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DOCUMENT SCANNER AND IMAGE FORMING APPARATUS

Abstract

A document scanner includes a casing and a document cover disposed above the casing. The casing includes a document glass and houses an image scanner. The document cover has one end portion and the other end portion opposite to the first end portion in a first direction and is configured to pivotally move about the one end portion between a closed position in which the other end portion covers the document glass and an open position in which the other end portion uncovers the document glass. The other end portion has an end surface that intersects, when the document cover is at the closed position, with an upper surface of the document glass. The end surface has an indication indicating a location to which an external device is to be brought into proximity to establish short-range wireless communication between the document scanner and the external device.

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Background/Summary

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION [0001] This application is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 18/481,406 filed Oct. 5, 2023, which is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 17/646,876, filed Jan. 4, 2022, now U.S. Pat. No. 11,831,825, which is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 16/795,659, filed Feb. 20, 2020, now U.S. Pat. No. 11,252,292, and claims priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119 from Japanese Patent Application No. 2019-041817 filed on Mar. 7, 2019, the entireties of which are incorporated herein by reference.

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0002] Aspects of the disclosure relate to a document scanner and an image forming apparatus including the document scanner.

BACKGROUND

[0003] A known image forming apparatus is configured to perform short-range wireless communication with an external device, such as an IC card and a smartphone, in compliance with, for example, a near field communication (“NFC”) technology. The known image forming apparatus includes a document scanner including a document cover configured to open and close. The document cover has an NFC communication area on an upper surface thereof.

SUMMARY

[0004] A user may open the document cover with an external device left on the NFC communication area on the upper surface of the document cover. This may cause the external device to be fallen down to the floor.

[0005] One aspect of the disclosure provides a document scanner configured to execute short-range wireless communication and having a novel configuration. Another aspect of the disclosure provides an image forming apparatus including the document scanner.

[0006] According to an aspect of the disclosure, a document scanner comprises a casing and a document cover. The casing includes, at an upper surface thereof, a document glass configured to support a document. The casing houses an image scanner configured to scan an image on the document supported by the document glass. The document cover is disposed above the casing. The document cover has one end portion and the other end portion opposite to the first end portion in a first direction. The document cover is configured to pivotally move about the one end portion between a closed position in which the other end portion of the document cover covers the document glass and an open position in which the other end portion of the document cover uncovers the document glass. The other end portion of the document cover has an end surface that intersects, when the document cover is at the closed position, with an upper surface of the document glass. The end surface has an indication indicating a location to which an external device is to be brought into proximity to establish short-range wireless communication between the document scanner and the external device.

[0007] According to another aspect of the disclosure, an image forming apparatus comprises the document scanner and an image forming unit configured to form an image scanned by the document scanner on a sheet.

Description

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0008] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of an image forming apparatus in an illustrative embodiment according to one or more aspects of the disclosure.

[0009] FIG. 2 is a front view of an image forming apparatus in an illustrative embodiment according to one or more aspects of the disclosure.

[0010] FIG. 3 is a top view of an image forming apparatus in an illustrative embodiment according to one or more aspects of the disclosure.

[0011] FIG. 4 is a right side view of an image forming apparatus in an illustrative embodiment according to one or more aspects of the disclosure.

[0012] FIG. 5 is a cross-sectional view of the image forming apparatus of FIG. 3, taken along a line A-A, illustrating a discharged sheet stopper is in a use position.

[0013] FIG. 6 is a perspective view of an image forming apparatus in a first modification according to one or more aspects of the disclosure.

[0014] FIG. 7 is a right side view of an image forming apparatus in a second modification according to one or more aspects of the disclosure.

[0015] FIG. 8 is a right side view of an image forming apparatus in a third modification according to one or more aspects of the disclosure.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0016] Respective directions of front, rear, left, right, top/upper, and bottom/lower are defined in conjunction with an orientation in which an image forming apparatus 1 is intended to be used, as depicted in FIG. 1. A side of the image forming apparatus 1 having a front surface 21 may be defined as a front side, and a side opposite to the front side may be defined as a rear side. A left side and a right side of the image forming apparatus 1 may be defined with respect to the image forming apparatus 1 as viewed from its front side. A side of the image forming apparatus 1 on which a second casing 3 is disposed is the upper side. A side of the image forming apparatus 1 on which a first casing 2 is disposed is the lower side. In the illustrative embodiment, the front-rear direction is an example of a first direction and the left-right direction is an example of a second direction and a width direction perpendicular to a discharging direction of a sheet by discharge rollers 28.

[Configuration of Image Forming Apparatus]

[0017] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of the image forming apparatus 1 according to an illustrative embodiment. FIG. 2 is a front view of the image forming apparatus 1. FIG. 3 is a top view of the image forming apparatus 1. FIG. 4 is a right side view of the image forming apparatus 1. FIG. 5 is a cross-sectional view of the image forming apparatus 1, taken along a line A-A of FIG. 3, illustrating a discharged sheet stopper 62 is in a use position. The image forming apparatus 1 employs an interior sheet discharge system. The image forming apparatus 1 includes the first casing 2, the second casing 3, a support portion 4, and a control panel 5.

[0018] The first casing 2 includes a cover 20 having a generally rectangular parallelepiped shape. The cover 20 defines an appearance of the first casing 2. The cover 20 includes the front surface 21, a rear surface 22, a left surface 23, a right surface 24, a top surface 25, and a bottom surface 26. The cover 20 has an opening 211 at a lower portion of the front surface 21. Through the opening 211, a sheet tray 27 is attached or removed.

[0019] The first casing 2 houses the sheet tray 27 configured to support a stack of one or more sheets, a conveying mechanism configured to convey a sheet from the sheet tray 27, an image

forming unit configured to form an image on the sheet conveyed by the conveying mechanism, a sheet discharge mechanism configured to discharge the sheet from the image forming unit to an exterior of the first casing **2**. The sheet discharge mechanism includes the discharge rollers **28** disposed at a most downstream portion thereof in a sheet conveying direction (e.g., the sheet discharging direction).

[0020] The sheet tray **27** is configured to move in a front-rear direction between a fully attached position (as depicted in FIG. **1**) and a separated position. At the fully attached position, the sheet tray **27** is fully attached to the first casing **2** through the opening **211**. At the separated position, the sheet tray **27** is at least partially separated or removed from the first casing **2** toward the front through the opening **211**. The image forming unit may form an image based on, but not limited to, an electrophotographic method, an inkjet method, or other method.

[0021] A sheet discharge tray **6** is located at the top surface **25** of the first casing **2**. The sheet discharge tray **6** is configured to receive a sheet discharged by the sheet discharge mechanism. The sheet discharge tray **6** is formed on the top surface **25** of the first casing **2** into a convex shape curving upward from the rear side toward the front side. The sheet having an image formed thereon may be discharged by the sheet discharge mechanism in a rear-to-front direction onto the sheet discharge tray **6**.

[0022] The sheet discharge tray **6** includes a protruding portion **61** disposed at a central portion thereof in the width direction, and the discharged sheet stopper **62** disposed at the protruding portion **61**. The protruding portion **61** protrudes upward relative to other area of the sheet discharge tray **6**. The protruding portion **61** has a trapezoidal shape whose rear portion is inclined downward. The discharged sheet stopper **62** has a generally rectangular plate shape. The discharged sheet stopper **62** has a rear end portion that is pivotally supported by the protruding portion **61**. The discharged sheet stopper **62** is configured to move between an accommodated position (as depicted in FIG. **4**) and a use position (as depicted in FIG. **5**). At the accommodated position, the discharged sheet stopper **62** is flush with the upper end portion of the protruding portion **61**. At the use position, a front end portion of the discharged sheet stopper **62** is raised. When the discharged sheet stopper **62** is in the use position, a sheet discharged onto the sheet discharge tray **6** may contact the discharged sheet stopper **62**, so that the position of the sheet on the sheet discharge tray **6** may be regulated.

[0023] In a case where the sheet discharged on the sheet discharge tray **6** has curling ends, in the width direction, that curl upward, the protruding portion **61** raises and supports the central portion of the sheet in the width direction and may reduce the curling. When a stack of one or more sheets is supported on the sheet discharge tray **6**, a space is provided below the stack near the protruding portion **61**. The space may allow a user to hold the stack. The protruding portion **61** may not necessarily be provided but may be omitted.

[0024] The image forming apparatus **1** includes a power switch **29** disposed at the top surface **25** of the first casing **2**. For easy recognition and operation, the power switch **29** may preferably be disposed at a portion of the top surface **25** of the first casing **2** further toward the front than the discharged sheet stopper **62** and outside an area of the sheet discharge tray **6** in the width direction. In the illustrative embodiment, the power switch **29** is located at a right front portion of the top surface **25**.

[0025] The second casing **3** is disposed above the first casing **2** and includes a document scanner **31**. The document scanner **31** includes a scanner casing **32**. The scanner casing **32** includes a document glass **321** on an upper surface thereof. The document glass **321** is configured to support a document. The scanner casing **32** houses an image scanner configured to scan an image on the document supported by the document glass **321**. The document scanner **31** further includes a document cover **33** disposed above the scanner casing **32**. The document cover **33** is configured to pivotally move about a pivot axis provided at one end portion, e.g., a rear end portion, of the document cover **33** between a closed position and an open position. At the closed position, the

other end portion, e.g., a front end portion, of the document cover 33 is pivotally moved down and the document cover 33 covers the document glass 321. At the open position, the front end portion of the document cover 33 is pivotally moved up and the document cover 33 uncovers the document glass 321.

[0026] The document cover 33 includes an auto document feeder (“ADF”) 34 disposed at an upper portion thereof. The ADF 34 is configured to automatically feed a document to the document glass 321. The ADF 34 has a front end surface 34A having an opening extending therethrough in the front-rear direction, thereby defining a grip 35. A user may hold the grip 35 to move the document cover 33 between the closed position and the open position. When the ADF 34 is at the closed position, the front end surface 34A intersects with an upper surface of the document glass 321 at an angle. In illustrative embodiment, the angle is, for example, a right angle. The image forming apparatus 1 includes a motor 341 disposed at a rear end portion of the ADF 34. The motor 341 is a drive source for the ADF 34.

[0027] The support portion 4 includes a left support portion 41, a right support portion 42, and a rear support portion 43. The left support portion 41, the right support portion 42, and the rear support portion 43 are respectively disposed at a left end portion, a right end portion, and a rear end portion of the top surface 25 of the first casing 2, raising the second casing 3. The second casing 3 is disposed above the sheet discharge tray 6 via a discharge space 63 in which a sheet is discharged. The left support portion 41, the right support portion 42, the top surface 25 of the first casing 2, and a lower surface of the second casing 3 define an open portion 44 at a front side of the image forming apparatus 1. The discharge space 63 is open toward the front, via the open portion 44. A user can be accessible to a sheet discharged onto the sheet discharge tray 6 via the open portion 44.

[0028] In illustrative embodiment, the right support portion 42 includes a front end surface 42A that is located further to the rear than a front end surface 3A of the second casing 3. The configuration may allow a right portion of the discharge space 63 to open widely, allowing a user to take a stack of one or more sheets discharged on the sheet discharge tray 6 from the right side of the image forming apparatus 1.

[0029] The control panel 5 has a substantially rectangular parallelepiped shape. The control panel 5 has a dimension in the left-right direction shorter than the dimension of the second casing 3 in the left-right direction. In the illustrative embodiment, the control panel 5 has a dimension in the left-right direction equal to or less than a half of the dimension of the second casing 3 in the left-right direction. The control panel 5 extends frontward from the front end surface 3A of the second casing 3 such that a left end portion of the control panel 5 is flush with a left end portion of the second casing 3. The location of the control panel 5 is not limited to a particular location as long as the control panel 5 is disposed downstream of the discharge rollers 28 in the discharging direction. The control panel 5 is configured to enable operations of the image forming apparatus 1, e.g., the document scanner 31. The control panel 5 includes an upper surface 51 on which a display, such as an LCD panel, and an input device, such as a touchscreen and keys/buttons, configured to operate the image forming unit and the image scanner, are disposed.

[NFC]

[0030] As depicted in FIG. 2, the ADF 34 has an NFC indication 71 provided, e.g., printed, on the front end surface 34A. The NFC indication 71 indicates a location to which an external device (e.g., an IC card and a smartphone) having an NFC function is to be brought into proximity to establish a wireless communication between the image forming apparatus 1 and the external device. The size and the shape of the NFC indication 71 are not limited to a particular size and shape. The NFC indication 71 may be provided in a manner other than printing. For example, the NFC indication 71 may include translucent member. The translucent member may illuminate the NFC indication 71 with a light source (e.g., a light-emitting diode) disposed under the translucent member. Using the NFC indication 71 as a guide, a user may bring the external device into proximity to the NFC indication 71, thereby establishing a wireless communication between the

external device and the image forming apparatus **1**.

[0031] Since the NFC indication **71** is provided at the front end surface **34A** of the ADF **34**, a user needs to bring the external device into proximity to the NFC indication **71** while securely holding the external device by hand. This may prevent a user from opening the document cover **33** with an external device on the document scanner **31**. The front end surface **34A**, which is created or defined by the thickness of the ADF **34**, may be effectively used for the NFC indication **71**. Since the NFC indication **71** is disposed at an upper portion of the document scanner **31** closer to a user, the user may readily identify the NFC indication **71**. The document scanner **31** having a novel configuration and the image forming apparatus **1** including the document scanner **31** may thus be provided.

[0032] The NFC indication **71** and the control panel **5** may be preferably located on a same side (e.g., a left side) of the image forming apparatus in the width direction. In other words, the NFC indication **71** and the control panel **5** may be located closer to one end (e.g., a left end) of the image forming apparatus **1** in the width direction than the other end (e.g., a right end) of the image forming apparatus **1** opposite to the one end in the width direction. To achieve such configuration, the ADF **34** on which the NFC indication **71** is provided needs to be disposed on the same side as the control panel **5** in the width direction. In other words, the ADF **34** needs to be located closer to the one end of the image forming apparatus **1** in the width direction than the other end of the image forming apparatus **1** in the width direction. In the illustrative embodiment, the ADF **34** and the control panel **5** is located on the left side of the image forming apparatus **1**. The NFC indication **71** is also located on the left side of the image forming apparatus **1** and is provided at a position overlapping with the control panel **5** in the left-right direction.

[0033] The NFC indication **71** and the control panel **5** are both located closer to the one end (e.g., the left end) of the image forming apparatus **1** in the width direction than the other end (e.g., the right end) of the image forming apparatus **1** in the width direction. This configuration may allow a user to readily identify both the NFC indication **71** and the control panel **5** by looking in one direction.

[0034] An NFC board **70** is located, facing the NFC indication **71**, inside the ADF **34**, to establish a favorable wireless communication between the image forming apparatus **1** and the external device. In the illustrative embodiment, the NFC board **70** is disposed behind the NFC indication **71** along an inner surface (e.g., a rear surface) of the front end surface **34A** of the ADF **34**. The NFC board **70** is a circuit board having a generally rectangular shape. The NFC board **70** includes a loop antenna **72** and circuits, such as a communication circuit and a detection circuit.

[0035] The loop antenna **72** is disposed on a front surface of the NFC board **70** such that the loop antenna **72** is located behind the NFC indication **71**. The loop antenna **72** is configured to transmit to or receive from an external device, radio waves for NFC communication. The communication circuit is configured to process the radio waves transmitted to or received from the external device into signals. The detection circuit is configured to detect a current that flows in the loop antenna **72**, thereby detecting intensities of the radio waves transmitted or received by the loop antenna **72**.

[0036] In the illustrative embodiment, the NFC indication **71** and the NFC board **70** are disposed at a front end portion of the ADF **34** and the motor **341** is disposed at a rear end portion of the ADF **34**. The motor **341** is disposed opposite to the NFC indication **71** and the NFC board **70** in the front-rear direction. This configuration may prevent or reduce degradation of communication performance between the image forming apparatus **1** and an external device, due to noises of the motor **341**.

[USB]

[0037] As depicted in FIG. **4**, the image forming apparatus **1** includes a USB port **81** to which a terminal of a USB device, such as a USB memory and a digital camera, is connectable. The USB port **81** is located at a side surface of the control panel **5** closer to the center of the image forming apparatus **1** in the width direction. In the illustrative embodiment, the USB port **81** is located at a right surface **52** of the control panel **5**. The USB port **81** may be located at any portion of the right

surface **52** of the control panel **5**. The control panel **5** has a USB indication **82** provided, e.g., printed, at a portion of the right surface **52** near the USB port **81**. The USB indication **82** or the USB port **81** may help a user to recognize the location of the USB port **81**.

[0038] Since the USB port **81** is located at a side surface of the control panel **5** closer to the center of the image forming apparatus **1** in the width direction, a USB device inserted into the USB port **81** may not stick out relative to a surface (e.g., a right surface) of the first casing **2** when viewed from the top. This configuration may reduce risks of damaging the USB device as a user hits the USB device. In addition, this configuration may ensure a space for attaching and removing the USB device. Since the USB port **81** is disposed above the sheet discharge tray **6**, a user may visually identify the USB port **81** readily. Further, a user may readily identify both the control panel **5** and the USB port **81** by looking in one direction.

[0039] The USB port **81** at a side surface of the control panel **5** may enhance visibility of the USB port **81** and operability of the control panel **5** at the same time. In addition, a USB device inserted into the USB port **81** may not cover the NFC indication **71**, which may ensure visibility of the NFC indication **71** even when the USB device is inserted into the USB port **81**.

[0040] A USB board **80** is located inside the control panel **5**. The USB board **80** is a circuit board having a generally rectangular shape. The USB board **80** includes the USB port **81** and circuits. The USB port **81** is disposed on an upper surface of the USB board **80** and protrudes rightward.

[First Modification]

[0041] FIG. **6** is a perspective view of an image forming apparatus **9** according to a first modification. The image forming apparatus **9** according to the first modification is different from the image forming apparatus **1** with respect to a document scanner **91**, which does not include an ADF, and positions of an NFC indication **92** and an NFC board **93**. Except for the document scanner **91** and the positions of the NFC indication **92** and the NFC board **93**, the image forming apparatus **9** has the same or similar configuration as the image forming apparatus **1**. Like numerals in the drawings denote like components and the detailed description of those components described above is omitted, with respect to FIGS. **6-8**.

[0042] The document scanner **91** includes a document cover **94** having a plate shape, which may be obtained by removing the ADF **34** from the document cover **33**. The document cover **94** has a front end surface **94A**. When the document cover **94** is at the closed position, the front end surface **94A** intersects with the upper surface of the document glass **321** at an angle. In the first modification, the angle is, for example, a right angle.

[0043] The NFC indication **92** is located at a position that satisfies the same condition as the position of the NFC indication **71**. In FIG. **6**, the NFC indication **92** is provided at a portion of the front end surface **94A** of the document cover **94** above the control panel **5**. The NFC board **93** is similar to the NFC board **70** and has a thickness corresponding the thickness of the document cover **94**. The NFC board **93** is located inside the document cover **94**, facing the NFC indication **92**.

[0044] In such configuration in which the document scanner **91** does not include an ADF and the NFC indication **91** is provided at the front end surface **94A** of the document cover **94**, effects similar to those of the image forming apparatus **1** may be obtained.

[Second Modification]

[0045] FIG. **7** is a right side view of an image forming apparatus **10** according to a second modification. The image forming apparatus **10** according to the second modification is different from the image forming apparatus **1** with respect to a pivotable control panel **101**. Except for the pivotable control panel **101**, the image forming apparatus **10** has the same or similar configuration as the image forming apparatus **1**.

[0046] The control panel **101** includes a pivot shaft **102** disposed at a rear end portion of the control panel **101**. The pivot shaft **102** extends in the left-right direction. The pivot shaft **102** is pivotally supported by a recess portion provided in the second casing **3**. This configuration may allow the control panel **101** to pivotally move about the pivot shaft **102** between an inclined position (as

depicted by a solid line in FIG. 7) and a horizontal position (as depicted by a phantom line in FIG. 7). At the inclined position, a front portion of an upper surface **103** of the control panel **101** is lower than a rear portion of the upper surface **103**. At the horizontal position, the upper surface **103** is horizontal. In other words, an angle of the control panel **101** relative to the NFC indication **71** is changeable.

[0047] Configuration of the second modification may allow a user to adjust an angle of the control panel **101** as desired, and to see the NFC indication **71** and the control panel **101** both at a glance. If the control panel **101** and the NFC indication **71** are close to each other, the control panel **101** may be moved to, for example, the inclined position, thereby preventing or reducing interference between the control panel **101** and an external device brought into proximity to the NFC indication **71**. This may lead to increased operability.

[Third Modification]

[0048] FIG. **8** is a right side view of an image forming apparatus **11** according to a third modification. The image forming apparatus **11** according to the third modification is different from the image forming apparatus **1** with respect to a pivotable control panel **111**. Except for the pivotable control panel **111**, the image forming apparatus **11** has the same or similar configuration as the image forming apparatus **1**.

[0049] The control panel **111** includes a pivot shaft **112** disposed at a front end portion of a bottom surface of the control panel **111**. The pivot shaft **112** extends in the left-right direction. The pivot shaft **112** is pivotally supported by a recess portion provided in the left support portion **41**. This configuration may allow the control panel **111** to pivotally move about the pivot shaft **112** between a horizontal position (as depicted by a solid line in FIG. **8**) and an inclined position (as depicted by a phantom line in FIG. **8**). At the horizontal position, an upper surface **113** of the control panel **111** is horizontal. At the inclined position, a front portion of the upper surface **113** is lower than a rear portion of the upper surface **113**. In other words, an angle of the control panel **111** relative to the NFC indication **71** is changeable.

[0050] Configuration of the third modification may allow a user to adjust the position of the control panel **111**, as desired, for example, to the horizontal position, and to see the NFC indication **71** and the control panel **111** both at a glance. If the control panel **111** and the NFC indication **71** are close to each other, the control panel **111** may be moved to, for example, the inclined position, thereby preventing or reducing interference between the control panel **111** and an external device brought into proximity to the NFC indication **71**. This may lead to increased operability.

Claims

1. An image forming apparatus comprising: a sheet discharge roller configured to discharge a sheet; a document scanner including, a document glass, an image scanner configured to scan an image on the document supported by the document glass, and a document cover pivotally movable about a cover pivot axis along with a first direction between a closed position, in which the document cover covers the document glass, and an open position, in which the document cover uncovers the document glass; an NFC indication located at the document cover; and a USB port; wherein the USB port and the NFC indication are located closer to a front side of the image forming apparatus than the sheet discharge roller is to the front side of the image forming apparatus in the rear-to-front direction.
2. The image forming apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising an image forming unit configured to form an image on the sheet, the sheet being configured to be formed the image thereon by the image forming unit.
3. The image forming apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the document cover includes a first surface facing a second direction crossing to the first direction, and wherein the NFC indication is located at the first surface.

- 4.** The image forming apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the second direction is perpendicular to the first direction.
 - 5.** The image forming apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the USB port is located below the document scanner.
 - 6.** The image forming apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a discharge tray configured to receive the sheet discharged by the sheet discharge roller, and wherein the USB port and the NFC indication are located above the discharge tray.
 - 7.** The image forming apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a control panel, the control panel pivotally movable about a panel pivot axis along with the first direction.
 - 8.** The image forming apparatus according to claim 7, wherein the control panel includes a panel pivot shaft extends in the first direction.
 - 9.** The image forming apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the sheet discharge roller is configured to discharge the sheet in the rear-to-front direction.
 - 10.** The image forming apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a control panel, and wherein the USB port is located at the control panel.
 - 11.** The image forming apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a control panel, and wherein the USB port and the control panel are located at a first side of the image forming apparatus in the first direction.
 - 12.** The image forming apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the NFC indication is located at the first side of the image forming apparatus.
 - 13.** The image forming apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the NFC indication is located on the document cover.
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