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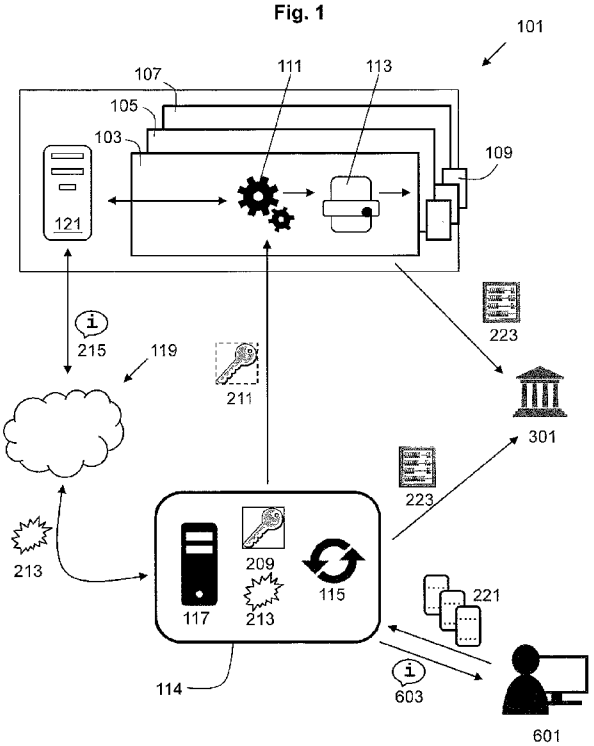
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(54) Title: METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR MARKING MANUFACTURED ITEMS

Fig. 1



(57) Abstract: There is provided a method and apparatus for marking manufactured items. The method comprises providing a cryptographic key, in an inactive state, to a point in a supply chain for the manufactured items, providing the cryptographic key, in an active state, and an activation code for activating the cryptographic key, to a verification centre, and providing the activation code to the point in the supply chain in response to the point in the supply chain transmitting information relating to the received cryptographic key. The activation code allows the cryptographic key in the inactive state to be activated to form the cryptographic key in the active state. The method further comprises generating, at the point in the supply chain, an identification (ID) code for each manufactured item. The ID code is derived from the cryptographic key in the active state and a dynamic key generated for each batch of manufactured items. The method further comprises providing the dynamic key for each batch of manufactured items to the verification centre, marking each manufactured item with the ID code, and counting the actual or correct number of ID codes marked on the manufactured items. The method and apparatus may be used for tax verification (for goods subject to taxation), production volume verification and authentication.

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