

Frequently Asked Questions About Typewriters

Why write on a typewriter when you can use a computer?

Why buy vinyl when you can download an MP3?

Why ride a bike when you can drive on the Interstate?

No, seriously. Why?

Because typewriters are independent, private, secure, durable, green, fun, and cool.

What can you use them for?

Write the first draft of anything without being distracted by word processing software and the Internet.

Impress a friend with a typewritten letter.

This November, participate in National Novel Writing Month and join the Typewriter Brigade group on nanowrimo.org.

Type in a coffeehouse and attract admirers.

Type envelopes, forms, labels, and checks.

Scan your typewriting and upload it to a blog (it's called typecasting).

Speaking of scanning, how do you turn typewritten text into digital?

Run optical character recognition software on a scan, or upload it to a site such as onlineocr.net.

Can you still get ribbons?

Yes. A standard half-inch-wide ribbon will fit almost any typewriter.

Keep your original metal ribbon spools and wind the new ribbon onto them. Your typewriter may call for grommets on the ends of the ribbons to trigger the ribbon reversing mechanism, but if grommets are absent you can tie a knot in the ribbon and it will work just as well. Don't buy ribbons with built-in white correction tape; it flakes off and gums up the typewriter.

Ribbons can be found on eBay, ordered from Baco Ribbons (bacoribbon@sbcglobal.net), or bought from local typewriter repair shops.

Typewriter repair shops??

There are at least four places in Cincinnati that will work on typewriters:

Howard Office Equipment, 6948 Plainfield Road, 513-793-2262

Ohio Office Equipment, 4710-D Interstate Drive, 513-342-4358,
ohioofficeequipment.com

Peter Paul Office Equipment, 711 Carr Street, 513-721-0865,
peterpauloffice.com

Royal Typewriter Co., 3042 Reading Road, 513-221-6319, royalohio.com

Where can I meet other typewriter users online?

The Portable Typewriter Forum:

groups.yahoo.com/group/theportabletypewriterforum

Welcome to the Typosphere: typosphere.net

The Classic Typewriter Page: site.xavier.edu/polit/typewriters

Writing Machines group on Flickr