(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau

(43) International Publication Date
10 April 2008 (10.04.2008)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 2008/041872 A2

(51) International Patent Classification: Not classified

(21) International Application Number:
PCT/NZ2007/000294

(22) International Filing Date: 5 October 2007 (05.10.2007)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:

60/828,591	6 October 2006 (06.10.2006)	US
60/894,410	12 March 2007 (12.03.2007)	US
60/894,421	12 March 2007 (12.03.2007)	US

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(81) Designated States *(unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available)*: AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BH, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DO, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, GT, HN, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KM, KN, KP, KR, KZ, LA, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LY, MA, MD, ME, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MY, MZ, NA, NG, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PG, PH, PL, PT, RO, RS, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SM, SV, SY, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, ZA, ZM, ZW.

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

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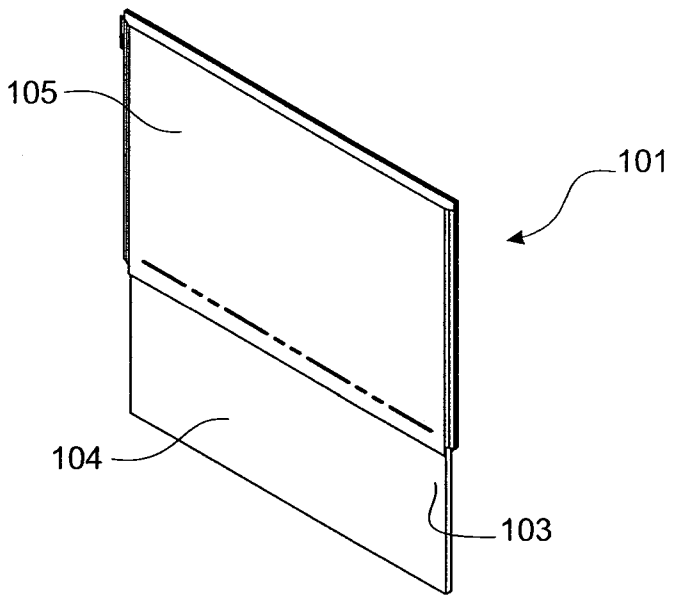
(54) Title: A SCREEN



(57) Abstract: A method for manufacturing a screen for partitioning an interior space. The method includes providing a flexible cover (105) formed as a sheath with an opening, providing a relatively rigid screen substrate (103), and inserting at least a portion of the screen substrate into the sheath through the opening to cover said at least a portion of the screen substrate with the sheath. A screen (101) for partitioning an interior space has a relatively rigid screen substrate (103) and a flexible cover (105). At least a portion of the screen substrate is covered by the flexible cover. The flexible cover is formed as a sheath with an opening prior to covering said at least a portion of the screen substrate. The screen may positioned adjacent the edge of a desktop.

WO 2008/041872 A2

Published:

— *without international search report and to be republished upon receipt of that report*

A SCREEN

FIELD OF INVENTION

The present invention relates to screens for partitioning an interior space. The invention can provide partitioning for workstation systems, although is not restricted to just that application.

BACKGROUND

Offices and other working environments typically provide workstation systems in which the workers in the environment can carry out their tasks. A workstation system usually comprises a number of individual workstations, each adapted to be used by a single worker. The workstations are arranged in side-by-side adjacent and opposing back-to-back relationships so that a number of workstations for use by a number of workers can be installed in a compact space.

As each worker carrying out their task at a workstation is in close proximity to a neighbouring worker, this can cause problems with privacy. Screens are often used to divide the large work areas into smaller areas, and may be combined with other screens and furniture to create individual work spaces. The screens may be secured to other items of office furniture such as a desk. The screens may alternatively be freestanding and fully self-supporting.

Screens may also be used in commercial spaces to create smaller display areas.

Typically, screens have a solid substrate covered with a decorative cover. The cover is typically a textile material that is secured to the substrate using adhesive or staples. Alternatively, the screens may have complex framing systems which capture the decorative cover. The assembly processes for these screens are time consuming and also make it difficult to remove the cover if required.

It is intended that reference to a range of numbers disclosed herein (for example, 1 to 10) also incorporates reference to all rational numbers within that range (for example, 1, 1.1, 2, 3, 3.9, 4, 5, 6, 6.5, 7, 8, 9 and 10) and also any range of rational numbers within that range (for example, 2 to 8, 1.5 to 5.5 and 3.1 to 4.7) and, therefore, all sub-ranges of all ranges expressly disclosed herein are hereby expressly disclosed. These are only examples of what is specifically intended and all possible combinations of numerical values between the lowest value and the highest value enumerated are to be considered to be expressly stated in this application in a similar manner.

It is an object of at least preferred embodiments of the present invention to provide an improved screen and method for manufacturing a screen, or to at least provide the public with a useful choice.

SUMMARY OF INVENTION

In accordance with a first aspect of the present invention, there is provided a method for manufacturing a screen for partitioning an interior space, comprising:

(a) providing a flexible cover formed as a sheath with an opening;

(b) providing a relatively rigid screen substrate; and

(c) inserting at least a portion of the screen substrate into the sheath through the opening to cover said at least a portion of the screen substrate with the sheath.

As used herein, "partitioning an interior space" will be considered to encompass at least partly separating an interior area into smaller areas, or providing at least some level of privacy for one or more workers in an interior area. The partitioning may be full partitioning (such as full height partitioning) or partial partitioning of the area.

The term "comprising" as used in this specification means "consisting at least in part of". When interpreting each statement in this specification that includes the term "comprising", features other than that or those prefaced by the term may also be present. Related terms such as "comprise" and "comprises" are to be interpreted in the same manner.

In one embodiment, the method further comprises (d) fixing the flexible cover to the screen substrate.

In one embodiment, the method may comprise covering at least a substantial portion of the screen substrate with the flexible cover. Alternatively, only a smaller portion of the screen substrate may be covered by the flexible cover, such that the screen has an uncovered portion.

In one embodiment, step (a) comprises providing two pieces of flexible material, and securing the pieces of flexible material together while forming an opening to receive at least part of the substrate. In a preferred embodiment, the pieces of flexible material are secured by sewing the pieces together. Alternatively, the pieces may be secured by gluing or stapling.

Alternatively, step (a) may comprise providing a single piece of flexible material, folding the piece of flexible material so that a portion overlays another portion thereof, and securing opposite sides of the flexible material together to form a sheath with an opening to receive at least part of the substrate. Again, the securing may be a result of sewing or any suitable other means.

Preferably, the method comprises forming a decorative edge feature around a major part of the flexible material. The decorative edge feature may be formed by a sewing process. Accordingly, the decorative edge feature may be provided along the sewn portions of the flexible material.

In one embodiment, the sheath is formed such that a dimension of its interior substantially corresponds to, or is slightly larger than, a corresponding dimension of the substrate. In an alternative, if the flexible material is a resilient material, the sheath may be formed such that a dimension of its interior is smaller than a corresponding dimension of the substrate. In that embodiment, the sheath will preferably require stretching to fit it onto the substrate, but will remain taut when released on the substrate.

In one embodiment, the flexible material is a textile material. In a preferred embodiment, the flexible material is a non-woven textile material such as wool felt. Other suitable textile materials include woven or non-woven textile materials that are manufactured by weaving, knitting, knotting, or pressing fibres together. The fibres may be natural or synthetic fibres. In an alternative embodiment, the flexible material may be a polymeric material that may be manufactured as a sheet or web. When a polymeric material is used, the flexible material may be formed as a sheath in a single manufacturing step without requiring securing of parts of the material to each other.

In accordance with a second aspect of the present invention, there is provided screen for partitioning an interior space, comprising:

a relatively rigid screen substrate and a flexible cover, wherein at least a portion of the screen substrate is covered by the flexible cover, and wherein the flexible cover is formed as a sheath with an opening prior to covering said at least a portion of the screen substrate.

The flexible cover may comprise two pieces of flexible material secured together. Alternatively, the flexible cover may comprise a single piece of flexible material.

The screen may further comprise a decorative edge feature around a major part of the flexible material.

The flexible material is preferably a non-woven textile material, such as wool felt. The flexible material may be any of the materials outlined in relation to the first aspect above.

In one embodiment, the flexible cover substantially covers the screen substrate.

Alternatively, the flexible cover may cover only a smaller portion of the screen substrate to provide a screen having a covered portion and an uncovered portion. The uncovered portion may provide an area via which the screen can be supported such by mounting the screen to a desk or sandwiching the screen between two back-to-back or side-to-side desks for example. Accordingly, the uncovered portion may be the lower portion of the screen, and the upper portion of the screen may be substantially covered.

Therefore, in a preferred embodiment the substrate has a front face and a rear face, and upper portions of at least the front and rear faces of the screen substrate are covered by the flexible cover and lower portions of at least the front and rear faces of the screen substrate remain uncovered by the flexible cover.

The uncovered portion suitably provides an area via which the screen can be supported.

In accordance with a third aspect of the present invention, there is provided the combination of a screen as outlined above and a desktop having an edge, wherein the screen is positioned adjacent the edge of the desktop.

The edge may be a back edge or a side edge of the desktop.

In one embodiment, the screen is positioned adjacent the desktop such that a part of the screen extends below the desktop and a part of the screen extends above the desktop.

In accordance with a fourth aspect of the present invention, there is provided the combination of a screen as outlined above and two adjacent desktops wherein the screen is positioned between the two adjacent desktops.

The desktops may form part of a workstation that may have two desktops, or that may have more than two desktops.

In one embodiment, each desktop has a back edge and the desktops are positioned such that the back edges are adjacent each other, and wherein the screen is positioned between the back edges of the adjacent desktops. In another embodiment, each desktop has a side edge and the desktops are positioned such that the side edges are adjacent each other, and wherein the screen is positioned between the side edges of the adjacent desktops.

Preferably, the screen is positioned between the pair of adjacent desktops such that at least a part of the uncovered portion(s) extend below the desktops and the at least a part of the covered portion(s) extend above the desktops.

In accordance with a fifth aspect of the present invention, there is provided a screen for partitioning an interior space, comprising:

a relatively rigid screen substrate having a front face and a rear face;

and a flexible cover, wherein upper portions of at least the front and rear faces of the screen substrate are covered by the flexible cover and lower portions of at least the front and rear faces of the screen substrate remain uncovered by the flexible cover.

Preferably, the entire lower portion of the screen substrate, including its sides, remains uncovered.

In accordance with a sixth aspect of the present invention, there is provided the combination of a screen according to the fifth aspect and a desktop having an edge, wherein the screen is positioned adjacent the edge of the desktop.

The edge may be a back edge or a side edge of the desktop.

In one embodiment, the screen is positioned adjacent the desktop such that a part of the screen extends below the desktop and a part of the screen extends above the desktop.

In accordance with an seventh aspect of the present invention, there is provided the combination of a screen as outlined in relation to the fourth aspect above, and two adjacent desktops wherein the screen is positioned between the pair of adjacent desktops.

In one embodiment, each desktop has a back edge and the desktops are positioned such that the back edges are adjacent each other, and wherein the screen is positioned between the back edges of the adjacent desktops. In another embodiment, each desk desktop has a side edge and the desktops are positioned such that the side edges are adjacent each other, and wherein the screen is positioned between the side edges of the adjacent desktops.

Preferably, the screen is positioned between the adjacent desktops such that at least a part of the uncovered portion(s) extend below the desktops and the at least a part of the covered portion(s) extend above the desktops.

In accordance with an eighth aspect of the present invention, there is provided method for manufacturing a screen for partitioning an interior space, comprising:

(a) providing a flexible cover formed from a non-woven textile material as a sheath with an opening;

(b) providing a relatively rigid screen substrate; and

(c) inserting at least a portion of the screen substrate into the sheath through the opening to cover said at least a portion of the screen substrate with the sheath.

Step (a) may comprise providing two pieces of non-woven textile material, and securing the pieces of non-woven textile material together while forming an opening to receive at least part of the substrate. Alternatively, step (a) may comprise providing a single piece of non-woven textile material, folding the piece of non-woven textile material so that a portion overlays another portion thereof, and securing opposite sides of the non-woven textile material together to form a sheath with an opening to receive at least part of the substrate.

Preferably, the method further comprises forming a decorative edge feature around a major part of the non-woven textile material. The decorative edge feature may be formed by a sewing process.

The sheath may be formed such that a dimension of its interior substantially corresponds to, or is slightly larger than, a corresponding dimension of the substrate.

Preferably, the non-woven textile material is wool felt.

In accordance with a ninth aspect of the present invention, there is provided a screen for partitioning an interior space, comprising:

a relatively rigid screen substrate and a flexible cover, wherein at least a portion of the screen substrate is covered by a flexible cover, and wherein the flexible cover is formed from a non-woven textile material as a sheath with an opening prior to covering said at least a portion of the screen substrate.

The flexible material cover may comprise two pieces of non-woven textile material. Alternatively, the flexible cover may comprise a single piece of non-woven textile material. The screen preferably comprises a decorative edge feature around a major part of the non-woven textile material.

Preferably, the non-woven textile material is wool felt.

To those skilled in the art to which the invention relates, many changes in construction and widely differing embodiments and applications of the invention will suggest themselves without departing from the scope of the invention as defined in the appended claims. The disclosures and the descriptions herein are purely illustrative and are not intended to be in any sense limiting. Where specific integers are mentioned herein which have known equivalents in the art to which this invention relates, such known equivalents are deemed to be incorporated herein as if individually set forth.

The invention consists in the foregoing and also envisages constructions of which the following gives examples only.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

Preferred embodiments of the present invention will now be described by way of example only and with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 shows a perspective view of a first preferred embodiment screen;

Figures 2a-2e show a preferred method of manufacturing the first preferred embodiment screen;

Figure 3 shows a perspective view of a second preferred embodiment screen;

Figures 4a-4d show a preferred method of manufacturing the second preferred embodiment screen;

Figure 5 shows a perspective view of the screen of Figure 3 in combination with adjacent back-to-back desktops;

Figure 6 shows a front view of the combination of the screen and desktops of Figure 5;

Figure 7 shows a perspective view of the screen of Figure 3 in combination with adjacent side-to-side desktops;

Figure 8 shows a perspective view of the screen of Figure 3 in combination with adjacent desk tops in a three way desktop workstation system; and

Figure 9 shows a perspective view of the screen of Figure 1 in combination with a single desktop.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

With reference to Figure 1, a first preferred embodiment of the screen is indicated generally by reference numeral 1. The screen has a relatively rigid screen substrate 3 captured by a flexible cover 5 to cover the screen substrate. The screen shown in Figure 1 is suitable for securing to an item of office furniture, such as a desk. In particular, the first embodiment of the screen is suitable as a side screen for a desk.

In the first preferred embodiment, the screen substrate 3 is a panel formed from a suitable board material, such as medium density fibre board. Alternatively, a different rigid material could be used such as a suitable aluminium or steel alloy or polymeric material for example. The screen substrate could be a multi-layer construction or single layer construction, or could be constructed from a plurality of different materials. If desired for particular applications, the screen substrate could be manufactured from a material that provides some resilience in the screen. However, in any of those alternatives the screen substrate will have greater rigidity than the cover, and will therefore be considered "relatively rigid" in comparison to the cover. In the form shown, the panel is substantially rectangular when viewed from the front and has a thickness of about 5 mm to about 12 mm, and preferably about 9 mm. The height, width, and thickness of the screen substrate will vary depending upon the intended use of the screen and the material chosen.

In the first preferred embodiment, the screen 3 has two support members in the form of posts 7 extending from a lower portion of the screen. With reference to Figure 2c, each support post 7 has a mounting portion 9 and a post portion 13 that is received by corresponding apertures in a desk for example. In the form shown, the mounting portion 9 has a portion in the form of a web that fits into a corresponding slot 11 in the screen

substrate. The bracket is secured to the screen substrate by fasteners, such as screws (not shown). It will be appreciated that other configurations could be used. For example, the mounting portion may not have a web, but instead could be connected to the substrate by fasteners.

In the first preferred embodiment, the flexible cover 5 is a sheath formed from a suitable textile material, such as a non-woven textile material, in particular wool felt. The wool felt has a thickness of about 3 mm to about 6 mm. The sheath has two panels 15 or pieces of felt that are fixed or secured together by stitching 17. The felt panels 15 each have a top edge 19, a left side edge 21, a right side edge 23, and a bottom edge 25. The stitching 17 extends along the length of the top edge, left edge, and right edge, as shown in Figure 2b. The flexible cover may have additional panels extending between the front and rear panels at the top, left, and right edges of the flexible panels, depending on the thickness of the screen substrate 3.

The bottom edges 25 of the felt panels 15 are not sewn together and remain open to form a mouth opening. The bottom edges 25 may be sewn or hemmed to prevent fraying of the material. When assembled with the screen substrate 3, the bottom edges 25 may be secured to the screen substrate (as indicated by reference numeral 18) by staples, adhesive, buttons, Velcro®, or an extruded polymeric or metal strip for example. Alternatively, the bottom edges may be secured to each other using any suitable means. As another alternative, the bottom edges may remain unsecured.

The flexible cover 5 may be formed from a range of suitable materials. For example, the flexible material may be a suitable woven or non-woven textile material that is manufactured by conventional methods such as weaving, knitting, knotting, or pressing fibres together, for example. The fibres may be natural or synthetic or a combination of natural and synthetic fibres. Other suitable materials for the flexible cover include a polymeric material that may be manufactured as a sheet or web, for example vinyl.

A preferred method for manufacturing the first preferred embodiment of the screen will now be described. The steps are shown in Figures 2a to 2e. A panel is cut out of a larger

piece of medium density fibre board to form a screen substrate. The size and shape of the panel will depend on the final intended use of the screen.

Referring to Figure 2a, the sheath is manufactured by cutting two panels 15 from the wool felt raw material. The wool felt panels are cut to a size to suit the size of the screen substrate with suitable seam allowances. Each panel is substantially rectangular with a top edge 19, a left side edge 21, a right side edge 23, and a bottom edge 25.

Referring to Figure 2b, the panels 15 are sewn together along the corresponding top, left, and right edges to form a sheath with the bottom edges left open to from a mouth. The stitching 17 is spaced from about 2 mm to about 12 mm from the edges of the felt panels, and preferably about 8 mm, to form a decorative edge feature extending around the top and sides of the cover. The edge feature may be filled with a suitable material such as foam to form a bead. In the preferred embodiment, the panels 15 are sewn together so that the stitching 17 is exposed in the final product. In an alternative embodiment, the panels may be sewn together so that the stitching is hidden or concealed. A label or tag may be inserted in the stitching if desired.

Support posts are secured 7 to the screen substrate, as shown in Figure 2c.

As shown in Figure 2d, the flexible cover 5 is sleeved onto the screen substrate 3 substrate to substantially cover the screen substrate and thereby capture the substrate. In the embodiment shown, the flexible cover conceals the brackets 9 of the supports 7. The bottom edge of the sheath is suitably secured to the screen substrate 3 for example by staples, adhesive, buttons, Velcro®, or an extruded polymeric or metal strip.

The flexible cover 5 may be sleeved onto the screen substrate 3 as part of a manufacturing process of the screen. Alternatively, the flexible cover may be assembled on site.

With reference to Figure 3, a second preferred embodiment of the screen is shown indicated generally by reference numeral 101. Unless described below, the features should be considered to be the same as those described above and like numerals are used to indicate like parts, with the addition of 100. The screen has a rigid screen substrate 103

captured by a flexible cover 105 that partly covers the screen. The second preferred embodiment screen is larger than the first preferred embodiment and is suitable for use between back to back desks or workstations to provide privacy for the workers.

As shown in Figure 3, the flexible cover 105 of the second embodiment does not cover the entire screen substrate 103. While the upper portions of at least the front and rear faces of the screen substrate are covered, lower portions of at least the front and rear faces of the screen substrate are exposed to form an uncovered modesty portion 104 of the screen substrate. When assembled with a desk, the modesty portion of the screen substrate extends from the work surface of the desk towards the floor and the covered upper portion will be positioned above and between the desks or workstations. In an alternative embodiment, the modesty portion of the screen substrate may be covered by the flexible cover. The uncovered portion may be used to support the screen from the desk or sandwich the screen between two back-to-back or side-to-side desks.

In the form shown, about the upper two thirds of the substrate are covered, and about the lower third remains uncovered. Those proportions could change. For example, about the upper half could be covered and about the lower half could remain covered.

In an alternative embodiment, the lower portion may be covered by a separate cover, that could be of the type described herein.

A preferred method of manufacturing the second embodiment screen is shown in Figure 4a to 4d. The method is similar to the method described above for the side screen. Initially, the two material pieces are cut to size as shown in Figure 4a, and are then stitched together. As shown in Figure 4b, the stitching 117 extends from near the middle of the left side edge to the top edge, along the top edge, and down to about the middle of the right side edge. As shown in Figure 4d, the flexible cover 105 is sleeved onto the screen substrate 103 so that it covers a portion of the screen substrate leaving an uncovered portion 104 of the screen substrate. If desired, the bottom edges of the cover can be secured to the screen substrate using any suitable means.

When wool felt or another substantially non-resilient or substantially non-stretchy material is used for the covering, the sheath will be formed such that a dimension of its interior

substantially corresponds to, or is slightly larger than, a corresponding dimension of the substrate. In an alternative, if the flexible material is a resilient material, the sheath may be formed such that a dimension of its interior is smaller than a corresponding dimension of the substrate. In that embodiment, the sheath will require stretching to fit it onto the substrate, but will remain taut when released on the substrate.

The first and second embodiments of the screen may be used in combination to form a suitable cubicle. For example, a screen of the second embodiment would be placed between back to back workstations or desks with a side screen used along a 90° return.

The screens are suitable for use in the workstation system described and shown in the US provisional patent applications 60/828591 and 60/894421 entitled "a workstation". The contents of those applications are incorporated herein in their entirety by way of reference.

The screens are also suitable for use in other furniture systems or office or commercial environments.

The second embodiment of the screen 101 in combination with back-to-back workstations or desks 201 is shown in Figures 5 and 6. Each desk 201 has a desktop 203 with a front edge 205, a back edge (not visible), and two side edges 209. The desktops are positioned with the back edges of the desktops adjacent each other and the screen 101 is positioned between the back edges of the adjacent desktops. Alternatively or in addition, the desks may be positioned with the side edges of the desktops adjacent each other and the screen positioned between the side edges 209 of the adjacent desktops. Such an embodiment is shown in Figure 7. Alternatively or in addition, a screen may be positioned adjacent a free edge of the desktop.

The uncovered portion of the screen is the lower portion of the screen, and the upper portion of the screen is substantially covered. The uncovered portion provides an area via which the screen can be supported. The uncovered portion can be slid between other objects or parts of the workstations, such as the cubicles 211 shown in Figure 5 and 6. The screen is supported by mounting the screen to one of the desktops or parts of the workstations or sandwiching the screen between the back-to-back or side-to-side desktops

for example. Fasteners could be used to mount the screen to one of the desktops or parts of the workstations if need be.

Alternatively, the screen that has an uncovered lower portion may also have support members in the form of posts 7 extending from a lower portion of the screen, as described with reference to the first embodiment. The posts could be used to mount the screen from a main support beam 213 of the workstations.

The screen is positioned between the adjacent desks such that part of the uncovered portion 104 extends below the desktops 203 and the covered portion extends 105 above the desktops. Part of the uncovered portion 104 forms a modesty panel below the desktops. The modesty panel may extend substantially towards the floor, or only part way towards the floor as shown in Figure 6.

Figure 7 shows an embodiment of the screen 1 in combination with side-to-side desktops. The screen 1 has two support members as described above. The post portion 13 of the support members is received by corresponding apertures. In the embodiment shown, the post portions are received in apertures (not visible) formed in the desk leg structures. Alternatively, the post portions may be received in apertures formed in the other components of the work station, such as the desktop.

The second embodiment of the screen 101 in combination with adjacent desktops is shown in Figure 8. In this embodiment, the desktops are part of a three way desktop workstation system. Each desk 301 has a desktop 303 with a front edge 305, a back edge 307, and two side edges 309. The back edge 307 has two substantially flat sections 307a, 307b arranged at approximately 120 degrees. The desktops are positioned with flat sections 307a, 307b of the desktop back edges adjacent each other and the screen 101 is positioned between the flat sections of the adjacent desktops. Alternatively or in addition, the desks may be positioned with the side edges of the desktops adjacent each other and the screen positioned between the side edges 309 of the adjacent desktops. Alternatively or in addition, a screen may be positioned adjacent a free edge of the desktop.

Figure 9 shows an embodiment of the screen 101 in combination with a single desktop 203. This combination is similar to the combination described above with reference to Figure 7, except that the screen is attached to a single desktop without an adjacent desktop at its back edge. This combination can be used for a single desktop that is positioned next to a wall. In addition, this combination of screen and desktop may be positioned adjacent one or more side-to-side desktops and screens.

The uncovered portion of the screen provides an area via which the screen can be supported. The screen is positioned adjacent the desktop such that part of the uncovered portion 104 extends below the desktops 203 and the covered portion extends 105 above the desktops.

The uncovered portion can be slid between other objects or parts of the workstations, such as the shelf 215 shown in Figure 9. Fasteners could be used to mount the screen to one of the desktops or parts of the workstations if need be. Alternatively, the screen that has an uncovered lower portion may also have support members extending from a lower portion of the screen, as described with reference to the first embodiment. The posts could be used to mount the screen from a main support beam 213 of the desk.

Figure 9 shows the combination of one desktop 203 and two screens 101 positioned adjacent the back edge of the desktop. Additionally or alternatively, the combination of screen and desktop shown in Figure 9 may have a screen positioned at one or both side edges of the desktop. The side screen may be the first embodiment screen 1 or the second embodiment screen 101.

Figure 9 shows the combination of one desktop 203 and two screens 101. In an alternative embodiment, the desktop may be in combination with a larger screen that extends along part of or the entire length of the desktop. In a further alternative embodiment, one screen may be used in combination with more than one desktop.

In workstation systems having more than two desktops, separate screens may be provided between adjacent desktops. Alternatively, one or more larger screen could be provided that extend between more than two adjacent desktops.

Preferred embodiments of the invention have been described by way of example only and modifications may be made thereto without departing from the scope of the invention.

For example, the screen may be freestanding or secured to another item. A freestanding screen will suitably be provided with supports such as feet, castors, or gliders to support the screen. The screen may be secured to other items of furniture by brackets, supports, or held in a suitable frame.

The screens are shown as being rectangular. It will be appreciated that the screens could be provided in any desired alternative shape. The screens can be provided with any desired sizes and proportions.

The screen substrate may be a panel as described above or a frame having for example vertical and horizontal members to form the desired shape. The screen substrate may be a panel as described above with additional members to increase the rigidity of the screen. In one embodiment, the substrate has a panel surrounded by an Aluminium alloy frame. The frame is preferably covered by the flexible cover. Alternatively, the frame may be assembled to the screen after the substrate has been inserted into the flexible cover.

Rather than securing the panels of flexible material together with stitching, the sheath may be formed by gluing or stapling the pieces of the flexible cover along some of the edges.

The flexible cover has been described as a sheath formed by cutting two separate panels that are secured together along three corresponding edges. Alternatively, the flexible material may be formed as a tube and only sewn or secured along a single edge. Another alternative is to provide a single piece of flexible material, fold the piece of flexible material so that a portion overlays another portion thereof, and securing opposite sides of the flexible material together to form a sheath with a mouth to receive at least part of the substrate. Another alternative, particularly when a polymeric material is used, is to form the flexible material as an integral sheath so that no sewing or securing of the edges is required. The integral sheath may be formed by any suitable technique, preferably a

suitable moulding technique, such as blow moulding, injection moulding, or vacuum forming for example.

Each panel of the sheath may be formed by sewing together two or more pieces of flexible material to obtain varying decorative effects.

While the above description describes the lower edge of the sheath forming the opening, a different portion of the sheath could be formed with the opening such as a top edge or side edge for example.

By pre-forming the flexible cover as a sheath, the preferred embodiments provide screens that are easy to assemble, and are more environmentally friendly than conventional glued screens.

The screens are shown in combination with one or more desktops with enlarged central areas and narrower side areas. Alternatively, the screen may be used in combination with desks having desktops with any other suitable shape, for example a rectangular desktop for example.

CLAIMS

1. A method for manufacturing a screen for partitioning an interior space, comprising:

(a) providing a flexible cover formed as a sheath with an opening;

(b) providing a relatively rigid screen substrate; and

(c) inserting at least a portion of the screen substrate into the sheath through the opening to cover said at least a portion of the screen substrate with the sheath.

2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the method further comprises (d) fixing the flexible cover to the screen substrate.

3. The method according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the method comprises covering at least a substantial portion of the screen substrate with the flexible cover.

4. The method according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the method comprises covering part of the screen substrate with the flexible cover such that the screen has an uncovered portion.

5. The method according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein step (a) comprises providing two pieces of flexible material, and securing the pieces of flexible material together while forming an opening to receive at least part of the substrate.

6. The method according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein step (a) comprises providing a single piece of flexible material, folding the piece of flexible material so that a portion overlays another portion thereof, and securing opposite sides of the flexible material together to form a sheath with an opening to receive at least part of the substrate.

7. The method according to any one of claims 1 to 6 wherein the method further comprises forming a decorative edge feature around a major part of the flexible material.

8. The method according to claim 7, wherein the decorative edge feature is formed by a sewing process.

9. The method according to any one of claims 1 to 8, wherein the flexible material is a non-woven textile material.

10. The method according to claim 9, wherein the non-woven textile material is wool felt.

11. The method according to any one of claims 1 to 10, wherein the sheath is formed such that a dimension of its interior substantially corresponds to, or is slightly larger than, a corresponding dimension of the substrate.

12. The method according to any one of claims 1 to 9, wherein the flexible material is a resilient material and the sheath is formed such that a dimension of its interior is smaller than a corresponding dimension of the substrate.

13. The method according to claim 12, wherein the sheath is stretched to fit the sheath onto the substrate, but will remain taut when released on the substrate.

14. A screen for partitioning an interior space, comprising:

a relatively rigid screen substrate and a flexible cover, wherein at least a portion of the screen substrate is covered by the flexible cover, and wherein the flexible cover is formed as a sheath with an opening prior to covering said at least a portion of the screen substrate.

15. The screen according to claim 14, wherein the flexible cover comprises two pieces of flexible material secured together.

16. The screen according to claim 14, wherein the flexible cover comprises a single piece of flexible material.

17. The screen according to any one of claims 14 to 16, further comprising a decorative edge feature around a major part of the flexible material.

18. The screen according to any one of claims 14 to 17, wherein the flexible material is a non-woven textile material.

19. The screen according to claim 18, wherein the non-woven textile material is wool felt.

20. The screen according to any one of claims 14 to 19, wherein the flexible cover substantially covers the screen substrate.

21. The screen according to any one of claims 14 to 19, wherein the screen comprises an uncovered portion.

22. The screen according to claim 21, wherein the uncovered portion is the lower portion of the screen and the upper portion of the screen is substantially covered.

23. The screen according to claim 22, wherein the substrate has a front face and a rear face, and upper portions of at least the front and rear faces of the screen substrate are covered by the flexible cover and lower portions of at least the front and rear faces of the screen substrate remain uncovered by the flexible cover.

24. The screen according to any one of claims 21 to 23 wherein the uncovered portion provides an area via which the screen can be supported.

25. The combination of a screen according to any one of claims 14 to 24 and a desktop having an edge wherein the screen is positioned adjacent the edge of the desktop.

26. The combination according to claim 25 wherein the edge is a side edge of the desktop.

27. The combination according to claim 25 wherein the edge is a back edge of the desktop.

28. The combination according to any one of claims 25 to 27, wherein the screen is positioned adjacent the desktop such that a part of the screen extends below the desktop and a part of the screen extend above the desktop.

29. The combination of a screen according to any one of claims 21 to 24 and a pair of adjacent desktops wherein the screen is positioned between the pair of adjacent desktops.

30. The combination according to claim 28, wherein each desktop has a back edge and the desktops are positioned such that the back edges are adjacent each other, and wherein the screen is positioned between the back edges of the adjacent desktops.

31. The combination according to claim 28, wherein each desktop has a side edge and the desktops are positioned such that the side edges are adjacent each other, and wherein the screen is positioned between the side edges of the adjacent desktops.

32. The combination according to any one of claims 28 to 31, wherein the screen is positioned between the pair of adjacent desktops such that at least a part of the uncovered portion(s) extend below the desktops and the at least a part of the covered portion(s) extend above the desktops.

33. A screen for partitioning an interior space, comprising:

a relatively rigid screen substrate having a front face and a rear face;

and a flexible cover, wherein upper portions of at least the front and rear faces of the screen substrate are covered by the flexible cover and lower portions of at least the front and rear faces of the screen substrate remain uncovered by the flexible cover.

34. The screen according to claim 33, wherein the entire lower portion of the screen substrate, including its sides, remains uncovered.

35. The combination of a screen according to claim 33 or 34 and a desktop having an edge wherein the screen is positioned adjacent the edge of the desktop.

36. The combination according to claim 35, wherein the edge is a back edge of the desktop.

37. The combination according to claim 35, wherein the edge is a side edge of the desktop.

38. The combination according to claim 35, wherein the screen is positioned adjacent the desktop such that a part of the screen extends below the desktop and a part of the screen extends above the desktop.

39. The combination of a screen according to claim 33 or 34 and a pair of adjacent desktops wherein the screen is positioned between the pair of adjacent desktops.

40. The combination according to claim 39, wherein each desktop has a back edge and the desktops are positioned such that the back edges are adjacent each other, and wherein the screen is positioned between the back edges of the adjacent desktops.

41. The combination according to claim 39, wherein each desktop has a side edge and the desktops are positioned such that the side edges are adjacent each other, and wherein the screen is positioned between the side edges of the adjacent desktops.

42. The combination according to any one of claims 39 to 41, wherein the screen is positioned between the pair of adjacent desktops such that at least a part of the uncovered portion(s) extend below the desktops and at least a part of the covered portion(s) extend above the desktops.

43. A method for manufacturing a screen for partitioning an interior space, comprising:

(a) providing a flexible cover formed from a non-woven textile material as a sheath with an opening;

(b) providing a relatively rigid screen substrate; and

(c) inserting at least a portion of the screen substrate into the sheath through the opening to cover said at least a portion of the screen substrate with the sheath.

44. The method according to of claim 43, wherein step (a) comprises providing two pieces of non-woven textile material, and securing the pieces of non-woven textile material together while forming an opening to receive at least part of the substrate.

45. The method according to of claim 43, wherein step (a) comprises providing a single piece of non-woven textile material, folding the piece of non-woven textile material so that a portion overlays another portion thereof, and securing opposite sides of the non-woven textile material together to form a sheath with an opening to receive at least part of the substrate.

46. The method according to any one of claims 43 to 45, wherein the method further comprises forming a decorative edge feature around a major part of the non-woven textile material.

47. The method according to claim 46, wherein the decorative edge feature is formed by a sewing process.

48. The method according to any one of claims 43 to 47, wherein the sheath is formed such that a dimension of its interior substantially corresponds to, or is slightly larger than, a corresponding dimension of the substrate.

49. The method according to any one of claims 43 to 48, wherein the non-woven textile material is wool felt.

50. A screen for partitioning an interior space, comprising:

a relatively rigid screen substrate and a flexible cover, wherein at least a portion of the screen substrate is covered by a flexible cover, and wherein the flexible cover is formed from a non-woven textile material as a sheath with an opening prior to covering said at least a portion of the screen substrate.

51. The screen according to claim 50, wherein the flexible cover comprises two pieces of non-woven textile material secured together.

52. The screen according to claim 50, wherein the flexible cover comprises a single piece of non-woven textile material.

53. The screen according to any one of claims 50 to 52, further comprising a decorative edge feature around a major part of the non-woven textile material.

54. The screen according to any one of claims 50 to 53, wherein the non-woven textile material is wool felt.

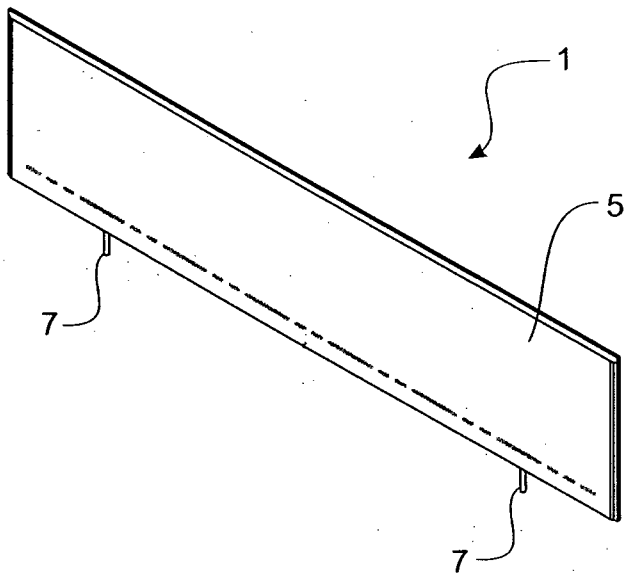


FIGURE 1

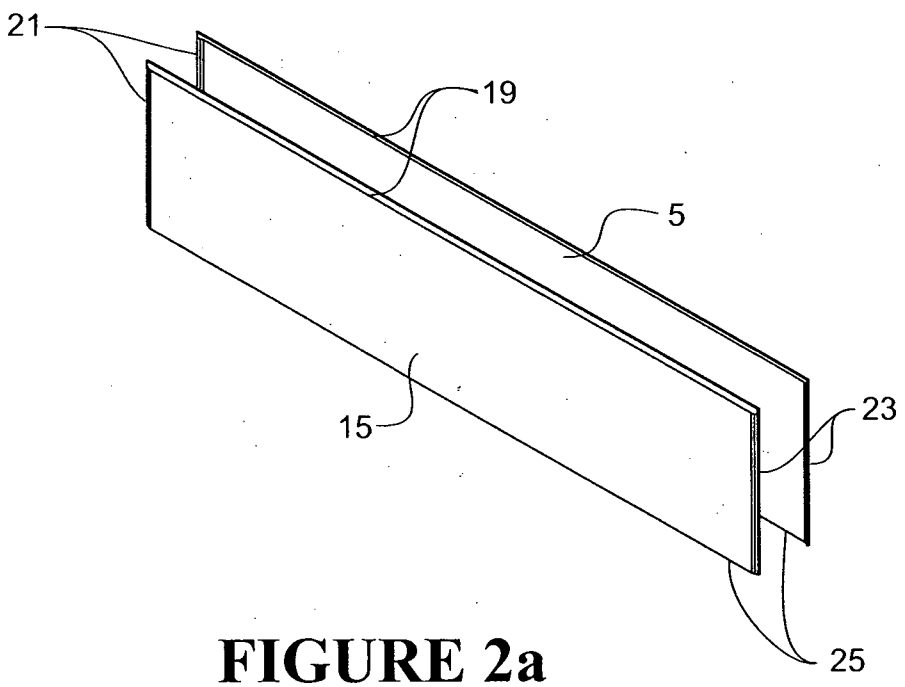


FIGURE 2a

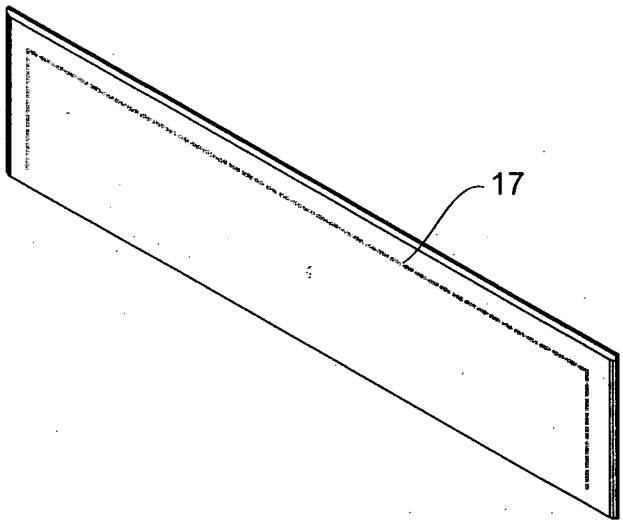


FIGURE 2b

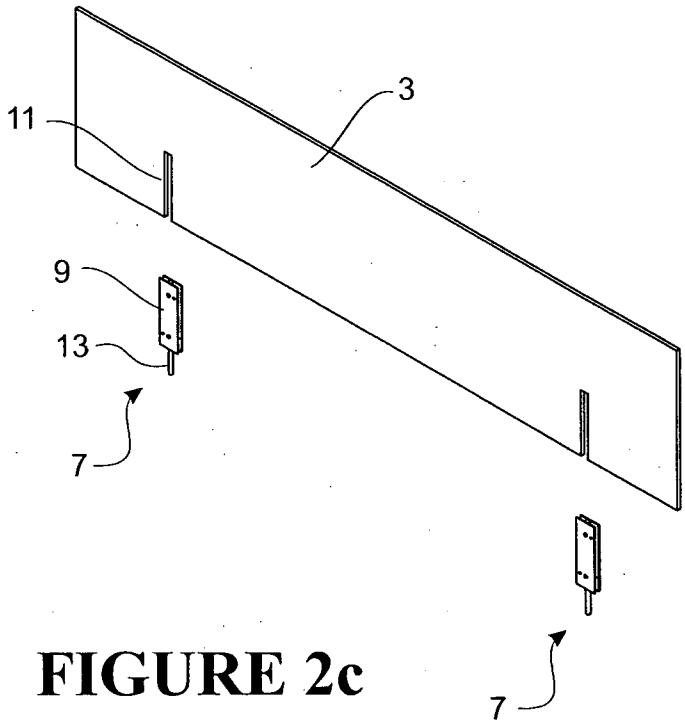


FIGURE 2c

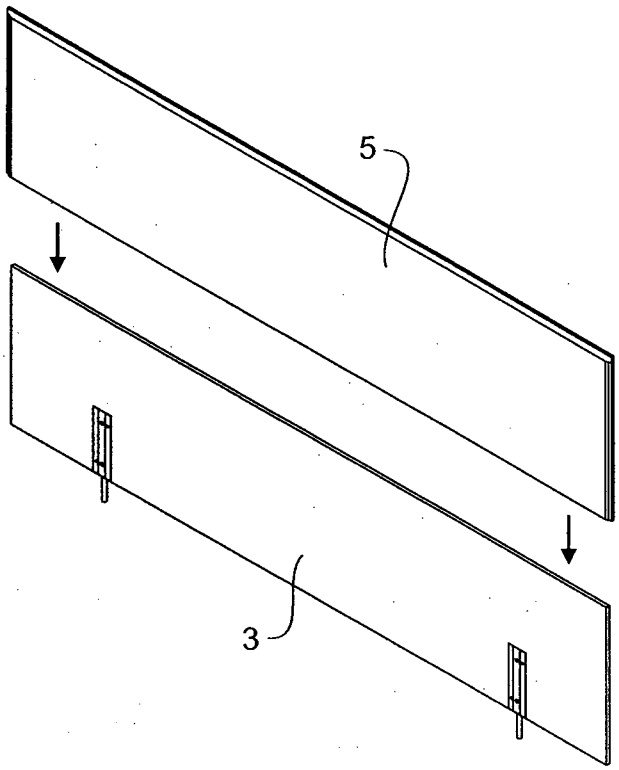


FIGURE 2d

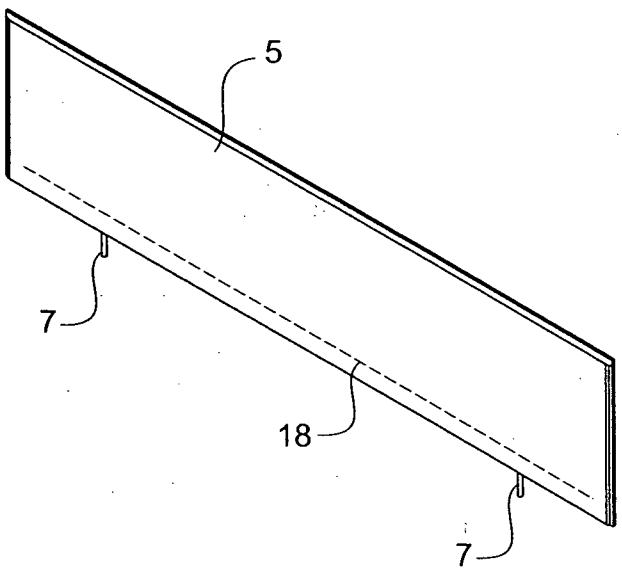


FIGURE 2e

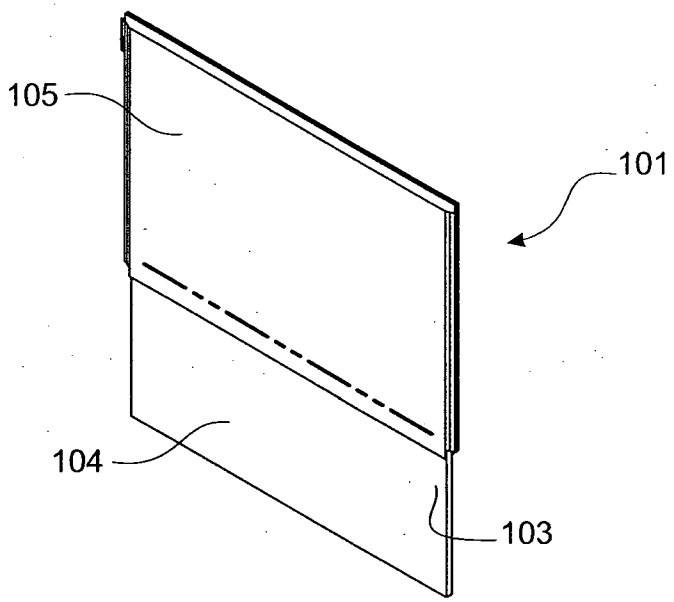


FIGURE 3

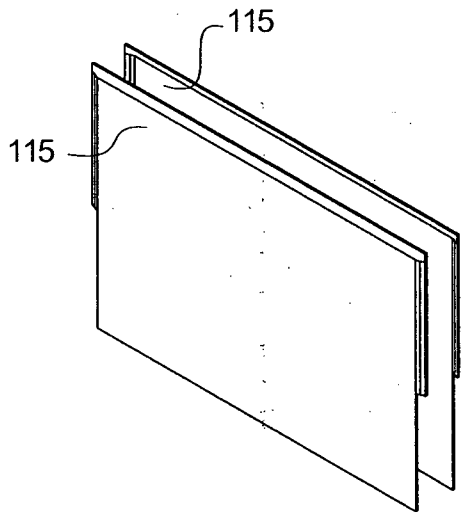


FIGURE 4a

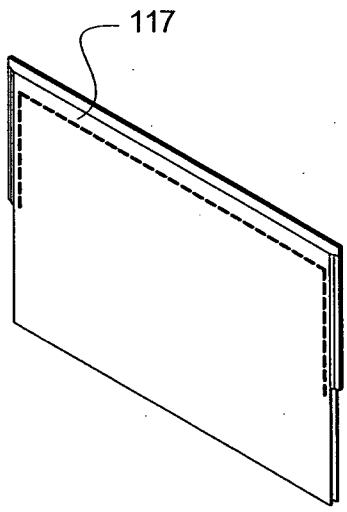


FIGURE 4b

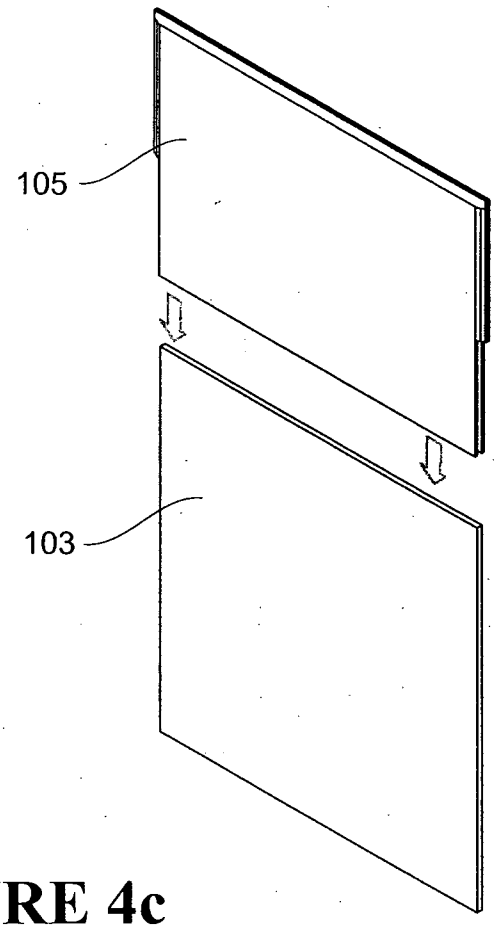


FIGURE 4c

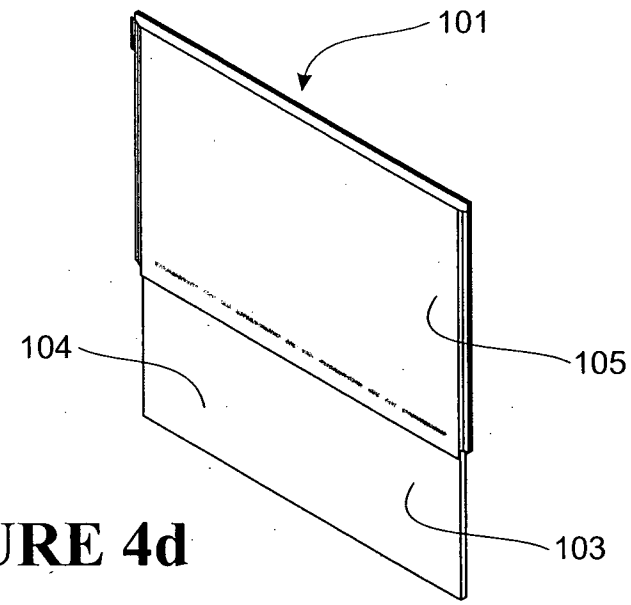


FIGURE 4d

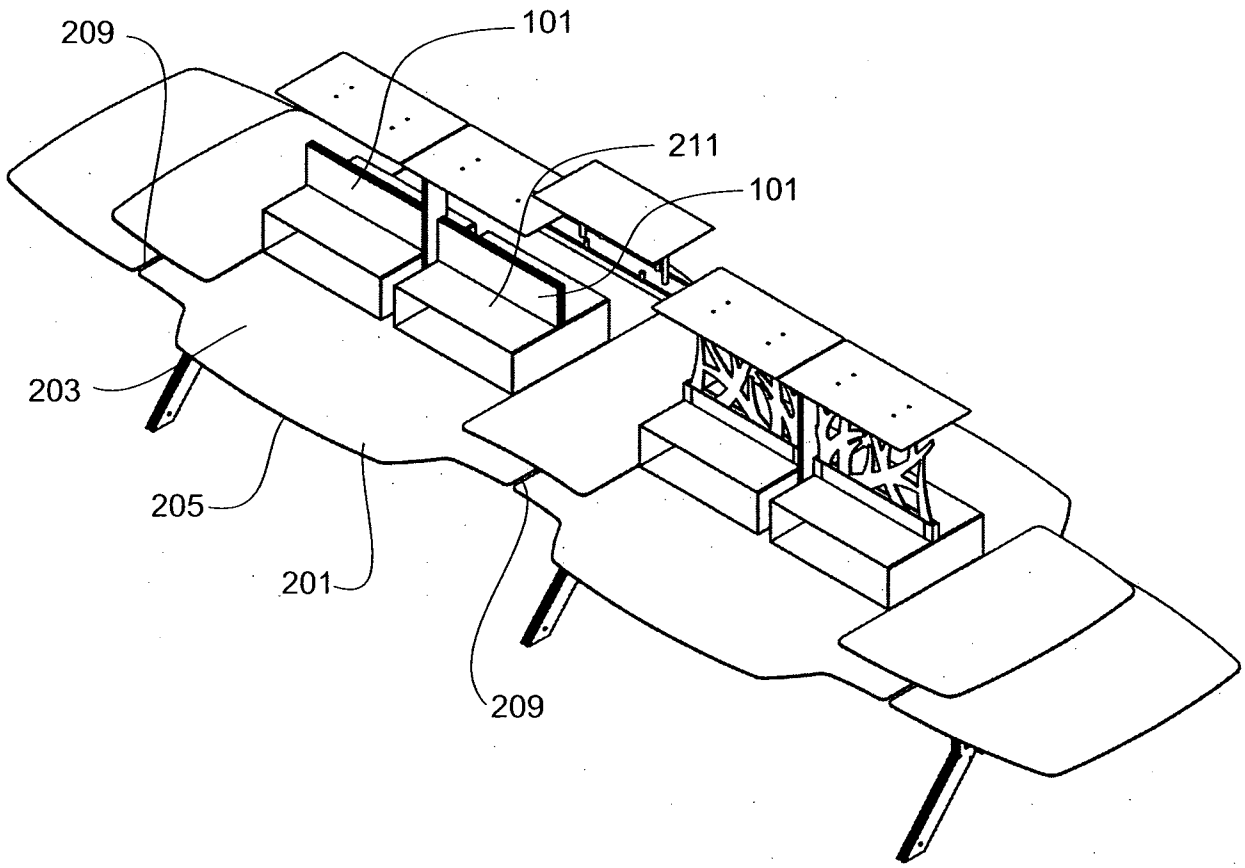


FIGURE 5

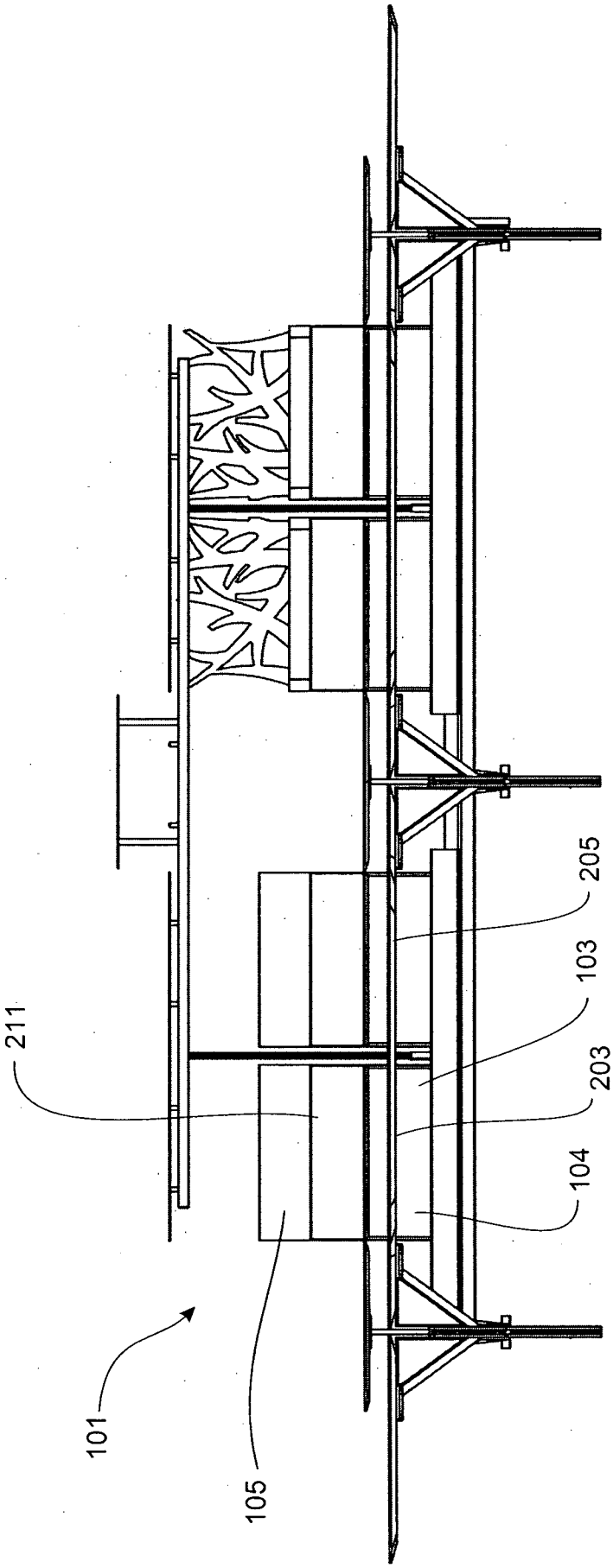


FIGURE 6

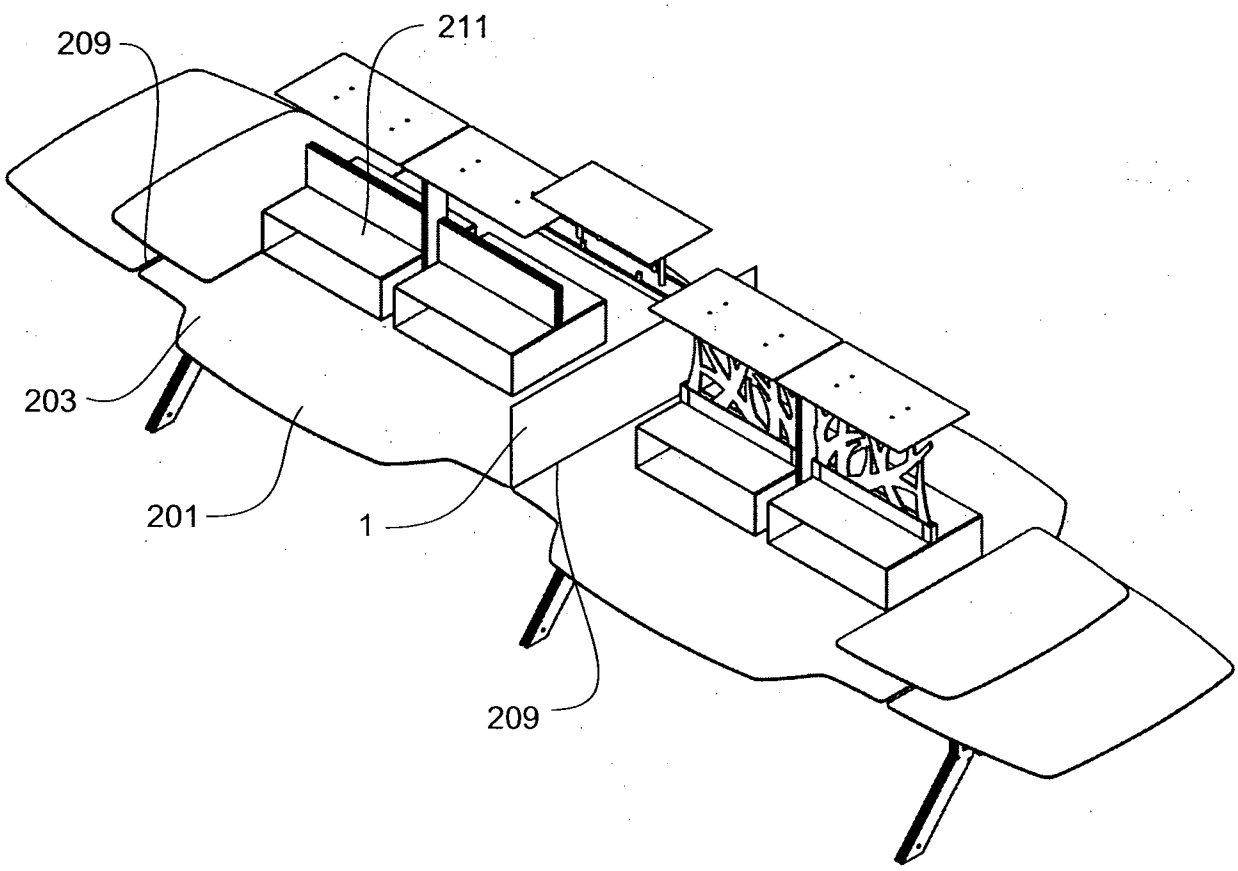


FIGURE 7

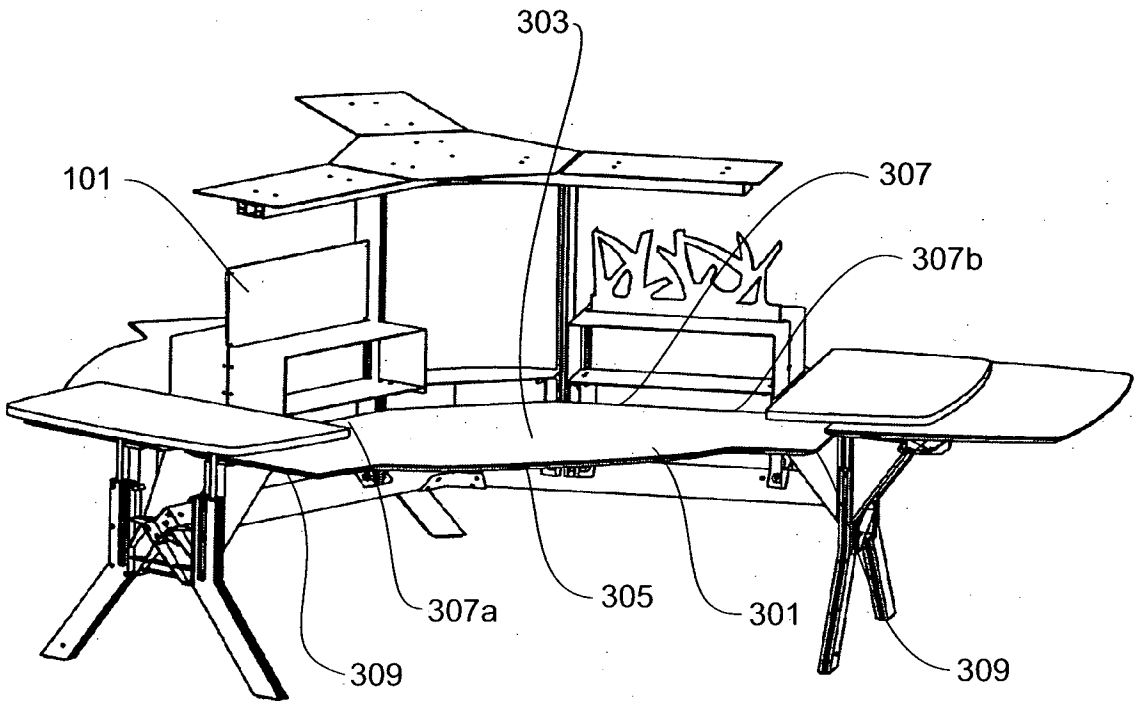


FIGURE 8

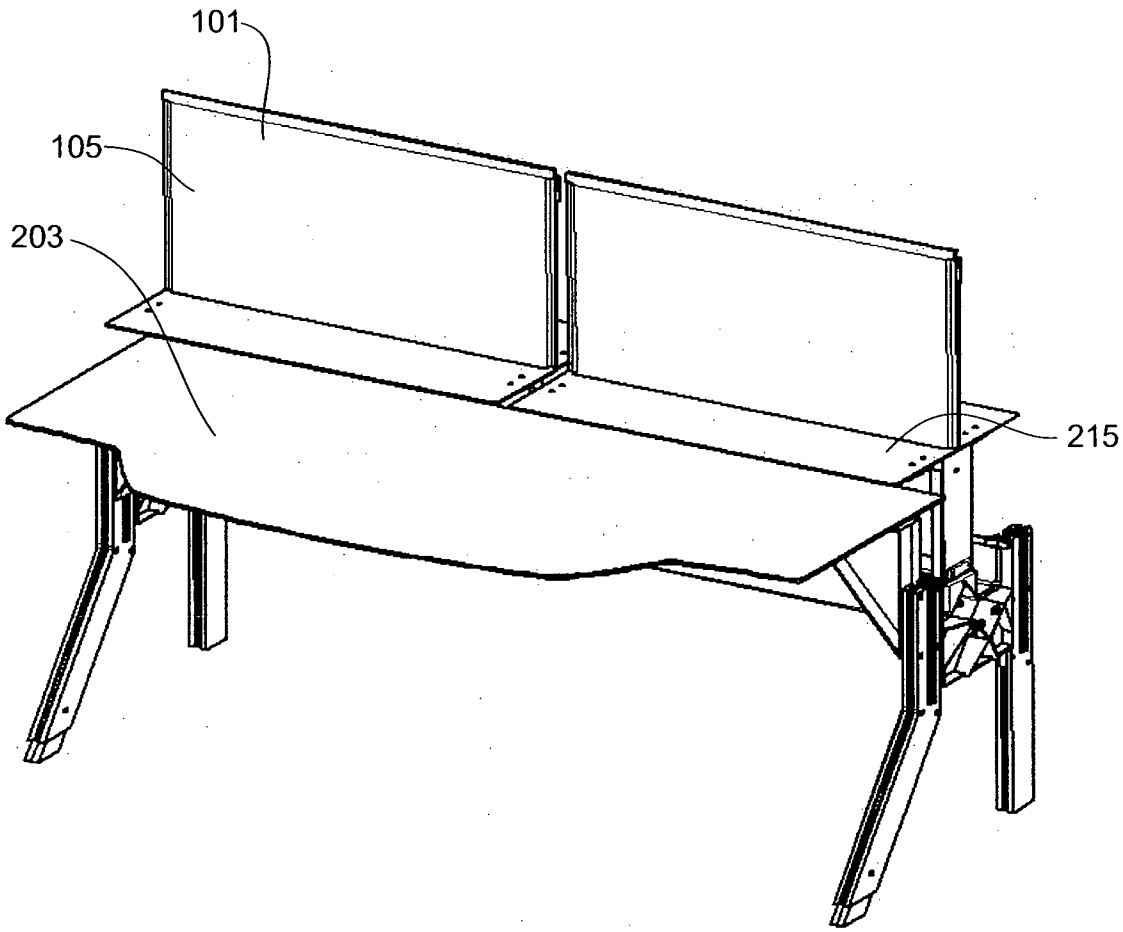


FIGURE 9