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(54) **File**

(57) A file (1) for suspension on a set of parallel horizontally spaced support rails (15), comprising a folder having two leaves (6,7) which may be folded together to define a document receiving pocket. Rail engaging hooks (8) are located on opposed edges of the folder which are adjacent when the two leaves are folded together, and means (11) for retaining documents against displacement from the folder are also provided. The

hooks are arranged such that the folder can be engaged with support rails by movement in a horizontal direction perpendicular to the rails. The files may be used as working files, and there is no need for secondary files to be placed within the file pockets. Less vertical space is taken up than with conventional lateral suspension files, and less horizontal space is taken up if the file pockets are used as working files.

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Description

[0001] The present invention relates to a file for use in a lateral suspension filing system, and to the lateral suspension filing system using such a file.

[0002] Lateral filing systems employ file pockets that are suspended by brackets or hooks from one or more suspension bars or flanges. The suspension bars run across the width of vertically extending filing cupboards or shelf units with the file pockets arranged perpendicular to the axes of the suspension bars so that access to the file pockets is from one side thereof. Lateral filing systems are more space efficient than filing systems which use filing drawers where the files are stored front to back with respect to a user. Typically, in a lateral filing system the file pocket remains in situ in the filing cupboard, and a secondary working file is used to store papers, the secondary file being removed from the file pocket when a user desires to work on the file. The file pocket must therefore have sufficient height to enable a secondary file containing A4 papers (or the like) to be easily inserted and removed from the file pocket.

[0003] The most common form of lateral filing system uses two relatively thin suspension bars spaced apart by slightly less than the width of a file pocket, with the file pockets being supplied with two hooks along each upper edge thereof. The suspension bars may be provided on the underside of a shelf. Each hook is placed close to an end of the file pocket, with the entrance to the hook for the suspension bar facing away from a central portion of the file pocket. Such lateral files must be offered up to the suspension bars at an angle from perpendicular to the suspension bar so that the hooks can easily pass between the bars. The file pocket must then be rotated so that it is perpendicular to the suspension bars in order that the hooks may be placed on the suspension bars. The file pockets are usually provided with cut-out areas beneath the hooks so that the suspension bars can be accommodated whilst the file pocket is being rotated. The placement of the file pockets on the suspension bars becomes increasingly more difficult as more file pockets are hung from the bars, due to the restriction on the space available to offer up the file pocket and then rotate it to the correct position.

[0004] Another known type of lateral suspension filing system is known as the "tub" type and uses suspension bars having a diameter of 20 mm. Front and rear suspending hooks are spaced apart along each upper edge of each file pocket, the entrances of the hooks facing towards the rear of the file pocket. The file pockets are offered up to the suspension bars with the hooks facing towards the rear of the filing cupboard. The rear hook is a simple inverted L shape and is offered up to the rear suspension bar first. The file pocket is then pivoted about the rear suspension bar so that the front hook may be placed over the front suspension bar. The front hook is an inverted J shape, and in order to hook it over the suspension bar properly, the file pocket must be sup-

ported forwards of its final position, then swung upwards above the level of the top of the front suspension bar, then pushed rearwards, and then lowered. The L shaped hook defines an elongated horizontal bar to retain it on the rear suspension bar during this operation. The "tub" type files use relatively thick suspension bars that cannot be provided underneath a shelf due to the need to have enough vertical clearance above the bars to enable the J shaped hook to be placed over the bar.

[0005] It is an object of the present invention to provide a file for use in a filing system having greater space efficiency than with prior systems, to enable easier placement of the file pockets in the system, to obviate the need for additional secondary files, and to improve indexing and therefore retrieval times.

[0006] According to a first aspect of the present invention there is provided a file for suspension on a set of parallel horizontally spaced support rails, comprising a folder having two leaves which may be folded together to define a document receiving pocket, rail engaging hooks located on opposed edges of the folder which are adjacent when the two leaves are folded together, and means for retaining documents against displacement from the folder, wherein the hooks are arranged such that the folder can be engaged with support rails by movement in a horizontal direction perpendicular to the rails.

[0007] The document retaining means enable the files to be used as working files, so that there is no need for secondary files to be placed within the file pockets, although secondary files could be stored in the file pockets. The system is thus extremely flexible. Less space is taken up than with conventional suspension files. This is particularly the case if the pockets are used as working files, as this eliminates the thickness of secondary files (1-2mm per pocket, representing a saving of about 10% in most circumstances). Even if secondary files are used however, a saving of space arises as the vertical space in between the suspension rails can be reduced given that the hooks do not have to be engaged over the front suspension rail. The files are also easy to position on the support rails due to the arrangement of the hooks, and are easy to retrieve.

[0008] Preferably four hooks are provided, two on each leaf of the document pocket. Preferably also each hook is defined by a reinforcing member extending along the edge of the folder.

[0009] The document retaining means preferably comprises a flap provided along a front edge of the folder that is upwardly extending when the file is suspended. The document retaining means may also or instead comprise a clip to retain papers in engagement with the folder.

[0010] According to a second aspect of the present invention there is provided a filing system comprising a set of parallel horizontally spaced support rails, and at least one file as previously defined.

[0011] The support rails may comprise rails extending

beneath a shelf.

[0012] An embodiment of the present invention will now be described, by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a file according to the present invention;

Figure 2 is a plan view showing the file of Figure 1 fully open;

Figure 3 is a perspective view of an alternative design of file according to the present invention;

Figure 4 is a plan view of the file of Figure 3 fully opened; and

Figure 5 is a side view of the file of Figure 1 in place on suspension rails provided underneath a shelf.

[0013] Referring to Figures 1 and 2 of the drawings, there is illustrated a file 1 comprising a rectangular sheet of cardboard or stiffened paper. A central fold 2 is provided, with two further fold lines 3 provided either side of fold 2. The central fold 2 divides the cardboard blank into two rectangles sufficient to accommodate documents of a required size (for example A4 paper). Folds 3 enable the file to have a greater width than if folded at fold 2. The cardboard blank has a central cut-out 4, and the outer edges are folded over to define flaps 5. When folded, the file defines two adjacent leaves 6, 7.

[0014] Four hooks 8 are provided, two along each edge of the file that is parallel with central fold 2, the hooks being positioned so that when the file 1 is folded together along fold 2 (or folds 3), two hooks on opposite edges are aligned and effectively act together as one hook. The hooks 8 have a generally flattened J shape, and are formed of a stiffer material than the file, such as metal or a plastics material to enable them to support the weight of documents in the file. The edges of the file on which the hooks are provided may be reinforced by a reinforcing strip of metal or another suitable material. In the illustrated case, the hooks 8 are in the form of projections extending from reinforcing strips retained in edge folds 5, the hooks projecting through slots in the folded edges of the file.

[0015] A paper retaining clip 9 and plate 10 is provided in the centre of the file, close to one fold 3, on which punched papers can be placed. A paper retaining flap 11 is also provided, attached to leaf 6. The flap also acts as a paper shield, covering the file contents when a file is suspended, thereby giving an overall neat appearance. A perspex label holder 12 is attached to leaf 7 such that the paper retaining flap 11 and the perspex label holder 12 are positioned next to one another when the file is folded. The flap 11 and the label holder 12 are thus positioned at the front of the file pocket when it is in situ. Papers are generally restrained from falling backwards out of a file pocket (if they are not secured by a clip) by the back of the filing cupboard or back wall of a shelving unit, although a flap (not shown) may be placed along the back edge of the file pocket.

[0016] The perspex label holder 12 enables a label identifying the contents of the file to be easily viewed when the file is in situ on suspension rails. Alternatively, a title tab 13 may be provided, as shown in Figures 3 and 4. The title tab 13 is formed by shaping leaf 7 to be longer than leaf 6, and may be provided with colour coded labels or large laser printed title labels for example for ease of file identification and retrieval.

[0017] The suspension rails may be free standing or supported underneath a shelf, as shown in Figure 5. Shelf 14 has two elongate rails 15 attached to its underside, the rails 15 extending along the entire length of shelf 14 to enable a large number of files to be suspended therefrom. Rails 15 are a complementary shape to hooks 8, in this instance a flattened J shape with the entrance to the brackets facing towards the front of the shelf.

[0018] In order to suspend the file, it is offered up beneath the suspension rails such that each pair of hooks is adjacent one suspension rail. The file is then moved vertically, pushed rearwardly, and then lowered onto the rails. Because of the relatively low height of the hooks 8, there is no need for a large amount of vertical clearance above the suspension rails.

[0019] As the file is easy to place onto the suspension rails and is easy to remove therefrom, and also does not need much space for this operation to be carried out, there is no need for separate secondary files to be used. Whether or not secondary files are used, the files do not take up as great a vertical depth as previous lateral filing system file pockets, and so the suspension rails can be placed closer together in the vertical direction than with previous systems. This affords, on average, around 16% extra filing capacity in a standard sized filing cupboard.

[0020] It will be appreciated that many other forms of paper retaining means may be used in conjunction with the filing system according to the present invention, for example pockets, ring binders, different retaining flaps, etc.

[0021] It will be appreciated that the described files and filing system provide great flexibility. The suspension pockets can be used as active files which are removed from the system when the retained papers are to be worked on, or may retain separate working files. Papers can be retained in loose-leaf form, or retained by clips. The front edges of the files can be easily labelled, assisting in efficient file retrieval and reinsertion into the system. The files can be used with free-standing suspension rails, or with rails that are mounted beneath conventional shelving systems. The files may support devices such as press studs (not shown) to releasably secure adjacent pockets together, thereby preventing papers being inserted between adjacent pockets.

Claims

1. A file for suspension on a set of parallel horizontally spaced support rails, comprising a folder having two leaves which may be folded together to define a document receiving pocket, rail engaging hooks located on opposed edges of the folder which are adjacent when the two leaves are folded together, and means for retaining documents against displacement from the folder, wherein the hooks are arranged such that the folder can be engaged with support rails by movement in a horizontal direction perpendicular to the rails. 5
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2. A file according to claim 1, wherein four hooks are provided, two on each leaf of the document pocket. 15
3. A file according to claim 2, wherein each hook is defined by a reinforcing member extending along the edge of the folder. 20
4. A file according to any preceding claim, wherein the document retaining means comprises a flap provided along an edge of the folder that is upwardly extending when the file is suspended. 25
5. A file according to any preceding claim, wherein the document retaining means comprises a clip to retain papers in engagement with the folder. 30
6. A filing system comprising a set of parallel horizontally spaced support rails, and at least one file according to any preceding claim.
7. A filing system according to claim 6, wherein the support rails comprise rails extending beneath a shelf. 35
8. A file substantially as hereinbefore described, with reference to the accompanying drawings. 40
9. A filing system substantially as hereinbefore described, with reference to the accompanying drawings. 45

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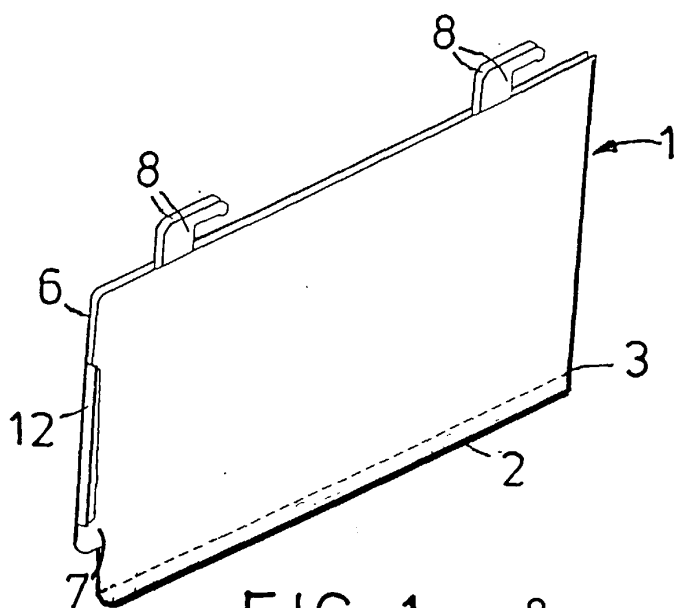


FIG. 1

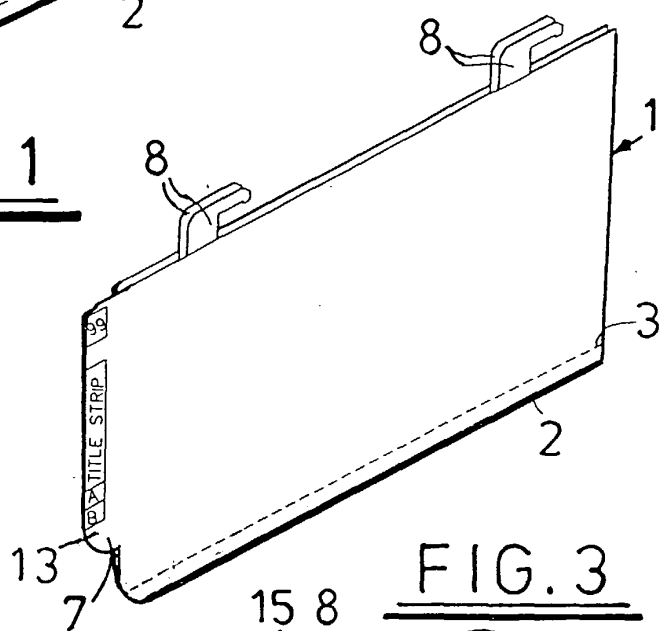


FIG. 3

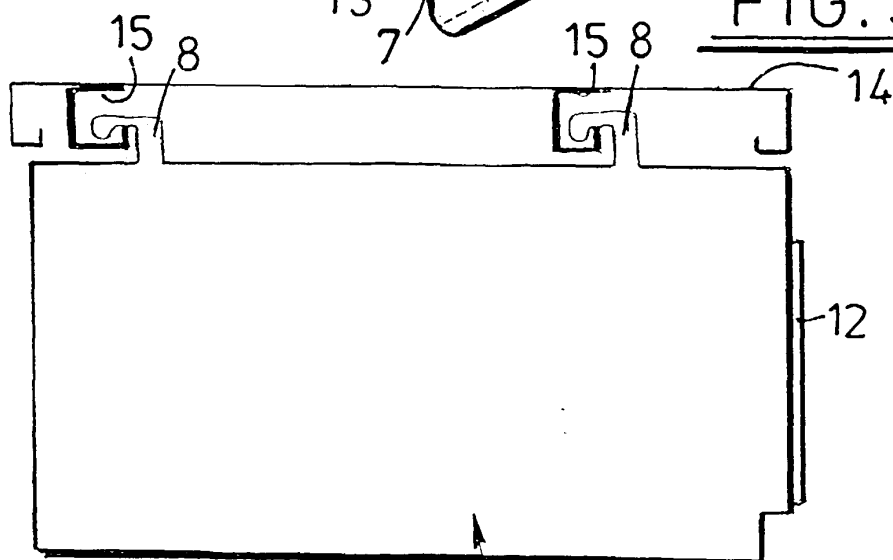


FIG. 5

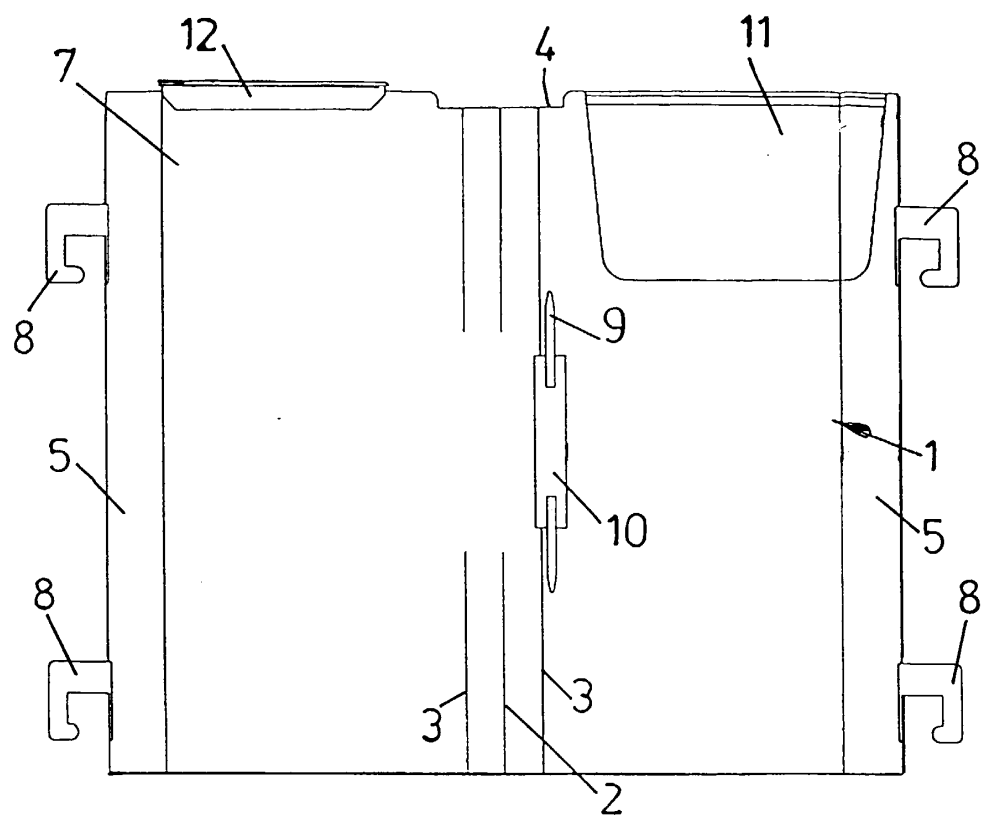


FIG. 2

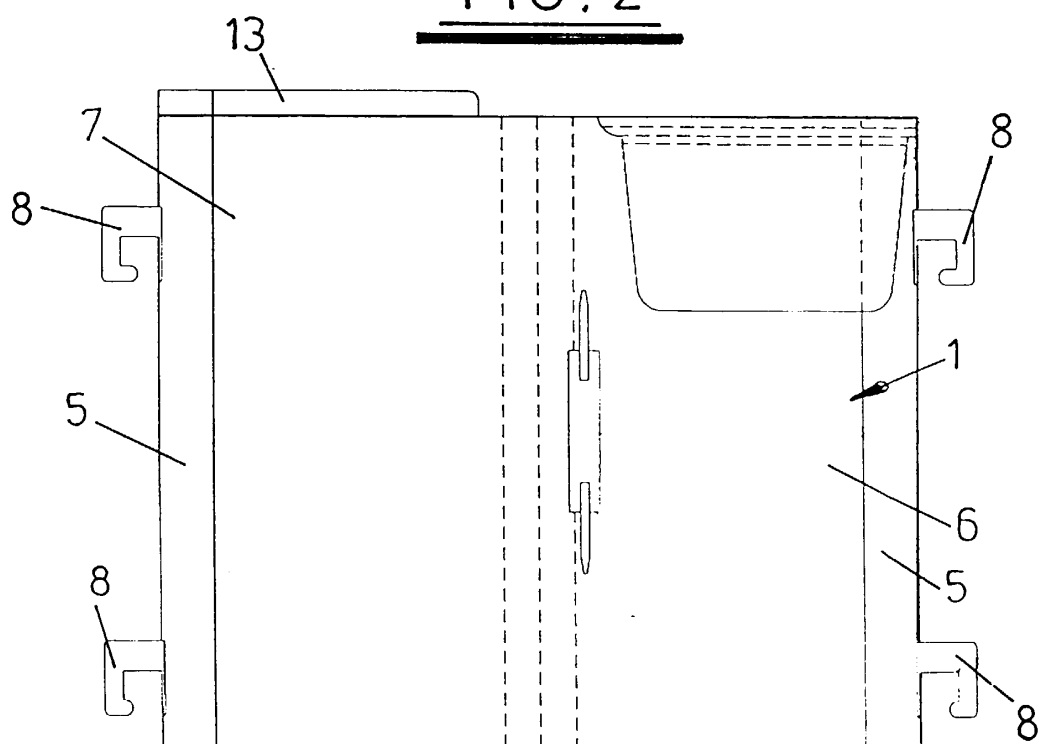


FIG. 4



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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 00 30 9996

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.7)
X	FR 1 032 526 A (PESARESI) 29 June 1953 (1953-06-29) * the whole document *	1,2,6,8,9	B42F15/00
Y	FR 1 463 195 A (BRUNET) 3 March 1967 (1967-03-03) * the whole document *	1-4,6,7	
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Y	CH 281 150 A (HANS ERNST) 29 February 1952 (1952-02-29) * the whole document *	6,7	
A	FR 1 166 685 A (BAIZE-COVILLE) 13 November 1958 (1958-11-13) * the whole document *	1-3	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.7)
			B42F
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 12 February 2001	Examiner Loncke, J
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS 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			

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**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO.**

EP 00 30 9996

This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report. The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on
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12-02-2001

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For more details about this annex : see Official Journal of the European Patent Office, No. 12/82