The system further comprises programming means 3 which activate the desired

module(s) of the programmable device 1 The programming means may be incorporated

into the programmable device in some applications (referenced 1a).

5   The system finally comprises reading means 5 which in this embodiment are

constructed as card reader means suitable for reading an electronically readable

information carrier, for example a programmable card 7. The card reader means may

also be incorporated into the programmable device in some applications (referenced 1b),

for example in an automatic payment machine. The programmable card in this

10   embodiment comprises a programmable memory capable of retaining a numerical value.

During programming, i.e. selecting and activating, of the programmable device 1, the

programmable card 7 is placed in the card reader means 5 which are coupled to the

programming means 3.

15   To ensure that the manufacturer of the programmable device receives payment for the

number of functions activated, the programmable card is issued by the manufacturer and

provided with a certain credit amount. It is also stored on the card how much is to be

debited from the amount for each function to be activated, which may be different for

different functions. The wholesaler can now program each programmable device as

20   desired by the end user and have this user pay for this. After the credit amount on the

card has been used up, the user must either have the card recharged at the manufacturer's

against payment, or buy a new card.

The programmable device 1 may be constructed, for example, as an automatic payment

25   machine, for example for use in shops. More or fewer functions may be programmed in

dependence on the end user's wishes. For example, the automatic payment machine may

thus be made compatible with post giro cards, rechargeable cash cards, credit cards, etc.

The programmable device may alternatively be constructed, for example, as a timer for

30   use with, for example, a shower, a suntanning couch, etc. The programmable device will

usually not comprise the programming means in this application, and the timer will have