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SUBJECT Preventing Papers From Being Copied

BARBARA MANTELL: Earlier in the show, we told you about the problems National Semi-Conductor had with secret documents being mistakenly made public and then copied.

Well, a Japanese firm has developed a product that prevents papers from being copied.

Our Tokyo correspondent, Rich Varner, visited the company.

RICH VARNER: In a world with a copying machine in every office, protecting secret documents is no easy matter. But, a tiny Osaka-based company has set out to do just this.

Our recent trip to Osaka of Business Times visited Kyso Kassa[?], a firm of only 14 employees and capitalized at just \$24,000. Specializing in plastic films for overhead projectors and other applications, Kyso Kassa has developed a polyester film for protecting secret documents, and presently holds patents in eight countries.

To prevent copying, the film uses color coding and metalization techniques. It's easily applied, but permanently bonded to the surface of a secret document.

In demonstration, first an unprotected page is copied followed by a protected page. The attempted copy is totally blackened by the film.

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The spokesman says that the challenge lies in developing a film that prevents copying but still allows the original to be read. This requires a combination of colorization to absorb the incoming light, and metalization to reflect the light.

To do this, the top of the film is coated with a red pigment, and the bottom is metalized with an aluminum layer. The pigment absorbs, the aluminum reflects.

Under normal reading conditions, this combination still lets enough light pass for the document underneath to be legible. Using a light table makes it easier to read. The technique sounds simple enough, but, in fact, there are a number of difficulties, such as specifications which vary from copier-to-copier.

The first sample film worked on some copiers, but not on others. The answer was to introduce five different types of films and let the user choose the appropriate one.

The spokesman tells how surprised they were to find the majority of inquiries coming from overseas. Apart from the likely protectors of secrets, like national intelligence agencies, there were a number of private firms, many of them Mideast, that were eager to protect themselves from employees who carried copies of secret documents when they changed jobs.

In total, several hundred inquiries have been received.

The first shipments of the no-copy film are underway. The cost is about \$1 per letter-size page. Still, there is a much larger market, the demand for which is to prevent the illegal duplication of not top secret but merely copyrighted materials.

To satisfy this demand, Kyso Kassa must make the protected original easier to read at a price that will invite very largescale production. That's the challenge. The demand by copyright holders is huge.

MANTELL: That was Tokyo correspondent Rich Varner.