

Typewriter and Inventors

One of the first typewriters to allow typists to see work in progress was invented in 1855 by Giuseppe Ravizza. In 1861 a Brazilian priest made a typewriter from wood and knives and was awarded a gold medal for his invention by the Brazilian emperor. Controversially, many people consider Father de Azevedo to be the real inventor of the typewriter. Peter Mitterhofer's creation, in 1864, was the first of five designs by the Austrian, the last in 1868. The first typewriter to be sold commercially was in 1870 by the Reverend Malling Hansen of Denmark whose design, the Hansen Writing Ball was a success throughout Europe for several decades and being used in London as late as 1909. Until the late 1860s most typewriters were slower than handwriting. The first of these faster typewriters, by Scholes, Soule and Glidden, in 1867, was sold for \$12,000 to Densmore and Yost who later licensed the typewriter design to Remington, whose typewriter was produced in New York in 1873. Underwood also famous for creating typewriters and famous too for early stereoviews.

Typewriters, Typists and Typewriter Facts

"A typewriter is a mechanical, electromechanical, or electronic device with a set of 'keys' that, when pressed, cause characters to be printed on a document, usually paper." Wikipedia.org 'Typewriter' was also the name by which early users of typewriters were known until confusion led to the alternative term, typist. A typewriter has a keyboard with keys that form character impressions on paper, but actual methods by which typewriter keyboards create these impressions has varied dramatically since the typewriter was invented in the early 1800s. Some typewriters had circular keyboards; other had two keyboards, one for lower case characters, the other for capital characters or upper case. Most early typewriters operated with ink ribbons forcing characters on paper behind the ribbon, sometimes carbon paper was placed between multiple sheets of paper, creating multiple copies behind the first blank page on which colour-free impressions were formed.

- * Typists using early typewriters often had to retype documents from scratch to correct mistakes and poor copies caused from damaged or dry typewriter ribbons.
- * It wasn't until the middle 1900s that substances like Tippex and Snowpake arrived to ease the burden on early typists and meant that mistakes could be obliterated by white paint and the original document returned to the typewriter for corrections to be made over the paint.
- * No matter how skilled the typist, however, typewritten documents were often flawed, due to typist error, or problems from typewriter or typewriter ribbon.
- * Most early typewriters had a bell which would sound to warn typists that they were nearing the edge of the paper and would have to begin a new line or manually hyphenate any part-typed words. Long levers at the side of the typewriter were used to perform a carriage return which moved the paper into position for a new line of typing to commence.
- * Early typewriter ribbons came in different colours, all black, all blue, for example, or red and black horizontally across the ribbon so typists could change between black and red type to highlight various parts of their work.
- * The QWERTY system was designed in 1874 for Sholes and Glidden typewriters. The layout was the result of copious testing and provided the best possible layout for busy fingers moving quickly across a keyboard. This universal feature of the typewriter keyboard was also the basis on which all typists and students of the art of typewriting were trained.
- * Some older typewriters do not possess separate keys for the numerals 1 and zero so typists became adept at using uppercase O for zero and the lowercase letter l for the number one.

- * Older typewriters lacked choice of fonts types and sizes such as computer users know today and Courier was the prevailing option.
- * In the Eastern Bloc typewriters were controlled by the secret police and their owners' names kept on files. In Russia the KGB was particularly guarded against anyone using a typewriter, those who did were often investigated as dissidents and political authors.
- * Like fingerprints, every typewriter had its own individual pattern of type and required a specialist forensic branch of police charged with locating actual typewriters used in blackmail and other criminal acts.
- * As of 2005 Barbara Blackburn was the world's fastest typist (Guinness Book of Records) and using the Dvorak Simplified Keyboard she can type 150 words a minute for 50 minutes and 170 words a minute over shorter periods. She has a recorded speed of 212 words per minute, despite the fact she actually failed her typewriting exams at school.

Typewriters and Ten Things You May Not Know About Them by Avril Harper

The typewriter is all but obsolete today, having been overtaken by computers and word processors. But typewriters still have useful applications many people don't know about, and a fascinating history that's worth documenting.

For example, did you know:

- * 'Typewriter' was also the name by which early users of typewriters were known until confusion led to the alternative term, typist.
- * A typewriter has a keyboard with keys that form character impressions on paper, but actual methods by which typewriter keyboards created these impressions varied dramatically since the typewriter was invented in the early 1800s. Some typewriters had circular keyboards; others had two keyboards, one for lower case characters, the other for capital characters or upper case. Some worked by creating impressions from beneath the paper so typists were unable to see their work or spot mistakes as they occurred. Because upper case 'o' (O) resembles a zero (0) and lower case 'l' (l) looks much like the figure one (1), some keyboards used the same key for each partner combination.
- * It is believed that 'writing machines', similar to typewriters, were around in the early 1700s, the earliest probably created by Henry Mill who in 1714 obtained a patent from what sounds to have closely resembled a typewriter.
- * In 1829 the 'typographer' was patented by William Burt and is sometimes called 'The First Typewriter', although more accurate perhaps is the London Science Museum's description of Burt's work as 'the first writing mechanism whose invention was documented', seemingly acknowledging those earlier creations.
- * Religion plays a major part in typewriter history. In 1861 a Brazilian priest, Father de Azevedo, made a typewriter from wood and knives and was awarded a gold medal for his invention by the Brazilian emperor. The first typewriter to be sold commercially was made in 1870 by the Reverend Malling Hansen of Denmark whose design, the Hansen Writing Ball, was a success throughout Europe for several decades and was used in London as late as 1909.
- * Until the late 1860s most typewriters were slower than handwriting. The first typewriter that was faster than writing by hand was made by Scholes, Soule and Glidden in 1867 and sold for \$12,000 to Densmore and Yost. The design was later licensed to Remington, whose first typewriter was produced in New York in 1873.
- * Typewriters are rarely used today but they do have viable application worldwide. Typewriters are still used in areas without electrical supplies or even during power cuts. They are also extremely useful for filling out forms where paper can be lined up in the typewriter for words to be typed in their proper place,

something that is nigh on impossible using computers. In developing countries with limited computers and few people possessing typewriters we find individuals setting up with their typewriters in public spaces where they provide on the spot letter writing services.

* The QWERTY system was designed in 1874 for Sholes and Glidden typewriters. The layout was the result of copious testing and provided the best possible layout for busy fingers moving quickly across a keyboard. This universal feature of the typewriter keyboard was also the basis on which touch typing (no peeking at the keyboard) is taught.

* In the Eastern Bloc typewriters were controlled by the secret police and their owners' names kept on file. In Russia the KGB was particularly guarded against anyone using a typewriter, those who did were often investigated as dissidents and political agitators.

* Like fingerprints, every typewriter had its own unique pattern of type. There was even a specialist forensic branch of police charged with matching typed documents with actual typewriters used in blackmail and other criminal acts.

Typewriter History by Avril Harper

It is believed that 'writing machines', similar to typewriters, were around in the early 1700s, the earliest was probably created by Henry Mill who in 1714 obtained a patent from what sounds to have closely resembled a typewriter.

In 1829 the 'typographer' was patented by William Burt and is sometimes called 'The First Typewriter', although more accurate perhaps is London's Science Museum's description of Burt's work as 'the first writing mechanism whose invention was documented'.

Burt's version of the typewriter was never commercially produced, no buyer was ever found for the invention which was in fact slower than writing by hand. But one great benefit of Burt's typewriter was the distinction incurred between an 'index typewriter' like this one which had a round dial to select characters, over the 'keyboard typewriter' as it came to be known where multiple keys existed to create character impressions in much the same manner as the typewriters we know today.

Since the first successful commercial typewriters were introduced in the late 1860s many unusual designs have emerged, some plain and simple, others intricate and stunningly detailed. One of the simplest and earliest designs had a wheel with letters round the edge which was turned manually until the required letter appeared in front of the paper and was pushed to form an impression. More complicated typewriters had double keyboards, one for lower case, the other for capitals, and were created in brass and mother of pearl hand painted with glorious gilded leaves and flowers. These are the kind of unusual models to watch out for at non-specialist auctions and they're almost certain to attract high prices on eBay.

These early models sometimes crop up at specialist typewriter auctions where they invariably fetch a high price. Not the place to buy in expectation of high resell fees on eBay but worth visiting for research and experience.

Like most collectibles, value depends mainly on rarity, not just age. For example, one of the earliest serviceable typewriters, the Underwood, created from 1900 to 1932 was made in the millions and can still be found in working condition, consequently they are worth very little.