

(19) World Intellectual Property
Organization
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date
29 January 2004 (29.01.2004)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 2004/010255 A3

(51) International Patent Classification⁷: G07B 17/00

(21) International Application Number:
PCT/US2003/022638

(22) International Filing Date: 18 July 2003 (18.07.2003)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:
60/397,516 18 July 2002 (18.07.2002) US

(71) Applicant: PITNEY BOWES INC. [US/US]; 1 Elmcroft Road, Stamford, CT 06926 (US).

(72) Inventors: CORDERY, Robert, A.; 11 1/2 Jeanette Street, Danbury, CT 06811 (US). PINTSOV, Leon, A.; 10 Governors Row, West Hartford, CT 06117 (US). MARTIN, Murray, D.; 40 Hull Place, Ridgefield, CT 06877 (US). RYAN, Frederick, W., Jr.; 4 Naples Lane, Oxford, CT 06478 (US).

(74) Agent: MALANDRA, Charles, R., Jr.; Pitney Bowes Inc., 35 Waterview Drive, Shelton, CT 06484 (US).

(81) Designated States (national): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NO, NZ, OM, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, UZ, VC, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW.

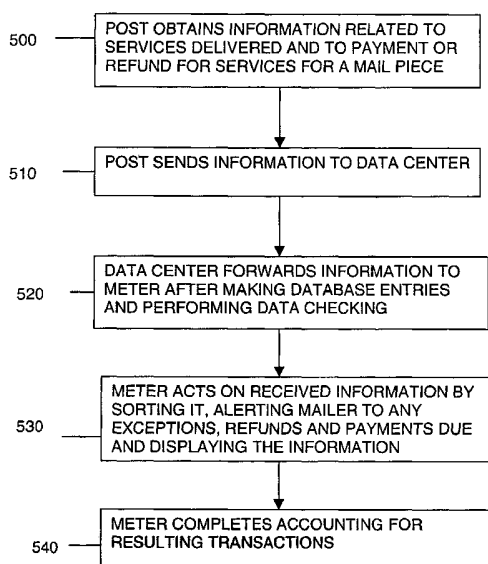
(84) Designated States (regional): ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HU, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, TR), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Published:
— with international search report

(88) Date of publication of the international search report:
8 April 2004

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.

(54) Title: CLOSED LOOP POSTAGE METERING SYSTEM



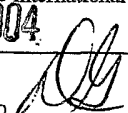
(57) Abstract: A closed loop postage metering system includes networked meters that provide mailers and/or recipients the capability to request additional or modified services during processing of a mail piece by a carrier. The networked meter allows the Post to charge the mailer, or even the recipient for these services or to provide them with a refund or credit. The services can include changing the processing of the mail piece. Further, the closed loop postage metering system enables more precise methods of paying for services when multiple carriers handle a mail piece. A special case of such multiple carriers handling is the handling of international mail.

WO 2004/010255 A3

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US03/22638

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER		
IPC(7) : G07B 17/00		
US CL : 705/402; 705/30, 404		
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. : 705/30, 400, 401, 402, 404		
Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched none		
Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used) none		
C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	US 4,752,950 A (LE CARPENTIER) 21 June 1988, see abstarct.	1-4 & 7
X	US 5,019,991 A (SANSONE et al) 28 May 1991, see entire document.	1-4 & 7
A	US 5,072,397 A (BARNES-SLAVIN et al) 10 December 1991, see abstract.	1-4 & 7
A	US 5,229,932 A (CONNELL et al) 20 July 1993, see abstract.	1-4 & 7
A	LI Business News: "Mailing for less means mailing smarter. (One-to-One Marketing Inc. mailing services" 20 September 1993, see entire article.	1-4 & 7
A	US 5,444,630 A (DLUGOS) 22 August 1995, see abstract.	1-4 & 7
A	US 5,475,603 A (KOROWOTNY) 12 December 1995, see abstract.	1-4 & 7
A	US 5,995,950 A (BARNES-SLAVIN et al) 30 November 1999, see abstract.	1-4 & 7
A	EP 1113376 A2 (MARRY et al) 04 July 2001, see abstract.	1-4 & 7
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. <input type="checkbox"/> See patent family annex.		
* Special categories of cited documents:	"T"	later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance	"X"	document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
"E" earlier application or patent published on or after the international filing date	"Y"	document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art
"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)	"&"	document member of the same patent family
"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means		
"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed		
Date of the actual completion of the international search	Date of mailing of the international search report	
22 November 2003 (22.11.2003)	16 JAN 2004	
Name and mailing address of the ISA/US Mail Stop PCT, Attn: ISA/US Commissioner for Patents P.O. Box 1450 Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450 Facsimile No. (703)305-3230	Authorized officer Edward R. Cosimano  Telephone No. (703) 308-3111	

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

C. (Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A,P	US 6,532,452 B1 (PINTSOV et al) 11 March 2003, see abstract.	1-4 & 7
A,P	US 6,592,027 B2 (KOVLAKEAS) 15 July 2003, see abstract.	1-4 & 7

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US03/22638

Box I Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of Item 1 of first sheet)

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

1. Claim Nos.:
because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:

2. Claim Nos.: 5 and 6
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:
Please See Continuation Sheet

3. Claim Nos.:
because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a).

Box II Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of Item 2 of first sheet)

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:

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 an additional fee, this Authority did not invite payment of any additional fee.
 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.
 No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

Continuation of Box I Reason 2:

A) in regard to claim 5:

(1) since claim 1 is a system/apparatus claim, the inclusion of method/process claim 5 by dependency creates a confusing hybrid claim, since it is unclear whether the claim 5 is to be considered a system/apparatus claim or a method/process claim.

(2) the subject matter of claim 5 lacks antecedent basis in claim 1, since claim 1 fails to recite the process of account for any feature of the invention.

B) in regard to claim 6:

(1) since claim 1 is a system/apparatus claim, the inclusion of method/process claim 6 by dependency creates a confusing hybrid claim, since it is unclear whether the claim 6 is to be considered a system/apparatus claim or a method/process claim.

(2) the subject matter of claim 6 lacks antecedent basis in claim 1, since claim 1 fails to recite the processes of either (a) detecting that any feature of the invention has either occurred or not occurred, or (b) sending a message, or (c) accounting for any feature of the invention that has not occurred.