

The invention has for its object to eliminate the above disadvantages. According to the invention, a system is for this purpose characterized in that the system at least temporarily also comprises reading means which are designed for reading an electronically readable information carrier comprising a programmable memory capable of containing a numerical value.

The electronically readable information carrier, for example a chip card, is provided with a certain credit amount and is delivered by the manufacturer to, for example, an intermediate trader, and paid for by the latter. Whenever a function is activated, a corresponding amount is subtracted from the credit amount on the electronically readable information carrier. The intermediate trader programs the programmable device in accordance with the end user's wishes and buys a fresh electronically readable information carrier from the manufacturer after the full credit amount has been written off this carrier, or has the carrier reprogrammed at the manufacturer's, so that the latter is always paid for the activated functions. An additional advantage for the end user is that he will only pay for functions actually activated and not for any functions not (yet) activated, while still retaining the possibility of having additional functions activated later. This enables the manufacturer to keep an eye on the activated functions without the necessity of programming the programmable devices himself or of activating the functions desired by the end user. The manufacturer as it were provides the end user with a software licensing card for all functions present on the programmable device, a certain value being debited to the card's account whenever one or several functions is or are activated.

EP-A-0 594 493 describes a method and a computer system for obtaining software by means of a microcomputer. The system for this purpose comprises a database in which the software to be used is stored and a detachable storage carrier which contains an access right. This latter carrier can be inserted into a reading device of the microcomputer for enabling a loading of software, for which the carrier contains the relevant access rights, from the database to the microcomputer. The carrier may also contain rights for implementing the loaded software.