

SPECIFICATIONJACK ASSEMBLY INCLUDING A CONTACT SWITCHING SYSTEMField of the Invention

This invention generally relates to the art of electrical connectors and, particularly, to a jack assembly which includes a contact switching system for receiving a coaxial plug.

Background of the Invention

Shielded electrical connector assemblies are widely used in various applications such as telecommunications equipment, computers and the like. The electrical wiring in such applications often include electrical cables having a plurality of electrically conductive leads surrounded and protected by an electrically conductive shield, such as a braid, foil or the like. In most such connector assemblies, it is necessary to shield the signal-carrying circuits to avoid electromagnetic interference caused by energy generated outside as well as inside the system, and/or to avoid radio frequency interference entering the system.

Many such electrical connector assemblies are used in conjunction with systems which incorporate printed circuit boards to which the connectors are surface-mounted or with panels having apertures through which the connectors are mounted. Often, either the board or the panel have ground planes or plates to which the connectors are conductively coupled. The coupling usually is through the shield of the connector assemblies. One type of shielded electrical connector assembly is a jack which is "box" or rectangularly shaped and includes a rectangularly shaped dielectric housing having a front face and outside portions

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surrounding the front face covered by a stamped and formed metal shield.

One such application of shielded jacks is for receiving a pin-type coaxial plug insertable through a hole in the front of the metal shield and into a cavity or chamber within the dielectric housing. The coaxial plug has a plurality of radially insulated terminals which are exposed at a tip of the plug in a fashion to provide axially separated terminal sections. The dielectric housing of the jack mounts a plurality of pairs of movable contacts or terminals and fixed contacts or terminals, with the movable contacts being engageable by the terminal sections of an inserted plug. The terminal sections of the plug not only establish electrical connection with the movable contacts, but the plug moves the movable contacts away from the fixed contacts to effect contact switching functions. One of the problems with jacks of this type is to maintain or ensure good electrical contact between the movable and fixed contacts. The engaging surfaces of the contacts often become contaminated which deteriorates the effectiveness of the contact coupling therebetween. Attempts have been made to provide a wiping action between the engaging surfaces of the movable contacts and the fixed contacts to counteract such contamination. However, most such jack assemblies are extremely small due to the ever-increasing miniaturization of such connector assemblies. The compact envelope afforded by such miniature constructions leave little room for providing adequate wiping actions.

This invention is directed to solving those problems by providing a unique contact construction which provides an improved and more extensive wiping action between the movable and fixed contacts than has heretofore been available.

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Summary of the Invention

An object, therefore, of the invention is to provide a new and improved jack assembly which includes a contact switching system for receiving a coaxial plug, and with the contacts of the jack assembly having an improved wiping action.

In the exemplary embodiment of the invention, the jack assembly includes an insulative housing having a terminal receiving chamber and an aperture communicating with the chamber for insertion therethrough of the coaxial plug. The housing includes at least one terminal pivot support means in the chamber. At least one fixed terminal is mounted on the housing and includes a fixed rounded contact portion located in the chamber. At least one movable terminal is mounted on the housing and includes a cantilevered spring contact arm projecting from the terminal pivot support means of the housing for pivoting thereabout. The contact arm includes a first contact portion for contacting the rounded contact portion of the fixed terminal and a second contact portion for contacting the coaxial plug when inserted into the chamber. The spring contact arm is resiliently preloaded to bias the first contact portion against the rounded contact portion of the fixed terminal. The spring contact arm is configured so that the first contact portion slides along and wipes over the rounded contact portion when the coaxial plug is inserted into the chamber and in contact with the second contact portion.

In particular, the cantilevered spring contact arm has a dog-leg configuration defining a pair of relatively angled legs which are preloaded in a biased condition toward each other when the fixed terminal and the movable terminal are in engagement. When the coaxial plug is inserted into the jack and moves the movable terminal away from the fixed terminal, the angled legs of the pre-

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loaded spring contact arm of the movable terminal spread apart from their preloaded condition as the first contact portion moves off of the rounded contact portion of the fixed terminal to enhance a wiping action therebetween.

- 5 Other objects, features and advantages of the invention will be apparent from the following detailed description taken in connection with the accompanying drawings.

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Brief Description of the Drawings

The features of this invention which are believed to be novel are set forth with particularity in the appended claims. The invention, together with its objects and the advantages thereof, may be best understood by reference to the following description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which like reference numerals identify like elements in the figures and in which:

FIGURE 1 is a perspective view of one embodiment of a jack assembly incorporating the concepts of the invention, in conjunction with a mating coaxial plug, with the jack assembly mounted to a printed circuit board;

FIGURE 2 is an exploded view of the jack assembly components;

FIGURE 3 is an axial section through the dielectric housing of the jack assembly;

FIGURE 4 is a sectional view of the dielectric housing with the terminals mounted therein;

FIGURE 5 is a view similar to that of Figure 4, with the shield of the jack assembly added, and with the coaxial plug inserted into the jack assembly;

FIGURE 6 is a fragmented elevational view of an alternate form of ground terminal;

FIGURE 7 is a front elevational view of a second embodiment of a jack assembly illustrating a further form of ground terminal;

FIGURE 8 is a view similar to that of Figure 7, partially in section, to show another form of grounding system between the shield and the coaxial plug;

FIGURE 9 is a view similar to that of Figure 8, showing still a further form of grounding system between the shield and the coaxial plug; and

FIGURE 10 is a view similar to that of Figure 5, but of another embodiment of a jack assembly.

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Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments

Referring to the drawings in greater detail, and first to Figures 1 and 2, the invention is embodied in a jack assembly, generally designated 12 (Fig. 1), which includes a contact switching system, for receiving a coaxial plug, generally designated 14. The coaxial plug is terminated to a shielded electrical cable 16. The jack assembly is a shielded electrical connector assembly of a "box" or rectangular shape and includes a rectangularly shaped dielectric housing, generally designated 18 (Fig. 2), which is substantially surrounded by a stamped and formed metal shield, generally designated 20, as best seen in Figure 1. The housing has a circular or cylindrical boss 22 which projects through a front wall 24 of the shield and through which coaxial plug 14 is inserted in the direction of arrow "A" (Fig. 1). Circular boss 22 defines a plug-receiving aperture 22a communicating with a chamber 26 (Fig. 2) within housing 18 and into which the coaxial plug is inserted.

Referring particularly to Figure 2, dielectric housing 18 is formed of a plurality of components, including a unitary main body, generally designated 28, having integral front and rear walls 30 and 31, respectively, a top wall 32, and a side wall 33a. Once the terminals (described hereinafter) are mounted within the main body, a side wall 33b is assembled to the main body, as indicated by arrow "B", and is fixed in place by appropriate fastening or latch means to close chamber 26.

Stamped and formed metal shield 20 includes front wall 24, along with a top wall 34, a rear wall 36 and a pair of side walls 38 to define a five-sided shielding box having an open bottom. As seen in Figure 2, housing 18 is assembled through the rear of shield 20 in the direction of arrow "C" before rear wall 36 of the shield is formed. Once the housing is inserted into the shield, rear wall 36

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is bent downward to the position shown in Figure 1, where-
upon five sides of the housing are substantially enclosed
by the box-shaped shield. Front wall 24 of the shield
includes a pair of side flanges 24a, and rear wall 36 of
the shield includes a pair of side flanges 36a for overlying
side walls 38 of the shield. Each side wall of the
shield includes a pair of depending ground legs 38a for
insertion into holes 40 (Fig. 1) in a printed circuit board
42 to surface mount the jack assembly to the board. Ground
legs 38a are electrically coupled, as by soldering, to
appropriate circuit traces (not shown) on printed circuit
board 42 or within holes 40.

Referring to Figures 3 and 4, dielectric housing
18, particularly main body portion 28, is molded of plastic
or like material with various terminal supporting grooves
and terminal pivot support means for mounting two pairs of
fixed and movable terminals, along with one ground terminal.
More particularly, the housing includes a supporting
groove 44 and a fixed support means 44a for mounting a
first fixed signal terminal, generally designated 46; a
supporting groove 48 and a pivot support means 48a for
mounting a first movable signal terminal, generally designated
50; a supporting groove 52 and a fixed support means
52a for mounting a second fixed terminal, generally designated
54; a supporting groove 56 and a pivot support means
56a for mounting a second movable terminal, generally designated
58; and a supporting groove 60 for mounting a
ground terminal, generally designated 62.

More particularly, first fixed terminal 46 includes
a tail portion 46a at one end and a rounded contact
portion 46b at its opposite end. The tail portion is insertable
into an appropriate hole in printed circuit board 42 for
electrical coupling to a circuit trace on the board or in the
hole. Rounded contact portion 46b is rigidly

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supported or backed-up by fixed support means 44a of the housing.

5 Similarly, second fixed terminal 54 includes a tail portion 54a for coupling to a circuit trace on the printed circuit board, and a rounded contact portion 54b rigidly supported or backed-up by fixed support means 52a of the housing.

10 First movable terminal 50 includes a tail portion 50a for coupling to an appropriate circuit trace on the printed circuit board, and a pivot portion 50b fixedly sandwiched between pivot support means 48a of the housing and a curved portion 48b of supporting groove 48 in the housing.

15 Similarly, second movable terminal 58 includes a tail portion 58a for coupling to an appropriate circuit trace on the printed circuit board, and a pivot portion 58b wrapped about pivot support means 56a of the housing.

20 Ground terminal 62 has a tail portion 62a for coupling to a ground trace on the printed circuit board, and a contact portion 62b which projects into aperture 22a defined by circular boss 22 of the housing for contacting coaxial plug 14, as described hereinafter.

25 The invention contemplates the novel provision of an improved wiping action between movable signal terminals 50 and 58 and fixed signal terminals 46 and 54, respectively, in response to insertion of coaxial plug 14 into engagement with the movable terminals. More particularly, referring first to movable terminal 50, the terminal includes a contact portion 50c at the distal end of a cantilevered spring contact arm, generally designated 50d, for engaging rounded contact portion 46b of fixed terminal 46.
30 The cantilevered spring contact arm is configured to have a dog-leg configuration to define a pair of legs 50e joined at an apex 50f to define an angle "D" between the legs.



Terminal 50 is mounted within supporting groove 48 and about pivot support means 48a in such a manner as to preload cantilevered spring contact arm 50d when contact portion 50c is in engagement with rounded contact portion 46b of fixed terminal 46. In this preloaded condition, angle "D" between legs 50e of the dog-leg configuration is "compressed".

Similarly, movable signal terminal 58 includes a cantilevered spring contact arm, generally designated 58d, which has a dog-leg configuration to define a pair of legs 58e joined at an apex 58f. One of the legs of the dog-legged spring contact arm on the distal side of apex 58f is maintained in engagement with rounded contact portion 54b of fixed terminal 54 in a preloaded condition. Again, like movable terminal 50, an angle "E" between legs 58e of movable terminal 58 is "compressed" in the preloaded condition of the terminal. The movable terminal has a rounded plug-engaging portion 58g near a distal end thereof.

Figure 5 shows coaxial plug 14 inserted into jack assembly 12, with the plug engaging movable terminals 50 and 58 as well as ground terminal 62. Before proceeding, it should be noted that the coaxial plug includes a tip terminal portion 64 at the distal end thereof, a ground terminal portion 66 at the proximal end thereof and an intermediate terminal portion 68 therebetween, the terminal portions being separated and insulated by dielectric insulators 70, all of which is known in the art. It can be seen that tip terminal portion 64 has engaged cantilevered spring contact arm 50d of movable terminal 50 at apex 50f of the dog-legged configuration of the spring contact arm. Intermediate terminal portion 68 of the coaxial plug has engaged plug-engaging portion 58g of movable terminal 58. Proximal terminal portion 66 of the coaxial plug has engaged contact portion 62b of ground terminal 62.



As stated above, movable signal terminals 50 and 58, particularly their dog-leg configured spring contact arms 50d and 58d, respectively, are mounted within the jack assembly in a preloaded condition. This biases contact portion 50c of movable terminal 50 against rounded contact portion 46b of fixed terminal 46, and biases distal leg 58e of movable terminal 58 against contact portion 54b of fixed terminal 54. When coaxial plug 14 engages the movable terminals, not only do the contact portions of the movable terminals move off of the contact portions of the fixed terminals, but a significant wiping action is effected because of the dog-leg configuration of the cantilevered spring contact arms of the movable terminals.

More particularly, referring first to movable terminal 50 in Figure 5, it can be seen that contact portion 50c of the movable terminal has moved off of contact portion 46b of fixed terminal 46. When this switching or disengagement action occurs, legs 50e of the spring contact arm become "relaxed" from their preloaded condition. In other words, angle "D" (Fig. 4) between the legs effectively expands or enlarges to an angle "D1" shown in Figure 5. Angle "D1" (Fig. 5) is larger than angle "D" (Fig. 4). The resulting, exaggerated action is to cause contact portion 56c of movable terminal 50 to ride along and wipe over contact portion 46b of fixed terminal 46 in the direction of arrow "F" (Fig. 5) rather than simply lifting off of the fixed contact portion.

Similarly, when the coaxial plug engages portion 58g of movable terminal 58 to move the distal leg 58e of the terminal off of contact portion 54b of fixed terminal 54, angle "E" (Fig. 4) expands or enlarges to an angle "E1" as seen in Figure 5, as the preloaded dog-leg configuration of the cantilevered spring contact arm of movable terminal 58 becomes relaxed. Again, this creates an exaggerated



wiping action across fixed contact portion 34b in the direction of arrow "G".

5 It also can be seen in Figure 5 that the tip of contact portion 50c of movable terminal 50 is in abutment with the inside of the housing, as at 71, under the pressure of engagement of the coaxial plug with apex 50f of the terminal. This abutment increases the normal contact force between the terminal and the coaxial plug.

10 Figures 6-9 show various forms of the jack assembly for enhancing the grounding capabilities of the assembly. First, referring to Figure 6, the lower end of a ground terminal 62' (corresponding to ground terminal 62 in Fig. 4) is provided with a pair of tail portions 62a' for insertion into a corresponding pair of appropriate holes in
15 printed circuit board 42. These multiple tails of the ground terminal provide multiple grounding paths to reduce the impedance of the system. The multiple tails also provide an improved shielding effect.

20 Figure 7 shows a further improvement wherein the ground terminal not only has a pair of tail portions 62a', but also a pair of contact portions 62b' projecting into aperture 22a of cylindrical boss 22 of the dielectric housing for engaging terminal portion 66 of the coaxial plug. The contact portions 62b' increase the surface contact area
25 between the ground terminal and the plug ground terminal portion, again reducing the impedance of the system.

30 Figure 8 shows an embodiment wherein contact portion 62b of ground terminal 62 is extended and wrapped about the outside of cylindrical boss 22 of the housing, with a distal end 62c of the ground terminal in engagement with front wall 24 of shield 20. Therefore, the coaxial plug not only has a ground path to the printed circuit board directly through ground terminal 62, but the ground terminal, in turn, is coupled to the ground plane of the

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printed circuit board through the shield and its grounding legs 38a (Figs. 1 and 2).

5 Figure 9 shows an improved grounding scheme wherein the ground terminal portion of the coaxial plug is coupled directly to shield 20 for improving the grounding characteristics of the jack assembly. More particularly, contact portion 62b of ground terminal 62 can be seen ex-
10 posed within aperture 22a of cylindrical boss 22 of the dielectric housing. In addition, front wall 24 of shield 20 includes a finger 80 which extends through a hole 82 in cylindrical boss 22 and, like ground contact portion 62b, is exposed within aperture 22a for engagement by the coaxi-
15 al plug, particularly terminal portion 66 of the coaxial plug. Therefore, like the embodiment shown in Figure 8, the coaxial plug is coupled to the ground plane of the printed circuit board both through ground terminal 62 as well as through shield 20 and legs 38a of the shield.

20 Lastly, Figure 10 shows an alternate embodiment of a jack assembly, generally designated 12', which is similar to jack assembly 12 except that it is adapted for receiving a coaxial plug 14' having three signal terminal portions and a ground terminal portion. It can be seen that the coaxial plug has the tip or distal terminal portion 64 at one end, the proximal or ground terminal portion
25 66 at the opposite end, with intermediate terminal portion 68 and a second intermediate terminal portion 86 therebetween. Consequently, jack assembly 12' has an additional or third pair of fixed and movable terminals. In order to simplify the description of jack assembly 12', like numer-
30 als have been applied to like components, including the first and second pairs of fixed and movable signal terminals and the ground terminal, as described above in relation to the description of jack assembly 12.

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5 More particularly, jack assembly 12' (Fig. 10) includes a third fixed terminal, generally designated 88, mounted within a supporting groove 90 in the housing. Fixed terminal 88 includes a tail portion 88a and a fixed contact portion 88b.

10 Jack assembly 12' also includes a third movable terminal, generally designated 92, mounted within a supporting groove 94 in the housing. Movable terminal 92 includes a tail portion 92a and a dog leg cantilevered spring contact portion, generally designated 92b, defining a pair of legs 92c joined at an apex 92d. A rounded contact portion 92e is formed at the distal end of the movable terminal. Like movable terminals 50 and 58, movable terminal 92 is mounted within the housing in a preloaded condition with one of legs 92c (the right-hand leg in Fig. 15 10) biased against contact portion 88b of fixed terminal 88. In this preloaded condition, legs 92c define an angle "H" which is "compressed" in the preloaded condition of the terminal.

20 When coaxial plug 14' is fully inserted into jack assembly 12', tip terminal portion 64 of the coaxial plug engages contact portion 92e of terminal 92 and moves the terminal off of the fixed terminal. When this occurs, angle "H" between legs 92c enlarges or expands and effects 25 an exaggerated wiping motion along fixed contact portion 88b.

30 It will be understood that the invention may be embodied in other specific forms without departing from the spirit or central characteristics thereof. The present examples and embodiments, therefore, are to be considered in all respects as illustrative and not restrictive, and the invention is not to be limited to the details given herein.

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CLAIMS

1. A jack assembly (12) which includes a contact switching system for receiving a coaxial plug (14), comprising:

5 an insulative housing (18) having a terminal-receiving chamber (26) and an aperture (22a) communicating with the chamber for insertion therethrough of the coaxial plug, the housing including a terminal pivot support means (48a, 56a) in the chamber; and

10 a movable terminal (50, 58) mounted on the housing and including a cantilevered spring contact arm (50d, 58d) projecting from said terminal pivot support means for pivoting thereabout, the spring contact arm including a first contact portion (50c, 58e) for contacting
15 the rounded contact portion of the fixed terminal and a second contact portion (50f, 58g) for contacting the coaxial plug when inserted into the chamber, the spring contact arm being resiliently preloaded to bias the first contact portion against the rounded contact portion of the
20 fixed terminal, and the spring arm being configured so that the first contact portion slides along and wipes over the rounded contact portion when the coaxial plug is inserted into the chamber and in contact with the second contact portion.

25 2. The jack assembly of claim 1 wherein said cantilevered spring contact arm (50d) has a dog-leg configuration with a pair of relatively angled legs (50e) converging at said second contact portion (50f).

30 3. The jack assembly of claim 2 wherein said first contact portion (50c) is defined by a distal end of one of said legs (50e).



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4. The jack assembly of claim 3 wherein an end of the other leg (50c) pivots about said terminal pivot support means (48a).

5 5. The jack assembly of claim 1 wherein said cantilevered spring contact arm (58d) has a dog-leg configuration with an end of one leg (58e) defining said second contact portion (58g), with an end (58b) of the other leg being pivotable about said terminal pivot support means (56a), and with said first contact portion being
10 located between the end (58g) of the one leg and a point (58f) where the legs converge.

6. The jack assembly of claim 1 wherein said first contact portion (50c) is rounded.

15 7. The jack assembly of claim 1 wherein the coaxial plug (14) includes a shield means (66), said housing (18) is adapted for mounting on a printed circuit board (42), and including a ground terminal (62) mounted on the housing in position for engaging the shield means, the ground terminal having at least two integral tail portions
20 (62a) projecting from the housing for interconnection to appropriate ground traces on the printed circuit board.

25 8. The jack assembly of claim 1 wherein the coaxial plug (14) includes a circumferential shield means (66), and including a ground terminal (62) mounted on the housing with at least two integral contact portions (62b) for engaging the shield means at two circumferential locations thereof.



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5 9. The jack assembly of claim 8 wherein said housing (18) is adapted for mounting on a printed circuit board, and the ground terminal includes at least two integral tail portions (62a') projecting from the housing for interconnection to appropriate ground traces on the circuit board.

10 10. The jack assembly of claim 1 wherein the coaxial plug (14) includes a circumferential shield means (66), and including a ground terminal (62) mounted on the housing, the ground terminal including an integral contact portion (62b) for engaging the shield means of the coaxial plug, and a shield (20) about at least a portion of the housing at least in the area of said aperture, the shield including an integral contact portion (80) for engaging the shield means of the coaxial plug.

15 11. The jack assembly of claim 10 wherein said housing (18) is adapted for mounting on a printed circuit board (42) and the ground terminal and the shield include integral tail portions (62a, 38a) projecting from the housing for interconnection to appropriate ground traces on the circuit board.

20 12. The jack assembly of claim 1 wherein the coaxial plug (14) includes a shield means (66), and said housing includes a hollow boss (22) projecting therefrom about said aperture (22a) for insertion therethrough of the coaxial plug, a shield (20) about at least a portion of the housing at least about said boss, and a ground terminal (62) mounted on the housing, the ground terminal including an integral contact portion (62b) projecting into the inside of the boss for engaging the shield means of the



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coaxial plug, the contact portion being wrapped (62c) about the outside of the boss for engaging said shield.

5 13. The jack assembly of claim 12 wherein said housing (18) is adapted for mounting on a printed circuit board, and the ground terminal includes at least two integral tail portions (62a") projecting from the housing for interconnection to appropriate ground traces on the circuit board.



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