**Different Types of Computer Keyboards**

**Laptop-Sized Keyboards**

Laptop sized keyboards are characterized by short key distance and reduced number of keys. A typically integrated laptop keyboard doesn’t have a numeric keypad but can have extended feature keys that control volume, brightness, power button, etc. They have a universal QWERTY keyboard setup. Of course, you will find options to add an external keyboard in every laptop via a USB port or by wireless means.

**Chorded Keyboard**

Have you ever played a chord on a piano or guitar? It’s basically the same principle used in chorded keyboards. It allows users to enter characters into a system with a limited number of keys. All you have to do is enter a combination to produce the desired character. These keyboards can simply be used with one hand only.

Because of their small size, it can easily fit into compact areas where standard-sized keyboards can’t. Unlike other keyboard types, chorded keyboards are not commercially successful.

**Flexible Keyboards**

Flexible keyboards are basically a blend between standard and laptop keyboards in both functionality and purpose. A typical flexible keyboard features both a large number of keys and a short key distance.

Most of the flexible keyboards are built from silicone, which makes it resistant to dust and water. They are generally used by travelers, who spent most of their time outdoors and in institutions where regular cleaning is mandatory such as hospitals and clinics.

In order to function properly, these keyboards do need a hard, plain surface. Furthermore, standard USB cables are required to establish a connection with your preferred system. Keep in mind that these keyboards are only meant to be rolled up, rather than folded as folding could possibly damage its internal wiring and circuits.

**Thumb-Sized or Thumb Keyboard**

Thumb-sized keyboards are generally found in handheld PCs, mobile phones and similar devices that lack built-in keyboards and have limited typing space. These keyboards feature fewer keys and require combo punches to produce certain symbols and characters. They are intended for typing with thumbs.

The numeric keypad is another type of thumb-sized keyboard that only accommodates mathematical symbols and numeric characters (0-9) to perform addition, subtraction and other arithmetic operations.

While numeric keypads are generally integrated and are usually located on the right-hand side of a standard computer keyboard, they are available individually and are used in various data entry jobs.

**Gaming Keyboards**

The gaming industry is among the fastest-growing sectors in the world. It has now become a profession for thousands of expert gamers, and just like gaming setups they need dedicated keyboards to achieve higher performance.

A dedicated gaming keyboard is much like a standard keyboard except they have a few additional features such as multimedia keys, LED screen and palm rest. Illuminated keys are a key component of these keyboards.

They are also slightly smaller and more comfortable than regular keyboards. This significantly reduces the amount of fatigue and injuries to the wrist that a player may experience during prolonged hours of play.

**Membrane Keyboard**

Membrane keyboards are a unique computer keyboard that uses pressure pads instead of individual/separate keys. Unlike traditional ones, membrane keyboards have symbols and characters printed on a flexible, flat surface also called membrane. When a marked area is pressed, an electric signal passes through the membrane to the underlying circuit board.

They are inexpensive and have dirt resistant quality which led to their rise to prominence in the 1980s. However, achieving typing accuracy with a membrane keyboard is almost impossible, largely due to its non-existent touch feedback. They are also not suitable for extensive gaming.

**Chiclet keyboard**

Next in the list is the chiclet keyboard. Named after a popular American chewing gum brand, chiclet keyboards feature slightly elevated and small square keys with rounded corners opposed to slanted-edge keys in traditional keyboards.

Chiclet keyboards didn’t perform well during its first commercial release in the early 1980s, during which it had taller keys and was widely criticized for its appearance. However, they are much popular today.

The specific technology used in such keyboards varies from device to device. In some chiclet keyboards, buttons are attached to the membrane with low-travel scissor switches, while in others, the keys are integrated into the base membrane which deforms only after completing an electric contact.

Today, chiclet style-keyboards are used in various systems including personal computers, remote controls, and calculators. Some versions of MacBook, Chromebook are currently using this

**Ergonomic keyboard**

Ergonomic keyboards are designed keeping human health factors in mind, such as muscle strain, back pain and wrist related injuries, which one may procure after spending hours on desktops. A typical ergonomic keyboard has a V-shaped design that allows both hands to stay at a more natural position while typing. Ergonomic keyboards have multiple subtypes including split and handheld keyboards.

The **fixed-split keyboard** is a variation of the split keyboard, in which all the keys are divided into groups and are positioned at a different angle, giving users more flexibility. Another type of split keyboard is an adjustable-split keyboard, which is highly customizable and can be split into pieces.

Another popular type of ergonomic keyboard is **handheld keyboards**. Instead of the traditional flat-out structure, handheld keyboards have a comfortable design much like a game controller. They are fast and provide users with the freedom to sit in any position while working.

Other types of ergonomic keyboards include angle split keyboard and keyless ergonomic keyboard.

**Virtual Keyboard**

The rise of iPad devices and the smart touch technology gave birth to another type of keyboard known as a virtual keyboard. It is simply a virtual interface that allows users to input symbols and characters without hard, physical buttons.

Today, they are not only used in smartphones but also in desktops mostly as an alternative input method for impaired users or bi-linguals. Also, they are used in emulation software.

While touch screen keyboards are now more popular than ever, new radical technology is on the rise, which is already creating a lot of buzz. In the future, we will see [augmented reality devices](https://time.com/4654944/this-technology-could-replace-the-keyboard-and-mouse/) replacing today’s standard keyboard and mouse.

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| LAPTOP SIZED KEYBOARDS | CHORDED KEYBOARDS | FLEXIBLE KEYBOARDS | THUMB SIZED KEYBOARD | GAMING KEYBOARDS | MEMBRANE KEYBOARDS | CHICLET KEYBOARDS | ERGONOMIC KEYBOARD | VIRTUAL KEYBOARD |  |
| They are characterized by short key distance and reduced number of keys . | They are relatively small in size, because of their small size they can easily fit into compact areas. | They are basically a blend between standard and laptop keyboard in both functionality and purpose. | They are generally found in handhaeld pc’s, mobile phones and similar devices that lack buit-in keyboards. | They are also slightly smaller and more comfortable than regular keyboards. | They make use of pressure pads instead of individual keys. | They are used in various systems like pc’s, remote controls, and calculators. | It has a v-shaped design that allows both hands to stay at a more natural position while typing. | It is simply a virtual interface that allows users to input symbols and characters without hard, physical buttons. |  |