SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR CLOTHING INDICATING ENCODED REGIONAL ASSOCIATION

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ABSTRACT
This disclosure relates to systems and methods for providing encoded geographic association via an article of clothing. The clothing provides for an encoded logo which allows a viewer of the clothing to immediately identify the geographic region if they are familiar with that geographic region while at least partially concealing the specific geographic region from them if they are not.
View the Code 201

Full Recognition?

YES → Association 213

NO → Partial Regional Recognition?

YES → Friendly Inquiry 219

NO → Identified as Code w/o Recognition?

YES → Interested in Learning More? 209

NO → Non-association 217

FIG. 2
SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR CLOTHING INDICATING ENCODED REGIONAL ASSOCIATION

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION(S)


BACKGROUND

[0002] 1. Field of the Invention

[0003] This disclosure relates to the field of clothing and the use of clothing for group association. Specifically, to the use of specialized collectable clothing that provides an encoded association with a geographic region.

[0004] 2. Description of Related Art

[0005] In many respects, many humans wear their opinions, associations, and desires quite directly on their sleeves. By the act of clothing ourselves, humans are commonly thought to express opinions about themselves, their likes, and their interests. These can be both forced by formal or informal protocols (for examples, some professionals are expected to wear business suits, some employees are expected to wear particular branded uniforms, and women of certain religions are expected to wear burkas) and some are chosen individually.

[0006] Some messages provided by clothing are direct and unambiguous. For example, wearing a T-shirt from a particular band’s concert tour generally implies a clear attraction to the band and its music and the display of clothing with prominent brand logos, or of certain styling, can be used to show affluence or social status in certain social circles. Other indications made with clothing can be more subtle. For example, choice of certain colors of clothing has been found in some studies to indicate confidence in the economic future of the country where the person resides (with brighter colors generally seen as more positive). Further choices of the source of patterns can indicate an affinity for the values of certain cultures, religions, organizations, or histories.

[0007] This “psychology of dress” has been relatively recently recognized as a source of formal scientific study, but has long been recognized as having an effect on interhuman interactions. In one format, dress is often used to communicate to other humans in a manner that those receptive to the messages will understand, while those unaware of the association or message do not recognize. In effect, clothing can be used as an “encoded” form of communication.

[0008] One way in which the encoding of dress is most well-known is through the overt use of “hidden” cues in clothing to show recognition. For example, the United States Secret Service is known to identify certain types of individuals with known affiliation through the use of specifically colored and shaped label pins. Similarly, many motorcycle clubs and similar organizations use positioning and presence of certain elements or colors on their jackets to have particular meaning to members of the club, and members of other clubs. While such “hidden” cues are relatively common today, this type of identification is not new, and the use of specific forms of dress to identify members and collaborators has a long history. Many fraternal organizations which were banned from holding meetings or discussions used hidden forms of dress, such as the presentation of particular colors in particular patterns or positions to show allegiance, in a manner only known to other members.

[0009] Such “hidden” association is generally connected with the wearer associating with a specific organization. That is, it identifies members of an organization to each other. The problem with such association is that it does not allow for identification of oneself (or others) that may share a common connection, but are not overt “members” of the same organization. That is, the “hidden” dress works well to identify current members, but cannot be used to identify potential members who may share a common interest. Thus, the association of an individual with hobbies, cultures, themes, or interests (as opposed to groups) tends to need to be much more direct. If one wanted to show an affiliation for science fiction, for example, they would wear a shirt which clearly indicated such an association in an attempt to locate a member of a group that shared that affinity.

[0010] Clothing to show such an association, however, often did not work within certain clothing requirements. For example, one could not wear a shirt advertising “Star Wars” with business attire. This has resulted in clothing recently becoming popular which provides for subtle messages hidden in plain sight. For example, a man interested in Star Wars may wear a tie with small Star Wars symbols in it. While someone of similar interest would likely recognize the logos, someone without the interest would simply see them as interesting patterns. Similarly, a woman interested in “Dr. Who” may wear earrings in the form of question marks. These subtle cues can be picked up by others with similar interests allowing for a connection to be made between people of similar interests, while keeping the association hidden from most people. Such cues, however, are necessarily subtle and easily overlooked by others even with an interest.

[0011] In addition to clothing with particular meaning being worn to express interests to those external to the individual wearing it, some clothing is also worn to express internal meaning. Such clothing may have some external meaning, but may also have additional meaning to the wearer beyond that discernible by others. An example of such may be wearing clothing indicating a clear “memory” phrase generally associated with death of a friend or loved one (e.g. RIP or IMO). This phrase on clothing may indicate to an external viewer that such clothing is a remembrance, but does not indicate to the external viewer to whom the remembrance is directed or the relationship of the individual to the one wearing the indicia. One common such phrase recently is the use of “BFF” where the meaning of wearing such a symbol may only be known to the two people associated with it.

[0012] Such internal connection to clothing may be far more subtle than the above which, at least, indicates to an external viewer that the clothing has internal meaning. Wearing a particular piece of clothing from a small, relatively unknown, design studio can be considered by the wearer as a showing of independence, rebelliousness, and support for that studio, even if no one else gets the message because simply no one else knows who made that item or associates it with that manufacturer. This internal meaning, even beyond any external meaning, has even been shown to influence behavior or attitude, a phenomenon sometimes referred to as “enclothed cognition.”
While the use of clothing as a subtle or direct indicator is one that is enshrined in human culture, what the clothing can be used to subtly suggest is sometimes very limited because the “encoding” of the message in the clothing needs to be sufficiently subtle to be overlooked by those it is not aimed at, while still being sufficiently clear to be understood by someone it is. This problem is particularly acute when one is trying to externally project association with a group where the members of the group have not specifically agreed on how to project that association.

One major area where there is a clear lack of clothing to indicate association is regional affiliation. Many people strongly affiliate themselves with geographical areas such as the town, city, state, or country in which they live and they want to indicate this affiliation. Traditional clothing, however, often does not do this well. In the first instance, unless it is very small, it is very rare for a region to develop a subtle way for its residents to communicate their association, and in the case of a small region, they often don’t need it. Instead, regional association through clothing is often done informally by each individual, and therefore, with only varying success. Further, clothing which indicates a region is often not connected with a wearer’s association to that region, but as the wearer having visited that region. T-shirts with city names are commonly sold to tourists as mementos. Thus, seeing someone wearing a shirt from your city does not provide an association of the person wearing the clothing as regionally affiliating themselves with the city as much as them having simply visited there.

Thus, clothing to show regional affiliation is often done by proxy and with an imperfect connection. This can lead to mixed messages where someone may ask if an individual is connected to the city indicated on their clothing, when they are wearing it simply to show they have been there. Often, association with a region is often best obtained by clothing associated with a small, generally regional event in that region, for example a small local film festival. However, these are further imperfect associations with clothing. Clothing from an event such as a film festival may be an indicator of regional preference, but it is often more strongly an indicator of preference for the type of film shown, or the event itself. Thus, regional association often requires a formal arrangement, for instance the use of numetags with regional association at a convention.

In sum, clothing that acts to indicate regional association in a clear manner, without being direct and unobtrusive, has not been accomplished in a reasonable manner. Further, those who wish to show regional preference, and regional support, are often forced to do so in a manner that can provide confusing external messages, and may not provide internal meaning in a desirable fashion.

SUMMARY

The following is a summary of the invention in order to provide a basic understanding of some aspects of the invention. This summary is not intended to identify key or critical elements of the invention or to delineate the scope of the invention. The sole purpose of this section is to present some concepts of the invention in a simplified form as a prelude to the more detailed description that is presented later.

Because of the above and other problems in the art, described herein is a clothing line, systems and methods for marketing clothing, and an associated interaction system which provide both direct (internal) connection of a wearer to a geographical region by having the clothing directly support the region and an “encoded” external message which is generally immediately identifiable to another individual who also has an association with the region, but which is either not completely understood, or even hidden, from a user which has no association with the region.

In an embodiment, the clothing utilizes a particular code which even if one understands the form of the code, does not necessarily allow them to identify the meaning of it unless they have association with the geographic region it identifies. However, someone who does associate with the region will often be able to recognize the code, even if they have no idea that a code is presented. That is, it can provide clear recognition of geographical association to someone with similar association, while often concealing the specifics of geographical association from others.

There is described herein, among other things, an article of clothing, the clothing comprising: an article of clothing to be worn by a wearer; a logo prominently displayed on the clothing for view by a viewer not wearing the clothing, the logo comprising: an encoded indicator of a geographic region, the indicator including at least two identifiers of the geographic region; wherein, the indicator, in its entirety, serves to specifically and uniquely identify the geographic region; wherein the indicator is readily associated with the geographic region even by a viewer who is not aware that the logo comprises the encoded indicator by the viewer recognizing all the at least two identifiers as associated with the geographical region, and wherein a viewer not recognizing all of the at least two indicators is not able to specifically associate the identifier with the geographic region, even if the viewer is aware that the logo is the encoded indicator.

In an embodiment of the clothing, the at least two identifiers comprise at least on alphabetic and at least one numeric indicator.

In an embodiment of the clothing, at least one of the at least two identifiers is selected from the group consisting of: International Air transit Association (IATA) airport code and IATA city code.

In an embodiment of the clothing, at least one of the at least two identifiers is a telephone area code.

In an embodiment of the clothing, the geographic region is a city.

In an embodiment of the clothing, the geographic region is an American state.

In an embodiment of the clothing, the geographic region is a country.

In an embodiment of the clothing, at least one of the at least two identifiers is selected form the group consisting of: a postal abbreviation and a postal code.

In an embodiment of the clothing, the at least one of the at least two identifiers is a year.

In an embodiment of the clothing, purchase of the clothing article provides a portion of the money used for the purchase to an institution in the geographic region.

In an embodiment of the clothing, purchase of the clothing allows access to information about the region.

In an embodiment of the clothing, the information is accessed via a computer-readable indicia provided with the article.

In an embodiment of the clothing, the information is only accessible via the computer-readable indicia.

In an embodiment of the clothing, the information is provided by prior purchasers of the clothing.
There is also described herein, in an embodiment, a method for promoting a geographic region, the method comprising: selling an article of clothing to a first person wishing to promote the geographic region, the clothing comprising: a logo prominently displayed on the article for view by a viewer not wearing the clothing, the logo comprising: an encoded indicator of a geographic region, the indicator including at least two identifiers of the geographic region; wherein, the indicator, in its entirety, serves to specifically and uniquely identify the geographic region; wherein the indicator is readily associated with the geographic region even if the viewer who is not aware that the logo comprises the encoded indicator by the viewer recognizing all the at least two identifiers as associated with the geographical region; and wherein when the viewer does not recognize all of the at least two indicators, the viewer is not able to specifically associate the identifier with the geographic region, even if the viewer is aware that the logo is the encoded indicator; having at least a portion of proceeds of the sale go to an instruction in the geographic region; allowing the first person to provide information about the geographical region; allowing a second person to access the information via purchase of another article.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 provides an indication of an article of clothing showing a regional affiliation code.

FIG. 2 provides a flowchart of how individuals with different knowledge can react to seeing the regional affiliation code of FIG. 1.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT(S)

Described herein, among other things, are systems and methods for the provision of clothing which can provide for multiple internal and external indications of regional preference while simultaneously also acting as a suitable memento of travel to a region. In effect, the clothing allows the crossing of a divide where a person can subtly indicate a regional preference, and effectively promote the region and show affiliation with the region, while also allowing the same items of clothing to act as a memento for those not interested in so affiliating. The clothing also provides for direct support of the region through its sale allowing for internal association with the region.

The multiple level association is accomplished through the use of a clothing “code” (101) which is placed in a clearly visible location on the clothing (109) such as on the front of a shirt, hat, or similar piece of clothing (109). FIG. 1 shows an embodiment of such a code (101) as a logo (101). The code (101) is designed to be immediately identifiable to a person knowledgeable about the region it is from, while presenting an open question to one who is not. Similarly, the clothing (109) utilizes systems and methods in each sale which allow for an individual purchasing it to obtain different value based on why they are purchasing it, even if the purchase transaction is the same.

The logo (101) of FIG. 1 is generally placed on an article of clothing (109) such as, but not limited to, a T-shirt, sweatshirt or hat which can be sold to interested parties and is presented in a clear and obvious position (e.g. on the front of a shirt or hat dominating the available area). The code (101) generally has one meaning to those who fully understand its meaning and a second meaning to one who does not.

This application relies, in some respects, on the vagaries of human psychology. Particularly, it needs to be recognized that many humans wear clothing to communicate a message. That message may be one that is not understood by the recipient viewing the clothing as a message at all, may be one which is understood by the viewer to be a message but the substance of the message is not completely clear, or may be one that is designed to be understood by the viewer. In the present case, the same message is used for all three types of communication and the nature of the message understood by the viewer is dependent on a relative knowledge of the wearer and the viewer about the system that the clothing (109) is part of and the regional area to which it is connected. Thus, the clothing (109) itself is designed to provide different amounts of understanding based on the relative knowledge of the viewer.

It is important that the reader keep in mind throughout this discussion that a person wearing the clothing (109) discussed herein will generally be intending to show a regional affiliation. As such, internally, they will wear the clothing (109) because they wish to show such regional affiliation and are seeking others with similar affiliation or interest. Generally, the wearer will show the affiliation because they reside in that region (or want to, or did previously) but that is not required. However, they will generally wear the clothing (109) because they wish to externally proclaim their association with the region, and wish to do so to promote it or to locate others that also associate themselves with the same region.

As indicated above, FIG. 1 provides an embodiment of a logo (101) which may be placed on an article of clothing (109). The logo (101) provides for a general graphic (103) but also includes identifying information for a region or locale. However, the identifying information is generally considered subtle and is referred to herein as “encoded”. In the depicted embodiment, the region or local area is identified on the logo (101) by the combination of two different identifiers (105) and (107). The first (105) is a letter abbreviation commonly associated with the region such as, but not limited to, the local airport code or, more specifically, the International Air transit Association (IATA) airport code or city code (which may be the same or different). The second (107) is a number identification commonly associated with the same region such as but not limited to, an area code or zip code. The graphic utilizes the two different identifiers (105) and (107) to help make the region identified specific and generally identifiable. For example, FIG. 1 shows the abbreviation “STL” (105) which is the airport code for Lambert International Airport, the largest airport serving Saint Louis, Mo. as well as the IATA city code for Saint Louis, Mo. Similarly, 314 (107) is the primary area code for the city and county of Saint Louis, Mo.

The sublety of the code (101) is through the combination of the two identifiers (105) and (107). The letter identification (such as an airport code) (105) is not a direct indicator of a city and many are often not direct abbreviations or may not be apparent except for larger airports. For example the code “SUS” which is for the Spirit of Saint Louis Airport located in Chesterfield, Mo. (a suburb of Saint Louis) is not commonly associated with Saint Louis or Chesterfield and the letters do not provide a clear indication of either. However, many letter codes (105) are often discernible to a large num-
ber of people as associated with a particular city or region, particularly if it is a larger region. For example, many people would also accurately associate “STL” with Saint Louis, “NYC” with New York City, “DFW” with Dallas-Fort Worth, and “LAX” with Los Angeles.

[0044] Thus, while a subtle indicator of a region or with a city, a number of letter codes (105) are actually relatively easy to recognize. However, someone who has a regional association will almost surely be interested in the logo (101) because of the regional association. However, in order to assist with the identification, a second subtle indicator (107) is also provided. In the depicted embodiment, this is a number indicator (107). There is an immediately apparent overlap in that one indicator is alphabetic (105) while the other is numeric (107) and therefore the two codes are never the same.

[0045] A number identifier (such as an area code) (107) has an advantage over an alphabetic identifier (105) in that generally every region has an area code, the codes are unique, and they cover relatively small areas. Thus, the region of an area code is likely smaller than the region which may be served by an airport. For example the city code “NYC” is the IATA city designator for New York City even though no airport in New York City uses that code. However, New York City has 6 different area codes. Some (e.g. 212) are specifically associated with Manhattan (and have been for a long time), while others (e.g. 347) are expressly used outside Manhattan and still others (e.g. 917) is used throughout the city. Thus, these codes are quite expressly associated with different affiliations even within New York City. Further, area codes and other number identifications (107) of a city are generally relatively unknown to those outside the area (unless they happen to call it a lot).

[0046] Because the logo (101) utilizes two identifying pieces of information (105) and (107) to identify the region, information about the region is subtly communicated. The first alphabetic identifier (105) acts as an initial connection to a city or area, while the second (107) provides a more subtle connection requiring more knowledge of the area. For example, a person knowing the meaning of the two pieces of the code may recognize that NYC 212 indicates New York City or even Manhattan, however, they may not recognize that NYC 212 would indicate an older (more traditional Manhattan) than NYC 646 (the most recently added area code). However, a resident of Manhattan would likely immediately recognize the difference by knowing the history and meaning associated with the area codes.

[0047] This gets at the first subtlety of the code (101) and how it is recognized by the three different external audiences. This is illustrated loosely by the flowchart of FIG. 2 which illustrates how recognition of the parts of the code (101) can “filter” individuals into groups without the viewer’s necessarily recognizing that they have been so filtered. Upon viewing the code (201) a person who knows nothing of the clothing (109) line or code system (207) will often recognize the code (101) simply as a graphic and have no association (217). They may identify that it likely is a code, but have no idea what it means. Further, such an individual may understand part of the code but not all of it (205). For example, many people would associate “NYC” with New York City but seeing “NYC 212” would generally not have meaning to them and they may discount the abbreviation of NYC as meaning something else given the number connection. For example, they may simply see it as the logo of some New York designer, or simply someone trying to evoke an association with New York fashion. This can lead to an inquiry (219) if they would like more information (209) about the connection.

[0048] For an individual who knows about the clothing (109) line (for example if they have a piece of clothing (109) from the line themselves) (207) and therefore knows the meaning of the code (101), they may know that the logo (101) is a code and that it represents a geographic area, but it will often only be partially recognized. Thus, an individual who is from Saint Louis may recognize that the code “NYC 212” indicates New York City. However, that individual will not specifically connect with it as they may not understand the difference between NYC 212 (possibly a long time resident) and NYC 646 (possibly a new transplant to the city) even though they may readily deduce that the person is associated with (or at least advertising) New York City and maybe even Manhattan. Further, this person will generally know that they are not connected with the individual wearing it since, even while they understand that “NYC” is specifically indicating New York City and may infer that “212” is the area code for Manhattan, they generally have no connection to New York City and therefore no connection (217) with the wearer. However, they again, may inquire (209) if they have interest in learning about the wearer’s connection to the region (219).

[0049] A person in the last group (that has a similar regional affiliation) (213), however, can generally immediately make the connection (203) and deduce the meaning even if they don’t understand that the logo (101) is supposed to make this connection. Upon seeing “NYC 212” they immediately connect the association to older Manhattan, and also can, often inherently, recognize that the code (101) may not be intended for mass recognition, even if they do not know the code system. Thus, they can generally detect that the wearer is intending to indicate a regional affiliation. For example, a long time resident of New York City that has only moved away in their waning years may be immediately be connected with someone with an NYC 212 code as having a similar regional association.

[0050] It is important to recognize that members of this latter group (those with an affiliation to the region) (213) will likely identify the regional association of the clothing (109) even if they don’t understand that the logo (101) is an encoded identifier. For example, an individual who resides in Saint Louis would likely immediately recognize STL 314 as being associated with that region, even if they have no idea about the purpose of the code (207). Similarly, a person who knows the code system (207) and is associated with Saint Louis may recognize that SUS 314 likely has some association with Saint Louis, even if they don’t know exactly what, leading to an inquiry (219).

[0051] The code (101) is, thus, a method for communicating information about a region on three levels. The first, highest level, is to those without knowledge of its meaning. To these people (non-association (217)), the code (101), at best, communicates a broad reference to the region. E.g. that the clothing (109) may be associated with New York City or Saint Louis. This generally occurs due to, at best, a partial recognition of the code (101) and may not actually communicate anything depending on the associated region. At the second level, one with knowledge of the code (101) system, but without connection to the region (or only partial understanding of the code), knows what the code (101) is supposed to communicate and may be able to deduce the region, but cannot necessarily make a clear connection. This can allow them to express interest as to the meaning of the code (101)
(friendly inquiry (219)) or to ignore the code (101) (non-association (217)) if they are not interested. For someone with a connection to the same region (common association (213)), however, the code (101) supplies more meaning and can potentially provide for an immediate connection between the wearer and the viewer even if that viewer knows nothing of the code (101) system.

[0052] This partial dissemination of information provides for sociological exclusiveness and provides for the wearer to effectively make themselves part of a group associated with regional distinction. In effect, those that would approach them about their clothing (109) are in the latter two groups (219) and (213) and either seek information about the region indicated (the friendly inquiry (219)), which those who choose to associate themselves with a region will often welcome, or also have association (common association (213)) with the same region allowing the wearer to find a fellow group member.

[0053] It should be recognized, as indicated above, that the association with the region generally also comes with a wearer’s desire to support the region. In the first instance, this is done by the mere act of publicly associating with it. Generally, others would recognize that a desire to associate oneself with a geographic region would only come from one who likes the region and therefore the clothing (109) facilitates interactions which support this behavior either with the person acting as an ambassador of the region (responding to the friendly inquiry (219)) or in finding a fellow member (acting as a conduit to promote a common association (213)).

[0054] While this may be sufficient support in many cases, the desire of an individual to support their region, however, can also be directly emphasized by the clothing (109). Specifically, purchasing the clothing (109) to show allegiance can directly support the region through the purchase. Specifically, the clothing (109) purchase may provide for additional components to support the local community. For instance, the clothing (109) may be specifically manufactured or assembled in the local area, may be made with local products, or purchase of the clothing (109) may support local charities. If done universally for the clothing (109) in all regions where it is sold (that is, each article of clothing (109) supports the local region it also encodes), these things serve to further connect the clothing (109) with the desire of a wearer to support and identify with the region. The clothing (109), by its purchase, directly economically supports the region. This gives the clothing (109) additional inherent value to the user who is now supporting the region in multiple ways through the purchase.

[0055] As should be apparent from the above, one component of supporting identity is to preferably only have the clothing (109) available for direct sale in the region it indicates. Thus, for example, NYC 212 logo (101) clothing (109) may only be sold within the boundaries of Manhattan, N.Y. In this way, it is readily obtainable by those who reside there (and are more likely to connect with the region), allows for more direct support of the region (it is purchased from a local store improving the local economy) and it further shows its exclusivity and connection to the region. However, having the clothing (109) for sale only in a limited area creates a value of the clothing (109) for someone who does not associate themselves with the region (or does not wish to do so indicate an association) by making it collectable. By making the clothing (109) specifically and only locally available, it also makes it an excellent memento of the region. However, this is only generally true to a purchaser who knows at least the basics of the code system.

[0056] As each region will generally have its own code (101) and associated clothing (109), the desire to have clothing items (109) with other codes (101) as souvenirs and mementos of travel can be clear due to the exclusivity. Because of this, the clothing items (109) will likely be sold to visitors. As contemplated above, the motivations between a visitor and resident will often be different. A visitor will often seek the clothing items (109) as a memento of a vacation or trip. Further, because of the specificity of the region to the location of the product sales, there is a need to actually visit a place to collect a shirt. These individuals may seek the clothing (109) as a collectable and as such may not wear it (or may only wear it in certain circumstances to show an unexpected allegiance or to show their collecting nature). The resident, however, will generally seek the clothing (109) out to associate themselves with the region. That is, they will wear it.

[0057] The nature of the code (101) can enhance the collectability nature of the clothing (109). Because the code (101) can utilize “port of entry” codes, that is transportation codes for the city and airport, the code (101) is necessarily associated with points of entry where visitors are likely to arrive in an area. As such, sales of the clothing (109) to visitors at such a point of entry provides a good point of sale. While such sales at airports can be one point of entry, it can also include other points of entry such as seaports, bus terminals, railway stations, and highway tourist stops.

[0058] The clothing (109) can utilize this feature of its sales in two primary ways to a visitor. In the first instance, the clothing (109) is immediately collectable. Specifically, because the clothing (109) is sold only within the region it promotes, it is generally necessary to travel to the region to obtain the clothing (109). Obviously, for particularly small locations, this may prove difficult and desire to collect a variety of the clothing items (109) can potentially promote tourism to a particular area. For example, as desire to obtain a KQA 907 coded clothing item (109) (for Akutan, Ak. a place that would likely have fewer visitors than NYC 212) can actually encourage people interested in the collectability and obtaining the clothing item (109) to visit. The clothing’s (109) collectability can therefore support the region it indicates in a still further way.

[0059] In the second instance, the collectability of the clothing (109) can be used to provide for further value and association by the visitor. Obtaining a KQA 907 coded item, the person may wish to wear it not to be associated with the region as a resident, but to show off that they have been there, a relatively rare feat. However, such a person wearing this item of clothing, would likely be identified as a resident by those with knowledge of the code system (101), which may also be desirable (the friendly inquiry (219) situation above).

[0060] Further, the collectability can also be used to allow for further association. For example, should an individual obtain clothing with a code (101) from all 50 states, that individual may be allowed to purchase a special code clothing item that, instead of having an airport code, has the well-recognized three digit letter code “USA” and potentially the number code “1776” to represent the foundation of the country. This allows for the individual to associate themselves not only with a broader region, but to show that they have traveled the country and collected the clothing (109). In effect, such a piece of clothing (109) would show they are knowledgeable
about the code (101) system generally and have used it widely. It provides recognition by those familiar with the code system as an affiliation. Similarly, special clothing (109) may be made available for collecting all the clothing items (109) from one state, or from specific regions. For example collecting clothing items from every region in Missouri, one may obtain a clothing item with the code “MO 24” “The MO providing the postal code for Missouri and 24 being its order of entry (24th state) into the United States.

[0061] While the clothing (109) itself is intended to be useable as a memento even if the purchaser does not wish to show allegiance to the area, purchase of the clothing (109) item in a place where a visitor is expected can also provide for certain other benefits precisely because of its regionality. In an embodiment, the clothing (109) may be sold at airport shops or in clothing vending machines at airports or related locations where individuals are expected to first arrive in the region. These sales may not only provide the clothing (109), but may provide access to information about the region. For example, the clothing (109) may include a machine readable indicator of other indicia which identifies the clothing item. This item may be read by a machine reader such as, but not limited to, a QR code reader on a smartphone.

[0062] Upon reading of the indicia on the clothing (109), the phone may be allowed to access information about the region. This can include tourist information, maps, recommendations on places to go and things to do, and related information that can be useful to a visitor to a region. It can also include discounts for local attractions or businesses. The advantage of providing this information as part of the clothing (109) is that it provides a visitor not only with a memento to take home, but also provides a valuable resource while they are there and connects both easily with the region.

[0063] As contemplated above, access to the regional information is preferably electronic and may be provided through a smartphone or other personal electronic device that is supplied by the purchaser of the clothing (109). However, in an alternative arrangement, the information may be provided in a more traditional format such as paper provided with the clothing (109). In an embodiment, the information provided may be generally available information which is simply accessed via the clothing (109). However, in an alternative embodiment, the information may only be accessible by unlocking it or otherwise gaining access only by scanning the indicia.

[0064] This latter embodiment allows for the information provided to be exclusively provided with the clothing item (109) and, therefore, to provide regional information that is as unique to the region as the clothing (109) itself. It also can provide a still further method by which the clothing (109) promotes the region. Specifically, the information provided via the scanned indicia may be information provided from others that have also obtained a similar clothing item (109).

[0065] In an embodiment, a person when accessing the indicia, may be initially asked if they wish to be considered a visitor or a resident of the location whose clothing (109) they purchased. If they indicate that they wish to be a resident, the application may solicit information from them that would be useful to a visitor. For example, it may request their favorite location to obtain a particular type of local food, a favorite place to shop, or an attraction a visitor may not think to go to, but which locals frequent. This type of information is often highly sought by visitors and, in this case, the information is effectively exclusively collected from such self-identified residents purchasing clothing that promotes such association. Thus, collection of this information provides a resident with a connection to their region in yet another way, as they can exhibit its best traits (in their opinion) as part of their purchase. In effect, they have advertised their region to a visitor directly without having worn their clothing (109) at all.

[0066] If the person is identified as a visitor, instead of receiving open ended questions which they are expected to answer to provide information about the region, they can instead be provided with the outcome of such information collection, and their feedback on the information, as a visitor, can be collected. In this way, they are also an inherent part of the regional data archive provided to visitors and they further enhance the information available. Further, however, they have access to valuable visitor knowledge which was collected directly from those most interested in exhibiting the region in its best light. Those interested in monitoring the region’s visitor appeal can also review the visitor comments to see if particular areas are being seen in different ways by locals and visitors which can result in changes to how the region is formally promoted (e.g. by its Convention and Visitors Board).

[0067] Such visitor information for the region associated with the clothing (109) is not the only thing that the application can show upon scanning the indicia. For example, as discussed above in conjunction with the collectivity of the clothing, the user may be provided with collection information which could include clothing they have obtained, and indications such as a colored map showing when and where they visited and got the clothing (109). Still further, the application could even record places they went and allow this to be integrated with various forms of social media to provide a record of the trip. For example, copies of photos taken with the same device while in the location associated with the clothing could be indexed to the location or could even have the logo (101) placed on them. The system can also be used to provide additional context when sharing photos or related items. In this way the clothing (109) is not only a memento, but acts as a resource providing an access point to information of value to a visitor to the region.

[0068] It should be apparent from the above that the systems and methods discussed herein provide for a variety of benefits to a variety of users from purchase of particular clothing (109) and the clothing carries out multiple functions in a variety of ways. The clothing (109) acts as a way for an individual to support a region through a myriad of different programs. The clothing item (109), by providing a coded identification of a region, and by being specifically sold in the region, allow for an individual who wishes to associate themselves with the region to do so directly as a promotion of the region, to directly also promote the region through their purchase of the clothing (109), and to promote the region through interaction with visitor “promotion” information via electronic or other media associated with the clothing (109). Further, the same clothing (109) can be used to provide a memento of a visit to the region to a person that does not necessarily wish to wear clothing (109) associating themselves with the region, while also simultaneously allowing them to gain access to information specifically generated by those who are so associated.

[0069] It should be clear from the above that while various embodiments and uses of the systems and methods have been discussed, the system can be used in a variety of related ways without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.
As a first example, while the systems and methods above generally contemplate their being a single “clothing series” to which all clothing items belong, there can actually be different series (for instance being different colors) and/or additional series can be provided alongside each other. For example, while one particular color combination could be provided for full-time residents, a different could be provided which indicates a temporary residence status. For example, college students could be provided with clothing (109) which is in their school colors and may display school icons in addition to the logo (101). The code (101) can then be provided for their hometown. This can allow for those attending college events, for example, spring break trips to popular destinations or college football games to proclaim both their school and residential allegiance. It can also allow new students to find others from areas of interest to them (for example, where they are from or where they may be interested in taking a job). Similarly, additional information and regional affiliation can be encoded. For example, a shirt for an individual born in the region could be different from one for an individual who moved (transplanted) to the region. Also, popular area rivalries may be encoded (for example, “STL 314” could be “CHI 312” or vice versa).

Still further, the clothing (109) could include an additional code, which is actually referential to the code system. For example, the clothing (109) could include a hashtag, website, or other indicia that refers an individual viewing it to a site that explains the code (101) system. This can help those with no knowledge of the code and no association (217) to potentially inquire about the clothing (109) itself, even if they don’t inquire about the region.

While the above has primarily discussed the use of regionally associated clothing for regions in the United States of America, this is by no means required and in other embodiments, the codes can refer to regions outside the United States.

While the invention has been disclosed in conjunction with a description of certain embodiments, including those that are currently believed to be the preferred embodiments, the detailed description is intended to be illustrative and should not be understood to limit the scope of the present disclosure. As would be understood by one of ordinary skill in the art, embodiments other than those described in detail herein are encompassed by the present invention. Modifications and variations of the described embodiments may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.

1. An article of clothing, the clothing comprising:
   an article of clothing to be worn by a wearer;
   a logo prominently displayed on said clothing to view by
   a viewer not wearing the clothing, the logo comprising:
   an encoded indicator of a geographic region, the indicator
   including at least two identifiers of said geographic region;
   wherein, said indicator, in its entirety, serves to specifically
   and uniquely identify said geographic region;
   wherein said indicator is readily associated with said geographic region even if said viewer who is not aware that said logo comprises said encoded indicator by said viewer recognizing all said at least two identifiers as associated with said geographical region;
   and
   wherein a viewer not recognizing all of said at least two indicators is not able to specifically associate said iden-

   tifier with said geographic region, even if said viewer is aware that said logo is said encoded indicator.

2. The article of claim 1 wherein said at least two identifiers comprise at least on alphabetic and at least one numeric identifier.

3. The article of claim 1 wherein at least one of said at least two identifiers is selected from the group consisting of: International Air transit Association (IATA) airport code and IATA city code.

4. The article of claim 1 wherein at least one of said at least two identifiers is a telephone area code.

5. The article of claim 1 wherein said geographic region is a city.

6. The article of claim 1 wherein said geographic region is an American state.

7. The article of claim 1 wherein said geographic region is a country.

8. The article of claim 1 wherein at least one of said at least two identifiers is selected form the group consisting of: a postal abbreviation and a postal code.

9. The article of claim 1 wherein said at least one of said at least two identifiers is a year.

10. The article of claim 1 wherein purchase of said clothing article provides a portion of the money used for said purchase to an institution in said geographic region.

11. The article of claim 1 wherein purchase of said clothing allows access to information about said region.

12. The article of claim 11 wherein said information is accessed via a computer-readable indicia provided with said article.

13. The article of claim 12 wherein said information is only accessible via said computer-readable indicia.

14. The article of claim 11 wherein said information is provided by prior purchasers of said clothing.

15. A method for promoting a geographic region, the method comprising:
   selling an article of clothing to a first person wishing to promote said geographic region, said clothing compris-
   ing:
   a logo prominently displayed on said article for view by
   a viewer not wearing the clothing, the logo comprising:
   an encoded indicator of a geographic region, the indicator
   including at least two identifiers of said geographic region;
   wherein, said indicator, in its entirety, serves to specifically
   and uniquely identify said geographic region;
   wherein said indicator is readily associated with said geographic region even if said viewer who is not aware that said logo comprises said encoded indicator by said viewer recognizing all said at least two identifiers as associated with said geographical region;
   and
   wherein when said viewer does not recognize all of said at least two indicators, said viewer is able to spe-
   cifically associate said indicator with said geographic region, even if said viewer is aware that said logo is said encoded indicator;
   having at least a portion of proceeds of said sale go to an
   instruction in said geographic region;
   allowing said first person to provide information about said geographical region;
   allowing a second person to access said information via purchase of another said article.

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