

(19)



Europäisches Patentamt

European Patent Office

Office européen des brevets



(11)

EP 0 790 140 A2

(12)

EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION

(43) Date of publication:
20.08.1997 Bulletin 1997/34

(51) Int. Cl.⁶: **B42D 15/02**

(21) Application number: **97102256.1**

(22) Date of filing: **12.02.1997**

(84) Designated Contracting States:
AT BE CH DE DK ES FI FR GB GR IE IT LI NL PT SE

(30) Priority: **15.02.1996 IT MI960291**

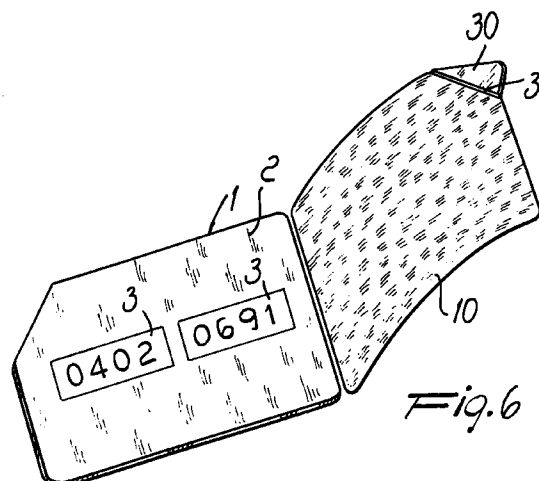
(71) Applicant: **Mantegazza, Antonio**
20090 Opera, Milano (IT)

(72) Inventor: **Mantegazza, Antonio**
20090 Opera, Milano (IT)

(74) Representative: **Modiano, Guido, Dr.-Ing. et al**
Modiano & Associati S.r.l.
Via Meravigli, 16
20123 Milano (IT)

(54) Document having at least one concealed surface region

(57) A document having at least one concealed surface region, particularly for using services and the like, comprising a sheet-like element (1) which forms, on at least one first face (2), at least one region (3) where secret indications and the like are applied, the document also comprising at least one covering element (10) rigidly coupled to the first face (2), with the interposition of a layer (20) of peel-off material for the separation of at least part of the covering element (10) from the sheet-like element (1) so that it is subsequently impossible to restore the coupling without clearly showing that separation has already occurred.



EP 0 790 140 A2

Description

The present invention relates to a document having at least one concealed surface region, particularly for using services and the like.

It is known that documents or cards bearing a secret code, which allows to use a given type of service, are already commercially available; the code must of course be accessible only to the user after he has purchased the card concerning that given type of service.

A covering strip is currently used to keep covered the region where the secret code or the like is located; the strip is placed on the card face that bears the secret code and the card is inserted in a first envelope which is in turn inserted in a second envelope, so that the user, when purchasing the intact package, can be sure that the code has not been seen by other people.

This type of protection, i.e., the use of envelopes and covering strips, not only leads to complexity in the production of the document but also makes it impossible to distribute the document by means of conventional vending machines for cards and the like.

Moreover, the user is not certain that the packages constituted by the envelopes have not been opened fraudulently and then cleverly resealed.

A principal aim of the invention is to solve the above problems by providing a document with at least one concealed surface region, particularly for using services and the like, which allows to ensure secrecy of the information provided on the document without having to resort to envelopes or the like to contain the document before sale.

Within the scope of this aim, a particular object of the invention is to provide a document which by having no apparent structural or dimensional change can be distributed by means of conventional card vending machines.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a document wherein any fraudulent attempt to view the secret code or the secret indication before the sale of the document can be detected immediately, since in order to access the region where the secret information is located it is necessary to permanently modify the document, thus clearly exposing the fraudulent attempt.

A further object of the present invention is to provide a document which can be easily obtained starting from commonly commercially available elements and materials and also has a very low cost.

This aim, these objects, and others which will become apparent hereinafter are achieved by a document having at least one concealed surface region, particularly for using services and the like, according to the invention, which comprises a sheet-like element having, on at least one first face, at least one region where secret indications and the like are applied, characterized in that it comprises at least one covering element which is rigidly coupled to said first face, at least at said region, with the interposition of a layer of peel-off material for the separation of at least part of said covering

element from said sheet-like element so that it is impossible to restore the coupling without clearly showing that separation has already occurred.

Further characteristics and advantages of the invention will become apparent from the following detailed description of some preferred but not exclusive embodiments of a document having at least one concealed surface region, particularly for using services and the like, illustrated only by way of non-limitative example in the accompanying drawings, wherein:

figure 1 is a schematic view of the layers of the document according to the present invention;

figure 2 is a sectional view of the layers that constitute the document;

figure 3 is a sectional view of the document;

figure 4 is a schematic perspective view of the document, taken from its second face;

figure 5 is a view of the document, taken from its first face before the covering element is removed;

figure 6 is a view of the document after removal of the covering element;

figure 7 is a view of the document with a different grip element for removing the covering element;

figure 8 is a view of a document with the covering element partially removed;

figure 9 is a view of a document wherein the covering element is partially removed;

figure 10 is a schematic view of a document with a covering element provided with two separate regions for placing secret indications.

With reference to the above figures, the document having at least one concealed surface region, particularly for using services and the like, according to the invention, comprises a sheet-like element 1, advantageously provided by means of a PVC layer, which preferably but not necessarily has the typical dimensions of a card, i.e., the so-called credit-card size.

On one face, specifically on the first face 2 of the document, there is provided at least one region 3 where secret indications are printed or otherwise placed; the indications can be constituted by code numbers or by any other element.

The particularity of the invention resides in the fact that there is provided a covering element 10 which is also provided by means of an optically opaque PVC layer applied to the sheet-like element by lamination.

Other regions with other indications can also be provided on the other face or second face; if this is required, it is possible to apply a simple protective PVC layer, designated by the reference numeral 11, which is also applied by lamination.

The important characteristic of the invention resides in the fact that a layer 20 of peel-off material is interposed between the covering element 10 and the sheet-like element 1 and allows to provide, during lamination, merely a temporary adhesion of the covering element 10, which can be removed by a tearing action

which in practice peels the document, allowing to remove the covering element 10, which is opaque and therefore permanently hide from view the region or regions 3 where the secret indications are provided.

In order to facilitate removal, there is provided a grip corner, designated by the reference numeral 30, which is delimited by a scoring line 31 with respect to the remaining part of the document, so that the user, by folding the corner 30, has the grip element which allows him to separate the covering element 10 and to gain visual access to the secret indications.

The grip element can also be obtained by means of a median flap, designated by the reference numeral 35 in figure 7, which is semicircular but is also delimited by a scoring line, again designated by the reference numeral 31, so as to allow to perform separation.

The covering element 10, which as mentioned is opaque, allows to apply representations of any kind to the face that remains visible; therefore, there are in practice three usable surfaces whereon one may print, namely the face of the covering element 10, the second face of the sheet-like element 1, and the first face of the covering element 10 where the secret code is provided.

In the described embodiments, the covering element 10 is completely removed from the sheet-like element 1; however, as shown in figures 8 and 9, the covering element 10 may also be firmly bonded in some regions to the sheet-like element 1 and the peel-off layer 2 may be interposed exclusively at the region 3 where the secret code is provided, so that when the covering element is removed, only part of the covering element is removed, partially tearing it along lines 40 which delimit the region or regions 3.

As shown in figure 10, it is possible to provide two separate regions for placing secret indications, with the possibility of two separate tearing lines 40 on the covering element 10 at each one of the regions that must be kept covered.

Moreover, in order to increase security characteristics, it is possible to provide, between the covering element 10 and the sheet-like element 1, a code or the like which, for example, can be used to identify the document but which most of all tears when the covering element separates from the sheet-like element, thus helping to even more clearly show that secrecy has been violated.

From the above description it is thus evident that the invention achieves the intended aim and objects; in particular, the fact is stressed that a document is provided having the typical configuration of a card, despite having a face which is absolutely not visible from the outside except after fully or partially removing the covering element, which is opaque.

The particular structure used, i.e., the coupling of PVC elements by lamination, makes it impossible to resume the same characteristics if one attempts to reapply the removed covering element, so that the previous separation and consequent violation of the secrecy of the secret indications is externally evident;

the permanent deformation affecting the surface layer is also evident.

The invention thus conceived is susceptible of numerous modifications and variations, all of which are within the scope of the inventive concept.

All the details may also be replaced with other technically equivalent elements.

In practice, the materials employed, as well as the contingent shapes and dimensions, may be any according to the requirements.

Where technical features mentioned in any claim are followed by reference signs, those reference signs have been included for the sole purpose of increasing the intelligibility of the claims and accordingly, such reference signs do not have any limiting effect on the interpretation of each element identified by way of example by such reference signs.

Claims

1. A document having at least one concealed surface region, particularly for using services and the like, comprising a sheet-like element which has, on at least one first face, at least one region where secret indications and the like are applied, characterized in that it comprises at least one covering element which is rigidly coupled to said first face, at least at said region, with the interposition of a layer of peel-off material for the separation of at least part of said covering element from said sheet-like element so that it is impossible to restore the coupling without clearly showing that separation has already occurred.
2. A document according to claim 1, characterized in that it comprises a grip corner which is delimited, on said sheet-like element, by a scoring line affecting said sheet-like element and a sheet for protecting the second face of said sheet-like element.
3. A document according to claim 1, characterized in that said sheet-like element is constituted by PVC and said covering element is constituted by a PVC sheet which is optically opaque and is calendered onto said sheet-like element.
4. A document according to claim 1, characterized in that it comprises a grip flap provided in a median portion of one side of said sheet-like element and delimited by a scoring line.
5. A document according to claim 1, characterized in that it comprises regions bearing applied secret indications on both faces of said sheet-like element, a respective covering element being provided on both of said faces and being rigidly coupled with a layer of peel-off material interposed at least at the region provided with said secret indications.

6. A document according to claim 5, characterized in that it has, on said covering element, tear lines which delimit said region bearing secret indications for the tearing of said covering element in order to access said region bearing secret indications. 5
7. A document according to claim 1, characterized in that it comprises a plurality of separate regions bearing secret indications, said covering element being delimited by tear lines at each region. 10
8. A document according to claim 1, characterized in that it comprises, between said covering element and said sheet-like element, a code which can tear when said covering element is separated from said sheet-like element. 15

20

25

30

35

40

45

50

55

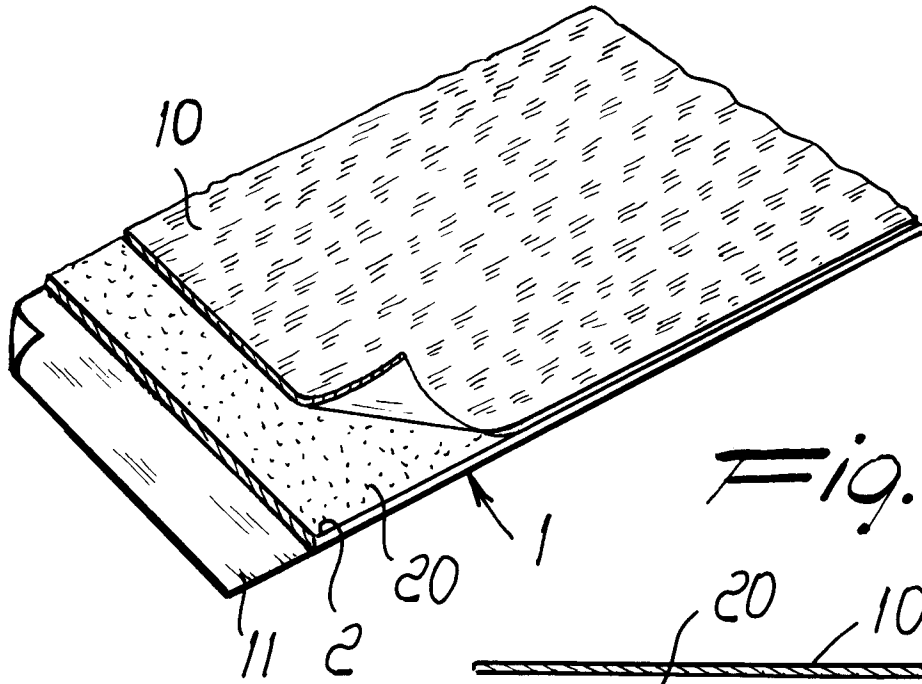


Fig. 1

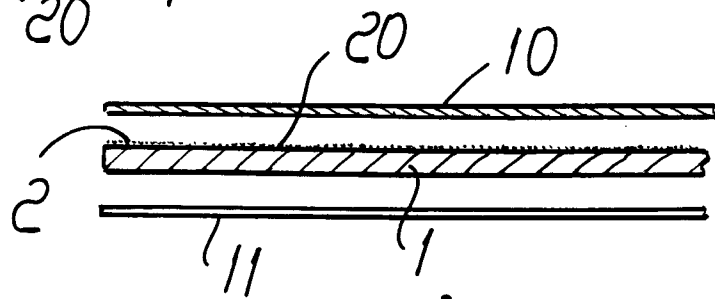


Fig. 2

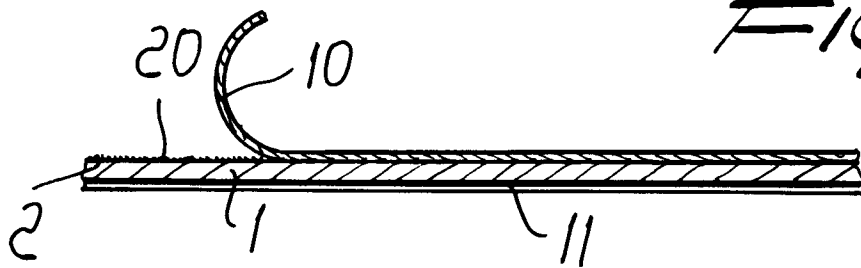


Fig. 3

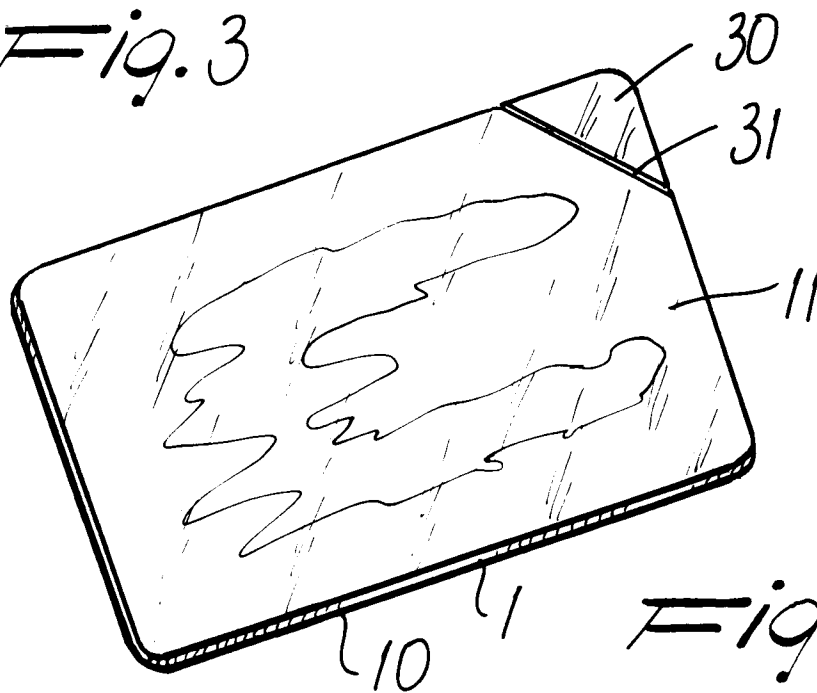


Fig. 4

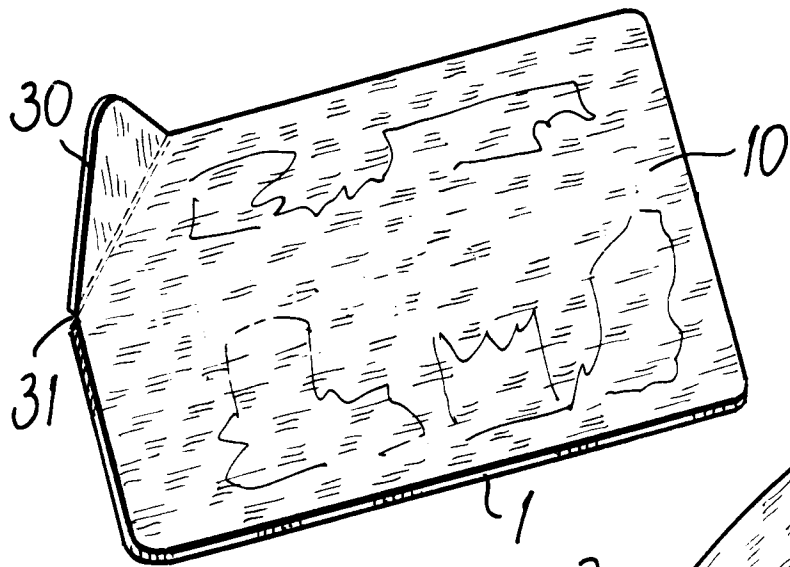


Fig. 5

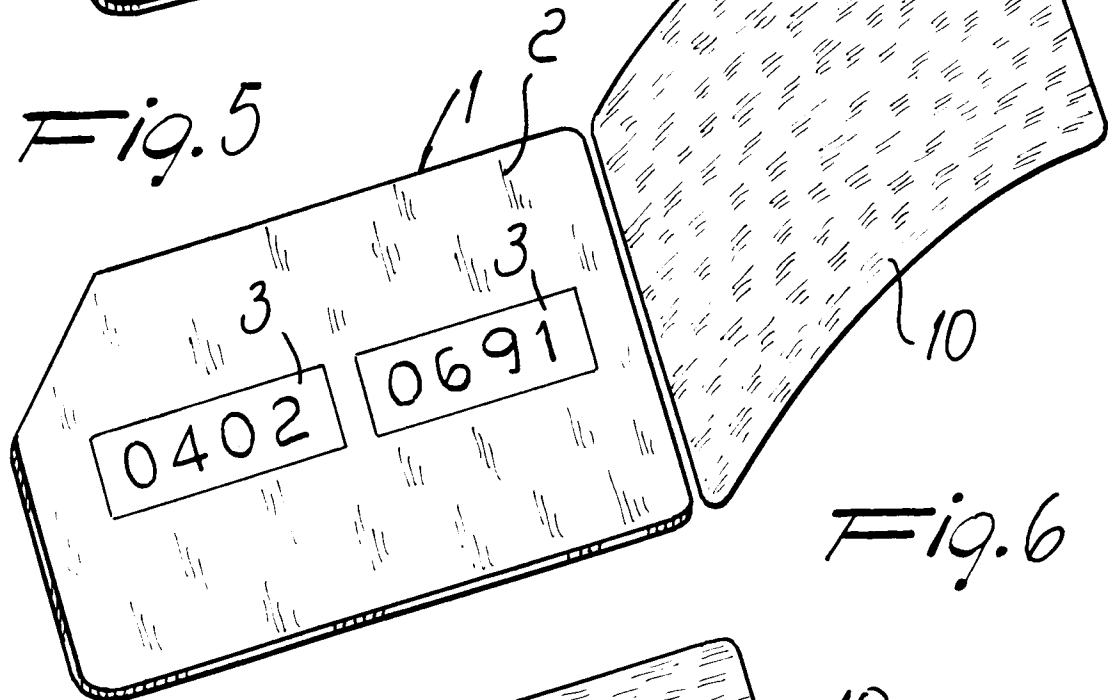


Fig. 6

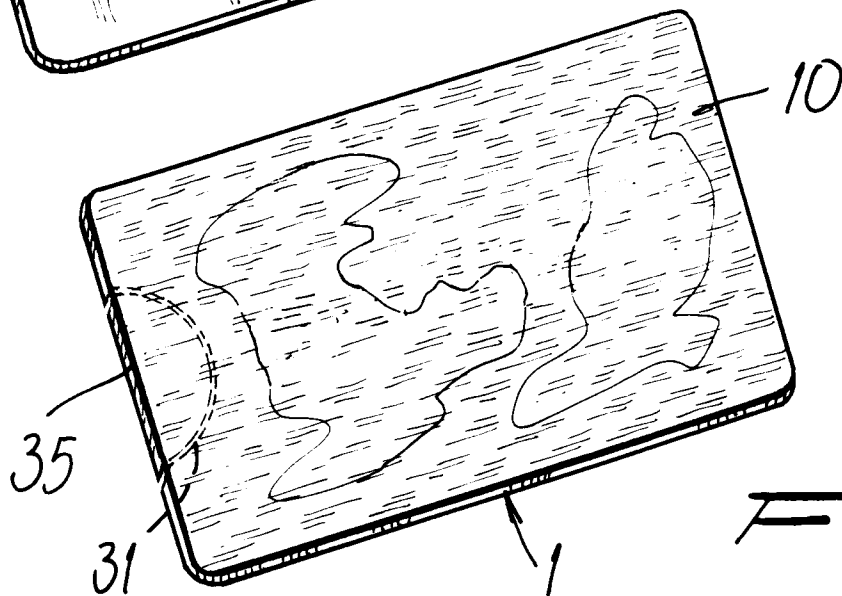


Fig. 7

