

Ion-Mask Technology Could Make Waterproof Gadgets Widespread

January 2 2008, by Lisa Zyga



Using technology developed by the British Defense Department to repel chemicals from soldiers' uniforms, a spin-off company called P2i is fabricating waterproof cell phones and other gadgets. Because the so-called "Ion-Mask" technology is inexpensive and doesn't require extra bulk, P2i hopes that the novel method could launch the mass-production of waterproof gadgets.

Ion-Mask is an invisible coating that is chemically bonded to a device using a plasma (an electrically charged gas). The coating has chemical properties that allow it to repel water and oil - or, in the case of soldiers'

uniforms, toxic vapors and liquids. Instead of seeping through the cracks, water simply beads off the surface of the device.

The thin coating has advantages over the seals that are currently used for making some devices waterproof. Many small gadgets have tiny cracks that are too small for the seals to be used, but the Ion-Mask coating can be applied to even the smallest components. The new technology is also more convenient than the bulky water-tight cases some phones use.

When treated with the Ion-Mask coating, gadgets are protected from moisture, rain and even full immersion, according to P2i. In other words, it could enable die-hard cell phone users to talk while taking a shower.

According to The Telegraph, P2i is in discussions with three leading phone makers about using Ion-Mask on a range of products. In 2006, more than 1.2 million cell phones suffered from water damage, such as by being dropped in sinks or put through washing machines. Water damage was one of the top cell phone insurance claims, and consumers would likely pay a few extra dollars to avoid it.

Besides mobile electronics, the Ion-Mask coating is also being developed by the shoe company High-Tec for making waterproof shoes. In the future, P2i hopes that a wide range of products will take advantage of the new waterproofing method.

Via: [The Telegraph](#)

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