Nov. 1, 1955 L. R. THOMPSON 2,722,070

CONTROL PANEL

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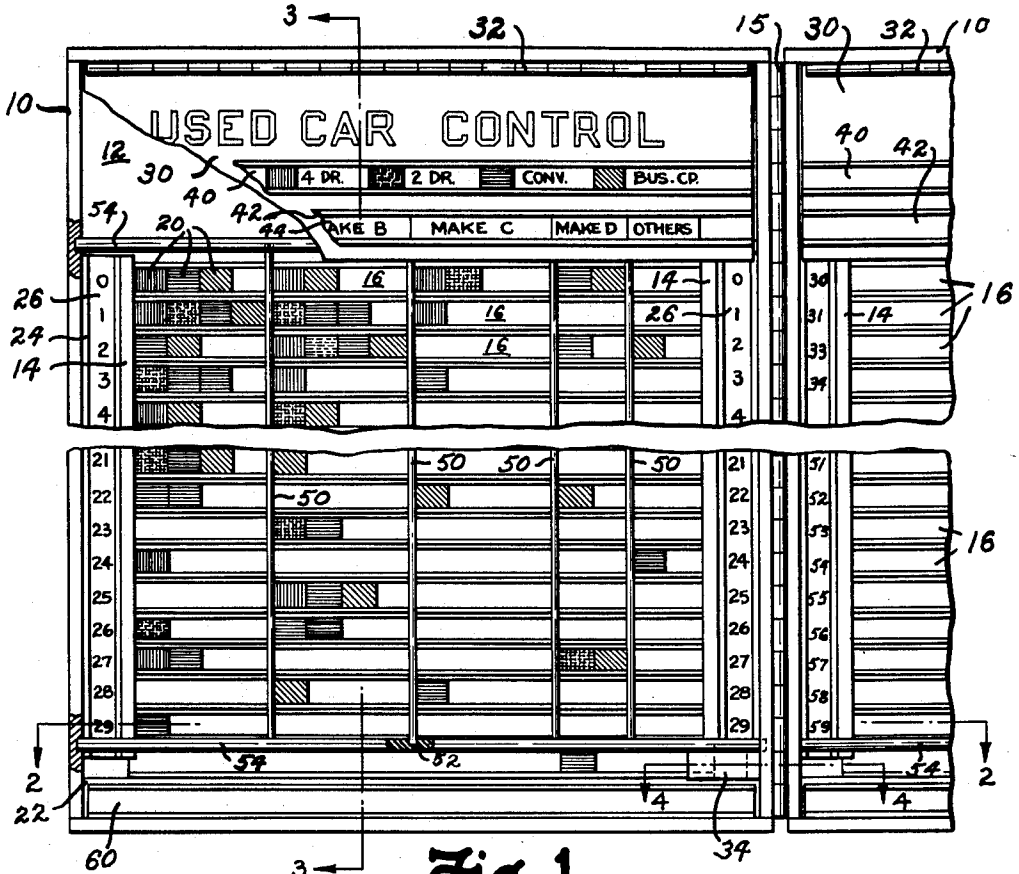


Fig. 1



Fig. 2

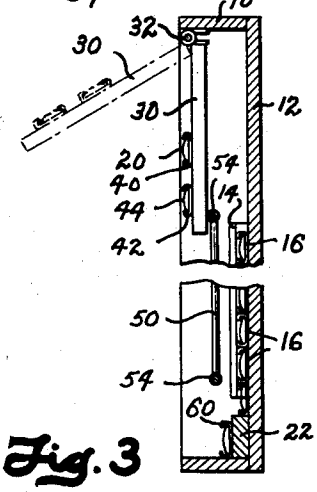


Fig. 3

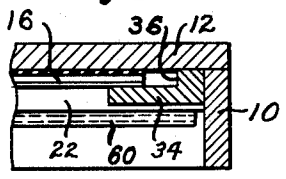


Fig. 4

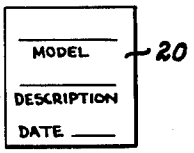


Fig. 5

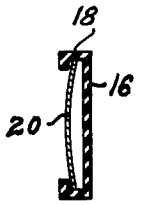


Fig. 6

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CONTROL PANEL

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5 Claims. (Cl. 40—63)

This invention relates to a control panel and more particularly to control panels of the type in which it is desired to periodically progressively advance the information contained thereon.

The control panel used to illustrate the invention is of the type suitable for used car dealers and the like for keeping a record of the cars purchased each day and for indicating at a glance the number of days each car still on hand has been in stock. The control panel shown also provides means for clearly indicating other pertinent information such as the make, style, model, et cetera, of cars on hand.

Control panels of various types are commonly used, but it is an object of this invention to provide an improved control panel which is simple to operate and which will give the above information or similar information at a glance.

It is another object of this invention to provide a control panel in which a record is made of each car taken in each day and this record is placed in the uppermost position on the panel and is progressively lowered one space each day until the end of a given period when the record is removed or transferred to another place.

It is another object of this invention to provide an improved arrangement whereby all of the entries covering a number of days may be shifted simultaneously.

Still another object of this invention is to provide a panel which is constructed in such a manner that as the oldest record at the bottom of the panel is removed, space is provided for the newest record at the top of the panel.

A further object of this invention is to provide a simplified and improved arrangement for dividing the panel into a series of vertical columns of adjustable width.

Other objects and advantages reside in the construction of parts, the combination thereof and the mode of operation, as will become more apparent from the following description.

In the drawings:

Figure 1 is a fragmentary elevational view with parts broken away;

Figure 2 is a plan view with parts broken away;

Figure 3 is a sectional view taken substantially on line 3—3 of Figure 1;

Figure 4 is a fragmentary sectional view taken substantially on the left half of line 4—4 of Figure 1;

Figure 5 is an elevational view of a card representing a used car; and

Figure 6 is a sectional view showing the arrangement of one of the cards in a card holder.

For purposes of illustrating the invention, there is shown a control panel of the type suitable for use by used car dealers, whereas the same construction or a somewhat similar construction could be used by others to give a visual indication of their inventory. The construction shown is also ideally suitable for use in customer follow-up systems and the like.

Referring now to Figure 1 of the drawings wherein

there is shown a preferred embodiment of the invention, reference numeral **10** generally designates each of a pair of similar main frames hinged together at **15**. Each frame comprises a supporting member or back panel **12** which serves as the main support for the data to be displayed. In view of the similarity of the two frames, the construction of only the one frame will be given in detail. As best indicated in Figure 2 of the drawings, a pair of guides **14** are provided along the side edges of the panel **12** and serve in conjunction with the panel **12** to slidably support a series of individual record bearing slats or slide elements **16**. The slats **16** are thus held in place against the panel **12** and a separate slat is provided for each day over a given period.

While the control janels may be made in various sizes, so as to accommodate various numbers of individual record bearing elements, the preferred number for use on a given side in a used car control panel is thirty, as most car dealers try not to allow any used cars to remain unsold for more than thirty days.

Each of the individual record bearing slide elements or slats **16** is preferably made of plastic and is provided with overturned edges **18** for receiving and holding a plurality of information bearing tags or cards **20** in a manner and for a purpose to be described more fully hereinafter. The individual record bearing slide elements **16** are vertically arranged one upon the other, as best shown in Figures 1 and 3, and are normally held against downward movement by means of the bottom stop **22** (see Figure 3) positioned directly beneath the lowermost one of the slide elements **16**.

Adjacent each end of the slide elements **16** there is provided a slat **24** similar in shape to the slide elements **16** but rigidly fixed in place. These elements **24** are each adapted to removably receive a strip of paper or the like **26** on which the numerals 0 to 29 are placed directly opposite the record bearing elements **16**. These numerals are intended to designate the number of days the cars listed on the slat opposite the numerals have been in stock. Thus, the topmost record bearing element **16** is opposite the 0 marks, so as to indicate that the tags carried thereby represent cars that have been on hand less than one full day. Likewise, the tags opposite the numeral 1 designate cars which have been on hand one day, et cetera. Upon sale of a car, its tag is preferably removed, as the panel is only intended to indicate the number and type of cars which are still for sale.

All of the slats are lowered one space each day, so as to keep the record up to date. Thus, the last thing at night or the first thing in the morning, the lowermost record bearing element is removed and upon removal of this lowermost element, all of the other elements thereabove automatically slide down one space, thereby leaving room for the insertion of a new record element at the top.

The upper ends of the guides **14** are normally hidden from view and are rendered inaccessible by means of a pivoted flap **30** which is attached to the frame **10** by means of the hinge **32**. When it is desired to insert a new record element opposite the 0 mark, the flap **30** is raised into its dotted line position, as shown in Figure 3, so as to render the open ends of the guide **14** accessible for insertion of a new record bearing element.

The lowermost record bearing element **16** is normally held against removal, since its left end does not fully clear the lower end of the left-hand guide **14** and its right end is held in place by means of the retainer element **34** which is provided at the lower right-hand corner, as shown in Figures 1 and 4. The lowermost slat **16** may, however, be removed by sliding the same to the

right until its left end clears the lower end of the guide **14**, at which time the left end of the slat may be pulled away from the guide **14**, so that the slat may be pulled out from underneath the retainer element **34**. As the lowermost slat **16** is pulled out, the entire series of slats thereabove automatically drops one space. It will be noted that the retainer element **34** is cut away at **36**, so as to provide clearance for the right end of the slat **16** during the slat removal process.

The pivoted flap element **30** at the top of the panel not only serves to conceal the upper ends of the guides **14** but also serves as a convenient panel on which suitable explanatory information relating to the panel may be mounted. Thus, as indicated in Figure 1 of the drawings, a channel-shaped slat element **40** similar to the slat element **16** may be attached to the flap **30** and may be used to indicate the significance of the different tags **20**. Thus, one color is used to designate four door cars, another color two door cars, and still another color convertibles, et cetera.

It is preferable to separate the tags into columns corresponding to different makes of cars. A separate channel **42** is fixed to the flap **30** and removably supports a series of tags **44** used to designate various makes of cars. For purposes of illustrating the invention, the actual names of the different makes have not been shown on the tags **44**, but the makes have been designated merely by letters of the alphabet.

The columns for the different makes of cars are set off by means of vertically extending rods **50** which are adjustably supported directly in front of the slats **16**, as best indicated in Figures 1 and 3. The rods **50** have their ends disposed in holes **52** provided in crossbars **54**. The crossbars **54** are provided with a large number of holes **52** which are preferably spaced from one another a distance corresponding to the width of a single tag **20**, so that irrespective of where the rods **50** are placed, there will be just enough room for a predetermined number of tags between adjacent rods without any tags being placed directly behind any of the rods. The rods **50** serve the dual purpose of separating the panel into columns and protecting the individual slats **16**. The uppermost rod **54** is concealed by the flap **30**, whereas the lowermost rod **54** is arranged directly in front of the point of contact between the two bottom slats **16**, so as not to hide the cards on any of the slats.

The tags **20** are preferably made up in a number of different colors corresponding to various car styles, so that anyone looking at the control panel and seeing a red card, for example, will know that the red card indicates a four door car of a make corresponding to the make indicated at the head of the column in which the red card appears. Each tag has a place thereon for recording detailed information concerning the particular car which it represents. Thus, on the one side of the tag there may be a place for indicating the model number (such as Special Deluxe), the description of the car (such as the color, type of accessories, et cetera), and the date on which the car was received in stock. The rear of the card (not shown) may be provided with information such as the inventory number, the make of the car, et cetera, so that when the tag is removed from the panel to some other panel or some other record, it will contain the necessary information concerning the particular car which it designates.

As explained hereinabove, each control is preferably made up in the form of two similar panel sections or frames hinged to one another at **15**, as shown in Figure 2. The hinge **15** is arranged so that when the two sections are not in use the two sections may be folded together into a box-like construction which is easy to carry around without danger of damaging the panel elements. By providing two sections in this manner, the first section, such as the one shown in Figure 1, may be used for the cars which have been in stock 30 days or less, whereas the second section can be used on those cars kept in stock more than 30 days. In such an arrangement the lowermost slat on the first panel would be transferred at the end of the 30th day to the uppermost position in the second panel, et cetera. In some agencies the number of cars handled would be great enough to require both sections to be used for cars taken in during the 30 day period. In other words, the second panel would take care of the overflow of cars from the first panel. Upon removal of the lowermost slat in such a case, it may then be transferred to the top of the same panel from which it was removed, so as to support the tags representing the cars less than a day old. Inasmuch as some agencies may have very few cars held over which are more than 30 days old, there is provided at the very bottom of each panel a fixed slat **60** which may be used to receive the tags which are left, if any, on the lowermost slat when it is removed from the panel. The slat **60** may also be used as a convenient place to put the tags from the cars which have been sent to the repair shop or the like and for that reason are not immediately available for sale.

Although the preferred embodiment of the device has been described, it will be understood that within the purview of this invention various changes may be made in the form, details, proportion and arrangement of parts, the combination thereof and mode of operation, which generally stated consist in a device capable of carrying out the objects set forth, as disclosed and defined in the appended claims.

Having thus described my invention, I claim:

1. In a control panel, a mounting member, a plurality of relatively long and narrow record bearing elements, guide means for supporting a series of said record bearing elements on said mounting member, said guide means including a first station at which record bearing elements may be added to the series and a second station spaced from said first station at which record bearing elements may be removed from the series, a first crossbar adjacent said first station, a second crossbar adjacent said second station, said crossbars being arranged in spaced relationship to said record bearing elements and said mounting member with the record bearing elements being located between said mounting member and said crossbars, rods extending between said crossbars for simulating lines traversing said series of record bearing elements, a flap member, and means for pivotally mounting said flap member on said mounting member with a portion of the flap arranged to move into overlying relationship to said first station and one of said crossbars so as to conceal said station and said one crossbar.

2. In a control panel, a mounting member, a plurality of relatively long and narrow record bearing elements, guide means for supporting a series of said record bearing elements on said mounting member, said guide means including a first station at which record bearing elements may be added to the series and a second station spaced from said first station at which record bearing elements may be removed from the series, a first crossbar adjacent said first station, a second crossbar adjacent said second station, said crossbars being arranged in spaced relationship to said record bearing elements and said mounting member with the record bearing elements being located between said mounting member and said crossbars, and transverse members extending between said crossbars and within the control panel for simulating lines traversing said series of record bearing elements.

3. In a control panel, a mounting member, a plurality of relatively long and narrow record bearing elements, guide means for supporting a series of said record bearing elements on said mounting member, said guide means including a first station at which record bearing elements may be added to the series and a second station spaced from said first station at which record bearing elements may be removed from the series, individual information tags, means for removably support-

ing said information tags on said record bearing elements, a first crossbar adjacent said first station, a second crossbar adjacent said second station, said crossbars being arranged in spaced relationship to said record bearing elements and said mounting member with the record bearing elements being located between said mounting member and said crossbars, transverse members extending between said crossbars for simulating lines traversing said series of record bearing elements, the distance between said transverse members being equal to a multiple of the width of said individual information tags, a flap member, and means for pivotally mounting said flap member on said mounting member with a portion of the flap arranged in overlying relationship to said first station and one of said crossbars so as to conceal said station and said one crossbar.

4. In a control board, a mounting member, a plurality of relatively long and narrow record bearing elements, means for supporting a series of said record bearing elements on said mounting member, means for supporting a pair of crossbars adjacent the ends of said series in spaced relationship to said mounting member, and rods supported by and extending between said crossbars, said rods being arranged substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of said record bearing elements, said crossbars having a plurality of apertures formed therein for receiving said rods.

5. In a control board, a mounting panel, a series of individual slide elements, means forming vertical guide channels arranged in opposed parallel relationship on said mounting panel, said guide channels having open ends at the top and bottom thereof whereby said slide elements may be inserted at the top thereof and removed from the bottom thereof, means spaced directly beneath said guide channels a distance less than the width of one of said elements for limiting the downward movement of said elements in said guide channels, one of said guide channels extending downwardly farther than the other of said guide channels, and means adjacent said other guide channel for retaining the lowermost slide element at the lowermost position of slide elements against movement perpendicular to the mounting panel, said last named means having clearance adjacent the end of said lowermost slide element so as to allow movement of said lowermost slide element parallel to said mounting panel, said last named means also including means for releasably retaining said lowermost slide element at the lowermost position for removal directly therefrom.

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