



Advanced Keyboard

Infogrip, Inc., Baton Rouge, Louisiana has introduced the BAT™ chord keyboard for computer data entry as an alternative to standard computer keyboards, a system that offers special utility to disabled people but also provides advantages to the general population of computer operators.

The BAT employs chordic technology, in which operators finger key combinations — like striking a chord on a piano — for text or graphics input. Designed for single-hand use, the BAT has only seven keys compared with 101 on the standard (QWERTY) keyboard. Five of the keys are positioned directly under the thumb and fingers; the other two are positioned so that the thumb can easily reach them with a slight movement to the left or right. By pressing a combination of keys, the BAT user can enter

anything that can be entered by the traditional keyboard. Users can also program additional words or phrases commonly used in their specific applications.

Because it can be operated with a single hand without moving the hand between rows of keys, the BAT offers the possibility of improved job access for workers with disabilities such as amputation, paralysis and impaired vision (the BAT chord system is based on Braille).

Infogrip cites a number of advantages for the general population of keyboard users: the operator need not look at the keyboard; one-handed use frees the other hand for moving a mouse (*below*), flipping through documents or holding a phone; the unit's ergonomic design reduces the strain and fatigue commonly associated with prolonged use of tradition-



al keyboards; and a proficient operator can make inputs faster. For even faster input, Infogrip offers a two-unit system, one BAT for each hand (*above*).

The BAT chord keyboard, says Infogrip, is "easier to learn than touch typing and the basic chords can be learned in about an hour."

The chordic input technology was developed jointly by Infogrip and Stennis Space Center, with test and evaluation assistance by Mississippi State University. NASA is interested in the potential of chordic technology for speeding human interaction with flight computers on board aircraft or spacecraft, and additionally in creating a low cost tactile/visual training system for the handicapped. •

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A SPINOFF COMPUTER

KEYBOARD OFFERS

IMPROVED JOB

ACCESS FOR

DISABLED WORKERS



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