

The opinion in support of the decision being entered today was not written for publication and is not binding precedent of the Board.

Paper No. 14

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS
AND INTERFERENCES

Ex parte KA TIEK LIM and HUN CHIANG LIM

Appeal No. 2000-2161
Application No. 08/933,319

ON BRIEF

Before COHEN, ABRAMS, and FRANKFORT, Administrative Patent Judges.

FRANKFORT, Administrative Patent Judge.

DECISION ON APPEAL

This is a decision on appeal from the examiner's refusal to allow claims 11 through 14, as amended subsequent to the final rejection in a paper filed December 6, 1999 (Paper No. 9). Claims 1 through 10, the only other claims in the application, have been withdrawn from further consideration as being directed to a non-elected invention.

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Appellants' invention relates to a method of achieving high utilization and high flexibility on an assembly line for manufacturing electronic assemblies. Independent claim 11 is representative of the subject matter on appeal and reads as follows:

11. A method of achieving high utilization and high flexibility on an assembly line for manufacturing electronic assemblies, the assembly line containing at least first and second placement workcells, a transport means for transporting the electronic assembly through the assembly line, and a host computer for the workcells and the transport means, comprising the following steps:

performing a first activity on a first electronic assembly in the first placement workcell;

transferring information relating to the state of the second placement workcell from the second placement workcell to the host computer;

dynamically reconfiguring the first placement workcell at least partially concurrent with the step of performing a first activity and in response to the information transferred to the host computer from the second placement workcell;

transporting the first electronic assembly from the first placement workcell to the second placement workcell via the transport means;

transporting a second electronic assembly into the first placement workcell via the transport means;

performing a second activity on the first electronic assembly in the second placement workcell;

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performing a third activity on the second electronic assembly in the dynamically reconfigured first placement workcell.

The sole prior art reference relied upon by the examiner in rejecting the appealed claims is:

Tsuji et al. (Tsuji) 5,329,690 Jul. 19,
1994

Claims 11 through 14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Tsuji.¹

Rather than attempt to reiterate the examiner's full commentary with regard to the above-noted rejections and the conflicting viewpoints advanced by the examiner and appellants regarding the rejections, we make reference to the final rejection (Paper No. 8, mailed October 7, 1999) and the examiner's answer (Paper No. 13, mailed June 5, 2000) for the reasoning in support of the rejection, and to appellants'

¹ In the advisory action mailed December 14, 1999 (Paper No. 10), the examiner has withdrawn the rejection of claims 11 through 14 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

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brief (Paper No. 12, filed March 14, 2000) for the arguments thereagainst.

OPINION

In reaching our decision in this appeal, we have given careful consideration to appellants' specification and claims, to the applied prior art reference, and to the respective positions articulated by appellants and the examiner. As a consequence of our review, we have made the determination which follows.

Regarding the examiner's rejection of claims 11 through 14 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) based on the Tsuji patent, we note that in the examiner's view, Tsuji discloses (in the language of claim 11 on appeal) a first placement workcell (substrate supply station 1) and a second placement workcell (parts mounting station 3). The examiner's theory on how the method of operating the assembly line of Tsuji is responsive to the

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"dynamically reconfiguring" step set forth in appellants' claim 11 on appeal is explained on pages 3-5 of the answer.

Having carefully reviewed the disclosure of the Tsuji patent and appellants' arguments in their brief, we must agree with appellants that the Tsuji patent does not anticipate the method as set forth in claims 11 through 14 on appeal. More particularly, we agree with appellants (brief, pages 6-7) that while some reconfiguration of the substrate supply station (1) of Tsuji (the first placement workcell) does occur during the processing of one or more kinds of substrates used in the manufacturing of printed circuit boards, such reconfiguring is not done "in response to the information transferred to the host computer from the second placement workcell" as required in claim 11 on appeal.

In Tsuji there is no indication that the second placement workcell (parts mounting station 3) provides any information relating to the state of the second placement workcell to the host computer (4), or that even if such information might be transferred to the host computer from the second placement

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workcell (parts mounting station 3) there would be any dynamic reconfiguration of the first placement workcell (substrate supply station 1) "at least partially concurrent with the step of performing a first activity and in response to the information transferred to the host computer from the second placement workcell" (emphasis added), as required in appellants' claims on appeal. The examiner's reference (answer, pages 4-5) to the fact that the host computer might reprogram or alter the substrate supply station (1) by allowing certain substrates to pass through the solder paste printer (13) without use of the printer when parts to be soldered are not going to be used on those particular substrates, has nothing to do with any information transferred to the host computer from the second placement workcell (parts mounting station 3). On the contrary, the information relating to any substrates that do not require paste printing is transferred from the substrate bar code labeling machine (11) to the host computer (4) and subsequently to the solder paste printer (13) upon a particular bar code being read by the bar code reader (6) located at the inlet of the solder

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paste printer and an inquiry being made to the host computer
(see Tsuji, column 13, lines 46-68).

In view of the foregoing, the examiner's rejection of
claims 11 through 14 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) will not be
sustained and the examiner's decision is reversed.

REVERSED

IRWIN CHARLES COHEN)
Administrative Patent Judge)
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) BOARD OF PATENT
NEAL E. ABRAMS) APPEALS

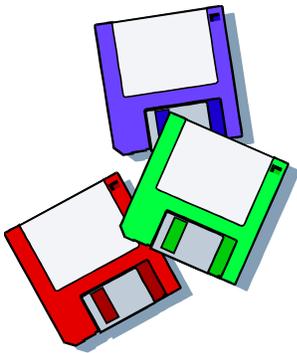
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Administrative Patent Judge)	AND
)	INTERFERENCES
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)	
CHARLES E. FRANKFORT)	
Administrative Patent Judge)	

CEF/LBG

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MOTOROLA INC.
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY DEPARTMENT
8000 WEST SUNRISE BOULEVARD
FORT LAUDERDALE, FL 33322



Lesley

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APJ FRANKFORT

APJ ABRAMS

APJ COHEN

DECISION: REVERSED

Prepared: June 14, 2002

Draft Final

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OB/HD GAU

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