Increasing the Speed of News

Just as the telegraph did 50 years earlier, typewriters transformed the news business. As the new “writing machines” gained popularity in the 1880s, reporters who once wrote stories longhand could type their reports faster, making it easier for typesetters to set them in metal type. This Remington Model No. 2 typewriter, introduced in 1878, was the first to have uppercase and lowercase letters. This early model is the oldest typewriter in the Newseum collection.

*Typewriter and photo: Newseum collection*
Bullets and Bulletins

Remington was famous as a gun and sewing machine manufacturer when the company entered the typewriter business. Like the earlier No. 2 model, this 1894 Remington No. 6 features the QWERTY keyboard that remains standard today. Remington was the first manufacturer to use the QWERTY layout, and in 1893, the five largest typewriter manufacturers agreed to adopt it as the industry standard.

Typewriter and photo: Newseum collection
Gossipy Type
Newspaper and radio commentator Walter Winchell used this 1929 Remington typewriter to skewer the famous and powerful in his gossip column in the *New York Evening Graphic* and later in the *Daily Mirror*. A fan of FBI director J. Edgar Hoover, Winchell talked mob boss Louis Buchalter, head of the Mafia hit squad Murder Inc., into surrendering to him in 1939. Winchell’s column paved the way for modern celebrity reporting.

*Typewriter: Newseum collection*
*Photo: James P. Blair/Newseum*
Pioneering Reporter
War correspondent Pauline Frederick used this portable Hermes typewriter during World War II. After the war, the newspaper and radio reporter covered the United Nations for ABC and NBC. She is considered the first woman to report the news on a television network, and in 1976, she became the first woman to moderate a televised presidential debate.

Typewriter: Gift, Catharine Cole
Photo: James P. Blair/Newseum
Segregated War News

*Pittsburgh Courier* reporter Frank E. Bolden was one of the few African Americans accredited to cover World War II. He used this Royal manual typewriter to report on the U.S. Army’s 92nd Infantry Division — the Buffalo Division — and the Tuskegee Airmen’s famed 332nd Fighter Group, among the few black units given combat assignments in the segregated armed forces. Because nearly all of the *Courier*’s readers were black, most Americans never saw Bolden’s reporting.

*Typewriter: Gift, Nancy Travis Bolden
Photo: Newseum collection*
Afro-American War Reporters

World War II correspondents Elizabeth M. Phillips and Herbert M. Frisby both used this typewriter during their careers with the Baltimore Afro-American. Phillips, one of the first women sent overseas as a war correspondent, traveled to London in 1944, preparing to enter France, but she became ill and was sent home. She later wrote the Afro’s popular “If You Ask Me” column. Frisby reported on black troops serving in the Arctic areas of the Hudson Bay and Aleutian Islands. He covered President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s 1944 visit to the Aleutians, where the president dined with 125 enlisted men, including more than two dozen black soldiers and sailors.

Typewriter: Newseum collection
Photo: Newseum collection
Veteran News Correspondent
Radio and television reporter Howard K. Smith used this Smith-Corona electric typewriter during his 40-year career in radio and television. In 1960, he moderated the first televised presidential debate between Richard M. Nixon and John F. Kennedy. One of Edward R. Murrow’s famed band of CBS radio reporters who covered World War II, Smith went on to become a co-anchor at ABC News and later a commentator for the network. He covered presidents from Franklin D. Roosevelt to Ronald Reagan.

Typewriter: Gift, Catherine H. Smith
Photo: James P. Blair/Newseum
Civil Rights Era ‘Laptop’

*New York Times* reporter Claude Sitton carried this portable Underwood Olivetti typewriter while covering the civil rights movement throughout the South in the 1960s. He covered the 1964 murders of three civil rights workers in Mississippi that became known as the Mississippi Burning case. Reporters on the civil rights beat were subject to harassment in the South, and Sitton found Mississippi most inhospitable: “In Alabama, they might beat the hell out of you; in Mississippi, they’d be very nice about it, but they’d just kill you.”

*Typewriter: Gift, Claude Sitton
Photo: James P. Blair/Neuseum*
Pulitzer Winner’s Typewriter

New York Times reporter David L. Halberstam used this typewriter while reporting in the 1960s. One of the first journalists to question American military progress in Vietnam, Halberstam earned the ire of President John F. Kennedy, who asked the Times to pull the reporter from Vietnam because of his critical stories. The Times did not reassign Halberstam, and his Pulitzer Prize–winning reporting fueled debate over the controversial war. Halberstam’s book “The Best and the Brightest” told the story of how smart and capable men propelled the country into an unwinnable war.

Typewriter: Gift, Michael Harry Halberstam
Photo: Amy Joseph/Newseum
Portable typewriters, such as this 1960s model used by war correspondent Peter Braestrup, were light enough to use in the newsroom and take on the road. Braestrup covered the Vietnam War for *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* and became an expert on the relationship between the military and the press. He went on to found *The Wilson Quarterly* and was senior editor at the Library of Congress until his death in 1997.

*Typewriter: Gift, Kate Braestrup*

*Photo: Newseum collection*
Reporting the Kennedy Assassination
United Press International White House reporter Merriman Smith used this portable typewriter, shown with its carrying case, to cover President John F. Kennedy’s fateful trip to Dallas, Texas, in 1963. On Nov. 22, 1963, Smith’s 12-word news bulletin was the first to report to the nation that the president had been shot: “Three shots were fired at President Kennedy’s motorcade today in downtown Dallas.”

Typewriter: Gift, Family of Merriman Smith
Photo: Newseum collection
'60 Minutes’ Legend
Curmudgeonly commentator Andy Rooney of CBS’s “60 Minutes” used this typewriter from 1978 until his retirement in 2011. When an Associated Press TV critic suggested in 1996 that he retire, Rooney aired the critic’s phone number — and 7,000 viewers called in Rooney’s defense. This typewriter could be seen on the air during Rooney’s weekly commentaries from his CBS office.

Typewriter: Gift, The Rooney Family and CBS News
Photo: Amy Joseph/Newseum
Nixon Foe’s Typewriter
Longtime CBS and NPR correspondent Daniel Schorr’s tough reporting earned him a spot on President Richard M. Nixon’s notorious “enemies list,” revealed during the Watergate scandal. Schorr considered his inclusion on the list one of his proudest accomplishments in a career that included landing the first TV interview with Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev in 1957. In 1985, he joined NPR, where the sound of him typing on this IBM Selectric III typewriter was a common soundtrack for the weekend news staff.

Typewriter: Gift, The Schorr Family
Photo: Amy Joseph/Newseum
ABC News Anchor’s Typewriter
Frank Reynolds co-anchored ABC’s “World News Tonight” with Max Robinson and Peter Jennings from 1978 until his death in 1983. Reynolds used this typewriter while anchoring from Washington, D.C. During ABC’s breaking news coverage of the 1981 attempt on President Ronald Reagan’s life, Reynolds broadcast an erroneous report that press secretary Jim Brady had been killed, quickly apologizing with an on-air outburst to his news team: “I’m told Jim may be alive. ... Let’s get it nailed down, people!”

Typewriter: Gift, ABC News
Photo: Amy Joseph/Newseum
News From ‘Nightline’
Using this typewriter, ABC News’s Ted Koppel anchored the late-night news program “Nightline.” The show began as a nightly news update on the 1979 Iran hostage situation, with State Department correspondent Koppel at the helm. Iran freed the hostages in 1981, but “Nightline” went on. With Koppel’s deft interviewing skills, “Nightline” became a late-night forum for breaking news, science, sports and pop culture news, usually focusing on a single topic. Koppel anchored the show until 2005.

Typewriter: Gift, Ted Koppel, ABC News
Photo: Amy Joseph/Newseum
USA Today Founder's Typewriter

As president, chairman and CEO of the Gannett newspaper group, Al Neuharth used this Royal typewriter to write the memo that proposed publishing a national newspaper — USA Today. Launched in 1982, USA Today became the largest-circulation newspaper in the country. Neuharth also was the leading force behind the creation of the Newseum, the interactive museum of news in Washington, D.C.

Newspaper: Gift, Al Neuharth
Photo: James P. Blair/Newseum
About the Newseum

The Newseum’s mission is to champion the five freedoms of the First Amendment through exhibits, public programs and education.

The Newseum’s dynamic, engaging and interactive museum allows visitors to experience the stories of yesterday and today through the eyes of the media while celebrating the freedoms guaranteed to all Americans by the First Amendment.

From the modern building located on historic Pennsylvania Avenue to the state-of-the-art theaters, exhibits and hands-on activities inside, a visit will quickly show why TripAdvisor users rated the Newseum as one of the “Travelers’ Choice Top 10 Museums in the U.S.”

The Newseum also has become an important forum for debate and dialogue about important issues of the day and a nonpartisan place to explore the principles on which America is built.

Learn more at newseum.org.