

JSIP 2020 Panel Discussion Case Study

- ID Number Protection Sticker Case -

1. Case

We assume that the inventive step of a patented invention is disputed in a Trial for Patent Invalidation.

2. Background information¹

ID Number is typically a number unique to each resident which is allotted by a municipality to all residents. Each resident applies for the issuance of an ID Number at the municipal office of her/his own municipality. The issued ID Number is notified to the applicant by a Notification of ID Number sent from the municipal office. ID Numbers are composed of 12 characters, for example, a combination of Arabic numerals and other characters. ID Numbers are intended to be used repeatedly as a means of identification when receiving a variety of administrative services, such as filing a final return, resident registration accompanying a move, application for a driver's license, and application for a passport. Therefore, ID Numbers must be kept safe in a manner that does not allow others to view the information.

Example of an ID Number



3. Patented Invention

Date of filing March 20, 2015

Claim

“An ID Number protection sticker for concealing and protecting an ID Number on a Notification of ID Number by being attached to the area indicating the ID Number, wherein the sticker loses its ability to be reattached once removed, and wherein the sticker has a non-adhesive area which does not adhere to said Notification of ID Number, at least in the area in contact with said ID Number of an adhesive layer which constitutes said ID Number protection sticker.”

¹ “ID Number” is a fiction, which has no relation to any numbers that really exist.

Description and Drawings

[Background Art]

Fig.1 is a sample of the Notification of ID Number **100** sent to an applicant. When checking the ID Number, the applicant peels off the original blindfold sticker **120** and reads the ID Number **110**. Once the ID Number is checked, the original blindfold sticker is not capable of concealing and protecting the ID Number again, which may allow others to easily view the information. ID Number protection stickers are proposed for concealing and protecting the ID Number on the Notification of ID Number which falls into the

abovementioned state, which are attached to conceal the ID Number. These ID Number protection stickers also lose the ability to be reattached once peeled off.

[Fig.1] Notification of ID Number

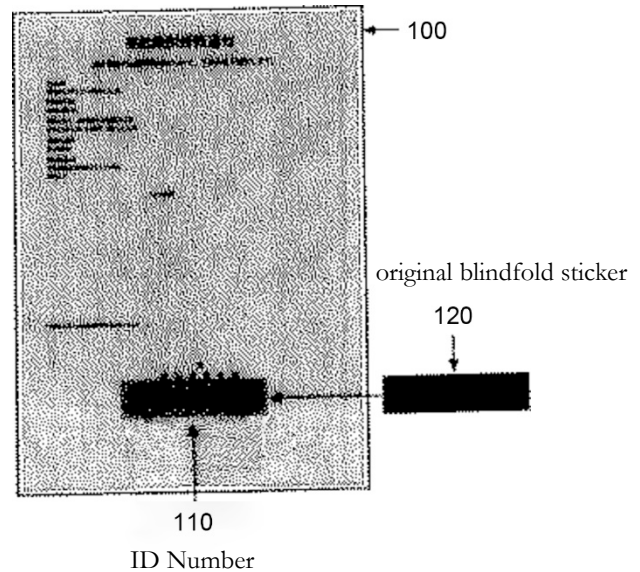
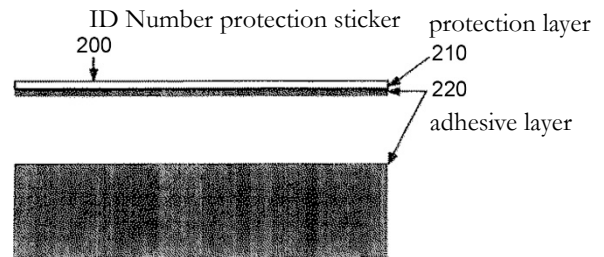


Fig.2 illustrates an ID Number protection sticker **200** of prior art. After the original blindfold sticker **120** has been peeled off, for example, this ID Number protection sticker **200** may be attached through the adhesive layer **220** to cover the ID Number **110** on the Notification of ID Number **100**

shown in Fig.1. ID Number protection sticker **200** comprises the protection layer **210** and an adhesive layer **220**. The side of the adhesive layer **220** adhered to the protection layer **210** and the other side attached on the Notification of ID Number **100** have different characteristics. The former has a very weak adhesiveness, which allows only the protection layer **210** to be removed and the adhesive layer **220** to remain on the Notification of ID Number **100** when the ID Number protection sticker **200** is peeled off. The adhesion between the adhesive layer **220** and the protection layer **210** is weak, which prevents protection layer **210** from being reattached.

[Fig.2]

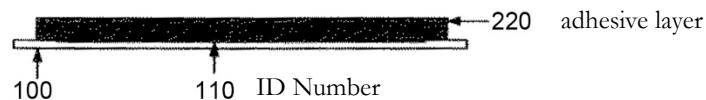


ID Number protection sticker **200** is available in general stationery stores and book stores, etc.

[Problem to be solved]

ID Numbers are repeatedly used for receiving a variety of administrative services, typically, filing a final return, resident registration accompanying a move, application for a driver's license, and application for a passport. Each time, a user performs a series of operations: peels off the ID Number protection sticker **200**, checks the ID Number **110**, and then conceals and protects the ID Number **110** by attaching a new ID Number protection sticker **200** to conceal the ID Number **110** on the Notification of ID Number **100**. Fig.3 illustrates a schematic view of a section of the part indicating the ID Number **110** on the Notification of ID Number **100** after attaching and peeling off the ID Number protection sticker **200** several times. Fig.3 illustrates a number of adhesive layers **220** attached to previously applied layers. If the adhesive layer **220** is colored or its transparency is low, the ID Number **110** may become unreadable after several adhesive layers have been applied.

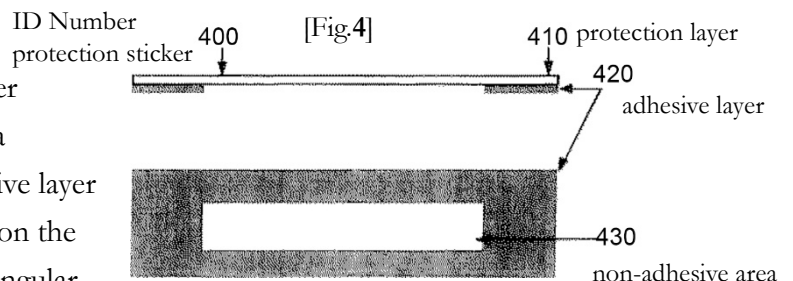
[Fig.3]



The present invention was conceived of so as to overcome the shortcomings of the prior art. The objective of the invention is to provide an ID Number protection sticker which effectively conceals and protects the ID Number on a Notification of ID Number and at the same time while preventing the ID Number from becoming unreadable.

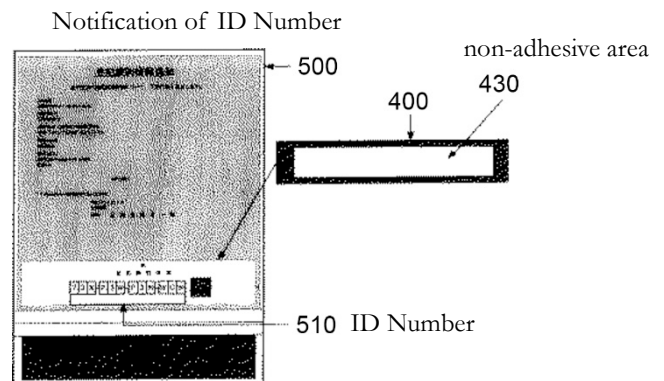
[Embodiment]

Fig.4 illustrates that an ID Number protection sticker **400** comprises a protection layer **410** and an adhesive layer **420**. As shown by a bottom view on the lower side in Fig.4, there is a rectangular non-adhesive area **430** provided inside the adhesive layer **420**.



[Fig.5]

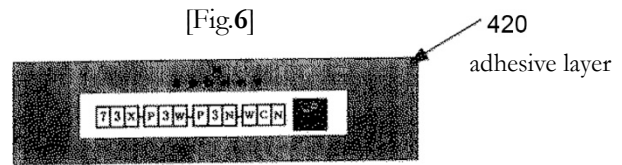
When a user receives a Notification of ID Number **500**, the user peels off the original blindfold sticker and checks the ID Number **510**. Next, as illustrated in Fig.5, the user may conceal and protect the ID Number **510** once again by attaching an ID Number protection



sticker **400** to cover the ID Number on the Notification of ID Number **500**.

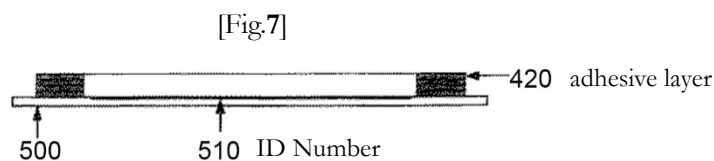
ID Number **510** is repeatedly used for receiving a variety of administrative services, etc. Each time, the user performs the series of operations: peels off the ID Number protection sticker

400, checks the ID Number **510**, and then conceals and protects the ID Number **510** by attaching a new ID Number protection sticker **400** covering the ID Number **510** on the Notification of ID Number **500**. Fig.6 illustrates the Notification of ID Number **500** from which the ID Number protection sticker **400** has been removed.



[Effect]

Repeated use of the ID Number **510** causes the repetition of the abovementioned operations, which results in over-accumulation of adhesive layers **420** as shown in Fig.7. However, the adhesive layers **420** do not accumulate on the ID Number **510**, therefore, the ID Number **510** does not become unreadable even if the adhesive layer is colored or composed of material of low transparency.



4. Document 1 (Published Patent Application)

Date of publication March 1, 2007

Claim

“An ID Number protection sticker for concealing an ID Number after the original blindfold sticker has been removed, which was concealing the ID Number on a Notification of ID Number sent by a municipal office, wherein the ID Number protection sticker loses its ability to be reattached once removed.”

Description and Drawings

[Background Art]

Currently, the ID Number is notified by a notification on which what is referred to as an original blindfold sticker is attached to the area where the ID Number is indicated. This original blindfold sticker protects the ID Number. The original blindfold sticker is a sticker which loses its ability to be reattached once removed.

[Problem to be solved]

When receiving various administrative services, the ID Number must be presented, which requires the user to check the ID Number indicated on the Notification of ID Number each time. As described above, the original blindfold sticker is not capable of being reattached once removed, hence is unusable for concealing the ID Number thereafter, which may lead to compromising security of the ID Number.

[Embodiment]

As illustrated in Fig.1, the user attaches an ID Number protection sticker **100** on the Notification of ID Number to conceal the ID Number. More precisely, the ID Number protection sticker **100** is attached on the part defined by the dotted line on the Notification of ID Number.

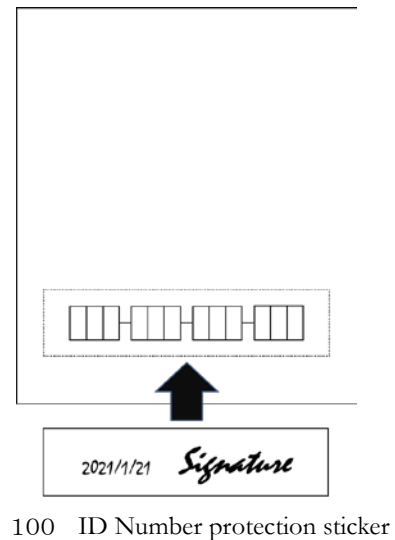
As an ID Number protection sticker, one may employ a sticker which is able to conceal the ID Number and which loses its ability to be reattached once removed. Such stickers are comprised of an opaque layer and an adhesive layer. The back side of the adhesive layer is retained on the opaque layer with a weak adhesive force. On the other hand, the surface of the adhesive layer has a strong adhesive force. When the sticker is removed, only the opaque layer is removed and the adhesive layer remains.

When using the ID Number, the user removes the attached ID Number protection sticker **100** and checks the ID Number. The removed ID Number protection sticker **100** is discarded. The user then conceals the ID Number by attaching a new ID Number protection sticker **100** to cover the ID Number, writes down on the sticker **100** any pertinent information such as date, and signs the sticker **100**. The next time the ID Number is used, the user performs this same series of operations.

[Effect]

ID Number is protected by attaching an ID Number protection sticker on a Notification of ID Number to conceal the ID Number.

[Fig.1]



100 ID Number protection sticker

5. Document 2 (Published Utility Model Application)

Date of publication June 15, 1988

Claim

“A confidential information protection sheet comprising a sheet member having an opaque element which non-transparently covers the information area of the covered member, wherein a printed layer, which may be removed, is formed on the sheet member being positioned on the circumference of the information area, and wherein a pressure sensitive adhesive layer bonding the sheet member to the covered member is stacked on the printed layer.”

Description and Drawings

[Background Art]

In recent years, notifications that provide personal information such as results of a variety of pass-fail tests such as license tests and certification tests are mailed to test takers from testing agencies, etc. In general, these notifications are mailed in the form of a postcard or an envelope. An envelope costs more, thus a postcard is better in terms of costs. However, a postcard has the disadvantage of having personal information exposed and unprotected.

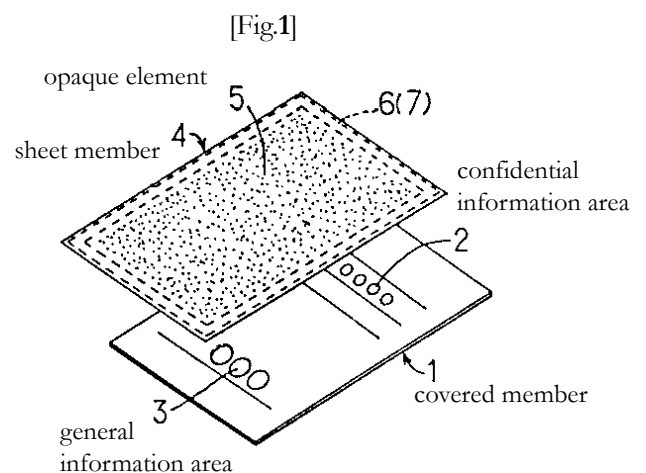
[Problem to be solved]

The present invention is related to a confidential information protection sheet which is bonded to a covered member like a postcard so as to non-transparently cover the information indicated on the covered member, wherein, once the sheet has been removed, leak of the confidential information by the removal may not be concealed by reattaching the sheet to the covered member.

[Embodiment]

In the embodiment illustrated in Figs.1 to 3, a postcard is shown as an example of a covered member 1 and a plastic film sheet of the same size is shown as an example of a sheet member 4.

The covered member 1 has, for example, a confidential information area 2 which contains confidential information such as the result of a pass-fail test, and a general information area 3 which contains non-confidential information such as the name of the sender.

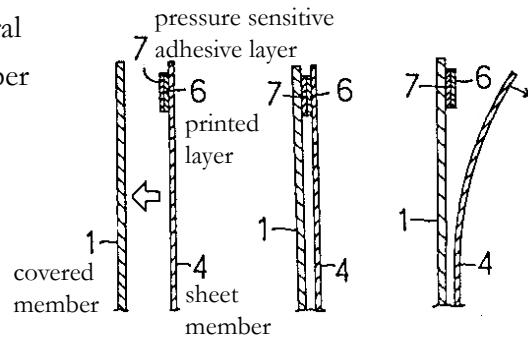


As illustrated in Fig.2A, on the peripheral rim of the back side of the sheet member 4, an opaque printed layer 6, which is removable, is formed, and a pressure sensitive adhesive layer 7 is stacked on printed layer 6. The printed layer 6 is continuously formed by printing on the entire peripheral rim of the sheet member

[Fig.2A]

[Fig.2B]

[Fig.2C]

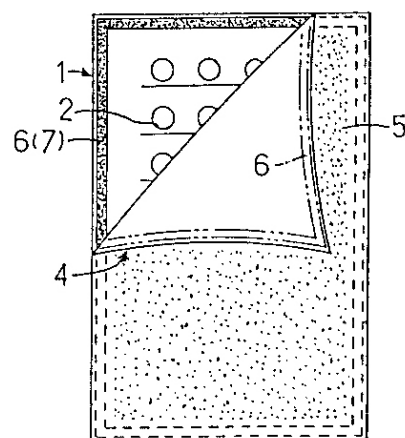


4. In the same manner, the pressure sensitive adhesive layer 7 is continuously formed by pasting the adhesive. As the bonding force of the pressure sensitive adhesive layer 7 is strong enough to remove the printed layer 6 from the sheet member 4, the pressure sensitive adhesive layer 7 is not formed on the center of the back side of the sheet member 4 stacked on the area where information is printed showing the covered member 1 details, namely, the confidential information area 2 and the general information area 3.

First, as illustrated in Fig.2A, the exposed adhesive layer 7 of the sheet member 4 is stacked on the covered member 1 in proper alignment and pressed against it. By this action, as illustrated in Fig.2B, the sheet member 4 is stacked on and bonded to the covered member 1, which non-transparently covers the confidential information area 2 by the opaque element 5.

Next, when the sheet member 4 is removed from the covered member 1, as illustrated in Fig.2C and Fig.3, while the printed layer 6 may be removed from the sheet member 4, it is bonded to the pressure sensitive adhesive layer 7, therefore a large part of said printed member 6 or at least a part thereof is randomly transferred onto the adhesive layer 7. Thus, even if one tries to reattach the sheet member 4 to the covered member 1, the sheet member 4 does not adhere to the removed printed layer 6. They remain separate and do not return to the original state.

[Fig.3]



Additionally, the covered member **1** being a postcard in the above-described embodiment, the confidential information protection sheet of the present invention may be used, for example, to the confidential information details on a package such as a carton, or to confidential information described in the document.

[Effect]

The effect of the present invention is that a leak of the confidential information is detected without fail in case information is stolen by removal of the sheet member **4** from the covered member **1**. This is achieved by a large part of said printed member **6** or at least a part thereof being randomly transferred from the sheet member **4** to the covered member **1** side, which makes restoration extremely difficult and exposes the removal.

6. Document 3 (Blog by a user of ID Number protection sticker)

Date of publication September 30, 2009

“As you know, a sticker is put on the ID Number on the notification sent from the city office. After peeling off the sticker, the remaining thin adhesive layer is noticeable. The sticker is of no further use once removed. This is where the ID Number protection sticker becomes necessary. You can attach a new sticker on the ID Number to conceal it again. But, if you remove this sticker, another adhesive layer will remain on the first one. Repeating attachment and removal, the adhesive layers will grow in thickness. The printing of the ID Number is pale, so the number may become difficult to read. Three layers or so may not be an issue, but as you know, the ID Number is used more than three times.”

7. Key points of each Published Document

The key points of documents 1 to 3 are as follows.

Document 1

- An invention corresponds to an ID Number protection sticker. More than one sticker is typically attached and removed.
- D1 does not disclose the problem to be solved by the patented invention (to prevent the ID Number from becoming unreadable after repeated use of the ID Number protection sticker.)
- D1 does not disclose whether the ID Number protection sticker has a “non-adhesive area” or not.
- D1 discloses that the user dates and signs the ID Number protection sticker. D1 does not explicitly state whether this action has an operation or a function to detect the fact that someone has stolen the information and attached a new sticker, however, it is arguably obvious.

Document 2

- In addition to a postcard illustrated as a covered member of the embodiment, the confidential information protection sheet may be used, for example, to maintain privacy of confidential information described in the document. However, D2 does not disclose that the sheet is used for an ID Number which is subject to repeated inspection.
- D2 does not disclose the problem to be solved by the patented invention.
- D2 discloses that the confidential information protection sheet has a one-time use that protects the confidential information during delivery of a covered member such as a postcard to a receiver. D2 also discloses that the sheet member is not capable of being directly reattached once removed and at least a part of the opaque printed layer is randomly transferred onto the covered member side, which achieves the detection of an unauthorized opening.
- D2 discloses that no pressure sensitive adhesive layer is placed on information areas.

Document 3

- A user's view of the ID Number protection sticker is disclosed in a blog published more than 5 years before the date of filing of the patented invention.
- D3 is the sole evidence referring to the problem to be solved by the patented invention.

8. Comparative Table of Patented Invention and Published Documents

	Patented Invention	D1	D2	D3
Use	ID Number	ID Number	Pass-fail test result	ID Number
Nature of information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidential • Repetitive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidential • Repetitive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidential • One-time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidential • Repetitive
Disadvantage of prior art	Unreadability of information	Unwanted disclosure of information repeatedly used	Unwanted disclosure of information used only once	Unreadability of information
Problem solved by the invention / effect of the invention	Prevention of unreadability of information	Concealment of information repeatedly used	Detection of removal by others (randomly transferred opaque printed layer)	N/A (Mere presentation of disadvantage)
Subject	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attach: user • Remove: user 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attach: user • Remove: user 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attach: sender • Remove: user 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attach: user • Remove: user
Structure	Non-adhesive area on information section	No mention regarding non-adhesive area on information section	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opaque printed layer on pressure sensitive adhesive layer • No pressure sensitive adhesive area on information section 	Adhesive area on information section
Operations or functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention of unreadability of information • Concealment of information repeatedly used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concealment of information repeatedly used • Detection of removal by others (signature) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concealment of information used only once • Detection of removal by others (randomly transferred opaque printed layer) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concealment of information repeatedly used

9. Identical features and differences

The identical features and differences between the patented invention and D1 are as follows.

Identical features

“An ID Number protection sticker for concealing and protecting an ID Number on a Notification of ID Number by being attached to the area indicating the ID Number, wherein the sticker loses its ability to be reattached once removed, and wherein the sticker has an adhesive layer which constitutes the ID Number protection sticker.”

Differences

The patented invention has “a non-adhesive area which does not adhere to the Notification of ID Number, at least in the area in contact with the ID Number of an adhesive layer,” whereas it is not clear whether the adhesive layer of D1 is formed on the entire surface of the sticker or on a part thereof.

There is no contention between the parties regarding the identical features and differences.

10. Discussion Points

(1) Problem to be solved

Discussion Point “Does the person skilled in the art try to solve the problem of the patented invention, which is the prevention of unreadability caused by repeated use, in the ID Number protection sticker disclosed in D1?”

- ① If the problem to be solved by the patented invention is well-known to the person skilled in the art, even though said problem is not described in D1, does the person skilled in the art attempt to improve the invention described in D1 in an effort to create a solution to the problem?

Attempts to improve: Y Does not attempt to improve: N

- ② Is it reasonable to determine that the problem to be solved by the patented invention was well-known to the person skilled in the art, who is the manufacturer and vendor of ID Number protection stickers, based on the sole evidence D3 which is a user's view more than 5 years before the date of filing of the patented invention?

Reasonable: Y Unreasonable: N

(2) Technical field

Discussion Point “Is the technical field of D2 related to that of D1 to the extent that the person skilled in the art attempts to employ a prior art in the technical field of the confidential information protection sheet of D2 when the person improves the ID Number protection sticker disclosed in D1?”

Related: Y Unrelated: N

(3) Operation or function

Discussion Point “D1 and D2 have a common operation or function, which is the “detection of removal”. Although not explicitly stated, D1’s signature on the sticker has an operation or serves a function to detect removal of the sticker by others. D2’s opaque printed layer, which is transferred when peeled off, has an operation or serves a function to detect the removal of the sheet member by others. May this common operation or function, which is the detection of removal, be a motivation to apply D2 to D1 although the common operation or function does not correspond to the problem to be solved by the patented invention and also it is achieved by different mechanisms for detection in D1 and D2?”

May be a motivation: Y May not be a motivation: N

(4) Effect

Discussion Point “If there was a motivation that the person skilled in the art would apply D2 to D1, is the effect of the patented invention, which is the prevention of unreadability caused by repeated use, considered to be expected by the person skilled in the art?”

Expected: Y Unexpected: N

(5) Conclusion

Discussion Point “Considering above (1) to (4) in a comprehensive manner, is the patented invention invalid?”

Invalid: Y Not invalid (Valid): N

Prepared by JPO based on Case 7 from [“Trial and Appeal Practitioner Study Group Report 2019”](#)



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