

operation that would be recorded by a manual typewriter. Conditions surrounding the particular case generally decide the question. At times a quantity of rather distinct personal habits appear in the disputed document by which it is possible to identify the typist, but it is more common to find only slight, if any, individuality in the matter under investigation.

The training of the typist and his mode of procedure have much to do with the work done and the possibility of identification. In general the self-taught, "hunt-and-peck" or two-finger operators tend to have definite traits by which their work can be recognized, while those who have been thoroughly instructed in modern touch typewriting techniques have fewer and less prominent personal habits. A study of the work of a large group of operators who have been thoroughly trained in the same typewriting methods nevertheless may still reveal some personal habits. Obviously, typist identification becomes more likely as these personal habits increase in number and take on a more individual character.

The factors by which a typist can be identified are almost as varied as the habits of the individuals concerned. Some depend on personal preferences; some are repetitious errors. The more valuable identification points are irregularities in alignment resulting from improper use of the shift key and the stacking or partial stacking of particular letter combinations, factors more common to typebar machines, especially manual models, and the habitual tendency to interchange or transpose letters in common words. A greater number of these personal habits are present in the work of a typist of limited skill but one should not expect all to appear except when a manual typebar machine is used. Well-trained operators generally make only a few of these errors. Contrary to popular belief, variation in touch and rhythm does not show up noticeably in the written work from even manual machines and probably not at all with single element typewriters, and seldom can any definite pattern be discovered. With all typists, however, consideration of the habits of arrangement, punctuation, capitalization, choice of alternative or optional symbols, spelling, hyphenation, phraseology, mode of correction, stenographic signatures, and presence of overtypings may point out an individual.

While there are many details in the specimen from which identification can be made, because of rather standardized training in arranging material on the paper, most of these habits are common to a large group of typists. Many are susceptible to imitation or deliberate disguise. Furthermore, those representing errors in operation are not constantly repeated with each writing so that extended specimens must be available if any pattern of error and frequency of occurrence is to be established. These observations indicate that identification of

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