



Ability Newsletter

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Special Edition - KEYBOARDS!

Some interesting options

The venerable keyboard is still with us. In spite of all the advances in other areas of technology, we still rely on our keyboards for nearly all of our text entry requirements. Voice recognition is an alternative for only some people, for some of the time.

But you are not condemned to the keyboard supplied with your computer. Alternatives are available, to meet a range of special situations and special needs.

We have devoted this issue of the Ability Newsletter to a brief survey of available keyboards. There are many more than we can cover here, but this will give you a taste of what is available.

Some of the models available and the uses to which they can be put will surprise you!



Small keyboards

Compact keyboards are roughly the size of a keyboard on a notebook computer. They have a number of advantages, including suitability for one-handed typing and greater flexibility in desktop layout. In particular they allow the mouse or other pointing device to be brought in closer to midline, thus reducing stress on the (right) upper limb.



Cherry Compact Keyboard



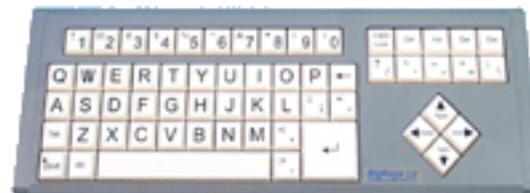
BTC Compact Keyboard



Datalux Keyboard

Large keyboards

Sometimes a person's disability makes it difficult for them to access a standard keyboard. A keyboard with larger keys, such as the BIG KEYS LX, can provide a great solution. Guards are also available.



Intellikeys - a customisable keyboard

BigKeys keyboards. Available in white, black or coloured keys, in QWERTY or ABC layout.

Keyboard with pointing devices

Some keyboards incorporate pointing devices. This makes for a convenient multi-purpose unit. However, bear in mind that the position of the pointing device is "locked in" - this may impose limitations in the future.



BTC with touch pad



Datalux with touch pad



Cherry Keyboards with built-in pointing devices



*IBM keyboard
with Trackpoint device*



Adjustable/ergonomic keyboards

The irony of ergonomic keyboards is that people don't usually think of them until they already have a problem! A good ergonomic keyboard should allow the user to customise the angle on each side of the keyboard, as well as the vertical elevation from the middle (called "tenting"). The aim is to get as close as possible to the "handshake" position for both hands.



*Goldtouch Ergonomic Keyboard -
one of the best*



Pace Adjustable keyboard



Belkin ErgoBoard - good value

Odds and Ends



The AlphaSmart is a great portable note-taker, but did you know it also functions as a compact keyboard when connected to a computer?



This Belkin keyboard for the Palm transforms the tiny device into a viable note-taking option. The keyboard folds up to a size similar to the Palm itself!



This is the layout for the LUCY keyboard - a standalone device where selections are made via a laser pen.

News

Albury Expo - May 24 and 25 - and more

Abilitytech is preparing for a major involvement in the IDEAS Expo in Albury on 24-25 May 2002. We will be offering a day of **free assessments** on Thursday 23 May, the day before the Expo. Contact Abilitytech for details.

This visit marks the beginning of a substantial commitment by Abilitytech to people with disabilities in rural areas in NSW. At least **five trips**, to various parts of the State, are planned over the next 12-18 months.

Alan on the mend

Thank you to those who have expressed good wishes to Alan after his fall recently. He is making good progress and is very keen to get back to work (what an inspiration!). His contribution to our work has been sorely missed, as verified by the number of "wait until Alan gets back - he'll know" waiting for him.

Environmental control

Abilitytech is further developing its home automation centre at Seaforth. We are now able to offer assessments in environmental control options for people with disabilities.

Our best wishes,

The Abilitytech team.

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