

A letter to a typewriter manufacturer

Gentlemen,

I would like to acquire -and I trust that this is a wish you applaud- a first-class electric typewriter that enables me to produce my technical notes, reports and scientific articles in what is now known as "camera-ready" form.

After having spent the major part of a day calling or visiting the major typewriter shops of Austin, Texas, I decided to contact you directly, for what those shops could provide was useless as far as I am concerned. And I hate to think that the typewriter industry is unable to produce a typewriter I could use, the more so as my wishes - well within the technology of today - seem as modest as reasonable.

As a mathematician/computing scientist, I need besides the 52 letters, the 10 digits, and the usual interpunction signs a bunch of special characters. The total number of symbols is less than 100 and would fit on a single daisy wheel. And with a very few exceptions my special characters are not so very special either in the sense that they can be found on some daisy wheel.

Invariably I was offered the solution of buying enough different daisy wheels so that I would have (almost all) the desired symbols at my disposal. But that solution is utterly unrealistic, for, when using a typewriter, I wish to compose the text at the keyboard, formulae and all. (If I did

not compose at the keyboard, the use of the machine would cost time instead of saving it.)

I am however unable to do mathematics at the keyboard if

- (i) a few vital symbols are lacking, and
- (ii) I would have to change daisy wheels a dozen times per line.

Unless I have all the symbols at my fingertips, the "solution" is unrealistic.

Do you think that as typewriter manufacturer you could manufacture the typewriter I need? If so, I would only be too pleased to specify my needs in the required detail. If my needs leave a few positions unused I shall be glad to assist you in the completion of the design.

Looking forward to your reply,

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