About

Site Contact

This site is run by Jordan Spencer Cunningham. To contact me, run this through a ROT-13 cipher: wf@gryrglcr.org.

Contact for Technical Teleprinter Help

This site aims to aggregate as much information on teleprinters as possible, but should you have specific questions that aren't (yet) answered here and you're serious about diving into these machines, try joining the GreenKeys mailing list and asking a unique and helpful bunch for their collective knowledge. I will not be held liable for basements, garages, attics, or barns that become overcrowded with musty telegraphy and radio equipment. But I will gladly take some of it off your hands.

Contribute

The teleprinter scene is a big pond, and I am a little fish. Contributions are welcome. Please contact me above if interested in minor contributions or having an account to add as much information as you like at any time.

About Teletypes (for the newbie)

If you're new around here, here's a brief description of the amazing machines we call teletypes. If you already know all this, skip ahead.

What I usually tell people who've never heard of them is that a teletype (or teleprinter) is the marriage between the telegraph and the typewriter. Indeed, the teleprinter apparatus was invented as a more efficient method of communication and largely replaced the telegraph in many applications by the early 1900s. Here are some videos of some machines in operation.

Teletype was a name brand of teleprinter that was so common in the United States that most Americans refer to all teleprinters as teletypes. The Teletype Corporation was owned by the American Telephone & Telegraph Company (AT&T) since 1930, though it was originally created as the Mokrum Company in 1906, named after Joy Morton and Charles Krum, the founders (Morton is more famously known for the Morton Salt Company, which thrives on today).

In the 1970s and 1980s, computers and screens became compact and cheap enough and communications networks so widespread and accessible that teletypes quickly began falling out of use. By 1990, the Teletype Corporation in particular ceased to exist. Other manufacturers of teleprinter equipment have either all died out, merged with other companies, or moved on to more profitable applications.

Because teletypes were a natural step in the progression of technology, the computers and networks we have today have their roots teletype technology. Even modern operating systems still contain vestiges of teletype history:

- Most serial devices are named "tty" in Unix and Unix-like systems.
- Modern terminals/CLIs are literally emulations of a teletype interface.
- The BEL or ALERT character, which in most computers today plays the system's alert sound, originated in teletypes as a literal ringing of a bell.
- ASCII, perhaps the best-known characterset of the modern day though it has evolved to more extensive charactersets, is the direct descendant of ITA2/USTTY, the charactersets most extensively used to one degree or another by the most prolific and iconic teletype equipment; these were still used in some teletype equipment even after ASCII was standardized and popularized in the latter half of the 20th century
- LF (line feed, or newline) and CR (carriage return)—invisible characters that control the cursor to advance to the next line on the screen—were used in teletypes to do the same thing on physical paper.
- The the term "baud" derives from the name "Emille Baudot", who invented the first iteration of encoding teletypes came to use. Baud is the rate of speed that teletypes can transmit. Older teletypes transmit at a speed of 45.45 baud; at 45 baud, an average JPEG would take 7-8 days to download.

About the Site

At nerdology.org and the nerdology.org YouTube Channel I share my machines digitally with the world, usually in a more entertaining way with only light amounts of technical and historical background so that those without knowledge of these machines are not overwhelmed. Consider it a gateway drug, as it were.

Teletype.net is meant to be the full gamut of which nerdology.org only scrapes the surface. This site aims to encapsulate as much information about teleprinters and related technologies including but not limited to history, technical information, manuals, repair tips, transmission/communication methods,

I cannot claim the glory of working on and using teletypes back when they were the cutting edge of communications technology, nor can I yet claim decades of experience with them like some of the salty guys from whom I've learned a thing or two. However, through the years I have grown a strange obsession with these machines and enjoy working with them and sharing them with the world (people young and old always seem to get a big kick out of them).

I created and continue to manage this site to both make information more accessible for my own selfish ends as well as to share that accessibility with the world. Sadly many of our teletype aficionados around the world are getting up there in age. With age comes knowledge and experience, but with it also comes the passing from this mortal coil and the loss of that knowledge and experience forever. My hope is to preserve and make more accessible that knowledge and experience so that some few of us may absorb and pass on this quickly dwindling art.

As the world of teletypes is deeply interconnected with computers, amateur radio, encryption, and many other topics, there will certainly be much crossover on the information included here.

Teletype Corporation Trademark

The Teletype Corporation name and logo were once registered trademarks of AT&T (AKA the American Telephone and Telegraph Company). It's used on this site not to claim official succession to the Teletype Corp but rather to honor the technology and history it left in its wake. The Teletype Corporation became defunct in 1990, and the trademark expired in 2006. Thus the trademark is used here under the presumption that it has been abandoned since it has not been used in 30 years, nor have there been attempts to officially renew it in over ten.