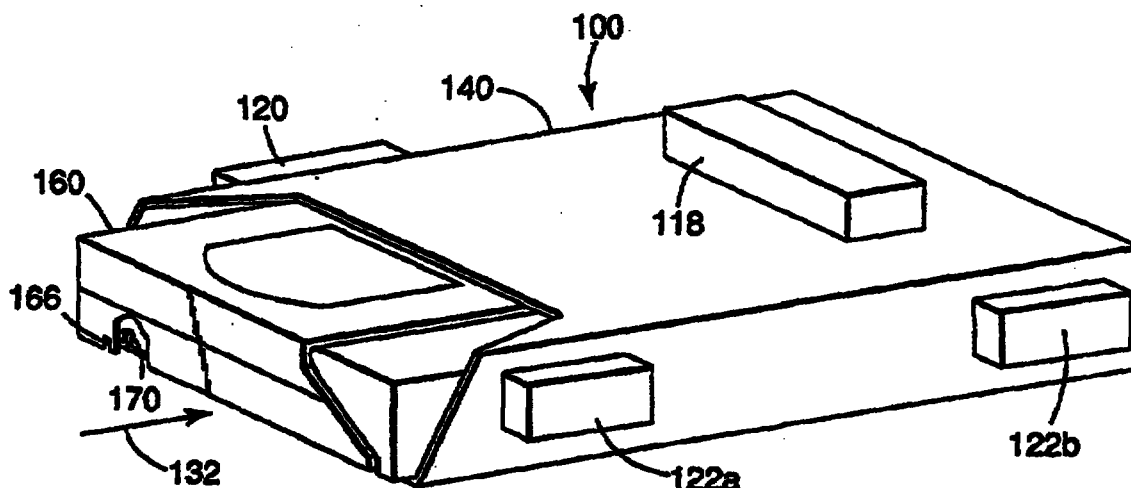


PCT

WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION
International Bureau

INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(51) International Patent Classification 6: G07F 7/06, 7/00, G06F 17/60	A1	(11) International Publication Number: WO 97/15031 (43) International Publication Date: 24 April 1997 (24.04.97)
(21) International Application Number: PCT/US96/15505 (22) International Filing Date: 27 September 1996 (27.09.96) (30) Priority Data: 08/543,364 ✓ 16 October 1995 (16.10.95) ✓ US ✓ (71) Applicant: MINNESOTA MINING AND MANUFACTURING COMPANY [US/US]; 3M center, P.O. Box 33427, Saint Paul, MN 55133-3427 (US). (72) Inventors: BELKA, Anthony, M.; P.O. Box 33427, Saint Paul, MN 55133-3427 (US). BRACE, Thomas, J.; P.O. Box 33427, Saint Paul, MN 55133-3427 (US). (74) Agents: BARTINGALE, Kari, H. et al.; Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Company, Office of Intellectual Property Counsel, P.O. Box 33427, Saint Paul, MN 55133-3427 (US).		(81) Designated States: AU, BR, CA, CN, JP, SG/European patent (AT, BE, CH, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE). Published <i>With international search report. Before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of the receipt of amendments.</i>

(54) Title: ARTICLE INVENTORY TRACKING AND CONTROL SYSTEM**(57) Abstract.**

An article inventory tracking and control system tracks and controls removal of articles from a secured facility. Exemplary facilities in which the system may be useful include libraries, rental stores and retail stores. Each article is marked with an EAS marker to prevent unauthorized removal. In the system, each user of a facility and each article in the facility is uniquely identifiable. Upon receiving the user and article information, the system queries a central database to ensure that the user is a valid user and that the desired transaction is authorized. A receiving compartment is specifically designed to receive a particular type of article, such as a video or audio cassette. Sensors in the receiving compartment ensure that the article is properly placed within the receiving compartment. Proper placement of the article within the receiving compartment ensures that the marker is properly re/desensitized, and also ensures that only one transaction on one article can be performed at a time.