

TINY DOTS DETER THIEVES

Spot-on

By LUCY ARTHUR

THEY'RE not much bigger than a grain of sand but they can deter thieves and help return stolen property to the right people.

Microdots carry an identification code which can only be read using a special magnification device.

Bucklands Beach resident Peter Haszard is the managing director of a company distributing the dots.

He says he works with organisations like Neighbourhood Support and Federated Farmers to promote the system.

And some insurance companies are even starting to offer discounts to people who have had their belongings marked with microdots, he says.

The microdots are sold in kits that have their own identification code.

The adhesive surrounding them can be identified using ultraviolet light.

Police are able to access the database of identification codes and match stolen items with their owners.

Mr Haszard says the dots can be attached to items like boats, jetskis, motorcycles and cars.

A car needs about 8000 dots, a motorcycle about 1500 and smaller

assets such as computers about 20.

Pakuranga's Saint Kentigern College has had microdots put on printers, photocopiers, oil heaters, kettles and other equipment.

"We hope people will now think twice about carrying out an offence," says college trust board property manager Greg Noble.

He says the microdots are easy to use.

"It strikes me as quite a low-cost and simple way to protect your assets," Mr Noble says.

Last year when Howick community constable Phil Savill was working in Otahuhu as an intelligence officer microdots helped him trace stolen car parts back to the owners.

Mr Haszard says the technology is similar to that used by spies to communicate during World War Two.

The microdots can be removed but Mr Haszard says it is very difficult if they have been applied properly.

Howick police sergeant Keith Olsen says having the means to identify property and return it to its rightful owner is good.

However, he says preventing theft is better.



Light work: Bucklands Beach resident and Recordit managing director Peter Haszard uses ultraviolet light to show the adhesive surrounding a microdot on a painting.
Photo: JAMES MADELYN



Minuscule: A microdot magnified on the back of a picture frame.