Notes on Using the Microfilm Reader-Printers

Introduction: Space limitations in libraries have made microfilm collections common in most academic libraries over the past century. One standard roll of microfilm holds the exact photographic images of several hundred pages of text. In order to view and copy these miniaturized images, the student must learn how to operate a microfilm reader. Not all microfilm readers are exactly alike because libraries acquire them from different manufacturers at different times. Lehman College Library has several types.

Come prepared: Some microfilm readers are just that. You can read the microfilm only. Others are reader-printers. On these you can read and then print any page you need. It is easy to tell, as each reader-printer have an attached pay box. It costs 20 cents (use two dimes, these machines don’t make change) to copy images. If you have many pages to copy you may be able to use a reader-printer that takes a copy card. Ask at the librarian at the Periodicals Reference Desk to find out whether a copy card can be used.

What to do first: Check the exact date of the material you need. Copy the full citation (or as much as you can find) so that you can use it to guide you once you are searching the microfilm. See “Citation Elements for Finding a Newspaper Article” below.

To find the right microfilm: Go into the microfilm room in the Periodicals Department. This is an open stack area. You serve yourself. Newspapers on microfilm are stored on the east wall. Journals on microfilm are on the west wall. They are stored in metal drawers. Be careful when you pull these out as they have sharp edges. Open the drawer. Check title and date on roll before taking it out.

Take microfilm roll to reader: First turn on the reader (switch either at right on Cannon 90 or under apron left on Cannon 2000). Unwrap the film. It has a tie to hold it tight to the reel. Remove the tie (paper ties or rubber-band). Put tie in safe place as it must be put back on when you finish with the roll. Follow the directions given for threading microfilm. Observe the labeled image of the microfilm reader and the knobs that are used to move, turn, or focus the image. If you have any difficulty, ask a staff in the Periodicals Department to assist you.

Citation Elements for Finding a Newspaper Article:
Source/Pathway:________________________
Author’s name:__________________________
Title of the article (always in quotes):___________________________________
Name of the Newspaper_____________________________________________
Edition of the Newspaper (International, National, etc.)_____________________
Section:__________________________________________________________
Page article begins on:__________
Pages article continues on:__________
Date of publication:________________________(month, day, year)

Making the copy: Once you have located the item you wish to copy line it up in the middle of the screen. The machines use letter-sized paper (not legal). Ignore the LGL guide marker. Notice where the guide marker has LTR (letter). Trace out the LTR-sized box. Keep your copying within this area. The LTR marker show you what part of the screen will actually be photographed. You may have to make two separate copies to get the full article. Position the text you want copied in the middle of the screen inside the LTR guide markers. Put two dimes in the pay box and push the rectangular green button just under the screen right. Do not use the guide marks at the far left or far right.

Returning the microfilm box: Re-pack the box as it was when you found it. Do not put the microfilm box back in the drawer. Leave it on the counter in the Microfilm Drop Box.
INSTRUCTIONS

1. TURN MACHINE ON USING SWITCH (LEFT) UNDER SMALL PLATFORM.
2. PUT FILM ON SUPPLY SPINDLE.
3. THREAD FILM UNDER FIRST TWO ROLLERS AND INTO CHANNEL.
4. PUSH GREEN BUTTON (RESET KEY) AND FILM WILL THREAD ONTO TAKEUP REEL.
5. FORWARD OR REVERSE KNOB ON RIGHT-HAND SIDE OF MACHINE.
Cannon 400 Adjustments

- Turns image around
- Reduces and enlarges image
- Focus knob
- Scanning lever shifts page up and down
- Speed knob for motion and side to side
- Blue square will start automatic film threading