Claims

1. Method for spacing apart electronic components arranged in a matrix structure, comprising the processing steps of:

A) picking up a part of a group of electronic components arranged in an initial matrix structure; and

B) setting down the picked-up electronic components on a carrier in a modified matrix structure,

wherein each matrix structure is formed by rows and columns of electronic components, and wherein:

- the direction of the rows of the matrix structure substantially corresponds to a primary transport direction of the electronic components; and
- the direction of the columns generally lies substantially perpendicularly of the direction of the rows of the matrix structure,

wherein the electronic components are set down in successive subgroups on the carrier in the modified matrix structure such that the number of rows of the modified matrix structure is smaller than the number of rows of the initial matrix structure of electronic components.

2. Method as claimed in claim 1, **characterized in that** the electronic components are engaged by a manipulator provided with engaging positions, a relative orientation of which corresponds to an orientation of the subgroups of electronic components to be engaged.

3. Method as claimed in claim 2, **characterized in that** the relative orientation of the engaging positions of the manipulator changes between processing steps A) and B).

4. Method as claimed in claim 2, **characterized in that** the relative orientation of the engaging positions of the manipulator does not change between processing steps A) and B).

5. Method as claimed in any of the claims 2 - 4, **characterized in that** all electronic components picked up by the manipulator are set down simultaneously on the carrier during processing step B).

6. Method as claimed in any of the claims 2-4, **characterized in that** the electronic components picked up by the manipulator are set down in successive sub-steps on the carrier during processing step B).

7. Method as claimed in claim 6, **characterized in that** between the successive sub-steps with which the electronic components are set down on the carrier the manipulator is displaced in a direction at an angle to the rows of the electronic components.

8. Method as claimed in any of the foregoing claims, **characterized in that** the electronic components are rotated during at least one of the processing steps.

9. Method as claimed in any of the claims 2 - 8, **characterized in that** the subgroups of electronic components are engaged by the manipulator by means of underpressure.

10. Method as claimed in any of the foregoing claims, **characterized in that** the electronic components are set down in successive subgroups on the carrier in a modified matrix structure such that the number of rows of the modified matrix structure is halved compared to the number of rows of the initial matrix structure of electronic components.

11. Method as claimed in claim 10, **characterized in that** every other electronic component in a first subgroup of a supplied group of electronic components is engaged and set down on the carrier in a modified matrix structure, and that the remaining components of the supplied group of electronic components are subsequently engaged in a second subgroup and placed on the carrier such that the electronic components of the second subgroup are placed between the electronic components of the first subgroup on the carrier.

12. Device for spacing apart electronic components arranged in a matrix structure, comprising:

- a supply for electronic components arranged in an initial matrix structure;

- a carrier on which picked-up electronic components are set down in a modified matrix structure; and
- at least one manipulator for picking up a subgroup of the electronic components supplied in the initial matrix structure,

wherein each matrix structure is formed by rows and columns of electronic components, and wherein:

- the direction of the rows of the matrix structure substantially corresponds to a primary transport direction of the electronic components; and
- the direction of the columns generally lies substantially perpendicularly of the direction of the rows of the matrix structure,

characterized in that the supply is adapted to carry X rows of electronic components and the carrier on which the electronic components are set down is adapted to carry Y rows of electronic components, with X > Y.

13. Device as claimed in claim 12, **characterized in that** the supply is adapted to carry an even number of rows of electronic components.

14. Device as claimed in claim 12 or 13, **characterized in that** X = 2Y.

15. Device as claimed in any of the claims 12-14, **characterized in that** the mutual spacing between the X rows of electronic components on the supply differs from the mutual spacing between the Y rows of electronic components on the discharge.

16. Device as claimed in claim 15, **characterized in that** the mutual spacing between the X rows of electronic components on the supply is twice as large as the mutual spacing between the Y rows of electronic components on the discharge.