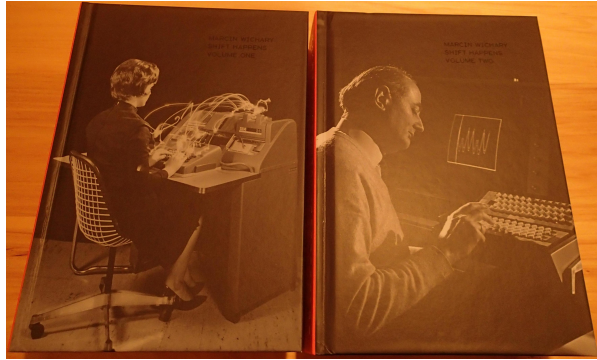


## Book review: *Shift Happens* by Marcin Wichary

Barbara Beeton, Karl Berry, Boris Veytsman

Marcin Wichary, *Shift Happens*, October 2023, 1216+160 pp., 2+1 vols., ISBN 9798985873900. <https://shifthappens.site>



The book *Shift Happens* by Marcin Wichary, mentioned in Barbara’s column in the last *TUGboat*,<sup>1</sup> was published near the end of 2023. The book tells the story of keyboards from the earliest typewriters (ca. 1870) to the virtual keyboards made of pixels in our pockets today, in approximately 1200 pages and 1300 photographs (many taken by the author). Notwithstanding the profusion of photos, it is not a “coffee table” book; the text tells the story.

There is a wealth of information about the book and keyboards in general on its web site: a commentary on the text, essays on related topics, the run of the newsletter that the author published during the book’s production, and several keyboard games (e.g., “make your own dvorak hands”). The book is strikingly designed and typeset by the author. He also oversaw the final production process, visiting the

<sup>1</sup> [tug.org/TUGboat/tb44-3/tb138beet.pdf](https://tug.org/TUGboat/tb44-3/tb138beet.pdf)

printing plant (in Maine) in person, and has plenty of interesting things to say about the whole process. The Kickstarter campaign updates tell much of the story.<sup>2</sup>

Before publication, the Museum of Printing (MoP) hosted a panel with the author and other typographic luminaries. The discussion, more than an hour long, was recorded, and is posted on MoP’s YouTube channel in three parts.<sup>3</sup>

For those interested in the nuts and bolts of publication, Glenn Fleishman, the book’s editor and manager of print production, crowdfunding, and fulfillment, wrote a terrific essay about the funding campaign and how Kickstarter works on the back end: “How We Crowdfunded \$750,000 for a Giant Book about Keyboard History”.<sup>4</sup>

Along with the book, Wichary worked with type designer Inga Plönnings to create Gorton Perfected No. 2, an OpenType font based on the design originating with the George Gorton Machine Company of Racine, Wisconsin, ca. 1900. The original has been pervasively used on engraved signs of all kinds, and later adapted to keycaps. A sample is shown below, and Marcin created a 96-page specimen booklet with many in situ examples.<sup>5</sup>

The book is completely sold out, but you can express interest in participating in another print run, in the event that one happens, on the web site.

Congratulations, Marcin!

◇ Barbara Beeton, Karl Berry, Boris Veytsman  
[tug.org/books](https://tug.org/books)

<sup>2</sup> [kickstarter.com/projects/mwichary/shift-happens](https://kickstarter.com/projects/mwichary/shift-happens)

<sup>3</sup> [youtube.com/watch?v=Hr1cFB\\_Q\\_UE](https://youtube.com/watch?v=Hr1cFB_Q_UE)

[youtube.com/watch?v=-8a4Xw0td9k](https://youtube.com/watch?v=-8a4Xw0td9k)

[youtube.com/watch?v=SWfDrcdXfaM](https://youtube.com/watch?v=SWfDrcdXfaM)

<sup>4</sup> [glennf.medium.com/how-we-crowdfunded-750-000-for-a-giant-book-about-keyboard-history-c30e24c4022e](https://glennf.medium.com/how-we-crowdfunded-750-000-for-a-giant-book-about-keyboard-history-c30e24c4022e)

<sup>5</sup> [shifthappens.site/gorton-perfected-specimen.pdf](https://shifthappens.site/gorton-perfected-specimen.pdf)

On November 14, 1885, Senator & Mrs. Leland Stanford called together at their San Francisco mansion the 24 prominent men who had been chosen as the first trustees of The Leland Stanford Junior University. They handed to the board the Founding Grant of the University, which they had executed three days before. This document—with various amendments, legislative acts, and court decrees—remains as the University’s charter. In bold, sweeping language it stipulates that the objectives of the University are “to qualify students for personal success and direct usefulness in life; and to promote the publick welfare by exercising an influence in behalf of humanity and civilization, teaching the blessings of liberty regulated by law, and inculcating love and reverence for the great principles of government as derived from the inalienable rights of man to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” ¿But aren’t Kafka’s Schloß and Æsop’s Œuvres often naïve vis-à-vis the dæmonic phoenix’s official rôle in fluffy soufflés? (iTHE DAZED BROWN FOX QUICKLY GAVE 12345–67890 JUMPS!) N#1@2. €100.00=\$108.74=10874¢=£85.46. ←↑→↓←↩→↪↵^⌘\☒☒☒