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Enthusiasts are proving that typewriters still have a place in the digital age.

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Transcript

Return of the Typewriter?

LESTER HOLT, anchor:

Seems like everything these days is digital. And so a story about communicating in a simpler way from a simpler time almost makes us feel sentimental. NBC’s Stephanie Gosk now on the return of the typewriter.

STEPHANIE GOSK, reporting:

Not that long ago, this was the sound of the workplace the age of the typewriter. The brand names had gravitas- Smith Corona, Royal Standard, and the old Blickensderfer. As great as they were, these marbles of mechanics stood no chance against the digital age, or did they? At the Mesa Typewriter Exchange in Arizona, third-generation repairman Bill Wahl is noticing a trend.

BILL WAHL: Now people using typewriters, they are different group and they love their typewriters. In the last few years, I’ve had more and more interest among younger people.

GOSK: Not far from their high school English teacher Ryan Adney has his students write almost entirely on typewriters.

JESSICA DUREN: It helps you concentrate more because on the computer there’s other distractions.

GOSK: There’s also no backspace, auto correct or spell-check.

SONIA ALDAVA: You got to you know what you’re going to say. You got to make sure it makes sense.

GOSK: Adney’s classroom is home to dozens of machines.

RYAN ADNEY: Twenty years ago if you’re collecting a typewriter you were a town eccentric. Now you can find people across the country who are, you know, interested in the same hobby.

GOSK: They’re popping up in unlikely places. There are the famous collectors, the high-profile users, and the modern day enthusiasts like this group in New York, taking part in a typing. An idea started by Mike McGettig that has spread around the world. Tell me what it is about typewriters that you like so much.

MIKE MCGETTIG: One, they’re finely crafted. Two, they’re not meant to be obsolete. Three, they only do one thing.

GOSK: They type. That’s it. With a little practice-- This is so easy. I was ready for the speed contest.

MIKE MCGETTIG: Go.

GOSK: Where’s the one? A rough start.

MIKE MCGETTIG: You overcame--
GOSK: I’m already-- I’m already losing. A lot harder than it looks. Oh, I ripped it. But I did finish. College freshman Matthew Scidoni was the fastest. That’s his copy on the left and mine on the right.

MATTHEW SCIDONI: When you’re sitting at one you almost feel like-- you could be like you’re Ernest Hemingway or Jack Kerouac or something.