

The Xerox Copiers: Difficult to Trace

By Peter Braestrup

Washington Post Staff Writer

In the age of the omnipresent office Xerox, what is a safe document?

Company memos, government roccuments, confidential FBI lists—all can be quickly copied, returned to their file racks, and later exploited for political or business advantage—or simply to disclose the facts.

Such was the case of Sen. Thomas Dodd (D-Conn.) whose staff members leaked to newsmen Xeroxed copies of personal files showing that the senator used campaign contributions to his own advantage. Last March, 1000 documents were stolen from the Media, Pa., office of the FBI and later excerpts were fed to newspapers. Last week, The New

York Times and The Washington Post published articles based on a secret Defense Department history of Vietnam policymaking.

Rep. Paul McCloskey (R-Calif.) said he had received an "immense amount" of documents from Daniel Ellsberg, a former Pentagon official turned antiwar writer.

The insider who decides to copy a secret document is exceedingly hard to trace. He needs no mini-camera or special equipment. All he needs is access to a Xerox machine.

The individual Xerox machine—unlike the typewriter—leaves no constant distinctive mark or "fingerprint" on the copies (most other copying machines require special paper) it splits forth. "If it were a national emergency,

and I had unlimited funds, I might go in the lab and come up with something," a Xerox spokesman quoted a company specialist as saying.

Each Xerox copier, according to company officials, leaves on its copies from time to time minute imperfections—or temporary "fingerprint" from the light-sensitive selenium drum that is a major element in the Xerography process.

However, it is rare that telltale blemishes last very long, according to Xerox officials, since they are the prime concern of the technical representatives who service the machines, often monthly. Now the old "fingerprint" transmitted to the copy weeks earlier has been erased.

"You might catch a machine—it's a function of time or usage—where this has persisted," a Xerox man said. "But it's a matter of rare circumstances."

Various "model groups" of Xerox machines do have distinctive marks. The early desk-top copiers—models 813, 660, 661—show "gripper marks" on the edges of the copy paper.

The bigger and newer "curved glass" topped 2400, 3600 and 7000 models produce a completely smooth surface, in contrast to the slight "braille" effect of printing on earlier machines.

But there are thousands of individual machines in each model group. By one unofficial estimate, there are more than 200,000 of the 660-model

alone in the United States and 2,000 of them in one city, Boston.

Worst of all, according to Xerox officials, there is no way for an official to know his private papers have been Xeroxed. The copying process has no effect on the chemical composition of the paper being copied.

U.S., S. Korea View

Textile Agreement

SEOUL, June 19 (AP)—U.S. Special Envoy David M. Kennedy met today with South Korean Deputy Premier Kim Hak-yul to negotiate an agreement to negotiate an agreement to negotiate an agreement to negotiate an agreement.

No progress has been reported in the negotiations which began Tuesday.