means, which programming means comprise the reading means and, at least
temporarily, the electronically readable information carrier.

If the programmable device does not comprise the programming means, it is favourable
to accommodate these programming means together with the card reader means in one
unit into which the wholesaler subsequently inserts the electronically readable
information carrier for the purpose of programming.

A particular embodiment of a system according to the invention is characterized in that
the programmable device is a timer.

Such a timer may be used, for example, with a suntanning couch, a shower at a
camping, etc. More or fewer functions of the timer may be activated in dependence on
the application. A timer for a shower, for example, is often of a simple construction and
need only determine the maximum shower time and possibly the use per unit time,
whereas a timer for a suntanning couch, for example, monitors a warming-up time, a
suntanning time, and the total number of hours of operation. Thanks to the system
according to the invention, it is now possible for the manufacturer to deliver the same
timer to the two customer groups, possibly each at its own specific price, while
nevertheless the customer pays only for the functions he actually obtains.

The invention also relates to a method of selectively activating one or several software
and/or hardware functions of a programmable device whereby at least one function is
selected and activated. This method is characterized in that the programmable device is
at least temporarily coupled to programming means which are coupled to reading
means, and in that the reading means cooperate with an electronically readable
information carrier on which a value is stored, while after the activation of a function a
corresponding value is debited.

This method will usually be carried out by a wholesaler or intermediary who has bought
the electronically readable information carrier from the manufacturer. It is also possible