

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2007



Promotional Products

Over 700,000 items in all prices. Custom premiums & promotions. www.OverturePromo.com

Large Format Laser System

CO2 Laser Cutting & Engraving 3D Engraving and Metal Cutting www.kernlasers.com

Etching and Engraving

Find Providers and Sellers of Etching and Engraving Equipment www.business.com

Branded pens with Logo

Your Clients will Love these Light-Up Pens with your Logo www.Logo-Lites.com

Ads by Google

- Channels**
- Home
- News
- Columnists
- Podcasts
- Movies
- Book Club
- Entertainment
- Carguide
- Holiday Gift Guide
- Learning Curve
- Travel
- Workology
- Lifestyle
- Plugged In
- Sports
- Business
- Your Money
- Dream Homes
- Horoscopes
- Weather

- Read Metro**
- Toronto
- Vancouver
- Montreal
- Ottawa
- Calgary
- Edmonton

Hate it?



METRO FILE

PUBLISHED DECEMBER 11, 2007

Duo add branded touch to electronics



RAFAEL BRUSILOW FOR METRO TORONTO

John Catanus, left, and Bruno Mackay are the founders of HiTech Tattoos, a new Canadian company that tattoos electronic equipment.

For people too squeamish to get branded permanently themselves, a new Canadian company is hoping to tap into people's desire for personalization by letting them tattoo their electronic gadgets instead.

John Catanus and Bruno Mackay, founders of HiTech Tattoos, got the idea from reading a blog entry by an engineer in the U.S. who figured out a way to program regular industrial lasers to burn visual patterns into metal. Shortly afterwards, several American companies popped up using the technology for a variety of cosmetic applications, but no one caught onto the idea in Canada.

"I did a lot of research online and I didn't find anyone pitching this idea here, so I said, 'Let's do it!'" Mackay said.

Despite very little advertising so far, Catanus says roughly 80 people have come through the doors to have their gadgets zapped since HiTech opened its doors in October.

"We're in a society that idolizes gadgets. If you think about it, every 18-year-old has at least a cellphone," Mackay said.

HiTech partnered recently with Rogers to engrave phones for new subscribers as a promotion, and they hope to work with marketing companies in the future. A street-level promotional campaign is in the works as well.

While lasers are ancient by technological standards — the first one was built in 1960 — using one to personalize consumer-level gadgets is a new idea. Designs engraved by the laser have a similar appearance to decals or painted designs, but no colouring actually takes place. Instead, the particular colour of each engraving comes from the actual colour of the under-material itself, which is revealed by the laser as it burns away a very thin top layer of the surface material. Black or dark grey gadgets tend to burn light grey, while aluminum gadgets take on a strong black tone. While traditional engraving has existed for years, a laser does the job faster (about 30 seconds for a cellphone), allows more complex designs and doesn't require changing a cutting tip for different materials.

Plans for the future include testing the laser to allow engraving of sneakers and stone surfaces, with Catanus suggesting the possibilities are truly limitless and depend only on what consumers will go for.

"As long as you can test things, you can engrave almost anything with it. There's a lot of potential — you let the consumers dictate it," he said.

Catanus says being friends for eight years at a previous company has made it easier to go into business together.

"We started off just as co-workers, so it was a natural progression to become friends and then business partners. We're open with each other, we know the weaknesses of each other and we know how to complement each other," Catanus said.

RAFAEL BRUSILOW FOR METRO TORONTO

- Tips on buying
- Free seminars
- Warranty information
- Builder profiles

TARION
www.tarion.com

PROTECTING ONTARIO'S NEW HOME BUYERS

advertisement

Ads by Google

[Glass Engraving Equipment](#)

Etch any design into glass, rock, professional results. On-Line video www.scmssysteminc.com

[Large Format Laser System](#)

CO2 Laser Cutting & Engraving 3D Engraving and Metal Cutting www.kernlasers.com

[\\$1599 Laser Engraver](#)

IE series cutting marking Wholesale Retail Welcome! www.iehk.net

[Personalized Promotional](#)

Business Promotional Gifts & Items. Low Cost Guarantee! Order Online. www.Branders.com

[Promotional Products](#)

10000+ imprinted products to choose Fridge Magnets, Pens, Mugs, Golf www.promoscanada.com

advertisement

[Columnists](#) - [Letters to the Editor](#) - [Contact Us](#) - [Advertise](#) - [About](#)