

CLAIMS

1. A data storage device comprising:
 - a plurality of tiles, a face of each tile marked with a character of a set of characters, each tile including a slot;
 - an elongated core, a cross section of the core configured to enable a slot of each of the tiles to fit over an openable end of the core to mount that tile on the core, with the marked face of that tile aligned with the face of an adjacent tile that is mounted on the core, and to enable the tile to slide along the core, a length of the core being sufficient such that when a stack of a predetermined maximum number of the tiles is mounted on the core, some of the tiles of the stack are slidable away from other tiles of the stack to form a gap that is sufficiently long to enable reading the character that is marked on that tile;
 - a locking element that is placeable on the openable end to prevent removal of a tile of the plurality of tiles from the stack, and removable from the openable end to enable addition of a tile of the plurality of tiles to the stack or removal of a tile of the plurality of tiles from the stack; and
 - a casing that is closable over the core and that includes a limiting structure to limit sliding of the tiles along the core when the casing is closed over the core.
2. The device of claim 1, wherein the character is indelibly marked on the face of the tile.
3. The device of claim 2, wherein the character is engraved on the face of the tile.
4. The device of any of claims 1 to 3, where the slot of each tile and the cross section of the core are noncircular.
5. The device of claim 4, wherein the core comprises a single bar.

6. The device of claim 4, wherein the core comprises a plurality of prongs.
7. The device of claim 6, wherein each tile of the plurality of tiles is shaped so as to enable mounting of different stacks of the tiles on different prongs of the plurality of prongs.
8. The device of claim 7, wherein the core comprises two prongs and each tile is substantially semicircular.
9. The device of any of claims 1 to 8, wherein the slot of each tile is located at a center of the face of that tile.
10. The device of any of claims 1 to 9, wherein the slot of each tile is located eccentrically on the face of that tile.
11. The device of any of claims 1 to 10, wherein one end the core that is opposite the openable end is widened at to prevent the tiles from sliding off said one end.
12. The device of claim 11, wherein the locking element comprises a cap into which the openable end is insertable.
13. The device of claim 12, wherein the openable end includes a notch.
14. The device of claim 13, wherein the cap includes a bore such that when the openable end is inserted into that cap such that the notch is aligned with the bore, a screw is insertable into the bore to hold the core to the cap.

15. The device of any of claims 1 to 14, wherein the locking element comprises an end lock, a slot of the end lock being placeable on and removable from the openable end.
16. The device of claim 15, wherein the openable end includes a slit over which the slotted lock is placeable.
17. The device of any of claims 1 to 16, wherein the limiting structure comprises a constriction.
18. The device of any of claims 1 to 17, wherein the limiting structure comprises a spring.
19. The device of any of claims 1 to 18, wherein the core comprises markings.
20. The device of any of claims 1 to 19, wherein the character includes at least one marking selected from a group of types of markings consisting of alphanumeric characters, pictographs, symbols, punctuation marks and diacritical marks.