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(54) **Document wallet**

(57) Document wallet including a plurality of pockets (5), each of which is able to receive a label or other form of indicia, and a portion arranged such that the content of the pockets in each of the document wallets may be seen when a number of similar wallets are aligned. In

an alternative example, a plurality of document wallets each include at least one pocket, with a label provided in the or at least one of the pockets. A transparent or translucent portion is arranged such that, when the wallets are aligned, it is possible to see the content of the pockets through the wallets.

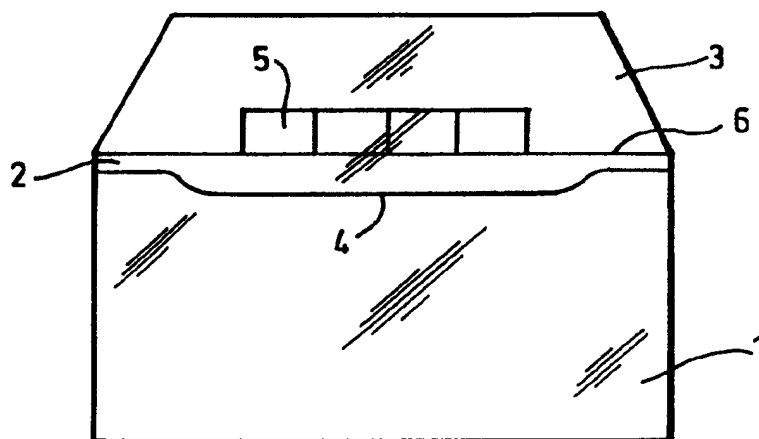


Fig.1.

Description

[0001] Document wallets, holders, files or folders are well known for storing and protecting documents. Typically, such products, referred to herein as document wallets, are formed from cardboard or plastics material. They include a front and rear panel, usually rectangular in shape, that are usually connected to each other around three edges, leaving the other edge unconnected to allow access to the interior of the wallet. A flap is usually connected to the rear panel, and is foldable over the open edge of the wallet onto the front panel, thereby closing the opening and retaining documents within the wallet. It is known for a fastener to be provided to allow the flap to be fastened to the front panel.

[0002] Also known are hanging or suspension files. A suspension file comprises a sheet of material, for example of cardboard or plastics, folded into a V-shape to form a pocket or pouch. Suspension rails are provided on two ends of the pouch, allowing the pouch to be supported on a pair of parallel bars. Index tabs are provided on one of the suspension rails. The tabs may be plastics tabs, into which a label may be inserted. In general, the index tabs can be positioned in any one of a number of different positions along the length of the suspension rail. In this way, the index tabs of adjacent files suspended from the parallel bars may be offset, making location of a desired file easier than if the index tabs are in alignment.

[0003] According to the present invention, a document wallet is provided that includes a plurality of pockets, each of which is able to receive a label or other form of indicia, and includes a portion arranged such that the content of the pockets in each of the document wallets may be seen when a number of similar wallets are aligned.

[0004] With the arrangement according to this aspect of the present invention, it is possible to provide a number of document wallets, and to position a label in one of the pockets of each wallet. By offsetting the pocket in which the label is provided in adjacent wallets, it becomes possible to locate the file of interest merely by viewing the labels in all of the wallets through the other wallets. Furthermore, where there are a number of wallets that contain related documents, the label may be positioned in the same corresponding pocket of each of the wallets. For other wallets that contain unrelated documents, the label may be positioned in a different pocket. In this way, the labels do not need to include information identifying the content of the wallet. Instead, the content of the wallet is indicated by the position of the label. This also means that, by viewing the labels through the wallets, it can be determined whether all wallets containing documents related to a particular subject have been removed, since only then will it be possible to see right through the wallets in the position of the pocket in which labels are provided to indicate a particular subject or type of content.

[0005] According to a further aspect of the present invention, a plurality of document wallets are provided, each including at least one pocket, each wallet including a label provided in the or at least one of the pockets, and including at least a transparent or translucent portion arranged such that, when the wallets are aligned, it is possible to see the content of the pockets through the wallets.

[0006] Where each of the wallets includes a single pocket, the pocket in different wallets is provided at a different location, such that the pockets in which the labels are provided in adjacent wallets are offset. This has the advantage that only one pocket is provided in each wallet, thereby preventing the need to provide a plurality of pockets with the associated additional cost of material.

[0007] Alternatively, the wallets may each include a plurality of pockets, and in this case the labels in different wallets may be positioned in different respective pockets such that the labels are offset. This has the advantage that all wallets can be formed identically, thereby reducing the number of different wallet arrangements that must be formed, and thereby assisting manufacture. This also gives greater flexibility to the final user, who can select which relative pocket to provide the label.

[0008] To assist in the ability to view the contents of the pockets through a number of wallets, it is preferred that the pockets are provided along a side of the wallet. In this way, provided the documents contained in the wallet are smaller than the wallet, the documents will tend not to obscure the pockets.

[0009] In particular, it is preferred that the pockets are provided along the side of the wallet from which the wallet is viewed. For example, where the wallets are intended to be stored in a drawer, it is preferred that the pockets are provided along a top edge of the wallet. Where the wallets are designed to be stored on a shelf, it is preferred that the pockets are provided along one end of the wallet. In either case, the pockets are located such that the documents contained within the wallet will be positioned away from the pockets, and the pockets are in a position assisting the easy viewing of the pockets.

[0010] It is preferred that the pocket or pockets are formed on the inside of the wallet, such that they are enclosed within the wallet when the wallet is closed. In this way, the pocket or pockets and the contents of the pocket are protected when the wallet is closed. The protection of the contents of the pocket is desirable, since the loss of the content of the pocket will mean that the correct wallet cannot be located or identified. The protection of the pocket itself is beneficial, firstly because this prevents the pocket becoming torn or otherwise damaged such that it can no longer retain the label, and secondly since an exposed pocket, especially where this projects from the wallet, may cause injury to a user.

[0011] In an alternative, the pocket or pockets may be provided on the outside of the wallet, for example along

the front or rear panel or on a flap.

[0012] In a preferred example, the pocket or pockets are formed with the opening of the pockets being close to or coincident with the edge of a flap and the front or rear panel of the wallet. In this case, the pocket or pockets may be provided on the inside of the panel to which the flap is connected, or on the inside of the flap. In either case, it is possible to access the pocket or pockets when the flap is opened, and thereby to insert or remove a label or other form of indicia from the pocket or pockets. However, when the flap is closed to close the opening of the wallet, this also closes the opening of the pocket or pockets, thereby preventing the contents of the pocket or pockets being removed. This therefore prevents the accidental loss of the labels or other forms of indicia from the pocket or pockets when the wallet is closed.

[0013] Where a number of pockets are provided, it is preferred that at least four, and preferably five pockets are provided. This will allow a reasonable number of labels to be provided in the pockets, without the risk that the label in one wallet will completely obscure the label in another pocket. The desired number of pockets is dependent upon the required size of each pocket, and the number of different label positions that are desired. Where each wallet of a set includes a single, offset, pocket, the number of different pocket locations is also dependent upon the required size of each pocket, and the number of different label positions that are desired.

[0014] The labels or other indicia may include a description or reference indicative of the content of the respective wallets. Alternatively, the labels of other indicia may be otherwise visually distinct, for example by being of different colour, or of different shape. In any case, these can help to identify the content of the wallet.

[0015] Preferably, the entire wallet, including the pockets, is formed from a transparent or translucent material. Alternatively, only a portion of the wallet may be formed from a transparent or translucent material, or may be formed with an opening, to allow the content of the pockets to be seen.

[0016] The wallet is advantageously made from a plastics material, such as polypropylene, polythene or PVC. Preferably, the pockets are formed from a similar material. The pockets may beneficially be formed from a single piece of material that is joined to the material of the wallet to form the pockets. In a preferred example, the strip may be joined to the material of the wallet along one long edge and at the two ends, leaving the other long edge unattached, and with a number of joins at intervals along the length of the strip to define the individual pockets.

[0017] The joins between the pockets and the wallet may be of any suitable form including adhesive. However, where the wallet and pockets are formed from a plastics material, it is preferred that the joins are welds, for example ultrasonic welds. Alternatively, other forms of weld, or other forms of join, such as sewing or an adhesive, may be used.

[0018] An example of a wallet according to the present invention will now be described with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 shows a front view of a document wallet with the flap open; and,

Figure 2 shows a front view of a closed document wallet.

[0019] In the example shown in Figure 1, the document wallet includes a generally rectangular front panel 1 and a generally rectangular rear panel 2. These are formed from a single sheet of transparent or translucent plastics material, for example from polypropylene, polythene or PVC that is folded to form the front and rear panels 1,2. The respective side edges of the panels 1,2 are joined together, for example by spot welding, using an adhesive or by sewing to form the body of the wallet. The sides may be gusseted to allow the wallet to hold a greater number of documents. The front panel 1 is slightly shorter than the rear panel 2, and/or includes a cut-out section 4. This permits easier access to the interior of the wallet for insertion and removal of documents. Also, a flap 3 is provided as an extension to the rear panel 2. In use, the flap 3 is folded over the opening to the wallet along a fold line 6, thereby closing the wallet and protecting the documents within. The flap 3 may be attached to the front panel 3, for example using a snap fitting, a hook-and-loop type fastening, or by string. To this extent, the document wallet is similar to known wallets, for example as sold under the "Polyfile" (Trade Mark) name by Snopake Limited.

[0020] As shown in Figure 1, a plurality of pockets 5 are formed using an additional strip of material attached to the inside of the flap 3 of the wallet. This strip is joined at each end, and along the top edge when the flap 3 is opened. The bottom of the strip is coincident with the join between the flap 3 and the rear panel 2. The bottom of the strip is not joined to the flap 3. Further, the strip 5 is joined to the flap 3 at regular intervals along the length of the strip 5 to define a plurality of individual pockets. Each of the pockets 5 is accessible through the bottom opening.

[0021] In use, when the flap 3 is opened, a label or file tag may be inserted into any one of the pockets through the lower opening. The label or file tag may be placed in a particular one of the pockets depending on the nature of the documents contained within the wallet. For example, all wallets containing documents relating to one subject may have a label or file tag inserted in the corresponding pocket, with all wallets containing documents relating to a second subject having a label or file tag located in a corresponding but different pocket. In this way, when a number of wallets are positioned in alignment, due to the transparency of the material from which the wallets are formed, it is possible to identify any wallets with a label or file tag in a pocket in a

particular position, and therefore to easily find all wallets containing documents relating to a particular subject.

[0022] Alternatively, the label or file tag for each of a number of files may be positioned in a different pocket. In this case, each label or file tag may include an indication of the subject to which the documents relate, or may be of a different colour. Since the material from which the wallets are formed are transparent or translucent, when the folders are held in alignment, it is possible to see the label or file tag of interest, and thereby to easily locate the folder required.

[0023] By providing the pockets 5 on the inside of the flap 3 of the folder with the opening at the bottom, corresponding generally to the fold line 6, it is possible to access the pockets 5 when the folder is opened, for example to remove or replace the label or file tag. However, when the folder is closed, the opening of the pockets 5 will be at or close to the join between the flap 3 and the top of the rear panel 2 of the wallet. This will close the opening to the pockets, and therefore the content of the pockets 5 will be unable to fall out of the pockets 5. Further, by positioning the pockets 5 at the edge of the folder, the pockets 5, and therefore the labels or file tags contained within them will not be obscured by the documents within the folder.

[0024] In an alternative example, the pockets 5 may be provided on the inside of the back panel 2 of the wallet. In this case, the open edge of the pockets will be the upper edge of the pockets, again in alignment with the join between the rear panel 2 of the wallet and the flap 3. In this way, when the wallet is closed, the opening to the pockets will be closed.

[0025] It will be appreciated that the pockets 5 may be placed elsewhere on the folder, for example elsewhere on the rear or front panel 1,2, or on the flap 3.

[0026] Whilst the above described embodiment is formed from a transparent or translucent material to allow the content of the pocket or pockets to be seen when the wallet is closed, it is possible for the wallet to be formed from an opaque material, and in the region overlying the pockets for the material to be transparent or translucent, or to be cut-away, to allow the content of the pocket to be observed. In some cases, it is desirable to print onto the wallet, and in this case the printing can be omitted at least in the portion overlying the pocket to allow the content of the pocket to be seen.

[0027] An alternative example of the present invention is shown in Figure 2. In this case, the pockets 5 are formed by a strip of material joined to the outside of the front panel 1 of the wallet, along one of the sides of the wallet. Whilst pockets 5 positioned on the outside of the folder are not protected in the same way as pockets on the inside of the folder, this increased accessibility may, in some applications, be preferred.

[0028] In the example shown in Figure 2, a closure 7 can be seen for closing the flap 3 onto the front panel 1 of the wallet, to keep the wallet closed. The closure 7 may be a press stud providing a snap-fitting, or a hook-

and-loop type fastener. Alternatively, the closure may be omitted.

[0029] The two examples shown in Figures 1 and 2 each have a plurality of pockets 5. This allows all the wallets to be formed identically. The user then selects which of the pockets to provide a label or other form of indicia. In an alternative aspect of the present invention, each wallet is formed with a single pocket, the pocket being in a different position in different wallets. In this way, when a label is provided in the pocket in each wallet and the wallets are aligned, the labels will be offset. This will allow the labels to be seen. In this case, the pockets can be provided on the inside or outside of the wallet, as with the other examples described.

Claims

1. A document wallet including a plurality of pockets, each of which is able to receive a label or other form of indicia, and a portion arranged such that the content of the pockets in each of the document wallets may be seen when a number of similar wallets are aligned.
2. A document wallet according to Claim 1, in which the pockets are provided along a side of the wallet, preferably along the side of the wallet from which the wallet is viewed.
3. A document wallet according to Claim 1 or Claim 2, in which the pockets are formed on the inside of the wallet, such that they are enclosed within the wallet when the wallet is closed.
4. A document wallet according to Claim 3, in which the document wallet includes a flap for closing the opening to the wallet, and in which the pockets are formed with the opening of the pockets being close to or coincident with the edge of a flap and the front or rear panel of the wallet such that, in use, the closing of the wallet closes the opening to the pockets.
5. A document wallet according to any one of the preceding Claims, in which the wallet, including the pockets, is formed from a transparent or translucent material.
6. A document wallet according to any one of Claims 1 to 4, in which a portion of the wallet overlying the pockets is transparent or translucent material, or includes an opening, arranged such that the content of the pockets can be seen.
7. A document wallet according to any one of the preceding claims, in which the pockets are formed from a single piece of material that is joined to the material of the wallet to form the pockets.

8. A document wallet according to Claim 7, in which the strip is joined to the material of the wallet along one long edge and at the two ends, leaving the other long edge unattached, and with a number of joins at intervals along the length of the strip to define the individual pockets. 5
9. A plurality of document wallets, each including at least one pocket, each wallet including a label provided in the or at least one of the pockets, and including at least a transparent or translucent portion arranged such that, when the wallets are aligned, it is possible to see the content of the pockets through the wallets. 10
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10. A plurality of document wallets according to Claim 9, in which the pocket in different wallets is provided at a different location.
11. A plurality of document wallets according to Claim 9 or Claim 10, in which the or each pocket is provided along a side of the respective wallet, preferably along the side of the respective wallet from which the wallets are viewed. 20
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12. A plurality of document wallets according to any one of Claims 9 to 11, in which the or each pocket is formed on the inside of the respective wallet, such that they are enclosed within the respective wallet when the respective wallet is closed. 30
13. A plurality of document wallets according to Claim 12, in which each document wallet includes a flap for closing the opening to the wallet, and in which the pockets are formed with the opening of the pockets being close to or coincident with the edge of a flap and the front or rear panel of the wallet such that, in use, the closing of the wallet closes the opening to the pockets. 35
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14. A plurality of document wallets according to any one of Claims 9 to 13, in which each wallet is formed from a transparent or translucent material.
15. A plurality of document wallets according to any one of Claims 9 to 13, in which a portion of each wallet overlying the pockets is transparent or translucent material, or includes an opening, arranged such that the content of the pockets can be seen. 45
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16. A plurality of document wallets according to any one of Claims 9 to 15, in which the pockets are formed from a single piece of material that is joined to the material of the respective wallet to form the pockets. 55
17. A plurality of document wallets according to Claim 16, in which the strip is joined to the material of the respective wallet along one long edge and at the two ends, leaving the other long edge unattached, and with a number of joins at intervals along the length of the strip to define the individual pockets.

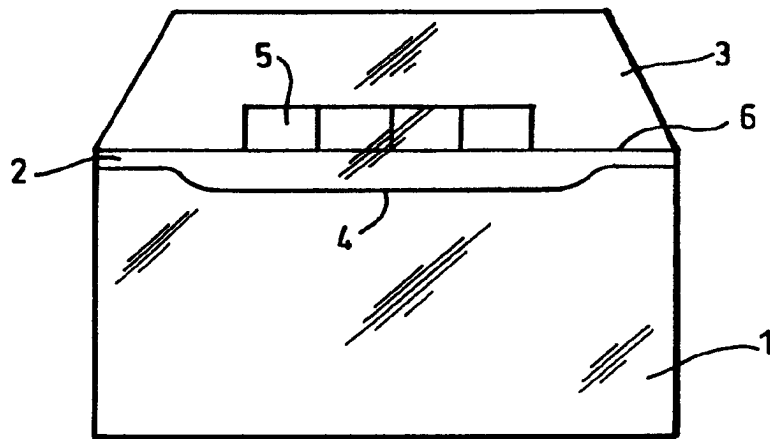


Fig.1.

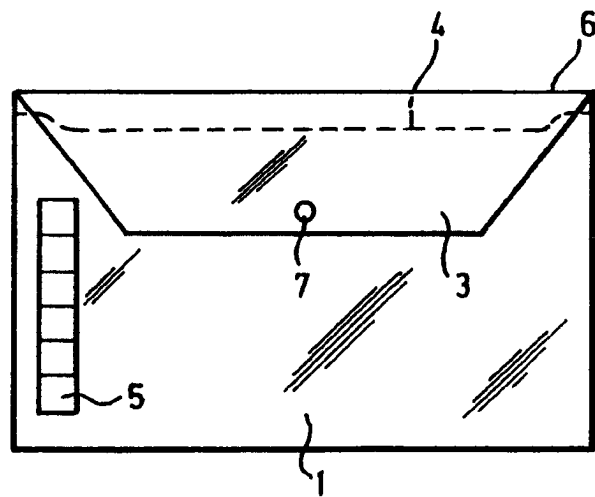


Fig.2.



European Patent
Office

EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 02 25 2567

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)
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X	US 3 565 148 A (MILLER ERWIN LIONEL) 23 February 1971 (1971-02-23) * column 1, line 39-55; figures 1-5 * ----	1,2, 5-12,14, 16,17	
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A	US 2 871 901 A (JULIUS NASH DANIEL) 3 February 1959 (1959-02-03) * the whole document * -----	1-17	TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.7) A45C
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search MUNICH		Date of completion of the search 24 June 2002	Examiner Lang, D
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			

EPO FORM 1503 03.82 (P04C01)

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

EP 02 25 2567

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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24-06-2002

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