



(11) Publication number : **0 476 984 A3**

(12) **EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION**

(21) Application number : **91308491.9**

(51) Int. Cl.<sup>5</sup> : **B07C 3/04**

(22) Date of filing : **18.09.91**

(30) Priority : **19.09.90 GB 9020413**

(43) Date of publication of application :  
**25.03.92 Bulletin 92/13**

(84) Designated Contracting States :  
**DE FR GB**

(88) Date of deferred publication of search report :  
**14.10.92 Bulletin 92/42**

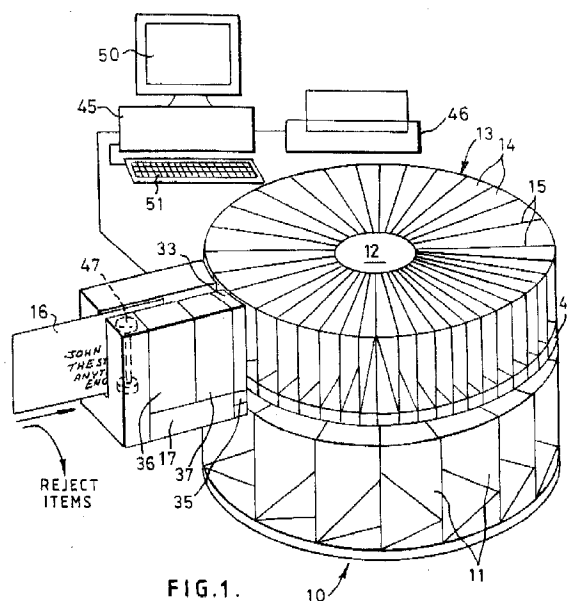
(71) Applicant : **ALCATEL BUSINESS SYSTEMS LIMITED**  
**P.O. Box 3 South Street**  
**Romford Essex, RM1 2AR (GB)**

(72) Inventor : **Gilham, Dennis Thomas**  
**12 Larkin Close**  
**Brentwood, Essex CM13 2SL (GB)**

(74) Representative : **Loughrey, Richard Vivian**  
**Patrick et al**  
**HUGHES CLARK & CO 114-118 Southampton**  
**Row**  
**London WC1B 5AA (GB)**

(54) **Mail handling system.**

(57) A system for handling and sorting mail items is disclosed. Destination of the mail items (16) is read and the mail items are fed into pockets (14) of a rotating carrier (13). A plurality of bins (11) are located beneath the carrier and as a pocket containing a mail item to be received in a specified bin aligns with that bin, the bottom (18) of the pocket is opened to release the mail item. The pockets and bins are arranged around a central hub (12) housing operating elements of the system. A module (17) for feeding mail items to the pockets and for reading destination addresses is mounted radially outwardly of the rotatable carrier. The system is controlled by a controller (28) which operates to allocate bins to destination addresses of the mail items. Sensors are provided to monitor operation of the system and to cause bin full indications to be provided to an operator of the system.





European Patent  
Office

# EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number

EP 91 30 8491

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int. Cl.5)
Y	FR-A-2 303 610 (SPETSIALNOE PROEKTNO-KONSTRUKTORSKOE BJURO MINISTERSTVA SVYAZI SSSR) * page 5, line 1 - page 6, line 36; claims 1-2 * * page 7, line 26 - page 8, line 16 * * page 13, line 16 - page 14, line 35 * * page 18, line 6 - page 20, line 15 * ---	1-2, 9-11, 17	B07C3/04
Y	DE-A-1 574 132 (SIEMENS A.G.) * page 1 - page 3; claims 1-3; figure 1 * ---	1-2, 9-11, 17	
A	US-A-3 573 748 (WILLIAM M. HOLME) * abstract * * column 1, line 14 - column 2, line 31 * -----	1-3	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int. Cl.5)
			B07C
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search		Date of completion of the search	Examiner
THE HAGUE		17 AUGUST 1992	BEAUCE G. Y. G.
<b>CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS</b> X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document			

EPO FORM 1503 03.92 (P0001)