

The LUDLOW Quarterly™

A Newsletter For Ludlow Typograph Operators and Enthusiasts

Ludlow Speed-setting

The Ludlow machine was designed to be a companion piece to the linotype machine. It did a beautiful job of setting display size type while the Linotype unceasingly cranked out body text.

Times change, however, and today the Linotype is too large for most places and much too complicated to operate and maintain. The Ludlow has been the machine of choice for most modern letterpress typesetting. Its size and ease of use and service have kept it busy producing small amounts of type for ribbon printing, stamps, invitations and checks. Today the cost and scarcity of good handset type has expanded the use of the Ludlow for body text.

Shops that produce custom or miniature books are setting page after page of type. Although it produces type slower than a Linotype, Ludlow typesetting is very much faster than setting foundry type by hand. This is especially true if some special techniques are used.

Lots of things affect speed-setting of Ludlow slugs. For the sake of this article, we will assume you are right handed and setting mats from regular wooden cases. There will be a number of useful tips described in this article. Any single one should increase speed, but combining several together can halve typesetting time and take the drudgery out of using the Ludlow for body text.

The biggest help to speed-setting type on the Ludlow is a technique called Gathering. This is a process in which you reach to a case and pick up, in proper order, enough mats to make from one word to half a line, and then transfer all mats to the composing stick at once. Gathering is an easy technique to learn. In minutes you can pick one mat per second, with very little practice - two or more per second.

The mats must be well dressed. Every single mat must slide easily against others, no sticking at all. If you try to lightly drag a mat up off the stack of a letter and get two or three - you simply cannot gather mats rapidly. Read the article on dressing mats in LQ issue #4. Don't dress every font, just the ones you use for body text.

One thumb, two fingers

Go to a case, make sure that no mats are lying flat in their sections and that the heads of all letters are to the left. In one motion, with no pauses, slide one mat up with your first finger, catch it against your thumb, and continue upwards to a point about 2" off the stack. Leave your forearm rather motionless at a low angle over the case, using wrist motion to get the mat up. Your fingers should be lightly "pinching" only the top 1/4 of the mat. Now touch it to the stack of the next letter just behind the first mat of that stack, and just as it touches, dip your second finger

down, slide a second mat up and against the first, and continue the motion without pause to 2" above the stack. Now you should have two mats, sandwiched between thumb and second finger, with the first finger resting lightly on the top of the two mats, or just above them. This is gathering!

Now take the pinch of two mats, a "pack," set it just behind first mat of the next stack and dip the second finger down to drag up another mat. The thumb and first finger should lightly stabilize the pack to prevent it from falling over. Again, use a fluid motion up and out.

A few more picks and you will have a pack of mats 1/2" to 3/4" wide, spelling the word you want, but getting a little disorderly. Go for another mat, but instead of a touch and go, set the pack on the stack more deliberately, with a slight tap. If you are correctly using a light pinch, the mats will settle themselves into a more uniform pack which is easier to carry to the next letter. As the pack increases in size you will find you must hold it a bit lower and more firmly. If the number of mats in the stack of a letter is too small to provide an adequate landing space to tap/settle the pack, put some six pica quad blocks behind them.

Some people can gather and set very fast without any quad blocks. They just angle the pack down, setting the end onto the mats of the next letter without ever really releasing their pinch. They drag a mat onto the pack with their second finger, then as the pack leaves they bring their first finger over the mat in mid-air and pinch, which releases the second finger to drag another mat.

Gathering can actually be accomplished using only thumb and one finger. Just set the pack on the stack, leaned against the thumb, use a finger to drag up a new mat, and pinch again. It is, however, very slow.

The motion for the first few mats should be like a bouncing ball, very fluid and non-stop. When you have a larger pack, the motion is like a rabbit landing, pausing a split second, then jumping off again. Pause as you get to a section, not as you leave. Always pull the new mat up to the pack and lift everything away with one motion.

Your jumps should ideally be directly to the section with the next letter, not to a hover looking for the right bin. Knowing the case well will pay off.

Spacing the words

Some printers fill an empty section with the one size of spaces that they want to use and set them in after each word, gathering them up like regular mats. This works well with centered or left-aligned text.

Full width justification is slower, but generally works best if you don't set any spaces in until all words are in the stick. Six words means 5 spaces, so grab 5 equal spaces that make about the right size and try them in the end of the line. If they fit, put them between the words, if they don't, try 5 of a smaller size. Repeat until using single thin spaces to tighten the line.

After casting the mats, unlock the stick, grab half the mats at a word break and drizzle them one by one back into their proper places.

Business Profile

Many subscribers of the **LUDLOW Quarterly** have a strong interest in letterpress in general, so this profile is about the best letterpress newsletter in America, the **TYPE & PRESS**.

T&P is a quarterly journal now in its 22nd year of publication. Its longevity is due to its editorial quality and a large enthusiastic following that contributes stories, research, and advice. Editorial subjects are thoroughly researched at rare book rooms and several university libraries. The first time I saw an issue I subscribed and ordered a copy of every back issue. It's that good.

It was started by Fred Williams in 1974, after he retired from 40 years of working at the printing trade. This was a time when large amounts of letterpress type, casters, mats and presses were being scrapped. Trade journals, heavily subsidized with ad revenues from offset-related industries, limited their editorial content to duplicating and electronic publishing. Mr. Williams thought something was needed to keep lines of communication open between letterpressmen. The **T&P** journal allowed them to buy, sell, and trade equipment, and share techniques, supply sources, and news.

Originally hand-set and dip-fed on an 8x12" treadle press, issues were distributed free through the Amalgamated Printers bundle and sent free to those requesting it. It is still produced by letterpress with eight pages per issue on vellum, but type is now set on a linotype and printed on a 12" x 18" Little Giant cylinder press. There are lots of cuts. Mr. Williams and his wife Betty Jean still produce every issue.

Subscribe! The subscription rate is only \$5.00 per year U.S., \$5.50 Canada, \$7.50 overseas, in U.S. funds. Classified advertising rate is 5 cents per word. **Type & Press**, Fred Williams, 24667 Heather Ct., Hayward, CA 94545.



FREE Matrix ID!

For those of you who do not have the new generation Ludlow mat gauge, which uses the lines on the back of the mats to identify the font and point size, we provide free ID service. Just send one mat of each font you want identified to the **LUDLOW Quarterly** address, with sufficient postage for return. The sample can be any letter, even a period. Think thin and light and you might even be able to tape them onto a letter!



P•I•P•E Donations

Many Thanks to these contributors to the **Postage-Ink-Paper-Equipment** fund: Clyde Barbee - Southern Printing Co., Elmer Broste, Dave Seat - Hot Metal Services, Ed Barron, and Susan Smith.

Tip

You can easily make some strange and non-linear effects with the Ludlow. Make a frame of some iron furniture on a steel surface. Place some type in the hole at odd angles, or even slugs bent into a curve. Pour a little metal from the crucible around the base of the type to freeze it in place, then pour another layer or two until the block is near type high. The resulting rectangle is an instant cut! It takes only seconds to make and locks easily into forms.

New Scraper!

Dave Seat, of Dave Seat Hot Metal Services is now manufacturing an adjustable, three bladed, well cleaning tool. It looks very similar to the old linotype well scrapers and has a cranking handle on the top. It works faster than the normal Ludlow reamer, is adjustable for fit and wear, and does not require long preheating. It was developed because in some machines the normal reamer spins easily in the well but the piston still drags. Call 1-(800)-542-2508.

(Editors note - There is a theory that one can spread the end of the normal Ludlow reamer a few thousandths of an inch with wedges to get it to "cut" better. I have talked to many people who tried to do this and instantly broke the reamer. If anyone has had success with this technique, I would like to hear about it.)

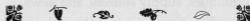


Cyberspace Dingbats

Matt Jalbert took a liking to Ludlow dingbats and has developed a font of six dingbats, each in four rotations of regular form or black box reversed. There are 72 images per font, all are leaf motifs, and they were crafted by scanning into Fontographer 4.0. Available in TrueType or postscript versions, they print well in any size and can be combined for seamless borders. You can try them for free and use them for a \$5.00 shareware fee.

Contact Matt Jalbert, P.O. Box 6386, Albany, CA 94706, or try AOL: mjalbert@aol.com, or internet: mjalbert@uclink2.berkeley.edu

If you cannot download the font, send the LQ a disk, with return postage.



Travel News

Jim Parrish, the renowned Ludlow service technician, has moved from Arizona to Arkansas for a while to help out in family matters. He plans to continue his service tours throughout the West, and will service more customers on the East coast. He can be reached at (501) 734-4035.

Classified Ads

Still only 15 cents per word. You must subscribe to advertise. Deadline for next issue is March 15th.

Free

To help preserve letterpress equipment, ads offering free items will be run without charge.

Wanted

Wanted: Two oak type cabinets wanted, one single-wide, one double-wide, for use in print shop. Must be in restorable condition, priced reasonably, and in the Southwest. I am also interested in type. Don Walker, 4979 C.R. 250, Durango, CO. 81301. Phone 970-247-1713.

Wanted: Ludlow mats. Coronet Bold 14, Times Bold 10, 12, and a series of Times New Roman. Write to the Ludlow Quarterly.

Wanted: Will pay for information on how to make photo-engraved cuts. 1-800-887-0306, Fax 1-800-325-1666

Wanted: Ludlow Mats. Caslon light 12, 14, 18, 30, and Cheltenham Oldstyle 12, 14, 18. Bookbinders Deluxe, Call Victor, at 212-740-9388

For Sale

For Sale: Chase for 12" x 18" Golding. Only \$35.00 PPd. John Powers, Box 304 Shore Acres Road, South Harpswell, ME 04079. Phone (207)833-6701.

For Sale: Largest selection of Ludlow fonts in North America. Over 10,000 total fonts - over 1500 different. For complete list phone, fax or write DON BLACK, 120 Midwest Road, Unit 5, Scarborough, Ont. Canada M1P 3B2. Phone 416-751-5944, Fax 416-751-5413. Also have a large list of special sale fonts \$30.00 each. Have all related supplies for Ludlow, also thousands of Lino fonts and accessories.

For Sale: LUDLOW MATS. We have hundreds of fine fonts still available at \$35.00 per font plus handling, send for list. MICHAEL CARBONE INC., 2041 Federal St., Camden, N.J. 08105. (609) 964-4112, FAX (609) 963-8860.

For Sale: Ludlow Type \$1.00 per line. Send \$5.00 for laminated Type specimen sheets. Top Notch Press, 28 Wardwell Rd, Canton, MA 02021. (617) 828-4088

For Sale: Two Ludlows, one is a model M, 20 cabinets of mats, centering sticks, etc. Call, fax, or write for listing. The Front Rubber Stamp Co., Inc. 960 Massachusetts Avenue, Boston MA 02118. Phone 1-800-666-7600, Fax 1-800-666-7605.

For Sale: Ludlow fonts, reasonably priced. Henry Weiland, 8946 West Grantosa Drive, Milwaukee, WI 53225. Phone (414) 463-4681.

For Sale: Typemetal, any quantity, in 20 lb ingots with analysis. Excellent side-arm tabletop letterpress. Printing Equipment Locators, pager number is 602-229-9709, will return your call. Phoenix, AZ.

For Sale: New! "Ludlow Field Service Notes" and Ludlow mat gauges with reference charts are now available from the author of "The Ludlow Trouble-Shooting Guide". Jim Parrish, P.O. Box 230, Brinkley, AR. 72021-0230, or call (501) 734-4035

For Sale: Kelsey hand press, 5" x 8" Excelsior model in excellent condition with new rollers. \$185.00 FOB Durango. Don Walker, 4979 C.R. 250, Durango CO 81301. Phone (970) 247-1713

For Sale or Trade: Over 70 fonts, much variety, but including; Bodoni Bold 12-14-18-24-36-48, Coronet 14-18, Coronet Bold 30-36, Bodoni Campanile 42-48-60, Garamond 30-48, Umbra 24-36-48-72, and many Tempos, Karnaks, Lining Plates and MICR #'s. Some good deals on Linotype fonts. Bill Simon, 3115 W. Cavedale Dr. Phoenix, AZ, 85027, (602)581-1748.

For Sale: Complete Ludlow/foil stamping shop for sale. Use what you need, sell off the rest, will deliver. 618-539-3377 (IL)

Trade Services

LOUDLOW REPAIRS and Machine Rebuilding. Frequent service tours throughout the country. Expert composing stick and mold repairs. Jim Parrish, P.O. Box 230, Brinkley, AR. 72021-0230, or call (501) 734-4035.

DAVE SEAT - HOT METAL SERVICES
The USA's most complete source for Ludlow, Linotype, and Intertype parts and supplies. Most orders shipped same day. In plant machine service and maintenance in 50 states and Canada. Rebuilt Ludlow machines. Large selection of new and used mats. 206 Whitnel Drive, P.O. Box 1160, Mt. Juliet, TN 37122. Phone (800) 542-2508, or 24 hour FAX is (800) 468-6382. E-Mail:70254.1575@compuserve.com. WWW page at; <http://machinerynet.com/printersmarketplace/hotmetalservices>.

LUDLOW - LINOTYPE - INTERTYPE Repairs and rebuilding. P.J. Burns, Mercersburg, PA. (717) 328-3092

MARLBORO MATS INC. has served hot metal typesetters with mats, supplies, and parts for 65 years! 13,000 fonts of Ludlow, Linotype and Intertype mats in stock. Free lists. Phone (208) 443-2715, Fax (208) 443-3060, or write to; Marlboro Mats, P.O. Box 188, Coolin, ID 83821.

THE LUDLOW QUARTERLY

Bill Simon, Editor/Publisher at 3115 W. Cavedale Dr, Phoenix, AZ. 85027-7637. Phone (602) 581-1748. \$ 6.00 per 4 issues US, \$8.00 Canada, \$12.00 other countries. 15 cents per word for classified advertising. Copy deadline for issue #6 is June 15th, 1996, provided that space is still available. Only subscribers may advertise. We welcome letters to the editor, questions, tips suggestions, experiences, and articles. Reprints of past issues of the Ludlow Quarterly are available at \$2.50 each.

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