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(54) Title: VENDING MACHINE

(57) Abstract

A vending machine for vending articles such as cassettes or boxes is disclosed which has a touch screen (18) for receiving user input commands, a key pad (26) and credit card or coin payment devices (22, 24). A control system (Figures 11 to 13 and 23) controls operation of the machine. A vending unit (14) has a carriage (70) mounted for movement below a storage compartment (46) which is divided into a plurality of sections (74). The compartment (46) stores cassettes or boxes which can be stacked one above the other and released into the carriage (70) so that the carriage (70) can move to dispense the article through an outlet (58). A latch (80) controls movements of the cassettes or boxes (75) into the carriage (70). The latch (80) is pivotally mounted and movable from a position where abutment (196) engages a cassette or box (75) or releases the cassette or box. When in the release position a top portion

(181) of the latch engages the cassette or box above the cassette or box to be released and holds that cassette or box in place until the lower most cassette or box is released and then return of the latch (80) enables the next box to drop down to be engaged by the abutment portion (196) and held in the storage compartment (46). The carriage (70) has an open bottom and articles can be delivered to an outlet opening (58) in the floor for dispensing through the outlet opening (58) could be aligned with the floor and articles tipped onto a front face by an abutment (505) and rearward movement of the carriage (70) and then pushed out of the outlet opening (58) by the carriage (70).

