



- (51) **International Patent Classification:**
G07D 7/12 (2006.01) *G07D 7/20* (2006.01)
- (21) **International Application Number:**
PCT/GB2014/051340
- (22) **International Filing Date:**
30 April 2014 (30.04.2014)
- (25) **Filing Language:** English
- (26) **Publication Language:** English
- (30) **Priority Data:**
1308434.8 10 May 2013 (10.05.2013) GB
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- (81) **Designated States** (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available): AE, AG, AL, AM, AO, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BH, BN, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CL, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM,

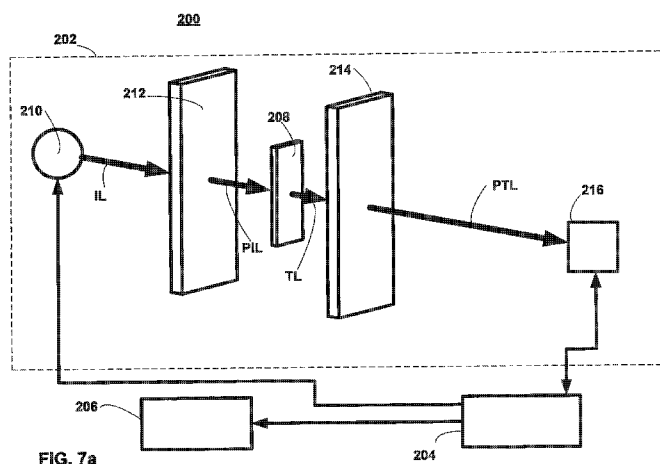
DO, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, GT, HN, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IR, IS, JP, KE, KG, KN, KP, KR, KZ, LA, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LY, MA, MD, ME, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MY, MZ, NA, NG, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PA, PE, PG, PH, PL, PT, QA, RO, RS, RU, RW, SA, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SM, ST, SV, SY, TH, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, ZA, ZM, ZW.

- (84) **Designated States** (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of regional protection available): ARIPO (BW, GH, GM, KE, LR, LS, MW, MZ, NA, RW, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, RU, TJ, TM), European (AL, AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, LV, MC, MK, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, RS, SE, SI, SK, SM, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, KM, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Published:

- with international search report (Art. 21(3))
- before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of receipt of amendments (Rule 48.2(h))

(54) **Title:** AUTHENTICATION APPARATUS AND METHOD



(57) **Abstract:** The present invention provides an authentication apparatus operative to determine the authenticity of a polymer film, comprising an optically-based measuring arrangement operative to measure a first effect influenced by a birefringence characteristic of said film and a second effect influenced by another optical characteristic of said film, and wherein said apparatus is operative to: compare a value, or range of values, representative of said first effect with a value, or range of values representative of a specified first effect corresponding to a predetermined birefringence characteristic of an authentic polymer film; compare a value, or range of values, representative of said second effect with a value, or range of values representative of a specified second effect corresponding to a predetermined other optical characteristic of an authentic polymer film; and output an authenticity signal indicative of authenticity or otherwise of said film based upon one or both of said comparisons. There are also provided one or more methods of determining the authenticity of a polymer film.