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[54] **CREDIT CARD IMPRINTER WITH COMPARISON AND CHECKING MEANS**  
**8 Claims, 11 Drawing Figs.**

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**101/285, 235/61.11, 235/61.7, 340/149**  
 [51] Int. CL. .... **B41f 3/04,**  
**G06k 7/02, H04q 3/70**  
 [50] Field of Search. .... **101/269,**  
**282, 283, 284, 285, 93, 1; 235/201, 61.11, 61.7;**  
**340/149, 149.5**

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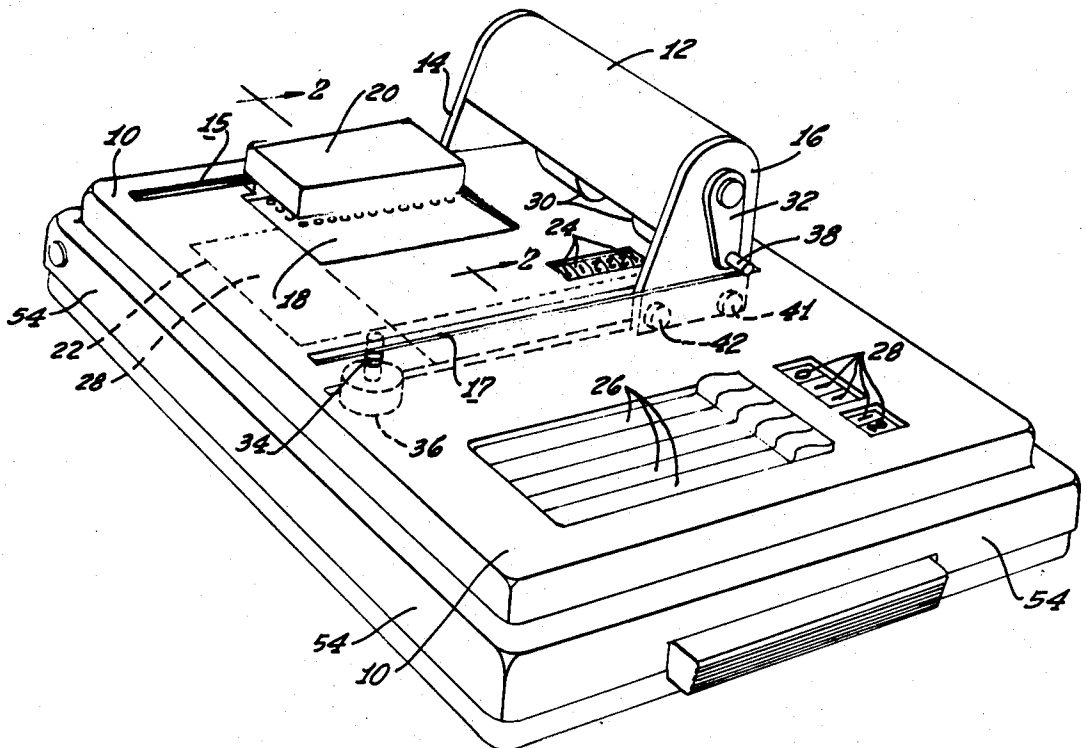
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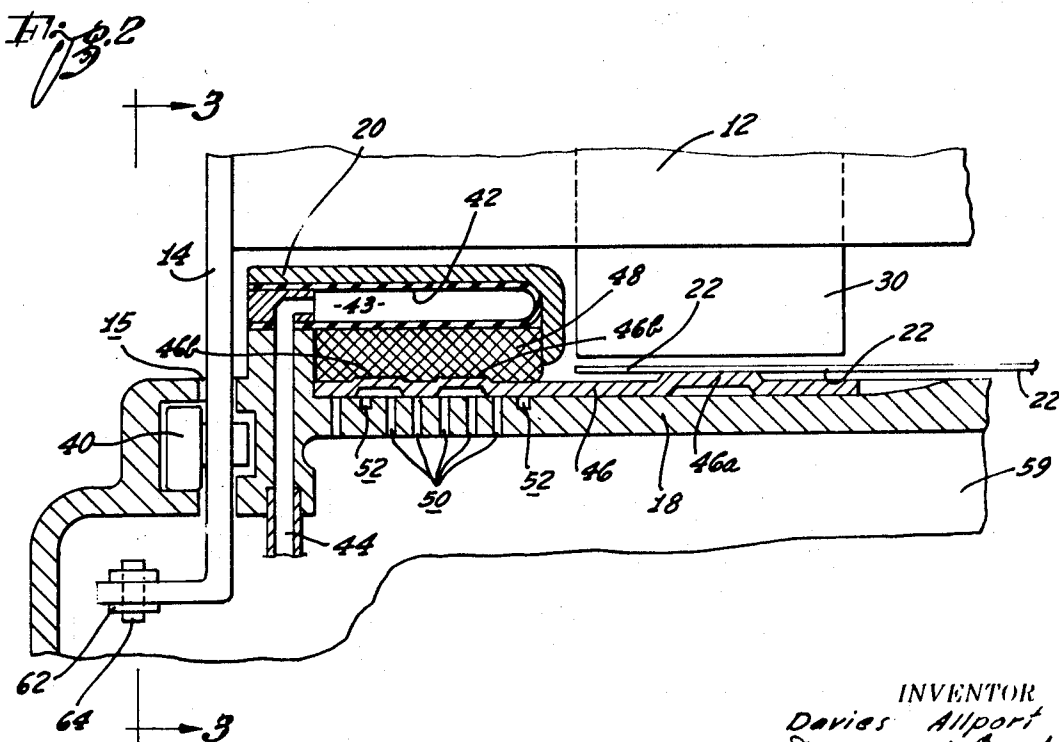
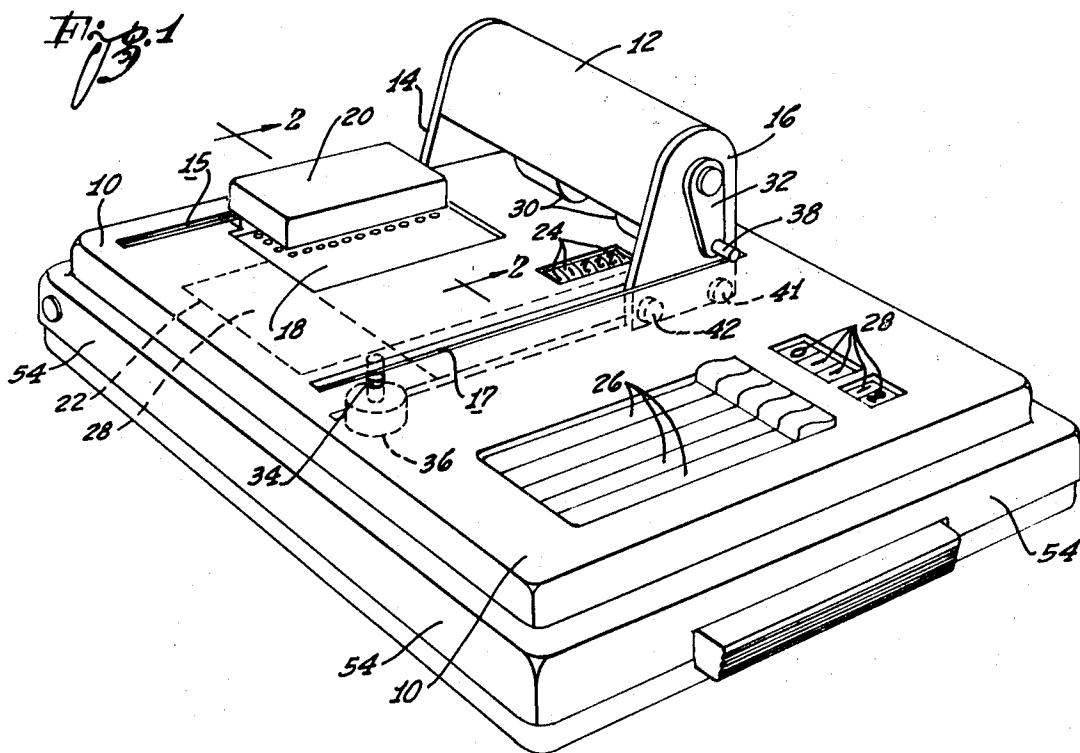
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**ABSTRACT:** An improved and simplified matching identification unit is provided which is particularly suited for automatically checking the status of identification cards or badges, credit cards, or the like. The embodiment of the invention to be described is a combined credit card imprinter and fluidic computer. The computer includes a master code data storage member which is easily replaceable for updating purposes, and which shall be termed herein as the "executive." The credit card, identification card, or its equivalent, has a code pattern formed thereon by embossments, apertures, or other means. The fluidic computer includes a comparator for matching the code on the card with the code on the executive, so that if the code pattern on the card matches a particular code combination previously set into the executive, for example, the card is rejected.





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Fig. 3

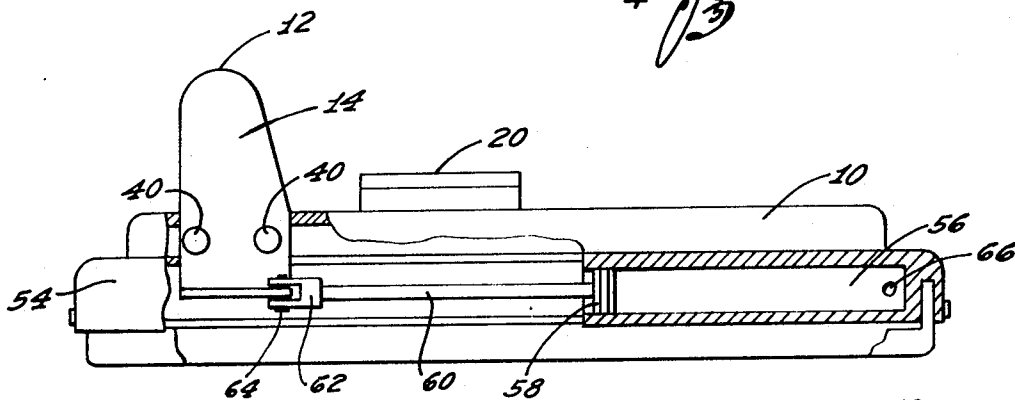


Fig. 4

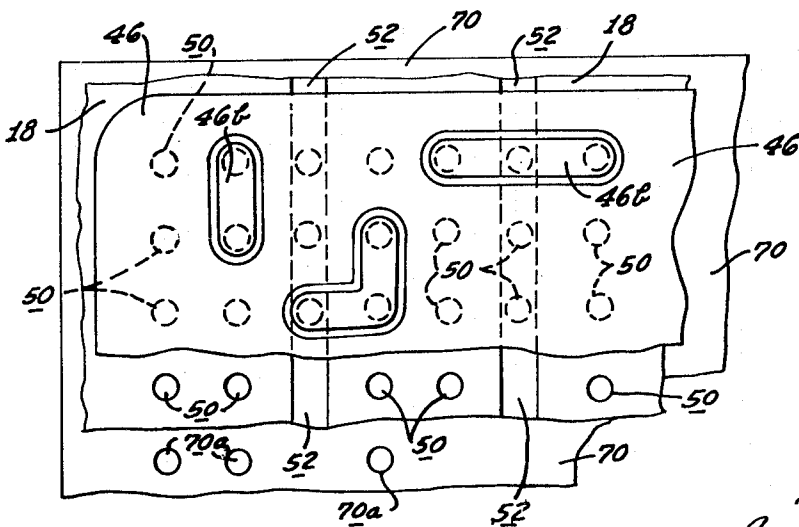
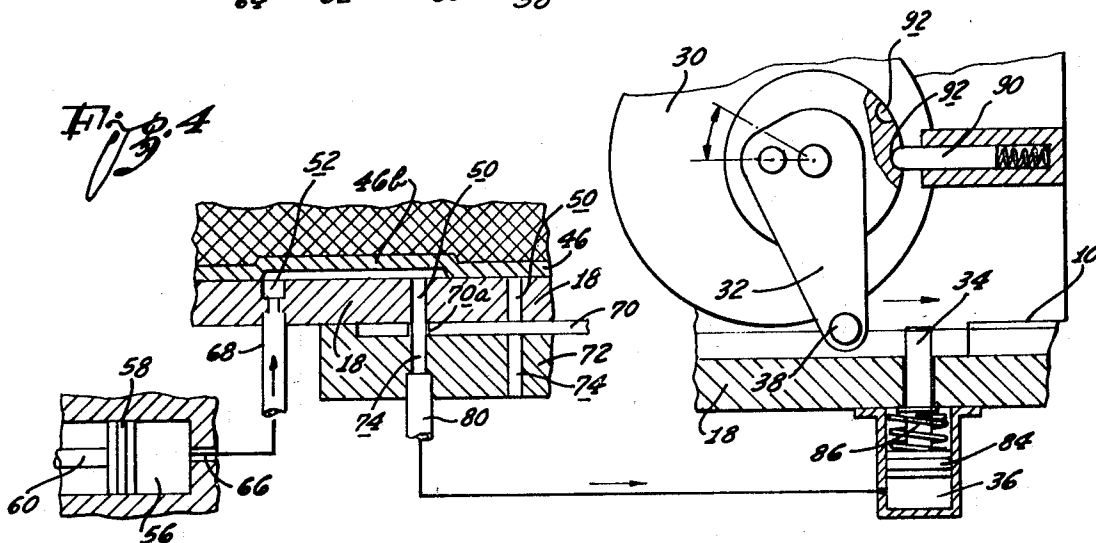
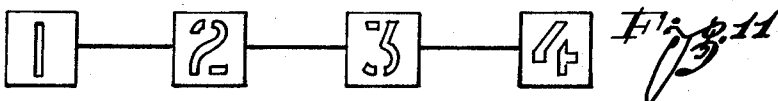
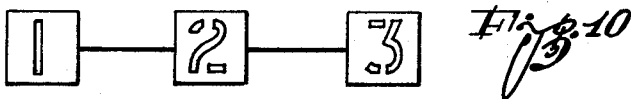
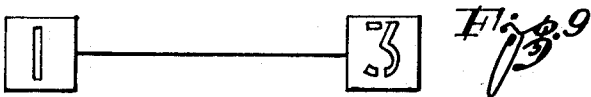
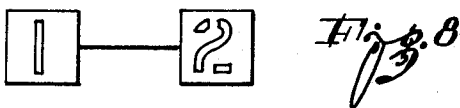
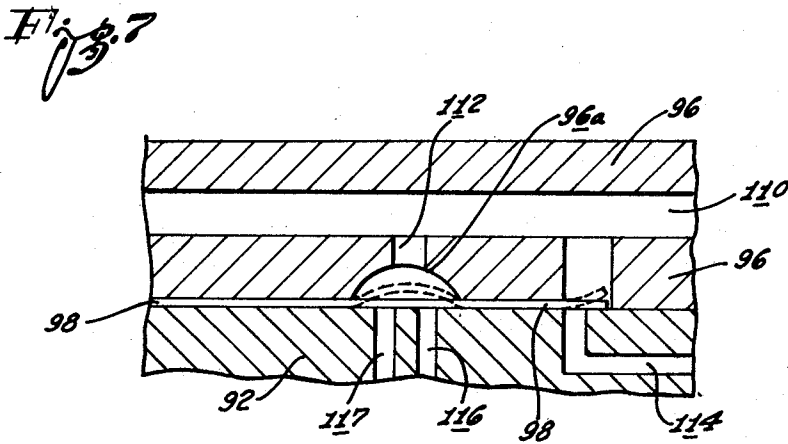
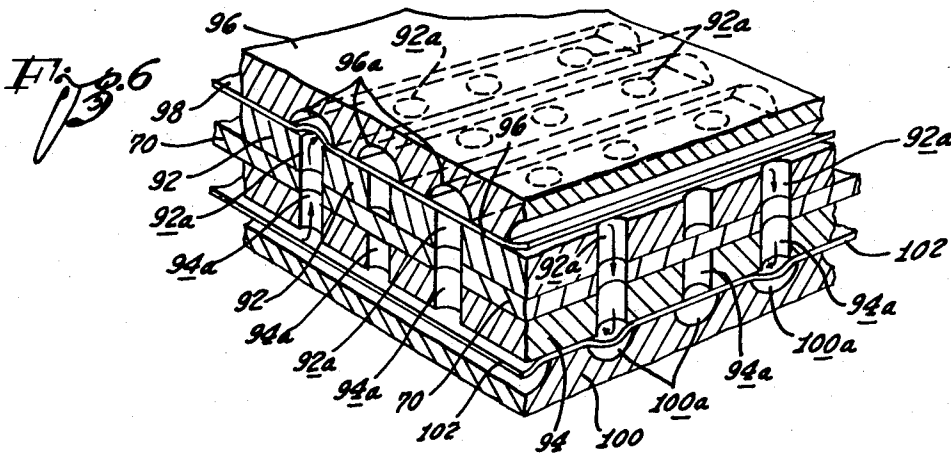


Fig. 5

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## CREDIT CARD IMPRINTER WITH COMPARISON AND CHECKING MEANS

### BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

It should be pointed out at the outset that the term "card," as used herein, is intended to have a generic connotation, and to refer to any thin sheetlike, platelike, or other type of identification or credit member. The member may, for example, be in the form of plastic, metal, cardboard, or of any other suitable material. When the unit of the invention is used for security purposes, for example, the "card" may be worn as a badge.

In any card-type identification or credit system in which a large number of individual cards are outstanding, it frequently becomes desirable to move those cards from circulation which have become delinquent, or which have been lost or stolen, or which have expired. In the case of identification for security purposes, it is often desirable periodically to invalidate all outstanding cards and to establish a new set of acceptable cards. In the latter case it is also essential to determine that the actual bearer of the card is the proper card holder.

It is the present practice in most credit card systems, for example, to distribute lists of the delinquent, lost or stolen cards to all outlets at which the cards of the particular credit card system are normally honored. However, due to the inconvenience in checking each card against the list, most often no check whatever is made and invalid cards are often accepted and honored. This means that the invalid cards continue to circulate in the system.

In the practice of the present invention, in one of its aspects, each time a credit or other code card, for example, is presented, it is placed in a combined computer/imprinting unit. This unit which is constructed in accordance with the concepts of the invention functions to imprint an invoice, or to make some other suitable record of the transaction. In accordance with the invention, the unit is constructed to receive and hold a master of "executive" card which has indicia on it representative, for example, of all, or of a selected number, of the cards in the system which are invalid for one reason or another, and which should be removed from the circulation. The executive card is readily removable from the unit, so that it may be replaced from time to time with a new executive card so that the unit may be maintained in a current condition. The indicia on the executive may be in the form of apertures, or other suitable form. It will naturally be appreciated that the executive indicia may represent all the good cards, rather than the invalid cards, if so desired.

When the unit described in the previous paragraph is operated, it functions to compare the identifying or other markings or indicia on the code card inserted into it, with the indicia on the executive. If the particular code card is one that should be withdrawn from circulation, for example, the unit will refuse to print the invoice; or some other alarm or signal may be initiated. When that occurs, a further check may be made to assure that the code card is indeed one that should be removed from the system, and the appropriate steps may then be taken.

When the unit of the invention is used, for example, in a security identification system, an additional presettable encoding device may be used. The latter apparatus may be constructed so that a code number, known only to the proper card holder, must be set into the additional encoder, before the appropriate signal or control effect is initiated to admit the card holder to the classified premises. Therefore, before the proper control effect is initiated, the card held by the person and inserted into the unit, the current executive card, and the additional encoder, must all provide matching information. This latter system permits, for example, the executive and encoder number to be changed from time to time, without any need to change the individual identification cards.

The embodiment of the invention to be described in detail herein, however, may be considered to involve a unit

representing a combination of a credit card imprinter and a fluidic computer, the computer being so programmed that any credit card which is not acceptable is not imprinted on the sales invoice which is placed with the credit card in the imprinter. For example, and as mentioned above, the particular credit card may be rejected if it has expired, or if the card holder has exceeded his credit limit, or if the card has been lost, stolen, or if the card has become delinquent for any other reason.

Although the particular illustrated embodiments herein will be described as applied to credit card applications, it will become evident as the description proceeds that the unit of the invention has general application. The unit may be used, for example, as suggested, either alone or in conjunction with an additional encoding means, for security identification purposes. The unit may also be used to check reservations, for example, or to operate any desired instrumentality once a match has been established between the individual coded card, and the executive card in the unit. For example, the units of the invention may be economically adapted for data control of inventory, sales and the like. Other uses are numerous.

When the units of the invention are used for security purposes, and as suggested above, a data card may be issued to the various personnel as a badge, and the card may be used to permit entry by selected employees into particular security facilities, sections or files. The data card is placed in the unit and, if all the criteria are met, access to the file, facility or section is permitted. The card may be rendered obsolete at any time, by providing for the additional encoding means as mentioned above. For example, new codes may be issued to each person for each shift to be set by them into the encoding means as an identity check. In addition, special codes may be issued to the personnel to signify trouble.

The unit of the invention is most advantageous in that it is entirely self-contained, and in that it does not require a separate power source. Nor does the unit of the invention rely on a central memory, which must be contacted each time a check is made. The units to be described herein may be constructed to be light and portable, and to be fully compatible with existing credit card imprinter and equivalent units. That is, the units of the present invention may be constructed to be used for normal recording purposes, for example, to print invoices, in conjunction with credit cards which have not been coded so as to establish the computer check, of which the unit is capable. Moreover, cards which are coded to be received in the unit of the invention for validating purposes may be used in conjunction with the usual sales outlet recording printers, of the usual type which are not equipped with the computer check feature of the invention. The latter imprinters may subsequently be modified by the addition of computers in accordance with the invention.

When the fluidic principle is incorporated into the computer portion of the imprinter/computer unit of the invention, the entire unit may be powered by the operator by movement of the imprinting handle. In this manner, the cost and maintenance problems associated with the prior art electronic and electrical devices of this general type are eliminated. The unit of the invention may be of modular construction so as to provide extreme versatility in programming, operation and in field maintenance. Moreover, the fluidic computer used in the units of the invention is reliable in its operation, and it is capable of being operated through long trouble-free periods.

As mentioned above, the units of the invention are self-contained, and they do not rely on an external power source, nor on a central memory storage, in order to perform their code card validating function. Instead, the source of pressurized fluid may be contained within the unit to be operated when the unit is operated, and a replaceable executive card may be used as the memory storage. The executive card, as mentioned above, may be readily insertable and removable from the unit, and this card is used to schedule the fluidic circuit. The executive card may be distributed to the various outlets by mail, or by other means, and new executive cards may be so dis-

tributed as often as desired, so that the validating units are all maintained on a current basis.

### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

A data comparing unit is provided which serves to compare data on a data card with data on an executive, and by means of fluidic circuits to provide a particular control or signal effect only if a desired match is achieved. Because of the low cost, small size, and portability of the unit, and because of its self-contained power source, the unit finds particular utility in credit card systems. However, as mentioned above, the units of the invention have general utility. For example, in a security system, an additional presettable encoding device may be provided into which a code (memorized by the proper card holder) must be programmed before the desired output is produced.

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a credit card imprinter unit, which has been modified to incorporate a fluidic computer/comparator in accordance with the concepts of the invention;

FIG. 2 is a sectional view taken essentially along the line 2—2 of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a further sectional view taken along the lines 3—3 of FIG. 2;

FIG. 4 is an enlarged fragmentary view, partly diagrammatic, of the unit of FIG. 1, and showing the manner in which a control effect is exerted on the imprinting mechanism in response to the output from the fluidic computer;

FIG. 5 is a sectional view taken substantially along the line 5—5 of FIG. 2;

FIG. 6 is a partial perspective view of the fluidic computer portion of the unit of FIG. 1, and showing a modified construction for the computer;

FIG. 7 is an enlarged fragmentary section of the modified computer of FIG. 6; and

FIGS. 8—11 are block diagrams representative of various embodiments of the invention.

### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE ILLUSTRATED EMBODIMENT

The imprinter/fluidic computer unit shown in FIG. 1, for example, includes a base 10 which, in the illustrated embodiment, has a generally flat configuration. Mounted on the base 10 is an imprinting handle 12 and associated side brackets 14 and 16. The side brackets move in guideways 15 and 17 in the base, as the handle is moved linearly across the base, first to the left-hand side of the base, and then back to its illustrated position on the right hand side of the base.

An apertured baseplate 18 is revealed through an opening in the base 10, and a housing 20 is mounted on the base over the apertured plate. The credit card to be checked, for example, is placed on the base plate 18 under the housing 20. Then, an invoice 22 such as shown by the shadowlines may be placed over the credit card.

A series of print wheels 24 also extend through an opening on the base 10, and these print wheels may be set to represent price, or other indicia, by corresponding settings of a series of linear dials 26. A visual readout 28 may be provided adjacent the dials, so as to provide a visual indication of the settings of the print wheels 24. A pair of pressure rollers 30 are rotatably mounted under the handle 12, and these rollers are controlled by an eccentric crank 32.

The arrangement is such that as the handle 12 is moved across the base 10 from the right to the left in FIG. 1, it passes freely over the invoice 22. However, when the handle reaches its left-hand position, and should the comparison of the indicia on the credit card with the executive show that the credit card is acceptable, a plunger 34 is extended up through the base 18 by an air cylinder 36, and this pin engages a further pin 38 on the crank 32 to turn the crank to an operative position as the

crank is moved past the plunger 34. The resulting angular movement of the crank causes the pressure rollers 30 to be moved down against the invoice 22, so that on the return stroke of the handle 12, the invoice is pressed down on the credit card and print wheels 24. The data on the card and indicia on the print wheels 24 may now be printed on the invoice by means, for example, of an interposed carbon paper. If the card is not acceptable, the plunger 34 is not actuated, so that the pressure rollers remain in their up position, and no printing is carried out by the unit.

It will be appreciated, of course, that the setting of the print wheels 24 may be controlled remotely, rather than by the linear dials 26, for example, by a computer, meter, cash register, business machine, or the like.

As shown in FIG. 2, for example, the side bracket 14 is supported in the guideway 15 on a pair of rollers, such as the roller 40. It will be understood that the side bracket 16 is supported by a similar pair of rollers 41 (FIG. 1) in the guideway 17.

The crank 32 and pin 38 are shown on the external surface of bracket 16 in FIGS. 1 and 4 in order to clarify the description of these elements. The elements would normally be mounted in an inaccessible part of the equipment.

A diaphragm 42 is supported under the housing 20 to form an expansible chamber 43. Pressurized fluid is fed into the chamber 43 through a conduit 44. As mentioned above, a credit card, such as the credit card 46 in FIG. 2 is slipped under the housing 20 when the apparatus is to be operated, and the invoice 22 is placed partially over the credit card as shown in FIGS. 1 and 2. A resilient backup pad 48 is mounted in the housing 20 under the expansible chamber 43. When the pressurized fluid is introduced into the aforesaid chamber, the resilient backup pad is forced down against the credit card 46, holding it firmly against the apertured baseplate 18.

The credit card 46 has a first set of embossments 46a which are disposed under the invoice 22, and which serve to impart certain information to the invoice, such as the name, account number, address, and so on of the card holder. This occurs when the card has been validated, so that the pressure roller 30 is moved down against the invoice 22 and across the face of the invoice upon the return stroke of the handle 12, as described above.

The baseplate 18 has a series of apertures 50 formed in it and which are disposed under the housing 20. The baseplate also has a further series of channels 52 formed in its upper surface. The credit card has further embossments 46b which may be referred to as identifying indicia, and these latter embossments, as shown in FIG. 2, provide intercoupling channels between the apertures or holes 50 in the baseplate 18, and between the channels 52 and selected ones of the holes 50, when the credit card is in place under the housing 20. It will be appreciated that when the pressurized fluid is introduced through the conduit 44 into the chamber 43, the resilient backup pad 48 is forced down against the face of the credit card 46, so that the identifying embossments 46b on the card are firmly held in position on the base 18 with respect to the apertures 50 in the base.

The pneumatic or fluidic computer/comparator which is used in conjunction with the assembly described above is supported, for example, in a housing 54 (FIGS. 1—3) under the imprinter base 10. An air cylinder 56 (FIG. 3) is supported within the housing 54, and this air cylinder has a plunger 58 and connecting arm 60 associated with it. The connecting arm 60 is pivotally coupled to the side bracket 14 of the handle 12 by means, for example, of a clevis 62 and pin 64.

The arrangement is such that when the handle 12, for example, is moved across the base to the left in FIG. 1, the plunger 58 is moved to the position shown in FIG. 3. Then, when the handle is returned to the right, the resulting pressurized fluid in the air cylinder 56 is discharged out through an orifice 66 and into the conduit 44 to expand the diaphragm 42 for the purposes described above. The resulting pressurized fluid is also carried by appropriate conduits such as the conduit 68 in

FIG. 4 into the cross-channels 52 in the base 18. The embossments 46b on the card 46 then provide for the intercoupling of the channels 52 in the base 18 with selected ones of the holes 50, so that the pressurized fluid may pass through the selected holes 50.

The aforesaid executive card, designated 70 in FIG. 5, is inserted under the baseplate 18, and between it and an apertured retainer plate 72. The plate 72 has holes 74 aligned with corresponding ones of the holes 50 in the baseplate 18. The executive card 70 is selectively apertured, and may be removed and replaced by a new card whenever desired, as mentioned above. The apertured executive card 70 selectively blocks certain ones of the holes 74 in the retainer plate 72 from the holes 50 in the base plate 18. The holes in the executive card 70 may be designated 70a, and they are patterned to represent a predetermined code representative, for example, of all the code cards which are to be rejected by the unit.

When, for example, the particular credit card inserted into the machine is a valid card, a path for the pressurized fluid is established through the embossments 46b on the credit card from the inlet conduit 68, and through the channels 52 and holes 50 in the baseplate 18; and then through the holes 70a in the executive 70, and through the holes 74 in the retaining plate 72. Under such conditions, a pressurized fluid output appears in a conduit 80, and it is introduced into the air cylinder 36. The pressurized fluid introduced into the air cylinder 36 causes a spring-loaded plunger 84 to move upwardly against the bias of a spring 86, so that the pin 34 is caused to move up through the baseplate 18 in the base 10.

When the pin 34 is in its extended position with respect to the base 18, such as shown in FIG. 4, the crank pin 38 engages the pin 34 on the return stroke of the printing handle 12, so as to turn the pressure rollers 30. The pressure rollers are eccentrically mounted, so that when so turned they are caused to move down and press against the invoice on the credit card and print wheels 24 in a printing engagement therewith.

A spring-loaded pin 90 engages appropriate detents 92 in the hub of the pressure rollers 30, so that the pressure rollers may be firmly retained either in their down and printing position, or in their up inoperative position.

It will be appreciated that in the event the card checked by the apparatus and system of the invention is invalid, no pressurized output appears in the conduit 80, and the pin 34 remains in its down position, as the plunger 84 is biased by the spring 86 to the bottom of the air cylinder 36. When that occurs, the crank pin 38 is not engaged as the handle 12 is returned to the right-hand side of the base 18 during the normal printing stroke, so that the pressure rollers 30 remain in their upper inoperative position, and no printing occurs. At the end of a normal printing stroke, the crank pin 38 is caused to engage a fixed stop (not shown), which returns it to the upper inoperative position of the pressure rollers 30.

It will be appreciated, therefore, that by providing appropriate patterns of channels and holes in the baseplate 18, and by selectively inserting various executive cards 70, the indicia on the different credit cards may be compared with the code established by the executive card, so that the imprinter is actuated only when a predetermined match between the credit card indicia and executive card indicia is obtained. In this way, all delinquent or expired credit cards may be rejected and removed from circulation. Also, and as mentioned above, the apparatus may be used for other purposes such as for reservations, for example, with a ticket being printed as confirmed only when the inserted executive matches properly with the code card set into the apparatus to show that space, for example, is available.

In the embodiment of FIG. 6, a more complex coding may be achieved, and, for example, any particular code card may be checked against many thousand possible combinations in order to achieve a match. In the latter embodiment, the executive card 70 is sandwiched between two apertured backup plates 92 and 94. The backup plates 92 and 94 contain respective apertures or holes 92a and 94a, which are aligned with

corresponding holes in the other backup plate, and the executive card 70 is apertured so as to block certain of the aligned holes 92a and 94a, and to open others of the aligned holes.

A top plate 96 is placed over the backup plate 92, and a flexible membrane 98 is interposed between the two members. The top plate 96 has channels 96a extending along it in a given direction and aligned with the corresponding holes 92a in the backup plate 92. A second end plate 100 is mounted adjacent the plate 94, and the two latter plates are separated by a flexible membrane 102. The plate 100 has channels 100a extending along its length, in a direction transversing the channels 96a in the upper plate, and also aligned with the corresponding holes 94a in the plate 94.

In the operation of the assembly shown in FIG. 6, the channels 96a and 100a are normally filled with a pressurized fluid at a relatively high pressure. This pressurized fluid serves to retain the diaphragm 98 down against the upper ends of the holes 92a so as to close the upper ends of the holes. The pressurized fluid also serves to maintain the diaphragm 102 firmly against the lower ends of the holes 94a in the plate 94 to close the latter holes.

However, when a credit card, for example, is inserted into the machine associated with the assembly of FIG. 6, the various channels 96a and 100a are coupled to the holes 50 of FIG. 2. This coupling is such, for example, that the embossments on the credit card cause one of the channels 96a and one of the channels 100a to be opened to the atmosphere.

A further pressurized fluid is introduced to the vertical passageways formed by the aligned holes 92a and 94a. However, the pressure of this latter pressurized fluid is lower than the aforesaid pressurized fluid in the channels 96a and 100a, so that normally the diaphragms 98 and 102 are not disturbed by the lower pressure fluid. However, when a card is inserted in the aforesaid associated equipment, so as to relieve the pressure in one of the channels 96a and in one of the channels 100a, the low-pressure fluid is caused to flow up through a vertical passageway formed by the holes 94a and 92a coupled to the particular relieved channel 96a, and to flex the diaphragm 98 at the relieved channel 96a so that the low-pressure fluid can flow down the relieved channel 96a until it reaches the vertical passageway formed by the other holes 92a and 94a, and which extends down to the relieved channel 100a.

If, for example, the executive 70 has a hole in alignment with the last-mentioned vertical passageway, the low-pressure pressurized fluid is able to flow down the vertical passageway to flex the diaphragm 102 in the relieved channel 100a, to flow along the opposite side of the diaphragm in the relieved channel to actuate the printer in the manner described above, or to permit some other operation.

That is, the executive card may be programmed so that when a hole is provided at any particular intersection of a channel 96a with a channel 100a, the intersection represents a valid card. Then, when that card is placed in the machine, the path is established to the imprinter, so that the normal printing operation may be carried out. However, when the particular card is invalid, no hole will appear in the executive at the appropriate intersection, and no control effect will be initiated. It will be appreciated, of course, that the converse may be true, in that the absence of a hole at any particular intersection of the executive produces the control effect indicative of a good card, whereas the presence of a hole at that particular intersection is representative of an invalid or delinquent card.

The high-pressure fluid may be introduced to the parts of the channels 96a, for example, lying above the diaphragm 98 in the manner shown in FIG. 7. For that purpose, the plate 96 is provided with a channel 110 which communicates with all of the channels 96a through, for example, vertical passageways such as the passageway 112. The high-pressure fluid may be introduced to the passageway 110 through a conduit 114 in the lower block 92. The end of the diaphragm 98 may serve as a flap valve for the high-pressure fluid, so as to retain the high pressure fluid in the upper parts of the channels

96a, and to permit additional high-pressure fluid to be introduced, whenever the fluid in the channels drop. The low pressure fluid may be introduced to the vertical passageways formed by the pairs of holes 92a and 94a through a conduit 116 which extends through the block 92, a return conduit 117 being provided.

Various types of comparison-computer combinations in the practice of the present invention are shown in FIGS. 8-11. For example, the block diagram of FIG. 8 represents a fluidic circuit in which a data card 1 has its coding indicia compared with a preset code in the form of an executive 2. In FIG. 9, the indicia on the data card 1 is compared with a variable code that may be preset into the system at the time of card insertion, for example, by a manually dialed or other preset code, or under the control of an appropriate data processing unit. The preset code may be introduced into the system, for example, by presetting controls such as described in Weingart U.S. Pat. No. 3,315,230, or in Michels U.S. Pat. No. 3,344,258.

In the system of FIG. 10, the coded indicia of the credit card 1 is compared not only with the executive 2, but also with the preset code 3, in order to achieve the desired control effect. As mentioned above, this latter system is particularly suited for security purposes. The system of FIG. 11 is similar to that of FIG. 10, with the additional provision of an encoder which provides a new input to the presettable code 3. The encoder 4 being used to change the settings 3 from time to time in accordance with a given program.

The invention provides, therefore, a new, improved system and unit for comparing the indicia on a coded card and the like with indicia stored in the apparatus, and for establishing the requirement for a predetermined match to be achieved, in order for a selected control effect to be initiated.

It should be noted that means may be provided in the equipment of FIG. 1 to print the code indicia also on the invoice. This would provide a means to check forged credit cards, or other fraudulent operation of the system.

It will also be appreciated that although particular embodiments of the invention have been shown and described, modifications may be made. It is intended in the claims to cover the modifications which fall within the scope of the invention.

1. Apparatus for use with a multiplicity of data cards each having data indicia thereon in the form of embossments which provide channels on the underside thereof, and for comparing

said indicia on each such card with indicia in the form of perforations on an executive member, said apparatus including: a base having a top surface with apertures therein and constructed removably to receive and support said card, and to support said executive member; holding means mounted on said base and extending over the top surface thereof for holding the aforesaid card in a stationary position on said top surface with the embossments thereon providing intercoupling channels for the apertures in said base; means for introducing pressurized fluid through said apertures in said base and past said indicia on a data card supported on said base through the aforesaid intercoupling channels and through said indicia perforations on the executive member so as to provide a fluid output indicative of whether or not a comparison has been achieved, and means responsive to said fluid output to provide a predetermined control effect.

2. The apparatus defined in claim 1, and which includes imprinting means for making a record of at least some of the data represented by the indicia on the last-mentioned data card.

3. The apparatus defined in claim 2, and which includes locking means coupled to said imprinting means and responsive to said predetermined control effect for preventing operation of said imprinting means when no match is achieved between the indicia on a data card and the indicia of said executive.

4. The apparatus defined in claim 2, in which said imprinting means is movable with respect to said base, and which includes fluid pressure generating means coupled to said imprinting means to generate the aforesaid pressurized fluid upon movement of said imprinting means with respect to said base.

5. The apparatus defined in claim 4, in which said fluid pressure generating means comprises an air cylinder and plunger combination.

6. The apparatus defined in claim 4, in which said imprinting means is movable along said base in a reciprocal linear manner with respect to said base.

7. The apparatus defined in claim 1, in which said executive member is removable from said apparatus and replaceable by a different executive member having different indicia thereon.

8. The apparatus defined in claim 1, and which includes a flexible diaphragm mounted adjacent said base for selectively closing the apertures therein.

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