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(54) **Size-adjustable spine shield**

(57) Spine shield having a main body with a front for marking and a rear for attaching it to an object, wherein the main body comprises at least two segments.

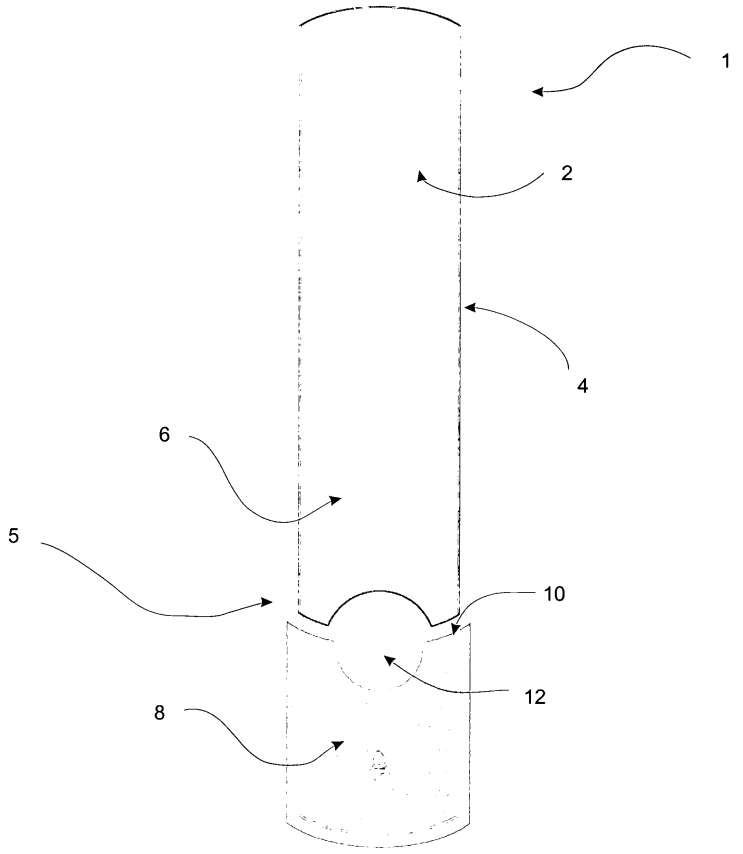

Fig. 1

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Description

[0001] The invention concerns a spine shield according to claim 1, that has a main body with a front for labelling and a rear to attach it to an object as well as a carrier according to claim 12.

[0002] Such spine shields are known in the practice and are mainly used for labelling storage systems, in particular filing folders. To facilitate the storage and retrieval of documents in several filing folders, in practice particularly spine shields are known which extend over the length of the spine of the folder and are inscribable. For the labelling of the folder's contents the marking may show, for example, individual fields of a topic with the associated documents stored in this folder.

[0003] As an alternative to the inscribable implementation in practice coloured spine shields are also known. In this manner folders with similar contents can be provided with similar, coloured spine shields. Depending on the topic of the file a corresponding colour is selected.

[0004] By virtue of this colour coding a quick locating of the correct folder in the filing cabinet is possible.

[0005] It is a disadvantage of the known spine shields that neither the flexible combination of the colour coding and the fact that they are inscribable nor an adaptability to suit a size is possible. It is exactly this combination of a colour coding and the fact that they are individually inscribable that can expedite the finding of the folder being looked for. The adaptability of the size of the spine shield can markedly increase the flexibility of usage depending on the application.

[0006] The object of the present invention is to provide a spine shield as well as a carrier of the type mentioned in the introduction which solve the problems of the state-of-the-art.

[0007] This objective is achieved by a spine shield having the features of claim 1 as well as by a carrier having the features of claim 12.

[0008] A spine shield according to the invention has a main body with a front and a rear. The front serves for the marking and the rear for the attachment to an object, for example a filing folder. The main body has at least two segments, while at least one segment can be separated along a separation line from the main body of the spine shield. The adaptability of the spine shield to suit a size is ensured by these segments and the separation line. The size of the spine shield can be adapted to suit the application or the size of the object to be labelled. A spine shield of this kind can be provided with at least two encoding systems. Thus, for example, the first segment can be used for inscription and the second, separatable segment have an additional encoding, a colour for example. The user of this spine shield has the choice, whether and which encoding system to use. Thus he can attach the spine shield to the object and use both encodings. It is, however, also possible to separate the separatable segment from the main body of the spine shield and use only the encoding of the first segment. Consequently, a spine shield according to the invention enables the user flexibly and adapted to suit his requirements to freely choose the number of encoding systems and the associated encoding effort when using the spine shield. Thus the spine shield according to the invention represents a marked advancement in comparison to the spine shields known from practice, since the complexity of the product types is reduced on the one hand and simultaneously the flexibility of application is increased on the other. Thus for a single spine shield according to the invention at least two application possibilities are conceivable. The user is either limited to the use of the encoding by the first segment and removes the second segment or he uses both encoding systems and refrains from the removal. Therefore, in contrast to the state-of-the-art, a spine shield according to the invention can be flexibly adapted to suit the relevant application situation.

[0009] It would be of advantage, to separate the separatable segment of the spine shield according to the invention from the main body of the spine shield by means and along a perforation line that forms the separation line. This construction of the possibility of separation reduces the efforts by the user. The application of the spine shield is independent from any tool. The separation can be carried out along the perforation line without scissors, knife or similar sharp objects. This increases the safety against injuries and the speed with which the user can apply the spine shield. The perforation lines can be constructed in various ways. Thus complete, punctiform punctures of the material are conceivable that are provided along a line between the segment to be separated and the main body. The cohesion of the segment with the main body is weakened along this line, facilitating a separation. The weakening of the cohesion can, however, be also achieved by different means. Thus a reduction of the material along a line without completely puncturing the material is conceivable. Such a separation line, that can be produced, for example, by embossing, has the advantage that after the separation a smooth edge remains on both segments. As an improvement compared with the usual perforation, the smooth edge forms an aesthetically complete picture of the attached spine shield. Other methods for weakening the cohesion between the separatable segment and the main body, not mentioned here, are also conceivable within the scope of the invention.

[0010] The spine shield according to the invention has various encodings on the segments. Thus it is possible for both segments to be coloured. By virtue of this coloured design during the course of use of the spine shield a colour code can be used for a plurality of objects, in particular for filing folders. A spine shield with the corresponding coloured segment is chosen for a folder depending on the topic. Thus folders can be quickly selected just by glancing into the filing cabinet which basically deal with the topic of interest, since they are all identified with the same colour.

[0011] A further possible encoding system is the indi-

vidual encoding by inscribing one of the segments. Thus on the spine of a folder its contents, for example, can be stated on the inscribable segment. In this manner it can be determined which documents are to be found in the folder.

[0012] Other encoding systems are also conceivable within the scope of this invention. Thus segments can be provided with single-dimensional or two-dimensional barcodes or have pre-printed letters or combinations of numbers.

[0013] The great advantage of the spine shields according to the invention is thus their flexible selection and combination of the respective encoding systems necessary for the relevant application. Spine shields with an entirely white segment could be also advantageous. Within the scope of this invention in the case of such spine shields the user can freely apply the encoding systems of his choice to the individual segments. Thus, for example, he can write the contents of the folder by hand on the first segment and print a bar code on the second segment.

[0014] To improve the readability of the inscribed segments, it could be advantageous to configure the inscribable segment basically white. In this manner the inscription can be carried out with commercially available felt pens resulting in good contrast effect. The contrast effect on a basically white segment is ideal also when the inscription is made by a printer connected to a computer.

[0015] To facilitate the application of the spine shield to an object it would be of advantage to coat the rear of the main body of the spine shield at least partially with an adhesive substrate. A spine shield of this kind can be attached in any manner to the appropriate objects, in particular to filing folders. By providing the adhesive substrate no additional tool, like adhesive tapes, adhesive sticks or other ancillary means are required in this case either. The spine shield is simply stuck on. The flexibility when using spine shields according to the invention is thus not impaired.

[0016] To ensure that at the time of application the adhesive substrate can provide the desired effect and would previously not lose its adhesive capacity, it would make sense to provide a protective film that on the rear of the main body of the spine shield covers at least the portion coated with the adhesive substrate. Thus it will be ensured that during transport and storage the adhesive substrate cannot lose its adhesive capacity by being in contact with the surrounding air. The handling is also considerably facilitated by the protective film, since an unintentional adhesion of the spine shield to a table, to clothing or other objects is prevented.

[0017] A spine shield according to the invention can have a main body, that has preferably basically a longish construction and the separation and perforation line of which basically extends transversely to this longitudinal direction. When using the spine shields according to the invention for filing folders the longitudinal direction is a sensible one, as it is basically aligned with the spine of the filing folder. The direction of the perforation line of the separatable segment transversely to this longitudinal direction is advantageous since in this manner the perforation line can be kept short. Thus the separation of the segment can be carried out quickly on the one hand and on the other the danger of unintentional tearing of the spine shield at other places is minimised. By providing the perforation line transversely to the longitudinal alignment the user has sufficient room on both sides of the perforation line to grasp both segments of the main body of the spine shield and to carry out the separation.

[0018] It would make sense in particular when using the spine shield for filing folders if the main body would have at least one cut-out. Filing folders usually have on their spines a grasping hole for easier handling of the folder. When the spine shield is attached the cut-out of the spine shield advantageously corresponds to the grasping hole. Thus this functionality of the grasping hole in the filing folder remains also with the spine shield attached.

[0019] This cut-out can be, for example, bounded by at least two segments. The advantage of this is that the perforation line can be further shortened. In the region of the cut-out no longer is a weakening of this kind of the cohesion necessary, exactly because no cohesion exists. This way the secure separation of the segment is even easier. According to an advantageous configuration one of the segments, through which the cut-out is formed in the main body of the spine shield, is a separatable segment.

[0020] Depending on the choice of the appropriate encoding it may be advantageous to provide for the separatable segment a certain front surface area for the front surface area of the main body of the spine shield. As one deals here with the separatable segment, that at least partly is not used, it is sensible to keep this portion below 50%. Thus in an advantageous manner the portion on the front of the separatable segment on the front of the main body of the spine shield is in the range between 10-40%, preferably between 20-30%, particularly preferred approx. 25%. For those applications where the separatable segment is separated, a sufficiently large portion of the front of the spine shield will remain.

[0021] To ensure an overall aesthetic picture of the attached spine shield, it could be advantageous to provide the separation line basically symmetrically relative the top edge of the front of the spine shield. When separating the separatable element, the separation line forms the bottom edge of the remaining front. By virtue of the symmetry the remaining external contour forms a frame that visually delimits the spine shield from the object to which it is attached.

[0022] To further improve the overall aesthetic picture, it could be advantageous for the separation line be basically similarly curved as the bottom edge of the front of the spine shield that is formed by the separatable segment. In this manner it will be ensured that a similar overall picture is produced by similar external contours wheth-

er the separatable element is separated or the main body is complete. Thus the mixing of applications with and without the separatable element does not present any aesthetic problem.

[0023] The advantageous dimensions of a spine shield according to the invention are within a range in which it can be applied to the spine of a folder. Thus, for example, the spine shield can be up to 288 mm long and up to 61 mm wide. At the same time the first segment can be, for example, 204 mm long and the second segment 68 mm long. The difference for the overall length of 288 mm occurs due to the curved top and bottom edge of the spine shield, that can have a radius of, for example, 61 mm and contributes axially to the overall length of the spine shield 8 mm in each direction. In an advantageous manner the cut-out in the spine shield is circular, has a radius of 14.5 mm and its top edge is 206 mm is axially below the top edge of the spine shield. This makes it possible during the attaching of the spine shield an accurate matching of the grasping hole on the spine of a folder.

[0024] A further subject matter of this invention is a carrier for the spine shields according to the invention. A carrier of this kind serves the purpose of simple transport and secure storage of the spine shields according to the invention.

[0025] Advantageously a carrier of this kind is simultaneously the protective film, at least for that portion of the rear of the spine shield which is coated with the adhesive substrate.

[0026] In an advantageous manner the carrier can be also a standardised size, facilitating its printing. Such a standardised size can be, for example, aligned to suit DIN standards for sheets of paper. The design of the carrier is possible, for example, in the form of a DIN-A4 page. On this DIN-A4 three, for example, spine shields can be provided.

[0027] It is essential that the joint between the carrier and the relevant spine shield is of such design, that when the spine shield is removed from the carrier no separation of the separatable segment from the main body takes place. Thus the main body of the spine shield can be completely removed off the carrier and the user has to decide only in the second step whether he wants to separate the separatable segment or leave it on.

[0028] Advantageously on a carrier according to the invention the individual spine shields can be distanced from one another by intermediate regions of, for example, 4.5 mm. Towards the edge more room, for example 9 mm, can be provided.

[0029] Further advantageous configurations of the invention as well as several embodiments are explained in detail in the following in conjunction with the attached figures of the drawing. The terms "left", "right", "top" and "bottom" used in the description refer to the figures of the drawing with their orientation enabling the normal readability of the descriptions and reference numerals. In this conjunction:

Fig.1 is an embodiment of a spine shield according to the invention;

Fig.2 is an embodiment of a carrier according to the invention with three spine shields;

Fig.3 is the illustration of two spines of file folders with spine shields according to the invention attached according to the embodiment according to [sentence unfinished]

[0030] Fig.1 shows an embodiment of a spine shield 1 according to the invention. The front view of this spine shield 1 is illustrated. This means that only the front 2 of the main body 5 is visible. The rear 4 of the spine shield 1 is, in contrast, not visible.

[0031] The spine shield 1 comprises a main body 5, that in turn comprises a first segment 6 and a second segment 8. The first segment 6 is essentially white and is inscribable. In this segment 6 the user of the spine shield 1 can either make an inscription using a commercially available felt pen or print this portion of the spine shield 1 by using a printer connected to a computer. The first segment 6 is 61 mm wide and approx. 272 mm long. The second segment 8 with the same width and a length of 68 mm is markedly smaller. The entire spine shield 1 is 288 mm long, including the curved top and bottom edges. This ensures that this spine shield 1 can be attached to the rear of a folder 30.

[0032] The bottom quarter of the main body 5 of the spine shield 1 is formed by the separatable segment 8. In this present embodiment of the spine shield 1 this segment 8 is coloured. The segment 8 is joined with the segment 6 by a perforation line 10 that forms a separation line, and thus forms, together with the segment 6 the main body 5 of the spine shield 1. Spine shields 1 according to this embodiment are available in various versions. Thus all versions have a white segment 6, whereas the colours of the segments 8 of the individual versions vary. By allocating individual topic subjects, by the various colours a basic colour coding of the folders, to which the spine shields 1 are attached, can be carried out. Each topic receives a specific colour. Folders 30 having documents of this topic have a spine shield 1, having a coloured segment with this colour, attached to them by adhesive.

[0033] The perforation line 10 is situated on the spine shield 1 according to Fig.1 in a basically symmetrical position relative the top edge of the spine shield 1. At the same time the perforation line 10 is essentially curved, identically with the lower termination of segment 8. The top and bottom edges, as well as the separation line, have a radius of curvature of 61 mm. In this manner it ensured that when the segments 6 and 8 are used, as well as when segment 6 is used without the removed segment 8, an aesthetic overall picture appears when the spine shield 1 is used. In the case of the removed segment 8 the separation line forms the bottom edge of

the spine shield. By virtue of the essentially identical curvature of the separation line and of the bottom edge of the removable segment 8, in case of both applications illustrated in Fig.3 a similar aesthetic appearance exists. The curvature of the bottom edge of the spine shield is essentially identical in both cases. In interaction with the top edge of the spine shield a frame is produced, formed by the external contour of the front of the spline shield. Therefore in no case does the user have to accept aesthetic disadvantages. A mixing of the applications is also possible without any problem, as it is shown in Fig.3.

[0034] Fig.3 shows both versions of the application of a spine shield 1 of the embodiment from Fig.1 on a folder 30. The folder 30 on the left shows a spine shield where the main body 5 still has both segments 6 and 8. The folder 30 on the right shows the application of a spine shield 1 where the segment 8 had been removed.

[0035] As it can also be seen from Fig.3, filing folder usually have a grasping hole. The purpose of the grasping hole is an easier handling of the filing folder. In particular when a great number of filing folders are stored in filing cabinets the grasping of the spine of the filing folder by hand for the purpose of pulling it out is usually not possible. In these cases the user can pull out partially the filing folder by the grasping hole, after pulling it out fully grasp it and handle it. In the case of the present embodiment of a spine shield 1 the main body 5 has a cut-out 12. When it is attached to the folder 30, this cut-out 12 coincides with the associated grasping hole. Thus the functionality of the grasping hole is totally retained even with the spine shield 1 attached.

[0036] In addition, the cut-out 12 is provided between the two segments 6 and 8. In this manner the perforation line 10 is shortened to two short sections left and right to the cut-out 12 in Fig.1. These short perforation lines can be simply and quickly severed by the user by firmly holding segment 8 with one hand and segment 6 with the other and to tear it along the perforation line 10 as this is illustrated on the right side of Fig.2.

[0037] Fig.2 shows an embodiment of a carrier 20, that has three spine shields 1 according to the embodiment of Fig.1. On this occasion the right spine shield 1 has already been detached from the carrier 20 and the segment 8 separated from the main body 5 of the spine shield 1. The further two spine shields 1 are still on the carrier 20. The entire surface of the rear 4 of the spine shield 1, therefore both segments 6 and 8, are coated with an adhesive substrate. This adhesive substrate coating is covered by a protective film 22, that is formed integrally with the carrier 20. To apply the spine shield 1 the user pulls the spine shield 1 off the carrier 20 and thus also off the protective film 22 and sticks the spine shield 1 either completely, or after the separation of the segment 8, on the spine of a filing folder, as it is illustrated in Fig.3.

[0038] The dimensions of the carrier 20 conforms with a DIN A4 page. Between the individual spine shields 1 intermediate regions of 4.5 mm and to the edge 9 mm is provided, so that an individual spine shield 1 could be detached from the carrier 20 without pulling off a further spine shield 1 as well. In this manner the carrier 20 can be printed as a normal sheet of paper with a printer connected to a computer. By using the appropriate software the user can directly print the white segments 6 of the spine shield 1, and additionally use or not use the colour code of the segment 8.

[0039] The embodiment of a spine shield for filing folders described here is not limited to the scope of the present invention. Thus a spine shield 1 according to the invention can be used, of course, for the marking of data carriers, in particular CDs or DVDs, and also for the labelling of storage systems of other types, like for example file covers.

[The text in Fig.1 reads "Attached drawings"

The inscription in Figs.2 and 3 reads "Daily copies"]

List of reference numerals

[0040]

1	Spine shield
2	Front
4	Rear
5	Main body
6	First segment
8	Second segment
10	Perforation
12	Cut-out
20	Carrier
22	Protective film
30	Folder

Claims

1. Spine shield (1) having a main body (5) with a front (2) for marking and a rear (4) for attaching it to an object (30), wherein the main body (5) comprises at least two segments (6, 8), while at least one segment (8) can be separated from the main body (5) of the spine shield (1) along a separation line.

2. Spine shield (1) according to claim 1, **characterised in that** the separatable segment (8) can be separated from the main body (5) of the spine shield (1) along the perforation line (10) forming the separation line.

3. Spine shield (1) according to any one of the preceding claims, **characterised in that** the front (2) at least one of the two segments (6, 8) is coloured and/or one of the segments (6, 8) is inscribable.

4. Spine shield (1) according to any one of the preceding claims, **characterised in that** the rear (4) of the

main body (5) of the spine shield (1) is coated at least partially with an adhesive substrate.

5. Spine shield (1) according to claim 4, **characterised in that** additionally a protective film (22) is provided, that on the rear of the main body (5) of the spine shield (1) covers at least the portion coated with the adhesive substrate.

6. Spine shield (1) according to one of claims 1 to 5, **characterised in that** the main body (5) of the spine shield (1) has basically a longish design and the separation line (10) basically extends transversely to this longitudinal direction.

7. Spine shield (1) according to any one of the preceding claims, **characterised in that** at least one cut-out (12) is provided in the main body (5).

8. Spine shield (1) according to claim 7, **characterised in that** this at least one cut-out (12) is bounded by at least two segments (6, 8).

9. Spine shield (1) according to claim 8, **characterised in that** at least one of these segments (6, 8) is a segment (8) that can be separated from the main body (5) of the spine shield (1).

10. Spine shield (1) according to any one of the preceding claims, **characterised in that** the front surface of the separatable segment (8) represents 10-40%, preferably between 20-30%, particularly preferred approx. 25% of the front surface of the main body (5) of the spine shield (1).

11. Spine shield (1) according to any one of the preceding claims, **characterised in that** separation line (10) is basically symmetrical relative the top edge of the front (2).

12. Spine shield (1) according to any one of the preceding claims, **characterised in that** the separation line (10) is basically similarly curved as the bottom edge of the front (2).

13. Carrier (20) having at least one spine shield (1) with the features of one of the claims 1 to 13.

14. Carrier according to claim 13, **characterised in that** the carrier (20) simultaneously forms the protective film (22), at least for that portion of the rear (4) of the spine shield (1) which is coated with the adhesive substrate.

15. Carrier (20) according to one of the claims 13 to 14, **characterised in that** it has a standardised size that facilitates the printing.

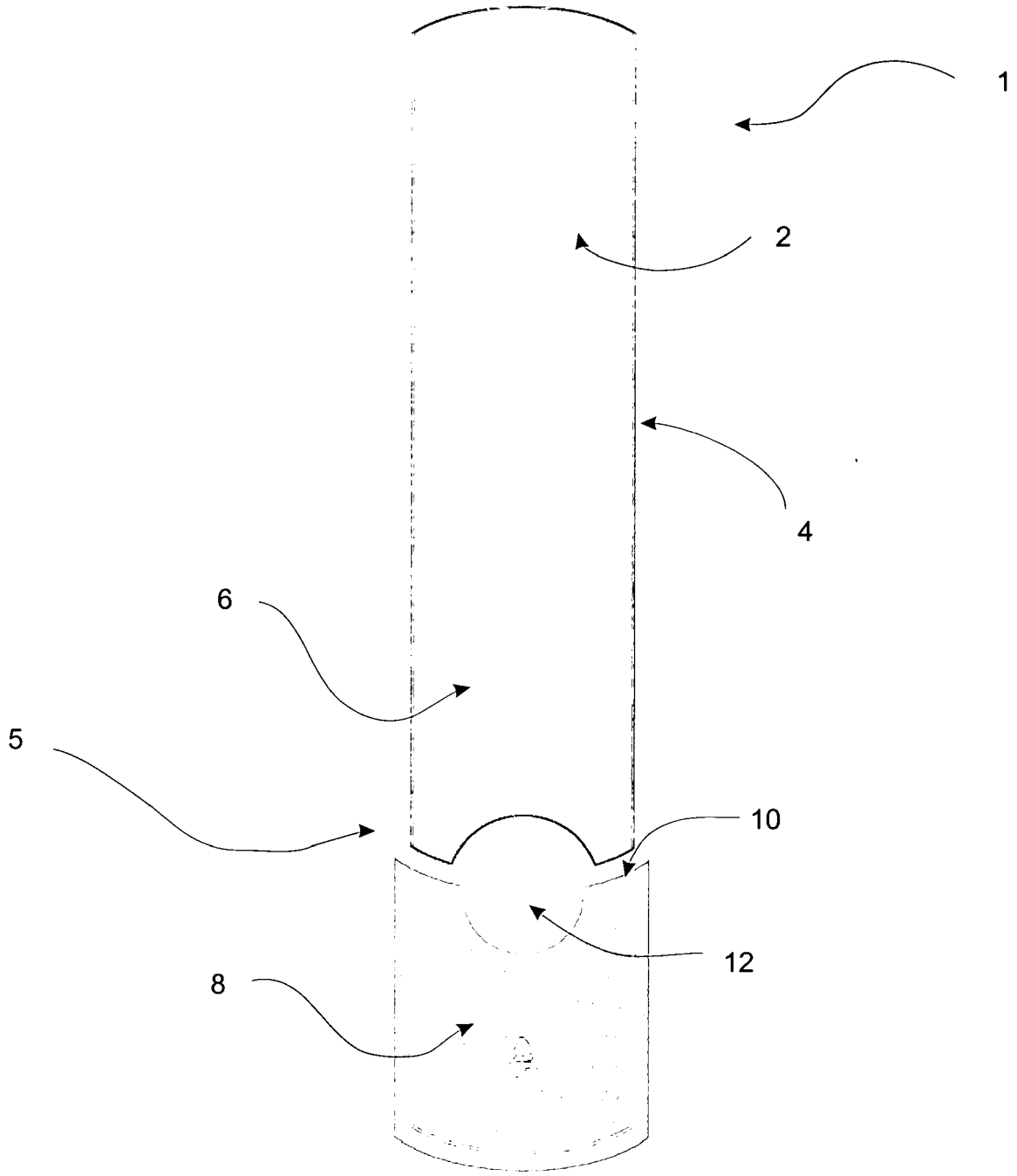

Fig. 1

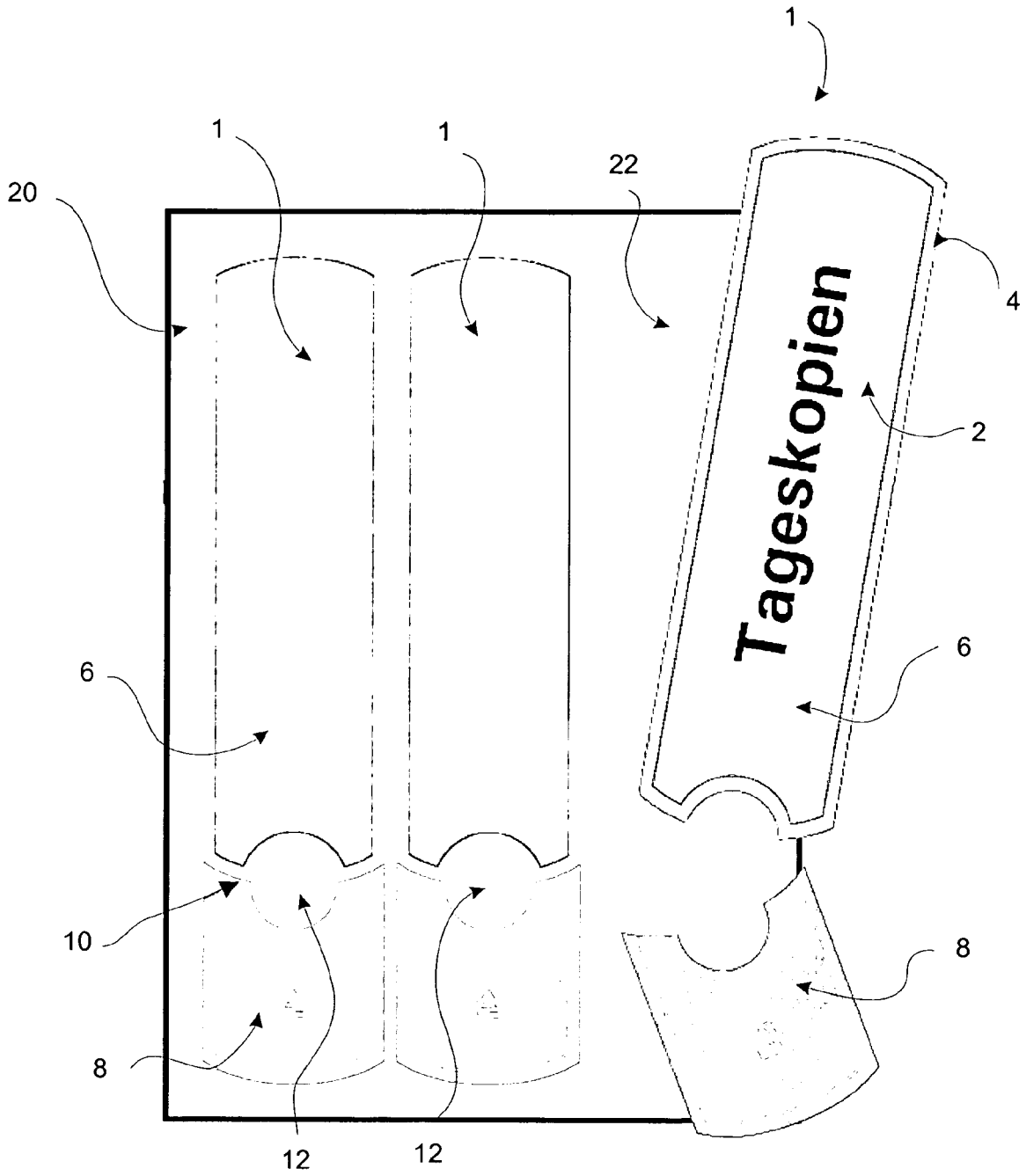

Fig. 2

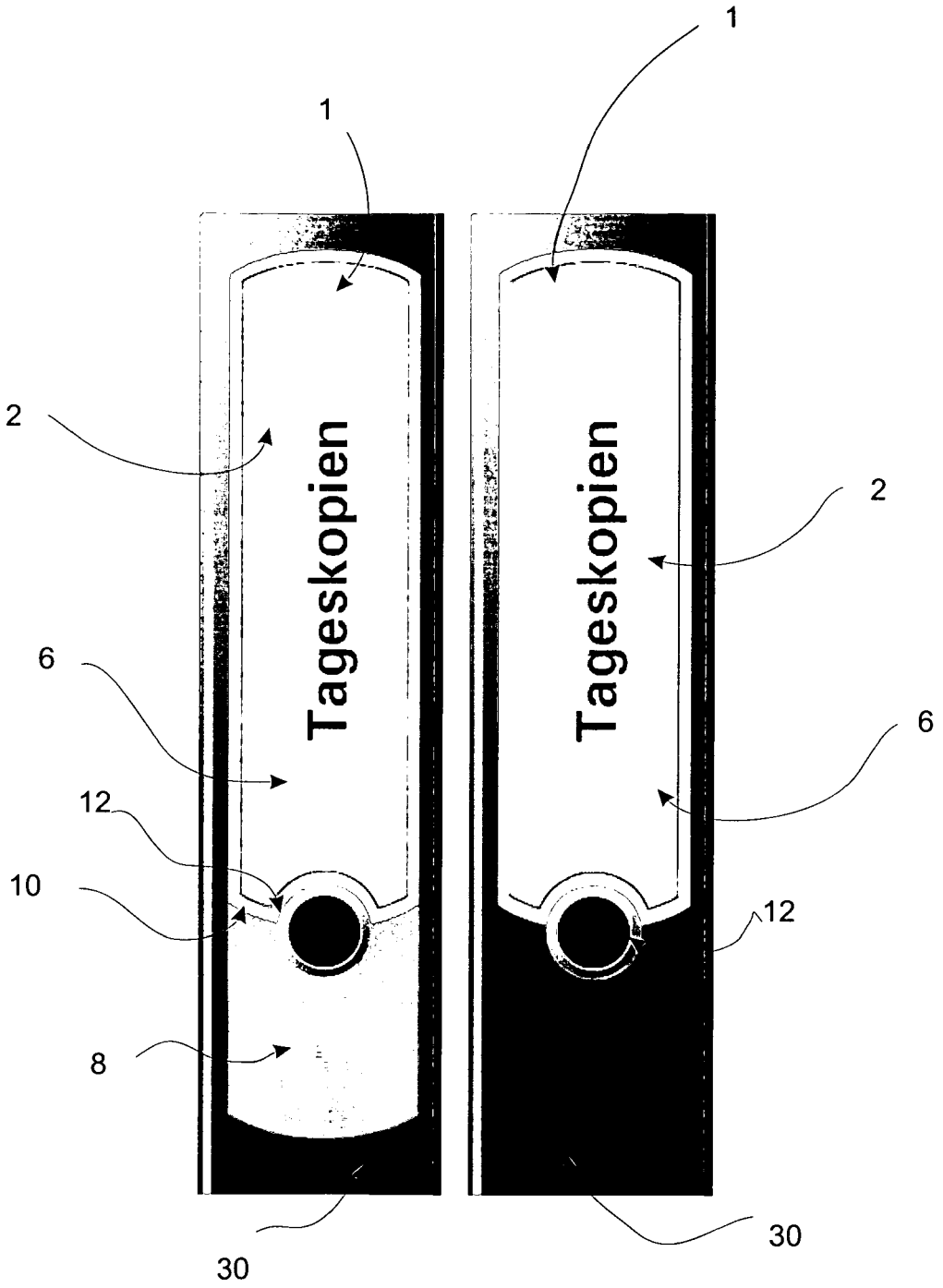

Fig. 3