

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

BEFORE THE PATENT TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD

SENKO ADVANCED COMPONENTS, INC.
Petitioner

v.

US CONEC LTD.
Patent Owner

Case: IPR2024-00805
Patent No. 11,385,415

**PETITIONER'S REPLY TO PRELIMINARY RESPONSE TO THE
PETITION FOR INTER PARTES REVIEW**

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EXHIBIT LIST

Exhibit No.	Description
1001	U.S. Patent No. 11,385,415
1002	Expert Declaration of Edward Lurie
1003	U.S. Patent No. 6,220,762 (“Kanai”)
1004	U.S. Patent No. 5,222,168 (“Saito”)
1005	U.S. Publication No. 2012/0057824 (“Kato”)
1006	U.S. Patent No. 5,673,346 (“Iwano”)
1007	U.S. Patent No. 6,929,406 (“Amorim”)
1008	U.S. Patent No. 6,386,768 (“Yoon”)
1009	PCT Publication No. WO 2012/174227 (“Hodge”)
1010	U.S. Publication No. 2005/0135753 (“Eigenmann”)
1011	Provisional Application No. 61/789,499
1012	Prosecution History of U.S. Application No. 14/214,931
1013	Prosecution History of U.S. Application No. 15/855,750
1014	Prosecution History of U.S. Application No. 15/855,788
1015	Prosecution History of U.S. Application No. 16/214,317
1016	Prosecution History of U.S. Application No. 17/145,864
1017	Prosecution History of U.S. Application No. 17/857,300
1018	Prosecution History of U.S. Application No. 18/483,949

Exhibit No.	Description
1019	U.S. Patent No. 6,146,023
1020	U.S. Patent No. 6,371,659
1021	U.S. Patent No. 6,305,961
1022	U.S. Publication No. 2005/0111796
1023	U.S. Publication No. 2005/0281509
1024	English Translation of Japanese Patent No. 2573482
1025	Scheduling Order
1026	Claim Listing
1027	Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary 11 th Ed. (definition of “groove”)
1028	Transcript From August 6, 2024 Deposition of William Singhose in the ITC Investigation No. 337-TA
1029	“Representative Domestic Industry Claim Chart for U.S. Patent No. 11,385,415 by MMC Adapters” from the ITC Investigation No. 337-TA

Emphasis added throughout unless indicated otherwise.

Based on unduly narrow claim interpretation positions, Patent Owner US Conec Ltd. (“Conec”) premises its entire Patent Owner’s Preliminary Response (“POPR”) on identifying allegedly “fatal misapprehension[s]” within the Petition. Tellingly, a number of these positions—namely with respect to “groove(s)” and “the adapter is free of internal walls”—are irreconcilably contradicted positions that Conec has taken before the ITC. Conec’s claim interpretations should be reject and *Inter partes* review should be instituted.

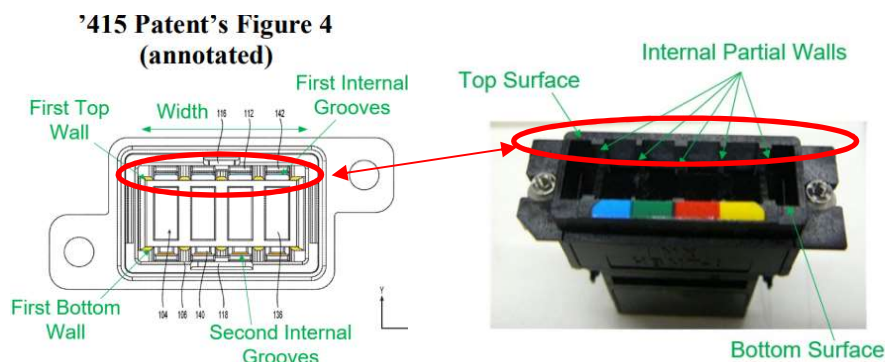
I. “GROOVES”

Treating the term “groove” as though it is a mean-plus-function limitation, the POPR argues that the claimed “grooves” should be limited to “very specific structures that have particular functions.” POPR: 3. In particular, the Conec proposes that the recited “groove” should be construed “to denote indentations disposed in the internal surfaces of the top and bottom walls *that are dimensioned to accept projections from the ferrule holders.*” POPR: 4 (emphasis added). Based on this narrow claim interpretation, Conec argues that “channels [between internal projections such as partial internal walls, ribs, or guide rails] are not grooves and the tips of the [partial internal walls, ribs, or] guide rails are not a continuous top or bottom surface.” POPR: 10; *see also* POPR: 5-6, 10-11, 17-18.

Contrary to Conec’s attempt to read unclaimed and unsupported limitations into the claims, one of skill in the art would recognize that the plain and ordinary

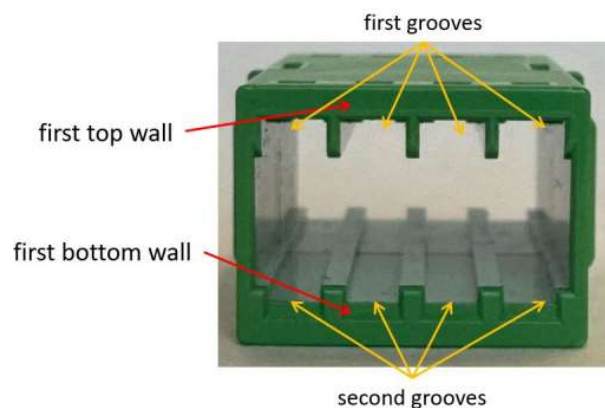
meaning of a groove is simply “an elongated recess or depression in a surface.” *See* EX1027: 551 (defining “groove” as “a long narrow channel or depression”). Notably, the claims provide no support for reading the recited “groove(s)” as a functional limitations requiring mating between the grooves and projections on the ferrule holder. Even Conec’s claim construction expert in the ITC acknowledges the claims of the ‘415 Patent do not require the “groove(s)” perform a mating function. EX1028 (ITC deposition transcript): 121:24-122:21, 123:15-124:19.

Additionally, neither the claims nor the specification require a specific topography of the grooves or the surfaces in which they are disposed. The ‘415 Patent provides no support for requiring any minimal surface area or spacing between the grooves, such that the “channels” between “the tips of the [partial internal walls, ribs, or] guide rails” would fail to qualify as grooves (i.e. elongated recesses or depressions in a surface). In fact, the “grooves” of the ‘415 Patent’s figures are indistinguishable from the channels between partial internal walls configuration that Conec alleges the recited “grooves” were distinguishing:



Comparing POPR: 2, 12 (further annotated).

Tellingly, Conec only takes the position that the grooves must be interpreted as excluding channels between internal projections such as ribs or guide rails when attempting to distinguish the prior art. Conec explicitly applied the term “grooves” from the claims to channels between internal ribs in its “Representative Domestic Industry Claim Chart for U.S. Patent No. 11,385,415 by MMC Adapters” as filed in the ITC:



EX1029: 4 (annotated by Conec).

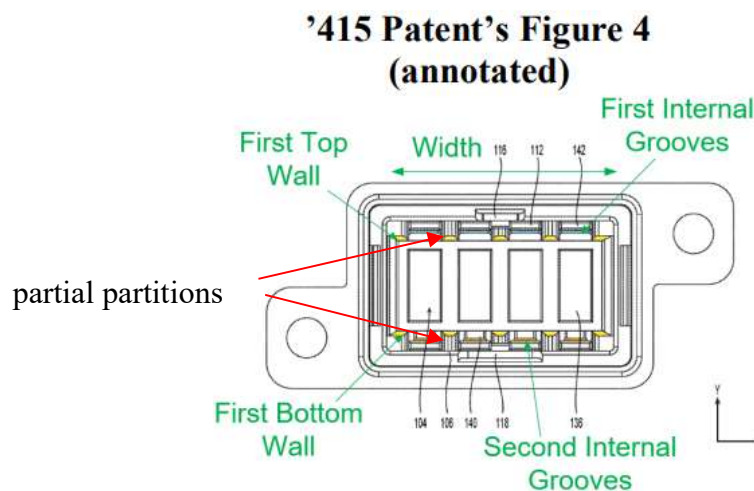
The term “groove” as used in the ‘415 Patent claims should be given its the plain and ordinary meaning of “an elongated recess or depression in a surface” without reading in additional, unclaimed limitations.

II. “THE ADAPTER IS FREE OF INTERNAL WALLS BETWEEN A SPACE FOR TWO FIBER OPTIC CONNECTORS ADJACENT ONE ANOTHER ON A SAME SIDE OF THE ADAPTER”

Building on its unduly narrow construction of “groove” as excluding “channels” between “the tips of the [partial internal walls, ribs, or] guide rails,” Conec argues that the “the adapter is free of internal walls . . .” limitation as recited

in Claim 12 excludes the presence of internal projections such as ribs or guide rails. See e.g., POPR:12-13.

To the contrary, those of skill in the art would only read the limitation as excluding the inclusion of *full height* partitions separating the connectors. Reading the limitation to further exclude the presence of *partial* partitions would effectively exclude the '415 Patent's preferred embodiment. Specifically, the grooves in the central portion of the '415 Patent adapter effectively create partial partitions between the spaces receiving the projections on the connectors.

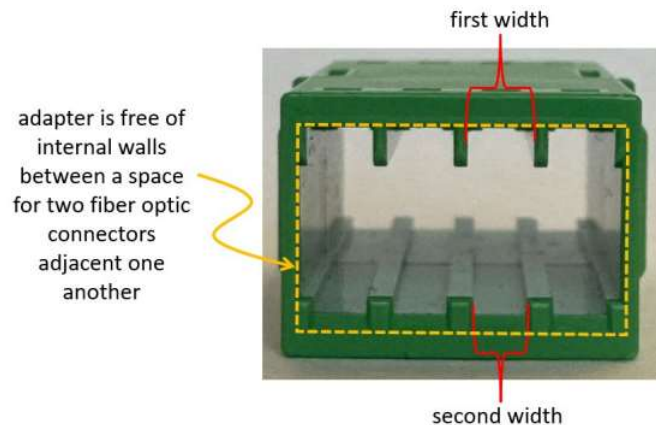


POPR: 12 (further annotated).

While the Conec may attempt to distinguish these partial partitions from partial walls, ribs, and guide rails such labels are merely a distinction without a difference. While the '415 Patent discloses the absence of *full height* partitions, it does not disclose any embodiments in which the adapter lacks *partial* partitions.

Again, Conec's application of the very same claim limitations as part of its

“Representative Domestic Industry Claim Chart for U.S. Patent No. 11,385,415 by MMC Adapters” contradicts its arguments here. As reproduced below, Conec took no issue in applying the limitation to adapters with projections forming partial walls and ribs.



EX1029: 5 (annotated by Conec).

The “the adapter is free of internal walls between a space for two fiber optic connectors adjacent one another on a same side of the adapter” limitation should be construed as excluding the inclusion of *full height* partitions separating the connectors.

III. CONCLUSION

The entire premise of the Patent Owner’s Preliminary Response is unsupported and is flatly contradicted by Patent Owner’s statements made in the ITC proceeding. *Inter partes* review should be instituted.

Dated: August 19, 2024

Respectfully submitted,
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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

Under 37 C.F.R. § 42.6(e), the undersigned certifies that on August 19, 2024, a copy of the foregoing PETITIONER'S REPLY TO PRELIMINARY RESPONSE TO THE PETITION FOR INTER PARTES REVIEW, along with the supporting exhibits, were served via email on the following:

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