

The IBM SELECTRIC® Composer: A Foreword

The following group of papers is devoted to the evolution and design of the IBM SELECTRIC Composer. The Journal's primary purpose here is to exemplify some of the work being done in an important, fast-changing field—the development and improvement of tools for producing the written word. The Composer, as one of these tools, is designed toward one objective: a large, obvious increase in the quality of printed copy a writer or typist, acting alone, can produce.

To develop a typewriter-like machine that would approach this goal, a number of problems had to be considered: how to thoroughly understand type design and free the type designer from traditional cold-type constraints on proportionality and character shape; how to preserve the designer's aesthetics in volume-production equipment; how to make both proportional character size and multiple type styles available in one machine; how to produce a justified line without losing proportionality; how to assure consistent, accurate character alignment; and how to accomplish all of these ends at moderate cost and without impractical complexity. Our engineers write about these and other considerations and describe the results of their work.

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