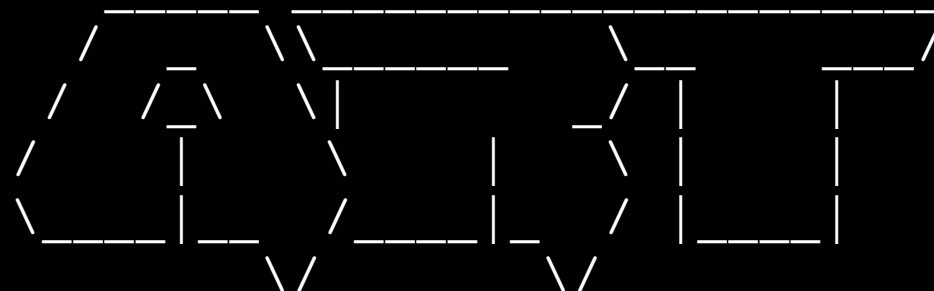


ANSI

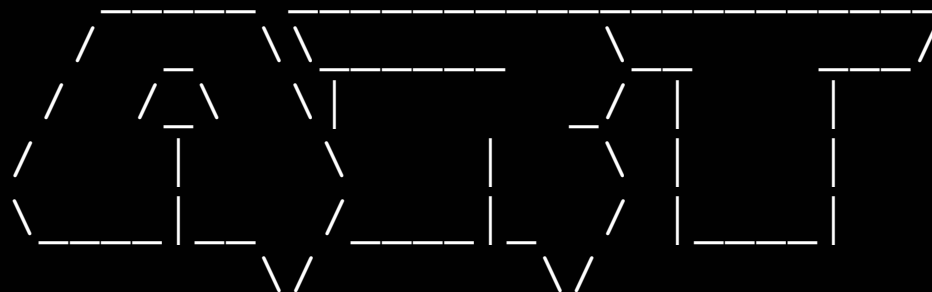


A Courier Type Specimen Book



Andrew McKinney 2009

ANSI



A Courier Type Specimen Book



Andrew McKinney 2009

andrewmckinney.com

The ANSI Art Scene

An Introduction

ANSI and ASCII art became popular throughout the 1980's and early 90's on underground, pre-internet computer network forums or "Bulletin Board Systems" (BBS). The pieces were composed entirely of system characters accessible across computer systems, known as American National Standards Institute or "ANSI".

Artists initially produced ANSI art to decorate their own (or friends') BBS boards to individualize the often ubiquitous white-on-black terminal text. Over the years these works grew from small, simple icons to intricate multi-color banners involving months of tedious work. These artists would later form groups and release art packs to a hungry audience, effectively creating a scene.

"Old Skool" Style

Characterized by lines of underscores and slashed to create outlines for shapes.



"New Skool" Style

Emphasis on shading and texture properties of thicker and thinner characters to stylize work.



"Block" Style

Block characters of various patterns became popular for more elaborate pieces involving multiple colors and shading.

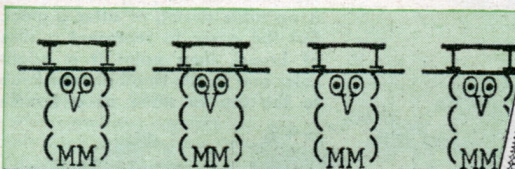
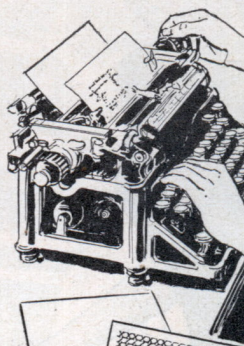


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KEYBOARD ART

By Paul Hadley

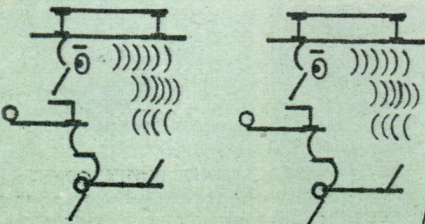
WHILE purely entertaining, doodling with a typewriter gives vent to the imagination and originality of both the experienced and the hunt-and-peck typist. Fill-in pictures are the easiest to "draw" with a typewriter. An example is shown in the flower which is made with the letter X alone. Such pictures, whether a flower or a portrait, are made by using an outline of the subject as a typing guide. This is done by tracing the outline lightly on paper and backing it with carbon paper to type the picture. Caricature or cartoon "drawing" combines letters with symbols as shown in the examples below. Here, half-spacing of the typewriter is required, as in the case of the owl's beak and feet. The log cabin shows what can be done in drawing a picture in perspective.



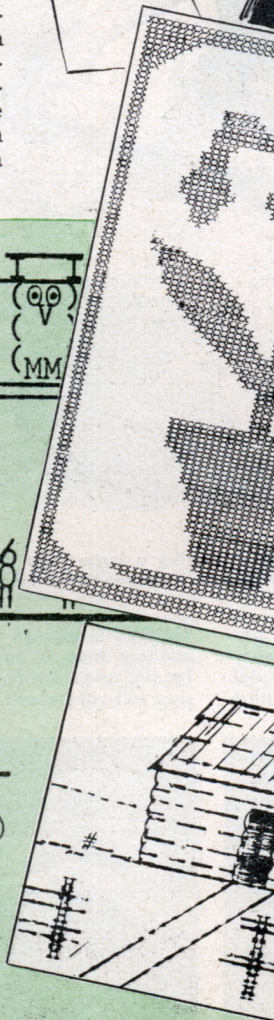
Capital letters I, O, V and M are combined with dashes, parentheses and periods to draw the owls. Half-spacing is required to locate the eyes, beak and feet of the owl



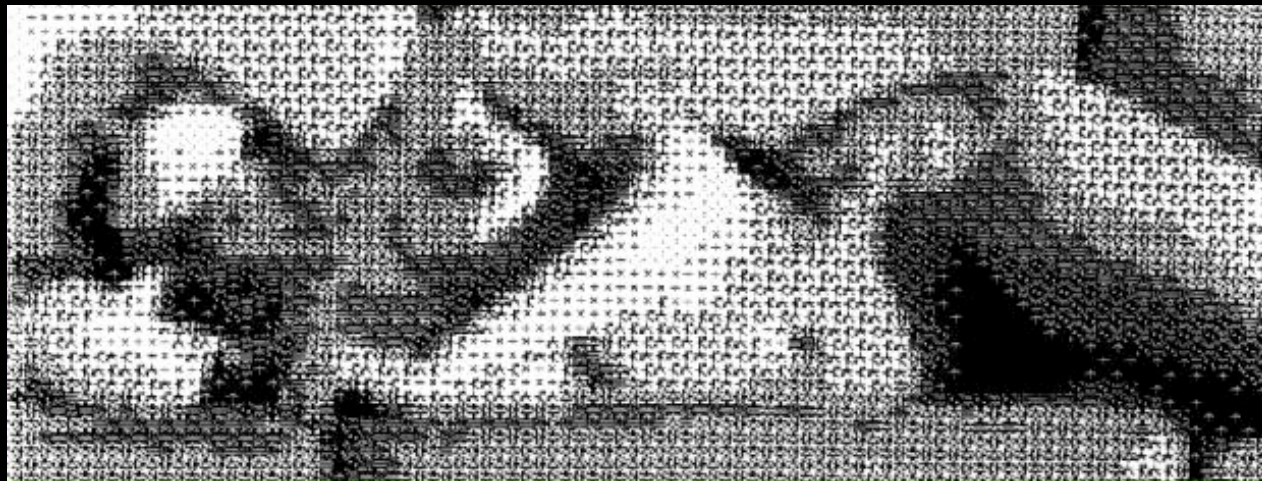
Quotation marks represent the legs of the soldier. His body is formed by a large and small letter O and the gun is a diagonal



Above uses diagonals, parentheses, dashes, hyphen, period and letters I, O, 1 and o



The 1st Computer Nude



<http://translab.burundi.sk/code/vzx/index.htm>

The typefaces used in ANSI were monospaced, most closely resembling today's Courier type family. The Courier typeface was originally commissioned by IBM in 1950 and designed by longstanding IBM employee Howard "Bud" Kettler in 1955. Bud created the typeface to be streamlined and efficient in appearance. IBM failed to secure exclusivity of the typeface, and it soon became industry standard on typewriters. Courier was used by the US Government for all printed materials until 2004. Many believe that Courier out-

stayed it's welcome, not unlike its creator who finally retired from IBM spinoff Lexmark in the 1990's.

In the October 1948, Paul Hadley wrote an article on so called "Keyboard Art", the first known mention of using monospaced typewritten characters for artwork.

In 1966, Kenneth Knowlton and Leon Harmon of Bell Labs used different computer characters, to create visualizations of models such as a telephone and the first computer nude.

The Early Hacker Underground_

--/[This Message Has Been FLUNG to the r0mPEr-RuM]/--

```
  /\_-\
  <((_)>
  \_-\
  /\_-\(::::::::::)/\_-\
  <((_) MindVox ((_)>
  \_-\(::::::::::)\_-\
  /\_-\
  <((_)>
  \_-\
```

--/[You have No Rights / [%] Symbolic Iron Cross [%] / Fascism & Tyranny]/--

We have found it necessary to violate your civil rights and CENSOR you.
Please refrain from engaging in any further THOUGHT CRIMES. You will
not receive additional warnings, consider yourself fortunate.

+++++

Mindvox BBS circa 1992

E

arly hackers lived in a world before the Internet, where phone line and modem were king. These were mostly teenagers and young men, socially isolated, working with early personal computers for entertainment.

Given the technologically mediated nature of their daily interactions, it was natural for these early hackers to seek social engagements through their computer. These early systems were precursors to the Internet, providing a social outlet as well as free software and games for 'elite' members.



Welcome to Cottonwood
This BBS is dedicated
(Of course, users of a

If the computer you're
highly recommend calli
CGIEM emulates a real
check out the Cottonwo
<http://cottonwood.serv>

Balzabaar is OUT

Press <RETURN/ENTER>
Enter 'v' if just visi
Others enter their US
or phone number with
--==>>951-123-4567<<=
--==>>

BBS

Bulletin Board Service

As personal computer ownership rose in the 1980's, hobbyists began using their computers for purposes beyond tax preparation and gaming. Individuals began installing modems on their computers and dialing up to (or hosting) Bulletin Board Services (BBSes) to speak with other hobbyist, share software and distribute ideas.

Some of these 'Boards' would have restricted zones known as 'elite', 'leet' or '1337' sections where pirated software, phone card codes and banned book material could be downloaded.

BBSes became ubiquitous by the late 1980's: every major city had at least one. With this popularity came a need for BBSes to individualize themselves.



Ed Pisker 2008
"WIZZYWIG VOLUME#2: HACKER"

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eee  eee  eeeeeee  eeeeeeee  eee  eee  eeeeeeee  eeeeeeee  eeeeeee
eee  eee  eeeeeeee  eeeeeeee  eee  eee  eeeeeeee  eeeeeeee  eeeeeeee
ee!  eee  ee!  eee  !ee  ee!  !ee  ee!  ee!  eee  !ee
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e!e!e!e!  e!e!e!e!  !e!  e!e!e!  e!!!!:  e!e!e!  !!e!!
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!!!e!!!!  !!!!!:  !!!  !e!  !!!  !e!  !!!!!:
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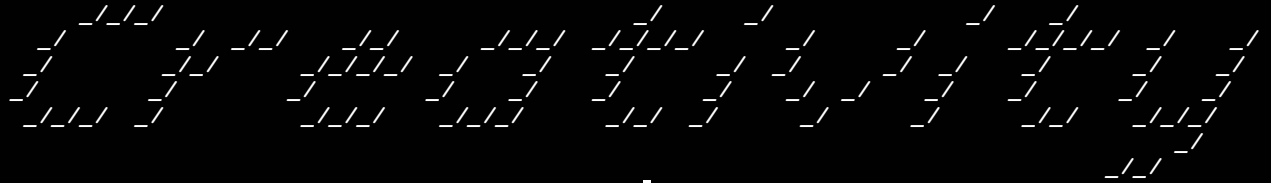
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eeeeee  eeeeeeee  eeeeeeee  eee  eeeeeeee  eeeeeeee  eeeeeeee
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ee!  eee  ee!  eee  ee!  ee!  !ee  ee!  !ee
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e!e!e!e!  e!e!e!e!  e!!  !!e  !!e!!  e!!  !!e!!
!!!e!!!!  !!!e!!  !!!  !!!  !!e!!!  !!!  !!e!!!
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 ith a lack of talented artists on BBSes, and a growing interest to individualize these boards, early hackers found themselves in the position of system administrator, programmer, content producer, and now artist.





As competition increased amongst key ANSI groups, artists were pressured to create more and more elaborate pieces. ANSI's quickly grew from single-page pieces to multi-page, scrollable artwork.



Artistic style quickly became established amongst major contributors. Arguments were endless as to how artists would go about creating the serif of their "F", or the way they corned a box.

"Ripping"

Duplicating another artist's style with intent was known as "style ripping" or simply "ripping".

Ripping was a major issue early ugly politics of art groups. Many new artists, in an attempt to gain access to a group, could quickly be discovered as frauds by keen appreciators.

Style ripping was a problem amongst established artists as well. A guilty sentence could often mean expulsion from a group and public chastizing.



From "BBS The Documentary"
Jason Scott 2008

"leetspeak"

n00b!

72 Point Courier Regular

31337 \$p3@k iz 4 haX0rs

48 Point Courier Regular

Deez w@r3Z Ar3 H0TT!!

36 Point Courier Regular

nO fLaM3rz 0n dis b0@rD

30 Point Courier Regular

C0uRi3r h@z n0 b0Ld, iTalic 'r b0Ld-iTalic

24 Point Courier Regular

m0n0-@paC3d typ3 iz boRiNg 8ut U\$3fu11

18 Point Courier Regular

wHY 4Lw@yz s0 \$tin9y wi7 Y0 w@r3z ?!?

14 Point Courier Regular

A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

a b c d e f g h i j k l m
n o p q r s t u v w x y z

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0
! @ # \$ % ^ & * ()

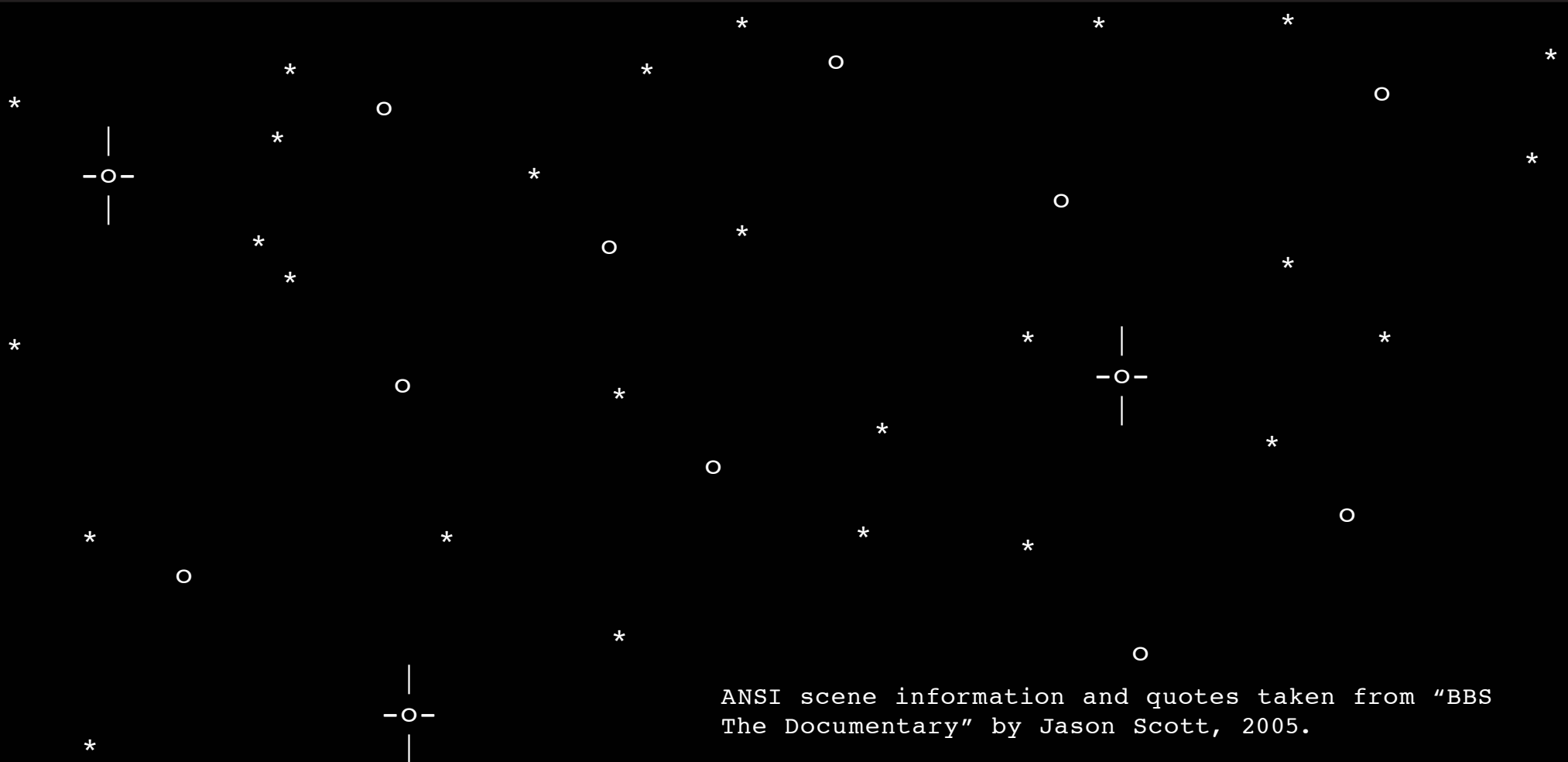
Death

of the BBS

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    xxxxxx
      xx
      xx
    xxxxxxxxxxxxxx
  xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
    xxxxxxxxxx          xxxxxxxxxx
      xxxx          The          xxxx
      xx      early days of the      xx
      xx      Internet were marked by  xx
      xx      rapid growth around the entire  xx
      xx      world as companies and insti-  xx
      xx      tutions realized the power of  xx
      xx      globally networked informa-  xx
      xx      tion. With this, individual us-  xx
      xx      ers began utilizing the World  xx
      xx      Wide Web more and more for con-  xx
      xx      tent distribution and socializ-  xx
      xx      ing. This effectively made BBS  xx
      xx      services obsolete, and their  xx
      xx      popularity quickly dwindled.  xx
      xx      ANSI art continued to be pop-  xx
      xx      ular with so called "warez"  xx
      xx      groups, who included ANSI art  xx
      xx      in their pirate software doc-  xx
      xx      umentation. Courier continues  xx
      xx      to be the typeface of choice  xx
      xx      today for computer monospaced  xx
      xx      fonts. Its creator, Bud Ket-  xx
      xx      tler passed away in 1999, just  xx
      xx      a few years after his retire-  xx
      xx      ment from IBM spinoff Lexmark.  xx

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ANSI scene information and quotes taken from "BBS
The Documentary" by Jason Scott, 2005.

Courier typeface information taken from "Typeart
History: Courier" [http://www.typeart.com/history.
asp?FID=43](http://www.typeart.com/history.asp?FID=43) and "Courier, Dispatched" Slate 2004
<http://www.slate.com/id/2095809/>

"Keyboard Art" information taken from Popular Me-
chanics October 1948. Early art exhibition informa-
tion taken from "Studies in Perception I" 1966.

ANSI's provided by [sixteencolors.net](http://www.sixteencolors.net) unless other-
wise noted.

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