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(54) Slide and shell container having dual hinge lids

(57) A slide and shell container (10) for consumer goods comprises an outer shell (14) and an inner slide (12) for housing the consumer goods, the inner slide (12) comprising a box (16), a first hinge lid (18) and a second hinge lid (20), substantially opposed to the first hinge. The inner slide (12) is slidable within the outer shell (14) between a first open slide position and a second open slide position. In the first open slide position, the first hinge lid (18) projects outwardly from the outer shell (14) through a first open end thereof such that the first hinge lid (18) is moveable to an open position and in the second open position, the second hinge lid (20) projects outwardly from the outer shell (14) through a second open end thereof such that the second hinge lid (20) is moveable to an open position.

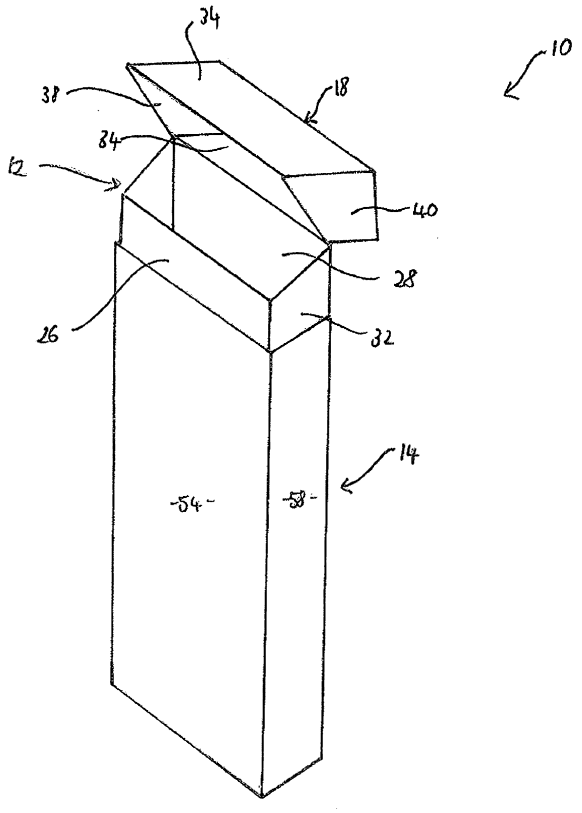

Figure 1

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Description

[0001] The present invention relates to a novel slide and shell container comprising dual hinge lids. The container finds particular application as a container for elongate smoking articles and other consumer goods.

[0002] It is known to package consumer goods in containers comprising an outer shell or sleeve and an inner slide or tray in which the consumer goods are housed and which is slidable within the outer shell. To remove consumer goods from such containers, a consumer slides the inner slide from an initial position within the outer shell to an open position in which the inner slide projects outwardly from the outer shell, in order to partially expose an open end or side of the inner slide.

[0003] It is known to provide slide and shell containers having a hinge lid as disclosed for example in WO-A-2008/065038. It would be desirable to provide a slide and shell container which provides novel ways for the consumer to access the consumer goods within the container.

[0004] According to the invention there is provided a slide and shell container for consumer goods comprising: an outer shell; and an inner slide for housing the consumer goods, the inner slide comprising a box, a first hinge lid connected to the box about a first hinge line and a second hinge lid, substantially opposed to the first hinge lid and connected to the box about a second hinge line. The inner slide is slidable within the outer shell between a first open slide position and a second open slide position. In the first open slide position, the first hinge lid projects outwardly from the outer shell through a first open end thereof such that the first hinge lid is moveable to an open position. In the second open position, the second hinge lid projects outwardly from the outer shell through a second open end thereof such that the second hinge lid is moveable to an open position.

[0005] The terms "front", "rear", "upper, "lower", "side", "top", "bottom", "left", "right" and other terms used to describe relative positions of the components of containers according to the invention refer to the container in an upright position. In the upright position, the first hinge line is on the back of the container and the first hinge lid is located at the upper end of the container. When the container in the upright position is open, the consumer goods contained in the inner slide may be removed through the first hinge lid of the inner slide. Although the container may be rotated or inverted in order to access consumer goods through the second hinge lid, the terminology for a particular component will remain the same.

[0006] The terms "left" and "right" are used with reference to side walls of the container when the container is viewed from the front in its upright position.

[0007] The term "longitudinal" refers to a direction from bottom to top or vice versa. The term "transverse" refers to a direction perpendicular to the longitudinal direction across the front wall, the back wall or one of the side walls.

[0008] Similarly, the terms "upwards" and "downwards" are used to describe the movement of the inner slide relative to the outer shell of containers according to the invention when the container is in an upright position.

[0009] The term "hinge line" refers to a line about which a lid may be pivoted in order to open the container. A hinge line may be, for example, a fold line or a score line in the panel forming the rear wall of the container. Alternatively, a hinge line may be a fold line or a score line in a piece of material bridging the lower edge of the rear wall of the lid and the top edge of the rear wall of the box. Such a piece of material may be, for example, a label that is permanently or removably attached to the rear wall of the inner slide.

[0010] Preferably, in the first open slide position of containers according to the invention, the second hinge lid is at least partially within the outer shell such that it is prevented from opening. Conversely, in the second open slide position, the first hinge lid is preferably at least partially within the outer shell such that the first hinge lid is prevented from opening.

[0011] This arrangement of the first and second hinge lids means that only one of the hinge lids may be opened at any time. This prevents the simultaneous opening of the hinge lids, which may result in consumer goods being lost from the container.

[0012] The first hinge lid and the second hinge lid are provided at opposite sides or ends of the inner slide. In preferred embodiments, the first hinge lid is provided at the top of the inner slide and the second hinge lid is provided at the bottom end of the inner slide. In such embodiments, the inner slide is movable in a substantially vertical direction relative to the outer shell and must be moved in a upwards direction relative to the outer shell in order to move it to the first open slide position and in a downwards direction in order to move it to the second open slide position.

[0013] The first and second hinge lines may extend across the same wall of the inner slide, so that the lids are pivotable in the same direction. Alternatively, the first and second hinge lines may extend across different walls of the inner slide, so that the lids pivot in different directions to each other.

[0014] The first and second hinge lids may have the same, or a different size and shape to each other.

[0015] The outer shell is provided with a first opening through which the first hinge lid projects in the first open slide position and a second opening, opposed to the first opening, through which the second hinge lid projects in the second open slide position. In preferred embodiments in which the first and second hinge lids are provided at the top and bottom ends of the inner slide, respectively, the top and bottom ends of the outer shell are preferably open, to provide the first and second openings.

[0016] Preferably, the inner slide is slidable within the outer shell between the first open slide position and the second open slide position through an intermediate slide position in which the first hinge lid and the second hinge

lid are both retained in a closed position by the outer shell. In the intermediate position, access to the consumer goods within the inner slide is therefore not possible.

[0017] Preferably, the internal dimensions of the outer shell are substantially the same as the external dimensions of the inner slide, so that inner surfaces of the outer shell overlie and abut the outer surfaces of the inner slide in the intermediate position. In the intermediate position, the inner slide is therefore entirely within the outer shell.

[0018] In use, frictional forces generated between the outer surfaces of the inner slide and the inner surfaces of the outer shell resist slidable movement of the inner slide between the intermediate position and either the first or second open slide position. This advantageously prevents opening and closing of the container without the application of a positive force by the consumer.

[0019] Preferably, containers according to the invention further comprise at least one friction element to further increase the friction between the outer shell and the inner slide.

[0020] Alternatively or in addition to the at least one friction element, suitable retention means may be provided to keep the inner slide in the intermediate position. For example, the retention means may include one or more magnets, Velcro® strips, low-tack adhesives, embossed or debossed areas on at least one of the outer shell and the inner slide.

[0021] The inner slide may be moved between the first and second open slide positions by applying a force to the inner slide through the first and second openings in the outer sleeve. If desired, further cut outs may be provided in the outer shell so that, in use, the inner slide may be grasped through the cut outs in order to move it between the open slide positions.

[0022] Once the inner slide has been moved to the first or second open slide position, the hinge lid projecting outwardly from the outer sleeve in that position may be opened and closed by applying a force to pivot the hinge lid about the corresponding hinge line. The necessary force may be applied directly to the lid. Alternatively, in some embodiments, at least one of the hinge lids may comprise a lid flap, which engages with the outer shell as the inner slide is moved such that the corresponding lid opens automatically as it is moved out of the outer sleeve. A suitable arrangement is described in, for example in EP-A-1 847 478.

[0023] Alternatively or in addition to providing means for automatically opening at least one of the hinge lids, containers according to the invention may be provided with means for resiliently biasing at least one of the hinge lids towards the open position of the lid. For example, the corresponding hinge line may be provided such that the lid naturally moves to the open position of the lid. This may be the case, for example, where the inner slide is formed of a fibrous material and the hinge line is a score line or fold line. The lid will be biased towards a position in which the fibres at the score or fold line are compressed as little as possible.

[0024] Preferably, containers according to the present invention further comprise retention means for preventing removal of the inner slide from the outer shell and for limiting the movement of the inner slide relative to the outer shell. Particularly preferably, the retention means ensure that the inner slide cannot be pushed out of the outer shell beyond its first or second open slide positions. For example, the inner slide may be connected to the outer shell, directly or indirectly.

[0025] In one preferred embodiment, the retention means comprises at least one retention tab provided on the inner slide which is capable of engaging with the outer sleeve to prevent movement of the inner slide beyond the first and second open positions. The at least one retention tab may engage with a corresponding tab provided on the inside of the outer sleeve, wherein the engagement of the tabs prevents further movement of the inner slide in a particular direction. Alternatively, the outer sleeve may include one or more cut outs on the inner surface thereof, wherein the at least one retention tab is restrained to moving within the one or more cut outs. Preferably, the wall of the outer sleeve comprising the one or more cut outs is formed of an inner wall panel and an outer wall panel, wherein the one or more cut outs are provided in the inner wall panel only, so that they are not visible from the outside of the container.

[0026] The at least one inner slide may further comprise an inner frame mounted in the box portion thereof.

[0027] Preferably, the inner slide of containers according to the invention is divided into a first compartment accessible by means of the first hinge lid and a second compartment accessible by means of the second hinge lid. Particularly preferably, in the first open slide position the first compartment is accessible and the second compartment is inaccessible whilst in the second open slide position the second compartment is accessible and the first compartment is inaccessible. It is therefore only possible to access one of the compartments at any one time.

[0028] Preferably, in the intermediate slide position, both compartments are inaccessible.

[0029] Preferably, the first compartment and the second compartment of the inner slide are separated from one another by a partition that substantially prevents an exchange of material between the contents of the two compartments during normal use of the container. This is particularly desirable either where the two compartments contain different consumer goods, or where one of the compartments comprises consumer goods and the other compartment is a waste compartment, as described in more detail below.

[0030] Particularly preferably, the first compartment and the second compartment of the inner slide are separated from one another by an integral partition. The term "integral partition" is used to indicate that the partition forms an integral part of the inner slide. This arrangement may be advantageous, since it enables the inner slide to be formed from a single laminar blank.

[0031] The first and second compartments of the inner

slide may be the same or different size, depending on the position of the partition.

[0032] The first and second compartments of the inner slide may contain the same consumer goods. For example, in one preferred embodiment, the first and second compartments of the inner slide each contain a bundle of smoking articles. Alternatively, the first and second compartments of the inner slide may contain different consumer goods. For example, one compartment may contain a bundle of smoking articles and the other compartment may comprise matches, a lighter of another ignition device.

[0033] In a preferred embodiment at least one of the hinge lids of the inner slide comprises a front wall. The front wall of the lid improves the closing of the container as it minimizes any visible gap between the inner slide and the outer shell when the container is closed.

[0034] In one preferred embodiment, one of the compartments contains a plurality of consumer goods whilst the other compartment is a 'waste compartment'. The waste compartment may be used to contain waste materials arising from the use of some or all of the consumer goods contained in the other compartment of the inner slide. Examples of waste materials that may be placed in the waste compartment include, but are not limited to, discarded wrappers and other packaging, and the remains of used consumer goods.

[0035] The container may be formed from any suitable materials including, but not limited to, cardboard, paperboard, plastic, metal, or combinations thereof. Preferably, the outer shell and inner slide are each formed from one or more folded laminar cardboard blanks and preferably, the cardboard has a weight of between about 100 grams per square metre and about 350 grams per square metre.

[0036] The inner slide and outer shell may be formed of the same or different materials to each other. When the same material is used to form both the inner slide and the outer shell, the thickness of the materials may be the same or different to each other and the finishing of the materials may be the same or different. Additionally, one or more of the blanks may be made of transparent material.

[0037] Containers according to the invention may be in the shape of a rectangular parallelepiped, with right-angled longitudinal and right-angled transverse edges. Alternatively, the container may comprise one or more rounded longitudinal edges, rounded transverse edges, bevelled longitudinal edges or bevelled transverse edges, or combinations thereof. For example, the container according to the invention may comprise, without limitation:

- One or two longitudinal rounded or bevelled edges on the front wall, and/or one or two longitudinal rounded or bevelled edges on the back wall.
- One or two transverse rounded or bevelled edges on the front wall, and/or one or two transverse rounded or bevelled edges on the back wall.
- One longitudinal rounded edge and one longitudinal bevelled edge on the front wall, and/or one transverse rounded edge and one transverse bevelled edge on the back wall.
- One or two transverse rounded or bevelled edges on the front wall and one or two longitudinal rounded or bevelled edges on the front wall.
- Two longitudinal rounded or bevelled edges on a first side wall or two transverse rounded or bevelled edges on the second side wall.

[0038] Where the container comprises one or more rounded edges and is made from one or more laminar blanks, preferably the blanks comprise three, four, five, six or seven scoring lines or creasing lines to form each rounded edge in the assembled container. The scoring lines or creasing lines may be either on the inside of the container or on the outside of the container. Preferably, the scoring lines or creasing lines are spaced from each other by between about 0.3 mm and 4 mm.

[0039] Preferably, the spacing of the creasing lines or scoring lines is a function of the thickness of the laminar blank. Preferably, the spacing between the creasing lines or scoring lines is between about 0.5 and about 4 times larger than the thickness of the laminar blank.

[0040] Where the container comprises one or more bevelled edge, preferably the bevelled edge has a width of between about 1 mm and about 10 mm, preferably between about 2 and about 6 mm. Alternatively, the container may comprise a double bevel formed by three parallel creasing or scoring lines that are spaced such that two distinct bevels are formed on the edge of the container.

[0041] Where the container comprises a bevelled edge and is made from one or more laminar blanks, the bevel may be formed by two parallel creasing lines or scoring lines in the laminar blank. The creasing lines or scoring lines may be arranged symmetrically to the edge between a first wall and a second wall. Alternatively, the creasing lines or scoring lines may be arranged asymmetrically to the edge between the first wall and the second wall, such that the bevel reaches further into the first wall of the container than into the second wall of the container.

[0042] Alternatively, the container may have a non-rectangular transversal cross section, for example polygonal such as triangular or hexagonal, or oval, semi-oval, circular or semicircular.

[0043] Containers according to the invention find particular application as packs for elongate smoking articles such as, for example, cigarettes, cigars or cigarillos. It will be appreciated that through appropriate choices of the dimensions thereof, containers according to the invention may be designed for different numbers of conventional size, king size, super-king size, slim or super-slim cigarettes. Alternatively, other consumer goods may be housed inside the container.

[0044] Containers according to the invention may be advantageously used to package smoking articles including, but not limited to, known lit-end cigarettes, cigars or cigarillos, heated smoking articles comprising a combustible fuel element or heat source and an aerosol-generating substrate (for example cigarettes of the type disclosed in US-A-4,714,082) and smoking articles for use with electrical smoking systems (for example cigarettes of the type disclosed in US-A-5,692,525).

[0045] Through an appropriate choice of the dimensions thereof, containers according to the invention may be designed to hold different total numbers of smoking articles, or different arrangements of smoking articles. For example, through an appropriate choice of the dimensions thereof, containers according to the invention may be designed to hold a total of between ten and thirty smoking articles.

[0046] Where the inner slide of containers according to the invention comprises a first compartment and a second compartment and where both compartments contain smoking articles, the compartments may contain the same or different numbers of smoking articles.

[0047] The smoking articles in the inner slide or in each compartment of the inner slide may be arranged in different collations, depending on the total number of smoking articles. For example, the smoking articles may be arranged in a single row of six, seven, eight, nine or ten. Alternatively, the smoking articles may be arranged in two or more rows. The two or more rows may contain the same number of smoking articles. For example, the smoking articles may be arranged in: two rows of five, six, seven, eight, nine or ten; three rows of five or seven; or four rows of four, five or six. Alternatively, the two or more rows may include at least two rows containing different number of smoking articles to each other. For example, the smoking articles may be arranged in: a row of five and a row of six (5-6); a row of six and a row of seven (6-7); a row of seven and a row of eight (7-8); a middle row of five and two outer rows of six (6-5-6); a middle row of five and two outer rows of seven (7-5-7); a middle row of six and two outer rows of five (5-6-5); a middle row of six and two outer rows of seven (7-6-7); a middle row of seven and two outer rows of six (6-7-6); a middle row of nine and two outer rows of eight (8-9-8); or a middle row of six with one outer row of five and one outer row of seven (5-6-7).

[0048] Containers according to the present invention may hold smoking articles of the same type or brand, or of different types or brands. In addition, both filterless smoking articles and smoking articles with various filter tips may be contained, as well as smoking articles of differing length (for example, between about 40 mm and about 180 mm), diameter (for example, between about 4 mm and about 9 mm). In addition, the smoking articles may differ in strength of taste, resistance to draw and total particulate matter delivery. Preferably, the dimensions of the container are adapted to the length of the smoking articles, and the collation of the smoking articles. Typically, the outer dimensions of the container are between about 0.5 mm to about 5 mm larger than the dimensions of the bundle or bundles of smoking articles housed inside the container.

[0049] The length, width and depth of containers according to the invention may be such that, in the closed position, the resultant overall dimensions of the container are similar to the dimensions of a typical disposable hinge-lid pack of twenty cigarettes.

[0050] Preferably, containers according to the invention have a height of between about 60 mm and about 150 mm, more preferably a height of between about 70 mm and about 125 mm, wherein the height is measured from the top wall to the bottom wall of the container.

[0051] Preferably, containers according to the invention have a width of between about 12 mm and about 150 mm, more preferably a width of between about 70 mm and about 125 mm, wherein the width is measured from one side wall to the other side wall of the container.

[0052] Preferably, containers according to the invention have a depth of between about 6 mm and about 100 mm, more preferably a depth of between about 12 mm and about 25 mm wherein the depth is measured from the front wall to the back wall of the container (comprising the hinge between box and lid).

[0053] Preferably, the ratio of the height of the container to the depth of the container is in between about 0.3 to 1 and about 10 to 1, more preferably between about 2 to 1 and about 8 to 1, most preferably between about 3 to 1 and 5 to 1

[0054] Preferably, the ratio of the width of the container to the depth of the container is in between about 0.3 to 1 and about 10 to 1, more preferably between about 2 to 1 and about 8 to 1, most preferably between about 2 to 1 and 3 to 1.

[0055] Preferably, the ratio of the height of the lid back wall to the height of the box back wall of the outer sleeve is between about 0 to 1 (hinge located at the top edge of the container) to about 1 to 1, more preferably, between about 1 to 5 and about 1 to 10, most preferably, between about 1 to 6 to about 1 to 8.

[0056] Preferably, the ratio of the height of the lid front wall of the outer sleeve to the height of the box front wall of the outer sleeve is between about 1 to 0 (lid covering the entire front wall) to about 1 to 10, more preferably, between about 1 to 1 and about 1 to 5, most preferably, between about 1 to 2 and about 1 to 3.

[0057] Where the container comprises smoking articles, the container may further comprise other consumer goods, for example matches, lighters, extinguishing means, breathfresheners or electronics. The other consumer goods may be attached to the outside of the container, contained within the container along with the smoking articles, in a separate compartment of the container or combinations thereof.

[0058] The exterior surfaces of containers according to the invention may be printed, embossed, debossed or otherwise embellished with manufacturer or brand logos,

trade marks, slogans and other consumer information and indicia.

[0059] Where the inner slide of a container according to the present invention comprises first and second compartments, the interior and exterior surfaces of the first and second compartments may be printed or otherwise embellished in the same or a different manner. For example, where the first and second compartments contain different consumer goods, the surfaces of the compartments may advantageously be printed in a different manner to emphasise that different consumer goods are contained therein. Alternatively or in addition, the exterior surfaces of the outer shell may be printed so as to identify which end of the outer sleeve it is possible to access each compartment through.

[0060] Where the inner slide of a container according to the present invention contains one or more bundles of cigarettes or other elongate smoking articles, the smoking articles are preferably wrapped in an inner liner of, for example, metal foil or metallised paper.

[0061] Once filled, containers according to the invention may be shrink wrapped or otherwise over wrapped with a transparent polymeric film of, for example, high or low density polyethylene, polypropylene, oriented polypropylene, polyvinylidene chloride, cellulose film, or combinations thereof in a conventional manner. Where containers according to the invention are over wrapped, the over wrapper may include a tear tape. In addition, the over wrapper may be printed with images, consumer information or other data.

[0062] The invention will be further described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 shows a perspective view of a container according to the invention with the inner slide in the first open slide position;

Figure 2 shows a perspective view of the inner slide of the container of Figure 1, from the back thereof;

Figure 3 shows a plan view of a laminar cardboard blank for forming the inner slide of the container of Figures 1 and 2; and

Figure 4 shows a plan view of a laminar cardboard blank for forming the outer shell of Figures 1 and 2.

[0063] The container 10 shown in Figure 1 is a rectangular parallelepiped and comprises an outer shell 14 and an inner slide 12 mounted within the outer shell 14. As described below, two bundles of smoking articles (not shown) are housed in the inner slide 12 of the container 10.

[0064] The inner slide 12 is formed from the blank 112 shown in Figure 3 and comprises a box 16, a first hinge lid 18 and a second hinge lid 20. As shown in Figure 2, the first hinge lid 18 is at the top end of the inner slide 12 and is connected to the box 16 along a first hinge line 22 extending substantially horizontally across the back wall of the inner slide 12 at a small distance from the top of the inner slide 12. The second hinge lid 20 is provided at the bottom end of the inner slide 12, opposed to the first hinge lid, and is connected to the box 16 along a second hinge line 24 extending substantially horizontally across the back wall of the inner slide 12 at a small distance from the bottom thereof.

[0065] The box 16 has a front wall 26, a back wall 28, a left side wall 30 and a right side wall 32. The top and bottom sides of the box are both open, to provide first and second openings through which the consumer goods within the inner slide can be accessed when the corresponding hinge lid is opened.

[0066] The first hinge lid 18 comprises a front wall 34, a back wall 36, a left side wall 38, a right side wall 40 and a top wall 42. When the first hinge lid 18 is closed, the free edges of the walls of the first hinge lid 18 abut the upper free edges of the walls of the box 16 along a line of abutment. In the closed lid position of the first hinge lid 18, the walls of the first hinge lid 18 therefore form extensions of the corresponding walls of the box 16 and the first opening in the inner slide 12 is covered by the first hinge lid 18.

[0067] The second hinge lid 20 is identical in size and shape to the first hinge lid 18 and comprises a front wall 44, a back wall 46, a left side wall 48, a right side wall 50 and a bottom wall 52. The terms 'front', 'back', 'left', 'right' and 'bottom' refer to the components of the second hinge lid 20 when the container in the upright position shown in Figure 1, with the second hinge lid 20 at the bottom of the inner slide 12. When the second hinge lid 20 is closed, the free edges of the walls of the second hinge lid 20 abut the lower free edges of the box 16 along a line of abutment. In the closed lid position of the second hinge lid 20, the wall of the second hinge lid 20 therefore form extensions of the corresponding walls of the box 16 and the second opening of the inner slide 12 is covered by the second hinge lid 20.

[0068] In alternative embodiments, the front wall 34 of the first hinge lid 18 and the front wall 44 of the second hinge lid 20 may be omitted, so that the front faces of the hinge lids are open. In this case, the front of the hinge lids is covered by the front wall of the outer shell 14 when the inner slide 12 is within the outer shell 14. Embodiments with this arrangement may be advantageous in certain assembly methods.

[0069] The outer shell 14 is formed from the blank 114 shown in Figure 4 and comprises a front wall 54, a back wall 56, a right side wall 58 and a left side wall 60. The top and bottom ends of the outer shell 14 are open, to allow movement of the inner slide 12 into the first or second open slide position. The back wall 56 of the outer shell 14 is formed of an inner back wall panel 56a and an overlying outer back wall panel 56b. The inner back wall panel 56a is provided with a vertical, elongate cut out 72, the purpose of which will be described below. The length of the cut out 72 is such that the ends are provided a short distance away from the top and bottom edges of the inner back wall panel 56a.

[0070] The inner slide 12 is moveable between the first open slide position shown in Figure 1, in which the first hinge lid 18 projects through the top end of the outer shell 14 and a second open slide position in which the second hinge lid 20 projects through the bottom end of the outer shell 14. In each of the open slide positions, only the hinge lid that is projecting from the outer sleeve 14 may be opened. The other hinge lid remains within the outer sleeve 14 so that the hinge lids cannot be open simultaneously.

[0071] In order to move the inner slide 12 to the first open slide position, the inner slide 12 is pushed upwards by applying a force to the bottom wall 52 of the second hinge lid through the open end at the bottom of the outer shell 14. Once the first hinge lid 18 projects from the top end of the outer shell 14, it may then be moved to an open position by pivoting it open about the first hinge line 22.

[0072] Conversely, in order to move the inner slide 12 to the second open slide position, the inner slide 12 is pushed in an opposite direction by applying a force to the top wall 42 of the first hinge lid through the open end at the top of outer shell 14. In order to facilitate removal of the consumer goods through the second hinge lid 20, the container 10 may be turned by 180 degrees so that the second hinge lid 20 is positioned at the upper end of the container 10. In this case, the second hinge lid 20 may be opened in exactly the same way as when the first hinge lid 18 is at the upper end of the container 10, by pivoting it about the second hinge line 24.

[0073] The outer dimensions of the inner slide 12 are similar to the inner dimensions of the outer shell 14, such that between uses, the inner slide 12 can be moved to an intermediate position in which the inner slide 12 lies entirely within the outer shell 14. In this intermediate position, neither hinge lid may be opened. Frictional forces between the outer surfaces of the inner, slide 12 and the inner surfaces of the outer shell 14 substantially prevent the inner slide 12 sliding relative to the outer shell 14 until a positive force is applied.

[0074] The inner slide 12 is divided into a first, top compartment and a second, bottom compartment by an integral partition 64 positioned inside the inner slide 12, approximately half way up. The integral partition 64 provides the bottom wall of the first compartment and the top wall of the second compartment. The first and second compartments are approximately the same size as each other and each contains a bundle of smoking articles (not shown in the figures). The first compartment is accessible through the first hinge lid 18 when the inner slide 12 is in the first open slide position. The second compartment is accessible through the second hinge lid 20 when the inner slide 12 is in the second open slide position.

[0075] As can be seen from Figure 3, the integral partition 64 is formed from a rectangular section in the front wall 26 of the box 16 of the inner slide 12. The section has been cut along three sides and is folded approximately 90 degrees into the interior of the inner slide 12, about a hinge line 62 extending substantially horizontally along the front wall 26.

[0076] The size and shape of the section forming the integral partition 64 correspond to the horizontal cross section of the inner slide 12 such that when the integral partition 64 is folded into place, it completely separates the first and second compartments from each other. As shown in Figure 3, the integral partition 64 comprises a tab portion 66 extending from its free bottom edge, wherein the bottom edge is the edge opposed to the hinge line 62 and which lies against the back wall 28 of the box 16 when the container 10 is assembled. The tab portion 66 is foldable relative to the remainder of the integral partition 64 and is inserted through a cut line 68 extending substantially horizontally across the back wall of the inner slide 12 between the sides thereof, at the same level as the integral partition 66. The tab portion 66 is then folded back against the outside of the back wall 28 of the box, such that when the container 10 is assembled, it lies between the box back wall 28 and the back wall of the outer shell. This arrangement ensures that the integral partition 66 is retained in place.

[0077] The back wall 28 of the box 16 further comprises a pair of retention tabs 70 provided above and below the cut line 68. Each retention tab 70 has been cut on three sides and is folded 180 degrees about a hinge line 74 extending parallel to the cut line 68. Once the container 10 has been assembled, the pair of retention tabs 70 therefore lies between the back wall 28 of the box of the inner slide 12 and the back wall of the outer sleeve 14. The width of the retention tabs 70 corresponds to the width of the elongate cut out 72 in the rear back wall panel of the outer shell 14 so that when the container 10 is assembled, the retention tabs lie within the elongate cut out 72.

[0078] As the inner slide 12 is moved in an upwards direction, the tabs 70 will move upwards within the cut out 72 until the free edge of the upper retention tab abuts the top edge of the cut out 72, so that the retention tab interlocks with the inner back wall panel 56a. This will prevent further movement of the inner slide 12 in an upwards direction relative to the outer sleeve 14. Similarly, the abutment of the free edge of the lower retention tab with the bottom edge of the cut out 72 will prevent further movement of the inner slide 12 in a downwards direction relative to the outer sleeve 14.

[0079] The length of the cut out 72 is such that the retention tabs 70 interlock with the inner back wall panel 56a when the inner slide 12 is in the first or second open slide position. The retention tabs 70 therefore prevent movement of the inner slide 12 beyond the first and second positions and also prevent removal of the inner slide from the outer shell 14.

[0080] In order to assemble the container 10, the inner slide 12 is formed around two bundles of wrapped cigarettes with the integral partition 64 folded in place as described above. The filled inner slide 12 is then inserted into the outer shell 14 with the retention tabs folded and

fitted into the elongate cut out 72, as described above. The assembled container may then be overwrapped with a transparent wrapper, in the convention manner.

Claims

1. A slide and shell container for consumer goods comprising:

   an outer shell; and
   an inner slide for housing the consumer goods, the inner slide comprising a box, a first hinge lid connected to the box about a first hinge line and a second hinge lid, substantially opposed to the first hinge lid and connected to the box about a second hinge line, wherein the inner slide is slidable within the outer shell between a first open slide position and a second open slide position, wherein in the first open slide position, the first hinge lid projects outwardly from the outer shell through a first open end thereof such that the first hinge lid is moveable to an open position and wherein in the second open position, the second hinge lid projects outwardly from the outer shell through a second open end thereof such that the second hinge lid is moveable to an open position.

2. A slide and shell container according to claim 1 wherein the inner slide is slidable within the outer shell between the first open slide position and the second open slide position through an intermediate slide position in which the first hinge lid and the second hinge lid are each retained in a closed position by the outer shell.

3. A slide and shell container according to claim 1 or 2 wherein the inner slide comprises a first compartment accessible by means of the first hinge lid and a second compartment accessible by means of the second hinge lid, wherein in the first open slide position the first compartment is accessible and the second compartment is inaccessible whilst in the second open slide position the second compartment is accessible and the first compartment is inaccessible.

4. A slide and shell container according to claim 3 wherein in the intermediate slide position both the first compartment and the second compartment are inaccessible.

5. A slide and shell container according to claim 3 or 4 wherein the first compartment and the second compartment of the inner slide are separated by an integral partition.

6. A slide and shell container according to any preceding claim further comprising retention means for preventing removal of the inner slide from the outer shell.

7. A slide and shell container according to claim 6 wherein the retention means prevent movement of the inner slide beyond the first open slide position and the second open slide position.

8. A slide and shell container according to claim 7 wherein the retention means comprises at least one retention flap provided on the inner slide which is capable of engaging with the outer sleeve to prevent movement of the inner slide beyond the first open slide position and the second open slide position.

9. A slide and shell container according to any of claims 3 to 8 wherein the first compartment of the inner slide comprises a plurality of consumer goods and the second compartment of the inner slide is a waste compartment.

10. A slide and shell container according to any preceding claim, wherein at least one of the hinge lids comprises a front wall.

11. A slide and shell container according to any preceding claim wherein the inner slide is formed of a single laminar blank.

12. A slide and shell container according to any preceding claim wherein the inner slide houses a plurality of smoking articles.

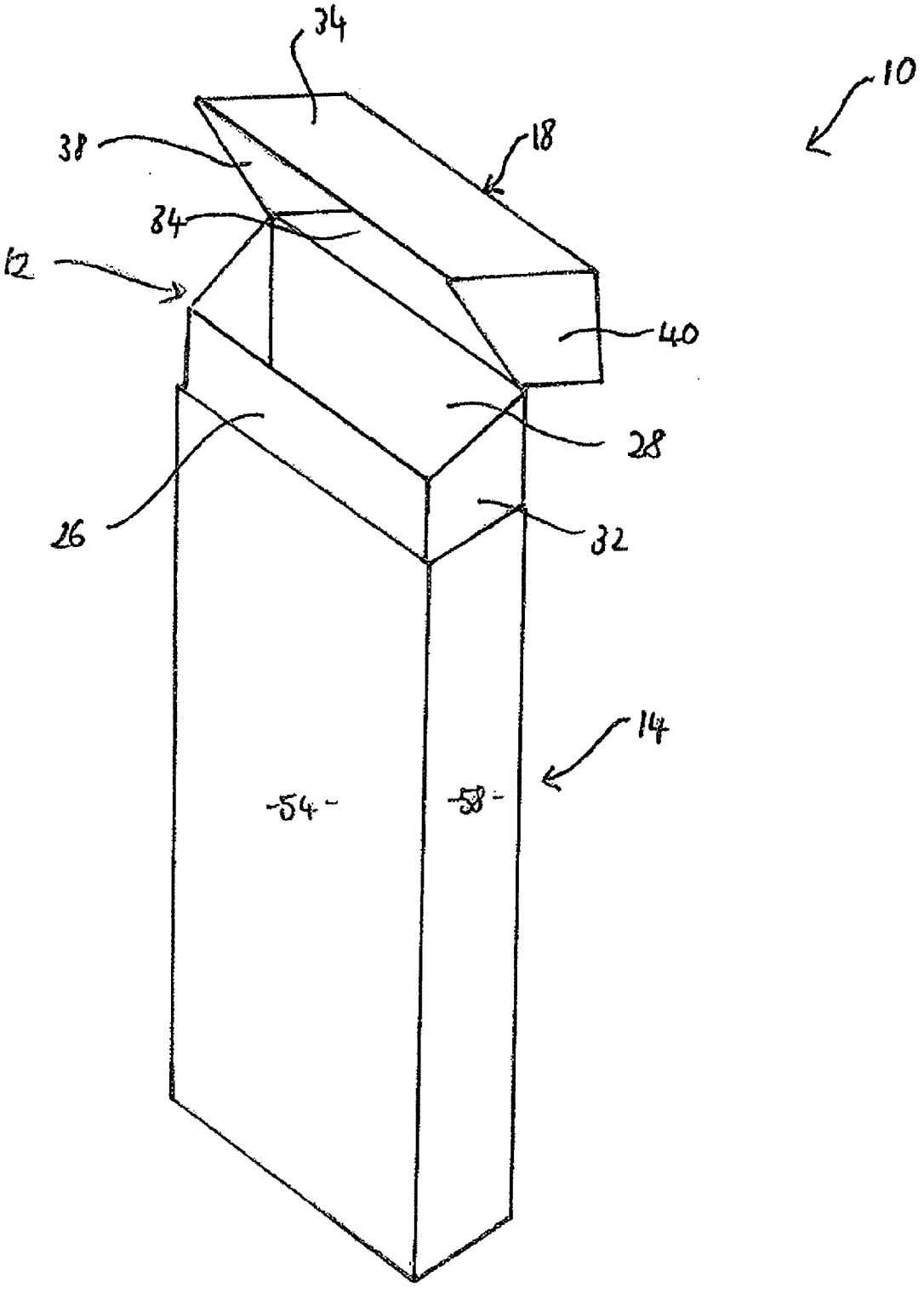

Figure 1

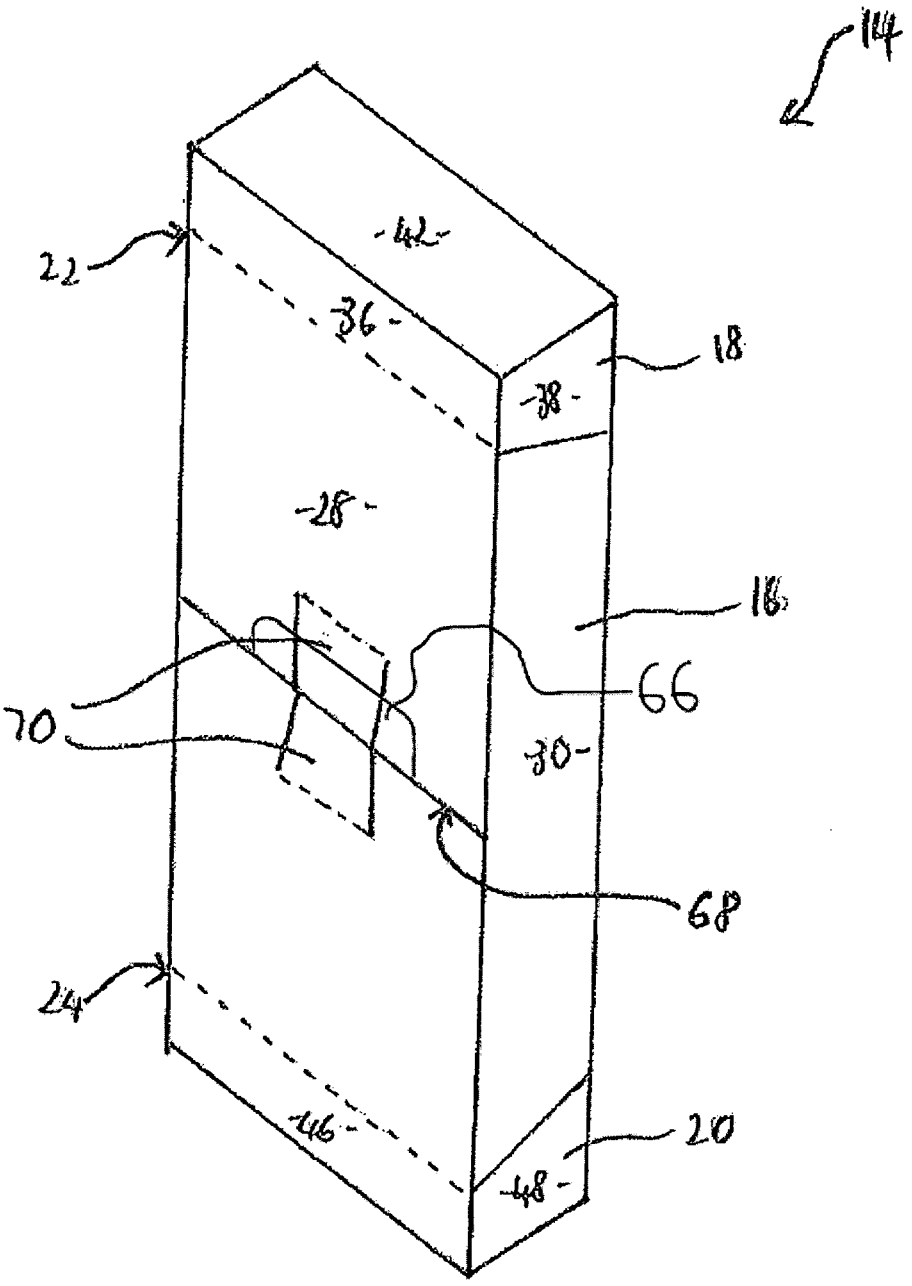

Figure 2

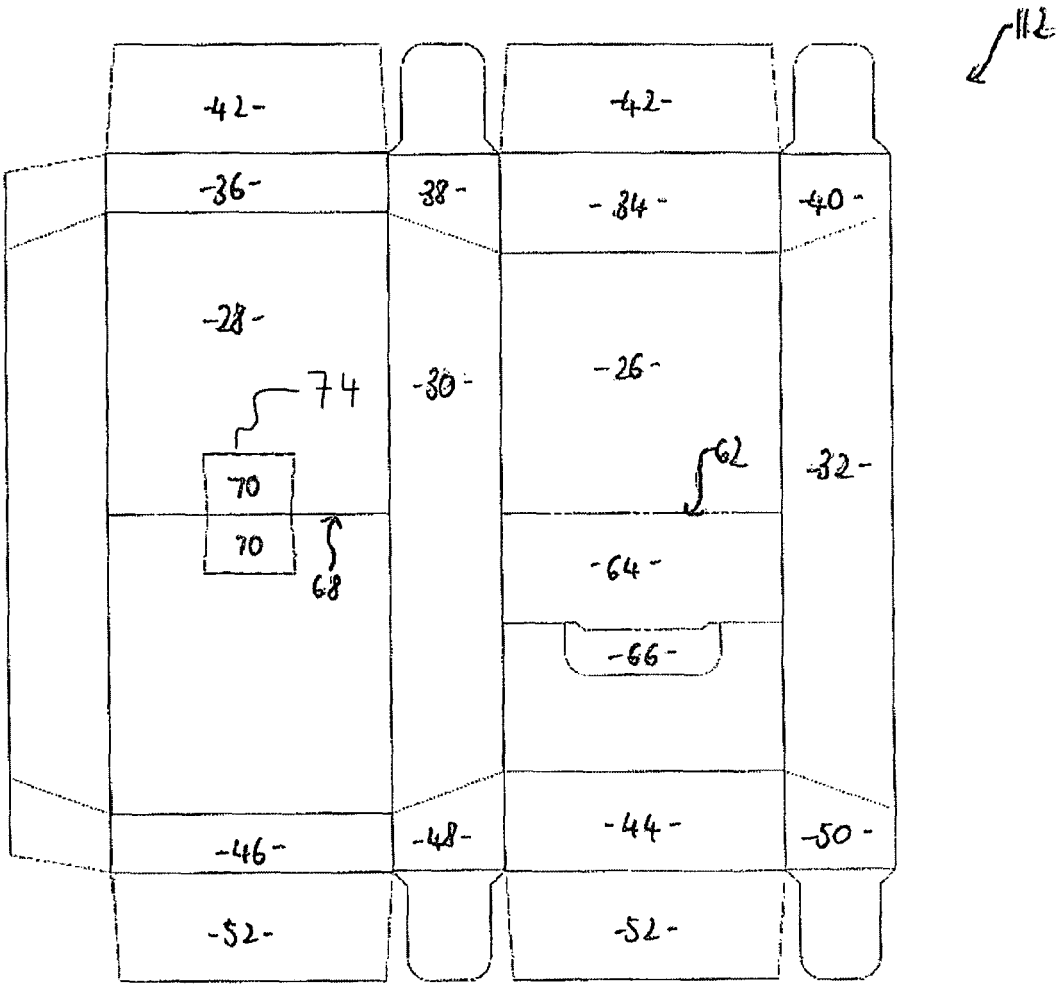

Figure 3

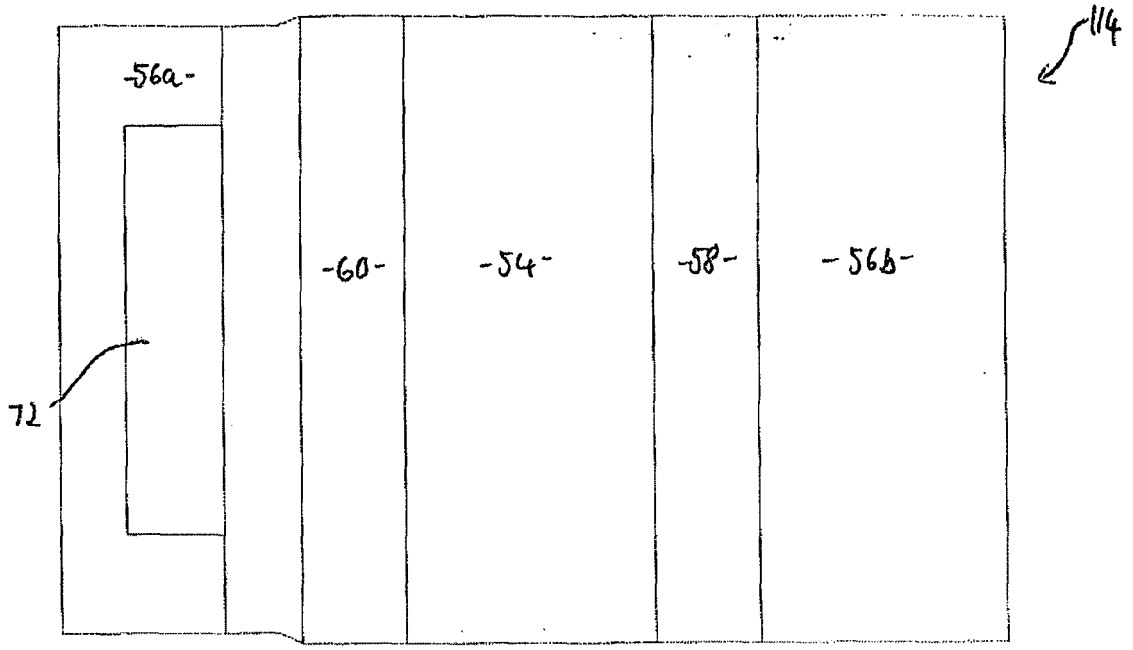

Figure 4

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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 09 25 2010

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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims

Place of search	Date of completion of the search	Examiner
Munich	13 January 2010	Piolat, Olivier

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