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(54) **Postbox**

(57) Postbox having two superposed and physically independent bodies, the lower one serving as a postbox per se and the upper one constituting the receptacle containing computer equipment able to supply the users of the postbox with postage stamps to pay the postage on ordinary mail, together with connection to the Internet with the option of email and connection to certain data-bases. On the front face of said postbox there is a shelf in which is located the keyboard and mouse of the computer equipment, and immediately above and behind it a video screen and the output slots of the printers for postage stamps and any other kind of graphical information. Said superposed bodies are preferably in the shape of prismatic triangles, are securely connected together and the lower body offers three wide side surfaces, and in its upper part it offers two side faces and a section of the front face above the canopy as areas for placing information posters.

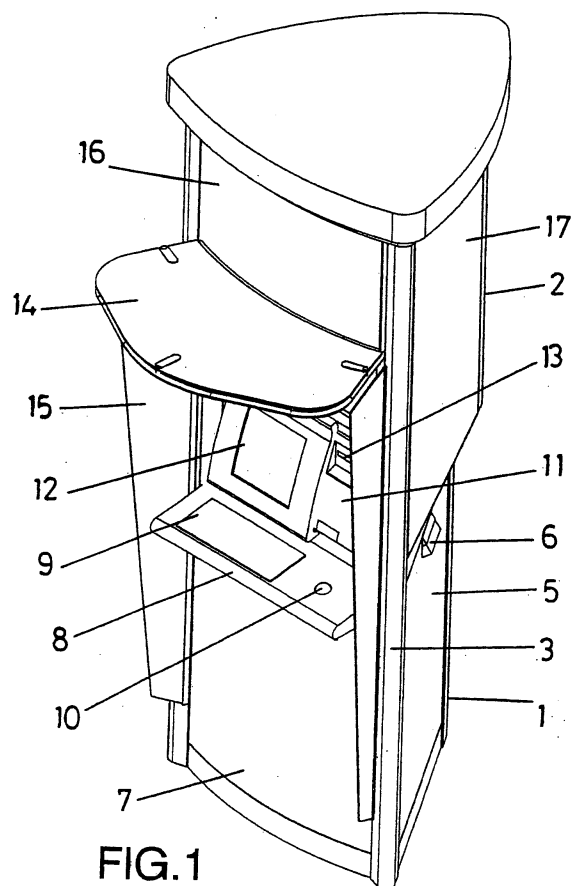


FIG.1

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Description

SUBJECT OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates to a postbox, i.e. an item of street furniture that as such is designed to be installed in public streets for the posting or reception of mail.

[0002] The aim of the invention is to achieve a postbox that, in addition to fulfilling its basic function as a postbox, offers the user a number of complementary services such as the sale and/or printing of postage stamps, also constituting a telecommunications terminal via which users can also access post office information, send and view emails, access the Internet and related applications, access various types of government and tourist information, etc.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] As is known, the post office has a public postal network for the posting of ordinary mail throughout the national territory, in both urban and rural areas.

[0004] Irrespective of how well said postboxes are distributed topographically, their services could not be more limited, since they can only receive ordinary mail, their design creates storage and maintenance problems, particularly as regards vandalism, and in general the public service image they convey is a negative, poor image of street furniture.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0005] The postbox proposed by the invention provides a completely satisfactory solution to the above-described problem such that, as stated above, independently of fulfilling its basic function as an element for receiving ordinary mail, it offers the general public other, very varied services, essentially centred around the possibility of paying the postage on ordinary mail at the postbox itself and having access to a wide range of different kinds of information, by way of both direct information from advertising posters and electronic information, such that the income generated by these complementary services can be used to finance and maintain postboxes of high-quality design and structure, allowing said postboxes to compete aesthetically with the best and most modern lines of street furniture.

[0006] To this end, and more specifically, the postbox proposed by the invention has a lower body, of essentially prismatic shape, on whose faces, centred close to its upper edge, there is an opening for access to the postbox per se.

[0007] In addition to said lower body there is another, upper body forming a second receptacle that is physically independent of the first, which houses the circuitry and mechanisms for the additional services of the postbox, such as a computer terminal, a computer, screen,

keyboard, etc., which is supported by an operational support centre, information network, network system, etc. and, where appropriate, the automatic postage stamp dispenser.

[0008] All these elements can be accessed via the front face of the upper body, which has a shelf for receiving the keyboard and mouse, and above these the video screen, and next to the latter the slot for issuing postage stamps, etc., these elements being duly protected by an overhead canopy, independently of which they are structured to withstand the effects of exposure to the weather, and flanked laterally by two small partitions that limit the user workstation to a certain degree.

[0009] Said canopy is substantially displaced downwards with respect to the upper end of the likewise upper body, leaving free an area that may also be used for information or advertising.

[0010] Although it is stated above that the opening for access to the postbox per se is located on one of the side faces of the lower body, in practice there may be two openings located on the two side walls of the body, leaving free the front face where the abovementioned shelf is located, at least one of said side walls taking the form of a door that allows access to the inside of the lower body for collection of the mail.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0011] To supplement the description given and to facilitate a clearer understanding of the features of the invention, according to a preferred practical embodiment thereof, said description is accompanied by a set of drawings that form an integral part thereof, in which the following are shown by way of non-limiting illustration:

Figure 1 - Shows an isometric perspective view of a postbox produced according to the subject of the present invention.

Figure 2 - Shows a front elevation view of said postbox.

Figure 3 - Shows, lastly, a side elevation view of the postbox.

PREFERRED EMBODIMENT OF THE INVENTION

[0012] From the figures described it can be seen that in the postbox proposed by the invention there is a lower body (1) and upper body (2), essentially in the shape of prismatic triangles, physically independent of one another although joined by common vertical uprights (3) and short intermediate pillars (4), the two side walls (5) of the lower body (1) each being equipped, at their upper edge, with openings (6) having flaps for protection against rainwater and whose dimensions are adapted to allow access to the inside of the body (1) by ordinary mail, which it will be possible to remove via either one

of the side walls (5), which takes the form of a door with its corresponding locking mechanism.

[0013] Both the side walls (17) and the section above the canopy on the front face of the upper body (16) constitute surfaces that are suitable for receiving information and/or advertising posters.

[0014] The upper body (2) is designed to house in its inside the mechanisms for the wide range of complementary services that the postbox can provide, and therefore on the front face of said upper body (2), at the level of its lower body (1), is a shelf (8) in which is integrated a keyboard (9) and a mouse (10), and, extending behind said shelf (8), a panel (11) in which is placed a video screen (12), together with slots (13) for issuing stamps and printed documents.

[0015] In accordance with the above description, inside the upper body (2) is a microprocessor system with corresponding hard disk, connecting ports, modem, possibly a card reader, thermal and graphic printer(s), graphics card, PCI card with UPS function and controlled start-up and shut-down, etc., all for the purpose, as stated above, of providing customers with Internet or email, postage payment and e-commerce services, and a wide range of information of all kinds.

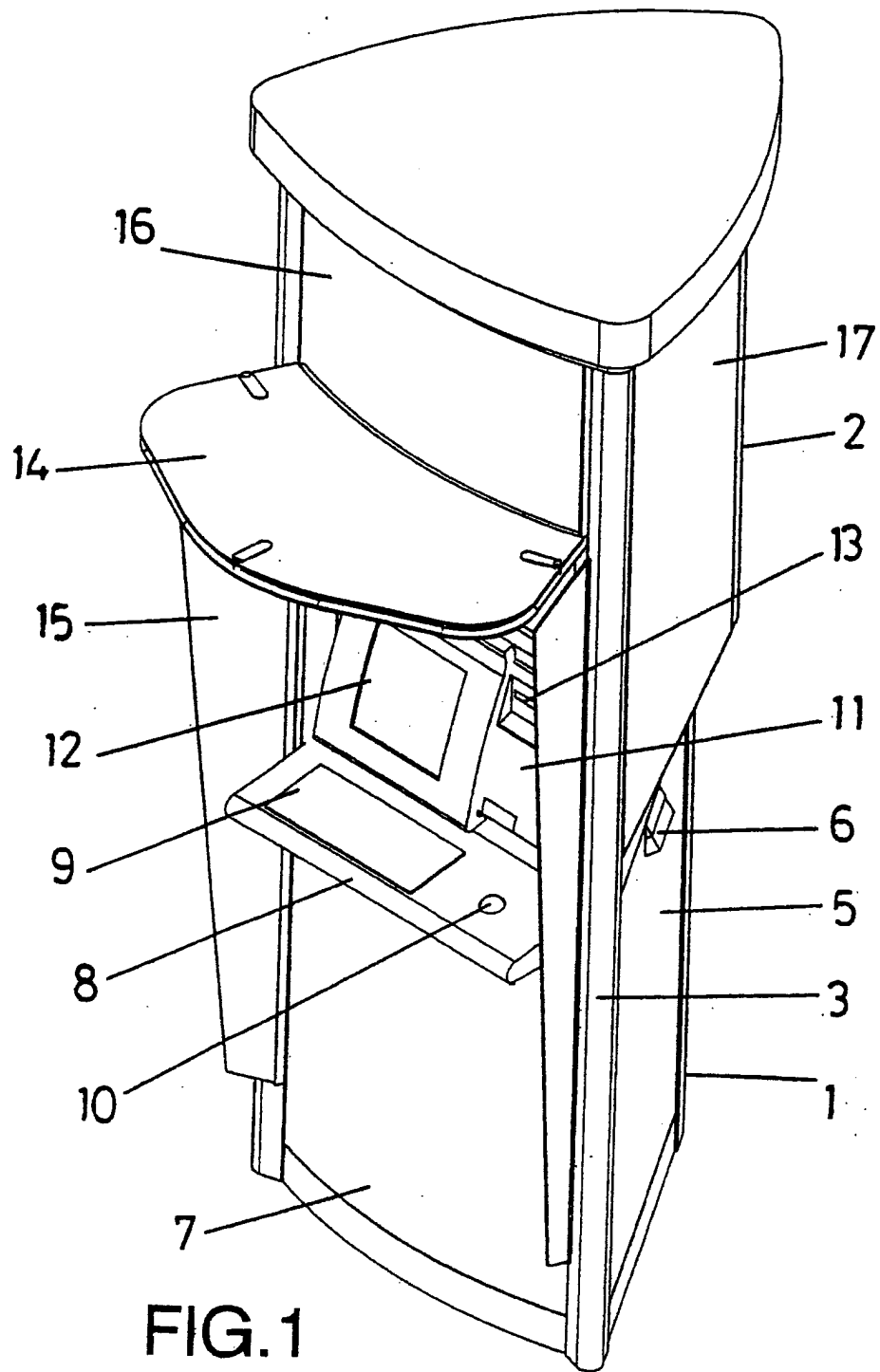
[0016] The workstation of the postbox containing the shelf (8) is protected by an overhead canopy (14) and flanked by a pair of small side partitions (15), that provide a degree of "protection" for said zone, above which there is an area (16) that, together with the side walls (17) of the upper body (2), considerably develops the useful surface area of the postbox for the placement of information and/or advertising posters that, together with the postbox's pay-per-access services, contribute to the funding and maintenance of said postbox.

[0017] It has also been envisaged that the postbox may offer additional services that are simpler than those described, such as for example substituting the computer equipment and its accessories with a public telephone, converting the postbox into a postbox-telephone kiosk.

2. Postbox according to Claim 1, **characterized in that** on the front face of said postbox, at the level of the join between its two bodies, there is a shelf in which is located the keyboard and mouse of the computer equipment, and immediately above and behind it a video screen and the output slots of the printers for postage stamps and any other kind of graphical information, provision having been made for this work zone of the postbox to be protected by an overhead canopy and flanked by two small side partitions that delimit it appropriately.
3. Postbox according to the preceding claims, **characterized in that** said superposed bodies are preferably in the shape of prismatic triangles, are securely connected together and the lower body offers three wide side surfaces, and in its upper part it offers two side faces and a section of the front face above the canopy as areas for placing information posters.

Claims

1. Postbox of the type constituting an item of street furniture designed to be installed in public streets, **characterized in that** it has two superposed and physically independent bodies, the lower one serving as a postbox per se, having at least one side opening for the posting of ordinary mail, and the upper one constituting the receptacle containing computer equipment able to supply the users of the postbox with postage stamps to pay the postage on ordinary mail, together with connection to the Internet with the option of email and connection to certain local government databases, especially tourist information databases.



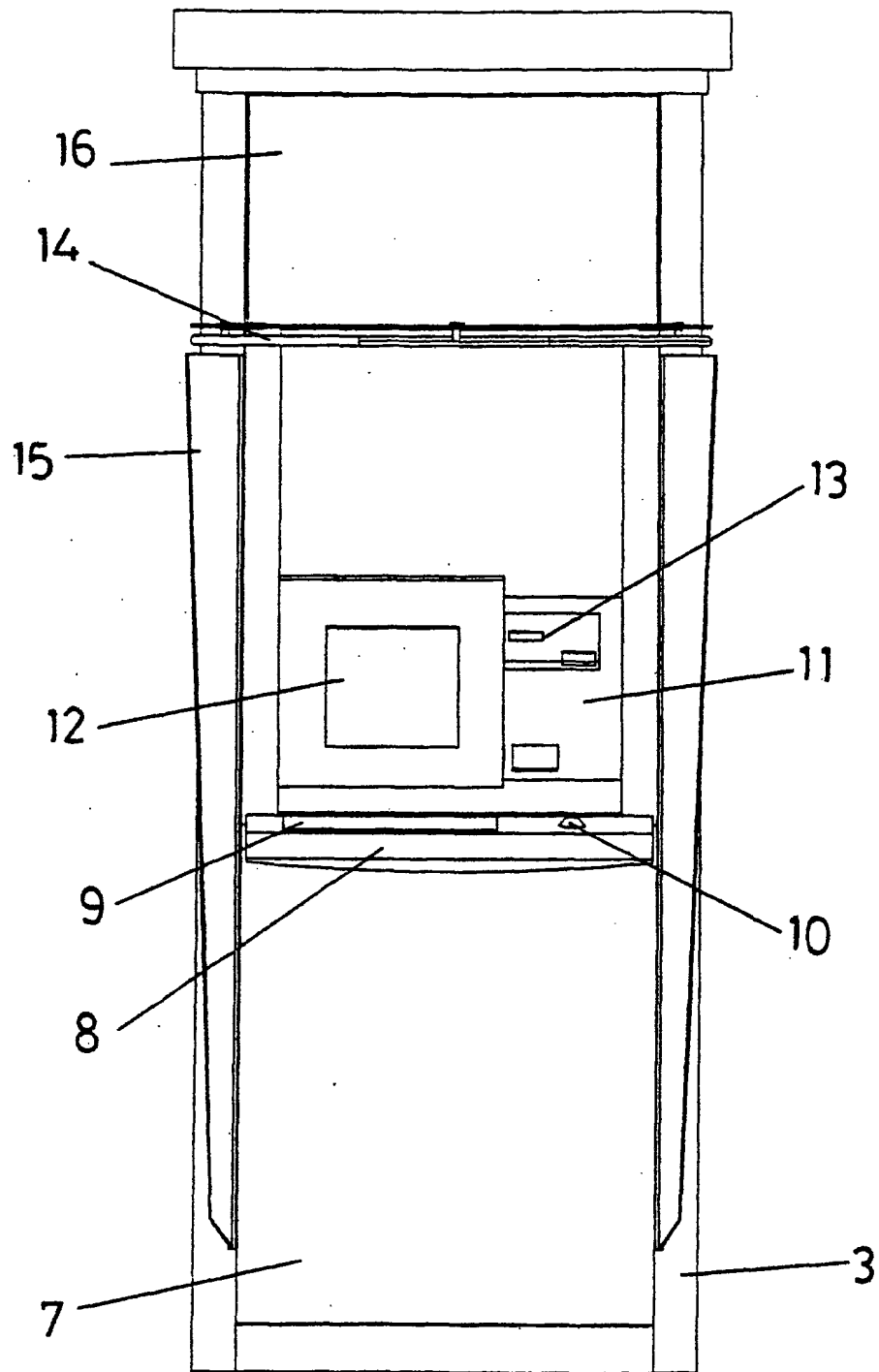


FIG.2

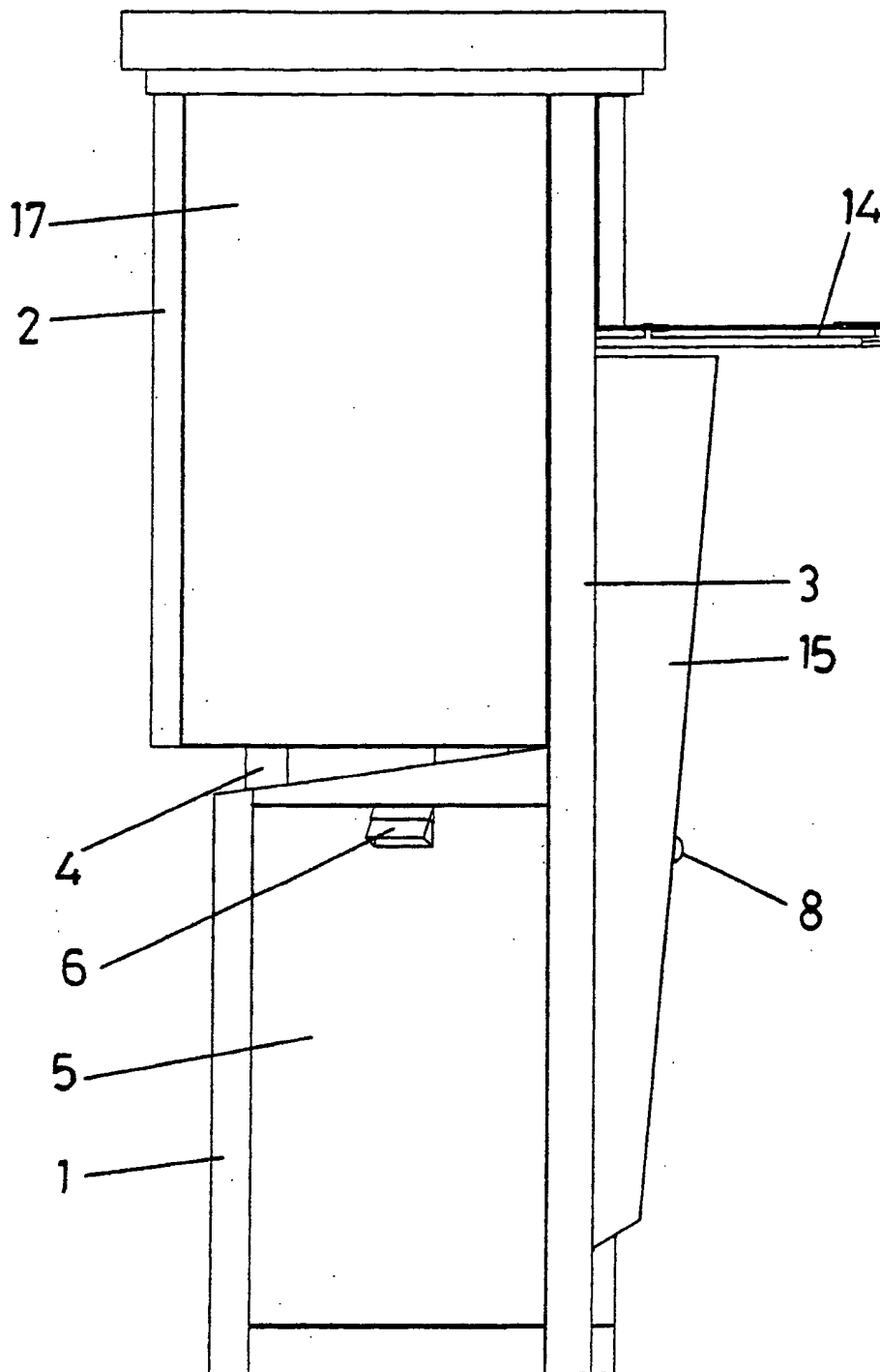


FIG.3