

CARTRIDGE AND IMAGE FORMING APPARATUS
USING THE CARTRIDGE

FIELD OF THE INVENTION AND RELATED ART

5 **[0001]** The present invention relates to a cartridge
and an image forming apparatus using the cartridge,
and the cartridge is suitably used for an
electrophotographic copying machine, an
electrophotographic printer (LED printer, laser beam
10 printer or the like), a facsimile apparatus, a word
processor, and so on.

[0002] In the image forming apparatus, an
electrophotographic photosensitive member generally of
a drum type as an image bearing member, i.e., a
15 photosensitive drum is electrically charged uniformly.
Then, the charged photosensitive drum is subjected to
selective exposure to light, whereby an electrostatic
latent image (electrostatic image) is formed. Then,
the electrostatic latent image formed on the
20 photosensitive drum is developed into a toner image
with toner as developer. Thereafter, the toner image
is transferred from the photosensitive drum onto a
recording material such as a recording sheet or a
plastic sheet, and then heat and pressure are applied
25 to the toner image transferred on the recording
material, so that the toner image is fixed on the
recording material and thus image recording is

effected.

[0003] Such an image forming apparatus requires toner supply and maintenance of various process means in general. In order to facilitate the toner supply and
5 the maintenance, a process cartridge type in which the photosensitive drum, a charging means, a developing means, a cleaning means and the like are integrally assembled into a cartridge (unit) in a frame and the cartridge is used as a process cartridge detachably
10 mountable to an image forming apparatus main assembly has been put into practical use.

[0004] Here, the process cartridge is such a cartridge that an image bearing member such as an electrophotographic photosensitive drum is at least
15 provided and that the image bearing member and process means actable on the image bearing member are integrally provided. Such a process cartridge is detachably mounted in the image forming apparatus main assembly.

20 **[0005]** According to this process cartridge type, the maintenance of the image forming apparatus can be made by a user himself (herself), and therefore operativity can be remarkably improved, so that it is possible to provide an image forming apparatus excellent in
25 usability. For that reason, the process cartridge type has been widely used in the image forming apparatus.

[0006] On the above-described process cartridge, a

storing medium for storing various pieces of service information and process information is mounted in some cases. The image forming apparatus uses these pieces of the information, so that an image quality and a maintenance property are further improved.

[0007] In order to establish a stable electrical connection between the storing medium and the image forming apparatus main assembly, an image forming apparatus in which the storing medium and the image forming apparatus main assembly are positioned relative to each other has been known (Japanese Laid-Open Patent Applications 2007-47397, 2008-224782 and 2007-47399).

[0008] For the purpose of establishing the stable electrical connection between the storing medium and the image forming apparatus main assembly, it is desired that the positioning between the storing medium and the image forming apparatus main assembly relative to each other can be effected without providing a particular space.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0009] A principal object of the present invention is to provide a cartridge capable of effecting positioning between a storing medium and an image forming apparatus main assembly relative to each other without providing a particular space in order to

establish a stable electrical connection between the storing medium and the image forming apparatus main assembly.

[0010] Another object of the present invention is to
5 provide an image forming apparatus using the cartridge.

[0011] According to an aspect of the present invention, there is provided a cartridge insertable into a main assembly of an image forming apparatus, comprising: a first unit including a first bearing
10 portion for supporting an image bearing member; a second unit including a second bearing portion for supporting a developer carrying member; and a storing medium including an electrical contact, wherein the second bearing portion is provided inside the first
15 bearing portion with respect to a rotational axis direction of the image bearing member, wherein at least a part of the storing medium is supported by the second unit and is provided at a position outside the second bearing portion and inside an outermost
20 configuration of the first unit with respect to the rotational axis direction, and wherein the electrical contact is faced toward a downstream with respect to an inserting direction into the main assembly.

[0012] According to another aspect of the present
25 invention, there is provided a cartridge insertable into a main assembly of an image forming apparatus, comprising: a first unit including a first bearing

portion for supporting an image bearing member; a second unit including a second bearing portion for supporting a developer carrying member; and a storing medium including an electrical contact, wherein the first bearing portion is provided inside the second bearing portion with respect to a rotational axis direction of the image bearing member, wherein at least a part of the storing medium is supported by the first unit and is provided at a position outside the first bearing portion and inside an outermost configuration of the second unit with respect to the rotational axis direction, and wherein the electrical contact is faced toward a downstream with respect to an inserting direction into the main assembly.

15 **[0013]** According to another aspect of the present invention, there is provided a cartridge insertable into a main assembly of an image forming apparatus, comprising: a developing unit including a developing bearing portion for supporting a developer carrying member; and a storing medium including an electrical contact, wherein the developing bearing portion is provided inside an image bearing member bearing portion with respect to a rotational axis direction of the developer carrying member, wherein at least a part of the storing medium is supported by the developing unit and is provided at a position outside the developing bearing portion and inside an outermost

configuration of an image bearing member unit including the image bearing member bearing portion with respect to the rotational axis direction, and wherein the electrical contact is faced toward a downstream with respect to an inserting direction into the main assembly.

[0014] According to another aspect of the present invention, there is provided a cartridge insertable into a main assembly of an image forming apparatus, comprising: an image bearing member unit including an image bearing member bearing portion for supporting an image bearing member; and a storing medium including an electrical contact, wherein the image bearing member bearing portion is provided inside a developing bearing portion with respect to a rotational axis direction of the image bearing member, wherein at least a part of the storing medium is supported by the image bearing member unit and is provided at a position outside the image bearing member bearing portion and inside an outermost configuration of a developer carrying member unit including the developing bearing portion with respect to the rotational axis direction, and wherein the electrical contact is faced toward a downstream with respect to an inserting direction into the main assembly.

[0015] According to another aspect of the present invention, there is provided an image forming

apparatus comprising the above-described cartridge and a tray for moving the cartridge, wherein the tray is movable between an inner position of the main assembly and an outer position of the main assembly.

5 **[0016]** According to a further aspect of the present invention, there is provided an image forming apparatus, comprising: a cartridge insertable into a main assembly of an image forming apparatus, including a first unit including a first bearing portion for
10 supporting an image bearing member, a second unit including a second bearing portion for supporting a developer carrying member, and a storing medium including an electrical contact; and a tray for mounting the cartridge, wherein the tray is movable
15 between an inner position of the main assembly and an outer position of the main assembly, wherein the electrical contact is faced toward a downstream with respect to an inserting direction into the main assembly.

20 **[0017]** These and other objects, features and advantages of the present invention will become more apparent upon a consideration of the following description of the preferred embodiments of the present invention taken in conjunction with the
25 accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0018] Figure 1 is a schematic view of a process

cartridge according to First Embodiment to which the present invention is applicable, as seen from a downstream side with respect to an inserting direction.

[0019] Figure 2 is a sectional view of a main assembly of an image forming apparatus and the process cartridge in First Embodiment.

[0020] Figure 3 is a sectional view of the process cartridge in First Embodiment.

[0021] Figure 4 is a sectional view showing an inside of a cleaning container of the process cartridge in First Embodiment.

[0022] Figure 5 is a perspective view of the image forming apparatus main assembly in a state in which an openable door of the image forming apparatus in First Embodiment is open.

[0023] Figure 6 is a perspective view of the image forming apparatus main assembly in a state in which the openable door of the image forming apparatus in First Embodiment is opened and then a tray is pulled out.

[0024] Figure 7 is a perspective view of the image forming apparatus main assembly and the process cartridge when the process cartridge is mounted in and demounted from the tray in the state in which the openable door of the image forming apparatus in First Embodiment is opened and then the tray is pulled out.

[0025] Figure 8 is a perspective view showing a

driving-side positioning portion between the process cartridge and the image forming apparatus main assembly in a state in which the process cartridge is mounted in the image forming apparatus main assembly
5 in First Embodiment.

[0026] Figure 9 is a perspective view showing a non-driving-side positioning portion between the process cartridge and the image forming apparatus main assembly in the state in which the process cartridge
10 is mounted in the image forming apparatus main assembly in First Embodiment.

[0027] Figures 10 to 13 are exploded perspective views each showing the process cartridge in First Embodiment.

15 **[0028]** Figure 14 is a perspective view for illustrating a state of assembling of a storing medium in First Embodiment.

[0029] In Figure 15, (a) and (b) are a front view and a side view, respectively, of a driving-side
20 developing side member before mounting of the storing medium in First Embodiment.

[0030] Figure 16 is an exploded perspective view of a main assembly contact, a first holder member and a second holder member in First Embodiment.

25 **[0031]** In Figure 17, (a) and (b) are schematic views each showing an assembled state of the main assembly contact, the first holder member and the second holder

member in First Embodiment.

[0032] In Figure 18, (a) and (b) are schematic views each showing a state of connection between the main assembly contact and the storing medium in First Embodiment.

[0033] In Figure 19, (a) and (b) are schematic views each showing the state of connection between the main assembly contact and the storing medium in First Embodiment.

10 [0034] In Figure 20, (a) and (b) are schematic views each showing the state of connection between the main assembly contact and the storing medium in First Embodiment.

[0035] In Figure 21, (a) is a schematic view for illustrating mounting of the storing medium, and (b) is a schematic view for illustrating a mounting range of the storing medium with respect to a rotational axis direction.

20 DESCRIPTION OF THE EMBODIMENTS

[0036] Embodiments of the present invention will be described in detail with reference to the drawings.
<First Embodiment>

[0037] First Embodiment will be described.

25 [0038] In the following description, a rotational axis direction of a photosensitive drum 62 as an image bearing member is a longitudinal direction. Further,

with respect to the longitudinal direction, a side in which the drum 62 receives a driving force from an image forming apparatus main assembly A is a driving side, and an opposite side thereof is a non-driving side. A general structure and an image forming process
5 will be described using Figures 2 and 3.

[0039] Figure 2 is a sectional view of the apparatus main assembly A and a process cartridge B in this embodiment. The apparatus main assembly A is a portion
10 from which the cartridge B is removed.

(General structure of image forming apparatus)

[0040] The image forming apparatus shown in Figure 2 is a laser beam printer in which the cartridge B is detachably mountable to the apparatus main assembly A and which uses electrophotographic technology. When
15 the cartridge B is mounted in the apparatus main assembly A, an exposure device (laser scanner unit) 3 for forming a latent image on the drum 62 is provided. Further, below the cartridge B, a sheet (feeding) tray
20 4 in which a recording material (sheet material) P to be subjected to image formation is accommodated is provided.

[0041] Further, in the apparatus main assembly A, along a feeding direction D of the sheet material P, a
25 pick-up roller 5a, a feeding roller pair 5b, a conveying roller pair 5c, a transfer guide 6, a transfer roller 7, a feeding guide 8, a fixing device

9, a discharging roller pair 10, a discharge tray 11 and the like are successively provided. The fixing device 9 is constituted by a heating roller 9a and a pressing roller 9b.

5 (Image forming process)

[0042] An outline of an image forming process will be described. On the basis of a print start signal, the drum 62 is rotationally driven at a predetermined peripheral speed (process speed) in an arrow R
10 direction. Further, a charging roller 66 to which a bias voltage is applied contacts an outer peripheral surface of the drum 62 and electrically charges the outer peripheral surface of the drum 62 uniformly.

[0043] The exposure device 3 outputs laser light L
15 depending on image information. The laser light L passes through a laser opening 71h provided in a cleaning frame 71, so that the outer peripheral surface of the drum 62 is subjected to scanning exposure. As a result, on the outer peripheral surface
20 of the drum 62, an electrostatic latent image depending on the image information is formed.

[0044] On the other hand, in a developing unit 20 (second unit) as a developing device, a toner T in a toner chamber 29 is stirred and fed by rotation of a
25 first feeding member 43, a second feeding member 44 and a third feeding member 50, thus being sent to a toner supplying chamber 28. The toner T is carried by

a magnetic force of a magnet roller 34 (fixed magnet) on a surface of a developing roller 32 as a developer carrying member.

[0045] The toner T is regulated in layer thickness on
5 the peripheral surface of the developing roller 32 by a developing blade 42 while being triboelectrically charged. The toner T is supplied onto the drum 62 depending on the electrostatic latent image, so that the electrostatic latent image is visualized
10 (developed) as a toner image.

[0046] As shown in Figure 2, in synchronism with output timing of the laser light L by the pick-up roller 5a, the feeding roller pair 5b and the conveying roller pair 5c, the sheet material P
15 accommodated in the sheet tray 4 provided at a lower portion of the apparatus main assembly A is fed. Then, the sheet material P is fed to a transfer position between the drum 62 and the transfer roller 7 via the transfer guide 6. In this transfer position, the toner
20 image is successively transferred from the drum 62 onto the sheet material P.

[0047] The sheet material P on which the toner image is transferred is separated from the drum 62 and then is fed to the fixing device 9 along the conveying
25 guide 8. Then, the sheet material P passes through a nip between the heating roller 9a and the pressing roller 9b which constitute the fixing device 9. At

this nip, a pressure and heat-fixing process is effected, so that the toner image is fixed on the sheet material P. The sheet material P on which the toner image is fixed is fed to the discharging roller pair 10 and then is discharged onto the discharge tray 11.

[0048] On the other hand, as shown in Figure 3, the drum 62 after the toner image transfer is, after a residual toner on the outer peripheral surface of the drum 62 is removed by a cleaning blade 77, used again in the image forming process. The residual toner removed from the drum 62 is stored in a residual toner chamber 71b of a cleaning unit 60 as a first unit.

[0049] In the above, the charging roller 66, the developing roller 32, the transfer blade 7 and the cleaning blade 77 are process means actable on the drum 62.

(Mounting and demounting of cartridge)

[0050] Next, mounting and demounting of the cartridge B will be described using Figures 5 and 6. Figure 5 is a perspective view of the apparatus main assembly A for which an openable door 13 is opened for permitting mount and demounting of the cartridge B. Figure 6 is a perspective view of the apparatus main assembly A and the cartridge B in a state in which the openable door 13 is opened for permitting the mounting and demounting of the cartridge B and then a tray 18 is

displaced (pulled out) an inside position (inner position) of the apparatus main assembly to an outside position (outer position) of the apparatus main assembly. Figure 7 is a perspective view of the apparatus main assembly A and the cartridge B when the cartridge B mounted and demounted in the state in which the openable door 13 is opened and then the tray 18 is pulled out. In Figure 7, the cartridge B is mountable in and demountable from the tray 18 along a mounting and demounting direction E.

[0051] To the apparatus main assembly A, the openable door 13 is rotatably attached, and when the openable door 13 is opened, a cartridge inserting opening 17 is exposed. In the cartridge inserting opening 17, the tray 18 for mounting the cartridge B in the apparatus main assembly A is provided. When the tray 18 is pulled out to a predetermined position, the cartridge B can be mounted and demounted. The cartridge B is inserted (mounted) in the apparatus main assembly A along a guide rail (not shown) in an arrow C direction in Figure 6 in a state in which the cartridge B is placed on the tray 18.

[0052] In this way, the C direction is an inserting direction (mounting direction) of the cartridge B into the apparatus main assembly A and is a movement direction of the tray 18. Strictly, the cartridge B is moved in a series of develops including horizontal and

vertical directions, but in this embodiment, the C direction is shown as a representative inserting direction (mounting direction).

[0053] In Figure 8, the apparatus main assembly is provided with a first main assembly(-side) driving shaft 14 and a second main assembly(-side) driving shaft 19 for transmitting a driving force to a first coupling 70 and a second coupling 21, respectively. The first main assembly driving shaft 14 and the second main assembly driving shaft 19 are driven by a motor (not shown) as a driving source for the apparatus main assembly A.

[0054] As a result, the drum 62 connecting with the first coupling 70 receives the driving force from the apparatus main assembly A and is rotated. The developing roller 32 is rotated by transmission of the driving force from the second coupling 21. Further, to the charging roller 66 and the developing roller 32, electric powers supplied by an electric power supplying portion (not shown) of the apparatus main assembly A.

(Support of cartridge)

[0055] As shown in Figure 5, the apparatus main assembly A is provided with a driving-side-side plate 15 and the non-driving-side-side plate 16 for supporting the cartridge B. The driving-side-side plate 15 is provided with a driving-side-first

supporting portion 15a, a driving-side-second supporting portion 15b and a rotation supporting portion for the cartridge B. The non-driving-side-side plate 16 is provided with a non-driving-side-first supporting portion 16a, a non-driving-side-second supporting portion 16b and a rotation supporting portion 16c for the cartridge B.

[0056] On the other hand, as portions-to-be-supported of the cartridge B, a portion-to-be-supported 73b and a portion-to-be-supported 73d of a drum bearing member 73, and a driving-side boss 71a, a non-driving-side projection 71f and a non-driving-side boss 71g of the cleaning frame 71 are provided. The portion-to-be-supported 73b is supported by the driving-side-first supporting portion 15a, the portion-to-be-supported 73d is supported by the driving-side-second supporting portion 15b, and the driving-side boss 71a is supported by the rotation supporting portion 15c. Further, the non-driving-side projection 71f is supported by the non-driving-side-first supporting portion 16a and the non-driving-side-second supporting portion 16b, and the non-driving-side boss 71g is supported by the rotation supporting portion 16c, so that the cartridge B is positioned inside the apparatus main assembly.

(General structure of cartridge)

[0057] A general structure of the cartridge B will be

described using Figures 3, 4 and 10 to 13. Figure 3 is a sectional view of the cartridge B, and Figures 10 to 13 are perspective views for illustrating a structure of the cartridge B. Figures 11 and 13 are partly
5 enlarged perspective views showing dotted circuit portions in Figures 10 and 12, respectively, as seen from different angles. In this embodiment, description will be made by omitting screws during connection of respective components.

10 **[0058]** In Figure 10, the cartridge B which is the process cartridge includes the cleaning unit 60 and the developing unit 20. In general, the process cartridge is prepared by integrally assembling the photosensitive drum and at least one of the chambering
15 means, the developing means and the cleaning means which are process means actable on the photosensitive drum, into a unit (cartridge) which is detachably mountable to the main assembly of the image forming apparatus.

20 **[0059]** In this embodiment, the cartridge B which is the process cartridge at least includes the cleaning unit 60. That is, as shown in Figure 3, the cleaning unit 60 includes the drum 62, the charging roller 66, the cleaning member 77, the cleaning frame 71
25 supporting these members, and a cap member 72 fixed to the cleaning frame 71 by welding or the like. In the cleaning unit 60, the charging roller 66 and the

cleaning member 77 are disposed in contact with the outer peripheral surface of the drum 62.

[0060] The cleaning member 77 includes a rubber blade 77a which is a blade-shaped elastic member formed of a rubber as an elastic material, and a supporting member 77b for supporting the rubber blade 77a. The rubber blade 77a is contacted to the drum 62 counterdirectionally to a rotational direction of the drum 62. That is, the rubber blade 77a is contacted to the drum 62 so that a free end portion thereof is directed upward with respect to the rotational direction of the drum 62.

[0061] The residual toner removed from the surface of the drum 62 by the cleaning member 77 is fed by a first screw 86, a second screw 87 and a third screw 88 which are residual toner feeding members. Then, the residual toner is accumulated in a residual toner chamber 71b formed by the cleaning frame 71 and the cap member 72. The first screw 86 receives the driving force transmitted from the coupling 21 shown in Figure 13 by a gear (not shown), and thus is rotated.

[0062] The second screw 87 and the third screw 88 are rotated by receiving the driving force from the first screw 86 and the second screw 87, respectively. The first screw 86 is disposed in the neighborhood of the drum 62, the second screw 87 is disposed at a longitudinal end portion of the cleaning frame 71, and

the third screw 88 is disposed inside the residual toner chamber 71b. Here, a rotational axis of the first screw 86 and a rotational axis of the third screw 88 are parallel to a rotational axis of the drum 62, and a rotational axis of the second screw 87 is perpendicular to the rotational axis of the drum 61.

[0063] Incidentally, as shown in Figure 3, a drum contact sheet 65 for preventing leakage of the residual toner from the cleaning frame 71 is provided at an edge portion of the cleaning frame 71 so as to contact the drum 62.

[0064] The drum 62 is rotationally driven in the arrow R direction in Figure 3 depending on the image forming operation by receiving the driving force from a main assembly driving motor (not shown) which is a driving source. The charging roller 66 is rotatably mounted in the cleaning unit 60 via a charging roller bearing 67 in each of end portion sides with respect to a longitudinal direction (substantially parallel to a rotational axis direction of the drum 62) of the cleaning frame 71. The charging roller 66 is press-contacted to the drum 62 by pressing the charging roller bearing 67 toward the drum 62 by an urging member 68. The charging roller 66 is rotated by the rotation of the drum 62.

[0065] As shown in Figure 3, the developing unit 20 includes the developing roller 32, the developing

container 23 for supporting the developing roller 32, a developing blade 42, and the like. Inside the developing roller 32, a magnet roller 34 is provided. In the developing unit 20, the developing blade 42 for regulating a toner layer on the developing roller 32 is disposed. As shown in Figures 10 and 12, a gap holding member 38 is mounted to each of end portions of the developing roller 32, and by contact of the gap holding member 38 with the drum 62, the developing roller 32 is held with a predetermined minute gap with the drum 62.

[0066] Further, as shown in Figure 3, a developing roller contact sheet 33 for preventing leakage of the toner from the developing unit 20 is provided in contact with the developing roller 32 at an edge portion of a bottom member 22. Further, in the toner chamber 29 formed by the developing container 23 and the bottom member 22, the first to third feeding members 43, 44 and 50 are provided. The first to third feeding members 43, 44 and 50 not only stir the toner accommodated in the toner chamber 29 but also feed the toner to the toner supplying chamber 28.

[0067] As shown in Figures 10 and 12, the cartridge B is constituted by combining the cleaning unit 60 and the developing unit 20. The cleaning unit 60 includes the cleaning frame 71, the cap member 72, the drum 62, the drum bearing 73 and the drum shaft 78 which are

used for rotatably supporting the drum 62. As shown in Figure 13, in the driving side of the drum 62, a driving-side drum flange 63 is rotatably supported by a first bearing portion 73a (image bearing member
5 bearing portion) of the drum bearing member 73.

[0068] On the other hand, as shown in Figure 11, in the non-driving side, a constitution in which a hole (not shown) of a non-driving-side drum flange 64 is rotatably supported by the drum shaft 78 press-fitted
10 in a hole 71c provided in the cleaning frame 71 is employed.

[0069] On the other hand, as shown in Figures 3, 10 and 12, the developing unit 20 includes the bottom member 22, the developing container 23, the driving-
15 side-developing side member 26, the developing blade 42, the developing roller 32 and the like. Further, bearing members 27 and 37 for rotating the developing roller 32 are attached to the developing container 23.

[0070] As shown in Figure 10, in the non-driving side,
20 the developing roller 32 is rotatably supported by a second bearing portion 27a (developing bearing portion) of the bearing member 27.

[0071] Then, as shown in Figure 11 and 13, the cartridge B is constituted by rotatably connecting the
25 cleaning unit 60 and the developing unit 20 by connecting pin 69 relative to each other. Specifically, a developing-first supporting hole 23a and a

developing-second supporting hole 23b are provided in members formed on the developing container 23 at longitudinal end portions of the developing unit 20. Further, at longitudinal end portions of the cleaning unit 60, first hanging holes 71i and second hanging holes 71j are provided in members formed on the cleaning frame 71.

[0072] Then, by engagement of the connecting pin 69 press-fitted and fixed in the first hanging holes 71i and the second hanging holes 71j with the first supporting hole 23a and the second supporting hole 23b, the cleaning unit 60 and the developing unit 20 are rotatably connected with each other.

[0073] Further, a first hole 46Ra of a driving-side-urging member 46R is hooked on a boss 73c of the drum bearing member 73, and a second hole 46Rb of the driving-side-urging member 46R is hooked on a boss 26a of the driving-side-developing side member 26. Further, a first hole 46Fa of a non-driving-side-urging member 46F is hooked on a boss 71k of the cleaning frame 71, and a second hole 46Fb of the non-driving-side-urging member 46F is hooked on a boss 37a of the bearing member 37.

[0074] In this embodiment, each of the driving-side-urging member 46R and the non-driving-side-urging member 46F is formed with a tension spring. The developing unit 20 is urged toward the cleaning unit

60 by an urging force of these springs, so that the developing roller 32 is constituted so as to be pressed toward the drum 62 with reliability. Then, by the gap holding member 38 provided at each of the end portions of the developing roller 32, the developing roller 32 is held with a predetermined minute gap with the drum 62.

(Structure of storing medium and mounted structure of storing medium)

10 **[0075]** A storing medium 101 (including a substrate in which a storing element is provided and on which electrical contacts are provided) to be mounted on the cartridge B will be described using Figures 1, 12, 14, 15 and (a) of Figure 21. Figure 1 is a schematic view of the cartridge B as seen from a downstream side with respect to the inserting direction, and (a) and (b) of Figure 15 are front view and a side view, respectively, of the driving-side developing side member 26 before mounting of the storing medium 101. In Figure 21, (a) is a schematic view for illustrating the mounting of the storing medium 101.

[0076] In Figure 14, an F direction is an up-down direction, a G direction is a front-rear direction, and an H direction is a leaf-right direction (rotational axis direction of the drum 62). A C direction is the inserting direction (mounting direction) of the cartridge B into the apparatus main

assembly, and is also a movement direction of the tray
18.

[0077] In this embodiment, the cartridge B as the
process cartridge includes the cleaning unit 60 (first
5 unit, image bearing member unit) including the first
bearing portion 73a for supporting the drum 62 (image
bearing member). Further, the cartridge B includes the
developing unit 20 (second unit, developer carrying
member unit) including the second bearing portion 27a
10 for supporting the developing roller 32 (developer
carrying member). The storing medium 101 is supported
by the developing unit 20 (second unit).

[0078] As shown in Figure 1, Figure 10 and Figure 12,
with respect to the rotational axis direction of the
15 drum 62, the second bearing portion 27a of the bearing
member 27 for supporting the developing roller 32 is
positioned inside the first bearing portion 73a of the
drum bearing member 73 for supporting the drum 62. The
first bearing portion 73a and the second bearing
20 portion 27a are surface portions of holes for
shaft-supporting the drum 62 and the developing roller
32, respectively.

[0079] The storing medium 101 is supported by the
driving-side developing side member 26 of the
25 developing unit 20 and is disposed outside the second
bearing portion 27a and inside an outer configuration
60a of the cleaning unit 60 with respect to the

rotational axis direction of the drum 62. A mounting range of the storing medium 101 with respect to the rotational axis direction in this case is shown in (b) of Figure 21 as a schematic view.

5 **[0080]** In this embodiment, the storing medium 101 is disposed in a position at an end portion of the developing unit 20, with respect to the rotational axis direction, which is inside a range Z and which supports the storing medium 101. The storing medium
10 101 may also be provided so that at least a part thereof is disposed between the bearing portion (first bearing portion 73a) of one unit and the bearing portion (second bearing portion 27a) of the other unit.

[0081] The storing medium 101 is provided below and
15 upstream of the drum 62 with respect to the inserting direction of the cartridge B into the apparatus main assembly A (Figure 4), and is provided with an inserting opening with respect to the rotational axis direction of the drum 62 (Figure 14).

20 **[0082]** As shown in Figure 14, the storing medium 101 which is a storing element such as RAM or ROM includes, as described later, electrical contacts (as a plurality of contact portions 101a1, 101a2) formed on a substrate 101b in a downstream side with respect to
25 a feeding direction (mounting direction of the tray into the apparatus main assembly). In this storing medium 101, information B on the cartridge B is

inputted in advance, and when the cartridge B is mounted in the image forming apparatus main assembly A, the information is transferred between itself and the apparatus main assembly A. That is, the storing medium
5 101 is used for the purposes that a state such as an operation status of the cartridge B is notified to a control substrate (not shown) of the image forming apparatus to be used for the image forming operation and that the state of the cartridge B is displayed for
10 an operator (user).

[0083] Further, writing in the storing medium 101 can be made even during use, and therefore the writing is made in real time as desired. The contact portions 101a1, 101a2 are used for being connected with a main
15 assembly(-side) contact 102, described later, of the apparatus main assembly A in order to read and write the information with respect to the storing medium 101.

[0084] As shown in Figure 14 and (b) of Figure 15, the driving-side developing side member 26 is provided
20 with an inserting groove 26f as an inserting opening defined by first storing medium limiting surfaces 26b1, 26b2 and second storing medium limiting surfaces 26c1, 26c2, 26c3, 26c4. When the storing medium 101 is inserted during mounting, the inserting groove 26f as
25 the inserting opening is not positioned at a lower portion with respect to the direction of gravity, and therefore there is such an advantage that the storing

medium 101 does not readily drop. The inserting groove 26f is provided with a third storing medium limiting surface 26d in a rear side and a snap-fit portion 26e in an entrance side.

5 **[0085]** In the neighborhood of the inserting groove 26f, a roughly guiding groove 26i defined by first holder limiting surfaces 26g1, 26g2 and a second holder limiting surfaces 26h which are used for limiting (regulating) a position of a first holder member, described later, provided in the apparatus main assembly A side. Further, in the neighborhood of the inserting groove 26f, positioning ribs 26k1, 26k2, positioning surfaces 26m1, 26m2, 26m3, 26m4 and an abutting surface 26n which are used for limiting
10 (regulating) a position of the main assembly contact 102, described later, provided in the apparatus main assembly A side.

[0086] A method of fixing the storing medium 101 on the driving-side developing side member 26 will be
20 described using Figures 14 and 15. When the storing medium 101 is inserted toward the inserting groove 26f in the arrow M direction (Figure 14) while elastically deforming the snap-fit portion 26e, the position of the storing medium 101 with respect to the arrow F
25 direction ((b) of Figure 15) which is the up-down direction is limited by the first storing medium limiting surfaces 26b1, 26b2.

[0087] Further, the position of the storing medium 101 with respect to the arrow G direction ((b) of Figure 15) is limited by the second storing medium limiting surfaces 26c1, 26c2, 26c3, 26c4. Further, the position of the storing medium 101 with respect to the arrow H direction ((a) of Figure 15) is limited by the third storing medium limiting surface 26d and the snap-fit portion 26e. In this way, the storing medium 101 is fixed on the driving-side developing side member 26.

(Structure of main assembly contact and mounted structure of main assembly contact)

[0088] A structure of the main assembly contact 102 provided in the apparatus main assembly A and a mounted structure of the main assembly contact will be described using Figures 16 and 17. Figure 16 is an exploded perspective view of the main assembly contact 102, a spring 103, the first holder member 104, a spring 105 and a second holder member 106. In Figure 17, (a) and (b) are schematic views for illustrating an assembled (mounted) state of the main assembly contact 103, the first holder member 104 and the second holder member 106, in which (a) is a side view, and (b) is a front view.

[0089] The main assembly contact 102 is provided with triangular contact portions 102a1, 102a2 each constituted by a spring material to be electrically

connected with the storing medium 101. Each of the contact portions 102a1, 102a2 each having a spring property is connected electrically with the control substrate in the apparatus main assembly A side via a bundle wire (not shown).

[0090] The main assembly contact 102 is provided at the contact portions 102a1, 102a2 with projected portions-to-be-positioned 102b1, 102b2, 102b3, 102b4 for positioning relative to the driving-side developing side member 26 with respect to the up-down direction. Further, the main assembly contact 102 is provided with surfaces-to-be-abutted 102c1, 102c2 to which an abutting surface 26n (Figure 14) of the driving-side developing side member 26 is contacted.

[0091] In Figure 16 and (b) of Figure 17, the main assembly contact 102 is provided, with respect to the up-down direction, with first limiting portions 102d1, 102d2 for positioning relative to the first holder member 104 and with disengagement limiting portions 102f1, 102f2 for limiting (preventing) disengagement thereof. Further, the main assembly contact 102 is provided, with respect to the left-right direction (perpendicular to the cartridge inserting direction), with second limiting portions 102e1, 102e2 for positioning relative to the first holder member 104.

[0092] On the other hand, the first holder member 104 is provided with first limiting portions 104a1, 104a2

for positioning relative to the main assembly contact 102 with respect to the up-down direction and disengagement limiting portions 104c1, 104c2 for limiting disengagement. Further, the first holder member 104 is provided with second limiting portions 104b1, 104b2 for positioning relative to the main assembly contact 102 with respect to the left-right direction.

[0093] In Figure 16 and (b) of Figure 17, the first holder member 104 is provided with limiting bosses 104d1, 104d2, 104d3, 104d4 for positioning relative to the second holder member 106. Further the first holder member 104 is provided with a projected portion 104e (Figures 14 and 16) engaging with the roughly guiding groove 26i ((a) of Figure 15) of the driving-side developing side member 26. On the other hand, the second holder member 106 is provided, for positioning relative to the first holder member 104, with elongated holes 106a1, 106a2 in which the limiting bosses 104d1, 104d2, 104d3, 104d4 are inserted.

(Assembled structure of main assembly contact, first holder member and second holder member)

[0094] An assembled structure of the main assembly contact 102, the first holder member 104 and the second holder member 106 will be described using Figures 16 and 17.

[0095] First, in Figure 16, the main assembly contact

102 is assembled with the first holder member 104 in a state in which the spring 103 urged in the cartridge inserting direction (perpendicular to the I direction and the J direction in Figure 17) is sandwiched therebetween. At this time, by engagement of the first limiting portions 102d1, 102d2 with the first limiting portions 104a1, 104a2 with respect to the up-down direction, the main assembly contact 102 is positionally limited (regulated) with play with respect to the up-down direction (arrow J direction in Figure 17).

[0096] Further, by engagement of the second limiting portions 102e1, 102e2 of the main assembly contact 102 with the second limiting portions 104b1, 104b2 of the first holder member 104 with respect to the left-right direction, the main assembly contact 102 is positionally limited (regulated) with play with respect to the left-right direction (arrow I direction in Figure 17).

[0097] Further, by contact of the disengagement limiting portions 102f1, 102f2 of the main assembly contact 102 with the disengagement limiting portions 104c1, 104c2 of the first holder member 104, the main assembly contact 102 receives an urging force of the spring 103 urged in the cartridge inserting direction.

[0098] The first holder member 104 is assembled with the second holder member 106 in a state in which the

spring 105 urged in the up-down direction (J direction in Figure 17) is sandwiched therebetween. At this time, by engagement of the limiting bosses 104d1, 104d2, 104d3, 104d4 of the first holder member 104 with the elongated holes 106a1, 106a2 of the second holder member 106, the first holder member 104 is movable in the up-down direction (J direction in Figure 17). (Connecting operation between storing medium and main assembly contact)

10 **[0099]** A connecting operation between the storing medium 101 and the main assembly contact 102 will be described using Figures 14, 16, 18, 19 and 20. Figures 18 to 20 are schematic views for illustrating a state in which the main assembly contact 102 and the storing
15 medium 102 are connected with each other, in which (a) of Figure 18, (a) of Figure 19 and (a) of Figure 20 are side views, and (b) of Figure 18, (b) of Figure 19 and (b) of Figure 20 are bottom views.

20 **[0100]** First, in (a) and (b) of Figure 18, when the cartridge B is inserted in the arrow K direction (inserting direction of the cartridge B), the projected portion 104e (Figure 14, Figure 16, (b) of Figure 18) enters the roughly guiding groove 26i ((a) of Figure 15) of the driving-side developing side
25 member 26. Then, the first limiting surfaces 26g1, 26g2 ((b) of Figure 18 which is the bottom view) of the driving-side developing side member 26 sandwich

the projected portion 104e, so that a longitudinal position of the first holder member 104 is limited relative to the driving-side developing side member 26.

[0101] Then, the second limiting surface 26h ((a) of Figure 15, (b) of Figure 18) of the driving-side developing side member 26 presses down the projected portion 104e, so that the first holder member 104 follows the driving-side developing side member 26 and moves downward while compressing the spring 105 (Figure 16).

[0102] When the cartridge B is further inserted in the arrow K direction, the positioning ribs 26k1, 26k2 and the positioning surfaces 26m1, 26m2, 26m3, 26m4 of the driving-side developing side member 26 shown in Figure 14 enter the projected portions-to-be-positioned 102b1, 102b2, 102b3, 102b4 of the main assembly contact 102. As a result, the driving-side developing side member 26 and the main assembly contact 102 are positioned relative to each other with high accuracy.

[0103] Then, when the mounting of the cartridge B in the apparatus main assembly A is completed, the abutting surface 26j (Figures 14 and 20) of the driving-side developing side member 26 contacts the surfaces-to-be-abutted 102c1, 102c2 (Figure 16) of the main assembly contact 102, so that the spring 103 (Figure 16) is compressed. Further, by the contact of

the contact portions 101a1, 101a2 of the storing medium 101, the triangular contact portions 102a1, 102a2, of the main assembly contact 102, constituted by the spring material are compressed.

5 **[0104]** Here, the urging force of the spring 103 (Figure 16) is set to be larger than a total value of urging forces of the contact portions 102a1, 102a2 of the main assembly contact 102, and therefore it is possible to ensure a desired contact pressure between
10 the storing medium 101 and the main assembly contact 102.

[0105] As described above, in this embodiment, the storing medium 101 and the positioning constitution were provided in a range created by a difference in
15 length between the cleaning unit 60 and the developing unit 20. As a result, there is no need to newly provide a space for positioning the main assembly contact 102 of the apparatus main assembly A and the storing medium 101 relative to each other. Therefore,
20 it is possible to realize not only stable electrical connection but also downsizing and cost reduction of the apparatus main assembly A and the cartridge B.
(Arrangement direction of electrical contacts of storing medium)

25 **[0106]** In this embodiment, as shown in Figures 18 to 20, at least the contact portions 101a1, 101a2 which are the electrical contacts of the storing medium 101

are disposed toward the downstream side with respect to the inserting direction (mounting direction) of the cartridge B. For that reason, the storing medium 101 and the main assembly contact 102 can be connected
5 with each other with a simple constitution.

[0107] That is, in the case where the cartridge B is seen from the downstream side with respect to the inserting direction, a state in which the electrical contacts of the storing medium 101 are in sight is
10 created. Each of the electrical contacts has a plurality of surfaces in some cases, and in this embodiment, a state in which a broadest surface is in sight. The broadest surface is not limited to the case where the surface is disposed at a position
15 perpendicular to the inserting direction, but may also be inclined with respect to the inserting direction.

[0108] Unless the contact portions 101a1 and 101a2 are directed toward the downstream side with respect to the inserting direction, there is a possibility
20 that there is a need to provide a mechanism for causing the main assembly contact 102 to follow the storing medium 101 also with respect to the inserting direction of the cartridge B. Alternatively, there is a possibility that there is a need to provide a
25 mechanism for engaging the main assembly contact 102 with the storing medium 101 in interrelation with a closing operation of the openable door 13 after the

mounting of the cartridge B is completed.

[0109] In this embodiment, the inserting direction of the cartridge B, the positioning direction between the storing medium 101 and the main assembly contact 102 and the compression direction of the contact portions 102a1 and 102a2 of the main assembly contact 102 are coincide with each other, so that there is no need to provide the above-described mechanisms for causing the main assembly contact 102 to follow and engage with the storing medium 101. Here, the term "toward the downstream side" not only means the case where the contact portions 101a1, 101a2 correctly oppose the electrical contacts in the apparatus main assembly A but also may include the case where the contact portions 101a1, 101a2 obliquely oppose the electrical contacts in the apparatus main assembly A.

(Modified Embodiments)

[0110] The preferred embodiment of the present invention was described above, but the present invention is not limited thereto. Various modifications and changes of constitutions of the direction are possible within the scope of the present invention. Incidentally, with respect to functions, materials, shapes and relative arrangement of constituent elements described in the above embodiments, the scope of the present invention is not intended to be limited only to these parameters.

(Modified Embodiment 1)

[0111] In the above-described embodiment, the constitution in which the bearing member 27 as the second bearing portion for supporting the developing roller 32 was positioned inside the first bearing portion 73a of the drum bearing member 73 for supporting the drum 62 was described. However, the present invention may also be applied to an opposite constitution in which a longitudinal positional relationship is opposite to that in the above-embodiment, i.e., a constitution in which the first bearing portion 73a of the drum bearing member 73 for supporting the drum 62 is positioned inside the second bearing portion 27a of the bearing member 27 for supporting the developing roller 32.

[0112] In this case, the storing medium 101 may only be required that the storing medium 101 is supported by the cleaning unit 60 as the first unit and is disposed outside the first bearing portion 73a and inside the outer configuration of the developing unit 20. As a result, the storing medium 101 is provided within the range created by the difference in longitudinal length between the cleaning unit 60 and the developing unit 20, and thus a similar effect can be obtained.

(Modified Embodiment 2)

[0113] In the above-described embodiment, the

cartridge B as the process cartridge was described.
That is, the cartridge which includes the first unit
including the first bearing portion for supporting the
image bearing member, the second unit including the
5 second bearing portion for supporting the developer
carrying member and the storing medium including the
electrical contacts and which is insertable into the
apparatus main assembly was described.

[0114] However, the present invention is not limited
10 thereto, but may also be applicable to, as the process
cartridge, a developing cartridge or an image bearing
member cartridge (photosensitive member cartridge).
That is, as the developing cartridge, a cartridge
which includes the developing unit including the
15 developing bearing portion for supporting the
developer carrying member and the storing medium
including the electrical contacts and which is
insertable into the main assembly of the image forming
apparatus may also be employed.

20 **[0115]** In this case, with respect to the rotational
axis direction of the developer carrying member, the
developing bearing portion is provided inside the
image bearing member bearing portion. Further, at
least a part of the storing medium is supported by the
25 developing unit and is provided at a position outside
the developing bearing portion and inside the outer
configuration of the image bearing member unit

including an image bearing member bearing portion. The electrical contacts are directed toward the downstream side with respect to the inserting direction of the cartridge into the apparatus main assembly.

5 **[0116]** Further, as the image bearing member cartridge (photosensitive member cartridge), a cartridge which includes the image bearing member unit including the image bearing member bearing portion for supporting the image bearing member and the storing medium
10 including the electrical contacts and which is insertable into the apparatus main assembly of the image forming apparatus may also be employed.

[0117] In this case, with respect to the rotational axis direction of the image bearing member, the image
15 bearing member bearing portion is provided insert the developing bearing portion. Further, at least a part of the storing medium is supported by the image bearing member unit and is provided at a position outside the image bearing member bearing portion and
20 inside the outer configuration of the developer carrying member unit including the developing bearing portion. The electrical contacts are directed toward the downstream side with respect to the inserting direction of the cartridge into the apparatus main
25 assembly.

[0118] According to the present invention, in order to establish stable electrical connection between the

storing medium and the image forming apparatus main assembly, the positioning between the storing medium and the image forming apparatus main assembly relative to each other can be made without providing a particular space.

[0119] While the invention has been described with reference to the structures disclosed herein, it is not confined to the details set forth and this application is intended to cover such modifications or changes as may come within the purpose of the improvements or the scope of the following claims.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A cartridge insertable into a main assembly of an image forming apparatus, comprising:

a first unit including a first bearing portion
5 for supporting an image bearing member;

a second unit including a second bearing portion for supporting a developer carrying member;
and

a storing medium including an electrical
10 contact,

wherein said second bearing portion is provided inside said first bearing portion with respect to a rotational axis direction of said image bearing member,

15 wherein at least a part of said storing medium is supported by said second unit and is provided at a position outside said second bearing portion and inside an outermost configuration of said first unit with respect to the rotational axis direction, and

20 wherein said electrical contact is faced toward a downstream with respect to an inserting direction of said cartridge into the main assembly.

2. A cartridge insertable into a main assembly of
25 an image forming apparatus, comprising:

a first unit including a first bearing portion for supporting an image bearing member;

a second unit including a second bearing portion for supporting a developer carrying member; and

a storing medium including an electrical
5 contact,

wherein said first bearing portion is provided inside said second bearing portion with respect to a rotational axis direction of said image bearing member,

wherein at least a part of said storing medium
10 is supported by said first unit and is provided at a position outside said first bearing portion and inside an outermost configuration of said second unit with respect to the rotational axis direction, and

wherein said electrical contact is faced
15 toward a downstream with respect to an inserting direction of said cartridge into the main assembly.

3. A cartridge insertable into a main assembly of an image forming apparatus, comprising:

20 a developing unit including a developing bearing portion for supporting a developer carrying member; and

a storing medium including an electrical contact,

25 wherein said developing bearing portion is provided inside an image bearing member bearing portion with respect to a rotational axis direction of

said developer carrying member,

wherein at least a part of said storing medium
is supported by said developing unit and is provided
at a position outside said developing bearing portion
5 and inside an outermost configuration of an image
bearing member unit including the image bearing member
bearing portion with respect to the rotational axis
direction, and

wherein said electrical contact is faced
10 toward a downstream with respect to an inserting
direction of said cartridge into the main assembly.

4. A cartridge insertable into a main assembly of
an image forming apparatus, comprising:

15 an image bearing member unit including an
image bearing member bearing portion for supporting an
image bearing member; and

a storing medium including an electrical
contact,

20 wherein said image bearing member bearing
portion is provided inside a developing bearing
portion with respect to a rotational axis direction of
said image bearing member,

wherein at least a part of said storing medium
25 is supported by said image bearing member unit and is
provided at a position outside said image bearing
member bearing portion and inside an outermost

configuration of a developer carrying member unit including the developing bearing portion with respect to the rotational axis direction, and

wherein said electrical contact is faced
5 toward a downstream with respect to an inserting direction of said cartridge into the main assembly.

5. A cartridge according to Claim 1, wherein said storing medium is provided at a position of an end
10 portion of said unit supporting said storing medium with respect to the rotational axis direction.

6. A cartridge according to Claim 1, wherein said at least the part of said storing medium is provided
15 between said bearing portion of one of said first and second units and said bearing portion of the other one of said first and second units with respect to the rotational axis direction.

20 7. A cartridge according to Claim 1, wherein said storing medium includes the electrical contact at a plurality of positions with respect to the rotational axis direction.

25 8. A cartridge according to Claim 1, wherein with respect to the inserting direction, said storing medium is provided below and upstream of said image

bearing member.

9. A cartridge according to Claim 1, further comprising an inserting opening for said storing
5 medium with respect to the rotational axis direction.

10. An image forming apparatus comprising:
a cartridge according to Claim 1; and
a tray for mounting said cartridge, wherein
10 said tray is movable between an inner position of the main assembly and an outer position of the main assembly.

11. An image forming apparatus according to Claim
15 10, wherein an electrical contact of the main assembly opposing the electrical contact of the storing medium has a spring property.

12. An image forming apparatus, comprising:
20 a cartridge insertable into a main assembly of an image forming apparatus, including a first unit including a first bearing portion for supporting an image bearing member, a second unit including a second bearing portion for supporting a developer carrying
25 member, and a storing medium including an electrical contact; and

a tray for mounting said cartridge, wherein

said tray is movable between an inner position of the main assembly and an outer position of the main assembly,

wherein the electrical contact is faced toward
5 a downstream with respect to an inserting direction of said cartridge into the main assembly.

13. An image forming apparatus according to Claim 12, wherein the second bearing portion is provided
10 inside the first bearing portion with respect to a rotational axis direction of the image bearing member, and

wherein the storing medium is supported by the second unit and at least a part thereof is provided at
15 a position outside the second bearing portion and inside an outermost configuration of the first unit with respect to the rotational axis direction.

14. An image forming apparatus according to Claim 20 12, wherein the first bearing portion is provided inside the second bearing portion with respect to a rotational axis direction of the image bearing member, and

wherein the storing medium is supported by the
25 first unit and at least a part thereof is provided at a position outside the first bearing portion and inside an outermost configuration of the second unit

with respect to the rotational axis direction.