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(54) **NOVELTY VIDEO DEVICE AND METHOD**

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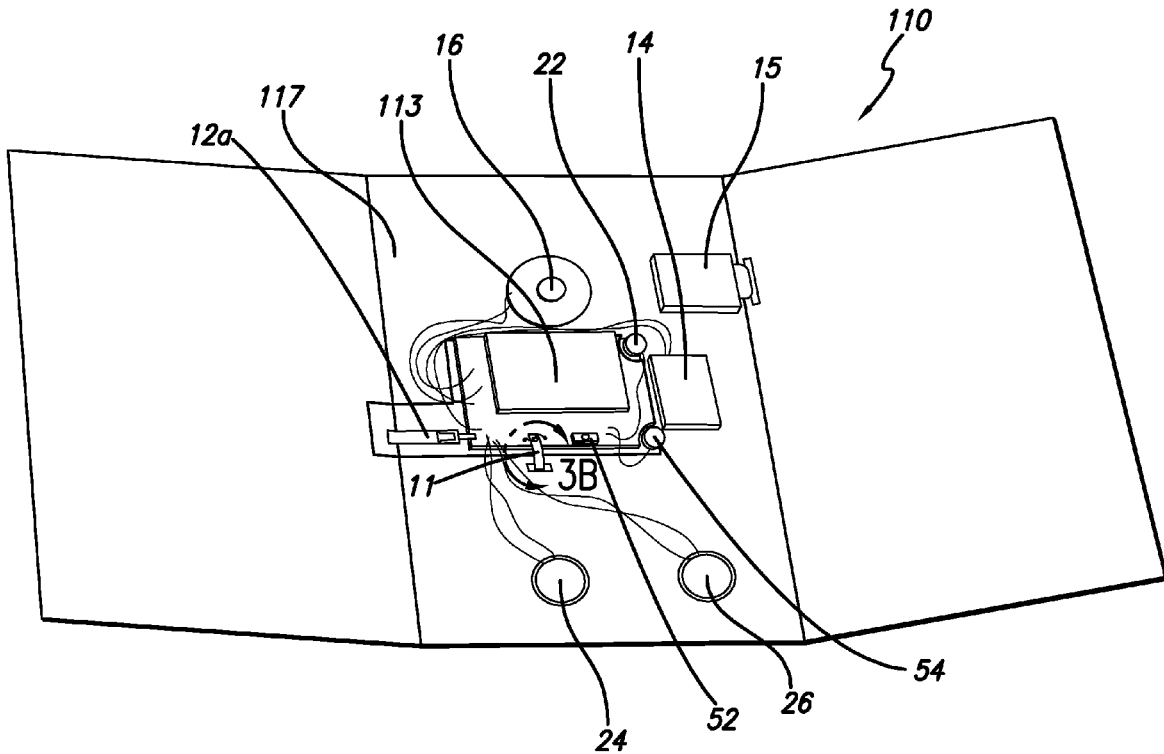
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

An article of print media that includes an electronic module that has at least one chip for storing data and for controlling the electronic module and first means for closing the electronic module such that at least a first video is shown.

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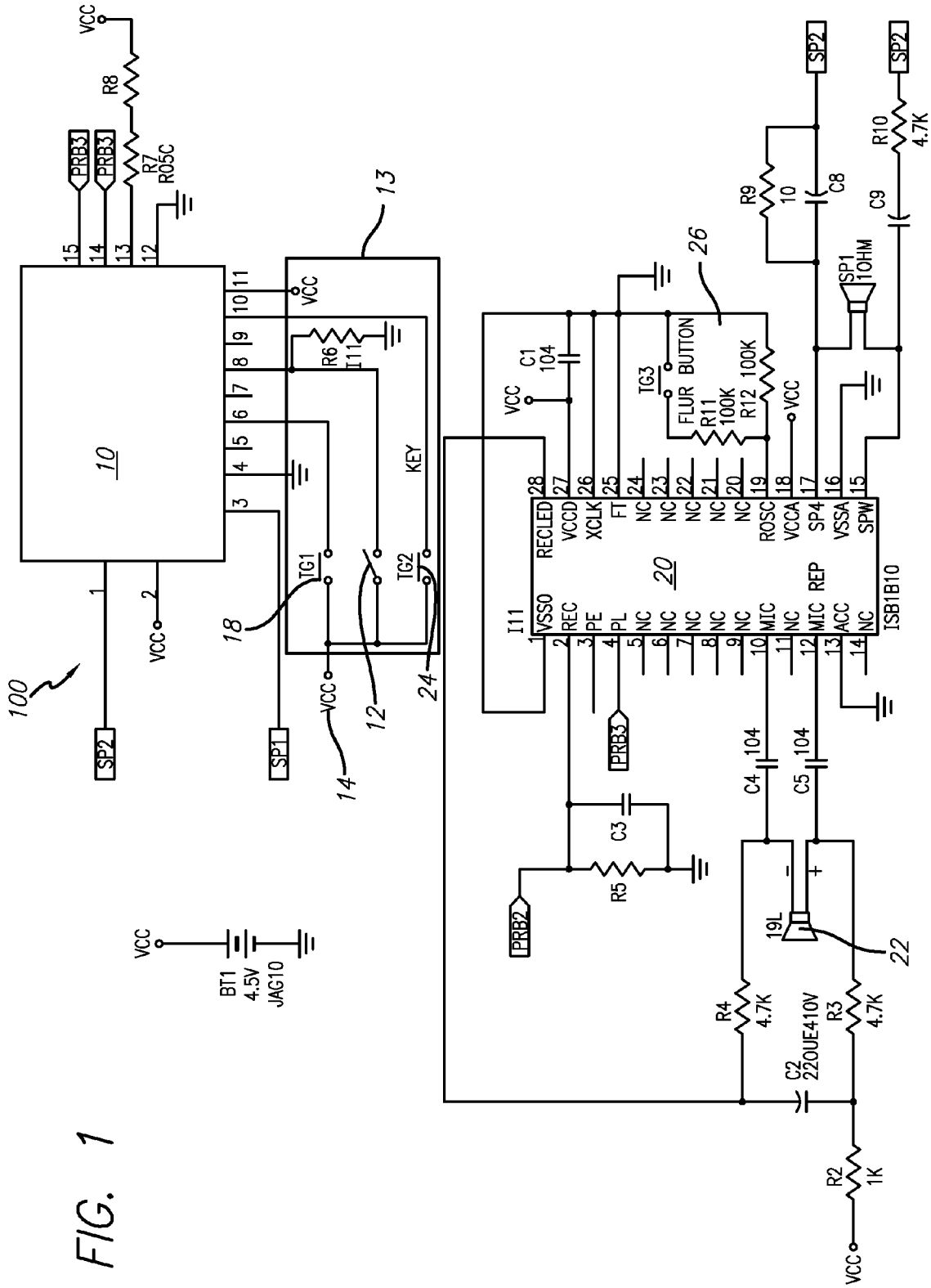


FIG. 1

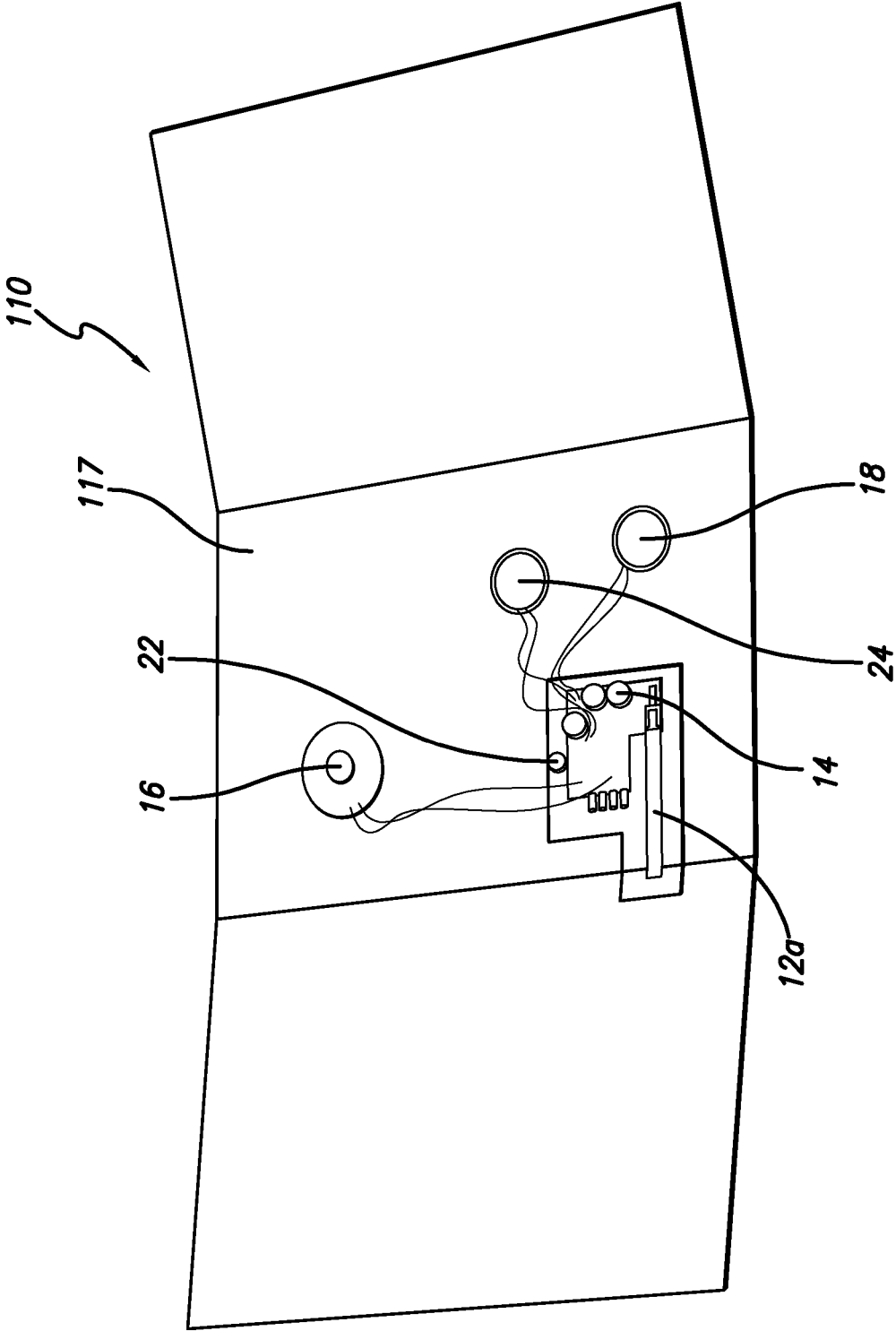


FIG. 2

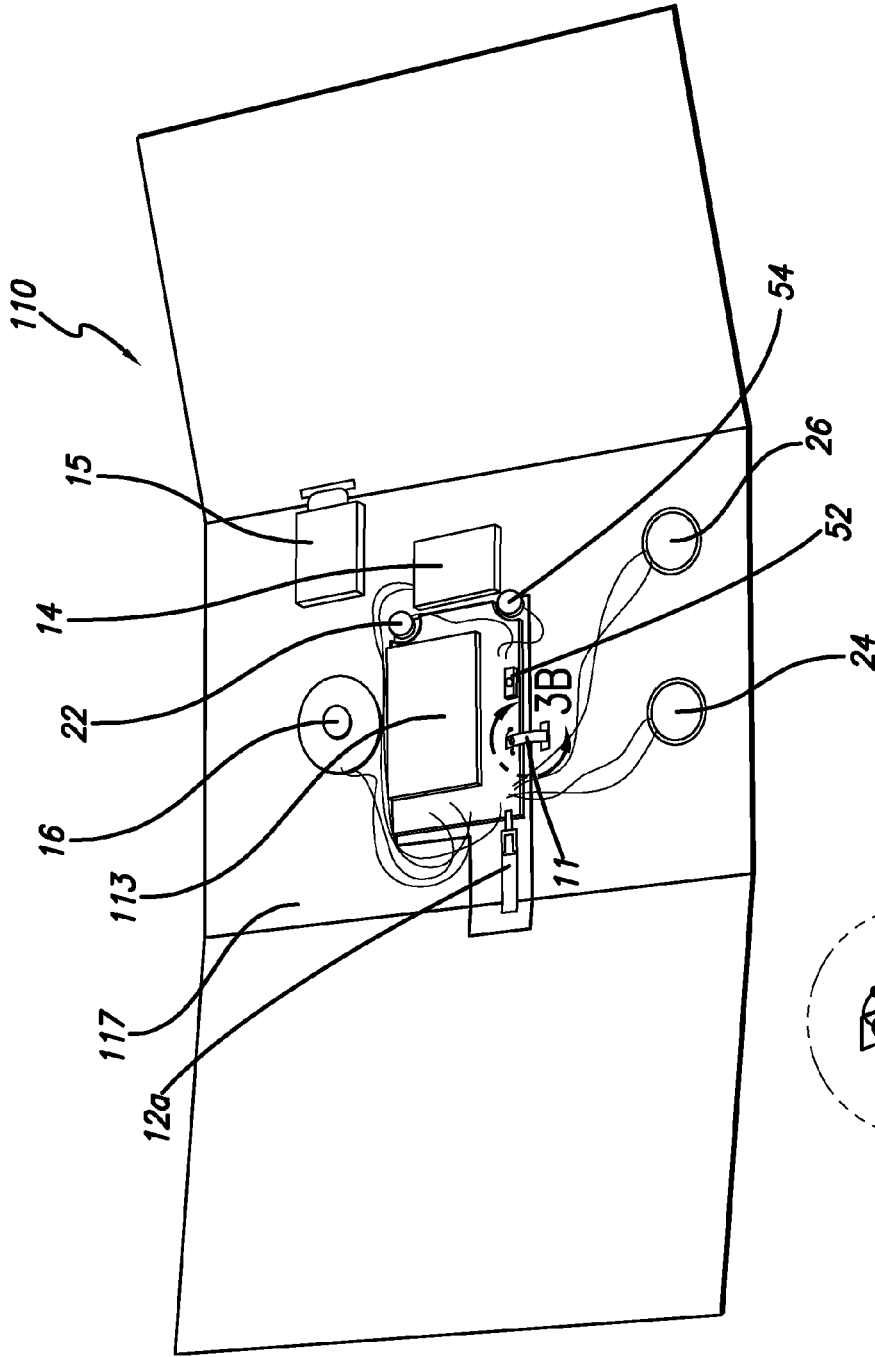


FIG. 3A

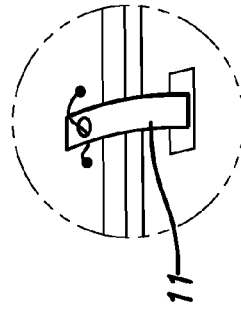


FIG. 3B

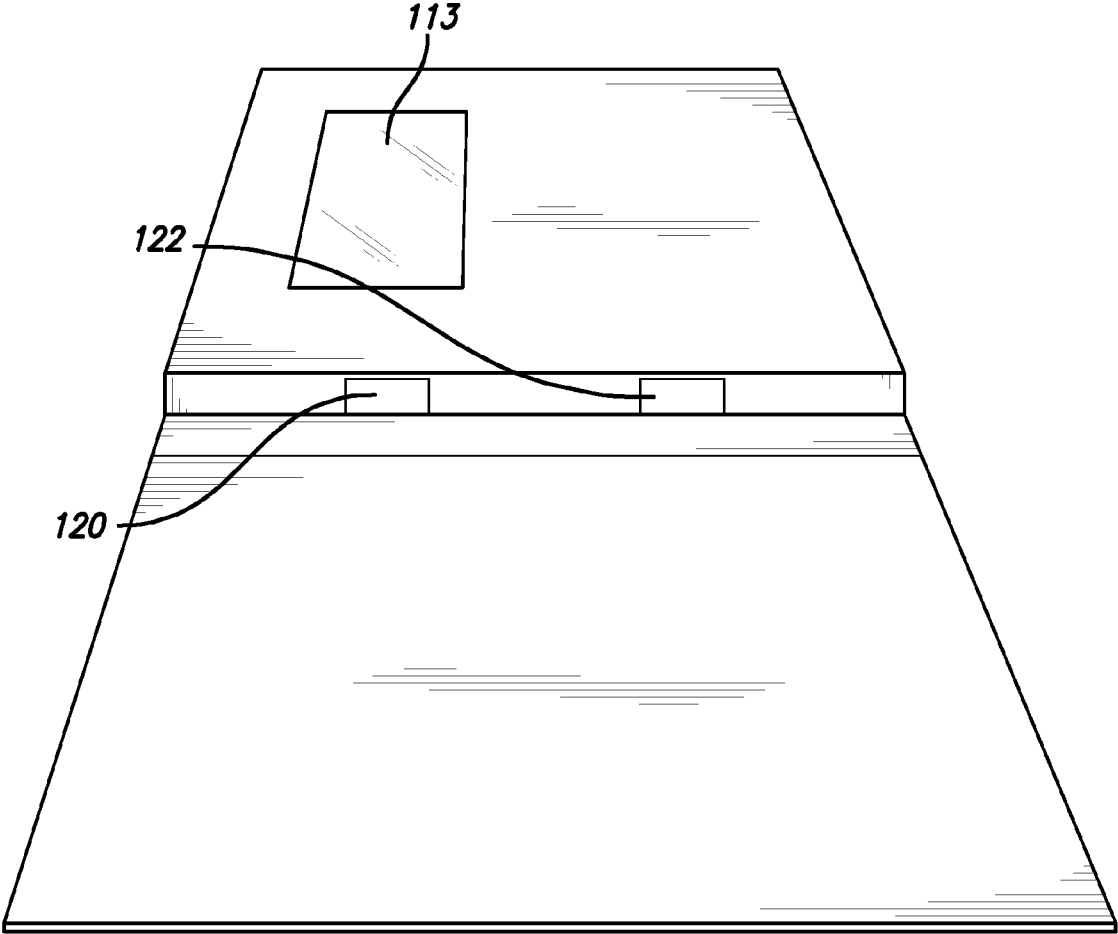


FIG. 4

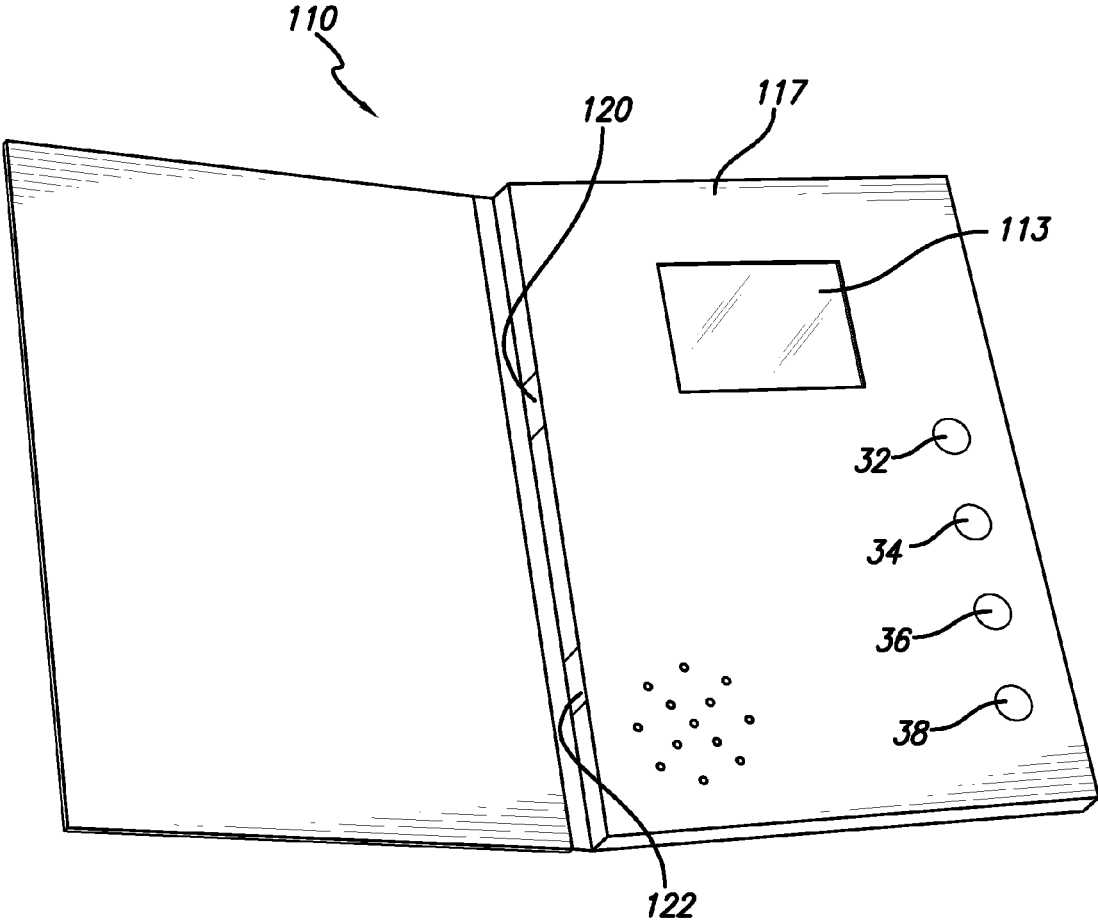


FIG. 5

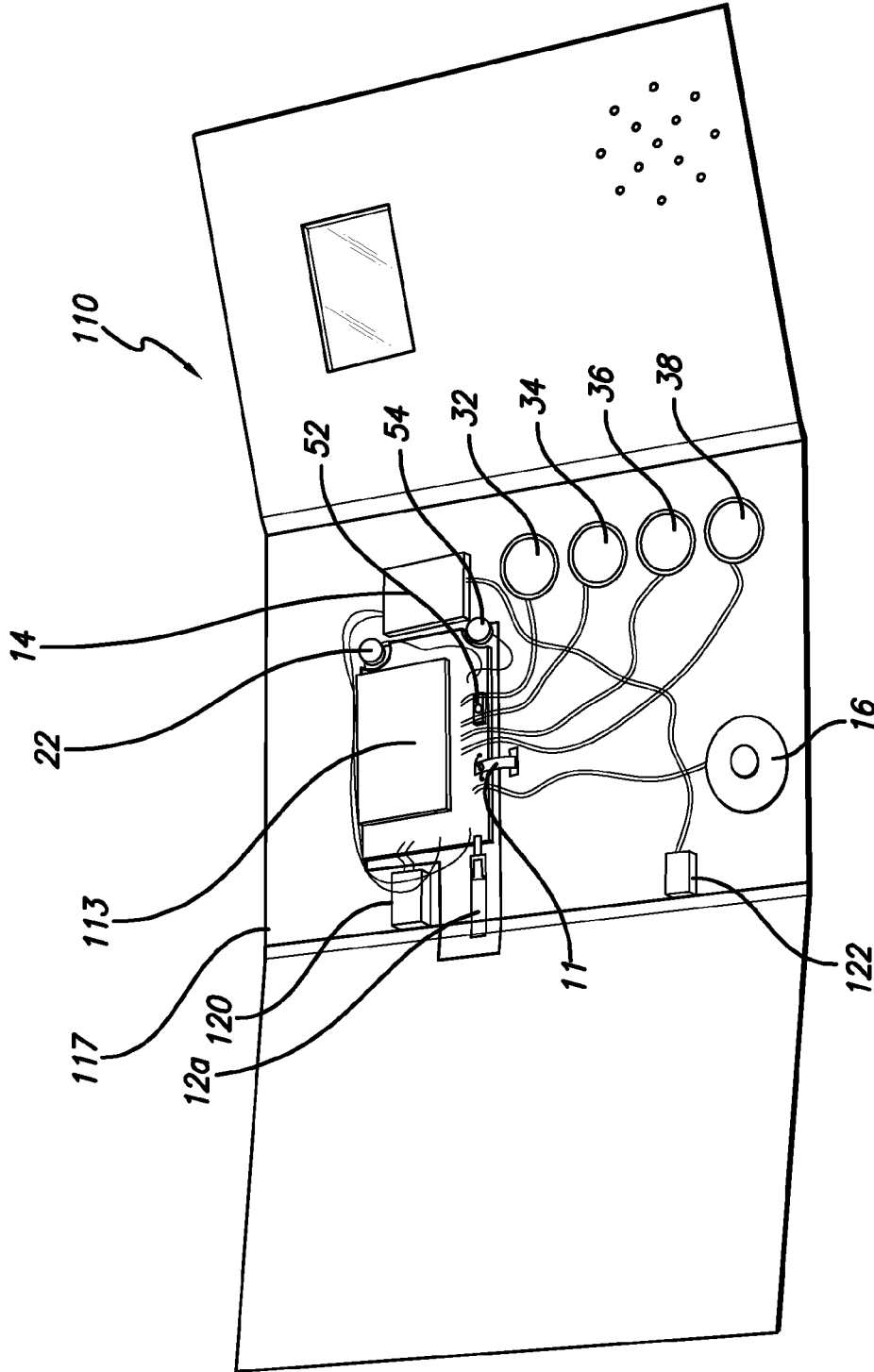


FIG. 6

**NOVELTY VIDEO DEVICE AND METHOD**

**[0001]** This application claims priority from, incorporates by reference and is a continuation in part of co-pending patent application Ser. No. 12/263,277, filed Oct. 31, 2008, which is a continuation in part of co-pending patent application Ser. No. 12/199,740, filed Aug. 27, 2008 which are both incorporated by reference as though set forth fully herein.

**FIELD OF THE INVENTION**

**[0002]** The present invention relates generally to video novelty devices, and, more particularly, to recordable video novelty devices and methods for operating same.

**BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

**[0003]** Video displays are known in the art including video displays that are incorporated into apparel and statues. As used herein, "video" means video alone or in combination with audio. As used herein "message" means a message that is either visual, audio or both.

**[0004]** In addition, there are audible greeting cards that play prerecorded messages activated either by a slide tongue mechanism that begins to play the recorded message when the card is opened or by a button that is pressed to initiate the playback. Other cards are able to record short audio messages that are later played back when the card by either opening the card and triggering the tongue mechanism or pressing a button located somewhere on the card. There are yet other cards that play prerecorded music or make other sounds. None of these cards, however, are able to perform two or more sensory actions at once, where one of the actions is created by the user or do some other combination of sensory displays simultaneously that involve some personalized message or display created by the user.

**SUMMARY OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS**

**[0005]** The present invention is a novelty method and device suitable for insertion into print media such as greeting cards, magazines, packaging, direct mail, point of purchase ("POP") displays, gift cards; into apparel such as t-shirts, caps, and hats; other devices such as plastic novelty items, sculpted novelty items, figurines, statues, models, watches, jewelry, or any other type of object in which a personalized message would be desired.

**[0006]** An embodiment of the present invention comprises an electronic module containing at least one microchip for storing data and for controlling the electronic module and means for triggering the electronic module in a first manner such as, but not limited to, the use of a switch, pressure button, solar cell, magnets, light sensors, motions sensors, vibration trigger, tilt trigger, or the like, which causes at least a first sensory action such as, but not limited to, sound, music, music and sound, lights, flashing lights, vibration, shaking, release of a scent, the spraying of confetti, a visual display, a video, or any other type of visual, auditory, physical or olfactory effect, to occur. Thereafter, when the module is triggered in a second manner, such as, but not limited to, by the use of second means for closing, which may be, but is not limited to, a second switch, a pressure button, solar cell, magnets, light sensors, motions sensors, vibration trigger, tilt trigger, or the like, a personalized second sensory action or message may be

created by the user at the same time as the first sensory action occurs, and/or a new video may be recorded to replace the original video.

**[0007]** In one embodiment of the present invention, in which there is a personalized secondary sensory action, it may be an auditory message which will be recorded by the user onto the microchip, a visually displayed message displayed on LCD, a synchronized and illuminated OLED, fiber optics, LED or other type of programmable visual display connected to the microchip, a recorded or prerecorded video which is stored by the user onto the microchip, music or vocals that are selected from a variety of music and/or vocals recorded and stored on the microchip by the user or some other type of personalized visual or auditory message.

**[0008]** In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, the user can continually recreate or record the personalized secondary sensory action until a satisfactory personalized message is obtained.

**[0009]** In a preferred embodiment in which a video is to be the first or second sensory action, means for downloading the sensory action is provided, which may be a USB or some other type of downloading port or connector known in the art.

**[0010]** In many of the embodiments of the invention, once the satisfactory message is obtained, the ability to record a new message is disabled, so that no further recording can occur. This can be achieved by a mechanical, electrical or wireless signal disruption, or by any other means to prevent a recording from taking place.

**[0011]** In some embodiments of the present invention, the novelty item contains a third means for closing which may be, but is not limited to, a switch, pressure button, solar cell, magnets, light sensors, motion sensors, vibration trigger, tilt trigger, or the like, which when activated causes the speed of the playback of the personalized recorded message to change via the software contained on the chip. In another embodiment of the present invention, there may be another means for closing, which may be, but is not limited to, a different switch, pressure button, solar cell, magnets, light sensors, motion sensors, vibration trigger, tilt trigger, or the like, which when activated, causes the microchip to process the personalized message so that the message is altered. By way of example and not limitation, in one embodiment of the invention where a vocalized message has been recorded, by pressing this switch or button or the like, the message is processed by the microchip such that the voice of a particular movie star, cartoon character, robot or some other person or entity is heard speaking/singing the message, or in another embodiment, the message is processed such that a special effect is imposed upon the voice originally recorded such that, by way of example, and not limitation, the message sounds like the person is underwater or is electronically talking or has some other speech altering effect imposed upon the original recording.

**[0012]** In a method of the present invention, an electronic module containing a memory chip and software, is charged by, such as, but not limited to, the closing of a switch, the pressing of a button, exposing a solar cell or a light sensor to light, joining of opposing magnets, moving a motion sensor, vibration trigger, tilt trigger, or the like, such that at least a first sensory action occurs. The sensory action could be, but is not limited to sound, music, music and vocals, lights, flashing lights, vibration, shaking, release of a scent, confetti or the like, the playing of a video or other visual effect or another physical, visual, audible or olfactory action of some type.



After the module is charged again, the software stored on the memory chip causes the first or another sensory action to occur while a personalized message, such as a vocals, music, sound, the programming of an LED, OLED or LCD display or another type of programmable visual display or a video to be created by the user.

**[0013]** By way of example and not limitation, in a particular embodiment, a video could be created by using CCD chipsets, an on-board movie camera, another type of video recorder, a flash card or the like, connecting the module to another device using a cable or wireless communication device.

**[0014]** After the message is created and recorded, when the module is charged again, the microchip detects the recorded message and causes the message to be played at the same time as the sensory action that was occurring while the message was being created. In yet a further embodiment of the present invention, more than one sensory effect can occur while the message is playing by adding the appropriate chipsets, software, sensory devices, and triggers.

**[0015]** In yet another method of the present invention, the user can continually recreate messages or download videos until a satisfactory message or video is created. In yet another method of the present invention, once a satisfactory message or video is created, the ability to create another version of the message or download a different video is disabled.

**[0016]** In yet a further method of the present invention, a user can speed up or slow down the playback of the message and/or the sensory action. In yet another method of the present invention, the software processes the vocal message after it is recorded so that it no longer sounds like it did when it was created, such that it can sound like a particular movie star, cartoon character, other person, robot, person talking underwater or it causes the message to be processed by any other type of vocally altering or distorting effect.

**[0017]** In yet another preferred embodiment of the present invention, a thin video display is incorporated into print media such as a greeting card, magazine, advertisement, POP, packaging or the like. Means are provided to record, download or replace the video to be shown on the video display. In some embodiments means are also provided to recharge the power source for the video display.

**[0018]** In yet another preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a novelty item that includes an electronic module having at least one chip for storing data and for controlling the electronic module; and first means for closing the electronic module such that at least a first video is shown. In a preferred embodiment, the novelty item includes a second means for closing the electronic module such that at least a second video is shown. Preferably, the electronic module and chip are housed in a foldable support structure, the first means for closing the electronic module is a slide tongue that moves when the foldable support structure is opened or closed, and the second means for closing the electronic module is a button.

**[0019]** In yet another preferred embodiment there is provided a method of playing a video. The method includes providing a foldable support structure having a video screen, a memory having at least a first video stored therein and an energy source, wherein the foldable support structure has a closed position and an open position and the foldable support structure is initially in the closed position. The method also includes moving the foldable support structure to the open

position, thereby causing a first switch to be closed and the first video to be played on the video screen.

**[0020]** In another preferred embodiment, there is provided an article of print media comprising an electronic module that includes at least one chip for storing data and for controlling the electronic module, a video screen, and a first switch activator for closing a first switch in the electronic module such that at least a first video is shown on the video screen.

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

**[0021]** The present invention may be more readily understood by referring to the accompanying drawings, in which like numerals refer to like parts, and in which:

**[0022]** FIG. 1 is a schematic of one embodiment of the present invention.

**[0023]** FIG. 2 is a plan view of a preferred embodiment of the present invention as it is used in a greeting card.

**[0024]** FIG. 3 is a plan view of an alternate preferred embodiment of the present invention as it is used in a greeting card.

**[0025]** FIG. 4 is a perspective view of another alternate preferred embodiment of the present invention as it is used in a greeting card.

**[0026]** FIG. 5 is a perspective view of another alternate preferred embodiment of the present invention.

**[0027]** FIG. 6 is a perspective view showing the inside of the embodiment of FIG. 5.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

**[0028]** In the following descriptions of the invention, terms such as “front,” “back,” “top,” “bottom,” “side,” and the like are used herein merely for ease of description and refer to the orientation of the components as shown in the Figures.

**[0029]** Generally, the present invention may be briefly described as follows. Referring first to FIG. 1, a schematic of the electronic module 100 of the present invention is shown.

**[0030]** The electronic module 100 can be mounted into, onto or affixed to print media such as greeting cards, magazines, packaging, direct mail, point of purchase (“POP”) displays, gift cards; into apparel such as t-shirts, caps, and hats; other devices such as plastic novelty items, sculpted novelty items, figurines, statues, models, watches, jewelry, or any other type of object in which a personalized message would be desired.

**[0031]** In a preferred embodiment, the electronic module 100 comprises a first and a second electronic microchips 10 and 20. In alternate embodiments only one microchip may be used that performs the same functions as the first and second microchip 10 and 20. Likewise, additional microchips can be added to the module 100 to increase the functionality, add additional sensory effects or cause additional sensory effects to occur.

**[0032]** In a preferred embodiment, microchip 10 contains all of the prerecorded data and the software that controls the various features of the module. In the same preferred embodiment, microchip 20 controls the recording and playback features of the module. However, one microchip that performs both functions may be used.

**[0033]** In a preferred embodiment, microchip 10 is coupled to a switching means 13. In the preferred embodiment, switching means 13 is comprised of two switches 12 and 18, but in an alternate embodiment a third switch 24 is used. As

used herein, switch shall be interchangeably used with pressure button, solar cell, magnets, light sensors, motions sensors, vibration trigger, tilt trigger, or the like; however, any structure known in the art that can cause a module to close and let power flow through can be used.

**[0034]** The switching means **13** is connected to a power source **14**, which in a preferred embodiment is comprised of button batteries of sufficient size to power the module and software. However, any miniature mountable power source of sufficient power may be used such as, but not limited to, solar cells, direct drives, mechanically driven drives and the like. The preferred button batteries used to power the device are of sufficient capacity as to allow the device to be operated repeatedly for several months.

**[0035]** In a preferred embodiment, the batteries are laid flat and mounted on the same module board containing the first and second microchips **10** and **20**.

**[0036]** In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, the power source is rechargeable. Thus, a port (not shown) such as a USB port, an AC or DC connector port, or another type of port known in the art is connected to the power source which recharges the power source using a computer or another power source.

**[0037]** In a preferred embodiment, the output of the first microchip **10** is connected to the input of the second microchip **20**.

**[0038]** In a preferred embodiment of the present invention the second microchip **20** is connected to a microphone **22** for recording a verbal message or vocals. In the same preferred embodiment, the output of the second microchip **20** is connected to a flat speaker **16**. However, in alternate embodiments, numerous speakers (not shown) may be connected to provide stereo or surround sound or any means that generates sound other than speakers can be used with suitable electronic modifications made to the microchip for driving the speakers.

**[0039]** In alternate embodiments of the present invention such as the one shown in FIG. **3**, the second microchip **20** either may be connected directly to a video recorder (not shown) for recording a video message which then is recorded onto the microchip **10** or is connected through a USB or other type port (not shown) to a computer or other video device to download a video onto the microchip. In a preferred embodiment, the port may be the same port referred to above for recharging the power source. In a preferred embodiment, see FIG. **3**, the visual display **113** may be, but is not limited to, an LCD, OLED or LED device, that is attached to the output of one of the microchips. The input can be a prerecorded plug in player, a small still **52** or movie camera (not shown), a CCD array or the like. In another embodiment, the input can be from a flash drive, a wireless communication device, a hard wired device, a USB or other type port connected to a computer or to a video camera and the like.

**[0040]** Likewise in other alternate embodiments of the present invention, either of the microchips may be connected to OLEDs, LEDs (not shown) or to miniature light bulbs or other light generating devices known in the art, in order to create a visual effect such as a steady, flashing or synchronized light. In other alternate embodiments, the microchips may be connected to a mechanism such as an offset motor **54** or any other similar device known in the art that will cause the device to vibrate, shake or cause some other physical action. In yet further embodiments of the present invention, the microchips may be connected to a small housing **15** containing a capsule (not shown) containing confetti, some other

item, or a scent, and, at the appropriate time determined by the microchip, the capsule will break in response to a signal from the first microchip **10** to release the contents.

**[0041]** In an embodiment this can be achieved by using a capsule under pressure that is electronically or mechanically ruptured, such as, but not limited to, triggering a spring loaded arm with a striker that breaks the capsule.

**[0042]** In other embodiments, the capsule may be a spray tube so that in response to a signal from the first microchip **10**, a spring loaded or the like nozzle will cause the contents of the spray tube to be released.

**[0043]** In another preferred embodiment of the present invention, another switching means **26** is attached to the second microchip **20**. In some embodiments, the switching means **26** will be a pressure button, which when pressed, will trigger the software to cause the speed at which the message is played to change so that the message will be played back either faster or slower. In other embodiments, the switching means **26** can cause the original message to become altered by triggering the appropriate software to process the original message. By way of example and not limitation, switching means **26** could trigger software contained within the first or second microchip to process the original verbal message so that the voice becomes that of a cartoon character, well-known personality, or becomes distorted in some way such as sounding electronic, sounding like it was recorded underwater, or some other distorted way.

**[0044]** In operation, the module of the present invention operates as follows. When switch **12** is first closed, the microchip **10** is powered such that it causes a preprogrammed first sensory action to occur. By way of example and not limitation, that first sensory action could be the playback of prerecorded music, the playback of prerecorded music and vocals, the playback of a video, the playback of sounds, the flashing or steady shining of a light, the vibration or shaking of the object on which the electronic module has been attached, the spraying of a spray tube containing a scent, or any type of aural, visual, olfactory or physical action and the like.

**[0045]** In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, when switch **18** is closed, microchip **10** is powered such that it causes both the first sensory action to occur and causes microchip **20** to begin to record a personalized message. As set forth above, the personalized message may be vocal or visual. By way of example and not limitation, when the first sensory action is the playback of music, the personal message might be vocals sung by the user or another verbal message, the possibilities are limitless.

**[0046]** Alternatively, the personal message might be a video that may be recorded by the second microchip **20**. In alternative methods of the present invention, when switch **18** is closed microchip **10** powers a programmable visual display **113** on which the user inputs a message that is recorded to be displayed on the visual display device **113** attached to microchip **20**.

**[0047]** After the personalized message or alternate video is recorded, when switch **12** is closed again, the personalized message or video will be played back at the same time that the first sensory action occurs if desired.

**[0048]** In a preferred method of the present invention, the step of creating a personalized message or video can be repeated over and over again by repeatedly closing switch **18** until a satisfactory personalized message or video is created. In yet another embodiment, an additional switch, switch **24**

can be connected to the module, to erase the previous recordings, so as to allow the personalized message or video to be rerecorded.

[0049] In yet a further preferred method of the present invention, after a satisfactory personalized message or video is created, switch 18 is permanently disabled. In a preferred embodiment, the disabling means 11 may be a tape, a string, a button or the like physically attached to switch 24, such that pulling on the disabling means 11 will disable or break switch 24 so that the module is unable create any further recordings. The disabling means could also be a button or switch attached to the module that when pressured will permanently disable any future recordings.

[0050] In the present invention, once microchip 10 determines whether a message or new video has been recorded, it will select the next action to take place when the module is again closed by switch 12.

[0051] In a preferred method of the present invention, when switch 26 is closed, microchip 20 causes the speed of the playback of the personalized message to change so that it is faster or slower than originally recorded. In yet another method of the present invention, microchip 10 processes the recorded message causing the original message to become altered. For example, when the original message is a vocal recording, the microchip can make the original recording sound like it emanated under water, or was spoken by a cartoon character or by some other famous person or distort or alter the recording in any other similar manner using special effects well known in the art.

[0052] Likewise, in another method of the present invention, another sensory action, such as those previously mentioned, which are also stored on the first microchip 10, could be triggered upon the particular occurrence of the closing of the module so that it occurs at the same time as the playback of the message.

[0053] In one embodiment of the present invention, the first sensory action is prerecorded music and vocals stored on microchip 10. By way of example and not limitation, in that embodiment, when switch 12 is closed, the prerecorded music and vocals play. Thereafter, when switch 18 is closed, just the prerecorded music is heard through speaker 16 so that the vocals of the user can be recorded by microchip 20 via microphone 22. In the same embodiment, the next time that switch 12 is closed, the prerecorded music and the user recorded vocals will be played back so that they are heard at the same time. In another embodiment, instead of vocals being recorded, the user can record a personalized visual message (such as a video, or a message to be displayed on the visual display) with appropriate alterations to the module 100. For example, the module 100 can have a USB connector (not shown) attached thereto or contain a wireless communication device (not shown), a flash drive, or any other video device for downloading a video onto the module. In other embodiments, the module may contain a video camera, a CCD array or the like for recording a video.

[0054] Referring next to FIG. 2, a preferred embodiment of the present invention is shown mounted onto a support structure 117 in a greeting card 110. In FIG. 2, greeting card 110 has a slide tongue mechanism 12a that operates switch 12. Slide tongue mechanism 12a is connected to microchip 10, such that sliding of the tongue mechanism 12a generally along one dimension causes either activation or deactivation of the microchip 10. The switch 12 is activated by the tongue mechanism 12a such that the folding or unfolding of the

greeting card causes the tongue mechanism 12a to either deactivate or activate the switch 12 and thereby activate or deactivate the microchip 10, respectively. In another embodiment, instead of using a slide tongue mechanism, the switch 12 can be operated by a push mechanism or button (not shown), a light sensor, pressure button, switch, magnets, motions sensor, vibration trigger, tilt trigger, or the like, or any other module closing device known in the art with appropriate modifications to the module. The push mechanism can be a small dome or membrane having conductive material with an electric insulator such that the unfolding of the device can cause the module to close.

[0055] In the greeting card embodiment of the present invention, a speaker 16 and a microphone 22 is shown. Batteries 14 are connected to provide the power necessary to run the system. There also is another switch activator which is shown as a push mechanism 24, although any switching mechanism can be used. In the embodiment shown, the switch activator 24 is a small dome or membrane having conductive material with an electric insulator which is receptive to touch so that pushing on the push mechanism will cause the recording of the personalized message to occur. Likewise, in a greeting card embodiment, switch activators 18 and/or 26 can also be a push mechanism, however, any switch activator known in the art can be used. The slide tongue 12 is also referred to herein as a switch activator.

[0056] In a preferred embodiment the greeting card is a karaoke card on which prerecorded music has been stored in microchip 10. When switch activator 24 is triggered by the user, it closes the module and energizes microchips 10 and 20 so that vocals can be recorded at the same time as the music is playing. Thereafter when switch 12 is activated, the recorded vocals will be played back at the same time as the music.

[0057] In one embodiment, the greeting card also contains prerecorded music and vocals on microchip 10 that are played back every time that there are no recorded vocals. The vocals can be the lyrics to the song sung by a professional singer or could be instructions on how to operate the card.

[0058] In one embodiment, continuous pushing on switch activator 26 will alter the speed of the playback of the recorded vocals and music. Alternatively in other embodiments, pushing on switch activator 26 will alter the recorded vocals such that they do not sound the same as when they were originally recorded.

[0059] By repeatedly pressing on push button 24, the vocals may be recorded over and over until satisfactory recorded vocals are created by the user. Thereafter, disabling means 11 such as a tape, string, button or the like, may be attached to switch 24 such that pulling on it will disable or break switch 24 so that the module is unable create any further recordings.

[0060] In addition, the greeting card could contain at least one gap through which a small bulb or LED could emit light for creating a visual effect when switch 24 is triggered. Likewise, the card could have an additional mechanism (not shown) attached for creating a physical action when switch 24 is triggered.

[0061] In yet further embodiments, the greeting card could contain a means for selecting prerecorded music by way of example, and not limitation, by having a plurality of music choices stored on the microchip and having a switch which is turned to input the exact music selected by the user.

[0062] Referring once again to FIG. 3A, an alternate preferred embodiment of the present invention is shown mounted onto a support structure 117 in a greeting card 110. In FIG.

3A, greeting card **110** has a slide tongue mechanism **12a**. Slide tongue mechanism **12a** is slidably connected to switch **12** which is connected to microchip **10** in FIG. 1, such that sliding of the tongue mechanism generally along one dimension causes either activation or deactivation of the microchip **10**. The switch **12** is activated by the tongue mechanism **12a** such that the folding or unfolding of the greeting card causes the tongue mechanism to either deactivate or activate the switch **12** and thereby activate or deactivate the microchip **10**, respectively. In another embodiment, instead of using a slide tongue mechanism, the switch **12** can be operated by a push mechanism or button (not shown), a light sensor, pressure button, switch, magnets, motions sensor, vibration trigger, tilt trigger, or the like, or any other module closing device known in the art with appropriate modifications to the module. The push mechanism can be a small dome or membrane having conductive material with an electric insulator such that the unfolding of the device can cause the module to close.

**[0063]** In the greeting card embodiment of the present invention, a speaker **16** and a microphone **22** is shown. Batteries **14** are shown connected to the provide the power necessary to run the system. There also is another switch activator **24** which is shown as a push mechanism, although any switching mechanism can be used. In the embodiment shown, the switch activator **24** is a small dome or membrane having conductive material with an electric insulator which is receptive to touch so that pushing on the push mechanism will cause the recording of the personalized message to occur. Likewise, in a greeting card embodiment, switch activator **26** is also a push mechanism, however, any switch activator known in the art can be used. Pushing on switch activator **26** can cause the recording to do something unusual like speed up, slow down, come out in a different voice, etc. For example, where a vocalized message has been recorded or prerecorded, by pressing switch activator/button **26** or the like, the message is processed by the microchip such that the voice of a particular movie star, cartoon character, robot or some other person or entity is heard speaking/singing the message, or in another embodiment, the message is processed such that a special effect is imposed upon the voice originally recorded such that, by way of example, and not limitation, the message sounds like the person is underwater or is electronically talking or has some other speech altering effect imposed upon the original recording.

**[0064]** Referring to FIG. 4, a greeting card contains a video screen **113** on which a video has been stored in microchip **10**. When switch activator **24** is triggered by the user, it closes the module and energizes microchips **10** and **20** so that a new video can be recorded to replace the existing video. In a preferred embodiment, a new video is recorded through the use of a suitable connector such as the USB connector **120** shown in FIG. 4, although any suitable connection port may be used. Thereafter when switch **12** is activated, the new video will be played back. In addition, the embodiment may also contain a port **122** for recharging the energy source. Thus, the present invention has the ability to have real video in print and to be able to download new content into print to supplement a pre-recorded video, or download overtop of the pre-recorded with a new video, as well as also be able to re-charge the batteries for repeated playings of the video.

**[0065]** In one embodiment, the greeting card also contains prerecorded music and vocals and/or a video on microchip **10** that are/is played back every time that there are no recorded vocals and/or video. When it is prerecorded music and vocals,

the vocals can be the lyrics to the song sung by a professional singer or could be instructions on how to operate the card. When it is a video, the video can explain how to operate the card and rerecord a new video.

**[0066]** In one embodiment, continuous pushing on switch activator **26** will alter the speed of the playback of the recorded vocals and music or video. Alternatively in other embodiments, pushing on switch activator **26** will alter the recorded vocals such that they do not sound the same as when they were originally recorded.

**[0067]** By repeatedly pressing on push button **24**, the vocals or video may be recorded over and over until satisfactory recorded vocals or video are created by the user. Thereafter, disabling means **11** such as a tape, string, button or the like, may be attached to switch **24** such that pulling on it will disable or break switch **24** so that the module is unable create any further recordings.

**[0068]** In addition, the greeting card could contain at least one gap through which a small bulb or LED could emit light for creating a visual effect when switch **12** is triggered. Likewise, the card could have an additional mechanism such as a camera **52** affixed thereto for creating images when the switch **12** is triggered and thereafter the images could be shown on video screen **113**.

**[0069]** In yet further embodiments, the greeting card could contain a means for selecting prerecorded music by way of example, and not limitation, by having a plurality of music choices stored on the microchip and having a switch which is turned to input the exact music selected by the user.

**[0070]** In the embodiment shown in FIG. 3, a further device **15** is supplied in which there is a small housing containing a scent such that when the recipient of the card pulls on a tab, the scent contained within the sealed capsule, a striker will rupture the capsule releasing the scent. Alternatively instead of scent being housed in the capsule, confetti or other items could be released. Alternatively housing **15** could contain a spring loaded capsule such that when the user presses a release, the contents is released.

**[0071]** FIGS. 5-6 show another preferred embodiment of the present invention. In this embodiment, the foldable support structure **117** comprises a card **110** that includes a video screen **113** and a plurality of buttons/switch activators (referred to herein as first button **32**, second button **34**, third button **36** and fourth button **38**). The internal components (e.g., the slide tongue, switches, microchips, speaker, mic, video screen, buttons, etc.) associated with the card **110** are the same or similar to those shown in FIGS. 1-4 above. This exemplary embodiment is directed to an implementation of how those components work together to create a commercial embodiment.

**[0072]** A first predetermined media, such as a video (e.g., a movie trailer, song video or the like) is stored in the memory of microchip **20**. When the cover **40** of the card **110** is opened, as a result of movement of slide tongue **12a**, microchip **10** is activated and the movie trailer stored in microchip **20** begins to play on video screen **113**. To stop the trailer from being played, the cover **40** is closed, and, as a result of movement of slide tongue **12a**, microchip **10** is deactivated. Accordingly, the first predetermined media (also referred to herein as video one) is associated with slide tongue **12a**/switch **12**.

**[0073]** It will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that buttons **32**, **34**, **36** and **38** each have a different predetermined media associated with them (also referred to herein as videos two through five). Each of the buttons **32**, **34**, **36** and **38**

actuates a switch that causes another predetermined media stored in microchip 20 to be played. Accordingly, the second predetermined media is associated with first button 32, the third predetermined media is associated with second button 34, the fourth predetermined media is associated with third button 36, and the fifth predetermined media is associated with fourth button 32. It will be understood that the number of buttons and/or media pieces or clips is not a limitation on the present invention.

**[0074]** In use, as described above, when cover 40 is opened, video one begins playing on screen 113. If one of the buttons 32, 34, 36 or 38 is pressed, video one will stop playing and the video associated with the depressed button will begin to play.

**[0075]** Generally, any type of video screen that is thin and can be incorporated into printed material (e.g., greeting card, newspaper, magazine, flyer, brochure, book, folder, etc.) is within the scope of the present invention.

**[0076]** As described above, the video screen 113 can include LCD (liquid crystal display) technology. However, this is not a limitation on the present invention. The video screen 113 can be any type of video screen technology known in the art, such as monochrome, electro-chromic, TFT (thin film transistor), OLED (organic light emitting diode), CSTN (color super-twist nematic), DSTN (double layer STN, dual scan STN), FRSTN (fast response STN), FSTN (film compensated STN, formulated STN or filtered STN), FFSTN (double film super-twist nematic), MSTN (monochrome super-twist nematic), active-matrix electrophoretic display (e-ink) or any other video screen technology now known or later developed.

**[0077]** In another embodiment similar to the one shown in FIG. 5, instead of including a plurality of buttons a single button that cycles through the plurality of videos can be used. In other words, video one is associated with the slide tongue 12a and videos two-five (or any number) are associated with a single button that when pressed the first time starts video two, when pressed a second time starts video three and so on.

**[0078]** These embodiments could be useful, for example, for a movie studio that is releasing a number of different films for the upcoming summer season. They could mail out these cards with the various trailers stored in the memory of the card to consumers, movie houses, businesses, etc. Also, the different clips operated by either the slide tongue or the buttons could be different chapters in a movie or TV show (similar to what is used in DVD's). In another embodiment, a single button can be pressed more than once to cycle through the different media or video clips. For example, pressing the button once causes trailer one to play, pressing it again causes trailer two to play, pressing it again causes trailer three to play, etc.

**[0079]** In another embodiment, to make the cards more attractive to consumers, the memory can contain prerecorded media, such as the movie trailers described above, but can also include the capability of recording new videos or downloading new videos as well. For example, a user could have his/her own card for recording and playing back videos (operated by, e.g., button 32), while at the same time, every time he/she opens the card, the movie trailer associated with the slide tongue 12a is played. In other words, in an example, the microchip includes a gigabyte of memory and includes a prerecorded video that takes up 100 megabytes of memory. This prerecorded video is "locked in" and cannot be erased. However, the chip still includes 900 megabytes of free memory that the user can use to record whatever they desire.

For example, the user could go to youtube.com and download videos and play those back at a later time. In this embodiment, the card may include a button or buttons that are specifically devoted to the recording and playback of bonus materials.

**[0080]** The media clips can be recorded into memory by the user by pressing a button and recording audio and/or video (as described above), inserting a flash/thumb drive, etc. to USB port 122 to either download to memory or to play directly from the memory of the drive.

**[0081]** It will be understood that the basic configuration of the present invention can include the electronic module including a printed circuit board, speaker, batteries and a video screen. Playing of a video can be actuated in a number of different ways, including a slide tongue, push button, motion sensor, light sensor, magnets, etc. And this can be done to play one or a series of videos. Another embodiments can include a slide tongue actuating the first video and push buttons for actuating other videos. In another embodiment, the slide tongue can be omitted and a plurality of push buttons or other actuation methods (described above) can actuate the videos. In another embodiment, the slide tongue can be omitted and a single push button or other actuation method can be used to cycle through a plurality of videos. In yet another embodiment, the user can download additional information from a computer or other memory storage device to overwrite any pre-recorded messages. In yet another embodiment, the user can download additional information from a computer or other memory storage device in addition to unerasable, pre-recorded messages that still play back even after the additional information has been added by the user.

**[0082]** In another embodiment, instead of activation of a video or audio clip, the closing of the switches can cause something related to smell, touch or taste to occur.

**[0083]** Those skilled in the art will understand that this type of novelty device can be used in a variety of objects such as print media such as greeting cards, magazines, packaging, direct mail, point of purchase ("POP") displays, gift cards; into apparel such as t-shirts, caps, and hats; other devices such as plastic novelty items, sculpted novelty items, figurines, statues, models, watches, jewelry, or any other type of object in which a personalized message would be desired.

**[0084]** The embodiments and methods described above are exemplary embodiments and methods of the present invention. While particular embodiments of the present invention have been illustrated and described, it will be apparent that various modifications can be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. Those skilled in the art may now make numerous uses of, and departures from, the above-described embodiments and methods without departing from the inventive concepts disclosed herein. Thus, the construction of the embodiments and the steps of the methods disclosed herein are not limitations of the invention. Accordingly, the present invention is to be defined solely by the scope of the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A novelty item, comprising:
  - an electronic module comprising:
    - at least one chip for storing data and for controlling the electronic module; and
    - first means for closing the electronic module such that at least a first video is shown.
2. The novelty item of claim 1 wherein the electronic module and chip are housed in a foldable support structure.

3. The novelty item of claim 2 wherein the first means for closing the electronic module is a slide tongue that moves when the foldable support structure is opened or closed.

4. The novelty item of claim 3, further comprising a rechargeable power source for powering the electronic module.

5. The novelty item of claim 4 further comprising a port connected to the rechargeable power source for recharging the rechargeable power source.

6. The novelty item of claim 1 further comprising a second means for closing the electronic module such that at least a second video is shown.

7. The novelty item of claim 6 wherein the electronic module and chip are housed in a foldable support structure, wherein the first means for closing the electronic module is a slide tongue that moves when the foldable support structure is opened or closed, and wherein the second means for closing the electronic module is a button.

8. A method of playing a video, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a foldable support structure having a video screen, a memory having at least a first video stored therein and an energy source, wherein the foldable support structure has a closed position and an open position and the foldable support structure is initially in the closed position, and

moving the foldable support structure to the open position, thereby causing a first switch to be closed and the first video to be played on the video screen.

9. The method of claim 8 wherein the first switch is closed by a slide tongue that moves when the foldable support structure is pivoted between the open and closed positions.

10. The method of claim 9 wherein the memory includes at least a second video stored therein and the method further comprises the step of pushing a button, thereby closing a second switch and playing the second video on the video screen.

11. The method of claim 8 wherein the foldable support structure includes a port and wherein the method further comprises the step of plugging a source of energy into the port and recharging the energy source housed in the foldable support structure.

12. The method of claim 8 wherein the foldable support structure includes a port and wherein the method further comprises the step of plugging a data source into the port and uploading media to the memory housed in the foldable support structure.

13. An article of print media comprising an electronic module that includes at least one chip for storing data and for controlling the electronic module, a video screen, and a first switch activator for closing a first switch in the electronic module such that at least a first video is shown on the video screen.

14. The article of print media of claim 13 wherein the electronic module and chip are housed in a foldable support structure that includes print thereon.

15. The article of print media of claim 14 wherein the first switch activator is a slide tongue that moves when the foldable support structure is opened or closed.

16. The article of print media of claim 15, further comprising a rechargeable power source for powering the electronic module.

17. The article of print media of claim 16 further comprising a port connected to the rechargeable power source for recharging the rechargeable power source.

18. The article of print media of claim 13 further comprising a second switch activator for closing a second switch in the electronic module such that at least a second video is shown on the video screen.

19. The article of print media of claim 18 wherein the first switch activator is a slide tongue that moves when the article of print media is opened or closed, and wherein the second switch activator is a button.

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