Applying Numbers to Specimens

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Although this topic is somewhat outside the domain of micro-mineral collecting, I suspect many in our hobby group are occasionally confronted with the task of applying reference numbers to larger specimens. This is usually true for those who catalog their collection specimens.

A computer generated printed sheet of sequential numbers is the typical starting point. Font size selection enables the numbers to be scaled and printed to the desired size. A toner type laser printer is recommended, as the numbers are less likely to smudge or run during the gluing process. Over the years I have experimented with a number of adhesives for applying these small numbers. I used Duco cement and clear nail polish until recently. The numbers were affixed by first applying the adhesive to the specimen area, plopping the number on the spot, and then finishing with a generous application of the adhesive over the top of the number. Apply the top coat in one smooth pass. Repeated passes will ultimately smudge the number.

Last year, while working on a hobbyist electronics project, I came across an adhesive that provides superior performance. This liquid is a urethane conformal coating that is used for protecting electronic circuits from environmental effects, particularly humidity and moisture. I purchased a small, 2 oz., bottle on the web: (http://www.circuitspecialists.com/4223-55ml.html?otaid=gpl&gclid=CjwKEAiAveWnBRCzjqf4zpuUkGYSJABcoZbHhQaF5i8eZmCYjyQYTXhBecSyn312DQs0JQ-EAlKbahoCJQzw_wcB) for $11.43 (plus shipping), - photo below.

I use a toothpick to apply the urethane liquid. This adhesive dries a bit slower than nail polish or Duco cement, typically taking about a half an hour. In the ten months since I purchased the bottle, it has shown no signs of drying out. If this continues, a single bottle could last a lifetime.

Specimen number attached with urethane conformal coating

8 cm granite chunk with several numbers applied as part of my evaluation.