

The opinion in support of the decision being entered today was not written for publication and is not binding precedent of the Board.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. 15

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS
AND INTERFERENCES

Ex parte JACQUES H. HELOT
and
MICHAEL D. DEROCHER

Appeal No. 2001-0007
Application No. 08/956,974

ON BRIEF

Before HAIRSTON, JERRY SMITH, and LALL, Administrative Patent Judges.

HAIRSTON, Administrative Patent Judge.

DECISION ON APPEAL

This is an appeal from the final rejection of claims 1 through 13 and 15 through 17.

The disclosed invention relates to a fan located in a docking station that allows air to flow between the docking station and an airflow port of a portable computer. The

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airflow port of the portable computer is adjoined to the docking station via an airflow coupler on the docking station.

Claim 1 is illustrative of the claimed invention, and it reads as follows:

1. A docking station for a portable computer, comprising:

an airflow coupler for adjoining said docking station to an airflow port of said portable computer, wherein said airflow port allows air to flow between said docking station and said portable computer through said airflow port; and

a fan.

The references relied on by the examiner are:

Donahoe et al. (Donahoe)	5,757,615	May 26, 1998 (filed Jul. 1, 1996)
Cheng	5,768,101	Jun. 16, 1998 (filed Dec. 20, 1996)

Claims 1 through 13 and 15 through 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cheng in view of Donahoe.

Reference is made to the brief (paper number 13) and the answer (paper number 14) for the respective positions of the appellants and the examiner.

OPINION

We have carefully considered the entire record before us, and we will reverse the obviousness rejection of claims 1 through 13 and 15 through 17.

In Cheng, a fan 31 located in the portable computer 3 forces hot air out of the portable computer and into the docking station 4 where it is vented out an exhaust hole 424 (column 2, line 62 through column 3, line 7; Figures 3 and 5).

The examiner acknowledges (answer, page 4) that Cheng does not have a fan in the docking station. For such a teaching, the examiner turned to Donahoe (answer, page 4). Based upon the teaching in Donahoe (column 8, lines 3 through 7) that "[i]f desired, the . . . heat sink **126** and fan **128** [may be] correspondingly relocated within the housing **114** as necessary," the examiner concludes (answer, page 5) that "[i]t would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate the teachings of Donahoe et al. in . . . the apparatus of Cheng to aid in cooling both the portable computer and the docking station."

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We agree with the appellants' argument (brief, pages 5 and 6) that Donahoe merely discloses (Figure 9) a cooling fan 128 located inside housing 114 of a docking station to pull ambient air 130 into the housing via inlet 132 to thereby create a flow of air past heat sink member 126, and that the combined teachings of the references "would prevent the cooling air from the portable computer [disclosed by Cheng] from flowing into and . . . out the exhaust hole 424 of the docking station." Since Cheng is concerned with pulling air out of the portable computer, and Donahoe is concerned with blowing air¹ past the cooling fins of the heat sink located on the portable computer, we additionally agree with the appellants' argument (brief, page 6) that "there is no 'objective reason' to combine the teachings of the references." Thus, the obviousness rejection of claims 1 through 13 and 15 through 17 is reversed.

¹An exhaust fan in the ductwork leading from a stove is a better example of the type of fan needed to assist the flow of hot air from the docking station disclosed by Cheng.

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DECISION

The decision of the examiner rejecting claims 1 through 13 and 15 through 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is reversed.

REVERSED

KENNETH W. HAIRSTON)	
Administrative Patent Judge)	
)	
)	
JERRY SMITH)	BOARD OF PATENT
Administrative Patent Judge)	APPEALS AND
)	INTERFERENCES
)	
)	
PARSHOTAM S. LALL)	
Administrative Patent Judge)	

KWH:hh

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