

Fingerprint Pads: The Future is Now

by Harold Hitt

The world is not the same as it was prior to September 11, 2001. Everyone has become more security-minded.

We now have identity theft to worry about as well as child abduction. Government, corporate America and individuals have had to think more about security. Fingerprint pads are being used extensively by most arms of the U.S. government, city, state and county offices, and law enforcement agencies. Banks from large to small, mortgage companies, pawn shops, sporting good stores where guns are sold, casinos, automotive dealers, retail stores, notaries, hospitals—all use them. More and more countries outside the U.S. are using fingerprint pads and indelible inks in their government elections. It isn't unusual to receive quotes for 20,000 to 250,000 pads per order.

Sizes and Types

Fingerprint pads are sold in several sizes, the larger sizes allowing for more imprints than the smaller sizes. There are a couple of different types of inks used in fingerprinting. The two most popular types used are dark and light inks. Law enforcement uses a dark ink, which leaves a dark, crisp imprint that can be photocopied or scanned. This ink may require a moist tow-

lette to clean the small amount of ink residue that is sometimes left on the fingers. The other Ink was developed with retail businesses in mind. It is considered in the industry to be an inkless pad. It leaves a clean, crisp imprint, and best of all it leaves no ink residue on hands. This pad is very popular with people who are fingerprinting their customers or the general public. There is no worry about mess or ink stains.



Hitt Marking Devices fingerprint products.



Harold Hitt.



Ken Hitt.



The new company building.

There are several sizes of pads, with imprints per pad ranging from 600 to 16,000 depending on the size of the pad. Economy pads on the market use a paper/felt surface and have a shorter lifespan. These products give fewer imprints per pad than the deluxe models but are less expensive. The deluxe pads typically use a very durable material surface, such as ceramic, or a hard porous surface. The smaller the pore opening, the better the imprint quality will be.

As everything does over time, fingerprint pads have been greatly improved over the years and become much less expensive. Fingerprint pads that used to dry out when left open for an extended amount of time are becoming obsolete and are being replaced with pads using specially formulated inks that allow the pad to be left open indefinitely without drying out.

Diversification and Selling

Fingerprint pads are an excellent fit for marking companies looking to diversify their product line. The buyers of fingerprint pads are usually the same buyers that are placing their rubber stamp and engraving orders with you. In most cases, all that is required by the marking products supplier is to ask their customers if they use fingerprint pads. Ask the buyers if they would like to receive a competitive quote on their next order. Buyers love free stuff, so try offering to send a *free* sample to get their attention. Your pad supplier should be able to provide you with a free sample to give to your customer. As we all know, the majority of buyers like to purchase from as few suppliers as possible. If they can get several products under one roof they will usually let you match the price they are paying or give you the price to beat.

When purchasing pads, be aware of suppliers that demand large minimum orders. This used to be the norm a few years ago when only a few companies were manufacturing fingerprint pads. Now, with the increased amount of pad manufacturers in the industry, large minimums can be avoided. Pad printing, hot stamping or private labeling the pads with your company information should be available to you from your supplier for a minimal charge per pad.

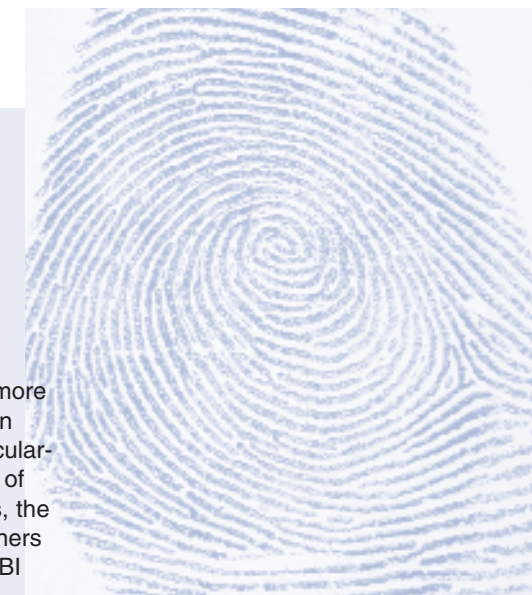
I hope this article has helped inform and enlighten you about the great opportunities that are available with this product. Good luck, and if I can be of any assistance please feel free to contact me.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Harold Hitt is president of Hitt Marking Devices Inc., a manufacturer/supplier of fingerprint pads, stone stamp pads and epoxy inks to the marking devices industry. For more information, contact him or the customer service department at 800/969-6699; website: www.hittmarking.com

Fingerprinting as Identification Through History

by Erin Cochran

Fingerprinting has been used as an identification system in crime solving for more than a century. A highly reliable method—the “friction ridge patterns” that define an individual’s fingerprints don’t change—fingerprint evidence continues to be a particularly accessible form of evidence for juries who may not understand the ins and outs of DNA matching or doubt its validity. In addition to its uses in criminal investigations, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) “requires applicants and petitioners for certain immigration benefits to be fingerprinted for the purpose of conducting FBI criminal background checks.”



1880 A *Scientific Journal* article by Dr. Henry Faulds is the first time in modern Western history that fingerprints are mentioned as a means of personal identification together with printers’ ink as way of recording the fingerprints.

1880s British anthropologist Francis Galton began researching the possibilities of using fingerprints a means of identification.

1891 Argentine police official Juan Vucetich began maintaining the first files of fingerprints based on Galton pattern types.

1892 Galton published *Fingerprints*, a detailed study of prints for all ten fingers that included the first classification system for fingerprints and identified the characteristics that allow fingerprints to be distinguished from one another. These markers, referred to as “minutia” or Galton’s Details, are the basis of identification systems still in use.

1892 Vucetich made the first fingerprint identification for the purposes of apprehending a criminal—a woman who murdered her sons and cut her own throat to divert attention from herself, but left a bloody print on a door post that sealed her fate.

1901 Sir Edward Richard Henry used and revised Galton’s research in developing the Henry Classification System, which is still used today in the English-speaking world.

1903 The New York state prison system began using fingerprints systematically in the identification of criminals.

1905 The U.S. Army began using fingerprints for identification, followed by an increasing number of law enforcement agencies over the next 25 years.

1924 Congress established the Identification Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Today, the FBI’s files—the largest collection in the world—include some 250 million sets of fingerprints from approximately 74 million criminals and civilians.

1999 The FBI’s Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System (IAFIS) began full operation. This system stores fingerprints as digital images and greatly reduces the time needed to correctly identify a set of prints.

Sources:

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