

## HAIR ACCESSORY WITH INTERCHANGEABLE DESIGNS

### BACKGROUND

[0001] Hair accessories are used to secure the wearer's hair in place, in addition to being fashion accessories. A headband is generally a flexible but resilient base in the shape of a horseshoe that is worn across the top of the wearer's head, holding the hair in place. A hair clip generally has a flat or concave surface with a clip attached to the bottom that can be secured to the wearer's hair. A hair comb generally has teeth extending from a solid base that can be inserted in the wearer's hair to secure it in place.

[0002] Such hair accessories are widely used and can be purchased with different design elements permanently integrated into the accessory. If a variety of designs for different occasions are desired, however, the user must purchase many different hair accessories. This increases costs to consumers and leaves the available designs to the retailer's and designer's discretion.

### SUMMARY OF THE EMBODIMENTS

[0003] One solution provides a means by which a hair accessory, which may be a headband, hair clip, hair comb, or other wearable hair accessory, can be easily altered by interchanging a decorative insert to suit the user's needs.

[0004] The accessories comprise a base that can be secured to the wearer's hair and a transparent cover that is removably attached to the base, allowing access to a receptacle that is formed by the joining of the base and cover. A decorative insert fits within this receptacle and is visible through the transparent cover.

[0005] The hair accessory and insert provide a system for changing the design of the hair accessory. By means of an application and perforated sheets of printable material, the user is also afforded a method for designing and printing additional decorative inserts, further expanding the versatility of a single hair accessory.

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0006] FIG. 1 illustrates a headband type of hair accessory as worn.

[0007] FIG. 2 is an expanded view of a headband type of hair accessory showing the base, decorative insert, and transparent cover.

[0008] FIG. 3 is a side view of a headband type of hair accessory showing the base and transparent cover with the decorative insert inside the receptacle formed between the base and cover.

[0009] FIG. 4 is a top view of a headband type of hair accessory showing the decorative insert viewable through the transparent cover.

[0010] FIG. 5 illustrates the snap-on connection of a headband type of hair accessory.

[0011] FIG. 6 illustrates the hinge connection of a hair clip type of hair accessory.

[0012] FIG. 7 illustrates the clip connection of a headband type of hair accessory.

[0013] FIG. 8 illustrates the magnet connection of a headband type of hair accessory.

[0014] FIG. 9 illustrates the hook and loop connection of a headband type of hair accessory.

[0015] FIG. 10 illustrates a decorative item with a shaft that mates to a hole in the headband.

[0016] FIG. 11 illustrates the decorative item with a hook and loop attachment to the hair accessory.

[0017] FIG. 12 illustrates the decorative item with a magnet type of attachment to the hair accessory.

[0018] FIG. 13 illustrates the decorative item with a clip attachment to the hair accessory.

[0019] FIG. 14 illustrates a sheet on which decorative inserts may be printed.

[0020] FIG. 15 illustrates the insert with slots to fit over keys in the base unit.

[0021] FIG. 16 is a flowchart illustrating the application's user interface.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE EMBODIMENTS

[0022] The hair accessory 90 may be a headband, hair clip, hair comb, or similar type of hair accessory. In this description, the hair accessory 90 is shown as a headband.

[0023] FIGS. 1 and 2 illustrate a headband type of hair accessory 90 comprising a base body 100 that can be secured to the wearer's hair. This base body 100 may be plastic or metal and, in some embodiments, may have an integrated clip, comb, or other mechanism for securing the accessory to the hair.

[0024] FIG. 2 illustrates a detachable transparent cover 120, decorative insert 130, and the base body 100. When the cover 120 is detached from the base 100, as shown in

FIG. 2, the decorative insert 130 may be removed and replaced. When the base 100 and cover 120 are attached as shown in FIG. 3, a receptacle 110 may be formed between them into which the decorative insert 130 may be secured. The receptacle 110 may be a channel formed in either or both of the base 100 or cover 120, or merely be a gap between them.

[0025] FIG. 4 illustrates the decorative insert 130 as it is viewable through the transparent cover 120.

[0026] FIG. 5 shows that the base body 100 and transparent cover 120 may be removably connected using snap-on connections, wherein projections 10 on the base body 100 engage with openings 20 on cover 120. The engagement could also be on the base body 100.

[0027] FIG. 6 shows how the base body 100 and transparent cover 120 may be removably connected using a hinge mechanism 30 at an end and a snap-on connection 40 at the other end to keep the pieces joined at all times. The hinge 30 at an end of the base body 100 allows the cover 120 to swing away from the base body 100, while a projection 40 on the base body 100 engages with an opening 50 on the cover 120 at the end with a snap-on connection.

[0028] FIG. 7 shows that the base body 100 and transparent cover 120 may be removably connected using a removable clip 60, wherein the resilient clip 60 fits into grooves 70 on both the base 100 and cover 120, holding the base 100 and cover 120 together under tension.

[0029] FIG. 8 shows how the base body 100 and transparent cover 120 may be removably connected by a magnetic attachment, wherein magnets 70 permanently attached to the base body 100 are attracted to a ferromagnetic material 80 permanently attached to the cover 120. As shown in FIG. 9, the base body 100 and transparent cover 120 may be removably connected by a hook and loop fastener, wherein a strip of the hook portion of the fastener 105 is attached to the base body 100 and a strip of the loop portion of the fastener 115 is attached to the cover 120, although the hook and loop portions could be reversed as well.

[0030] The hair accessory 90 may also include a decorative item 95 removably attached to the exterior of the cover 120. This further expands the range of design

possibilities available to the user. As shown in FIG. 10, the decorative item 95 may be comprised of a decorative head 96 and a shaft 97 sized to fit within a hole 94 in the cover 120 or base body 100. The fit may be a compression or snap fit, or include a backing that engages the shaft 97. FIG. 11 shows how the decorative item 95 may be removably attached to the cover 120 by a hook and loop fastener, wherein a piece of the hook portion of the fastener 98 is attached to the decorative item 95 and a piece of the loop portion of the fastener 99 is attached to the cover 120, although the hook and loop portions could be reversed.

[0031] As shown in FIG. 12, the decorative item 95 may be removably attached to the cover 120 by a magnetic attachment, wherein a magnet 101 permanently attached to decorative item 95 is attracted to a ferromagnetic material 102 permanently attached to the cover 120. FIG. 13 shows that the decorative item may be removably attached to the cover 120 by a clip 121, wherein the resilient clip 121 is permanently attached to the decorative item and fits into grooves 122 on both the base 100 and cover 120, holding the decorative item 95 onto the hair accessory 90 under tension.

[0032] The hair accessory 90 and the decorative insert 130 may be used with a system by which the decorative insert 130 may be customized to suit the user's needs. In such a system, the decorative inserts 130 may be preprinted on master sheets 135, as shown in FIG. 14, that are shaped to fit within the receptacle 110. These sheets 135 may be made of paper or any other printable material. Blank sheets perforated in the shape of the insert 130 may allow the user to custom design an insert 130 using an application and then print the design on the blank sheet using a laser or ink jet printer. The insert 130 for each type of hair accessory 90 may be sized to fit within the receptacle 110 of that type of accessory. As shown in FIG. 15, the inserts may have slots 131 cut in them that fit over keys 132 in the base unit 100, thereby securing the insert 130 within the receptacle 110.

[0033] In use, a user may create an account within the application and login in order to select or design an insert. Once logged in, a user may download a design from a pre-existing database of designs. Such a design may be free or available for sale. Alternatively, a user wanting a custom design may begin with a blank template and insert a photo or use the application's design interface using palettes and drawing tools to create an insert. After completing the design, a user wanting to share the design could post an image

directly to a social networking site, such as Facebook or Twitter, from within the application. Or the user could share the design from within the application itself.

[0034] The system's social feature could be expanded to include integration with advertising. Thus, if a user buys tickets or visits a sport's team's website, the website may offer downloadable designs on the website or along with ticket purchases, encouraging users to come to the game with the team's logo on the insert 130.

[0035] The inserts could be mass produced by partnering with a commercial supplier of custom printed products. This would be an efficient way to supply a group of users who want identical inserts to represent a sports team, school mascot, or other large group for which producing the number of inserts required using a home printer would be impractical.

[0036] The flow chart in FIG. 16 illustrates the user interface provided by the application. The user to first logs in 140, then selects the size and shape of the insert to be produced 150. The user then selects a design from a database of designs 160, customizes a design from the database 170, or custom designs an insert from a blank template using a design palette 180. After completing the design, the user is presented with options for printing the insert 190. Finally, the user is given the option to share the design on a social networking site such as Facebook or Twitter 200.

[0037] The interchangeable design insert is suitable for adaptation to many other types of decorative wearable items. Items such as necklaces, bracelets, belt buckles, brooches, or jewelry pins could be provided with a similar construction to the hair accessory describe above.

[0038] While the invention has been described with reference to the embodiments above, a person of ordinary skill in the art would understand that various changes or modifications may be made thereto without departing from the scope of the claims.