

Collectors like typewriters in the best of condition

Q My grandfather bought this typewriter at auction. It was made by the Yost Typewriter Co. of Bridgeport, Conn. I wonder how old it is and its possible value.

—Shirley Steiner, Adams, Neb.

A Primary credit for invention of the typewriter usually goes to Christopher Latham Sholes of Milwaukee, who patented a device that became the basis for the first successful commercially produced machine, the Sholes & Glidden Type Writer, which appeared in 1874.



This typewriter, made before World War I, needs work and so is worth only \$75 to \$125.

Sholes also invented the “qwerty” keyboard (named after the top-left row of keys), which is still used on computer keyboards. The “qwerty” arrangement distributed the most frequently typed letters across the keyboard to prevent the typewriter keys from jamming.

These typewriter facts and a host of others, along with help in

dating and identifying your own machine are widely available on the World Wide Web. The Early Office Museum at www.officemuseum.com, for instance, has a typewriter section full of history and photographs. And at <http://xavier.xu.edu:8000/~polt/typewriters.html>, you will find The Classic Typewriter Page, a source of copious information, including an archived Typewriter of the Month gallery.

Richard Polt of the Classic Typewriter Page identifies your machine as either a Yost Model 15 of 1908 or a Yost No. 20 of 1912. Its maker, George Washington Newton Yost, was an early typewriter entrepreneur who worked to put out early E. Remington & Sons typewriter models before starting his own company.

Chuck Dilts, co-editor of ETCetera, newsletter for the Early Typewriter Collectors Association at <http://typewriter.rydia.net/etcetera.htm>, notes that a Yost in better condition would have less paint loss as well as a “paper table,” a metal part at the top of the carriage that



Leslie Hindman

Consequently, it likely is worth about \$75 to \$125.

Q Hopefully you can provide an evaluation of my chandelier. I have provided photos and information on its size. It is marked “Bryant” with a patent date of May 17, 1910.

—*Sylvia Greenberg, South Holland*

A In this case, the mark and date you sent don’t help because both appear on the light-bulb socket and refer to the maker and the patent date of the socket, not the chandelier. Chandeliers seldom are marked and, over the years, have been made by hundreds of firms.



This chandelier might sell for \$1,000 to \$1,500.

The neoclassical design of the chandelier, which would have first been employed in the early 19th Century, also presents difficulties.

“This is a design that is still being made today,” said Jim Newman of New Metal Crafts Inc. of Chicago (www.newmetalcrafts.com), “so dating the piece can be difficult. To me, it looks to have been made within the last 50 years.”

Victoria Shaw-Williamson, formerly a decorative arts specialist at Christie’s and now an independent appraiser in New York City, is inclined to date your chandelier a bit earlier, to about 1920.

At about 15 inches across, she notes, it would have been made to “grace the formal entryway of a large home.”

Assuming that all the crystals on the chandelier are present and undamaged and that the frame is free of dents and defects, Shaw-Williamson estimates that it might bring \$1,000 to \$1,500 at auction.

Leslie Hindman is the author of “Adventures at the Auction,” host of an HGTV show and owner of Leslie Hindman Gallery in Chicago. She welcomes letters but cannot reply to them individually and cannot return photographs. She answers those of general interest and that have publishable photographs in her column; appraisals are not given over the phone. Write (no e-mail), sending clear photos of objects with identifying marks visible, a brief history and daytime phone number to: Home&Garden, Chicago Tribune, 435 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60611, Attn: What’s It Worth.

The Classic Typewriter Page

This article was written by [Berthold Kerschbaumer](#)
and translated by [Richard Polt](#)

Mignon



SM 1001

This machine often marks the beginning of a collector's passion, especially in Europe. Since the Mignon was on the market for almost 30 years in not insignificant numbers -- over 350,000 specimens were manufactured -- and since its unusual appearance makes it stand out, it can often be found at various flea markets at relatively good prices. Like many inventions, the Mignon was at first the godchild of a completely different idea: its manufacturer was the *Allgemeine Electricitäts Gesellschaft (AEG)* of Berlin, on whose board of directors sat the creator and former director of the dynamo division of Siemens, *Friedrich von Hefner-Alteneck*. Since he had relevant experiences in the field of electric telegraphy, he was able to convince the board of directors to develop an electric typewriter in order to expand the company's product line. Under his direction, an electric keyboard typewriter for professional use was constructed, and six prototypes were manufactured.



At the same time, in 1901-1902, a mechanical index typewriter for personal use, the Mignon, was developed on the basis of a patent by Louis Sell of Berlin (no. 149308 of December 22, 1901), and the first 50 machines were produced. The board of directors could not be persuaded that the electric machine was ready for the market, and saw real sales potential only for the Mignon.

Thus, the machine which had been conceived "only" as

a secondary project was put into further production, and in 1903, the Union-Schreibmaschinen-Gesellschaft was founded as its special distributor. Until a few years ago, it was a matter of doubt whether this Model 1 of the Mignon, pictured here, had been produced at all, since only advertising illustrations were known. But in 1990 the first photos of the typewriter were published in HBW (Historische Bürowelt), and shortly thereafter a complete specimen finally turned up, in the Heimatmuseum of Erfurt, in the former East Germany.

In 1905 the improved Model 2 came on the market, probably at first with a red finish. Now the machine has a ribbon instead of an ink roller, and the space key and printing key are found to the right of the index. This basic arrangement was altered only slightly in subsequent models. The Mignon is an index typewriter whose rectangular index includes 84 characters in seven rows. The lowercase letters are arranged on the right, the capitals on the left, and special characters on the perimeter. The arrangement of the characters follows the order of their frequency, starting with the center of the index. When a type cylinder in a foreign language was used, the index could also be replaced, simply by lifting the old one out and inserting the new one. However, this advertisement from January 1908 shows an early version of the Model 2 in which the index was still screwed to the frame.



The method of typing is described as follows in "*Mechanik und kurze Geschichte der Schreibmaschine*" by Karl Czerny: "With the left hand one grasps the handle of the indicator needle (**m**), which can easily be turned in every direction, and brings the tip of the needle, at the index (**a**), to the letter which is to be written. The type cylinder (**g**) is thereby turned and possibly pushed forward, until the letter reaches the point of impression. When the printing key (**c**) is depressed, the type cylinder descends, and by striking through the ribbon, prints the letter." The key (**b**) served as the space key.

In contrast to Model 2, in which the carriage was returned by holding down the space key and simultaneously pushing the carriage back, Model 3 is equipped with a carriage release and a line spacing lever on the right side of the carriage. The protective cover over the type cylinder mechanism is now metal, whereas in Model 2 it was made of papier mache.

Model 4 (1924), which is pictured at the top of this page, includes the innovation of a backspacer. An extra-wide carriage with a platen 42 cm long was available as a special accessory. There was also an aluminum version on which the base of the indicator needle could fold down, and there were export models with colored finishes.

In 1933 the last model of the Mignon appeared, the Olympia Plurotype, which offered three separate options for spacing between characters, in order, for example, to make



it possible to justify the right margin, or to write in poster type without the need to hit the space key after each letter. It is worth noting that for the poster-type style (in previous models as well) an index in the QWERTY arrangement was available.

Although the intended market for the Mignon was primarily the private user, several sources indicate that the machine was capable of typing up to 300 characters a minute. Until 1908 the Mignon was offered in a cardboard box, and later in a wooden or tin case.

In the USA, the Mignon was produced for a short time, starting in 1918, as the *Yu Ess*, and in France as the *Stella*, the *Eclipse* and (from 1921) the *Heady*. In 1936, the first Czech typewriter came on the market, the *Tip-Tip*, a design which shows great similarity to the Mignon but was nevertheless an independent development.

Finally, we offer a survey of Mignon serial numbers and years of manufacture, in order to facilitate the dating of the machine.

Serial no. up to	Year	Serial no. up to	Year	Serial no. up to	Year	Serial no. up to	Year
100	1904	32000	1911	115000	1918	250000	1925/26
199/300	1905	40000	1912	125000	1919	275000	1926/27
1500	1906	50000	1913	140000	1920	312000	1928
3000	1907	52000	1914	150000	1921	325000	1929
10000	1908	70000	1915	170000	1922	355000	1930
15000	1909	80000	1916	185000	1923	360000	1931
23000	1910	90000	1917	200000	1924	363000	1932

Model 1 from 1904, Model 2 (200-40000) from 1905, Modell 3 (up to 185000) from 1913, Model 4 from 1924, Olympia Plurotype from 1933

Sources:

Czerny, Karl, *Mechanik und kurze Geschichte der Schreibmaschine*, Vienna, 1932

Martin, Ernst, *Die Schreibmaschine und ihre Entwicklungsgeschichte*, 5th ed., Pappenheim, 1934

Rüscher, Ulrich, *Liste der Herstellungsdaten deutscher und ausländischer Schreibmaschinen*, Hamburg, n.d.

Krumeich, Gerd, "Mignon Mod 1" gesichtet!, in *Historische Bürowelt* Nr. 26, Cologne, 1990

Buhr, Regina, *Friedrich von Hefner-Alteneck - (K)ein Macher der Büromaschinengeschichte*, in *Von Menschen und Maschinen*, ed. Deutschen Büromaschinen-Sammlerverein, Essen, 1993

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Mignon 2 red

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Pettytyp

Plurotyp

Saturn

TipTip

Tokytotype

Yu Ess

First year of production:
1905

Company:
Allgemeinen Elektrizitaets-Gesellschaft (AEG) ,
Berlin , Germany

Serial nr:
21933

The Mignon is the mother of all index typewriters. It appeared on the market very late, in 1905, but remained very popular until the final production year in 1934. And even then the concept was copied by the TipTip company that continued to produce a similar machine for some years.

The principle of the Mignon is very simple. It combines a typesleeve with a complete character set, and an index card with pointer and two (later three) keys.

Point the pointer at a letter on the index and strike the key to print a letter on the paper and advance the carriage. With minor practice the operator could reach a typing speed of at least 100 strokes per minute.

Both the index card and typesleeve could be replaced to change fonts and use character sets for different languages.

The Mignon combined the simplicity of more primitive index machines with the sturdiness of a well-produced office machine. It was in fact a real alternative for much more expensive keyboard machines in the offices of the early 20th Century. And because of the interchangeable typesleeves, the machine was a highly practical tool for jobs that required the use of different fonts. It's only competitor for this work was the much more



expensive Hammond typewriter.

The first Mignon model to be produced and sold in considerable numbers was the Mignon 2, that was built until 1913.

Only one specimen of the Mignon 1 is known to exist in a museum in Leipzig, Germany.



Mignon production hall at the AEG plant in Berlin. (Date unknown)

The Mignon appeared on the market in different countries with different names and different colors. The second picture shows an extremely rare variation with



Mignon 2B

embossed, nickel-plated paper table that was sold in France. Around 1913, just before AEG introduced the Mignon 3, the company produced a transition model, with a metal cover over the mechanism, much like the one on the Mignon 3. About 3,000 of these were built but only a handful are known to exist today, with serial numbers between 44.000 and 47.000. Also see Mignon 2 Red and Mignon 4.

Courtesy of: Robert collection

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Early Office Museum

Antique Index Typewriters



Hall Typewriter
No. 1, 1885 ad



Hall Typewriter
1886 ad



Hall Typewriter,
No. 3 (Boston),
c. 1890



Typewriter ads,
1890



Sun Typewriter,
introduced
c. 1885

Index typewriters do not have keyboards. Generally, one hand operates a pointer that index while the other hand depresses a lever that moves the type to the paper.

The first practical index typewriters, the American **Hall Type Writer** and the German **Typewriter**, were introduced in the early 1880s, several years after the first keyboard typewriters were much cheaper than keyboard typewriters during the 1880s and 1890s. Index typewriters generally stressed this fact. Index typewriters generally sold for \$10-\$20, \$40. (See advertisement to the left and table below.) In 1895 the Champion Typewriter over 9,000 Champions were in use in the U.S.



The Hall Typewriter won an award in 1881.

Relatively inexpensive new keyboard machines declined in price from \$60 to \$70 for throughout the 1880s to \$50 for the Crandall during the early 1890s, \$35 for the Blic Chicago during the late 1890s and early 1900s, and \$25 for the Commercial Visible in 1903. Also, a large supply of used and rebuilt keyboard machines became available. As the cheapest keyboard machines fell, the demand for index machines dropped. Eventually index typewriters left on the U.S. market were cheap toys (e.g., the Simplex Typewriter). Some (e.g., the Mignon Typewriter) sold for decades longer in Europe.

Original US Prices of Index Typewriters

Typewriter Single-case = caps only Double-case = upper and lower case letters	Year	
Universal	1882	
Hall	1883-88 unknown but later	
Herrington	1886	
Columbia	1886	
Sun	1886-90	



*Kosmopolit
Typewriter,
1889 ad*



*Pearl
Typewriter,
patented 1891*



Kruse Typewriter



*World
Typewriter, late
model, double-
case*

Ingersoll	1886 unknown	
World, single-case (sc)	1887-88	
No. 1 Japanned, pine box, sc	1887-88	
No. 2 Japanned, leather-covered box, sc	1887-88	
No. 3 Nickered, walnut-covered box, sc	1887-88	
Single-case	1888-89	
Double-case	1888	
Double-case	1888-93	
Odell 1 (single-case)	1887	
Odell 1 &/or 2 Single-case	1891-92	
Odell 2 Double-case	1892-93	
Odell	1895	
Odell	1904	
Odell No. 4	unknown	
Crown	1888-90	
Morris	1889-90	
Victor	1889-92	
Merritt	1889-93	
American No. 1	1889	
American No. 1	1894	
American No. 2	1895-97	
American No. 2	1897, 1900-02	
American No. 2	1902	
American No. 2	1903-04	
Simplex	1891-93	
Simplex	1895, 1897	
No. 2	1896	
Simplex	1898	
Simplex	1902	
No. 1 (toy)	1907-14	
No. 2 (toy)	1907	
No. 2 (toy)	1914	
No. 3 (toy)	1914	
No. 5 (toy)	1907-14	
Dollar	1891	
Edland	1892	
Champion	1895	
Little Giant (toy)	1897	
Index Visible	1900	
Practical No. 3	1902	
Little Gem (toy)	1902	
Coffman's Pocket	1902 1903, 1905 (Beach), 1909	

according to Darryl Rehr (1997, p. 88). A skilled user was able to type quickly. Rehr were made from 1904 to 1932.

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Invention of Typewriter keyboard etc. A look at the history

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01-26-2004, 09:27 AM #1

dr pepper Posts: n/a

Invention of Typewriter keyboard etc. A look at the history

075112833
#4739By **dr pepper** on **Monday, January 26, 2004 - 10:27 am**

In the history of automation and easing our lives the keyboard and typing machine are prime candidates. The printing type was invented 600 years ago but a real functional typing machine came into practice in 19th century.

The keyboard that we take for granted evolved from the typewriter that was invented about 150 years ago for a visually impaired person.

Who invented the typewriter?

First attempts.
The first patent for a writing machine was granted in London in 1714 to an engineer called Henry Mill. But there had been earlier attempts to create writing machines, particularly as a means for blind people to communicate in writing. There were several more or less succesful attempts at building typewriters, particularly in the United States (Burt - 1829 ; Francis - 1859), but also in Europe where an Austrian carpenter (Mittelhofer) and a Danish clergyman (Hansen) literally wrote history.

Other claimants to the title of 'Inventor of the Typewriter' can be found in France, Italy, Russia and other nations. However, it was Christopher Latham Sholes, a printer from Milwaukee, who designed and built a machine that was to be produced as the Sholes & Glidden Type Writer by the Remington factory in Ilion, New York.

Sholes gave the world the word 'typewriter' as well as the 'qwerty' keyboard. Sholes' partners in his typewriter enterprise were Carlos Glidden and James Densmore.

Other names involved with the development and marketing of the Sholes & Glidden typewriter were Remington and Yost, names that would earn their own place in typewriter history soon after the introduction of the S&G in 1874.

Peter Hood apparently invented a typewriter in 1857 for the use of James Arrol (a blind ancestor of Sir William Arrol who designed the Forth Bridge.) Hood was a blacksmith to

trade in the village of Westmuir, Angus, born in 1834(?) died 1873. He also made clocks. His typewriter was capable of actual work but was handicapped by slowness of operation.

It makes no sense. It is awkward, inefficient and confusing. We've been saying that for 124 years. But there it remains. Those keys made their first appearance on a rickety, clumsy device marketed as the "Type-Writer" in 1872. Today the keyboard is a universal fixture even on the most advanced, sophisticated computers and word processors electronic technology can produce.

In this case, the answer lies in the old proverb about the early bird catching the worm. As far as the typewriter keyboard is concerned, being first was the whole ball game.

The name "QWERTY" for our typewriter keyboard comes from the first six letters in the top alphabet row (the one just below the numbers). It is also called the "Universal" keyboard for rather obvious reasons. It was the work of inventor C. L. Sholes, who put together the prototypes of the first commercial typewriter in a Milwaukee machine shop back in the 1860's.

For years, popular writers have accused Sholes of deliberately arranging his keyboard to slow down fast typists who would otherwise jam up his sluggish machine. In fact, his motives were just the opposite.

When Sholes built his first model in 1868, the keys were arranged alphabetically in two rows. At the time, Milwaukee was a backwoods town. The crude machine shop tools available there could hardly produce a finely-honed instrument that worked with precision. Yes, the first typewriter was sluggish. Yes, it did clash and jam when someone tried to type with it. But Sholes was able to figure out a way around the problem simply by rearranging the letters. Looking inside his early machine, we can see how he did it.

The first typewriter had its letters on the end of rods called "typebars." The typebars hung in a circle. The roller which held the paper sat over this circle, and when a key was pressed, a typebar would swing up to hit the paper from underneath. If two typebars were near each other in the circle, they would tend to clash into each other when typed in succession. So, Sholes figured he had to take the most common letter pairs such as "TH" and make sure their typebars hung at safe distances.

He did this using a study of letter-pair frequency prepared by educator Amos Densmore, brother of James Densmore, who was Sholes' chief financial backer. The QWERTY keyboard itself was determined by the existing mechanical linkages of the typebars inside the machine to the keys on the outside. Sholes' solution did not eliminate the problem completely, but it was greatly reduced.

The keyboard arrangement was considered important enough to be included on Sholes' patent granted in 1878 (see drawing), some years after the machine was into production. QWERTY's effect, by reducing those annoying clashes, was to speed up typing rather than slow it down.

Sholes and Densmore went to Remington, the arms manufacturer, to have their machines mass-produced. In 1874, the first Type-Writer appeared on the market. No contemporary account complains about the illogical keyboard. In fact, few contemporary accounts even mention the machine at all. At its debut, it was largely ignored.

Sales of the typewriter did not take off until after Remington's second model was introduced in 1878, offering the only major modification to the keyboard as we know it today.

first machines typed only capital letters. The new Remington No. 2 offered both upper and lower case by adding the familiar shift key. It is called a shift because it actually caused the carriage to shift in position for printing either of two letters on each typebar. Modern electronic machines no longer shift mechanically when the shift key is pressed, but its name remains the same.

In the decades following the original Remington, many alternative keyboards came and went. Then, in 1932, with funds from the Carnegie Foundation, Professor August Dvorak, of Washington State University, set out to develop the ultimate typewriter keyboard once and for all.

Dvorak went beyond Blickensderfer in arranging his letters according to frequency. Dvorak's home row uses all five vowels and the five most common consonants: AOEUIDHTNS. With the vowels on one side and consonants on the other, a rough typing rhythm would be established as each hand would tend to alternate.

With the Dvorak keyboard, a typist could type about 400 of the English language's most common words without ever leaving the home row. The comparable figure on QWERTY is 100. The home row letters on Dvorak do a total of 70% of the work. On QWERTY they do only 32%.

The Dvorak keyboard sounds very good. However, a keyboard need to do more than just "sound" good, and unfortunately, Dvorak has failed to prove itself superior to QWERTY. It appears that many of the studies used to test the effectiveness of Dvorak were flawed. Many were conducted by the good professor himself, creating a conflict of interest question, since he had a financial interest in the venture. A U.S. General Services Administration study of 1953 appears to have been more objective. It found that it really didn't matter what keyboard you used. Good typists type fast, bad typists don't.

It's not surprising, then, that Dvorak has failed to take hold. No one wants to take the time and trouble to learn a new keyboard, especially if it isn't convincingly superior to the old. A few computer programs and special-order daisy wheels are available to transform modern typewriters or word processors to the Dvorak keyboard, but the demand for these products is small. After all, expert typists can do nearly 100 words a minute with QWERTY. Word processors increase that speed significantly. The gains that Dvorak claims to offer aren't really needed.

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The First Typewriter



It was called the "Sholes & Glidden Type Writer," and it was produced by the gunmakers E. Remington & Sons in Ilion, NY from 1874-1878. It was not a great success (not more than 5,000 were sold), but it founded a worldwide industry, and it brought mechanization to dreary, time-consuming office work.

The idea began at Kleinstuber's Machine Shop in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in the year 1868. A local publisher-politician-philosopher named Christopher Latham Sholes spent hours at Kleinstuber's with fellow tinkerers, eager to participate in the Age of Invention to produce devices to improve the lot of Mankind.

It's said Sholes was working on a machine to automatically number the pages in books, when one of his colleagues suggested the idea might be extended to a device to print the entire alphabet. An article from "Scientific American" was passed around, and the gentlemen nodded in agreement that "typewriting" (the phrase coined in SA) was the wave of the future.

Sholes thought of a simple device with a piece of printer's type mounted on a little rod, mounted to strike upward to a flat plate which would hold a piece of carbon paper sandwiched with a piece of stationery. The percussive strike of the type should produce an impression on the paper. Sholes' demonstration model looked like this:



Sholes' 1868 demonstration model

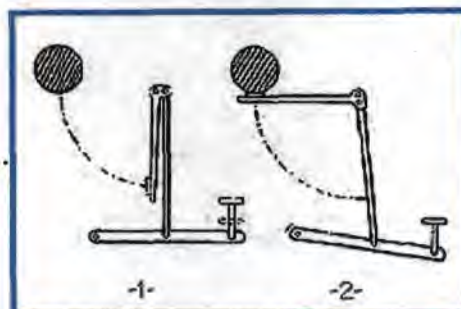
With the key of an old telegraph instrument mounted on its base, Sholes would tap down on his model, and the little type jumped up to hit the carbon & paper against the glass plate. There was nothing for spacing, line advance or any "normal" typewriter feature. Those were all to come. It seems silly, but in 1868, the mere idea that type striking against paper to produce an image was totally new. It needed proving, and the little telegraph key model did the trick.

With the point proven, Sholes proceeded to construct a machine to do the whole alphabet. The prototype was eventually sent to Washington as the required Patent Model. The original still exists, locked up in a vault at the Smithsonian:



Sholes' original prototype and patent model.

This diagram shows Sholes' basic mechanism...



...an "up-strike" design. The actual printing type is mounted on the end of a "type-bar." Pressing on the key swings the type-bar up toward the cylindrical platen, with a ribbon for the inking. The typing was, therefore, hidden from view, and so the machine was called a "blind-writer." The carriage was hinged so the user could check the work.

Investor James Densmore provided the marketing impetus which eventually brought the machine to Remington. Sholes lacked the patience required to penetrate the marketplace, and sold all of his rights to Densmore, whose belief in the machine kept the enterprise afloat. Remington agreed to produce the device beginning in 1873. The "Glidden" part of the name came from Carlos Glidden, one of the Kleinstuber Machine Shop gang, who had been something of a help to Sholes.



Sholes & Glidden Type Writer, 1874. Treadle model.

The original Type Writer was heavily decorated with colorful decals and gold paint. A foot treadle was provided for the carriage return. If you think it all looks a lot like an old sewing machine, you're right. No coincidence, though. William Jenne, the Remington engineer who set up the typewriter factory had been transferred from Remington's sewing machine division.

A table model (top of page) was also offered with a handle at the side instead of the foot pedal. Among the first users was Mark Twain, who fiddled around with it before putting it aside. Yes, Twain did become the first person to submit a novel in typed form to the publisher, but that wasn't until much later ("Life on the Mississippi," 1883), and he didn't type it himself... it was a typed copy of his handwritten manuscript. Twain fans, by the way, might cite his autobiography, which says "Tom Sawyer" was his first book submitted in typescript. Not so. The old fella remembered it wrong, and careful research by Twain historians has proven otherwise.

The original Sholes & Glidden used the QWERTY keyboard, but typed in capitals only. It was a sluggish, finicky, inefficient machine. In five years, only 5,000 were sold, but Remington had plans. In 1878, the No. 2 machine was introduced. It typed both upper and lower case, using a shift key. Gone were the decorated panels in favor of a black open frame (which turned out to be quieter), establishing the archetype open-black-box look typewriters would have for decades to come. It took another decade, but the "Remington No. 2" became a huge success, and the Typewriter Industry was on its way.

Did you know that lots of people COLLECT antique typewriters? Mad, but true! For a look at the strange (very strange, believe it!) machines these strange people collect, check out [Collecting Antique Typewriters](#).

Are you a QWERTY hater? There was Method behind the Madness. See [Why QWERTY was invented \(coming\) or the QWERTY Connection](#).

The Classic Typewriter Page

presents

A Brief History of Typewriters

The concept of a typewriter dates back at least to 1714, when Englishman Henry Mill filed a vaguely-worded patent for "an artificial machine or method for the impressing or transcribing of letters singly or progressively one after another." But the first typewriter proven to have worked was built by the Italian Pellegrino Turri in 1808 for his blind friend Countess Carolina Fantoni da Fivizzano (as established by Michael Adler in his excellent 1973 book [The Writing Machine](#)); unfortunately, we do not know what the machine looked like, but we do have specimens of letters written by the Countess on it.

Numerous inventors in Europe and the U.S. worked on typewriters in the 19th century, but successful commercial production began only with the "writing ball" of Danish pastor Malling Hansen (1870). This well-engineered device looked rather like a pincushion. Nietzsche's mother and sister once gave him one for Christmas. He hated it.



Much more influential, in the long run, was the Sholes & Glidden Type Writer, which began production in late 1873 and appeared on the American market in 1874.



A Record of 30 Years



1873



1903

THIRTY YEARS AGO the advent of the

REMINGTON

created the typewriter industry.

EVER SINCE the Remington has been the recognized leader among writing machines.

TODAY its supremacy is unquestioned.

Christopher L. Sholes, a Milwaukee newspaperman, poet, and part-time inventor, was the main creator of this machine. The Sholes & Glidden typed only in capital letters, and it introduced the QWERTY keyboard, which is very much with us today. The keyboard was probably designed to separate frequently-used pairs of typebars so that the typebars would not clash and get stuck at the printing point. The S&G was a decorative machine, boasting painted flowers and decals. It looked rather like a sewing machine, as it was manufactured by the sewing machine department of the Remington arms company. For an in-depth look at this historic device, visit Darryl Rehr's Web site "[The First Typewriter](#)."

The Sholes & Glidden had limited success, but its successor, the Remington, soon became a dominant presence in the industry.

The Sholes & Glidden, like many early typewriters, is an understroke or "blind" writer: the typebars are arranged in a circular basket under the platen (the printing surface) and type on the bottom of the platen. This means that the typist (confusingly called a "typewriter" herself in the early days) has to lift up the carriage to see her work. Another example of an understroke typebar machine is the Caligraph of 1880, the second typewriter to appear on the American market.



The Caligraph has a "full" keyboard -- separate keys for lower- and upper-case letters. [Click here](#) to read more about the Caligraph.

The Smith Premier (1890) is another example of a full-keyboard understroke typewriter which was very popular in its day. [Click here](#) to read more and see the machine.

The QWERTY keyboard came to be called the "Universal" keyboard, as the alternative keyboards fought a losing battle against the QWERTY momentum. (For more on QWERTY and to learn why "QWERTY is cool," visit Darryl Rehr's site [The QWERTY Connection](#).) But not all early typewriters used the QWERTY system, and many did not even type with typebars. Case in point: the ingenious Hammond, introduced in 1884. The Hammond came on the scene with its own keyboard, the two-row, curved "Ideal" keyboard -- although Universal Hammonds were also soon made available. The Hammond prints from a type shuttle -- a C-shaped piece of vulcanized rubber. The shuttle can easily be exchanged when you want to use a different typeface. There is no cylindrical platen as on typebar typewriters; the paper is hit against the shuttle by a hammer.



The Hammond gained a solid base of loyal customers. These well-engineered machines lasted, with a name change to [Varytper](#) and electrification, right up to the beginning of the word-processor era.

Other machines typing from a single type element rather than typebars included the gorgeous Crandall (1881) ...



... and the practical Blickensderfer.



The effort to create a visible rather than "blind" machine led to many ingenious ways of getting the typebars to the platen. Examples of early visible writers include the [Williams](#) and the [Oliver](#). The Daugherty Visible of 1891 was the first frontstroke typewriter to go into production: the typebars rest below the platen and hit the front of it. With the [Underwood](#) of 1895, this style of typewriter began to gain ascendancy. By the 1920s, virtually all typewriters were "look-alikes": frontstroke, QWERTY, typebar machines printing through a ribbon, using one shift key and four banks of keys. The most popular model of early Underwoods, the #5, is still to be found everywhere.



Let's return for a moment to the 19th century. The standard price for a typewriter was \$100 -- comparable to the price of a good personal computer today. There were many efforts to produce cheaper typewriters. Most of these were **index** machines: the typist first points at a letter on some sort of index, then performs another motion to print the letter. Obviously, these were not heavy-duty office machines; they were meant for people of limited means who needed to do some occasional typing. An example is the "[American](#)" index typewriter, which sold for \$5. Index typewriters survived the 20th century as children's toys; one commonly found example is the "Dial" typewriter made by Marx Toys in the 1920s and 30s.

Much more could be said about the hundreds of makes of early typewriters -- but I'll restrain myself. To get some different perspectives, try looking through [my collection list](#) or [my wish list](#). To bone up on the topic yourself, check out <http://staff.xu.edu/~polt/typewriters/tw-history.html>



Main Menu



Consider QWERTY...

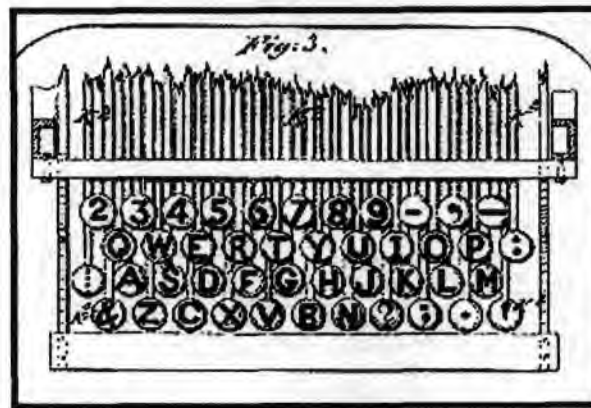
...the typewriter keyboard...

...the Universal User Interface....

It makes no sense. It is awkward, inefficient and confusing. We've been saying that for 124 years. But there it remains. Those keys made their first appearance on a rickety, clumsy device marketed as the "Type-Writer" in 1872. Today the keyboard is a universal fixture even on the most advanced, sophisticated computers and word processors electronic technology can produce.

How could we get stuck with something so bad?

In this case, the answer lies in the old proverb about the early bird catching the worm. As far as the typewriter keyboard is concerned, being first was the whole ball game.



1878 Typewriter Patent Drawing, featuring the QWERTY Keyboard. Years after its introduction, it was considered important enough to include in a patent.

The name "QWERTY" for our typewriter keyboard comes from the first six letters in the top alphabet row (the one just below the numbers). It is also called the "Universal" keyboard for rather obvious reasons. It was the work of inventor C. L. Sholes, who put together the prototypes of the first commercial typewriter in a Milwaukee machine shop back in the 1860's.

For years, popular writers have accused Sholes of deliberately arranging his keyboard to slow down fast typists who would otherwise jam up his sluggish machine. In fact, his motives were just the opposite.

When Sholes built his first model in 1868, the keys were arranged alphabetically in two rows. At the time, Milwaukee was a backwoods town. The crude machine shop tools available there could hardly produce a finely-honed instrument that worked with precision. Yes, the first typewriter was sluggish. Yes, it did clash and jam when someone tried to type with it. But Sholes was able to figure out a way around the problem simply by rearranging the letters. Looking inside his early machine, we can see how he did it.

The first typewriter had its letters on the end of rods called "typebars." The typebars hung in a circle. The roller which held the paper sat over this circle, and when a key was pressed, a typebar would swing up to hit the paper from underneath. If two typebars were near each other in the circle, they would tend to clash into each other when typed in succession. So, Sholes figured he had to take the most common letter pairs such as "TH" and make sure their typebars hung at safe distances.

He did this using a study of letter-pair frequency prepared by educator Amos Densmore, brother of James Densmore, who was Sholes' chief financial backer. The QWERTY keyboard itself was determined by the existing mechanical

Why QWERTY was Invented

linkages of the typebars inside the machine to the keys on the outside. Sholes' solution did not eliminate the problem completely, but it was greatly reduced.

The keyboard arrangement was considered important enough to be included on Sholes' patent granted in 1878 (see [drawing](#)), some years after the machine was into production. QWERTY's effect, by reducing those annoying clashes, was speed up typing rather than slow it down.

Sholes and Densmore went to Remington, the arms manufacturer, to have their machines mass-produced. In 1874, the first Type-Writer appeared on the market. No contemporary account complains about the illogical keyboard. In fact, few contemporary accounts even mention the machine at all. At its debut, it was largely ignored.

Sales of the typewriter did not take off until after Remington's second model was introduced in 1878, offering the only major modification to the keyboard as we know it today.

The first machines typed only capital letters. The new [Remington No. 2](#) offered both upper and lower case by adding the familiar shift key. It is called a shift because it actually caused the carriage to shift in position for printing either of two letters on each typebar. Modern electronic machines no longer shift mechanically when the shift key is pressed, but its name remains the same.

In the decades following the original Remington, many alternative keyboards came and went. Then, in 1932, with funds from the Carnegie Foundation, Professor August Dvorak, of Washington State University, set out to develop the ultimate typewriter keyboard once and for all.

Dvorak went beyond Blickensderfer in arranging his letters according to frequency. Dvorak's home row uses all five vowels and the five most common consonants: AOEUIDHTNS. With the vowels on one side and consonants on the other, a rough typing rhythm would be established as each hand would tend to alternate.



With the Dvorak keyboard, a typist can type about 400 of the English language's most common words without ever leaving the home row. The comparable figure on QWERTY is 100. The home row letters on Dvorak do a total of 70% of the work. On QWERTY they do only 32%.

The Dvorak keyboard sounds very good. However, a keyboard need to do more than just "sound" good, and unfortunately, Dvorak has failed to prove itself superior to QWERTY. It appears that many of the studies used to test the effectiveness of Dvorak were flawed. Many were conducted by the good professor himself, creating a conflict of interest question, since he had a financial interest in the venture. A U.S. General Services Administration study of 1953 appears to have been more objective. It found that it really didn't matter what keyboard you used. Good typists type fast, bad typists don't.

It's not surprising, then, that Dvorak has failed to take hold. No one wants to take the time and trouble to learn a new keyboard, especially if it isn't convincingly superior to the old. A few computer programs and special-order daisy wheels are available to transform modern typewriters or word processors to the Dvorak keyboard, but the demand for these products is small. After all, expert typists can do nearly 100 words a minute with QWERTY. Word processors increase that speed significantly. The gains that Dvorak claims to offer aren't really needed.

LINKS TO FOLLOW:

[All About Antique Typewriters: collecting vintage writing machines](#)

[The First Typewriter: the machine on which QWERTY debuted](#)

<http://home.earthlink.net/~dcrehr/whyqwerty.html>



---Remington No. 2, 1878---

The Remington No. 2 Type Writer was introduced in 1878, the first typewriter to type both upper & lower case. This was part of second-generation of typewriter products produced by Remington. This famous gun company founded the world typewriter industry in 1874 with the Sholes & Glidden Type Writer, which typed capitals only. Follow the Sholes & Glidden link to learn more.

All Remingtons prior to No. 10 are up-strike machines. Type-bars swing up to the platen, which has to be raised to see the work. Most common are No. 6 & 7, which are identical, except for a different number of keys.

Machine from author's collection.

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---Hammond No. 1, 1884



---Hammond Multiplex, 1918

The Hammond Typewriter was first introduced around 1884, the first single-element machine operated by a keyboard on the market. The machine employed a "type shuttle" which was a curved strip of hard rubber with the type embossed on its surface. It pivoted to its appropriate place when a key was pressed. A spring-loaded hammer struck the paper from behind, whacking the paper against the type, with the ribbon in-between. Sounds bass-ackwards, but it worked. It worked so well, in fact, that the basic design survived until 1980! In 1927, the machine's name was changed to Varsity. Sound familiar? That company is still in business, but its mechanical typesetter, based on the Hammond principle, remained on the market until 1980. Wow.

All Hammond's came with the "Ideal" (curved) keyboard, or the Universal (straight/qwerty) keyboard. The No.1 was originally offered with the Ideal only, the Universal added to the line later. Most-common of the many Hammond models is the Multiplex, so named because it carried two type shuttles on the machine at the same time, allowing the user to quickly switch between two different typefaces (i.e., normal and *italic*).

No. 1 from Dickerson collection. Multiplex from Rauen collection.

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Type shuttle: curved strip pivots to place
before printing



--Victor Typewriter, 1890

The Victor Typewriter is one of many products called "index" machines. The "index" is the chart from which you choose the letters. On the Victor, it is a semicircular strip, but the index can take many forms--it can be a wheel, a linear strip, a rectangle, whatever.

On an index machine, you choose a letter first, and then press another key (or do some similar action) to make it print. YES... it WAS very slow! Collectors like to say... "about a page a day."

Index machines were the "bargain basement" items of the typewriter industry. When full-size office machines cost \$100, you could buy an index machine for \$15 or less! Today, generally speaking, good old index machines are more desirable than the big black office jobbies.

The Victor, incidentally, was history's first "daisy wheel" typewriter.

Machine from author's collection.

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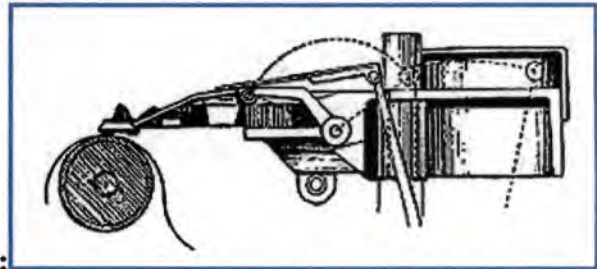
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A major class of machines with no keyboards using pointers or indicators to choose letters from a chart (the "index"). Printed with type wheels, type plates, type shuttles & many other novel systems. May or may not have been toys.



---Williams Typewriter, 1892---

The Williams Typewriter is one of the wonderful oddities of Typewriterdom, featuring its intriguing "grasshopper" typebar movement. As you can see, the typebars are arrayed in two fans, both in front of and behind the platen. Each type rests in an inkpad. When a key is pressed, the typebar hops forward, hits the paper, and hops back. Naturally, the paper is a problem, because it seems like there is no place to put it! Not quite. First, the blank sheet is fed into the basket of metal hoops just behind the keyboard. In use, the paper is fed across the platen, and down into the basket of hoops at the back of the machine. Only a few lines are actually "visible" at any one time.



Here's a diagram of the Williams movement:

The Williams machine seen above is the very first, Model No. 1 with 3-rows of keys and a curved keyboard. This is the rarest and most-desirable of all Williams Typewriters. The No. 1 was quickly revised to have a straight keyboard. The No. 2 is very similar and Nos. 4 & 6 have 4-row straight keyboards. All but the No.1/curved are fairly frequently found.

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*grasshopper, odd action with type bars
"hopping" forward to hit platen*



—Empire Typewriter, 1894

The Empire Typewriter is one of three nearly-identical thrust action machines based on the patents of Bostonian Wellington Parker Kidder. Kidder's "Wellington" Typewriter was the American version, made and sold in the USA. The Empire was made in Canada and sold there, in England and many other parts of the world. The Adler Typewriter was made in Germany under license from Kidder. Adler, of course, is still in business today.

Thrust action typewriters have type-bars that rest parallel to the table, and slide directly forward to meet the platen.

Empire, Wellington and Adler Typewriters were very good machines, made in great quantity. The survivors are easily available today.

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Thrust action bars sliding forward to platen



---Fitch Typewriter, 1895---

The Fitch Typewriter was first made in Brooklyn, NY, and later in London, England. The typbars hovered at an angle over the platen, and struck down to print. As on all downstrike machines, paper handling was a problem. The paper was rolled up and inserted within the circular rings above the keyboard. As typing progressed, the paper was fed across the printing point, and into another "basket" of rings behind the platen. Only a few lines were visible at a time.

Machine from Russo Collection.

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Rear/downstrike also called
backstroke



--Smith Premier Typewriter, 1896

The Smith Premier is the "classic" double-keyboard typewriter. The double, or "full-keyboard," with a separate key for every character was considered a honest-to-gosh alternative to typewriters with shift keys for capitals. Double-keyboard promoters thought it was confusing to have to press TWO keys when you wanted capitals. Heck, some machines had only three rows of keys, and you pressed one shift key for capitals, and a different one for numerals & punctuation.

Believe it or not, the Smith Premier was one of the two most-popular typewriters of its day (Remington was the other). If it weren't for 10-finger touch typing, the double keyboard would still be with us today.

The Smith Premier No. 2 is the most common of this line. The most desirable is the No. 1 (1889), but those are pretty common, too.

The "Smith" family of Smith Premier is the same that started the later company which later became Smith-Corona. It was the longest-lived name in the typewriter business until Smith-Corona declared bankruptcy in 1995. Tsk!

Machine from Dickerson collection.

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*Rows of keys: anywhere from 1 to 8!
(6 or more are "double keyboards."*



--Chicago Typewriter, 1899

The Chicago Typewriter is a revision of the earlier Munson machine, first patented in 1889. The Chicago uses a type-sleeve, a cylinder embossed with type and mounted lengthwise on a horizontal shaft at the printing point. When pressing a key, the type-sleeve rotates and shifts horizontally to bring the correct letter into position. A hammer at the rear whacks the paper against the type-sleeve with the ribbon in between.

The Chicago was made under many different brand names: Draper, Yale, Conover, Galesburg, Mitzpah.

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Type "sleeve" if cylinder is elongated



---Blickensderfer No. 7, 1897---



---Blickensderfer Electric, 1902

How much can be said of the famous Blickensderfer Typewriter? This wonderfully appealing single element machine was a mechanical marvel. A press on the key spun the type-wheel into place, sending it in an arc down to the platen, brushing past an ink roller on the way. The "Blick" as it's also known, made its commercial debut at the Chicago World's Fair of 1893. Full production began about 1895, with the No. 5 (earlier models were apparently prototypes only) . Most common are models 5 & 7. Models 6,8,9 not uncommon, but not AS common as 5&7. Rarest Blick is the 1902 Electric. Wow. Just like the IBM Selectric... only 60 years EARLIER!

Blick 7 from Russo Collection

Blick Electric from Milwaukee Public Museum

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Type wheel; Type cylinder spins into place before hitting platen

Early Office Museum

Antique Index Typewriters



Hall Typewriter
No. 1, 1885 ad



Hall Typewriter
1886 ad



Hall Typewriter,
No. 3 (Boston),
c. 1890



Typewriter ads,
1890



Sun Typewriter,
introduced
c. 1885



Kosmopolit
Typewriter,
1889 ad



Pearl
Typewriter,
patented 1891

Index typewriters do not have keyboards. Generally, one hand operates a pointer that selects a letter from an index while the other hand depresses a lever that moves the type to the paper.

The first practical index typewriters, the American **Hall Type Writer** and the German Hammonia Typewriter, were introduced in the early 1880s, several years after the first keyboard typewriter. Index typewriters were much cheaper than keyboard typewriters during the 1880s and 1890s, and advertisements for index typewriters stressed this fact. Index typewriters generally sold for \$10-\$20, although the Hall was \$40. (See advertisement to the left and table below.) In 1895 the Champion Typewriter Co. advertised that over 9,000 Champions were in use in the U.S.



The Hall Typewriter won an award in 1881.

Relatively inexpensive new keyboard machines declined in price from \$60 to \$70 for the Caligraph No. 1 throughout the 1880s to \$50 for the Crandall during the early 1890s, \$35 for the Blickensderfer No. 5 and Chicago during the late 1890s and early 1900s, and \$25 for the Commercial Visible and Postal beginning in 1903. Also, a large supply of used and rebuilt keyboard machines became available. As the prices of the cheapest keyboard machines fell, the demand for index machines dropped. Eventually, the only index typewriters left on the U.S. market were cheap toys (e.g., the Simplex Typewriter). Serious index typewriters (e.g., the Mignon Typewriter) sold for decades longer in Europe.

Original US Prices of Index Typewriters

Typewriter Single-case = caps only Double-case = upper and lower case letters	Year	Price
Universal	1882	\$1.50
Hall	1883-88 unknown but later	\$40 \$30
Herrington	1886	\$5
Columbia	1886 c. 1890	\$30 \$15 & \$30
Sun	1886-90	\$12
Ingersoll	1886 unknown	\$2.25 \$1.50
World, single-case (sc)	1887-88	\$8
No. 1 Japanned, pine box, sc	1887-88	\$8
No. 2 Japanned, leather-covered box, sc	1887-88	\$10
No. 3 Nickered, walnut-covered box, sc	1887-88	\$15
Single-case	1888-89	\$10
Double-case	1888	\$12
Double-case	1888-93	\$15
Odell 1 (single-case)	1887	\$15
Odell 1 &/or 2 Single-case	1891-92	\$15
Odell 2 Double-case	1892-93	\$20
Odell	1895	\$12
Odell	1904	\$7.5
Odell No. 4	unknown	\$5
Crown	1888-90	\$20
Morris	1889-90	\$15



Columbia
Typewriter No. 2,
advertised 1887



Victor Typewriter,
1890



Peoples
Typewriter, 1891

Columbia, Victor, and
Peoples photos courtesy
of Jim Gehring



Champion
Typewriter, 1893



Ingersoll
Typewriter, 1891
ad. This machine
looks like a toy but
was advertised in
business
publications.



Victor	1889-92	\$15
Merritt	1889-93	\$15
American No. 1	1889	\$5
American No. 1	1894	\$6
American No. 2	1895-97	\$8
American No. 2	1897, 1900-02	\$10
American No. 2	1902	\$7.95 (Sears)
American No. 2	1903-04	\$10
Simplex	1891-93	\$2.5
Simplex	1895, 1897	\$3
No. 2	1896	\$5
Simplex	1898	\$3.5
Simplex	1902	\$2.7
No. 1 (toy)	1907-14	\$1
No. 2 (toy)	1907	\$2.5
No. 2 (toy)	1914	\$2
No. 3 (toy)	1914	\$3
No. 5 (toy)	1907-14	\$5
Dollar	1891	\$1
Edland	1892	\$5
Champion	1895	\$15
Little Giant (toy)	1897	\$1
Index Visible	1900	\$25
Practical No. 3	1902	\$3.55 (Sears)
Little Gem (toy)	1902	\$0.75 (Sears)
Coffman's Pocket	1902 1903, 1905 (Beach), 1909 (Mares)	\$3.90 (Sears) \$5
Niagara	1902 (Rehr)	\$15
Best	1902	\$8.95 (Sears)
Virotyp	1914 (Bliven)	\$5
American Toy	1915	\$0.85



Kruse Typewriter



World Typewriter, late model, double-case



Pocket Typewriter, 1887



Virotyp Typewriter, 1914



Virotyp, Paris, 1914



Odell Typewriter No. 4



Mignon Typewriter, 1904



Mignon type

The other characteristic of index typewriters emphasized in advertisements was the fact that they were small, light, and portable, and hence suitable for being carried on trips and used in locations such as railway cars. The Hall Type Writer weighed 7 lb., the **Victor Typewriter** 5.25 lb., and the Sun Typewriter and Morris Typewriter each 4.5 lb.



Ad showing World Typewriter used by a man on a train, a man at a desk with other office equipment, and a woman and boy at parlor tables

A major downside of index typewriters was that they were slower than keyboard machines. The American/Globe "with practice will yield thirty or forty words per minute." (Mares, p. 245) As a result, index machines were not suitable for offices where a significant amount of typing was done. Some of the cheapest index models, such as the later **Simplex Typewriter** models illustrated in the advertisement to the right, were sold at least in significant part for use by children.

The arrangement of the letters on the index may be along a straight or curved line (Merritt, Victor), in a circle (Pocket, Virotyp), in a rectangle (Hall, Mignon), on a pseudo-keyboard (American Visible), or in any of a number of other patterns. The type is usually arranged on a single-element, which may be a wheel (Victor, Crown), sleeve (Mignon), shuttle (American), semi-circular element (World), straight bar (Odell), or rectangular plate (Hall, Morris).

An 1892 advertisement stated, "Merritt Typewriter, An Educator for the Home and School....Indispensable to storekeepers having limited correspondence." The Merritt was unique in using individual printer's type pieces. In the photo at the bottom right, the type pieces are stored in a line in a channel (see yellow dot). A knob (blue dot) is moved along the index (red dot) to select a letter. When the knob is pressed down, the selected type piece is lifted through a small rectangular opening (green dot) and pressed against the paper.

American Typewriter No. 2, 1895



Dart Marking Machine: "A Movable Typewriter for Addressing Shipping Cases," Patented 1899, Advertised 1902-04



Simplex Typewriter ad for children, 1907



Hall No. 3 (Boston) Index



Merritt Typewriter



Merritt Typewriter, carriage down



Merritt Typewriter, carriage up



American Visible Typewriter, American Typewriter Co., New York, NY, early 1900s

sleeves

An 1887 advertisement for the World Typewriter stated that 20,000 had been sold, a figure that is difficult to believe in light of the fact that the machine was introduced in 1887. An 1889 ad claimed 50,000 had been sold, and an 1892 ad claimed 100,000 were in use. In 1891, **Odell Type Writer** claimed that 50,000 of its machine were in use. In light of the fact that the machine was introduced in 1889 and faced many competitors, that number is implausibly high. In any case, in 1904 Odell claimed only that "over 30,000 in use." In 1895, Champion claimed that it had sold over 8,000 of its machines in the U.S. American claimed that it sold 15,600 machines during 1896.

The **Mignon Typewriter**, a German product, was "the very best index machine that was ever made," according to Darryl Rehr (1997, p. 88). A skilled user was able to type quickly. Rehr reports that 380,000 were made from 1904 to 1932.

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About the Owner



Jessica28
2 things in public collection

MIGNON TYPEWRITER



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Category: Other Arts & Antiques

Artist/Maker/Designer: MIGNON

THIS IS A GERMAN TYPEWRITER IS OK CONDITION. STILL WORKING. COVER WATER DAMAGED

This item currently has no tags.

Value

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Story about MIGNON TYPEWRITER

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INHERITED

WHEN MY UNCLE PASSED AWAY IN JAN 2008 WE FOUND THIS IN HIS GARAGE WHEN WE WERE CLEARING OUT.

Comments

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---Franklin No. 7, c. 1900---

The Franklin Typewriter was a make popular around the turn of the century. Its type-bars stood erect at the front of the machine and swung down to the platen. This downstrike machine was characterized by its radical semi-circular keyboard. Lots and lots of Franklins were sold, apparently, since many survive today.

Machine from Dickerson collection.

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Shape of rows
straight, curved or circular



---Franklin No. 7, c. 1900---

The Franklin Typewriter was a make popular around the turn of the century. Its type-bars stood erect at the front of the machine and swung down to the platen. This downstrike machine was characterized by its radical semi-circular keyboard. Lots and lots of Franklins were sold, apparently, since many survive today.

Machine from Dickerson collection.

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*Standing erect & swinging down
from the front*

Oliver Typewriter



---Oliver 11, 1923

The Oliver 11 Typewriter was the last in a long line of machines which were first introduced in 1895. Most common are the models No. 5 and No. 9. The majority of Oliver Typewriters are painted olive green. The color was changed for the No. 11, which is black. All Olivers feature the characteristic double banks of typebars, standing erect, and flopping down to the platen from each side. What fun to watch them whipping through the air, hitting the paper with a healthy "whackety-whack!). Some people say the Oliver looks like a miniature pipe organ... other call it the "Iron Butterfly."

Machine from Milwaukee Public Museum.

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