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French et al.

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(54) **CART RETURN CREDIT SYSTEM**

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(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

This patent is subject to a terminal disclaimer.

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(22) Filed: **Mar. 23, 2000**

Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation-in-part of application No. 09/153,912, filed on Sep. 16, 1998, now Pat. No. 6,486,768.

(51) **Int. Cl.**⁷ **H04Q 19/00**

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **340/5.92**; 194/211; 705/14; 235/383; 340/518.5

(58) **Field of Search** 340/5.9, 5.91, 340/5.92, 568.5; 705/14; 194/211; 235/383

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Primary Examiner—Michael Horabik

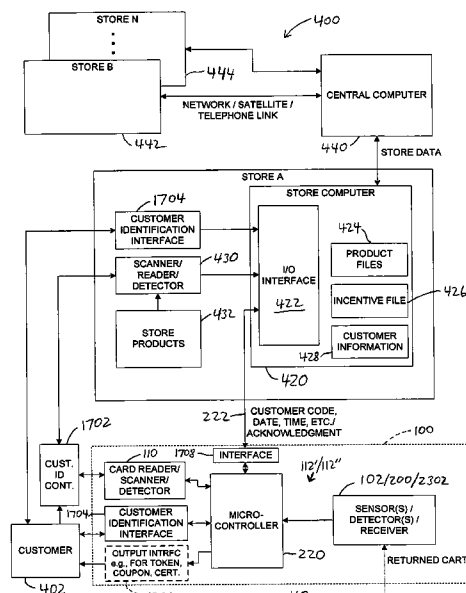
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A system and method for providing an incentive to a customer of a store to return a shopping cart to a cart return location. The system generates a cart return signal. The system determines whether a cart is being removed from or returned to the cart corral. Alternatively, a radio frequency identification system may be used to detect return of a cart. The shopper is credited with points or credits in a frequent shopper or reward program for returning the shopping cart to the cart return location. The cart return system may be readily configured to integrate with a wide range of existing, or new frequent shopper or loyalty programs.

15 Claims, 14 Drawing Sheets



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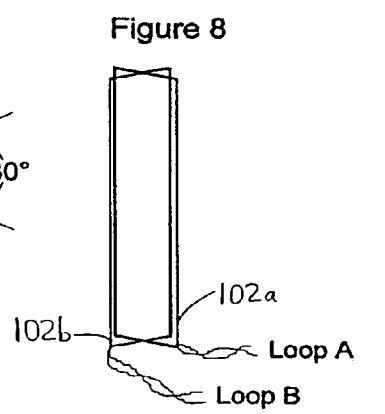
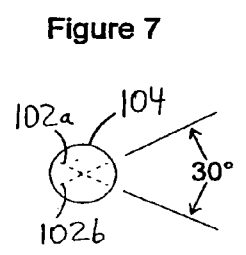
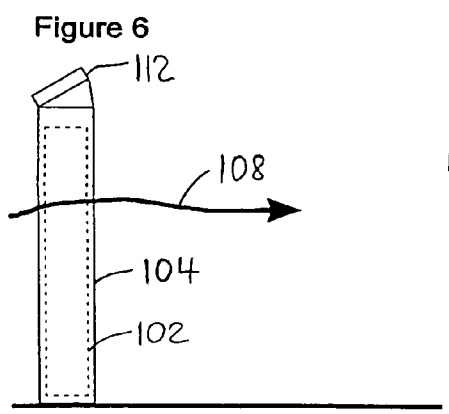
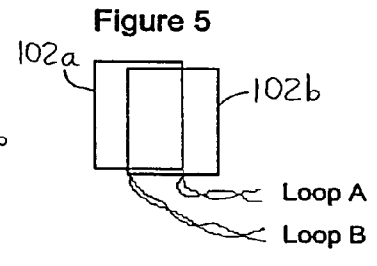
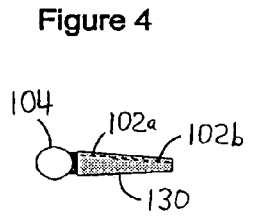
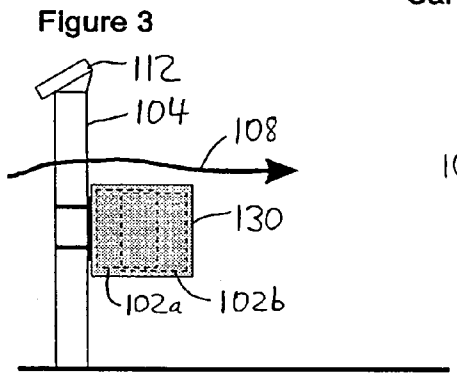
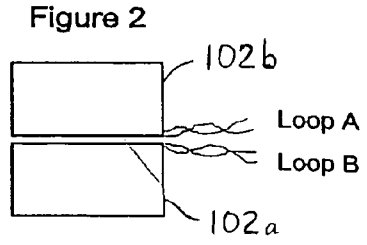
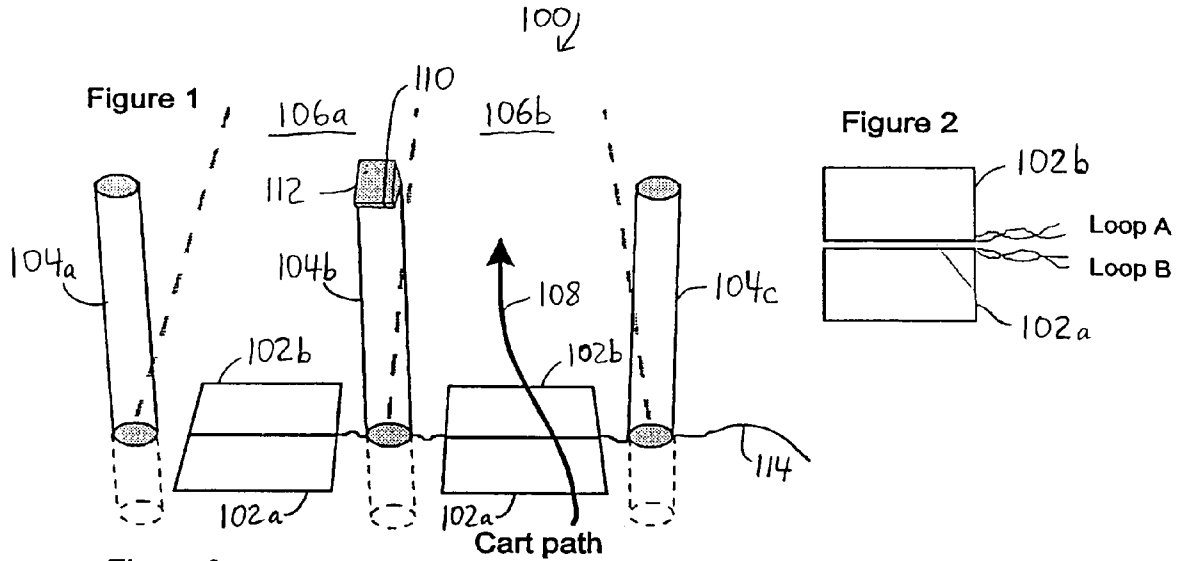


Figure 9

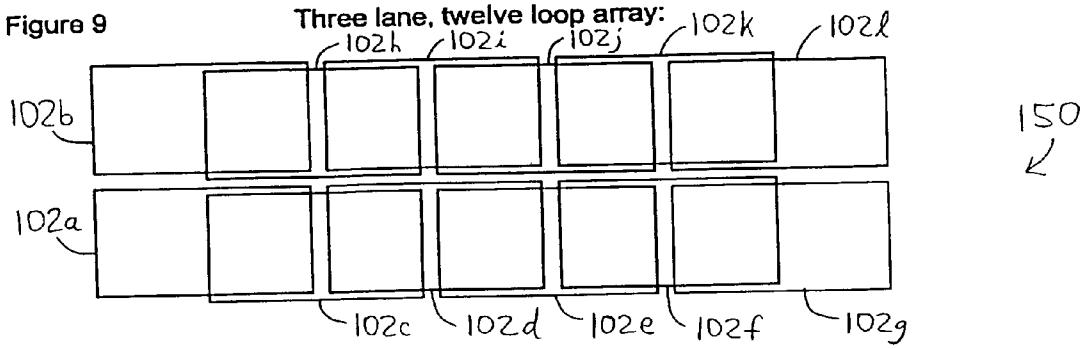


Figure 10

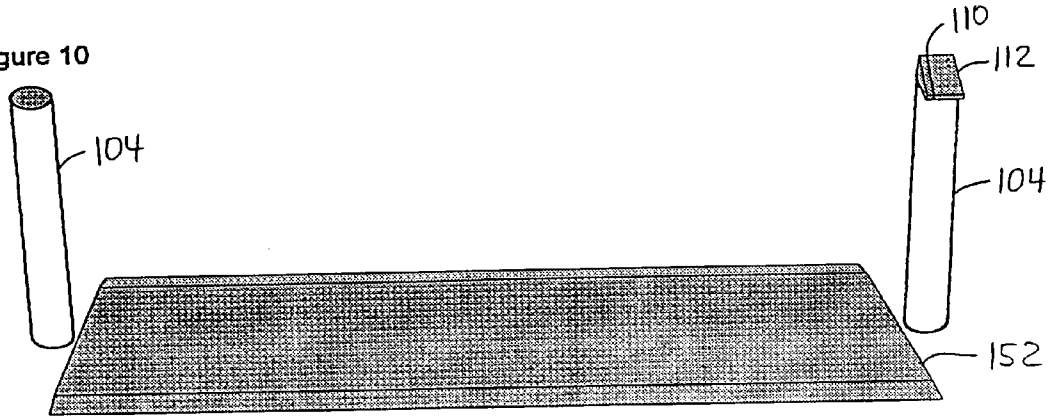


Figure 11

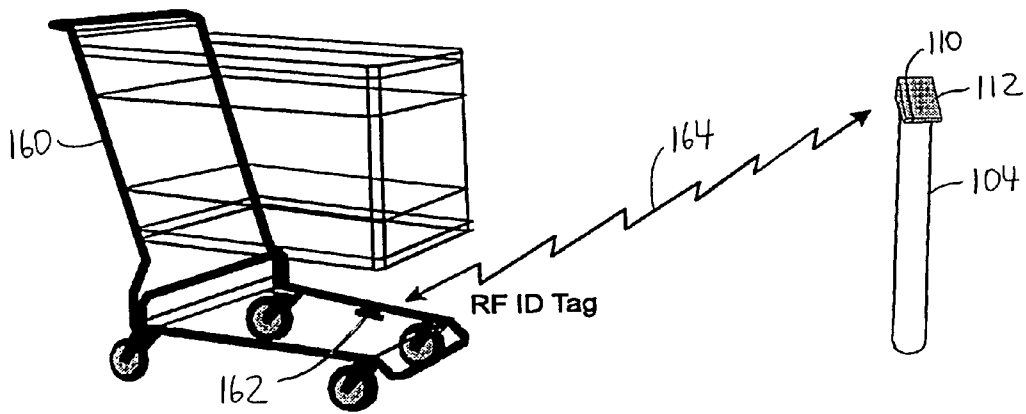


Figure 12 Cart Detector circuit

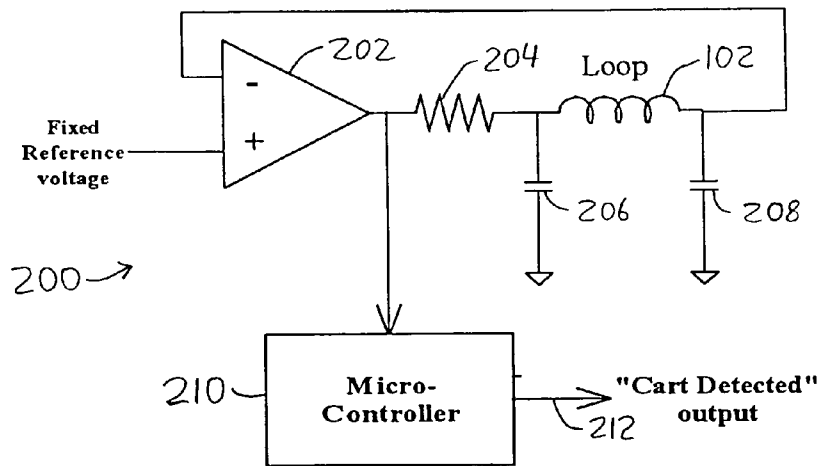
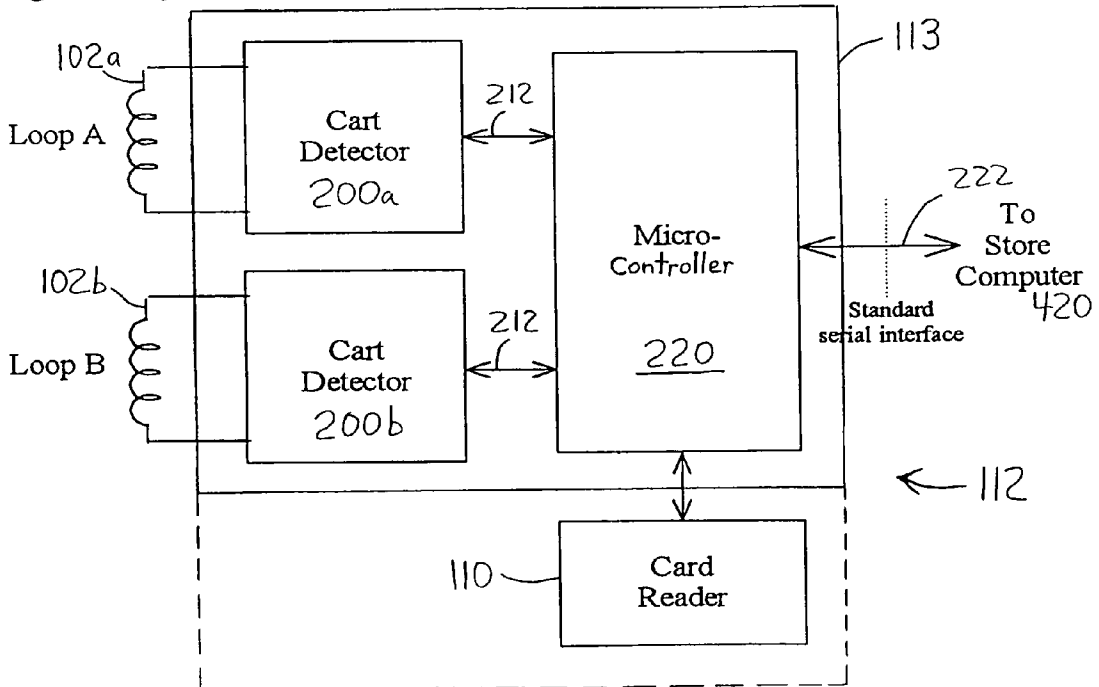
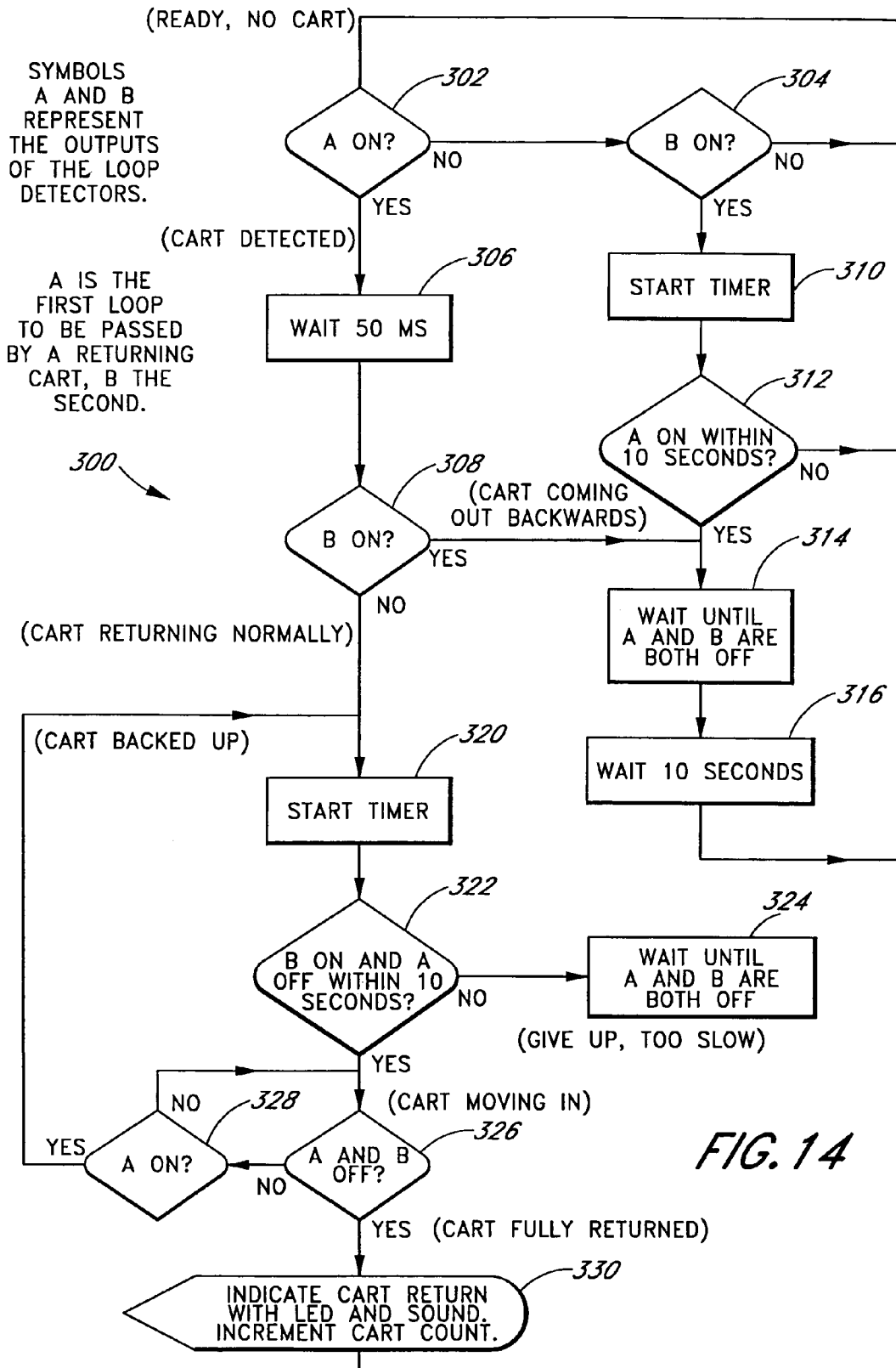


Figure 13 System Electronics





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