

EP-A-0 530 601 describes the use of data carrier cards which enable an activation of individual appliance functions of an electronic appliance. The electronic appliance here comprises a circuit arrangement with one or several circuits for putting into action a number of functions of the appliance. The functions to be carried out by the circuit arrangement can be activated by means of the data carrier card.

A major difference between the latter two systems and the system according to the present invention is that said latter two systems use configuration cards which are adapted to the specific wishes of the end user. These cards are capable of activating certain, predetermined functions of the programmable device only. The cards have to be specially manufactured for the end user, which is labour-intensive. In the system according to the invention, on the other hand, an electronically readable information carrier is used which is capable of activating any function of the programmable device while at the same time debiting the card's account for the amount due.

A special embodiment of a system according to the invention is characterized in that the programmable device comprises the programming means and the reading means.

This means that the wholesaler only needs an electronically readable information carrier in order to program the programmable device in accordance with the end user's wishes.

In particular, the programmable device is an automatic payment machine.

Since an automatic payment machine comprises reading means, it is possible to activate or additionally activate one or several functions of the automatic payment machine, provided it is also fitted with programming means, by means of no more than an electronically readable information carrier.

A further special embodiment of system according to the invention is characterized in that the programmable device is coupled at least temporarily to separate programming