

A DEVICE FOR CONTROLLING A DOOR

Field of the Invention

5 The present invention relates generally to the field of controlling a door, and more particularly – but by no means exclusively – the field of controlling the ability to open the door.

Background of the Invention

10 The ability to control the opening of a door can be highly desirable. For instance, the ability to prevent an emergency exit door of a public building (such as a shop) from being readily opened can be desirable for security reasons. While there exists many door locking mechanisms that could be used to control the opening of the
15 door, existing door locking mechanisms can be unsuitable in some situations because they do not meet building safety requirements. More specifically, existing door locking mechanisms will commonly only release the door for opening if the appropriate key is used to unlock the mechanism. In this regard, some building safety standards require door locking mechanisms to release the door without a key so that it can be opened
20 relatively easily.

Summary of the Invention

25 According to a first aspect of the present invention there is provided a device for controlling a door, the device comprising:

 a body;
 an electromagnet arranged to generate a magnetic field for retaining the door;
 a coupling means that couples the electromagnet to the body, the coupling means being arranged to allow a movement of the electromagnet relative to the body;
30 and

 a current supply means that is arranged to supply the electromagnet with a current, the current supply means being further arranged to detect the movement of the electromagnet and to cease supplying the current at a predetermined instant after detecting the movement of the electromagnet.

35 An advantage of an embodiment of the device is that it enables the opening of the door to be controlled in a manner that accords with a building safety requirement to

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allow the door to be opened without a key. Of particular note is the fact that the embodiment of the device retains the door in a closed position for a predetermined extent of time, after which the embodiment of the device releases the door so that it can be opened. This advantage is provided by virtue of the fact that the embodiment of the device is capable of detecting the movement of the electromagnet and cease supplying the current at the predetermined instant after detecting the movement of the electromagnet.

Preferably, the device further comprises a visual indicator arranged to provide a particular visual indication when the electromagnet is generating the magnetic field.

An advantage of incorporating the visual indicator into the embodiment of the device is that it effectively provides a means for enabling persons (such as security staff) to readily discern whether the door is being retained by the device.

Preferably, the body comprises:
an elongate section that defines a void; and
elements that extend outwardly from opposed surfaces of the elongate section and into the void, wherein the coupling means and the electromagnet are located in the void.

Preferably, the coupling means comprises:
a base that is retained in position by the elements;
a component that is secured to the main part and which is attached to the base;
and
a resilient part disposed between the base and a head of the component, the resilient part being such that it enables the movement of the electromagnet.

Preferably, the current supply means comprises:
an electronic circuit that has a switch; and
a lug that is attached to the electromagnet,
wherein the electronic circuit and the lug are arranged such that the movement of the electromagnet causes a change in a state of the switch, which in turn causes the electronic circuit to cease supplying the current at the predetermined instant.

Preferably, the current supply means also comprises an adjustable portion that can be adjusted so as to set an amount of the movement of the electromagnet that causes the change in the state of the switch.

Preferably, the device further comprises an image capture means arranged to capture an image subsequent to the current supply means detecting the movement of the electromagnet.

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An advantage of an embodiment of the device including the image capture device is that the device can, for example, capture an image of a person attempting to open the door.

10 Preferably, the device further comprises a sound emitting means arranged to emit a sound subsequent to the current supply means detecting the movement of the electromagnet.

15 An advantage of an embodiment of the device including the sound emitting means is that by emitting the sound it can cause the person to look at the device, which in turn enables the image capture device to capture a better image of the person's face.

20 Preferably, the device further comprises an audio recording means for recording audio information subsequent to the current supply means detecting the movement of the electromagnet.

25 An advantage of an embodiment of the device including the audio recording means is that it enables the device to record audio (voices) from persons in the vicinity of the door.

Preferably, the device further comprises a radio frequency transmitter that is arranged to transmit a radio signal encoded with the image captured by the image capture means and/or the audio information recorded by the audio recording means.

30 According to a second aspect of the present invention, there is provided a door locking device comprising:

an electromagnet for retaining a door armature plate; and

a visual indicator means arranged to provide a particular visual indication when the electromagnet is retaining the door armature plate.

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Brief Description of the Drawings

Notwithstanding any other embodiments that may fall within the scope of the present invention, an embodiment of the present invention will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying figures, in which:

Figure 1(a) provides an illustration of a device in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 1(b) provides another illustration of the device depicted in figure 1(a);

Figure 1(c) provides a further illustration of the device depicted in figure 1(a);

Figure 1(d) provides yet another illustration of the device depicted in figure 1(a);

Figure 1(e) provides a further illustration of the device depicted in figure 1(a);

Figure 1(f) provides another illustration of the device depicted in figure 1(a);

Figure 1(g) is yet a further illustration of the device depicted in figure 1(a);

Figure 2(a) shows an alternative embodiment of the invention;

Figure 2(b) shows the device of figure 2(a) in another position; and

Figure 2(c) shows the device of figure 2(a) in yet another position.

An Embodiment of the Invention

With reference to figure 1(a), a device 100 in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention comprises a body 102; an electromagnet 104; a coupling means 106, which can be viewed in figure 1(d); and a current supply means 108; and a visual indicator 110, which can be seen in figure 1(g).

With reference to figure 1(b), the body 102 is in the form of an elongate section that defines a void 112 and which is made from aluminium. It will be

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appreciated by persons skilled in the art that other embodiments of the present invention the body 102 can be made from a material other than aluminium such as, for example, steel. The body 102 has a U-shaped cross profile and has two elements 114 that project outwardly from an inner surface 116 of the body 102 and into the void 112 defined thereby. As described in more detail in subsequent paragraphs of this specification, the elements 114 are used to retain the coupling means 106 in the void 112. As can be seen in figure 1(e), the body 102 is attached to a door frame 117 in the doorway. The body 102 is attached to the door frame 117 by screws.

10 With reference to figure 1(d), the electromagnet 104 is located in the void 112 of the body 102. As persons skilled in the art will readily appreciate, the electromagnet 104 is arranged to generate a magnetic field as a current passes through the electromagnet 104. As discussed in more detail in subsequent paragraphs of this specification, the electromagnet 104 receives a supply of the current from the current supply means 108 (which is shown in figure 1(a)). The electromagnet 104 has a face 118 that protrudes from the void 112 of the body 102. The face 118 is relatively flat and is arranged to be in abutment with a metal armature plate 120 that is attached to a door 122. The electromagnet 104 is such that it securely retains the metal armature plate 120 when the armature plate 120 is in abutment with the face 118 and the electromagnet 104 is generating the magnetic field. By securely retaining the metal armature plate 120 the electromagnet 104 is capable of holding the door 122 in a closed position.

As described previously, the electromagnet 104 is located in the void 112 of the body 102. It is the coupling means 106 that holds the electromagnet 104 securely in the void 112. As can be seen in figure 1(d), the coupling means 106 comprises a base 124 that is held in position by the elements 114 of the body 102. The base 124 is made from a plastic material, but could well be made from another material, such as non-ferrous metal, in an alternative embodiment of the present invention. The base 124 comprises a recess 126.

30 In addition to the base 124 the coupling means 106 comprises at least one component 128 that resides in the recess 126. The component 128 is essentially a screw-type device, which extends through the base 124 and into the electromagnet 104 to thereby secure the electromagnet 104 in the void 112 of the body 102. The coupling means 106 also comprises a resilient part 130 that is located between a head 132 of the component 128 and a base 134 of the recess 126 in the base 124. The resilient part 130, which is made of a rubber material (or plastic in an alternative embodiment), allows the

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electromagnet 104 to be moved relative to the body 102 in the direction indicated by arrow "A". The amount of movement permitted by the coupling means is illustrated in figure 1(e) and figure 1(f). The electromagnet 104 typically moves in the direction indicated by arrow "A" when the armature plate 120 attached to the door 122 is secured to the face 118 of the electromagnet 104 when it is generating the magnetic field and when a force in the direction of arrow "A" is exerted on the door 122, which occurs when persons try to open the door 122.

Referring to figure 1(a), the current supply means 108 comprises an electronic circuit 136. The electronic circuit 136 is essentially arranged to be connected to a 12 volt DC power source (or any other suitable voltage) and to provide the electromagnet 104 with the supply of current necessary for it to generate the magnetic field. The electronic circuit 136 consists of various electronic components including, for example, a voltage regulator, resistors and capacitors. One of the notable components is a micro-switch 138. The micro-switch 138 is a single pole double throw (SPDT) arrangement. The actuator of the micro-switch 138 is capable of being moved from a first position to a second position. The electronic circuit 136 is arranged such that when the actuator of the micro-switch 138 is in the first position the electronic circuit 136 is such that it provides the supply of the current to the electromagnet 104. However, the electronic circuit 136 is such that when the actuator of the micro-switch 138 is moved from the first position into the second position the electronic circuit 136 ceases supplying the current to the electromagnet after a predetermined period of time has elapsed. Typically, the electronic circuit 138 will cease supplying the current after approximately 5 seconds. It is noted that the electronic circuit 136 includes a Dual In-line Package (DIP) switch (not shown in the figures), which can be set by a person to adjust the predetermined period of time as required.

In addition to the electronic circuit 136, the current supply means 108 includes a lug 140 that is attached to the electromagnet 104. The lug 140 includes an adjustable portion 142 in the form of a grub-screw, which can be screwed up and down relative to the lug 140. The lug 140 is attached to the electromagnet 104 at a position near the micro-switch 138 such that movement of the electromagnet 104 in the direction indicated by the arrow marked "A" causes the actuator of the micro-switch 138 to be moved from the first position to the second position. In this regard, the adjustable portion 142 can be set (screwed) to set the amount of movement of the electromagnet 104 that causes the actuator of the micro-switch 138 to be moved from the first position to the second position.

In relation to the visual indicator 110, which can be seen in figure 1(g), this feature of the device 100 is used to provide a visual indication of whether the metal armature plate 120 attached to the door 122 is secured to the face 118 of the electromagnet 104 by the magnetic field generated thereby. More specifically, the visual indicator 110 is arranged to emit light of a first colour when the metal armature plate 120 attached to the door 122 is secured to the face 118 of the electromagnet 104 by the magnetic field generated thereby, and light of a second colour when the metal armature plate 120 attached to the door 122 is not secured to the face 118 of the electromagnet 104 by the magnetic field generated thereby; that is, the electromagnet is not generating the magnetic field. The visual indicator 110 is electrically connected to the electronic circuit 136. The visual indicator 110 is in the form of at least one Light Emitting Diode (LED).

While not shown in the accompanying figures, it is envisaged that alternative embodiments of the device 100 include addition features that enhance the security aspects of the device 100. One of the addition features is a CCD camera that is electrically coupled to the current supply means 108. On detecting movement of the electromagnet 104 the current supply means 108 activates the CCD camera in order to cause it to capture an image of the area near the door 122. Typically, the usage (which may be either a single shot or short video clip) will capture persons trying to open the door 122.

To ensure the CCD captures suitable images of persons trying to open the door 122, the device 100 also includes (in an alternative embodiment) a sound emitting circuit. The sound emitting circuit is also coupled to the current supply means 108, which is arranged to activate the sound emitting circuit on detecting movement of the electromagnet. On being activated, the sound emitting circuit emits a sound. By emitting the sound persons in the vicinity of the door 122 will be caused to look at the device 100, which in turn allows the CCD camera to capture a good image of the persons' face.

In addition to the CCD camera and the sound emitting circuit, it is envisaged that the alternative embodiment of the device 100 includes a digital audio recording circuit for recording the voices of persons in the vicinity of the door 122. In this regard, the digital audio recording circuit is electrically coupled to the current supply means 108. The current supply means causes the audio recording circuit to be activated to

thereby record the voices of persons located near the door 122.

It is also envisaged that in an alternative embodiment the device 100 also includes a radio frequency transmitter circuit, which is arranged to receive the image captured by the CCD camera and the audio information recorded by the digital audio recording circuit. On receiving the image and the audio information the radio frequency transmitter circuit transmits a radio frequency signal that is encoded with the image and the video information. The transmitted radio frequency signal can be received and processed at a security console.

Referring to figure 2(a), an alternative embodiment of the invention is shown. In this version two microswitches 238,239 are used. The microswitches are actuated by the heads of actuation screws 240, 241. The depth of insertion of each of screws 241, 240 into plate 224 dictates the force required to actuate either of microswitches 239, 240.

Referring to figure 2(b), a moderate force is being applied to device 200 which is comparable to the force that might be applied by a person attempting to push open a door. The force is balanced by compression of spring 230. It can be seen that microswitch 239 has become actuated by the head of actuation screw 241.

Referring to figure 2(c), a large force is being applied to device 200 which is comparable to the force that might be applied by a person attempting to force open a door. The force is balanced by further compression of spring 230. It can be seen that microswitch 238 has become actuated by the head of actuation screw 240.

Device 200 includes a radio transmitter device which can transmit signals indicating a condition of device 200 based on the positions of microswitches 239, 240. If neither switch is actuated then this indicates that the door is not being pushed.

If switch 239 is actuated then this indicates that somebody may be attempting to open the door. The radio transmitter circuit may transmit a signal indicating this. This may be received at a local unit which sounds an alarm to indicate to the person that the door is locked.

If switches 239 and 240 are actuated then this indicates that somebody may be making a forced attempt to break open the door. The radio transmitter circuit may

transmit a signal indicating this. This may be received at a remote security console or the like to indicate to security personnel that a forced attempt may be being made to open the door to which device 200 is attached.

Any reference to prior art contained herein is not to be taken as an admission
5 that the information is common general knowledge, unless otherwise indicated.

Finally, it is to be appreciated that various alterations or additions may be made to the parts previously described without departing from the spirit or ambit of the present invention.

CLAIMS

1. A device for controlling a door, the device comprising:
a body;
5 an electromagnet arranged to generate a magnetic field for retaining the door;
a coupling means that couples the electromagnet to the body, the coupling
means being arranged to allow a movement of the electromagnet relative to the body;
and
a current supply means that is arranged to supply the electromagnet with a
10 current, the current supply means being further arranged to detect the movement of the
electromagnetic and to cease supplying the current at a predetermined instant after
detecting the movement of the electromagnet.
2. The device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the device further comprises a visual
15 indicator arranged to provide a particular visual indication when the electromagnet is
generating the magnetic field.
3. The device as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the body comprises:
an elongate section that defines a void; and
20 elements that extend outwardly from opposed surfaces of the elongate section
and into the void, wherein the coupling mean and the electromagnet are located in the
void.
4. The device as claimed in claim 3, wherein the coupling means comprises:
25 a base that is retained in position by the elements;
a component that is secured to the main part and which is attached to the base;
and
a resilient part disposed between the base and a head of the component, the
resilient part being such that it enables the movement of the electromagnet.
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5. The device as claimed in claim 4, wherein the current supply means comprises:
an electronic circuit that has a switch; and
a lug that is attached to the electromagnet,
wherein the electronic circuit and the lug are arranged such that the movement
35 of the electromagnet causes a change in a state of the switch, which in turn causes the
electronic circuit to cease supplying the current at the predetermined instant.

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6. The device as claimed in claim 5, wherein the current supply means also comprises an adjustable portion that can be adjusted so as to set an amount of the movement of the electromagnet that causes the change in the state of the switch.
- 5 7. The device as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, further comprising an image capture means arranged to capture an image subsequent to the current supply means detecting the movement of the electromagnet.
8. The device as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, further comprising a
10 sound emitting device arranged to emit a sound subsequent to the current supply means detecting the movement of the electromagnet.
9. The device as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, further comprising an audio recording means arranged to record audio information.
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10. The device as claimed in claim 7 or claim 9, further comprising a radio frequency transmitter that is arranged to transmit a radio signal encoded with the image captured by the image capture means and/or the audio information recorded by the audio recording means.
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11. A door locking device comprising:
an electromagnet for retaining a door armature plate; and
a visual indicator means arranged to provide a particular visual indication when the electromagnet is retaining the door armature plate.