

Sample Middle School Research Paper

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April 2008

Social Studies

Research Paper

What changes in the business world were caused by technology of the late 19th century?

Technology in the 19th century led to economic growth, which in turn led to social changes. Businesses had new methods to communicate, to transport goods to market, to reach their customers, and more.

Alexander Graham Bell was an important figure in late 19th century technology. He was a Scottish immigrant to the United States. He got the credit for inventing the telephone in 1876. (1) The telephone provided businesses with a faster means of communication, which could give a possible advantage over competitors. For example, warehouses could just call up factories when more products were needed as people bought the products. The faster this happened, the faster more products could be manufactured to meet the demand. The competitor may have had to write a letter or send a courier and more time as lost.

James Ritty invented the cash register in 1879. He owned a bar and nicknamed his invention the “Incorruptible cashier”. He started a company to manufacture and sell his invention and it was a great success. (1) Machines like cash registers and adding machines helped business in two key ways: they reduce human error and reduce the time it takes to carry out the bookkeeping so important to running a successful business. Information like this is used to make business decisions. So many business decisions are based on timeliness, that speeding access to accurate information gave companies a competitive edge.

An indispensable business machine is the typewriter. In 1867, Christopher Sholes, Carlos Glidden and Samuel Soule invented the first practical mechanical typewriter machine. (2) The first typewriter attempt in 1829 was hard to use and never caught on. The first typewriter only typed in capitals. The order of letters was changed from alphabetical to the QWERTY arrangement we use today because fast typists had a lot of clogged keys (See illustrations) (3). Typewriters greatly improved business communication in two ways: legibility and speed. Skilled typists could type 100 words a minute, compared to about 31 words per minute handwriting. (4) Typewritten documents were easier to read than handwritten documents.

The telephone and typewriter transformed business in speeding communications. Businesses who had accurate information in a timely way could make decisions to increase their profit. The typewriter and the cash register both contributed to accurate record-keeping and bookkeeping, which are very important to maintaining a successful and profitable business. The demand for these new, successful business machines made the producers of these innovations very rich and the jobs created by the new manufacturing helped expand the economy further.

Bibliography

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First Commercially Successful
Typewriter, 1870s



VERY first, unsuccessful typewriter idea.

