



US 20110315589A1

(19) **United States**

(12) **Patent Application Publication**
Thomas

(10) **Pub. No.: US 2011/0315589 A1**

(43) **Pub. Date: Dec. 29, 2011**

(54) **CARRYING CASES HAVING ADJUSTABLE COMPARTMENTS FOR USE WITH PORTABLE ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND RELATED METHODS**

Publication Classification

(51) **Int. Cl.**
B65D 81/02 (2006.01)
(52) **U.S. Cl.** 206/521
(57) **ABSTRACT**

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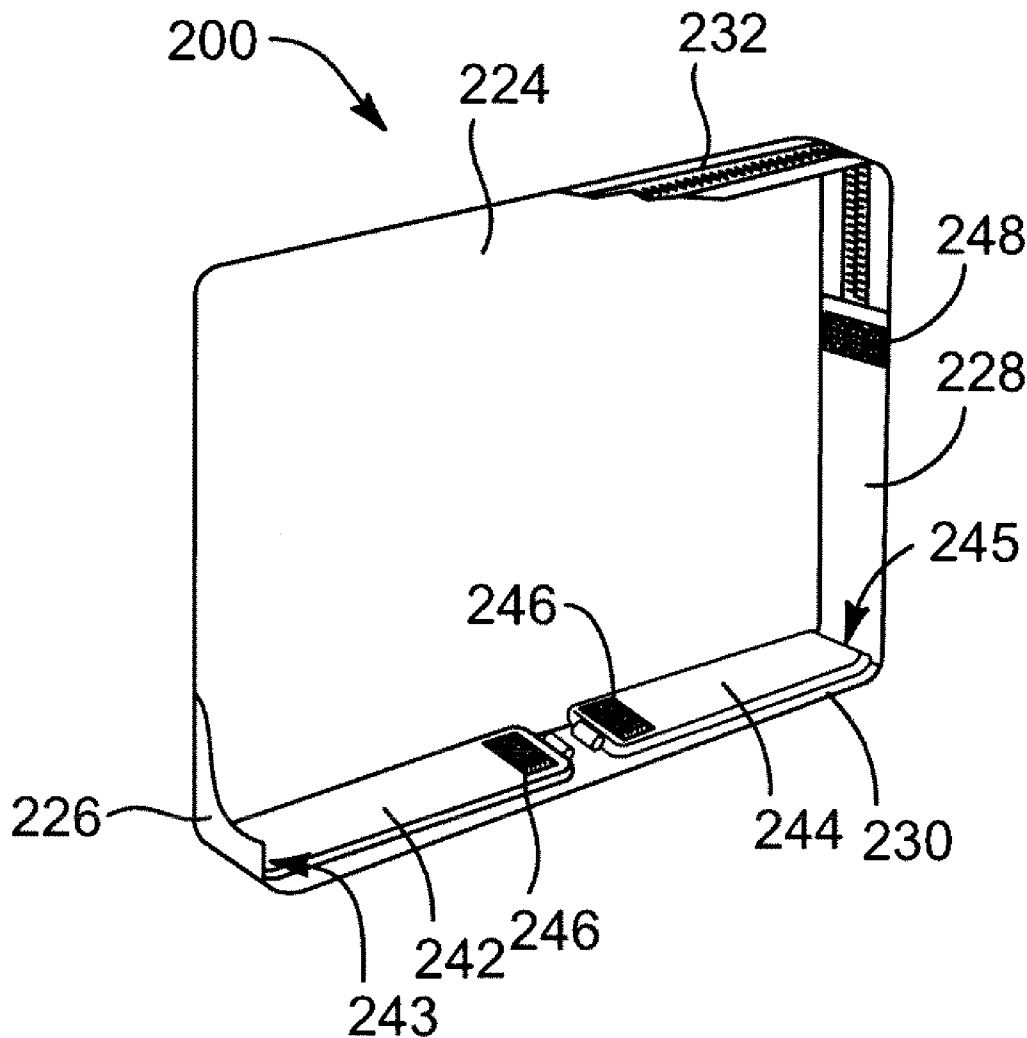
(21) **Appl. No.:** 13/171,225

(22) **Filed:** Jun. 28, 2011

Related U.S. Application Data

(60) Provisional application No. 61/359,672, filed on Jun. 29, 2010.

According to various embodiments, a carrying case may be configured with an internal compartment adapted to receive a laptop computer, netbook, tablet computer, touch screen, multimedia projector, mobile telephone, and/or other portable electronic device. The dimensions of a compartment may be adapted for a specific device by moving adjustable cushions from a side spacing orientation to a base spacing orientation. According to one embodiment, a compartment may include adjustable cushions configured to be placed within the compartment in a side spacing orientation or outside the compartment in an external orientation. Additionally, a carrying case may include an instruction icon illustrating methods for using adjustable cushions within a compartment.



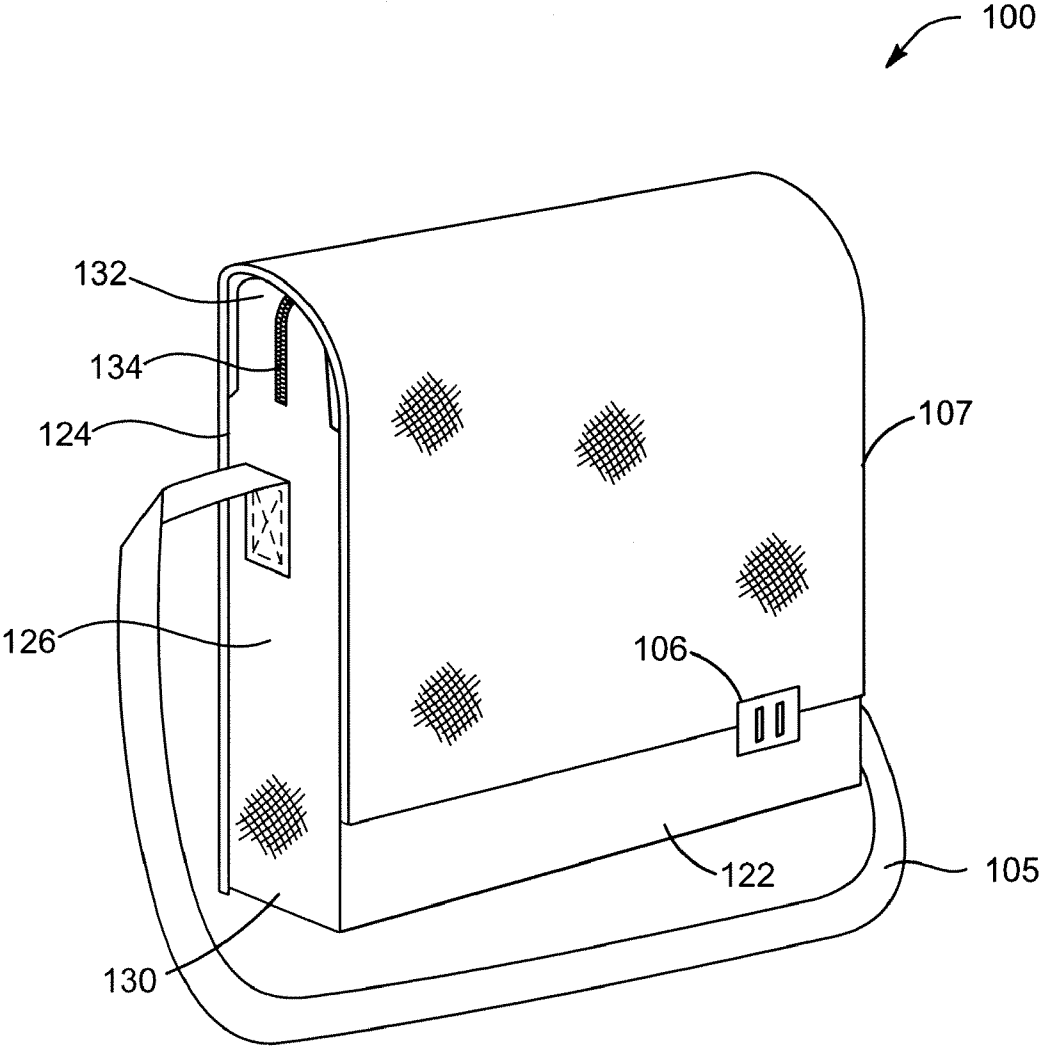


FIG. 1

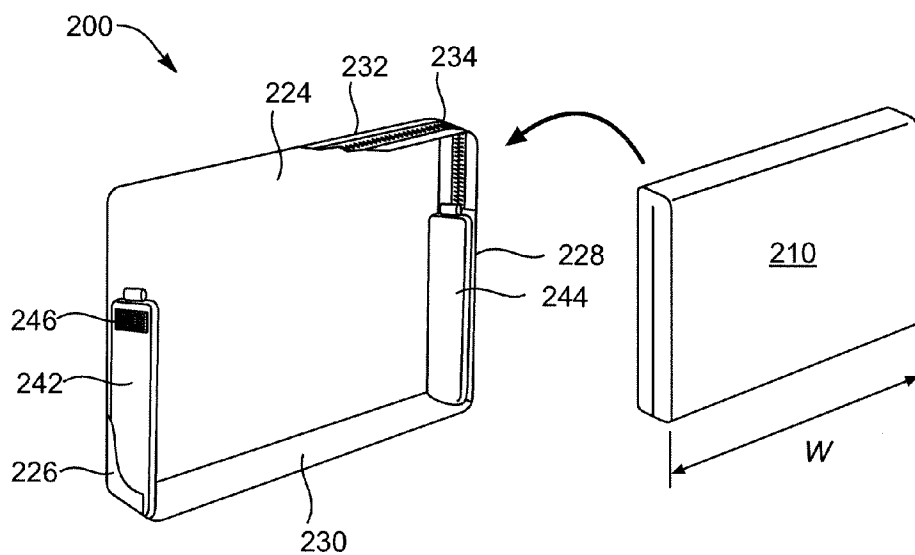


FIG. 2A

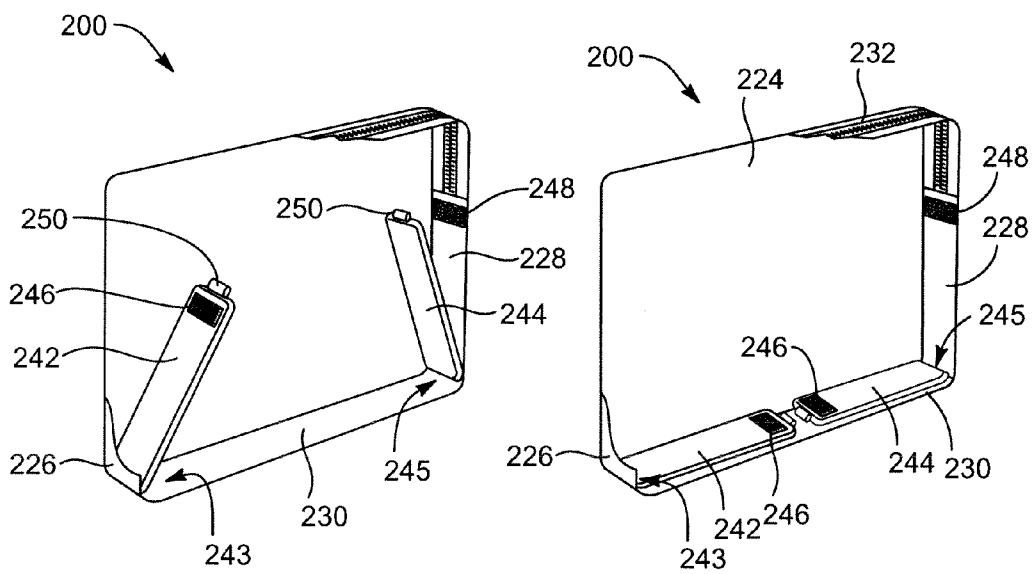
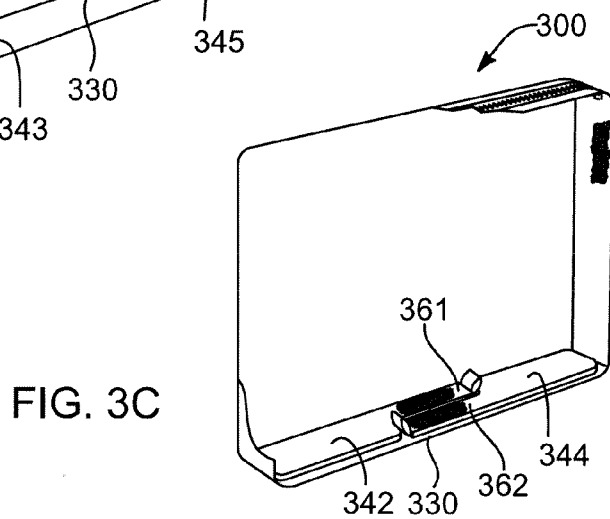
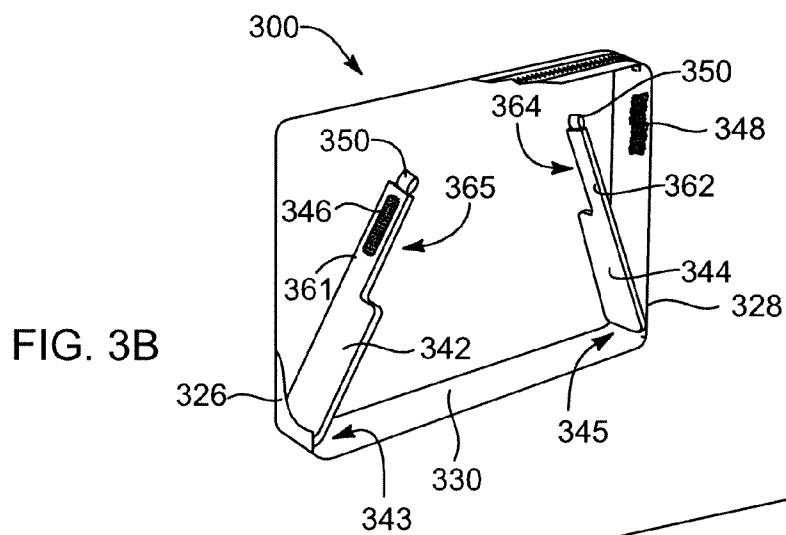
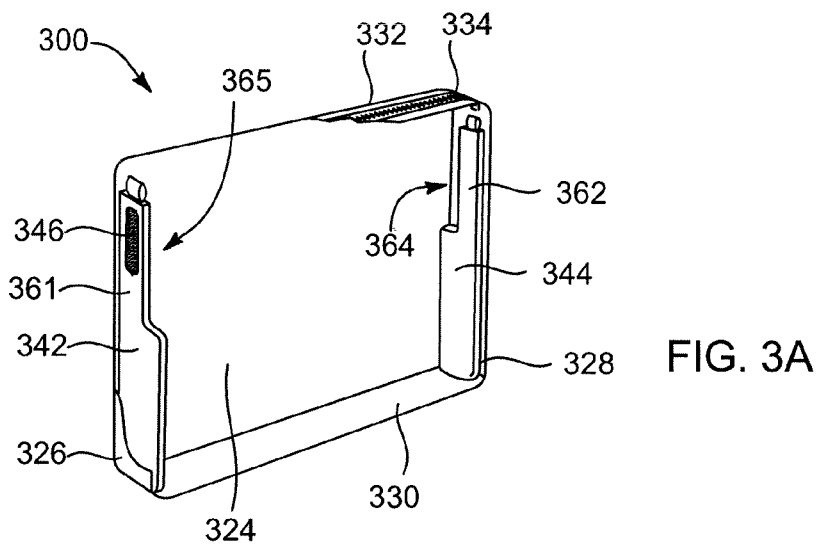


FIG. 2B

FIG. 2C



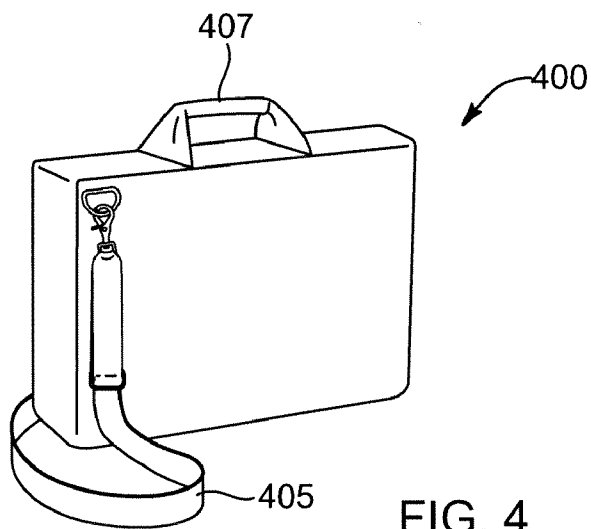


FIG. 4

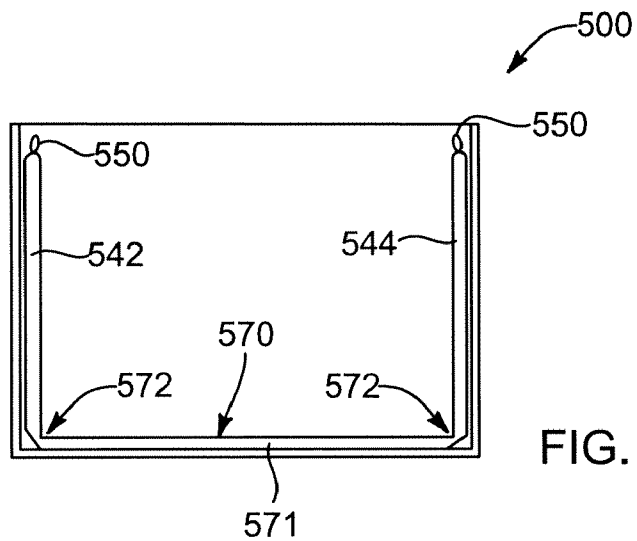


FIG. 5A

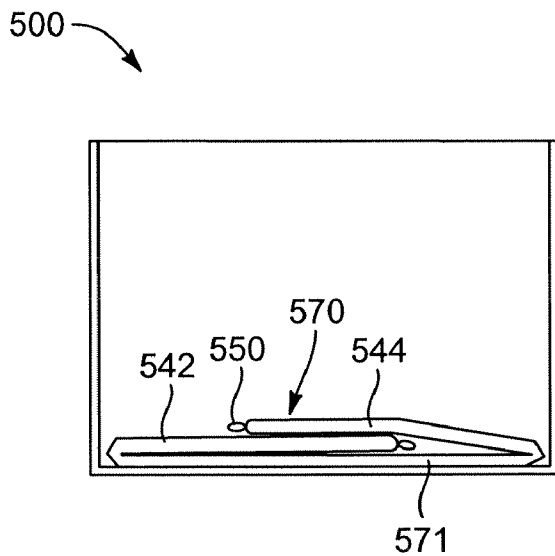


FIG. 5B

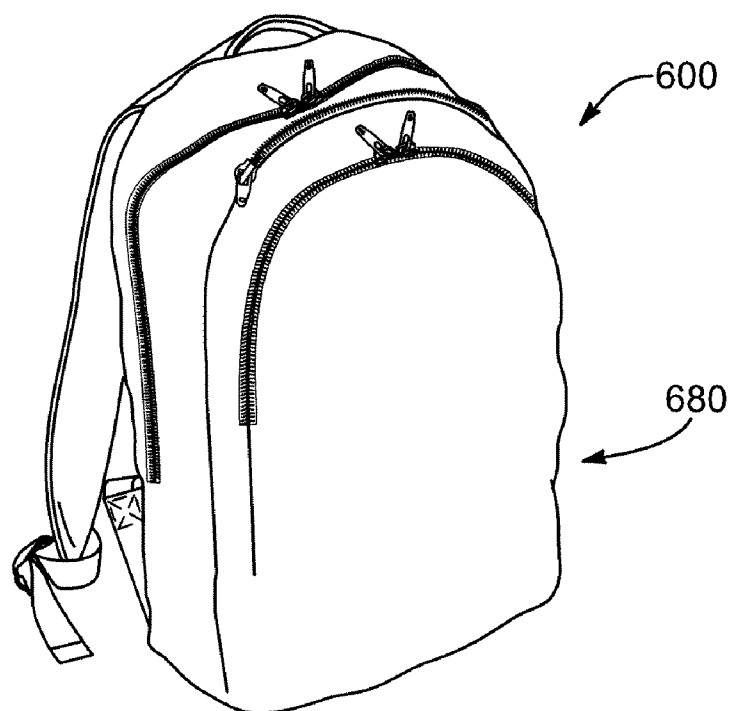


FIG. 6A

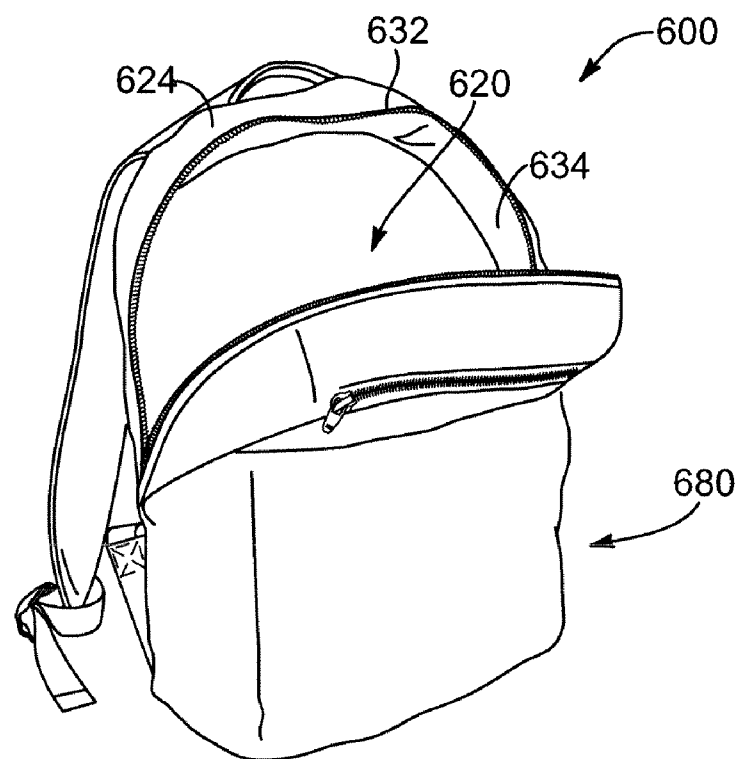


FIG. 6B

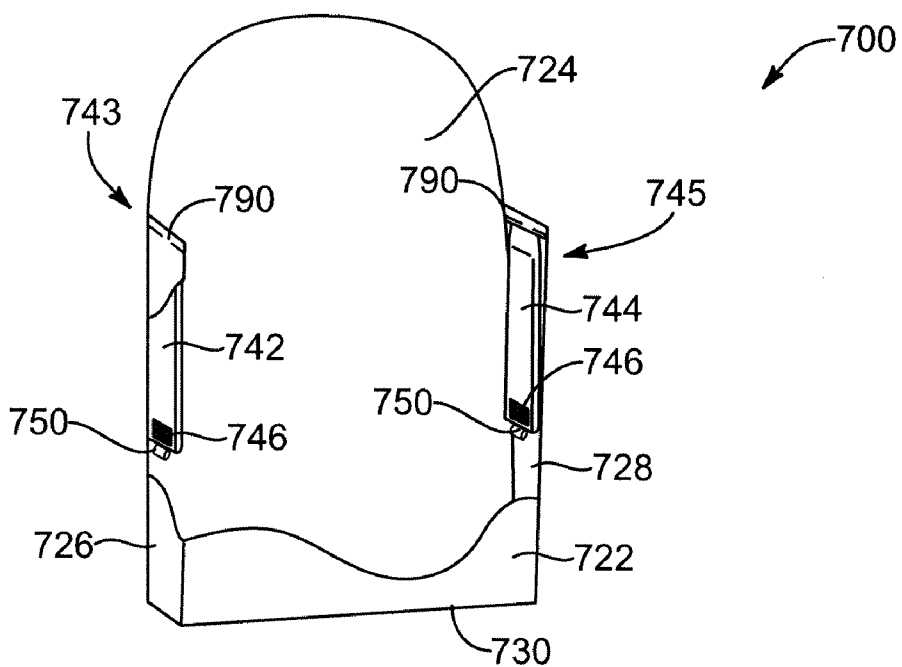


FIG. 7A

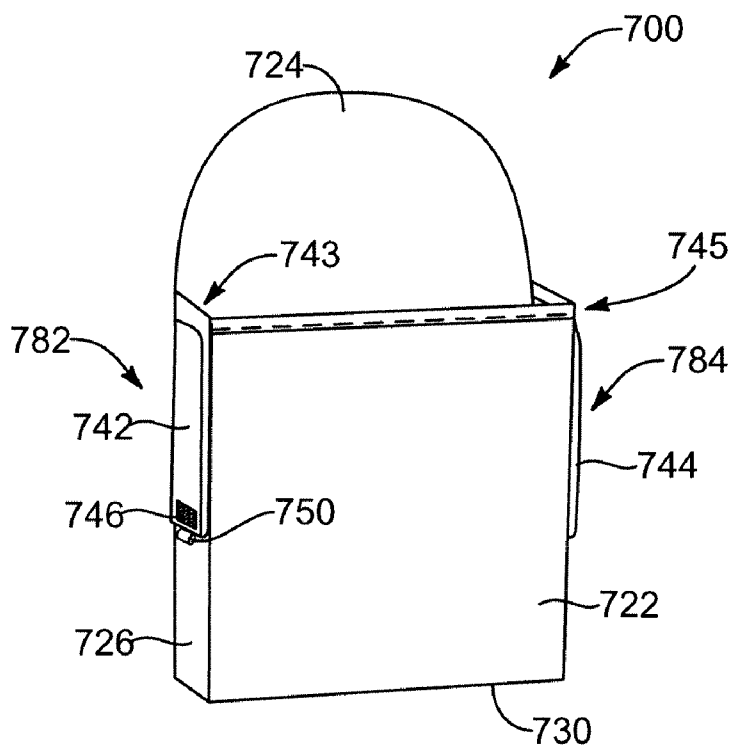


FIG. 7B

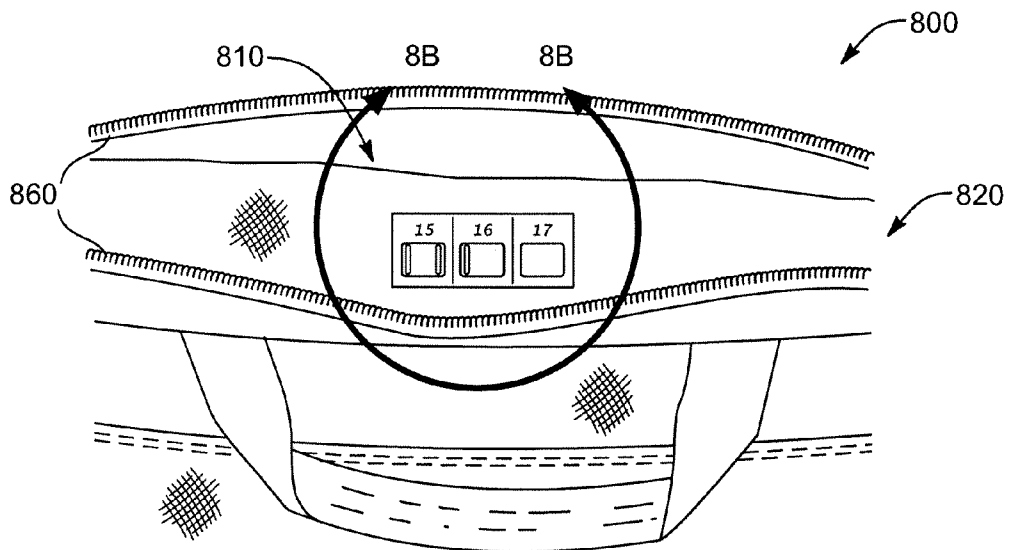


FIG. 8A

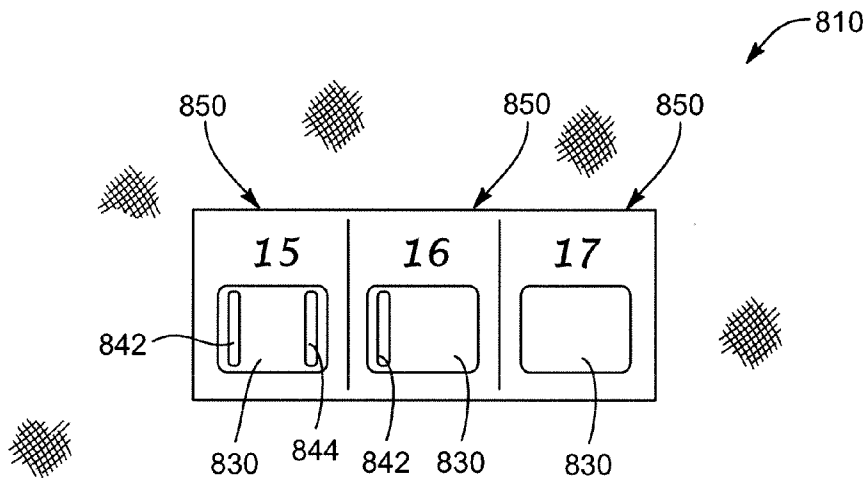


FIG. 8B

CARRYING CASES HAVING ADJUSTABLE COMPARTMENTS FOR USE WITH PORTABLE ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND RELATED METHODS

RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] The present application claims the benefit under 35 U.S.C. §119(e) of U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/359,672 filed Jun. 29, 2010, titled “Carrying Cases Having Adjustable Compartments For Use With Portable Computers And Related Methods,” which application is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0002] The present disclosure relates generally to cases for portable electronic devices.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0003] Non-limiting and non-exhaustive embodiments of the disclosure are described, including various embodiments of the disclosure with reference to the figures, in which:

[0004] FIG. 1 illustrates a perspective view of an embodiment of a carrying case including a compartment configured to receive a portable electronic device.

[0005] FIG. 2A illustrates a cutaway view of a compartment formed in a carrying case including adjustable cushions positioned in a side spacing orientation.

[0006] FIG. 2B illustrates a cutaway view of an embodiment of a carrying case including adjustable cushions transitioning away from a side spacing orientation.

[0007] FIG. 2C illustrates a cutaway view of an embodiment of a carrying case including adjustable cushions positioned in a base spacing orientation.

[0008] FIG. 3A illustrates a cutaway view of an embodiment of a compartment including two adjustable notched cushions positioned in a side spacing orientation.

[0009] FIG. 3B illustrates a cutaway view of an embodiment of a compartment including adjustable notched cushions transitioning away from a side spacing orientation.

[0010] FIG. 3C illustrates a cutaway view of an embodiment of a compartment including adjustable notched cushions positioned in a base spacing orientation.

[0011] FIG. 4 is a perspective view of an embodiment of a carrying case including a compartment configured to receive a portable electronic device.

[0012] FIG. 5A is a cross-sectional view of a compartment including adjustable cushions in a side spacing orientation.

[0013] FIG. 5B is a cross-sectional view of a compartment including adjustable overlapping cushions in a base spacing orientation.

[0014] FIG. 6A illustrates an embodiment of a carrying case including a compartment configured to receive a portable electronic device in a closed configuration.

[0015] FIG. 6B illustrates an embodiment of a carrying case including a compartment configured to receive a portable electronic device in an open configuration.

[0016] FIG. 7A illustrates a cutaway view of an embodiment of a compartment including adjustable cushions in a side spacing orientation.

[0017] FIG. 7B illustrates a cutaway view of an embodiment of a compartment including adjustable cushions in an external orientation.

[0018] FIG. 8A is a perspective view of a portion of an embodiment of a carrying case including an instruction icon.

[0019] FIG. 8B illustrates an enlarged view of the instruction icon in FIG. 15A.

[0020] In the following description, numerous specific details are provided for a thorough understanding of the various embodiments disclosed herein. The systems and methods disclosed herein can be practiced without one or more of the specific details, or with other methods, components, materials, etc. In addition, in some cases, well-known structures, materials, or operations may not be shown or described in detail in order to avoid obscuring aspects of the disclosure. Furthermore, the described features, structures, or characteristics may be combined in any suitable manner in one or more alternative embodiments.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0021] The present disclosure provides various embodiments of and methods for using carrying cases configured with adjustable compartments for securing any of a variety of portable electronic devices. A carrying case may be configured with an internal compartment adapted to receive a laptop computer, netbook, tablet computer, touch screens, multimedia projectors, mobile telephones, and/or other portable electronic devices.

[0022] Portable electronic devices are available in a variety of sizes. For example, the diagonal measurements of many laptop computers ranges from about thirteen inches to about seventeen inches. Of course, laptop computers and other portable electronic devices are also available in larger or smaller sizes. Accordingly, it may be desirable for a compartment of a carrying case for portable electronic devices to be adjustable so as to securely accommodate various models, sizes, and/or types of portable electronic devices within a given size range. For example, a carry case may be configured to specifically accommodate laptop computers with diagonal screen measurement ranging from about fifteen inches to about 17 inches.

[0023] According to various embodiments, the cavity or compartment of a carrying case may be an integral component of the carrying case. According to alternative embodiments, the compartment may be removable and/or detachable from other portions of the carrying case. Additionally, a carrying case may be interchangeably paired with multiple sizes and/or shapes of compartments. Accordingly, a single carrying case may be adapted to accommodate portable electronic devices of varying size ranges by inserting or attaching an appropriate compartment.

[0024] According to various embodiments, a carrying case may include one or more straps or handles. Additionally, a carrying case may include one or more wheels and/or telescoping handles to facilitate the transportation of a portable electronic device. According to various embodiments, a carrying case may include a closure mechanism for selectively opening and closing a compartment configured to receive a portable electronic device. For example, a carrying case may include one or more flaps, buttons, zippers, latches, snaps, and/or locks allowing a user to selectively insert and remove a portable electronic device from a compartment.

[0025] According to various embodiments, a compartment within a carrying case may be configured to accommodate portable electronic devices of varying sizes through the use of one or more cushions, pads, or strips. The dimensions of a compartment may be adjusted through the use of cushions

configured to pivot from a side spacing orientation to a base spacing orientation. The adjustable cushions may be positioned in a side spacing orientation in order to reduce the internal width of the compartment, or pivoted into a base spacing orientation to expand the internal width and/or reduce the internal height of the compartment. According to various embodiments, the adjustable cushions may be permanently secured at a pivot point, detachably secured at a pivot point, or unsecured at the pivot point.

[0026] According to one embodiment, a compartment of a carrying case may be defined by a front panel, a rear panel, a left sidewall panel, a right sidewall panel, a base panel, and an upper panel. According to various embodiments, the upper panel, and/or potentially a portion of one or more other panels, may include a closure mechanism for selectively opening the compartment. In a side spacing orientation, a left adjustable cushion may extend along the left sidewall panel and a right adjustable cushion may extend along the right sidewall panel. Transitioning the adjustable cushions from a side spacing orientation to a base spacing orientation may entail pivoting the adjustable cushions until they extend along the base panel of the compartment. According to various embodiments, the combined length of the left and right cushions may be equal to or less than the length of the base panel. Alternatively, the left and right cushions may overlap one another in a base spacing orientation.

[0027] According to one embodiment, a compartment may include adjustable cushions that can be placed within the compartment in a side spacing orientation or outside the compartment in an external orientation. Additionally, a carrying case and/or compartment may include an instruction icon illustrating methods for using adjustable cushions within a compartment. For example, an instruction icon may include graphical depictions of various possible orientations for left and right adjustable cushions within a compartment. According to one specific example, an instruction icon may depict several possible orientations for adjustable cushions in order for a compartment to accommodate a fifteen-inch laptop, a sixteen-inch laptop, or a seventeen-inch laptop.

[0028] Throughout the disclosure, numerous examples are provided with reference to laptop computers; however, the various embodiments of carrying cases described herein may be used for or adapted for carrying any of a wide variety of portable electronic devices and/or other sensitive or delicate equipment. For clarity, the illustrated embodiments show only a single compartment configured to receive a portable electronic device. However, according to various embodiments, a carrying case may include multiple compartments, each configured to receive a portable electronic device. Additionally, a carrying case may include any number of additional pockets, compartments, zippers, mesh areas, elastics, rings, hooks, latches, and/or similar items configured to accommodate additional items, such as keys, pens, paper, folders, power cords, batteries, mobile phones, clothing, and/or the like.

[0029] Reference throughout this specification to “one embodiment” or “an embodiment” means that a particular feature, structure, or characteristic described in connection with the embodiment is included in at least one embodiment. Thus, the appearances of the phrases “in one embodiment” or “in an embodiment” in various places throughout this specification are not necessarily all referring to the same embodiment. In particular, an “embodiment” may be a system, an

article of manufacture (such as a computer-readable storage medium), a method, and/or a product of a process.

[0030] Throughout this specification the term “joined” may be used to describe two or more components that are attached to one another, or the term may be used to describe two portions of an integral component. Accordingly, the term “joined” may be used to describe two panels manufactured as disparate components that are sewn, glued, fused, or otherwise attached to one another; additionally, the term “joined” may be used to describe two panels that are manufactured as a single integral component and are separate only for ease of description. For example, a compartment may be formed wherein the bottom panel, the front panel, and the rear panel are manufactured as a single integral component. However, throughout the description and claims, such a compartment may be described as comprising a base panel joined to opposing front and rear panels along their respective base edges.

[0031] In some cases, well-known features, structures or operations are not shown or described in detail. Furthermore, the described features, structures, or operations may be combined in any suitable manner in one or more embodiments. It will also be readily understood that the components of the embodiments as generally described and illustrated in the figures herein could be arranged and designed in a wide variety of different configurations.

[0032] The embodiments of the disclosure are best understood by reference to the drawings, wherein like parts are designated by like numerals throughout. It will be readily understood that the components of the disclosed embodiments, as generally described and illustrated in the figures herein, could be arranged and designed in a wide variety of different configurations. Thus, the following detailed description of the embodiments of the systems and methods of the disclosure is not intended to limit the scope of the disclosure, as claimed, but is merely representative of possible embodiments of the disclosure. In other instances, well-known structures, materials, or operations are not shown or described in detail to avoid obscuring aspects of this disclosure. In addition, the steps of a method do not necessarily need to be executed in any specific order, or even sequentially, nor need the steps be executed only once, unless specifically stated.

[0033] FIG. 1 illustrates an embodiment of a carrying case **100** including an adjustable compartment configured to receive a portable electronic device. Carrying case **100** may be of any suitable variety, such as a shoulder bag, backpack, briefcase, or the like. In the illustrated embodiment, carrying case **100** is of a shoulder bag variety and includes a shoulder strap **105**. According to various embodiments, one or more additional or alternative handles or straps may be employed in conjunction with carrying case **100**.

[0034] Carrying case **100** may be adapted to accommodate a laptop computer, a netbook, tablet computer, a touch screen, a multimedia projector, a mobile telephone, and/or other portable electronic device. According to various embodiments, an internal compartment may be defined by a front panel **122**, a rear panel **124**, a left sidewall panel **126**, a right sidewall panel (not visible in FIG. 1), a base panel **130**, and an upper panel **132**. As illustrated, upper panel **132** may include a closure mechanism such as zipper **134** and/or flap **107**. Throughout the description front panel **122**, rear panel **124**, left sidewall panel **126**, right sidewall panel (not visible), base panel **130**, and upper panel **132** are discussed as separate components forming a compartment; however, according to

various embodiments, two or more panels may actually be portions of an integral component.

[0035] According to various embodiments and as illustrated, an internal compartment may define a substantially right parallelepiped shape. However, according to various embodiments, the exact shape and/or dimensions of an internal compartment may be adapted to accommodate any of a wide variety of portable electronic devices. For example, the internal compartment may include a protrusion or intrusion to accommodate a corresponding feature on a portable electronic device.

[0036] According to various embodiments, upper panel 132 may be a separate panel or may be integrally formed as a part of the sidewall panels and/or front and rear panels. Upper panel 132 may include one or more closure mechanisms for selectively opening the internal compartment, such as zipper 134, a flap 107, a latch 106, a button, a zipper, a snap, and/or a lock. Additionally, carrying case 100 may include any number of additional pockets, compartments, zippers, mesh areas, elastics, rings, hooks, latches, wheels, straps, handles and/or other features.

[0037] FIG. 2A illustrates a cutaway view of a compartment 200 formed in a carrying case including adjustable cushions 242 and 244 positioned in a side spacing orientation. As illustrated, a left adjustable cushion 242 and a right adjustable cushion 244 may be positioned within compartment 200 defined by base panel 230, left sidewall panel 226, right sidewall panel 228, rear panel 224, upper panel 232, and a front panel (not shown in FIG. 2).

[0038] According to various embodiments, compartment 200 may be configured with an appropriate dimension and size to accommodate any of a wide variety of portable electronic devices. For example, compartment 200 may be adapted to accommodate a laptop 210 (or other portable electronic device) having a width W. According to various embodiments, left adjustable cushion 242 and right adjustable cushion 244 may be used to adjust the interior dimensions of compartment 200. In particular, adjustable cushions 242 and 244 may be oriented in a variety of permutations in order to accommodate portable electronic devices of varying widths W and/or heights.

[0039] According to various embodiments, adjustable cushions 242 and 244 may comprise a compliant structure configured to absorb energy from an impact so as to protect a portable electronic device stored within compartment 200. Additionally, adjustable cushions 242 and 244 may be formed of a resilient material in order to return to their original shape after being compressed. According to various embodiments, adjustable cushions 242 and 244 may comprise any suitable compliant and/or resilient structure, such as, for example, a polymeric foam material.

[0040] According to some embodiments, compartment 200 may include one or more additional compliant and/or resilient structures adapted to reduce the internal dimensions of compartment 200 and/or protect a secured portable electronic device by absorbing energy during an impact.

[0041] Adjustable cushions 242 and 244 may be configured to transition from a side spacing orientation to a base spacing orientation. In a side spacing orientation, the left 242 and right 244 adjustable cushions may extend substantially parallel to the interior surfaces of the left 226 and right 228 sidewall panels, respectively. According to various embodiments, adjustable cushions 242 and 244 may be configured to extend along only a portion of sidewall panels 226 and 228. For

instance, an edge of each adjustable cushion 242 and 244 may terminate at or near the endpoints of zipper 234.

[0042] FIG. 2B illustrates a cutaway view of compartment 200 with adjustable cushions 242 and 244 transitioning from a side spacing orientation (see FIG. 2A) to a base spacing orientation (see FIG. 2C). According to various embodiments, adjustable cushions 242 and 244 may be fixedly attached to an internal wall of compartment 200 at an attachment region 243 and 245, respectively. Adjustable cushions 242 and 244 may be configured to pivot about attachment regions 243 and 245 from the side spacing orientation (FIG. 2A) to the base spacing orientation (FIG. 2C). According to alternative embodiments, an adjustable cushion may be selectively detachable, permanently attached, and/or integral with sidewall panel 226 and 228 and/or base panel 230.

[0043] Additionally, each adjustable cushion 242 and 244 may include a connector 246 configured to function in cooperation with a connector 248 on each of the left 226 and right 228 sidewall panels. For example, connector 246 locate on adjustable cushion 244 may cooperate with connector 248 on a right sidewall panel 228 in order to selectively retain adjustable cushion 244 in the side spacing orientation. Any suitable connection system may be used, such as hook and loop fasteners (e.g., Velcro®), snaps, magnets, etc. In certain embodiments, each adjustable cushion 242 and 244 may include a tab 250 that can be readily gripped by a user when disengaging connectors 246 and 248 from each other.

[0044] As shown in FIG. 2C, when adjustable cushions 242 and 244 are in the base spacing orientation, they may be positioned adjacent and parallel to an interior surface of base panel 230. According to various embodiments, adjustable cushions 242 and 244 do not overlap one another or contact one another when in the base spacing orientation. For example, in the illustrated embodiment each adjustable cushion 242 and 244 defines a length slightly less than one half the width defined by base panel 230.

[0045] In the illustrated embodiment, adjustable cushions 242 and 244 are fixedly attached to compartment 200 at a left attachment region 243 and at a right attachment region 245, respectively. Moreover in the illustrated embodiment, each attachment region 243 and 245 is at an intersection of base panel 230 and the left 226 and right 228 sidewall panels, respectively. Any suitable mechanism may be employed to fixedly secure adjustable cushions 242 and 244 to compartment 200. For example, in various embodiments, adjustable cushions 242 and 244 may be stitched to compartment 200.

[0046] Compartment 200 may be configured for use with a portable computer 210 having any width W. Compartment 200 may be prepared to receive portable computer 210 by placing both adjustable cushions 242 and 244 in the side spacing orientation, as shown in FIG. 2A. Compartment 200 may be prepared to receive a wider portable computer by placing both adjustable cushions 242 and 244 in a base spacing orientation, as shown in FIG. 2C. Compartment 200 may also be prepared to receive a portable computer of an intermediate width by placing one of adjustable cushions 242 and 244 in the side spacing orientation and the other of adjustable cushions 242 and 244 in the base spacing orientation.

[0047] Adjustable cushions 242 and 244 may be dimensioned in any suitable manner to provide a relatively close fit or, in some instances, a snug fit along the side edges of portable computers having different sizes. In some embodiments, each adjustable cushion 242 and 244 is substantially the same size and shape. For example, in some embodiments,

each adjustable cushion **242** and **244** defines the same thickness such that adjustable cushions **242** and **244** cooperate to define a substantially planar surface on which a base edge of portable computer **210** can rest when adjustable cushions **242** and **244** are in the base spacing orientation.

[0048] In certain embodiments, one or more of the front panel (**122** in FIG. 1), rear panel **224**, left sidewall panel **226**, right sidewall panel **228**, base panel **230**, and upper panel **232** may be structurally reinforced (e.g., stiff) so as to maintain the shape and configuration of compartment **200** independent of the orientation of adjustable cushions **242** and **244**. Alternatively, compartment **200** may be configured to be collapsible when adjustable cushions **242** and **244** are in one or both of the side spacing position and the base spacing position.

[0049] According to various alternative embodiments, adjustable cushions **242** and **244** may contact each other when in the base spacing orientation. Additionally, one of adjustable cushions **242** and **244** may overlap the other when in the base spacing orientation. In some embodiments, adjustable cushions **242** and **244** may be removable from compartment **200**. In some embodiments, a set of connectors **246** may be provided on opposite sides of adjustable cushions **242** and **244**, and base panel **230** may include a corresponding set of connectors, such that adjustable cushions **242** and **244** may be selectively secured in the base spacing orientation. In other or further embodiments, connectors **248** may be omitted from sidewall panels **226** and **228**, and corresponding connectors **246** may likewise be omitted from cushions **242** and **244**. In other or further embodiments, compartment **200** may include only a single adjustable cushion **242** or **244**.

[0050] FIGS. 3A-3C illustrate alternative embodiments of a compartment **300** of a carrying case. Many features of the embodiments illustrated in FIGS. 3A-3C are similar or identical to those illustrated and described in conjunction with FIGS. 2A-2C. Accordingly, the relevant descriptions of similar or identical features of FIGS. 2A-2C apply equally to the features of compartment **300**. Any suitable combination of the features and variations described with respect to compartment **200** may be applicable to and employed with compartment **300**, and vice versa. This pattern of disclosure applies equally to further embodiments depicted in subsequent figures and described hereafter.

[0051] According to the illustrated embodiment, compartment **300** may be defined by a base panel **330**, a left sidewall panel **326**, a right sidewall panel **328**, a rear panel **324**, and a front panel (not shown in FIG. 3). Compartment **300** may include a left adjustable cushion **342** configured with an extension **361** and a notch **365** and a right adjustable cushion **344** configured with an extension **362** and a notch **364**. According to various embodiments, extension **361** of left adjustable cushion **342** corresponds to notch **364** of right adjustable cushion **344**. Likewise, extension **362** of right adjustable cushion **344** corresponds to notch **365** of left adjustable cushion **342**.

[0052] According to various embodiments, connectors **346** may be located on the extension portions **361** and **362** of left **342** and right **344** adjustable cushions. As illustrated in the cut-away view provided in FIG. 3A, connectors **346** may be configured to cooperate in conjunction with connectors **348** (see FIG. 3B) located on internal sidewall panels **326** and **328** in order to selectively secure left **342** and right **344** adjustable cushions to sidewall panels **326** and **328** in the side spacing orientation. According to various embodiments, extensions

361 and **362** may be sufficiently short that they do not come into contact with upper panel **332** and/or zipper **334**.

[0053] As illustrated in FIG. 3B, adjustable cushions **342** and **344** may be fixedly attached to an internal wall of compartment **300** at attachment regions **343** and **345**, respectively. Accordingly, adjustable cushions **342** and **344** may pivotally transition from a side spacing orientation (see FIG. 3A) to a base spacing orientation (see FIG. 3C). According to alternative embodiments, adjustable cushion **342** and **344** may be selectively detachable, permanently attached, and/or integral with sidewall panel **326** and **328** and/or base panel **330**. In some embodiments, adjustable cushions **342** and **344** may include tabs **350** extending from extensions **361** and **362** of adjustable cushions **342** and **344**, respectively. Tabs **350** may assist a user in transitioning adjustable cushions **342** and **344** from the base spacing orientation to the side spacing orientation, and vice versa.

[0054] As illustrated in FIG. 3B and 3C, when adjustable cushions **342** and **344** are transitioning to the base spacing orientation, extension **361** may be received within notch **364** and extension **362** may be received within notch **365**. According to one embodiment, adjustable cushions **342** and **344** may contact each other so as to define a solid (e.g., continuous) base cushion that covers or substantially covers base panel **330**.

[0055] FIG. 4 illustrates an embodiment of a carrying case **400** resembling that of a brief case. According to various embodiments, carrying case **400** may include a handle **407** and/or a shoulder strap **405**. Carrying case **400** may include any number of additional pockets, compartments, zippers, mesh areas, elastics, rings, hooks, latches, and/or similar items configured to accommodate additional items such as keys, pens, paper, folders, power cords, batteries, mobile phones, clothing, and/or the like. Additionally, carrying case **400** may include a compartment including adjustable cushions, similar to those described in conjunction with FIGS. 1-3C and/or FIGS. 5A-5B.

[0056] FIGS. 5A and 5B illustrate an embodiment of a compartment **500** in which a left adjustable cushion **542**, a right adjustable cushion **544**, and a base cushion **571** are formed from a unitary piece of material **570**. Unitary piece of material **570** may comprise a single piece of polymeric foam or multiple sections of polymeric foam joined together.

[0057] In some embodiments, base cushion **571** may be connected to left **542** and right **544** adjustable cushions by living hinges **572**. As illustrated in FIG. 5B, when adjustable cushions **542** and **544** are in the base spacing orientation, right adjustable cushion **544** may be configured to overlap left adjustable cushion **542**. Alternatively, left adjustable cushion **542** may be configured to overlap right adjustable cushion **544**. According to one embodiment, adjustable cushions **542** and **544** may be shorter so that they do not overlap one another in the base spacing orientation. Additionally, adjustable cushions **542** and **544** may be configured to fold inward at a fold point between living hinges **572** and tabs **550**. According to such an embodiment, adjustable cushions **542** and **544** may be configured to fold and thereby not contact one another when in the base spacing orientation.

[0058] FIGS. 6A and 6B illustrate an embodiment of a carrying case **600** resembling a backpack including an outer cover **680**. According to various embodiments, carrying case **600** may include a compartment **620** configured to receive a portable electronic device, such as a laptop or a tablet device. As illustrated in FIG. 6B, outer cover **680**, sidewall panels

634, and a top panel **624** may define a compartment **620**. According to some embodiments, internal panels independent from outer cover **680** may define compartment **620**. Additionally, carrying case **600** may include a zipper **632** or other closure mechanism allowing a laptop or other portable electronic device to be selectively received and removed.

[0059] FIGS. 7A and 7B illustrate a compartment **700** configured to receive a portable electronic device. According to various embodiments, compartment **700** may be configured for use in a backpack style carrying case, such as the exemplary backpack illustrated in FIGS. 6A and 6B. According to some embodiments, one or more of a front panel **722**, a rear panel **724**, a left sidewall panel **726**, a right sidewall panel **728**, a base panel **730**, and an upper panel (not shown) that define compartment **700** may be integral with an outer cover of a carrying case. However, in the illustrated embodiment, at least the left sidewall panel **726** and the right sidewall panel **728** are separate from an outer cover of a carrying case, such that additional external compartments **782** and **784** (FIG. 7B) are provided between sidewall panels **726** and **728** and an outer cover.

[0060] Compartment **700** may include a left adjustable cushion **742** and a right adjustable cushion **744** attached to compartment **700** at connection regions **743** and **745**, respectively. Connection regions **743** and **745** may be positioned at the upper ends of the left sidewall panel **726** and right sidewall panel **728**, respectively. Each connection region **743** and **745** may include stitching **790** by which adjustable cushions **742** and **744** are fixedly attached to sidewall panels **726** and **728**, respectively.

[0061] Adjustable cushions **742** and **744** may be pivoted or rotated about connection regions **743** and **745** between a side spacing orientation (FIG. 7A) and an external orientation (FIG. 7B). Tabs **750** may assist a user in transitioning adjustable cushions **742** and **744** from the base spacing orientation to the side spacing orientation, and vice versa.

[0062] When in the external orientation, adjustable cushions **742** and **744** may be inserted into external compartments **782** and **784**, respectively. Alternatively, in an embodiment not including external compartments **782** and **784**, adjustable cushions **742** and **744** may extend parallel and adjacent to exterior sidewall panels **726** and **728**, respectively. According to various embodiments, adjustable cushions **742** and **744** may include multiple connectors **746**, so as to be selectively or temporarily fixed in each of the side spacing and external orientations. Sidewall panels **726** and **728** may include one or more appropriately positioned corresponding connectors (not shown in FIGS. 7A and 7B) to interact with connectors **746**.

[0063] FIG. 8A provides a perspective view of an embodiment of a portion of a carrying case **800** including an instruction icon **810** on or near a compartment **820**. According to various embodiments, an icon **810** may be included in any of the carrying cases and/or compartments previously described in conjunction with FIGS. 1-7B.

[0064] According to one embodiment, instruction icon **810** may be included within a compartment **820** of carrying case **800**, and may be hidden from view when compartment **820** is closed. Compartment **820** may be closed using zipper **860** or through the use of one or more alternative closure mechanisms.

[0065] Instruction icon **810** may depict compartment **820** in various operational configurations. For example, in the illustrated embodiment, instruction icon **810** depicts three different operational configurations. FIG. 8B illustrates an

enlarged view of instruction icon **810**. As illustrated, each configuration depiction may include a compartment representation **830**, representation of possible positioning of one or more adjustable cushions **842** and **844**, and a size indicator **850**.

[0066] For example, in the left configuration depiction, a left adjustable cushion representation **842** and a right adjustable cushion representation **844** are shown. In the center configuration depiction, only a left adjustable cushion representation **842** is shown. In the right configuration depiction, no adjustable cushion representations are shown. According to one embodiment, the presence of an adjustable cushion representation in a configuration depiction may indicate that an adjustable cushion can be placed in the side spacing orientation in order to achieve the depicted configuration. In the illustrated embodiment, size indicators **850** include the numerals 15, 16, and 17, which signify that the depicted configurations may be used with laptop computers having diagonal measurements of about 15 inches, about 16 inches, and about 17 inches, respectively.

[0067] According to various alternative embodiments, size indicators **850** may be modified to suit the type of carrying case utilized. For example, size indicators **850** may be configured to indicate possible configurations for compartments configured to receive laptops having any range of dimensions, netbooks of varying sizes, tablet computers, touch screen devices, portable music players, cellular phones, calculators, peripheral devices, and/or other portable electronic devices. Accordingly, size indicators may include numerical indications (e.g., inches or millimeters), graphical indications (e.g., illustrations of various devices), or a combination thereof. For example, an icon may include an illustration of a generic or brand-specific laptop computer, cellular phone, tablet device, and/or other portable electronic device.

[0068] The above description provides numerous specific details for a thorough understanding of the embodiments described herein. However, those of skill in the art will recognize that one or more of the specific details may be omitted, modified, and/or replaced by a similar process, system, or component. In many instances the order of steps and/or actions of the methods of use described herein may be interchanged with one another.

What is claimed:

1. A carrying case for a portable electronic device comprising:

an internal compartment comprising:

- a front panel;
- a rear panel opposing and spaced apart from the front panel;
- a first sidewall and a second sidewall opposing one another and joined to the front and rear panels along corresponding side edges of the front and rear panels;
- a base panel joined to each of the front panel, rear panel, first sidewall, and second sidewall along a base edge of each of the front panel, rear panel, first sidewall, and second sidewall; and

a first adjustable cushion attached to the compartment at a first attachment region;

a second adjustable cushion attached to the compartment at a second attachment region; and

wherein the first and second adjustable cushions are configured to move between a first orientation and a second orientation; and

- wherein in the first orientation, the first adjustable cushion extends substantially parallel to an interior surface of the first sidewall and the second adjustable cushion extends substantially parallel to an interior surface of the second sidewall.
2. The carrying case of claim 1, wherein the first and second adjustable cushions comprise substantially compliant structures configured to absorb energy from impact so as to protect a portable electronic device.
3. The carrying case of claim 2, wherein the substantially compliant structures comprise a polymeric foam material.
4. The carrying case of claim 1, wherein, the first adjustable cushion comprises a first connector and the compartment comprises a second connector configured to cooperate with the first connector to selectively retain the first cushion in the first orientation; and
 wherein the second adjustable cushion comprises a third connector and the compartment comprises a fourth connector configured to cooperate with the third connector to selectively retain the second adjustable cushion in the first orientation.
5. The carrying case of claim 1, wherein the first and second adjustable cushions are configured to pivot about the first and second attachment regions, respectively.
6. The carrying case of claim 1, wherein the first attachment region is adjacent the location the first sidewall panel is joined to the base panel;
 the second attachment region is adjacent the location the second sidewall panel is joined to the base panel; and
 wherein in the second orientation, the first and second adjustable cushions are adjacent to an interior surface of the base panel and extend substantially parallel thereto.
7. The carrying case of claim 1, wherein the first attachment region is located at an end of the first sidewall opposite the base panel;
 the second attachment region is located at an end of the second sidewall opposite the base panel; and
 wherein in the second orientation, at least a portion of the first adjustable cushion and a portion of the second adjustable cushion are exterior to the compartment.
8. The carrying case of claim 1, further comprising an instruction icon including representative illustrations of at least three permutations of the first adjustable cushion and the second adjustable cushion in the first and second orientations.
9. A carrying case for a portable electronic device comprising:
 an internal compartment comprising:
 a front panel;
 a rear panel opposing and spaced apart from the front panel;
 a first sidewall and a second sidewall opposing one another and joined to the front and rear panels along corresponding side edges of the front and rear panels;
 a base panel joined to each of the front panel, rear panel, first sidewall, and second sidewall along a base edge of each of the front panel, rear panel, first sidewall, and second sidewall; and
 a first adjustable cushion configured to move between a first orientation and a second orientation and attached to the compartment at a first attachment region;
 a second adjustable cushion configured to move between a first orientation and a second orientation and attached to the compartment at a second attachment region; and
- wherein the first adjustable cushion includes an extension and a notch located on an end opposite the first attachment region and the second adjustable cushion includes a corresponding extension and a notch located on an end opposite the second attachment region; and
 wherein the extension of each of the first and second adjustable cushions is aligned with the notch of the other adjustable cushion, such that in the second orientation the first and second cushions are positioned adjacent to an interior surface of the base panel and extend substantially parallel thereto.
10. The carrying case of claim 9, wherein in the first orientation, the first adjustable cushion extends substantially parallel to an interior surface of the first sidewall and the second adjustable cushion extends substantially parallel to an interior surface of the second sidewall.
11. The carrying case of claim 9, wherein the first and second adjustable cushions comprise substantially compliant structures configured to absorb energy from impact so as to protect a portable electronic device.
12. The carrying case of claim 11, wherein the substantially compliant structures comprise a polymeric foam material.
13. The carrying case of claim 9, wherein, the first adjustable cushion comprises a first connector and the compartment comprises a second connector configured to cooperate with the first connector to selectively retain the first cushion in the first orientation; and
 wherein the second adjustable cushion comprises a third connector and the compartment comprises a fourth connector configured to cooperate with the third connector to selectively retain the second adjustable cushion in the first orientation.
14. The carrying case of claim 9, wherein the first and second adjustable cushions are configured to pivot about the first and second attachment regions, respectively.
15. The carrying case of claim 9, further comprising an instruction icon including representative illustrations of at least three permutations of the first adjustable cushion and the second adjustable cushion in the first and second orientations.
16. A carrying case for a portable electronic device comprising:
 an internal compartment comprising:
 a front panel;
 a rear panel opposing and spaced apart from the front panel;
 a first sidewall and a second sidewall opposing one another and joined to the front and rear panels along corresponding side edges of the front and rear panels;
 a base panel joined to each of the front panel, rear panel, first sidewall, and second sidewall along a base edge of each of the front panel, rear panel, first sidewall, and second sidewall; and
 an adjustable cushion comprising:
 a base portion configured to extend substantially parallel to the base panel;
 a first side portion configured to move between a first orientation and second orientation, wherein in the first orientation the first side portion extends substantially parallel to an interior surface of the first sidewall; and
 a second side portion configured to move between a first orientation and second orientation, wherein in the first orientation the second side portion extends substantially parallel to an interior surface of the second sidewall.

17. The carrying case of claim 16, wherein the first side portion and the second side portion are attached to the base portion.

18. The carrying case of claim 17, wherein the first side portion and the second side portion are attached to the base portion via living hinges.

19. The carrying case of claim 16, wherein the first side portion, the second side portion, and the base portion are formed from a unitary piece of material.

20. The carrying case of claim 16, wherein the adjustable cushion comprises a substantially compliant structure configured to absorb energy from impact so as to protect a portable electronic device.

21. The carrying case of claim 20, wherein the substantially compliant structure comprises a polymeric foam material.

22. The carrying case of claim 20, wherein, the first side portion comprises a first connector and the compartment comprises a second connector configured to cooperate with the first connector to selectively retain the first side portion in the first orientation; and

wherein the second side portion comprises a third connector and the compartment comprises a fourth connector configured to cooperate with the third connector to selectively retain the second side portion in the first orientation.

23. The carrying case of claim 16, wherein in the second orientation, the first side portion and the second side portion are adjacent to an interior surface of the base portion and extend substantially parallel thereto.

24. The carrying case of claim 20, wherein in the second orientation, one of the first side portion and the second side portion overlap the other of the first side portion and the second side portion.

25. The carrying case of claim 16, further comprising an instruction icon including representative illustrations of at least three permutations of the first side portion and the second side portion in the first and second orientations.

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