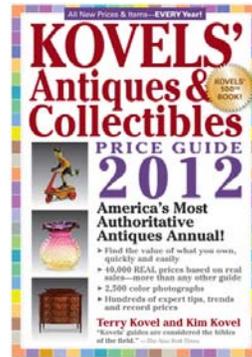
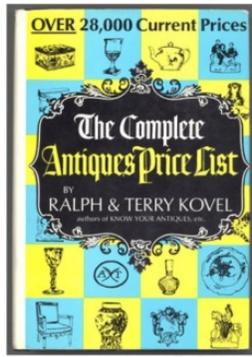




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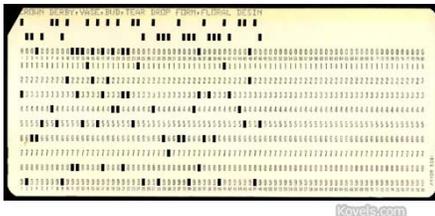
First Book Written Using a Computer – On Antiques, of All Things

SUMMARY – Terry Kovel celebrates her 100th book on antiques and collectibles. Her first price guide, published in 1967, was the first book sold in book stores that was compiled with the aid of a computer.



CLEVELAND – January 31, 2012 – Our 100th book, *Kovels' Antiques & Collectibles Price Guide 2012*, has just been published, and people are asking us how we got started and how the writing and publishing world has changed since the 1950s and '60s.

My husband, Ralph, and I started writing in 1953. Our first book, *Kovels' Dictionary of Marks*, identifies the marks found on pottery and porcelain—a list, no paragraphs, a sort of telephone book. It has been in print or online ever since.



In 1967 we talked to our publisher about a unique idea for a price book for average collectors. Our syndicated newspaper column was attracting letters asking “What is my antique worth?” So we wanted to write a book that would be a straightforward list of accurate prices. And we planned to do it with a machine that used keypunch cards to record information. Each entry was recorded by punching a hole in the card for every letter or number.

Keypunch card

We bought keypunch machines, hired part-time typists, looked in antiques publications for prices of things average collectors were buying, listed prices of things we spotted in

shops, and asked collectors we knew all over the country to send us lists of current prices. Then we invented a style of recording items that could be alphabetized by category (furniture), object (chair), description, date, price. I took bundles of punched cards everywhere I went—I proofread while waiting to pick up a child, sitting in a doctor’s waiting room or watching television. If even one letter was incorrect, a new card had to be punched.

When we had about 40,000 cards with prices, we sorted them alphabetically. There was no commercial alpha-sort available and we couldn’t find a sorting machine, so we sorted the cards the old-fashioned way—by hand. Fifteen college students sat at card tables and alphabetized boxes and boxes of keypunch cards. And after a few days it was done, all 40,000 cards in alphabetical order through the first three words of each listing.

The boxes were sent to a local company that ran the punch cards’ information on a huge computer in a large and very cold room. The computer liked a temperature in the 60s. It took several hours to produce a huge printout with a number next to each line entry (we needed numbers to tell the computer what to correct). That first book had 436 pages, over 28,000 prices and 283 paragraphs that summarized the history of factories like Meissen and Rookwood. There were no photographs or line drawings. The book had only two typefaces, one a computer typeface for prices, the other a standard typeface for the pasted-in paragraphs. It went from start to manuscript to published book



Page from 1st Price Book

