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## NYPD comes to NYU to tag gadgets

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Campus criminals beware: NYU's Department of Public Safety is teaming up with the NYPD to host Operation Identification, a program that tags and registers electronic devices so owners can be identified when lost or stolen property is recovered.

Operation ID will be held at NYU this Thursday from 3 to 6 p.m. in the lobby of Founders residence hall, where students and faculty can register their cell phones, iPods, laptops and other small electronic devices with the police.

According to NYU's Crime Prevention Manager Jay Zwicker, an infrared pen will mark electronics with a distinct serial number that will be fed into an NYPD database. This will allow the police to access the property's description, model and owner information if the item is recovered. After items are tagged with an infrared pen, police will be able to view the serial number by shining a light on the device.

"They'll be able to ascertain who the owner is and get in touch with the owner to reunite them with their property," said Zwicker, who is also assistant director of Public Safety.

Operation ID serves as a preemptive measure in case items are stolen, said José Vera, an officer in the NYPD's crime prevention section.

"We just try to go ahead and alert people in case anybody takes any personal property of somebody else, and we can ID it," Vera said.

CAS freshman Caitlin Link said she thinks the program is beneficial for lost property. But she is skeptical about the recovery of stolen items.

"This program is going to be absolutely useless if something is stolen, because the items will rarely turn up again," Link said.

But Zwicker said that wouldn't necessarily be the case. Both NYU Public Safety and the NYPD have recovered property without knowing to whom it belongs, he said.

"When you walk into the property custodian's office at the police department, they have all types of electronics," Zwicker said. "This is just a method to reunite property with their owners."

Zwicker said he thinks Operation ID is a valuable program, and he hopes many students and faculty members will participate.

"Sometimes it's not the value of the property; it's the information that's contained on the BlackBerrys and laptops and what have you," he said. "It doesn't cost anything, and if it reunites one owner with their property, it's successful."