



functional or appealing? traces of a long struggle

HaPoC 2015
Pisa, October 8 – 11





preamble

the session title

**computing
and the modelling of
reality**



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preamble

permutation

reality
and the modelling of
computing



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preamble

completion

**reality considerations
and the modelling of the shape of
computing devices**





functional or appealing? traces of a long struggle

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functional and appealing as conflicting qualities





appealing vs functional

an example

**Juicy Salif
by Philippe Stark
for Alessi**





assessing the object

appealing!

unexpected

formally beautiful

funny

functional?

scratches on the kitchen

drops of juice out of the glass

inefficient squeezing





official statements

Alberto Alessi

“the most controversial
lemon squeezer
of the century”

Philippe Starck

“it is not meant
to squeeze lemons
but to start conversations”





back to the history of computing (and philosophy)





lot of possible conversations

about functional and appealing

drawbacks of flat design

touchscreen, nice but limited

16:9 screens and word processing

minimalism and mouse buttons

noisy fans and overheating

P101 as a product that everyone must have

...





**just one,
back in time and
tied to Olivetti history**





full vs ten-keys calculator keyboards

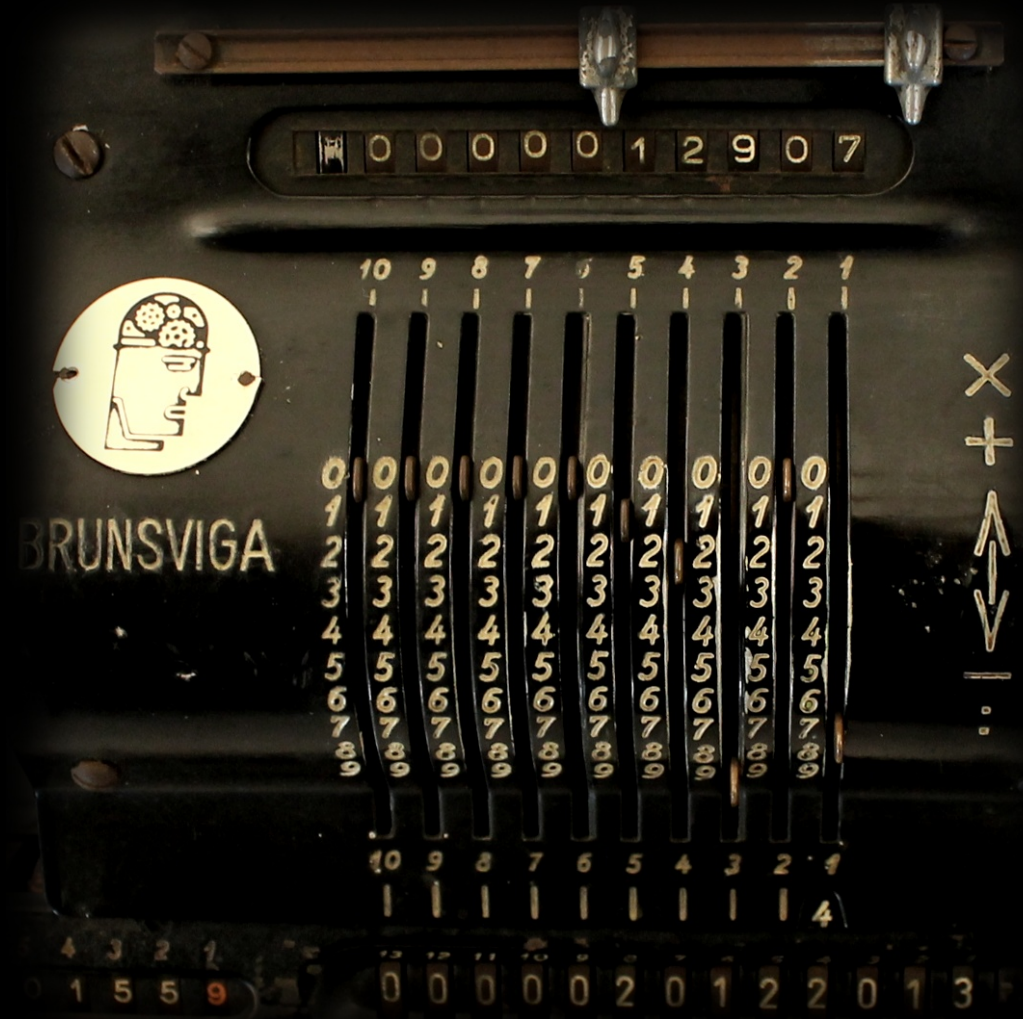


before keyboards

there were sliders

**in arithmometers,
Odhner machines,
still used
in the Curta**

**Brunsviga 13
1927**



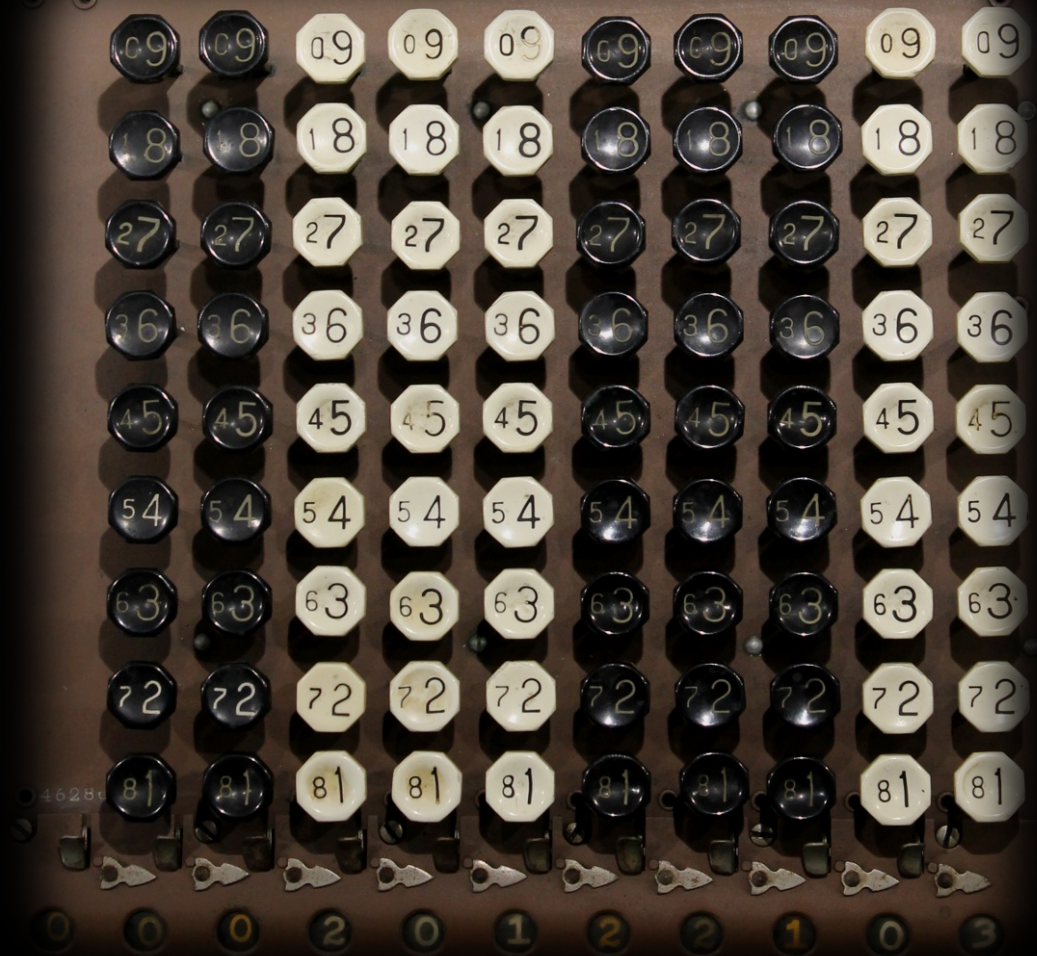


the full keyboard

the first solution

**idea by Thomas Hill
refined by Dorr Felt
firstly used in
the Comptometer**

**Model C
1907**





a standard

many functional pros

fast, two or more digits in the same stroke

very fast on the Comptometer

value visible on non-direct action machines

easy mechanical implementation





on accounting printing machines

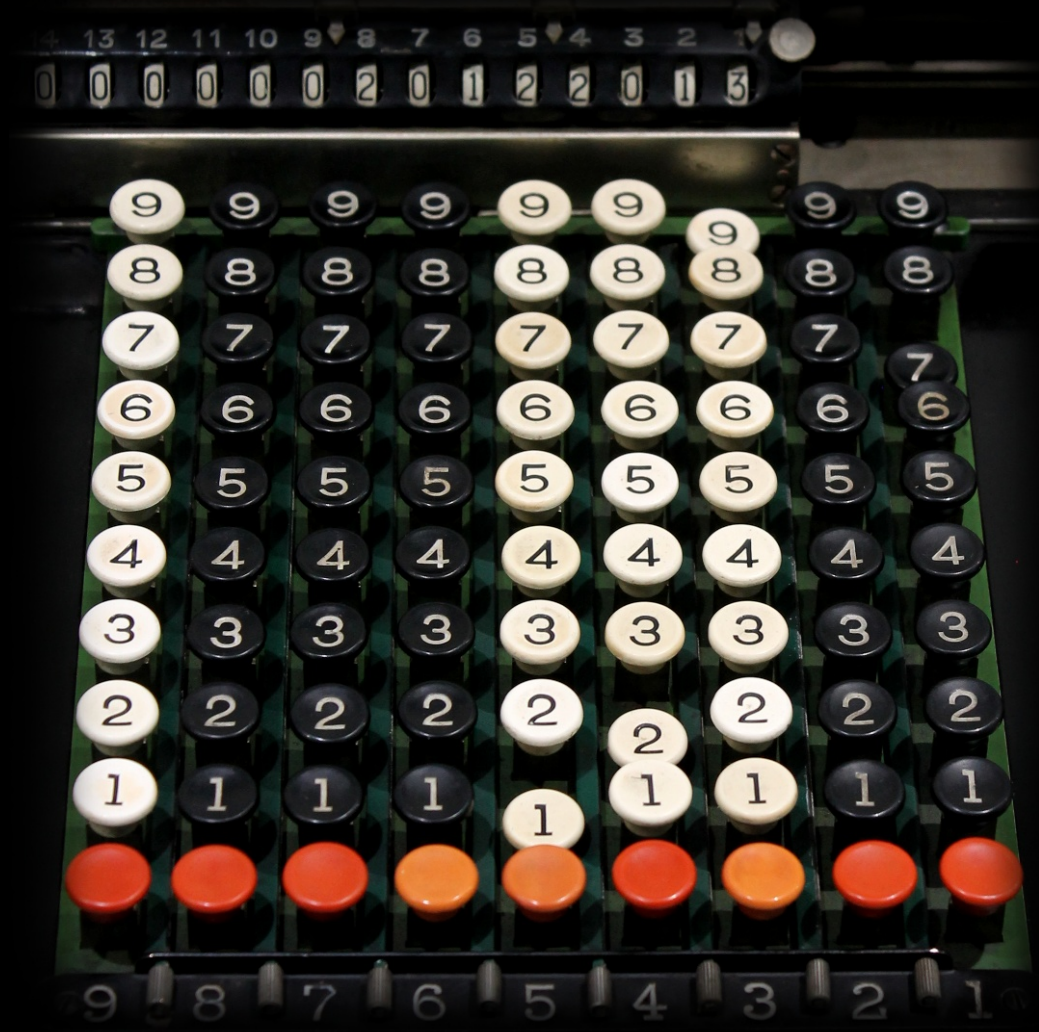


**Class 3 Visible
1914
(ex Pike 1904)**





and scientific machines



**Marchant KC
1922**





yet, quite early...





the ten-keys appear

“Dalton” layout

a quite
successful one

Dalton
1912





in two flavours

“Sundstrand” layout

the one we
are used today

Sundstrand
1914





ten-keys pros & cons

pros, on the appealing side

essential look, smaller footprint on the desktop
surprise for the elegant solution
values are typed like on a typewriter

cons, on the functional side

value is not visible, just the number of digits
mechanics is much more complicated
less fast, digits have to be typed in sequence





Olivetti calculators, a late entry





times and decisions

essential chronology

1934, s.a. Macchine per Operazioni Aritmetiche

1938, end of the study & design phase

1940, MC 4S Summa launched

a priori characteristics

printing, as they have a bigger market

electrical, modern

ten-keys keyboard, elegant





the second series

first clear success

Natale Capellaro
Marcello Nizzoli

Divisumma 14
1947





achievements

on the appealing side

clear colour, regular body, soft shapes

the exterior appears as an autonomous design

celebrated at the MoMA exhibition in 1952

on the functional side

four operations, negative results and printing

sort of a general purpose machine

(all the ten-keys cons are still there)





a rational perspective (reality considerations)





the opinion of Riccardo Musatti

art historian, advisor of Adriano Olivetti

“Design per la Luna”, 1965

published on Rivista Pirelli, v. 18 n. 2-3

and, posthumous, on Notizie Olivetti, n. 84

the Musatti analysis

technological market is becoming emotional

a different beauty can revive a saturated market

good *design* and bad design or *styling*





a last episode, still Olivetti



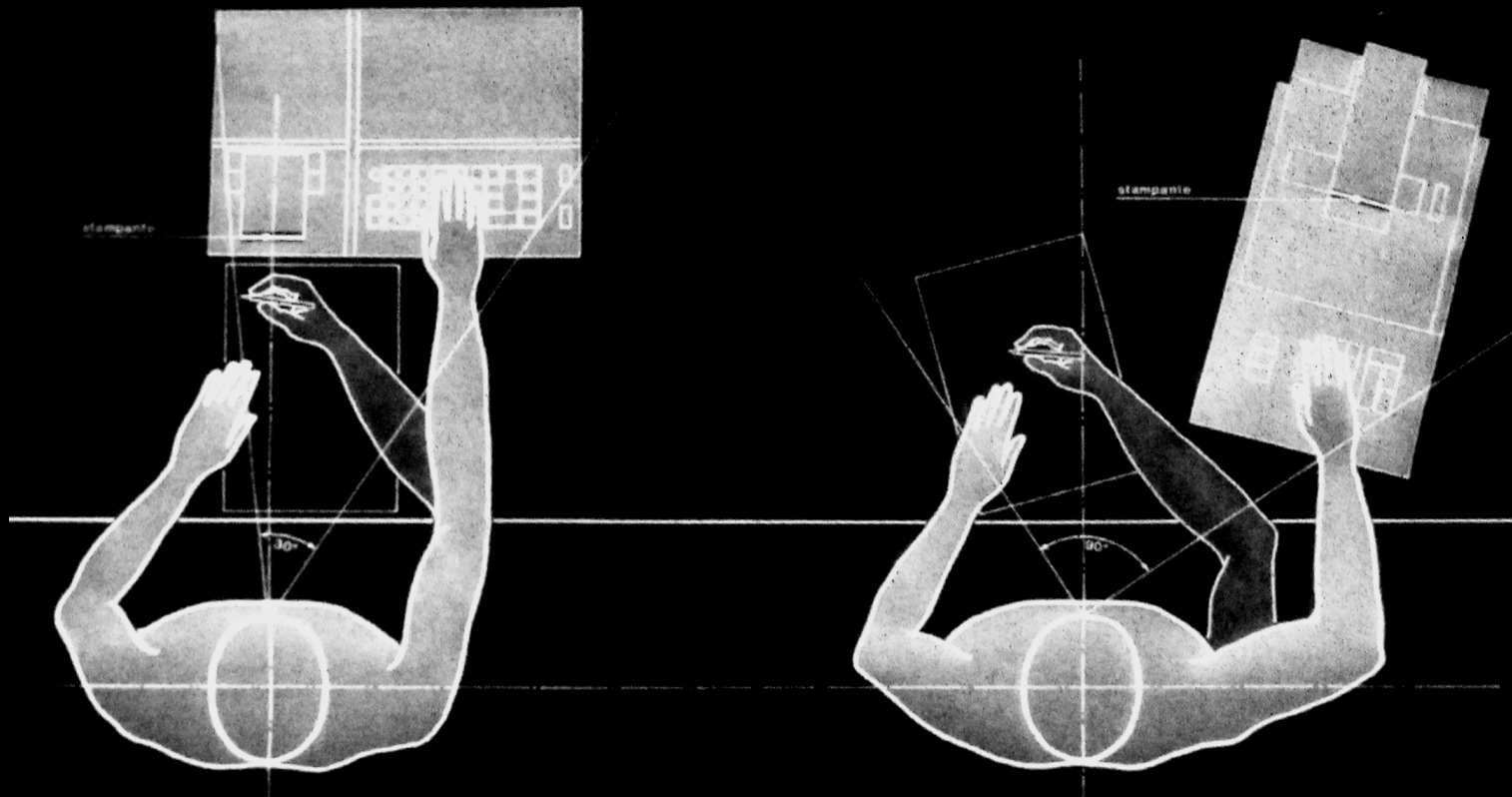


transition to electronics

**a 1970 electronic calculator, lot of arithmetic
yet still a mechanical keyboard
and printing only, no display**



**Mario Bellini contribute
aesthetics an ergonomics raise the overall quality**





conclusions





traces of a long struggle

reality considerations

**computing devices are products
they have to consider their market
all qualities contribute to the success**

obvious today

**still an interesting conversation
a dialectics that started in the past
able to produce masterpieces**

