(19) Europäisches Patentamt
European Patent Office
Office européen des brevets

(11) EP 2 017 180 A1

(12) EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION

(43) Date of publication:
21.01.2009 Bulletin 2009/04

(21) Application number: **07252890.4**

(22) Date of filing: **20.07.2007**

(51) Int Cl.:
B65D 5/00 *(2006.01)* ***B65D 5/42*** *(2006.01)*
B65D 21/02 *(2006.01)* ***B65D 85/10*** *(2006.01)*

(84) Designated Contracting States:
AT BE BG CH CY CZ DE DK EE ES FI FR GB GR HU IE IS IT LI LT LU LV MC MT NL PL PT RO SE SI SK TR
Designated Extension States:
AL BA HR MK RS

(71) Applicant: **Philip Morris Products S.A.**
2000 Neuchâtel (CH)

(72) Inventors:
- **Bourgoin, Philippe**
  1033 Cheseaux (CH)
- **Vickerstaff, John**
  2000 Neuchâtel (CH)

(74) Representative: **Millburn, Julie Elizabeth**
Reddie & Grose
16 Theobalds Road
London
WC1X 8PL (GB)

(54) Double pack with integral connector

(57) A container for smoking articles comprises at least two packs (2, 5) hingedly connected in a Jacob's ladder arrangement, each for housing a separate bundle of smoking articles. In an initial position, the container comprises: a first pack (2) having a first wall (11, 51) with opposed first and second edges and an integral connector (17, 57) extending across the first wall (11, 51) and a second pack (5) having a first wall (31, 71) with opposed first and second edges and an integral connector (37, 77) extending across the first wall (31, 71). The integral connector (17, 57) of the first pack (2) comprises a first section (18, 58) hinged about the first edge of the first wall (11, 51) of the first pack (2) and a second section (19, 59) hinged about the second edge of the first wall (11, 51) of the first pack (2). The integral connector (37, 77) of the second pack (5) comprises a first section (38, 78) hinged about the second edge of the first wall (31, 71) of the second pack (5) and a second section (39, 79) hinged about the first edge of the first wall (31, 71) of the second pack (5). The first section (18, 58) of the integral connector (17, 57) of the first pack (2) is affixed to the first section (38, 78) of the integral connector (37, 77) of the second pack and the second section (19, 59) of the integral connector (17, 57) of the first pack is affixed to the second section (38, 78) of the integral connector (37, 77) of the second pack so that the first edges of the first walls (11, 51, 31, 71) of the first (2) and second (5) packs are adjacent and the second edges of the first walls (11, 51, 31, 71) of the first (2) and second (5) packs are adjacent.

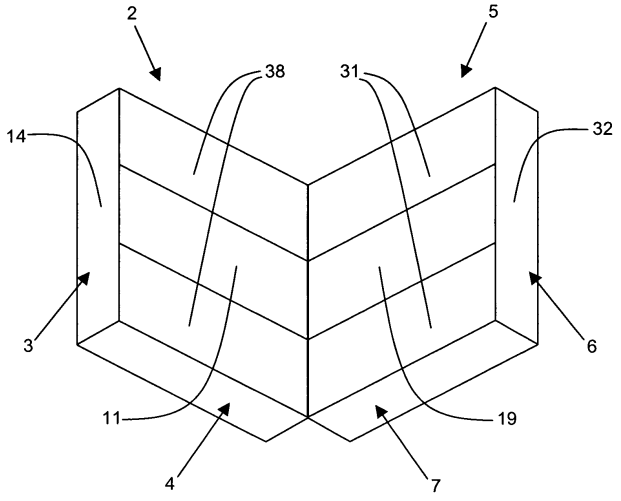

Figure 1a

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Description

[0001] The present invention relates to a container for smoking articles comprising at least two hingedly connected packs, each for housing a separate bundle of smoking articles.

[0002] WO-A-2006/079799 discloses packages comprising two packs connected in a Jacob's ladder arrangement by at least first and second straps and blanks and a method for forming such packages.

[0003] In one aspect, WO-A-2006/079799 describes a package comprising: first and second packs each capable of containing items, each pack having a first face bound by a first edge and a second edge, the second edge being parallel to the first edge; and means, connecting the first and second packs, which means comprising first and second straps which are attachable to the first and second packs; wherein, in a first position of the packs the first face of the first and second packs face each other with the first edges of the first and second pack adjacent to each other and the second edges of the first and second pack adjacent each other, the first and second straps extending across the first face and being hinged about the first and second edges, wherein the first strap is hinged about the first edge of the first pack and hinged about the second edge of the second pack and the second strap is hinged about the second edge of the first pack and hinged about the first edge of the second pack, whereby the first and second packs are movable, one relative to the other between at least the first position, a second position in which the second pack is rotated relative to the first pack about the first edge and a third position in which the second pack is rotated relative to the first pack about the second edge.

[0004] In another aspect, WO-A-2006/079799 describes a blank for forming the means comprising first and second straps that connects the first and second packs of the package, which comprises a single sheet of material, having at least a first region providing a first strap and a second region providing a second strap, the regions being adjoined by a line operable to separate the first region from the second region, the line having a first, second and third section thereon, the second section being a weakened section such that the first and second regions are separable, and the first and second sections being cut portions extending from respective ends of the weakened section to the edge of the sheet.

[0005] In a further aspect, WO-A-2006/079799 describes another blank for forming the means comprising first and second straps that connects the first and second packs of the package, which comprises a single sheet of material having a first elongate section in which there is an elongate hole having major edges which are spaced apart and a second section aligned with the hole and extending from a minor edge of the first section, the second section having a maximum width substantially equal or less than the minimum width of the hole and a length greater than the length of the hole such that a free minor edge of the second section is threadable through the hole and capable of attaching to the free minor edge of the first section.

[0006] The first and second packs of all of the packages described in the specification and shown in the drawings of WO-A-2006/079799 are connected in a Jacobs Ladder arrangement by a separate joining blank or by a separate Jacobs Ladder structure. To manufacture the packages, a separate joining blank is either fixed to the first and second packs or the first and second packs are positioned within, and in some cases fixed to, two pack containing sections in a separate Jacobs Ladder structure.

[0007] It would be desirable to provide a container comprising two or more packs connected in a Jacob's ladder or similar arrangement that can be manufactured in a simple way.

[0008] According to the invention there is provided a container for smoking articles comprising at least two hingedly connected packs, each for housing a separate bundle of smoking articles, wherein in an initial position the container comprises: a first pack having a first wall with opposed first and second edges and an integral connector extending across the first wall, the integral connector comprising a first section hinged about the first edge of the first wall and a second section hinged about the second edge of the first wall; and a second pack having a first wall with opposed first and second edges and an integral connector extending across the first wall, the second integral connector comprising a first section hinged about the second edge of the first wall and a second section hinged about the first edge of the first wall, wherein the first section of the integral connector of the first pack is affixed to the first section of the integral connector of the second pack and the second section of the integral connector of the first pack is affixed to the second section of the integral connector of the second pack so that the first edges of the first walls of the first and second packs are adjacent and the second edges of the first walls of the first and second packs are adjacent.

[0009] Throughout the specification the term "integral" denotes that the connector and the first wall of each of the first and second packs of containers according to the invention are formed from a single piece of material, for example, from the same blank.

[0010] The first and second packs of containers according to the invention are hingeable relative to one another about the first edges of the first walls of the first pack and the second pack between the initial position and a second position. In the initial position the first edges of the first walls of the first and second packs are adjacent and the second edges of the first walls of the first and second packs are adjacent. In the second position the first edges of the first walls of the first and second packs are adjacent and the second edges of the first walls of the first and second packs are spaced apart. The first pack and the second pack of containers according to the invention are also hingeable relative to one another about

the second edges of the first walls of the first and second packs between the initial position and a third position. In the third position the second edges of the first walls of the first and second packs are adjacent and the first edges of the first walls of the first and second packs are spaced apart.

[0011] In the initial position the first walls of the first and second packs are parallel and opposed and in the second and third positions the first walls of the first and second packs are substantially coplanar.

[0012] The first pack and the second pack of containers according to invention are thus advantageously hingedly connected in a Jacob's ladder arrangement by the affixed first sections and the affixed second sections of the integral connectors. Since the first and second packs are connected by integral connectors, containers according to the invention can advantageously be formed from fewer blanks or other pieces of material than the packages described in WO-A-2006/079799. This advantageously simplifies the manufacture and assembly of containers according to the invention.

[0013] In a preferred embodiment of the invention, the integral connector of the first pack further comprises a third section hinged about the first edge of the first wall of the first pack, the second pack further comprises a third section hinged about the second edge of the first wall of the second pack, and the third section of the integral connector of the first pack is affixed to the third section of the integral connector of the second pack. Preferably, the second section of the integral connector of the first pack is disposed between the first section and the third section of the integral connector of the first pack, and the second section of the integral connector of the second pack is disposed between the first section and the third section of the integral connector of the second pack.

[0014] Preferably, the first, second and, if present, third sections of the integral connectors of the first pack and the second pack of containers according to the invention are detachably connected to one another in the initial position. More preferably, the sections of the integral connectors are detachably connected to one another along lines of weakness in the initial position. Most preferably, the sections of the integral connectors are detachably connected to one another along lines of perforations in the initial position.

[0015] In use, hinging of the first and second packs relative to one another about the first edges or the second edges of the first walls of the first and second packs from the initial position to the second position or from the initial position to the third position, respectively, detaches the first sections of the integral connectors of the first and second packs from the seconds sections of the integral connectors of the first and second packs. Where present, hinging of the first and second packs relative to one another from the initial position to the second position or from the initial position to the third position also detaches the third sections of the integral connectors of the first and second packs from the seconds sections of the integral connectors of the first and second packs.

[0016] If desired, containers according to the invention may comprise first and second packs having integral connectors comprising more than three sections. For example, containers according to the invention may comprise first and second packs having integral connectors further comprising a fourth section, a fourth section and a fifth section, or a fourth section, a fifth section and a sixth section. The further sections may be arranged similarly to either the first section or the second section of the integral connectors of the first and second packs. Where present, fourth and sixth sections of the integral connectors of the first and second packs of containers according to the invention are preferably hinged about the same edges of the first walls of the first and second packs as the respective second sections of the integral connectors thereof. Where present, fifth sections of the integral connectors of the first and second packs of containers according to the invention are preferably hinged about the same edges of the first walls of the first and second packs as the respective first and third sections of the integral connectors thereof.

[0017] Preferably, the opposed first and second edges of the first wall of the first pack and the opposed first and second edges of the first wall of the second pack are longitudinal edges. More preferably, the opposed first and second edges are longitudinal vertical edges of the packs.

[0018] One or both of the first pack and the second pack of containers according to the invention may be a slide and shell pack comprising an outer shell and an inner slide within the outer shell. Alternatively or in addition, one or both of the first pack and the second pack of containers according to the first aspect of the invention may be a hinge-lid pack comprising a lower box portion and an upper lid portion hinged to the lower box portion.

[0019] Where the first pack is a slide and shell pack, the integral connector of the first pack is preferably of substantially the same dimensions as the first wall of the first pack. Similarly, where the second pack is a slide and shell pack, the integral connector of the second pack is preferably of substantially the same dimensions as the first wall of the second pack.

[0020] Where the first pack is a hinge-lid pack, the integral connector of the first pack is preferably of substantially the same dimensions as the lower box portion of the first wall of the first pack. Similarly, where the second pack is a hinge-lid pack, the integral connector of the second pack is preferably of substantially the same dimensions as the lower box portion of the first wall of the second pack.

[0021] Preferably, the first pack and the second pack of containers according to the invention are both slide and shell packs or both hinge-lid packs. It will be appreciated, however, that containers according to the invention may comprise a first pack and a second pack provided with different types of opening and closing means.

For example, the first pack may be a hinge-lid pack and the second pack may be a slide and shell pack.

[0022] In one preferred embodiment of the invention, the first pack and the second pack are both slide and shell packs and the outer shell of the first pack and the integral connector of the first pack are formed from a first blank and the outer shell of the second pack and the integral connector of the second pack are formed from a second blank.

[0023] In another preferred embodiment of the invention, the first pack and the second pack are both hinge-lid packs and the first pack and the integral connector of the first pack are formed from a first blank and the second pack and the integral connector of the second pack are formed from a second blank.

[0024] Where both the first pack and the second pack of containers according to the invention are hinge-lid packs, the first pack may have a hinge-lid pivotable about a hinge line extending across the first wall of the first pack and the second pack may have a hinge-lid pivotable about a hinge line extending across the first wall of the second pack.

[0025] In alternative embodiments of the invention, the first pack may have a hinge-lid pivotable about a hinge line extending across a second wall of the first pack that is parallel and opposed to the first wall of the first pack and the second pack may have a hinge-lid pivotable about a hinge line extending across a second wall of the second pack that is parallel and opposed to the first wall of the second pack.

[0026] Preferably, the first section, second section and any further sections of the integral connector of the first pack are adhered to the first section, second section and any further sections of the integral connector of the second pack, respectively, with, for example, hot melt adhesive, contact adhesive or double sided adhesive tape. However, it will be appreciated that, a variety of other known means may be employed to affix corresponding sections of the integral connectors of the first and second packs to one another such as, for example, hook and loop type fasteners, magnetic fasteners or mating plug (male) and socket (female) type fasteners.

[0027] Containers according to the invention preferably further comprise retention means to provide resistance to movement of the first and second packs from the initial position to the second position and from the initial position to the third position, such that a positive force must be applied by a consumer to hinge the first and second packs relative to one another from the initial position to the second position and from the initial position to the third position. If desired, containers according to the invention may comprise retention means which provides a positive force that urges movement of the first pack and the second pack towards the initial position.

[0028] For example, the first pack and the second pack of containers according to the invention may be releasably connected in the initial position by the releasable engagement of first retention means provided on the first pack and second retention means provided on the second pack. The first retention means and the second retention means may comprise any suitable known magnetic fasteners, mechanical fasteners, adhesive fasteners or combinations thereof. For example, the first retention means and the second retention means may comprise one or more releasable pressure-actuated hook-and-loop type fasteners, snap fasteners or other mating plug (male) and socket (female) type fasteners.

[0029] Containers according to the invention may comprise two or more hingedly connected packs, each for housing a bundle of smoking articles, for example cigarettes, such as conventional lit-end cigarettes or cigarettes for use with electrical smoking systems (for example cigarettes of the type disclosed in US-A-5 692 525), cigars or cigarillos. Preferably, containers according to the invention comprise two or more hingedly connected packs, each for housing a separate bundle of cigarettes.

[0030] Through an appropriate choice of the dimensions thereof, the first pack and the second pack of containers according to the invention may be designed to house separate bundles of different numbers of cigarettes. Alternatively or in addition, the first pack and the second pack of containers according to the invention may be designed to house separate bundles of cigarettes of different dimensions (for example, cigarettes of different length or different circumference). The first pack and the second pack of containers according to the invention may, for example, be designed to house separate bundles of different numbers of short (between about 70 mm and about 75 mm in length), regular size (about 80mm in length), king size (about 84 mm in length), super-king size, slim, super-slim or wide cigarettes.

[0031] Through an appropriate choice of the dimensions of the first pack and the second pack thereof, containers according to the invention may also be designed to hold different total numbers of smoking articles. For example, containers for cigarettes according to the invention may comprise a first pack and a second pack for housing, in combination, a total of twenty or twenty-one regular size cigarettes. Alternatively, containers for cigarettes according to the invention may comprise a first pack and a second pack for housing, in combination, a total of seventeen or eighteen wide cigarettes.

[0032] The length, width and depth of the first pack and the second pack of containers according to the invention may be such that, when in the initial position, the resultant overall dimensions of the containers are similar to, or substantially the same as, the dimensions of a conventional disposable pack of smoking articles. For example, the length, width and depth of the first pack and the second pack may be such that, in the initial or first position, the resultant overall dimensions of the container are similar to the dimensions of a conventional disposable hinge-lid pack of twenty cigarettes.

[0033] Containers according to the invention may advantageously comprise first packs and second packs for housing separate bundles of smoking articles of different

types. A wide variety of different types of cigarettes are produced and sold. For example, different types of tobacco having unique characteristic tastes and aromas, such as Burley, Oriental and Virginia tobacco, are used alone or in varying amounts in tobacco blends to produce brands of cigarettes having different characteristic tastes. In addition, both plain cigarettes and cigarettes having many different types of filter tips are manufactured as well as cigarettes of differing length (for example, regular size, king size or super-king size), circumference (for example, slim or super-slim), strength of taste, resistance to draw and total particulate matter delivery. Furthermore, cigarettes containing flavourings such as menthol are also available.

[0034] Containers according to the invention may comprise first packs and second packs for housing separate bundles of cigarettes of a different tobacco blend or flavour. Alternatively, or in addition, containers according to the invention may comprise first packs and second packs for housing separate bundles of cigarettes of a different size (different length, different circumference or both different length and different circumference).

[0035] The first pack and the second pack of containers according to the invention may be of the same or different cross-section. For example, one or both of the first pack and the second pack of containers according to the invention may be rectangular, square, triangular, pentagonal, hexagonal, D-shaped, semi-circular or semi-oval in cross-section.

[0036] Preferably, the first pack and the second pack of containers according to the invention are substantially parallelepipedal. More preferably, the first pack and the second pack of containers according to the invention are substantially cuboid.

[0037] The first pack and the second pack of containers according to the invention may have one or more right-angled longitudinal edges, one or more right-angled transverse edges, one or more rounded longitudinal edges, one or more rounded transverse edges, one or more bevelled longitudinal edges, one or more bevelled transverse edges or any suitable combination thereof.

[0038] Preferably, the first pack and the second pack of containers according to the invention are of substantially the same shape. The dimensions of the first pack and the second pack of containers according to the invention may be the same or different. Preferably, the first pack and the second pack of containers according to the invention are of different dimensions. More preferably, the first pack and the second pack of containers according to the invention are of substantially the same length and width, but of different depth.

[0039] Preferably, the first wall of the first pack and the first wall of the second pack of containers according to the invention are of substantially the same dimensions.

[0040] Preferably, the first wall of the first pack and the first wall of the second pack are major walls of the packs. Preferably, the first wall of the first pack is a front wall or a rear wall of the first pack. Preferably, the first wall of the second pack is a front wall or a rear wall of the second pack.

[0041] The first pack and the second pack of containers according to the invention are preferably formed from one or more folded laminar blanks, more preferably from one or more folded laminar cardboard blanks.

[0042] The exterior surfaces of the first packs, second packs and connectors of containers according to the invention may be printed, embossed, debossed or otherwise embellished (for example using labels or stickers) with manufacturer or brand logos, trade marks, slogans and other consumer information and indicia. It will be appreciated that the same or different manufacturer and brand logos, trade marks, slogans, and other consumer information and indicia may be applied to the exterior surfaces of the first packs, second packs and connectors.

[0043] The connectors of containers according to the invention may be formed from one or more suitable materials including, but not limited to, paperboard, cardboard, plastic, metal (such as, for example, aluminium), transparent or opaque foil (such as , for example, polyethylene (PE) or polyethylene terephthalate (PET) foils) and laminated material (such as, for example, paper/aluminium, plastic/paper/aluminium or other laminates).

[0044] Containers according to the invention may comprise connectors having one or more windows or cut-outs provided therein. In preferred embodiments, the one or more windows or cut-outs interact or cooperate with images provided on the first walls of the first packs, second packs or first and second packs of the containers to generate further images.

[0045] The invention will be further described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 a shows a container according to a first embodiment of the invention, which comprises two hingedly connected slide and shell packs, in a position between the initial position and the third position;

Figure 1b shows the container of Figure 1 a in a position between the initial position and the second position;

Figure 2a shows the inner surface of a first blank for forming the outer shell and integral connector of the first slide and shell pack of the container shown in Figures 1 a and 1 b;

Figure 2b shows the inner surface of a second blank for forming the outer shell and integral connector of the second slide and shell pack of the container shown in Figures 1 a and 1 b;

Figure 3 shows the inner surface of a blank for forming the inner shell of the first slide and shell pack and the inner shell of the second slide and shell pack of the container shown in Figures 1 a and 1 b;

Figure 4a shows the inner surface of a first blank for forming a first hinge-lid pack of a container according to a second embodiment of the invention, which comprises two hingedly connected hinge-lid packs; and

Figure 4b shows the inner surface of a second blank for forming a second hinge-lid pack of the container according to the second embodiment of the invention.

[0046] Figures 2a, 2b, 3, 4a and 4b show blanks for forming containers or parts of containers according to embodiments of the invention. In all of these Figures, solid lines are used to denote cut lines or outer borders of the blanks. Dashed lines are used to denote lines, which are formed by compressing or partially cutting the material of the blanks by creasing, scoring, embossing or an equivalent process, along which the blanks are bent upon erection of the containers or parts of containers formed there from or which act as hinge. Dashed and dotted lines are used to denote lines of weakness, which are formed by, for example, perforating the material of the blanks, along which the blanks may be torn during use.

[0047] The container according to the first embodiment of the invention shown in Figures 1a and 1b comprises two hingedly connected cuboid slide and shell packs. The container comprises a first pack 2 having an outer shell 3 and an inner slide 4 within the outer shell 3 and a second pack 5 having an outer shell 6 and an inner slide 7 within the outer shell 6, which are connected in a Jacob's ladder arrangement.

[0048] An elongate blank 10 for forming the outer shell 3 of the first pack 2 is shown in Figure 2a. The blank 10 comprises a rear wall panel 11, a left side wall panel 12, a front wall panel 13 and a right side wall panel 14, which are separated from one another in the longitudinal direction of the blank 10 by vertical fold lines (shown by dashed lines in Figure 2a). A pair of rear wall flaps 15 are connected to the upper and lower edges of the rear wall 11 along horizontal fold lines and a right side wall flap 16 is connected to the side of the rear wall panel 11 along a vertical fold line. As shown in Figure 2a, the blank 10 also includes an integral connector panel 17 comprising first and third sections 18, which are connected to the right side wall panel 14 along vertical fold lines, and a second section 19 disposed between the first and third sections 18, which is detachably connected to the first and third sections 18 along horizontal lines of perforations (shown by dashed and dotted lines in Figure 2a). A left side wall flap 20 is connected to the second section 19 of the integral connector panel 17 along a vertical fold line.

[0049] An elongate blank 30 for forming the outer shell 6 of the second pack 5 is shown in Figure 2b. The blank 30 for forming the outer shell 6 of the second pack 5 is of largely similar construction to the blank 10 for forming the outer shell 3 of the first pack 2 and comprises a rear wall panel 31, a right side wall panel 34, a front wall panel 33 and a left side wall panel 32, which are separated from one another in the longitudinal direction of the blank 30 by vertical fold lines. A pair of rear wall flaps 35 are connected to the upper and lower edges of the rear wall panel 31 along horizontal fold lines and a left side wall flap 40 is connected to the side of the rear wall panel 31 along a vertical fold line. Like the blank 10 for forming the outer shell 3 of the first pack 2, the blank 30 for forming the outer shell 6 of the second pack 5 also includes an integral connector panel 37 comprising first and third sections 38 and a second section 39 disposed between the first and third sections 38, which is detachably connected to the first and third sections 38 along horizontal lines of perforations. However, as shown in Figure 2b, in the blank 30 for forming the outer shell 6 of the second pack 5 the second section 39 of the integral connector panel 37 is connected to the left side wall panel 32 along a vertical fold line and the first and third sections 38 of the integral connector panel 37 are connected to a right side wall flap 36 along vertical fold lines.

[0050] To erect the outer shell 3 of the first pack 2 of the container from the blank 10 shown in Figure 2a, the rear wall flaps 15 are folded inwardly through 180 degrees about the horizontal fold lines. The right side wall flap 16, rear wall panel 11, left side wall panel 12, front wall panel 13, right side wall panel 14, integral connector panel 17 and left side wall flap 20 are folded through 90 degrees about the vertical fold lines and the outer surface of the right side wall flap 16 is affixed to the inner surface of the right side wall panel 14. The inner surface of the left side wall flap 20 is affixed to the outer surface of the left side wall panel 12 so that in the erected outer shell 3, the first 18, second 19 and third sections 18 of the integral connector 17 overlie and extend across the rear wall panel 11.

[0051] To erect the outer shell 6 of the second pack 5 from the blank 30 shown in Figure 2b, the rear wall flaps 35 are folded inwardly through 180 degrees about the horizontal fold lines. The left side wall flap 40, rear wall panel 31, right side wall panel 34, front wall panel 33, left side wall panel 32, integral connector panel 37 and right side wall flap 36 are folded through 90 degrees about the vertical fold lines and the outer surface of the left side wall flap 40 is adhered to the inner surface of the left side wall panel 32. The inner surface of the right side wall flap 36 is affixed to the outer surface of the right side wall panel 34 so that in the erected outer shell 6, the first 38, second 39 and third sections 38 of the integral connector 37 overlie and extend across the rear wall panel 31.

[0052] If desired, the inwardly folded rear wall flaps 15, 35 may be affixed to the inner surface of the rear wall panels 11, 31 of the blanks 10, 30 during erection of the outer shells 3, 6 of the first pack 2 and the second pack 5.

[0053] To connect the erected outer shell 3 of the first pack 2 and the erected outer shell 6 of the second pack 5, the outer surfaces of the first section 18, second section 19 and third section 18 of the integral connector 17 of the first pack 2 are affixed to the outer surfaces of the first section 38, second section 39 and third section 38, respectively, of the integral connector 37 of the second pack 5. Preferably, the inner slides 4, 7 of the first pack 2 and the second pack 5 are filled with a bundle of smoking articles and placed inside the erected outer shells 3,

6 before the outer shells 3, 6 of the first pack 2 and the second pack 5 are connected to one another. The bundles of smoking articles in the inner slides 4, 7 of the first pack 2 and the second pack 5 advantageously improve the stability of the container.

[0054] In the initial connected position (not shown), the rear wall 11 of the outer shell of the first pack 2 is parallel and opposed to the rear wall 31 of the outer shell 6 of the second pack 5. The connected outer shells 3, 6 of the first pack 2 and the second pack 5 are hingeable relative to one another about the longitudinal edges of the rear walls 11, 31 of the outer shells 3, 6 between their initial connected position to the positions shown in Figures 1a and 1b. As shown in Figure 1, hinging the outer shells 3, 6 of the first pack 2 and the second pack 5 relative to one another separates the affixed second sections 19, 39 of the integral connectors 17, 37 from the affixed first sections 18, 38 and the affixed third sections 18, 38 of the integral connectors 17, 37 along the lines of perforations.

[0055] Figure 3 shows a blank 42 for forming the inner slides 4, 7, of the first slide and shell pack 2 and the second slide and shell pack 5 of the container according to the first embodiment of the invention shown in Figures 1 a and 1 b. As shown in Figure 3, a flap 44 is cut from the lower portion of the major wall of the inner slide 4, 7. The flap 42 is connected to the major wall of the inner slide 4, 7 along a horizontal fold line. During erection of the inner slide, the flap 42 is folded outwardly through 180 degrees about the horizontal fold line. In use, as the inner slides 4, 7 is slid upwardly within the outer shell 3, 6, the leading surface of the outwardly folded flap 42 extending from the major wall of the inner slide 4, 7 engages the corresponding facing surface of the rear wall flap 16, 36 extending inwardly from the upper edge of the rear wall 11, 31 of the respective outer shell 3, 6. Engagement of the rear wall flap 16, 36 of the outer shell 3, 6 by the flap 42 of the inner slide 4, 7 advantageously restricts further upward movement of the inner slide 4, 7 within the outer shell 3, 6, and so prevents removal of the inner slide 4, 7 from the upper end of the outer shell 3, 6.

[0056] Figures 4a and 4b show the inner surfaces of two blanks for forming a container according to a second embodiment of the invention (not shown), which comprises a first hinge-lid pack and a second hinge-lid pack connected in a Jacob's ladder arrangement. The final digits of the reference numerals for the panels of the blanks 50, 70 for forming the first hinge-lid pack and the second hinge-lid pack of the container according to the second embodiment of the invention shown in Figures 4a and 4b are the same as the final digits of the reference numerals for corresponding panels of the blanks 10, 30 for forming the outer shell 3 of the first slide and shell pack 2 and the outer shell 6 of the second slide and shell pack 5, respectively, of the container according to the first embodiment of the invention shown in Figures 2a and 2b.

[0057] The first hinge-lid pack and the second hinge-lid pack of the container according to the second embodiment of the invention are connected in a similar manner as the outer shell 3 of the first slide and shell pack 2 and the outer shell 6 of the second slide and shell pack 5 of the container according to the first embodiment of the invention shown in Figures 1 a and 1b. However, unlike in the blanks 10, 30 shown in Figures 2a and 2b, the second sections 59, 79 of the integral connector panels 57, 77 of the blanks 50, 70 shown in Figures 4a and 4b are not detachably connected to the first sections 58, 78 and the third sections 58, 78 of the integral connector panels 57,77 along horizontal lines of perforations. Instead the second sections 59, 79 of the integral connector panels 57, 77 of the blanks 50, 70 are separated from the first sections 58, 78 and the third sections 8, 78 of the integral connector panels 57,77 by cut lines.

[0058] As shown in Figure 4a, the first and third sections 58 of the integral connector panel 57 of the blank 50 for forming the first hinge-lid pack of the container according to the second embodiment of the invention are connected to a right side wall panel 54 along vertical fold lines and detachably connected to a left side wall flap 60 along vertical lines of perforations and the second section 59 of the integral connector panel 57 of the blank 50 is connected to the left side wall flap 60 along a vertical fold line and detachably connected to the right side wall panel 54 along a vertical line of perforations. During erection of the first hinge-lid pack from the blank 50 shown in Figure 4a, the inner surface of the left side wall flap 60 is affixed to the outer surface of a left side wall panel 52 so that in the erected hinge-lid pack, the first 58, second 59 and third sections 58 of the integral connector panel 57 overlie and extend across the rear wall 51 of the box portion of the hinge-lid pack.

[0059] As shown in Figure 4b, the second section 79 of the integral connector panel 77 of the blank 70 for forming the second hinge-lid pack of the container according to the second embodiment of the invention is connected to a left side wall panel 72 along a vertical fold line and detachably connected to a right side wall flap 76 along a vertical line of perforations and the first and third sections 78 of the integral connector panel 77 of the blank 70 are connected to the right side wall flap 76 along vertical fold lines and detachably connected to the left side wall panel 72 along vertical lines of perforations. During erection of the second hinge-lid pack from the blank 70 shown in Figure 4b, the inner surface of the right side wall flap 76 is affixed to the outer surface of a right side wall panel 74 so that in the erected hinge-lid pack, the first 78, second 79 and third sections 78 of the integral connector panel 77 overlie and extend across the rear wall 71 of the box portion of the hinge-lid pack.

[0060] To connect the first hinge-lid pack and the second hinge-lid pack the outer surfaces of the first section 58, second section 59 and third section 58 of the integral connector 57 of the first hinge-lid pack are affixed to the outer surfaces of the first section 78, second section 79 and third section 78, respectively, of the integral connec-

tor 77 of the second hinge-lid pack, as previously described above.

[0061] In the initial connected position (not shown), the rear wall of the first hinge-lid pack is parallel and opposed to the rear wall of the second hinge-lid pack. The connected hinge-lid packs are hingeable relative to one another about the longitudinal edges of their rear walls between their initial connected position and second and third positions in which the rear walls of the hinge-lid packs are substantially coplanar. Hinging the connected hinge-lid packs relative to one another from the initial position to the second position or the third position separates the first and third sections 58 of the integral connector 57 of the first hinge-lid pack from the left side wall flap 60 thereof and separates the second section 59 of the integral connector panel 57 of the first hinge-lid pack from the right side wall panel 54 thereof along the lines of perforations. Hinging the connected hinge-lid packs relative to one another from the initial position to the second position or the third position also separates the second section 79 of the integral connector 77 of the second hinge-lid pack from the right side wall flap 76 thereof and separates the first and third sections 78 of the integral connector 77 of the second hinge-lid pack from the left side wall panel 72 thereof along the lines of perforations.

Claims

1. A container for smoking articles comprising at least two hingedly connected packs (2, 5), each for housing a separate bundle of smoking articles, wherein in an initial position the container comprises:

   a first pack (2) having a first wall (11, 51) with opposed first and second edges and an integral connector (17, 57) extending across the first wall (11, 51), the integral connector (17, 57) comprising a first section (18, 58) hinged about the first edge of the first wall (11, 51) and a second section (19, 59) hinged about the second edge of the first wall (11, 51); and
   a second pack (5) having a first wall (31, 71) with opposed first and second edges and a an integral connector (37, 77) extending across the first wall (31, 71), the integral connector (37, 77) comprising a first section (38, 78) hinged about the second edge of the first wall (31, 71) and a second section (39, 79) hinged about the first edge of the first wall (31, 71),

   wherein the first section (18, 58) of the integral connector (17, 57) of the first pack (2) is affixed to the first section (38, 78) of the integral connector (37, 77) of the second pack and the second section (19, 59) of the integral connector (17, 57) of the first pack is affixed to the second section (38, 78) of the integral connector (37, 77) of the second pack so that the first edges of the first walls (11, 51, 31, 71) of the first (2) and second (5) packs are adjacent and the second edges of the first walls (11, 51, 31, 71) of the first (2) and second (5) packs are adjacent.

2. A container according to claim 1 wherein the second section (19) of the integral connector (17) of the first pack (2) is detachably connected to the first section (18) of the integral connector (17) of the first pack (2) and the second section (39) of the integral connector (37) of the second pack (5) is detachably connected to the first section (38) of the integral connector (37) of the second pack (2).

3. A container according to claim 1 or 2 wherein the integral connector (17, 57) of the first pack (2) further comprises a third section (18, 58) hinged about the first edge of the first wall (11, 51) of the first pack (2); and

   the integral connector (37, 77) of the second pack (5) further comprises a third section (38, 78) hinged about the second edge of the first wall (31, 71) of the second pack,
   the third section (18, 58) of the integral connector (17, 57) of the first pack (2) being affixed to the third section (38, 78) of the integral connector (37, 77) of the second pack (5).

4. A container according to claim 3 wherein the third section (18) of the integral connector (17) of the first pack (2) is detachably connected to the second section (38) of the integral connector (17)(57) of the first pack (2) and the third section (38) of the integral connector (37) of the second pack (5) is detachably connected to the second section (39) of the integral connector (37)(77) of the second pack (5).

5. A container according to any preceding claim wherein the first pack (2) and the second pack (5) are slide and shell packs.

6. A container according to any preceding claim wherein the first pack and the second pack are hinge-lid packs.

7. A container according to claim 6 wherein the first pack has a hinge-lid pivotable about a hinge line extending across the first wall (51) of the first pack and the second pack has a hinge-lid pivotable about a hinge line extending across the first wall (71) of the second pack.

8. A container according to claim 6 wherein the first pack has a hinge-lid pivotable about a hinge line extending across a second wall of the first pack that is parallel and opposed to the first wall of the first pack and the second pack has a hinge-lid pivotable about

a hinge line extending across a second wall of the second pack that is parallel and opposed to the first wall of the second pack.

9. A container according to any preceding claim wherein the first pack and the second pack are of different dimensions.

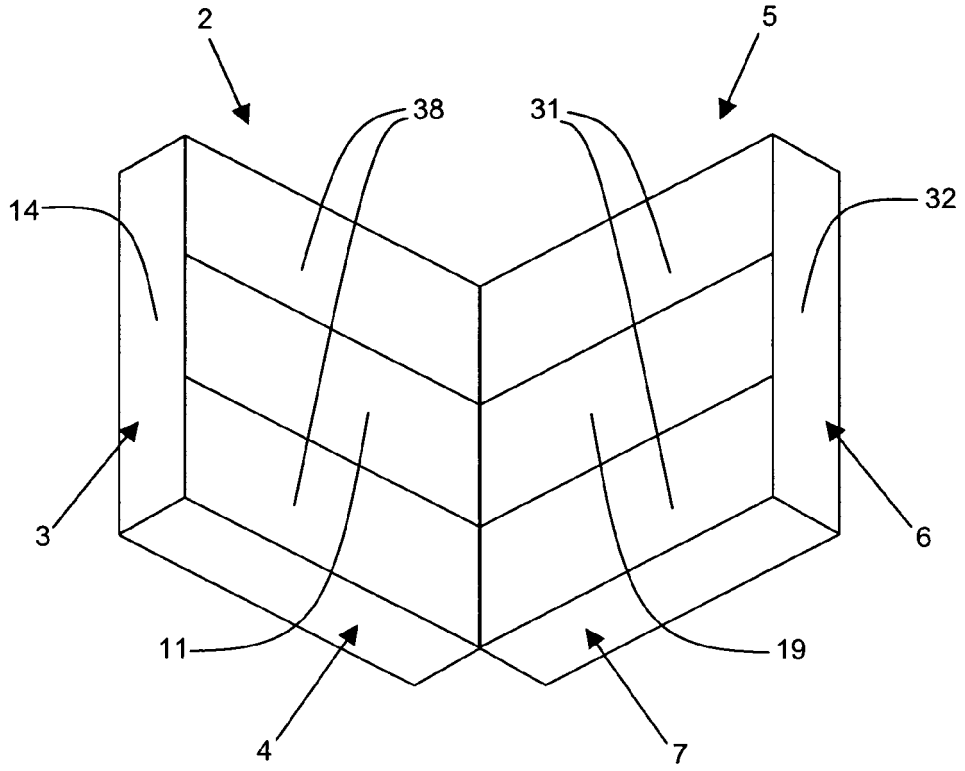


Figure 1a

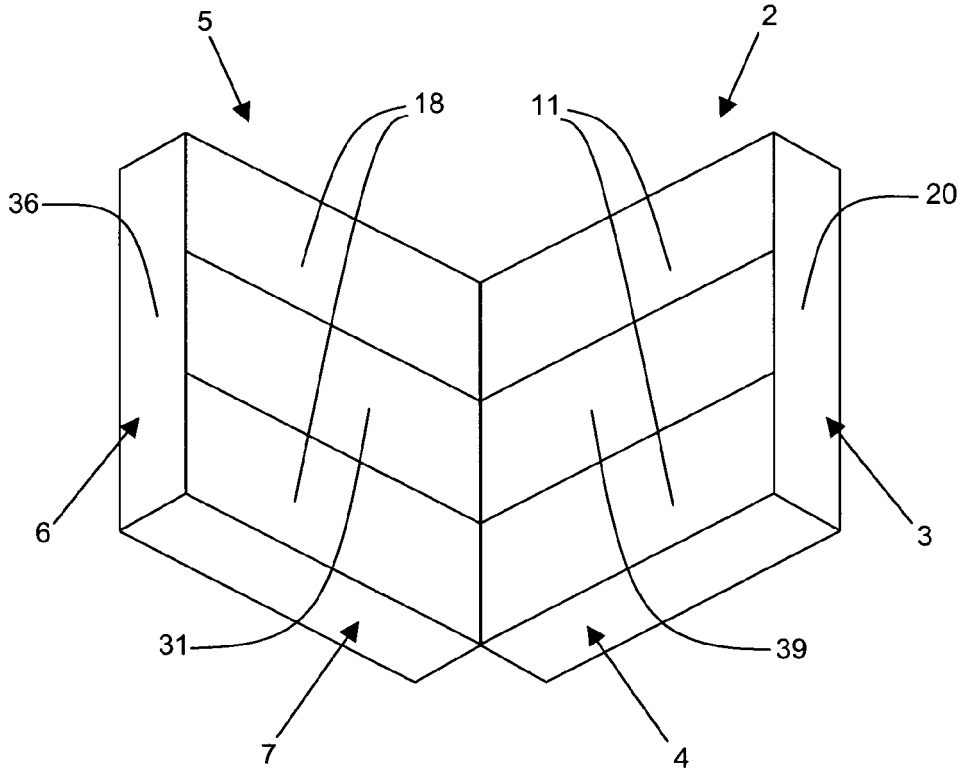


Figure 1b

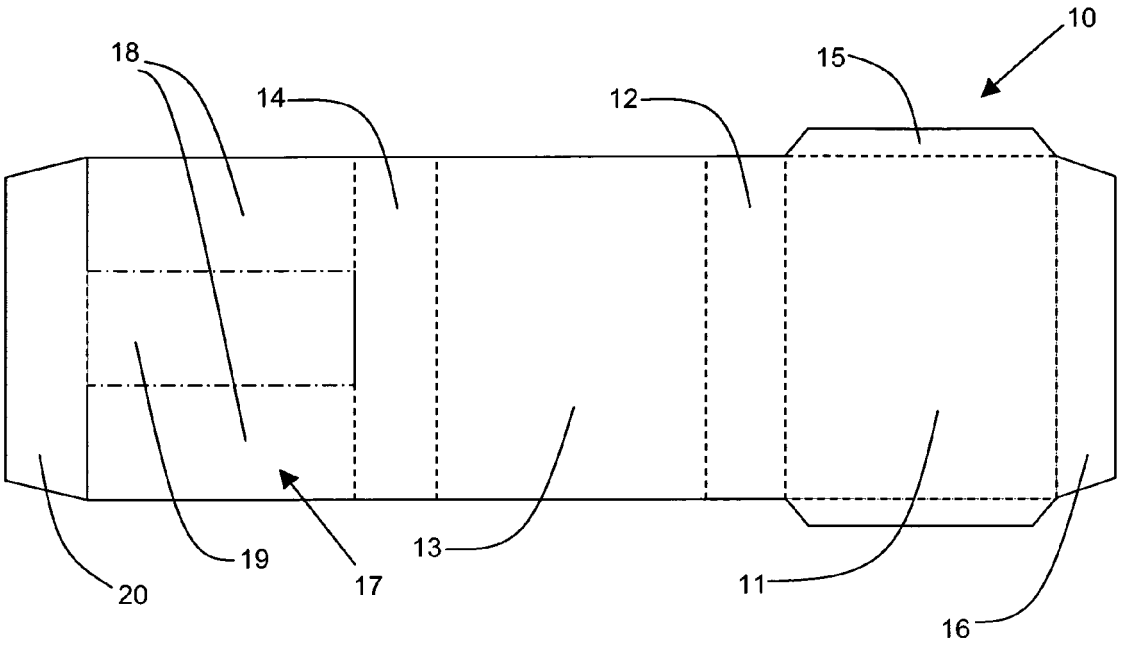


Figure 2a

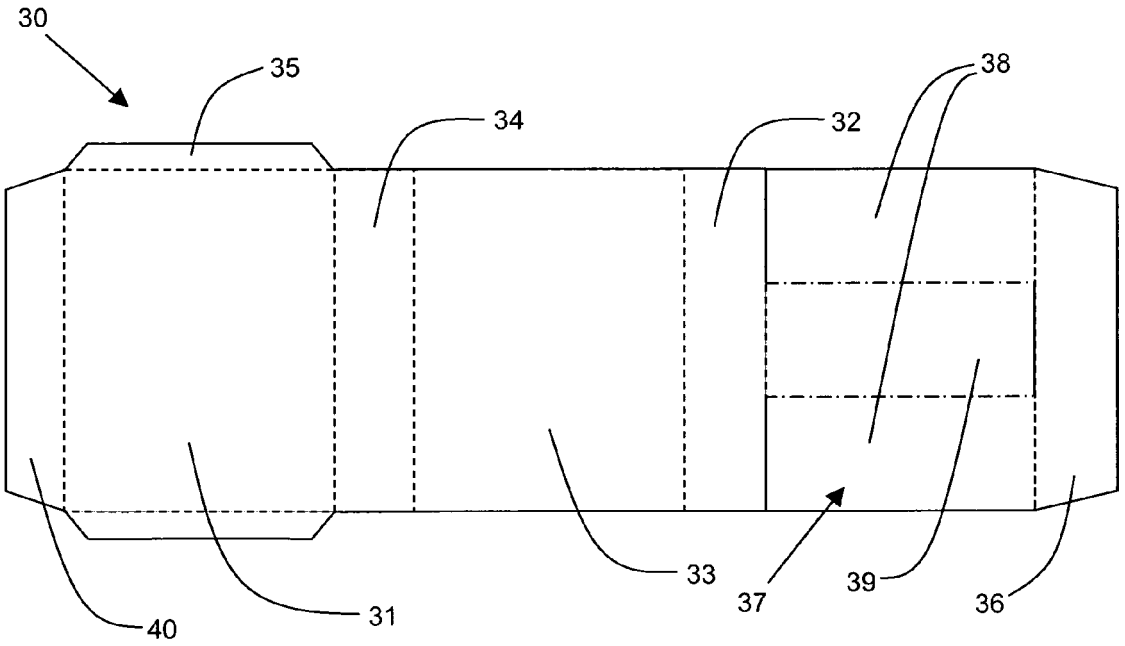


Figure 2b

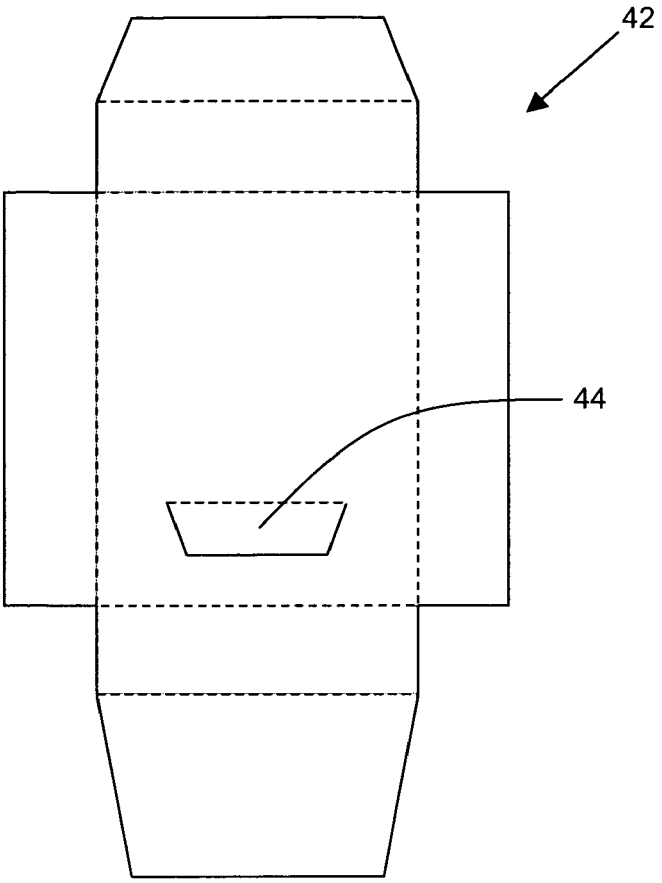


Figure 3

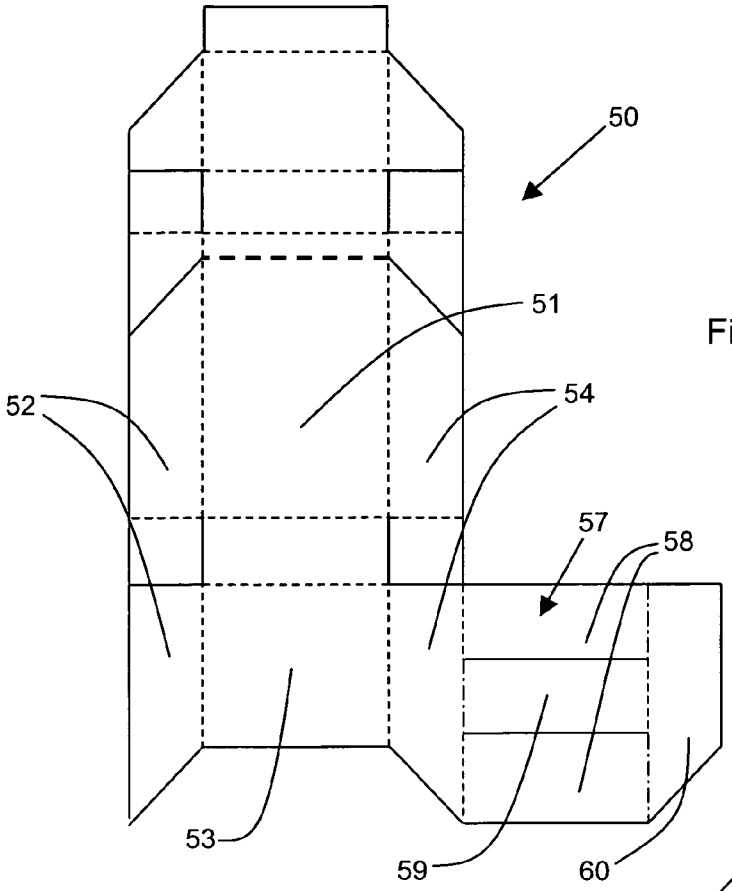
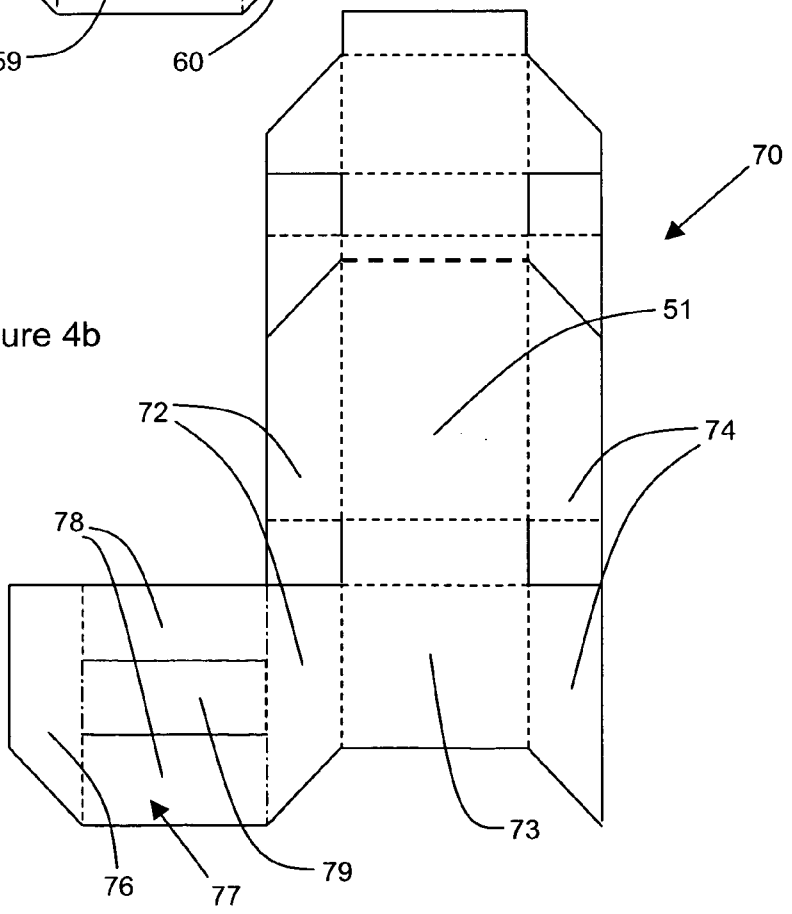


Figure 4a

Figure 4b



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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 07 25 2890

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A	EP 1 801 031 A (JT INTERNAT S A [CH]) 27 June 2007 (2007-06-27) * paragraph [0031] - paragraph [0036]; figures 1-8 *	1-9	INV. B65D5/00 B65D5/42 B65D21/02 B65D85/10
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B65D

The present search report has been drawn up for all claims

Place of search	Date of completion of the search	Examiner
Munich	14 December 2007	Appelt, Lothar

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