



HistoLab

Start > Electricity > Electrostatic Generator

Electrostatic Generator

🔊 Listen

branch of study: electricity / electrostatics

inventor: multiple parallel developments during the 18th century

The electrostatic generator is one of many variants of a frictional electrical machine used in the second half of the 18th century. It became standard equipment for the systematic research on the then new found phenomenon of electricity. The machine is composed of a hand crank to put the disc in motion, woollen cloth which forms the cushion, collecting combs and the conductor from which the generated charge could be retrieved. The collecting combs consist of metallic tips that are placed near the surface of the rotating disk passing on the electrical charges to the conductor.



We use the instrument in two versions, for historical research, a glass disc is placed into the instrument. However, for educational purposes, a disc of acrylic glass is used for reasons of practicability and safety.



further reading

Hackmann, W. D. (1978). **Electricity from Glass: The History of the Frictional Electrical Machine 1600 - 1850.** Alphen aan den Rijn: Sijthoff & Noordhoff.

Weber, H. (2011). **Die Elektrisiermaschinen im 18. Jahrhundert.** Berlin: VWB, Verl. für Wiss. und Bildung.

[Back to top](#) [Page # 16724](#) [Permalink](#) 06/17/2019 [Feedback](#)