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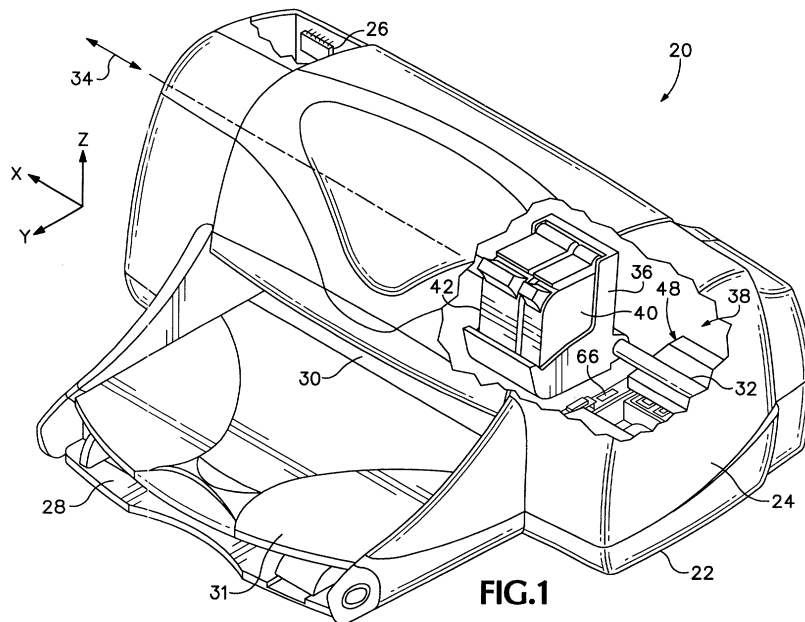
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(54) **Uni-directional waste ink removal system**

(57) A uni-directional waste ink removal system (71) cleans ink residue from an electrostatic sensing element (66) of an ink drop detector (58) in a printing mechanism (20) when the electrostatic sensing element (66), supported by a base (90), is actuated between an activated position (FIG. 3), a storage position (FIG. 6), and back to the activated position (FIG. 3). The system (71) also includes a scraper (78) and an absorber (76) which first contact the sensing element (58, 66) when the base (90)

is in the storage position (FIG. 6), thereby ensuring ink residue may be absorbed, and that ink residue is only scraped (FIG. 7) from the sensing element (66) in one direction as the base (90) is moved to the activated position (FIG. 3). A method of cleaning ink residue from an electrostatic sensing element (66) of an ink drop detector (58), and a printing mechanism (20) having such a uni-directional waste ink removal system (71) are also provided.



**FIG.1**



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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search <b>THE HAGUE</b>		Date of completion of the search <b>27 February 2003</b>	Examiner <b>Adam, E</b>
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document		T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons ..... & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document	

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<p>CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS</p> <p>X : particularly relevant if taken alone                      Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category                      A : technological background                      O : non-written disclosure                      P : intermediate document</p> <p>T : theory or principle underlying the invention                      E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date                      D : document cited in the application                      L : document cited for other reasons</p> <p>.....                      &amp; : member of the same patent family, corresponding document</p>			

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