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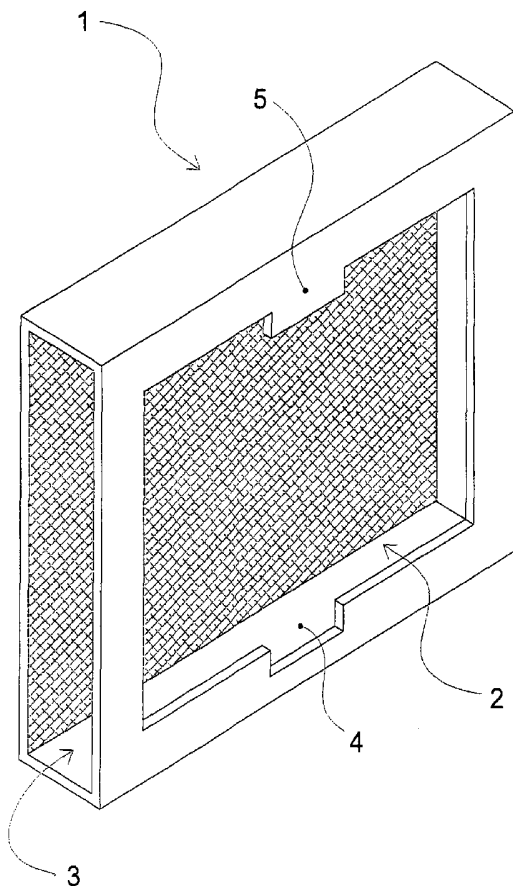
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(54) Title: CASE FOR BOOKS OR SIMILAR ARTICLES



(57) Abstract: The present invention relates to a case (1) for books and similar articles, the case (1) has at least one window (2) through which at least a portion of the book cover is visible; the case (1) also comprises at least a device which is a user of electrical energy and means for the connection of the user device to a source of electrical energy. The case can also be provided with a back extending beside it, to support a block of sheets such as a calendar or a block for drawing notes.



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Case for books or similar articles

The present invention relates to a case for books or similar articles.

Conventionally, in its simplest form, a case for a book is a rough cardboard case which has substantially the same shape and the same size as the book and in which the face corresponding to the spine of the book is absent; the book can thus be inserted in the case through this opening and its spine remains visible; conventionally, the function of the case is simply that of protecting the book and, in particular, its cover.

Clearly, when a book is inserted in the case, the book is impossible to recognize except by reading any writing on the spine.

Moreover, if the book cover is itself of high quality, when the book is inserted in the case it can no longer be appreciated.

To solve this problem, cases having the book cover reproduced on their front faces are sometimes used; this solution leads to a considerable increase in price for the case in comparison with the use of rough cardboard.

The object of the present invention is to provide a case which is improved in comparison with conventional cases for books.

This object is achieved by the case for books or similar articles having the features set out in independent Claim 1.

The innovative concept underlying the present invention is that of providing a window in the front face of the case and further an electrical device.

Both the window and the functional capabilities of the electrical device thus enable the cover and/or the contents of the book to be appreciated. The case thus retains its function of protecting the book but enables

the book to be recognized and its cover and/or its contents to be appreciated.

The presence of the window also modifies the functionality of the case; indeed, unlike cases without windows, there is only one correct way to insert the book.

The invention, together with advantageous aspects of its implementation, will become clearer from the following description which should be considered in conjunction with the appended drawings, in which:

Figure 1 shows an embodiment of a case according to the present invention,

Figure 2 shows an article particularly suitable for being inserted in a case according to the present invention,

Figure 3 shows the article of Figure 2 partially inserted in the case of Figure 1,

Figure 4 shows a first embodiment of means for hanging the case according to the present invention,

Figure 5 shows a second embodiment of means for hanging the case according to the present invention,

Figure 6 shows a first embodiment of means for supporting the case according to the present invention,

Figure 7 shows a second embodiment of means for supporting the case according to the present invention, and

Figure 8 shows a third embodiment of means for supporting the case according to the present invention.

Figures 9 and 10 show further respective embodiments of a case according to the present invention.

The case according to the present invention is characterized in that it has at least one window through which at least a portion of the book cover is visible, naturally when the book (of suitable dimensions, that is, substantially complementary with

the space inside the case) is fully inserted in the case.

By virtue of the window, the book cover is substantially visible and can be appreciated even when the book is in the case; this effect is achieved irrespective of the material and construction of the case and therefore even with very inexpensive, rough cardboard cases.

The case according to the present invention is further characterized in that it comprises at least one device which is a user of electrical energy and means for the connection of the user device to a source of electrical energy.

By virtue of the user device (which may be, for example, a light generator or a sound generator) the cover and/or the contents of the book can be appreciated to a greater extent.

Figure 1 shows an embodiment of the case, generally indicated 1; the window, indicated 2, is readily visible on the front face of the case; the left-hand side face of the case is absent and the book is inserted through that opening, which is indicated 3; on the upper edge of the window 2 there is a projection, indicated 5 behind which a user of electrical energy in the form of a lamp is housed.

The case according to the present invention serves to hold books but may very well also be used with advantage for similar articles.

The company BOOKSMART has in the past devised an article in the form of a book comprising a plurality of pages arranged in order and bound together; the first page acts as the cover page of the book and comprises a frame which defines a window; a subject, which is preferably artistic and is flat or in relief, is shown on, applied to, or specifically applicable to a

following page of the book in a position aligned with the window of the frame; the subject is visible through the window of the frame when the book is closed; the article thus incorporates both the function of a book and the function of a framed artistic subject; an example of such an article in book form is shown in appended Figure 2.

The case according to the present invention is suitable, particularly but not exclusively, for such an article in book form.

In Figure 2, the article as a whole is indicated 11, the cover page of the book is indicated 12, a page of the book which acts as a passe-partout is indicated 13, the page of the book associated with the subject is indicated 14, the subject is indicated 15, a further four pages of the book are indicated 16, the back page of the book is indicated 17, and a plaque to which writing can be applied is indicated 18.

Naturally, the case according to the present invention is particularly suitable for holding an article in book form such as that shown in Figure 2, or similar articles; in fact, the cover of the article is visible through the window of the case and the subject 15, which performs an important role for the article, is visible through the cover of the article; for the purposes of the present invention, the number of pages of the article is of no importance; the article could therefore even be reduced simply to a framed subject.

From Figure 3, it can be understood better how the article of Figure 2 can be inserted in the case of Figure 1.

The user device of the case according to the present invention may be, for example, a light generator; the light will permit a better appreciation of the cover and/or the contents of the book inserted in the case.

A light generator of this type may comprise one or more lamps which may be located in and/or on the case in very many different ways; in the case of Figure 1, a single lamp is provided, housed behind the projection 5; for several lamps and a case with a rectangular window, a lamp may be placed, for example, on each side of the window.

The user device of the case according to the present invention may be, for example, a sound generator; the sound will permit a better appreciation of the cover and/or the contents of the book inserted in the case; in this case, the sound (for example, music) will typically be relevant to the cover and/or to the contents of the book.

A case according to the present invention may comprise several user devices, preferably a light generator and a sound generator; there is thus a positive synergic light and sound effect.

In the case of a light generator, the light generator is advantageously arranged to illuminate at least a portion of the book cover; this portion will typically be that which is visible through the window of the case, as for the case of Figure 1; the cover will thus be displayed well and thus readily appreciated. If the article of Figure 2 is inserted in the case of Figure 1, as shown in Figure 3, the light generator will illuminate the subject 15, in particular through the window of the cover and the window of the picture frame.

A screen is advantageously provided in or on the case for screening the light generated by the generator, typically from the eyes of a person looking at the book; in the embodiment of the case of Figure 1, the screen is constituted by the projection 5 made of opaque material on the upper edge of the window of the

case and serves to screen the direct light generated by the generator; alternatively, for example, the edge of the window may itself act as a screen for one or more lamps housed behind the front face of the case.

Naturally, the user device needs a source of electrical energy. This may be included in the case and constituted, for example, by one or more button cells or by a flat-shaped battery; a technology for producing flat batteries suitable for use in the case according to the present invention was developed and patented by Polaroid in the seventies; a flat-shaped battery could be placed, for example, on the rear face of the case.

Alternatively, the source of electrical energy is outside the case; in this case, the connection means may advantageously comprise electrical contacts which are accessible from outside the case; these electrical contacts may be suitable for connection to respective electrical contacts of a support base.

The connection of the case according to the present invention may comprise at least one push-button and/or at least one switch for the selective supply of electrical energy.

If the case comprises several user devices, typically several push-buttons or switches will be provided.

If a push-button is used, a timing circuit may advantageously be provided so as to supply electrical energy to the user device for a predetermined period of time after the push-button has been pressed or released.

If the source of electrical energy is outside the case, the devices for switching the electrical current may be, for example, outside the case or may be completely absent.

For accuracy, it is pointed out that none of the light generator, the sound generator, the connection means,

and the electrical energy source is visible in the appended drawings; only a screen of a light generator is visible in Figure 1; in fact, in many embodiments of the present invention, these elements will be inside the case and therefore not visible from the exterior.

The efficacy of the window in the case according to the present invention is greatest if the shape and dimensions of the window are such that a considerable portion of the book cover is visible.

Other windows may be provided in addition to this window, which may be called the "primary" window.

For example, a window of much smaller size than the primary window may be provided, for example, for displaying the title of the book given on the book cover.

The primary window may have at least one recess in its edge, such as that shown and indicated 4 in Figure 1; in the embodiment shown in the drawings, this recess serves to display the plaque 18 of the book.

The simplest and least expensive, but nevertheless effective, way of producing the window is to provide an opening in the front face of the case, that is, to produce an empty window.

Naturally, a sheet of transparent material may also be added in the window opening.

The simplest and least expensive way of producing the case is to use cardboard.

Naturally, more expensive materials may also be used.

To improve the quality of the case and to enhance the subject displayed through its window, the case may be shaped and/or decorated like a frame around the window. This solution is ideal particularly if the case is to be used to hold an article such as that of Figure 2 which already has a frame; in this case, the frame of

the case will preferably be similar to that of the article.

Although they are not shown in any of the drawings, one or more notches (small recesses) may advantageously be provided in the region of the free edges of the faces of the case, to facilitate the removal of the book from the case.

Since the window of the case is suitable not only for the display of the book cover but also for its appreciation (in the case of an article with a good-quality cover such as the article of Figure 2, by virtue also of the presence of the subject 15) at least one device for supporting the case and/or at least one device for hanging the case is advantageously provided so as to permit maximum appreciation thereof; the provision of both allows the user to choose.

The most convenient solution is to provide one or both devices on the side of the case opposite the window.

Preferably such a device can adopt a closed position such as not to project from the profile of the case; it does not thus cause any trouble when the device is not in use (for example, during the storage of the cases or if the case with its book is placed in a bookcase). All of the examples of these devices shown in Figure 4, Figure 5, Figure 6, Figure 7 and Figure 8 have this characteristic.

The hanging device of Figure 4 is constituted by a tab which can be bent and which is provided, for example, with a riveted hole for engagement on a wall nail; in a closed position (Figure 4-A), the tab is entirely housed in a recess in the rear face of the case; the recess has a notch for facilitating the extraction of the tab; in an open position (Figure 4-B), the tab is bent through about 180° from the closed position; the tab thus projects from the case.

The hanging device of Figure 5 is constituted by a tab which can be pulled out and which is provided, for example, with a riveted hole for engagement on a wall nail; in a closed position (Figure 5-B), the tab is housed in a pocket formed in the rear face of the case; the pocket has a notch for facilitating the removal of the tab; in an open position (Figure 5-B), the tab is pulled out of the pocket and projects from the case.

A more conventional but nevertheless effective hanging device for the case is constituted by a picture hook fitted on the rear face of the case.

The support device of Figure 6 (shown in the open position) is constituted by a flap which can be bent horizontally by up to about 45° ; in the closed position, the flap lies entirely in a recess in the rear face of the case.

The support device of Figure 7 (shown in the open position) is constituted by a flap which can be bent vertically by up to about 90° ; in the closed position, the flap lies entirely in a recess in the rear face of the case.

The device of Figure 8 is similar to that of Figure 7 but, in addition, has an element which can be bent horizontally and can fix the bent flap in position by engaging therewith; the support is thus more stable. As can be seen from the drawing, when the flap and the element are not bent, both lie in the recess formed in the rear face of the case without giving rise to any projection.

Although one flap may suffice, more than one (typically two) may advantageously be provided if their material is not very stiff (for example, cardboard).

The use of the hanging device or of the support device above provides also for another improvement to the present invention: indeed the case 1 may be combined

with a block of sheets like it is shown in figures 9 and 10, where same reference numerals indicate the same parts of the previous embodiments.

As can be seen in the first of these figures, a case 1 according to the invention is associated with a block of sheets 20, for instance the sheets of a calendar; preferably the case 1 is provided on the rear with a support (not visible in fig. 9) like those referred to above and shown in fig. 6-8, so as to keep it in a upright position.

Furthermore, according to a preferred embodiment the back 21 of the case 20 is made of cardboard or other semi-rigid sheet material, and extends beside the case to support the block of sheets 20; if also the remaining parts of the case 1 are made of the same material of the back 21, they can be all manufactured by cutting and folding a single piece of cardboard, thereby achieving evident advantages for the industrial production.

Of course changes are possible also for this embodiment of the invention, as shown in figure 10, where the case 1 is suitable for being hung to a wall and therefore is provided with an eyelet 22 along the upper edge; such an eyelet is made according to any of the hanging devices referred to in fig. 4.

An electric user device as those already explained above may also be provided in connection with the projection 5, while the block of sheets 20 is located below the case 1 with reference to its hung condition, but can still supported by the back 21.

Of course, also in this embodiment the back 21 and the case 1 can be made of the same material, so that they can all be manufactured by cutting and folding a single piece of cardboard or other similar material.

Last it just matters to be added that the sheets of the block 20 instead of being printed as a calendar or with another subject, may be blank sheets suitable for drawing notes.

The case according to the present invention may also comprise a device for housing a CD or a DVD, or a similar storage medium which can hold data and/or sounds and/or images; this device may be placed, for example, on the rear face of the case, on the inside or on the outside.

CLAIMS

1. A case for books or similar articles, characterized in that at least one window is provided, through which at least a portion of the book cover is visible.
2. A case according to Claim 1, wherein the window has a shape and dimensions such that a considerable portion of the cover is visible.
3. A case according to Claim 1 or Claim 2, wherein another window of much smaller dimensions is provided.
4. A case according to any one of Claims 1, 2 and 3, wherein the window has at least one recess in its edge.
5. A case according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the window is empty.
6. A case according to any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that it is made of cardboard.
7. A case according to any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the case is shaped and/or decorated like a frame around the window.
8. A case according to any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that it comprises at least one support device for the case.
9. A case according to any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that it comprises at least one hanging device for the case.
10. A case according to Claim 8 or Claim 9, wherein the device is disposed on the face of the case opposite the window.
11. A case according to any one of Claims 8, 9 and 10, wherein the device can adopt a closed position in which the device does not project from the profile of the case.
12. A case according to any one of Claims 8, 10 and 11, wherein the support device comprises at least one flap which can be bent, preferably vertically or horizontally, and preferably through less than 90°.

13. A case according to Claim 12, wherein the support device comprises an element suitable for fixing the bent flap in position.

14. A case according to any one of Claims 9, 10 and 11, wherein the hanging device comprises a tab which can be bent, preferably through about 180°.

15. A case according to any one of Claims 9, 10 and 11, wherein the hanging device comprises a tab which can be pulled out.

16. A case according to any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that it comprises:

- at least one device which is a user of electrical energy, and
- means for the connection of the user device to a source of electrical energy.

17. A case according to Claim 16, wherein the user device is a light generator.

18. A case according to Claim 16, wherein the user device is a sound generator.

19. A case according to Claim 16, comprising two user devices, preferably a light generator and a sound generator.

20. A case according to any one of Claims 16 to 19, wherein the light generator is such as to illuminate at least a portion of the book cover.

21. A case according to Claim 20, further comprising a screen for screening the light generated by the light generator.

22. A case according to any one of Claims 16 to 21, further comprising a source of electrical energy.

23. A case according to any one of Claims 16 to 22, wherein the connection means comprise electrical contacts accessible from outside the case.

24. A case according to any one of Claims 16 to 23, wherein the connection means comprise at least one push-button and/or at least one switch.

25. A case according to any of the preceding claims, associated with a plurality of sheets (20).

26. A case according to claim 26, wherein the sheets (20) are arranged in a block beside.

27. A case according to claims 25 and 26, comprising a protruding semi-rigid back (21) which supports the sheets (20).

28. A case according to claim 27, wherein the semi-rigid back (21) is made from the same piece of the back of the case.

29. A case according to claims 25-28, wherein the sheets are printed or blank.

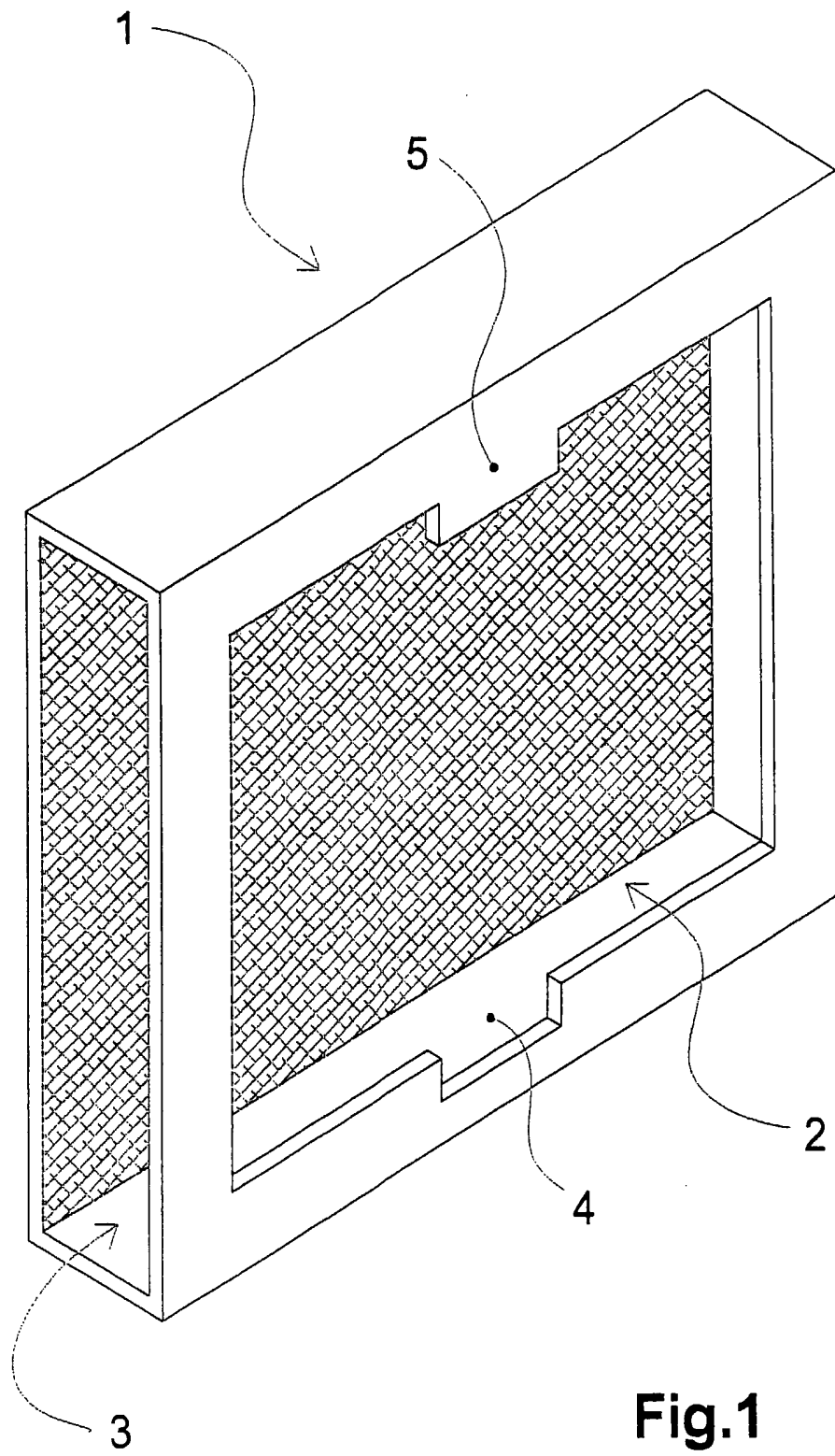
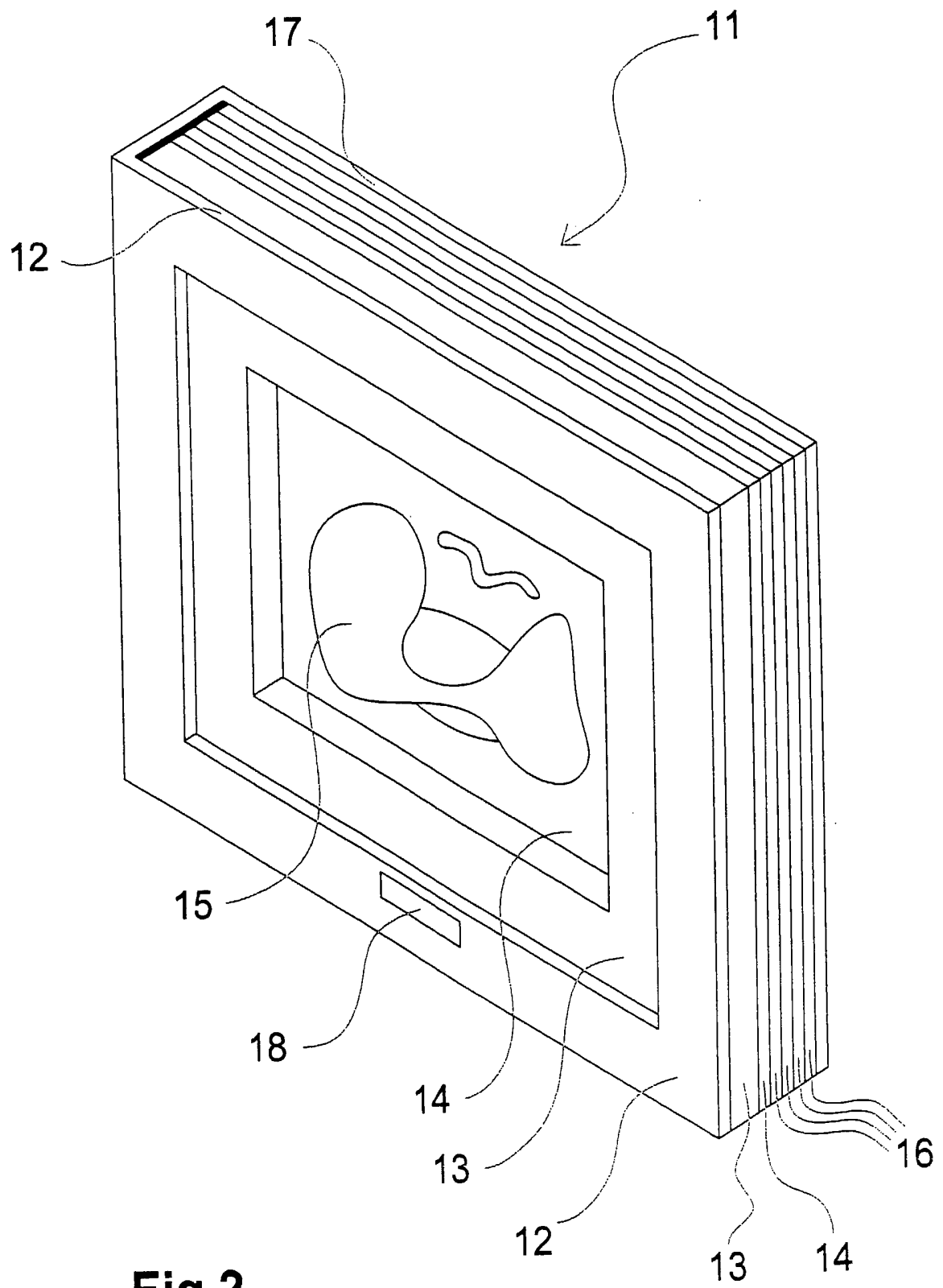


Fig.1

**Fig.2**

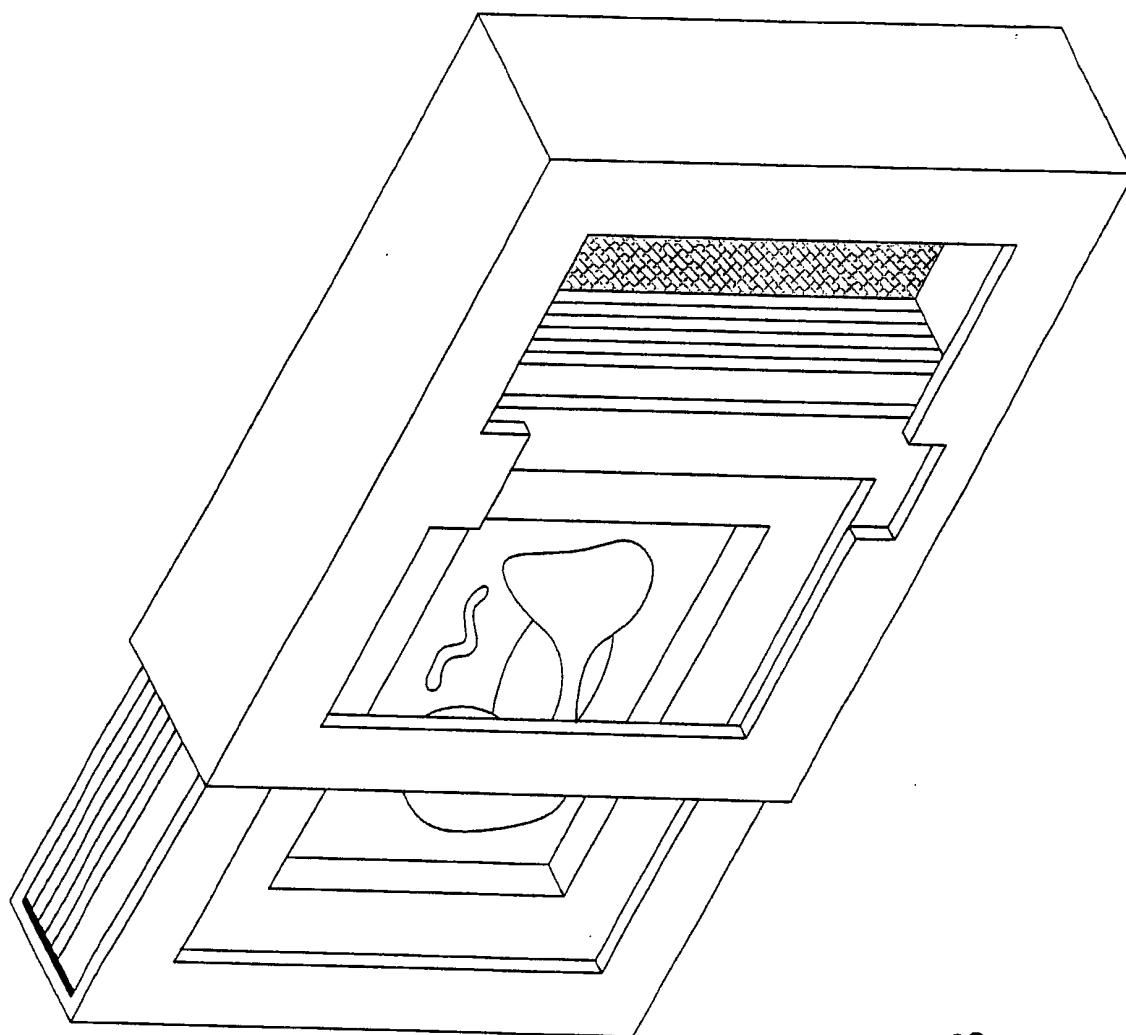


Fig.3

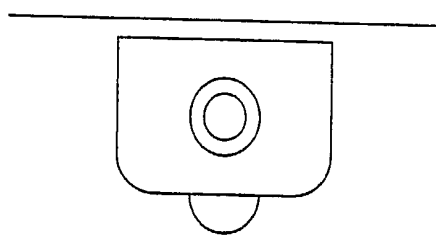


Fig.4-A

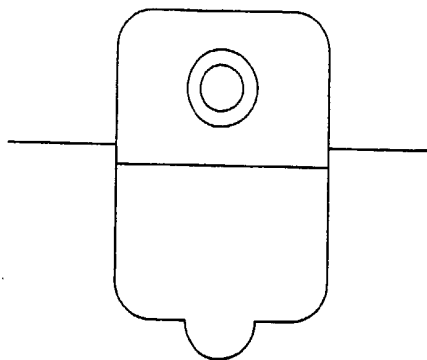


Fig.4-B

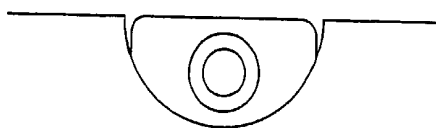


Fig.5-A

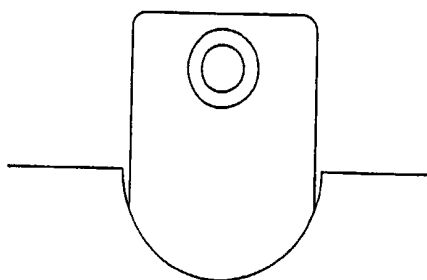


Fig.5-B

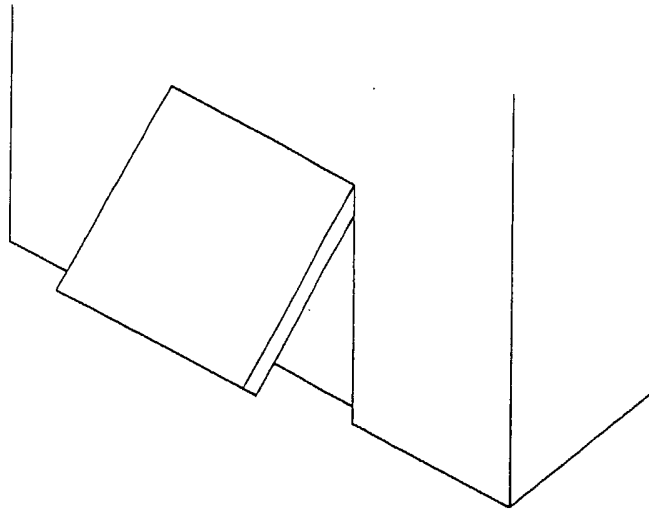


Fig. 6

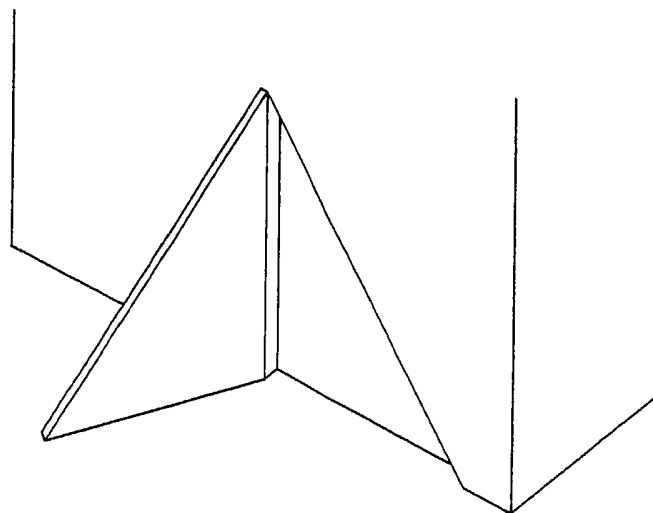


Fig. 7

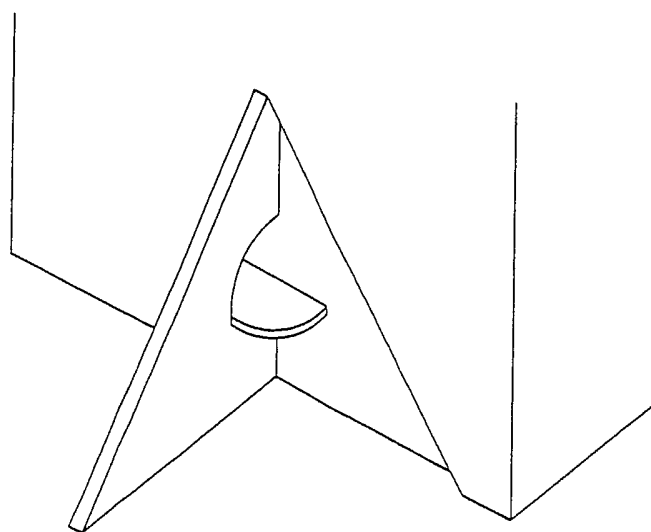
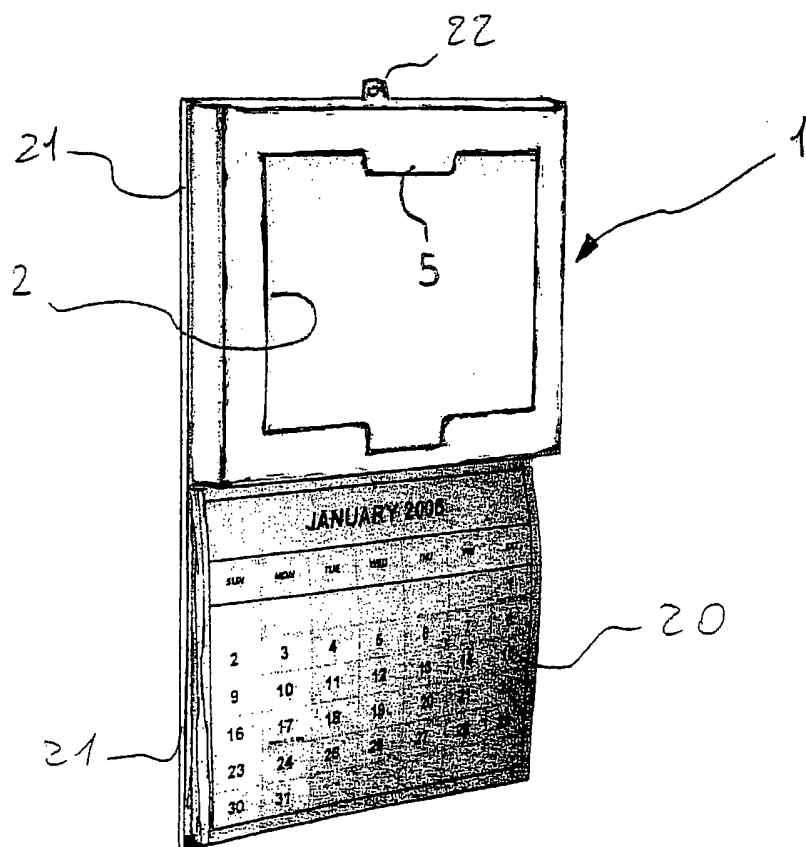
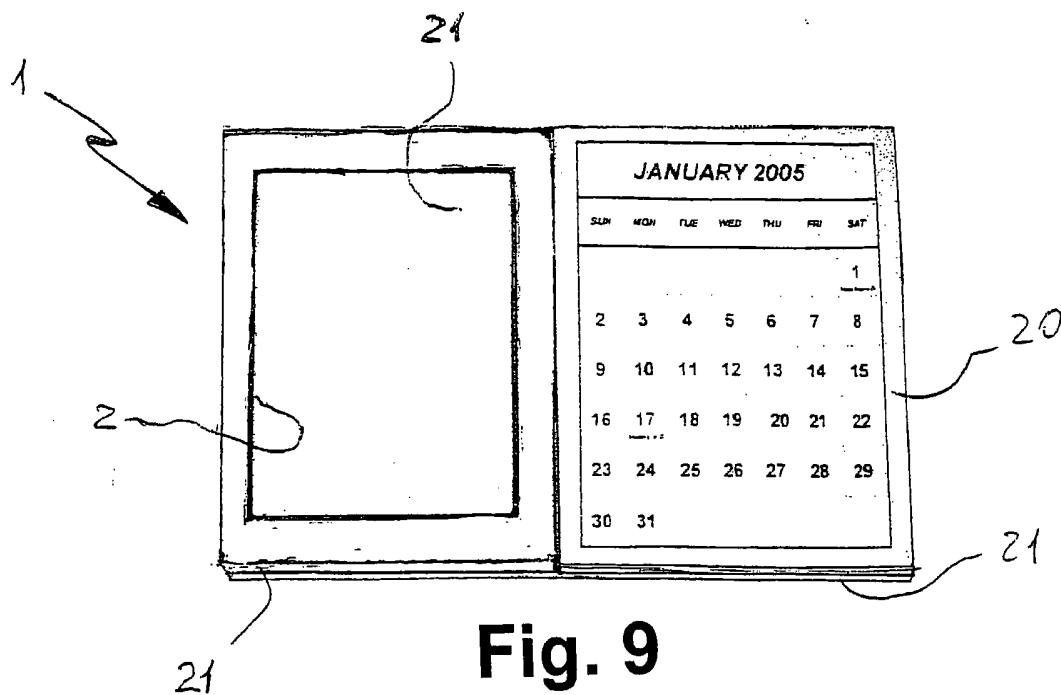


Fig. 8

6/6

**Fig. 10**