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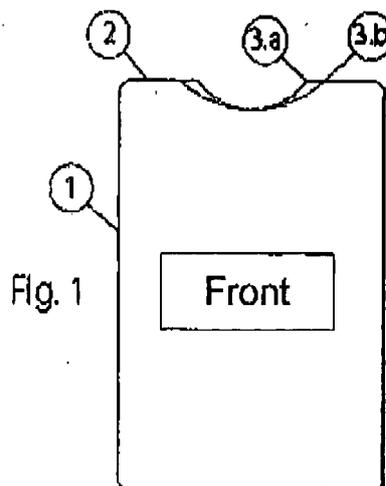
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(54) **Case for cards or the like**

(57) Case for cards or the like made like a sleeve, made of a relatively flexible, rigid or semi-rigid material, which sleeve has the dimensions substantially corresponding to those of the card designed to be housed

therein and at least one open or openable insertion side. The case has at least one outer face arranged for receiving one or more images of any type, such as for example printing images.



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Description

[0001] The invention relates to the field of production of cases for articles of small thickness, particularly protective sleeves or the like. Such cases can have several applications, such as for example the protection of CD, DVD, cards, magnetic cards or microprocessor cards, Memory Cards or other similar objects.

[0002] Specifically the invention relates to a case for cards, such as for example magnetic cards or chip cards such as bank cards, credit or debit cards, loyalty cards of stores, prepaid cards with scale down credit or the like.

[0003] It is known that there are machines for forming protective sleeves or the like, such as for example the one described in the Italian patent n. 1353067.

[0004] Some arrangements are also known that allow the credit present in a card to be displayed by associating to the case means for the identification of the credit present in the card stored therein such as for example described in the Italian patent n. 1285934.

[0005] The present invention aims at overcoming what already disclosed and claimed in said patent by focusing its attention on aspects that allow known cases to be provided with a better handiness and convenience for effectively protecting cards, or similar products, and prints provided thereon, if any.

[0006] The invention achieves the aim by a case made like a sleeve, made of a relatively flexible, rigid or semi-rigid material, which sleeve has the dimensions substantially corresponding to those of the card designed to be housed therein and at least one open or openable insertion side. At least one outer face is arranged for receiving, particularly by printing, one or more images of any type. Thus the outer faces of the case can be used for showing advertising images, business logos, works of art, telephone numbers and addresses or the like.

[0007] The case can also have means for identifying or diversifying it from the other cases, such as for example peripheral areas of different color or different structure, particularly peripheral edges with different colours or different outlines, shapes, marks and drawings.

[0008] The case can be made of any material. For example, with the aim of obtaining overall dimensions as small as possible, it can be composed of a sheet of plastic material, paper or other water resistant fibers or combinations thereof. Preferably the case is composed of a composite sheet comprising three coupled materials.

[0009] Therefore the sheet comprises an inner layer, that is intended to face the inside of the case, which is made of polymer material, preferably polyethylene, an intermediate layer composed of metal material, preferably aluminium, and an outer layer, that is intended to face the outside of the case, which is made of cellulose material, such as paperboard, paper or kraft paper.

[0010] The three layers are coupled to each other such to form a single sheet.

[0011] The outer part of the case can be laminated, for example with food plastic. This technique is used since

it allows the product to be more resistant to mechanical tensile stresses and to external agents (weathering, sweat, moisture and other). These improved mechanical properties give also a higher life of the product. Moreover the lamination protects to a greater extent the print and it gives a higher brightness to the case.

[0012] According to a preferred embodiment, the sheet is formed, the outer layer is printed and then laminated, the sheet is cut to shape or die cut, and therefore it is folded as an envelope and sealed along the edges by means of a suitable folding and sealing machine.

[0013] The fact that the edges of the folded sheet to be sealed are in contact with each other by the respective inner layer of polyethylene allows an easy sealing by the softening of the inner layers, the mutual penetration of the material and the following cooling of the bonded layers.

[0014] As an alternative or in combination it is possible to obtain a sealing by acting on the laminated surface layer arranged on the outer layer made of cellulose material.

[0015] A part or both the faces of the case then can be intended for the application of advertising messages or other type of information.

[0016] According to an improvement, the case can have a suitably shaped cut, particularly perpendicular to the long side of the case in the back or front face, thus allowing another card, a ticket of any type, various cards or the like to be inserted. Thus a double-pouch case is obtained that allows the cards inserted therein to be easily and independently removed.

[0017] The case can have a slot in the outer front or back face. Both the size and the position of the slot are customized on the basis of the position of the barcode, or similar, provided in the card. This allows the card to be read without the need of removing it from the case.

[0018] The case, when provided for being associated with cards or tickets with scale down credit can advantageously have means for noting and/or storing the residual credit such as for example those described in the Italian patent n. 1285934 to be considered as an integral part of the present description.

[0019] Further characteristics and improvements are the object of the subclaims.

[0020] The characteristics of the invention and the advantages deriving therefrom will be more clear from the following detailed description of the annexed figures, wherein:

- Fig. 1 is a case for cards or the like according to one embodiment
- Figs. 2, 3 and 4 are variants of the case of fig. 1.

[0021] With reference to fig.1 now a case for cards is described upon which any type of images can be printed. The perimetral edge 1 can be enlarged and can have a predetermined shape and/or a specific colour. The sleeve is open or at least openable along an edge 2,

having a recess through which a grasping portion of the card projects in the stored condition. The thumb notch is crescent-shaped on the open side such to facilitate the removal of the card, it has a smaller radius 3a in the back part and a greater radius 3b in the front part which makes it possible to better insert the card.

[0022] The thumb notch can also have other shapes, such as shown for example in figs. 4 and 5, in order to allow the card to be easily inserted, regardless of how the case is grasped. This solution has elongated asymmetric and opposite radii on each edge 6, 7 of the open side.

[0023] The advantage is the fact that such radii form a small resting plane and, by rotating on its own vertical axis, the case is always in the ideal position for the insertion of the card.

[0024] The case of fig.2 has an improvement that is a horizontal cut 4 that can be made with different shapes in order to allow a second card or ticket of any type to be easily removed, for example a visiting card, made of any material.

[0025] The case of fig.3 is particularly suitable for cards provided with a barcode. It has a slot 5 with such a shape and size to allow the code to be read without the need of removing the card from the case.

[0026] The case according to the invention can be made of three coupled materials composed of a sheet of polyethylene or polythene, a sheet of aluminium, a sheet of paperboard, or paper or kraft paper, thin such to take up a small space. The outer part of the case can be laminated with a pre-adhesive polypropylene film, according to European standards. The case is closed by a sealing process applied on the outer lamination at the two sides of the sleeve. It is possible to combine to said materials a sheet of material suitable for exerting a function shielding the card against any external interference, typically magnetic and/or electric interference, for magnetic or microchip or microchip contactless card or other systems.

[0027] Particularly if the cards to be housed in the case have a RFID device, it is important to guarantee data stored in the RFID device not to be read from the outside in a casual or fraudulent manner.

[0028] To this end, according to a preferred embodiment, the inner layer of the sheet of three coupled materials is composed of aluminium with a thickness greater than 5 μm , preferably greater than 7 μm .

[0029] The characteristics described above, that is lamination, thumb notch with two different radii or with opposite asymmetric radii, double-pouch, slot allow cases improved with respect to known ones to be obtained. Obviously these characteristics can also be provided not only in combination, but also individually, one independently of the other.

[0030] The present invention shown and disclosed in one possible constructional configuration thereof by way of example, not limitative for this reason, has to be intended as extended to all those additional variants as regards shape, materials and components that, as such,

fall within the scope of the following claims.

Claims

1. Case for cards or the like made like a sleeve, made of a relatively flexible, rigid or semi-rigid material, which sleeve has the dimensions substantially corresponding to those of the card designed to be housed therein and at least one open or openable insertion side, **characterized in that** it has at least one outer face arranged for receiving one or more images of any type.
2. Case according to claim 1, **characterized in that** it has one or more images printed on one or both the outer faces, such as for example advertising images, business logos, works of art, telephone numbers, addresses or the like.
3. Case according to claim 1 or 2, **characterized in that** it has means for identifying or diversifying it from the other cases, such as for example peripheral areas of different color or different structure, particularly peripheral edges (1) with different colours or different outlines, shapes, marks and drawings.
4. Case according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** it is composed of a sheet of plastic material, paper or other water resistant fibers in combination or not with magnetic and/or electric protection sheets.
5. Case according to claim 4, **characterized in that** the sheet comprises an inner layer made of polymer material, an intermediate layer made of metal material and an outer layer made of cellulose material.
6. Case according to claim 5, **characterized in that** it is composed of a composite sheet comprising three coupled materials of polythene or polyethylene, aluminium, paperboard or paper or kraft paper.
7. Case according to claim 4 or 5, **characterized in that** the inner layer of the sheet is made of aluminium with a thickness greater than 5 μm , preferably greater than 7 μm .
8. Case according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** it is externally laminated, particularly with food plastic.
9. Case according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** it has a cut (4) in the back part with such a size and shape to allow another card, ticket of any type or the like to be inserted.
10. Case according to one or more of the preceding

claims, **characterized in that** it has a slot (5) in the outer face such to allow instructions or barcodes present on the card associated or associable thereto to be read.

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11. Case according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** it is open or at least openable along an edge (2) having a recess through which a grasping portion of the card projects in the stored condition, said recess being of different dimensions, or equal and symmetric dimensions, on the opposite faces forming said edge.

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12. Case according to claim 11, **characterized in that** said recess has the shape of an arc of a circle or crescent-shape (3a, 3b) with different radii on the opposite faces, particularly a smaller radius on the back part of the case.

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13. Case according to claim 11, **characterized in that** said recess has the shape of an arc of a circle or crescent-shape with elongated asymmetric and opposite radii on the two faces forming the edges (6, 7).

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14. Case according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** it is provided for being associated to cards or tickets with scale down credit, the case having means for noting and/or storing the residual credit.

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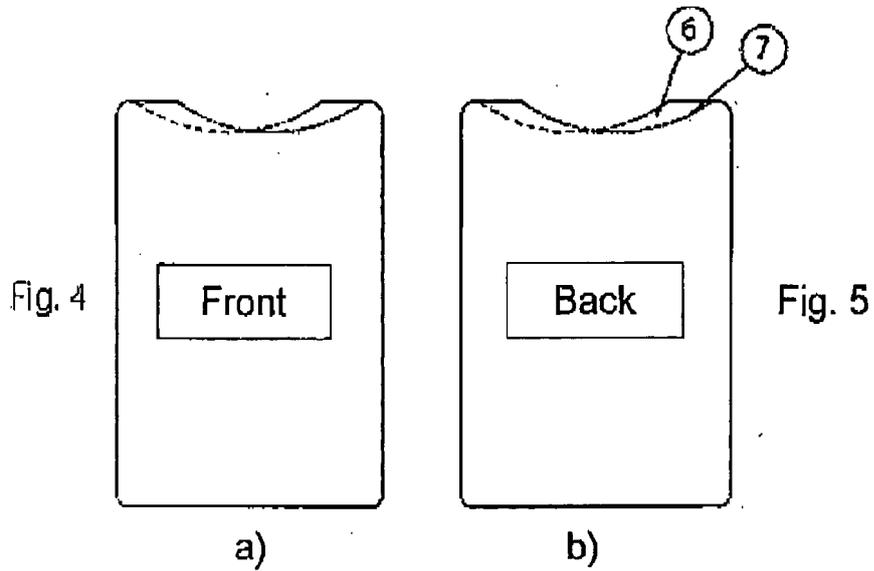
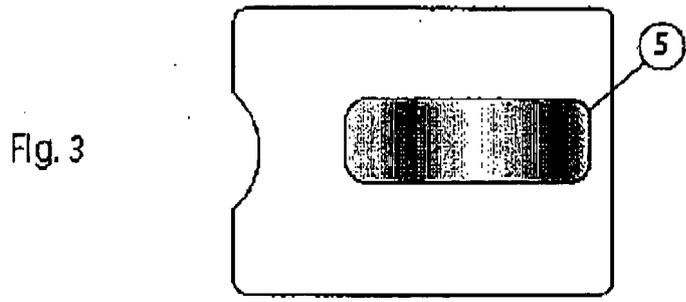
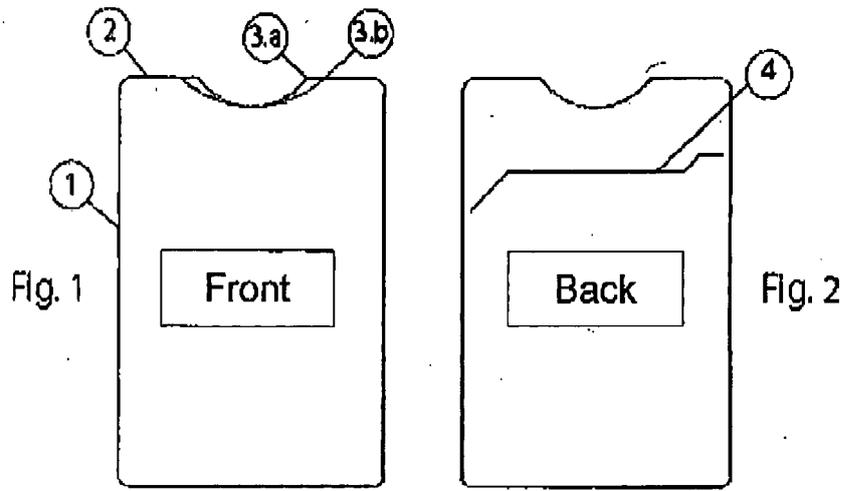
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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 14 00 0773

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X	DE 20 2008 011071 U1 (SIEGERLAENDER PLASTIK GMBH [DE]) 27 November 2008 (2008-11-27) * paragraphs [0012], [0013], [0019] - [0025] * * figures *	1-14	
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			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (IPC)
			A45C
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search The Hague		Date of completion of the search 26 June 2014	Examiner Frank, Lucia
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document		T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document	

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**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
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For more details about this annex : see Official Journal of the European Patent Office, No. 12/82

REFERENCES CITED IN THE DESCRIPTION

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