The Tech

Microfilming-Indexing Project

The What?
The Tech indexing-microfilming project. Started in the spring of 1972 by then-news editor Paul Schindler. It grew from a very simple idea: There is no better chronicle of life at MIT than The Tech. It is the oldest continuous publication on campus; but time was catching up with all available copies of back issues - in the newspaper board room, in the library, in the archives. No one could afford to microfilm the back issues. So the newspaper, and the story it told, slowly deteriorated. For some time, only the archives had a complete set - and because the material was archival, access to it was limited.

So far . . .
With generous help from the Institute Archives and a grant from the Activities Development Board, which funds students capital projects, The Tech pitched in with time, people and money and finished microfilming every issue from 1881 to the end of Volume 94 (this January.). The Archives held the master and have one copy. The Tech board room has one copy and a microfilm reader (pictured above). They are available to the public during regular newspaper business hours. Complete sets of The Tech on microfilm are available for $300. Individual volumes are $10 each.
The Board of The Tech has voted to microfilm future volumes as they are completed. This invaluable record of student life at MIT has been preserved for all times.

Who cares?
Those who ignore mistakes are destined to repeat them. Articles in the newspaper will eventually have a greater historical perspective because of the index. Use of the newspaper as an historical reference will be easier - when the index is done - for alumni and historians.

Now what?
Hand-in-hand with making available the complete back issues of The Tech goes the project of making the information in them more accessible. As it is now, one has to know the precise date of an event in order to find it. To find topics, students, particular persons or teams is a nearly impossible task. Members of the newspaper staff are now creating a computer computer-aided index (OK, the computer just alphabetizes everything). It will have about 3 million entries, and may cost as much as $40,000. When it's done, it will be seven feet high, and will make it possible to look up people and topics in any issues from 1881 to the present. Once the catch-up work is done, the board will maintain the index.

The Pitch
So far, the Provost's Office and generous former board members of The Tech have provided $4,000 for indexing. With federal matching grants, we have gotten about $6,000 worth of work on the index. We have a long way to go. We need help.

Contributions made using the envelope below - pledged to The Tech - are tax deductible. You don't have to be an alumnus!
And, if you now some foundation or organization that funds such work, tell them about us.

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