KEYBOARD

A computer keyboard looks like a typewriter. Besides normal keys, it also has a numeric keypad located to its right. The numeric keypad is configured like a 10-key calculator, which allows the operator to enter numbers rapidly. The keyboard that we use is also known as QWERTY keyboard. The name 'QWERTY' comes from the first six letters in the top-left alphabet row (the one just below the numbers). It is also called the 'Universal' keyboard, in 1868. As the technology evolved, the QWERTY keyboard started appearing in different shapes. Generally, keyboards are available in two models:

- The standard model with 83-84 keys; and
- The enhanced model with 104 keys or more. This is the more popular model nowadays.

A brief description of various keys present on the keyboard is given below:

- Typewriter keys: these are normal keys on the keyboard. They include letter, numbers and punctuation symbols. The typewriter keys are used for typing and designing. Quite often, some key combinations also function as short-cuts to different commands.
- Function keys: these keys, labelled F1 to F12, are located at the tp row of the keyboard. The functions they perform depend on the software you use.
- Cursor Control Keys: These are marked as ➡, ⬅, ⬆, ⬇ are called the left, right, up and down arrow keys, respectively. These keys enable one to move the cursor to the left , right, up or down the screen – one line or one character at a time.
- Numeric Keys: the numeric keys are located just below the function keys. They also have some special characters printed on the topside. The keyboared also contains a numeric keypad located to the right. The numeric keypad has a calculator-like configuration. Some numeric keypads have double functions. The switchover between two functions of a numeric keypad is controlled by the key marked NUM LOCK. For example, the key marked 7 also works as a Home key when the NUM LOCK key is ON (indicated by a green light on

top of the keybaord), the keys marked 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 0 function as numeric keys. Then pressing key one displays its respective numbers.

- Page Up and Page Down Keys: the Page Up and Page Down keys are used to move to the preceding and next pages of the document, respectively.
- Home and End keys: the Home and End keys take the cursor to the top and end of the document, line or window, respectively.
- Caps Lock key: normally, an alphabet is typed in the lowercase. If you press the Caps Lock key once (i.e. when the LED status indicator of Caps Lock is lit), any letter you type will appear in the uppercase (capital). This effect can be reversed by simply pressing the Caps Lock once again.
- Shift Key: holding the Shift Key down and then pressing a letter key creates an uppercase letter. However, if the Caps Lock is ON, then this effect is reversed. Pressing any key with two symbols or characters while holding down the Shift key causes the upper symbol to appear. The upper symbols are ~, !, @, #, $, %, ^, &, *, (,), _, +, |, :, {, }, ", <, >, ?, etc. Shift key is also used extensively in shortcuts commands.
- Ctrl and Alt keys: the Ctrl (control) and Alt (alternate) keys are often used in combination with other keys to carry out special actions. For example, in MS-DOS, pressing Ctrl and C simultaneously aborts the current task or command from being executed and the user returns to DOS prompt. By pressing Ctrl, Alt and Del (Delete) keys simultaneously, the machine automatically restarts.
- Enter Key: the Enter Key is also referred to as the Return Key. The Enter key is mainly used for two purposes. First, when you press it, the computer gets the signal that you have finished giving an instruction so that it can execute the instruciton. Second, in an MS Word document, pressing the Enter key begins a new paragraph or a new line.
- Tab key: the Tab key moves the cursor along a line to a preset point. It lets you indent paragraphs and line up columns, texts or numbers.

In some software menus, the Tab key helps you to move from one option to another.

- Esc key: in most applications, you can use the Esc key to cancel or ignore the entry or command that you have just entered. Esc key is also used to exit a program.
- Delete and Backspace Keys: pressing Delete erasers a space or character (one space/character at a time) that is placed to the right side of the blinking cursor. On the contrary, the Backspace Key erasers the character to the left side of the blinking cursor. It moves the cursor back, one character at a time – erasing what you typed last.

Dvorak Keyboard: This is another type of keyboard designed for speed typing. The Dvorak Keyboard was designed in the 1930s by August Dvorak, a professor of education, and his brother-in-law, William Dealy. Unlike the traditional QWERTY keyboard, the Dvorak keyboard has in its middle row, keys of the most common letters. Besides, common letter combinations are positioned in such a way that they can be typed quickly. Apart from a standard Dvorak keyboard, there are also two additional Dvorak models – left handed and right handed keyboards. These keyboards are designed for people who function with only one hand.