desktop on the adjustable hook; and
 - repeating the selective positioning and hanging steps until all the adjustable hooks are covered with a mountable office accessory.

* * * * *