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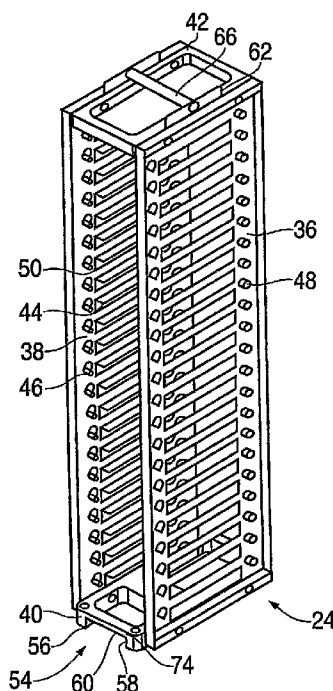
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[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: MICROPLATE STORAGE APPARATUS AND METHOD



(57) Abstract: An embodiment of the invention has a side panel with integrated shelving members and integrated locating members, both folded from the side panel. One method of fabricating the shelving members involves cutting a template of the shelving members and locating members onto the side panel and then folding the cut portions of the side panel to form shelving members and locating members.

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**Declarations under Rule 4.17:**

- as to applicant's entitlement to apply for and be granted a patent (Rule 4.17(ii))
- as to the applicant's entitlement to claim the priority of the earlier application (Rule 4.17(iii))
- of inventorship (Rule 4.17(iv))
- before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of receipt of amendments

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For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US05/24357

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC: **B01L 11/00**(2007.01);**A47F 1/14**(2007.01);**B23K 26/14**(2007.01);**C30B 35/00**(2007.01)

USPC: 422/99;211/134;219/121.67;117/200

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

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

U.S. : 422/99; 219/121.67; 117/200; 211/26,41,18,73,187,135,190,207,90.01,90.04,103,191

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

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

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 4,664,265 (George) 12 May 1987 (12.05.1987), Abstract, Figures 1-8	1-13
A	US 4,600,231 (Sickles) 15 June 1986 (15.06.1986), Abstract, Figures 1-3, 5	1-13
A	US 4,385,781 (Welsch et al.) 31 May 1983 (31.05.1983), Abstract, Figures 1-3	1-13
A	US 6,447,726 (Delucas et al.) 10 September 2002 (10.09.2002), Figures 4B, 4D, 5A, column 1, lines 9-12, 26-29,	1-13

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.

☐ See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents:

"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance

"E" earlier application or patent published on or after the international filing date

"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)

"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means

"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art

"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

09 November 2006 (09.11.2006)

Date of mailing of the international search report

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US05/24357

Box No. II Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)

This international search report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:
2. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they relate to parts of the international application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful international search can be carried out, specifically:
3. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a).

Box No. III Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 3 of first sheet)

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:
Please See Continuation Sheet

1. ☐ As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers all searchable claims.
2. ☒ As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying additional fees, this Authority did not invite payment of any additional fees.
3. ☐ As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:

4. ☐ No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this international search report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.:

- Remark on Protest**
- ☐ The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest and, where applicable, the payment of a protest fee.
 - ☐ The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest but the applicable protest fee was not paid within the time limit specified in the invitation.
 - ☐ No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

BOX III. OBSERVATIONS WHERE UNITY OF INVENTION IS LACKING

This application contains the following inventions or groups of inventions which are not so linked as to form a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1. In order for all inventions to be examined, the appropriate additional examination fees must be paid.

Claims 1-13, drawn to a side panel, classified in class 211, subclass 134.

Claims 14-16, drawn to a method of fabricating the side panel, classified in class 219, subclass 121.67.

Claim 17, drawn to a method for determining the storage unit's position, classified in class 221, subclass 17.

Claims 18-19, drawn to a method for aligning and registering the storage unit, classified in class 221, subclass 191.

Claims 20-25, drawn to a side panel, classified in class 221, subclass 92.

The inventions lack unity from each other because of the following reasons:

Inventions I and II are related as process of making and product made. The inventions are distinct if either or both of the following can be shown: (1) that the process as claimed can be used to make another and materially different product or (2) that the product as claimed can be made by another and materially different process. In the instant case the product of invention I one can be made by another materially different process such as a process that does not require laser cutting.

Inventions I and III are related as product and process of use. The inventions can be shown to be distinct if either or both of the following can be shown: (1) the process for using the product as claimed can be practiced with another materially different product or (2) the product as claimed can be used in a materially different process of using that product. In the instant case the process of invention III can be practiced by another materially different product such as a product without integrated shelving members.

Inventions I and IV are related as product and process of use. The inventions can be shown to be distinct if either or both of the following can be shown: (1) the process for using the product as claimed can be practiced with another materially different product or (2) the product as claimed can be used in a materially different process of using that product. In the instant case the product of invention I can be used in a materially different process such as a process not requiring an alignment bar or barcode scanning.

Inventions I and V are related as subcombinations disclosed as usable together in a single combination. The subcombinations are distinct if they do not overlap in scope and are not obvious variants, and if it is shown that at least one subcombination is separately usable. In the instant case, subcombination I has separate utility such as use without shelving objects.

Inventions II and III are related as product and process of use. The inventions can be shown to be distinct if either or both of the following can be shown: (1) the process for using the product as claimed can be practiced with another materially different product or (2) the product as claimed can be used in a materially different process of using that product. In the instant case the product created by the process of invention II can be used in another materially different process such as a process without shelving members.

Inventions II and IV are related as product and process of use. The inventions can be shown to be distinct if either or both of the following can be shown: (1) the process for using the product as claimed can be practiced with another materially different product or (2) the product as claimed can be used in a materially different process of using that product. In the instant case the product created by the process of invention II can be used in another materially different process such as a process not requiring an alignment bar or barcode scanner.

Inventions II and V are related as process and apparatus for its practice. The inventions are distinct if it can be shown that either: (1) the process as claimed can be practiced by another and materially different apparatus or by hand, or (2) the apparatus as claimed can be used to practice another and materially different process. In this case the product created by the process of invention II can be used in another materially different process such as a process not having shelving objects.

Inventions III and IV are related as subcombinations disclosed as usable together in a single combination. The subcombinations are distinct if they do not overlap in scope and are not obvious variants, and if it is shown that at least one subcombination is separately usable. In the instant case, subcombination III has separate utility such as use without an alignment bar.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US05/24357

Inventions III and V are related as product and process of use. The inventions can be shown to be distinct if either or both of the following can be shown: (1) the process for using the product as claimed can be practiced with another materially different product or (2) the product as claimed can be used in a materially different process of using that product. In the instant case the process of invention III can be practiced by another materially different product such as a product not having shelving objects.

Inventions IV and V are related as product and process of use. The inventions can be shown to be distinct if either or both of the following can be shown: (1) the process for using the product as claimed can be practiced with another materially different product or (2) the product as claimed can be used in a materially different process of using that product. In the instant case the process of invention IV can be practiced by another materially different product such as a product not having shelving objects.

Because these inventions lack unity the reasons given above and have acquired a separate status in the art in view of their different classifications, Lack of Inventive Unity for examination purposes as indicated is proper.