

BOOK REVIEW

The Office Copying Revolution: History, Identification and Preservation

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**Batterham, Ian (2008). National Archives of Australia, ISBN 978-1-920807-63-4
216 pages, \$59.95 AUD**

Ian Batterham's book, *The Office Copying Revolution: History, Identification and Preservation*, is a new text that discusses office copying machines from the 18th to 21st centuries. Batterham, a conservator at the National Archives of Australia, began compiling this book when he was doing research for his master's degree. His reasoning was that there was no single reference assembling this information, so he created this compilation "...aimed at persons trusted with the care of the various copies which remain as the legacy of the wide variety of processes used in the modern office." The result is a publication written to be a general survey aimed at a relatively small audience: conservators, librarians, archivists, and forensic document examiners. It is an interesting and informative summary of copying machines, filled with colorful images of machines, brochures and advertisements, sample documents, and micrographs.

Batterham narrowed the scope of the book to office copying machines. He states, "...I decided to include document copying processes used commercially and in government offices to produce single copies or small runs of copies, from an existing original, from a prepared stencil or master, from an electronic data file, from a microfilm, or through the use of moveable type. In other words, in-house copying is the scope of this book, rather than larger-scale copying by printing companies." You will not find information about the Gutenberg press or other *printing* processes in this survey; rather it explores machines used to make duplicates of an original document.

He begins with a brief history of office copying and discusses how the Industrial Revolution greatly transformed the copying process. As

new machines were created, they would then be refined due to cost, practicality, and simplicity. He divides this information into chapters that include 11 copying processes: impact/transfer, ink/dye offset, stencil, photo-sensitive (non-silver and silver), lithography and related methods, typographic copying, thermal induction, other thermal, electrostatic, and inkjet. He discusses methods that began long ago, such as pressed letter books, mimeographs, hectography, and typewriters utilizing carbon papers to more recent methods like Thermo-Fax, electrostatic copying, and inkjet printing. He also delves into some lesser known processes such as adherography, infrared sublimation, and the imagic process.

Each chapter chronologically covers the period of active use of each machine, how common it was at that time, common synonyms, brand and product names, the history of the machine, working procedure, identification, and preservation. These chapters do not go into great depth in explaining each process but are more of an overview and a source of information for further study.

The book also has 3 informative appendices, the 1st of which provides an outline of 11 steps to help identify unknown copies. It is analogous to a dichotomous key, and it may be useful in dating the document or identifying a printing process. It also includes an identification chart for each of the office copying processes. There are micrographs of the letter "e" from all the different processes discussed in the chapters. However, the images are fairly small and therefore not practical for identification purposes. It may suffice to have the publisher include the images on a CD with the publication, where the images can be enlarged for

better analysis. The 2nd appendix provides a long list of names associated with each process, such as common synonyms or trade names, manufacturers, machine names, copy paper names, and other names associated with the process. The 3rd appendix offers tips on how to obtain a copy from a faded original. It suggests photocopying using filtration, photography utilizing ultraviolet through infrared light, multi-spectral imaging, and photo-editing using software.

The content is easy to read and very straightforward. There are many colorful illustrations. The parts of this book that were most helpful were the history, the working procedures for each process, the identification information, and the appendices. On the other hand, the 1 thing missing was a glossary of terms which would have been very useful.

Though we may not see these machines often anymore, there have been many documents created by them. This text provides the information about what kind of documents are out there and how they were created. The information is brought together and is helpful because we may not be able to identify how these archived documents were produced. This book is a valuable resource because it discusses some of the lesser known processes and provides illustrations not covered in other questioned document books. It is a good value and a book to purchase for your library, applicable for any document examiner, both trainee and journey level.

The Office Copying Revolution: History, Identification and Preservation, is published by the National Archives of Australia and can be purchased from the National Archives of Australia for \$59.95 AUD. Postage is \$8.00 AUD for orders shipped within Australia and \$24.00 AUD outside the country.