

Graphic arts

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INSIGHT AND INNOVATION

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Using his knowledge of die making, Gutenberg created several pieces of type, not in wood but in metal. It was this process of printing from cast type and not the process of printing per se—which already existed—that was Gutenberg's great contribution to the graphic arts. Technically speaking, Gutenberg's invention, the letterpress, was so well conceived that it remained the dominant printing process for almost five hundred years.

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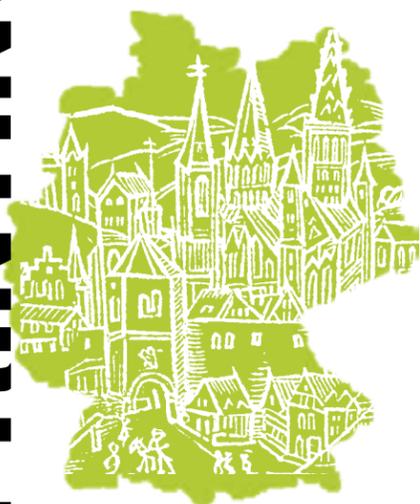
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printing in germany

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Gutenberg was the right man because of his familiarity with the craft of the goldsmith and the diemaker. He was in the right place because Mainz was a cultural and commercial center. It was the right time because the Renaissance thirst for knowledge was creating a growing market for books that could not be satisfied with the traditional handwritten manuscripts.

Handwritten manuscripts were made to order and were usually expensive. They were laboriously copied by scribes who had either to read from a manuscript or have it read to them while copying. This process was not only time-consuming, but led to many errors, which had to be corrected. Adding to the expense was the scarcity and high cost of vellum and parchment. As a result, handwritten manuscripts were limited to a select few: clergymen, scholars, and wealthy individuals.

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figure one;

the figure to the left is an image of bible page printed with Gutenberg's movable type.



figure two;

the figure above is an image of the print shop used by Gutenberg.

insight & innovation

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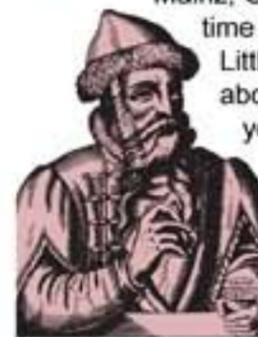
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Gutenberg's shop



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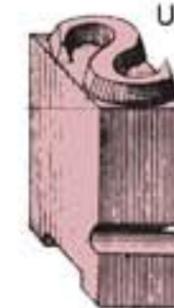
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inventor of the printing press.

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Sample Texts



(left) Giant Bible
of Mainz

(right) Fragment
from Weltgericht

mag sich überge nicht vor de got: ichē
angerecht katus wil do urech ipe reuen
Dū wil alle boßheit rechen Die die ge
dadt den willē in Den wil er gebē ewige
pin Dū wil den gude gebē By rym lode
vñ ewig lebē hilt die werlt vñ alle ding
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After the judgement, it is believed that Gutenberg set up another shop and even continued to print books and other materials for another ten years. In 1465, he received a large pension from the local archbishop but died just three years later. According to an early source, he was buried in the Franciscan church at Mainz.

CONTINUING A LEGACY

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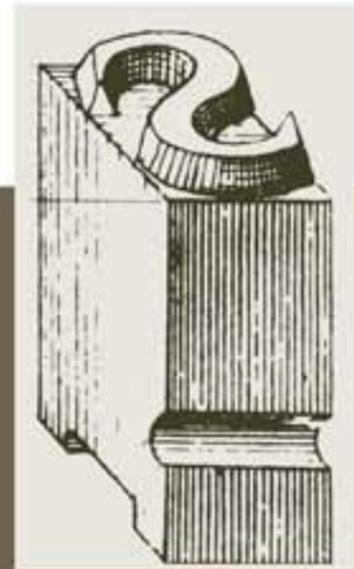
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FOR GUTENBERG

A BRIEF MEDITATION ON HISTORY'S
MOST FAMOUS WORDSMITH



Typsetter at work



Example of type high block letter



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