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POINT OF SALE SUPERSTORE

Cherry SPOS Keyboard Review

Product: SPOS Keyboard

Manufacturer: Cherry

Type: QWERTY Layout Programmable Keyboard

Support: 2 Year warranty through Cherry; Lifetime support from POSGuys

The [Cherry SPOS QWERTY](#) Keyboard combines programmable keys, a traditional QWERTY keyboard layout, and optional magnetic card reader, smart card reader, or trackpad into a compact form factor.

Typical uses and environments:

The SPOS keyboards best find use in locations where keyboard macros are used often, such as retail locations with products lacking barcodes, restaurant environments, or any location where a single keystroke is preferable to multiple steps.

Though the SPOS is designed for point of sale (otherwise the POS in the name would be unnecessary), we feel that the features also allow it to succeed in environments where space is a consideration, such as rack-mount terminals. The optional magnetic card reader can provide enhanced security, while the programmable keys could be used to open often-used tools or resources.

Unique Features & Advantages:

What helps the Cherry SPOS QWERTY keyboard stand out from the rest of the POS Keyboard line is Cherry's superior durability. Each key is rated at a lifetime of 25 million operations. Using a little back of the envelope math, and assuming that the space bar is used between every word, you could type at 70 words per minute constantly for nearly 250 days before a key would give out. If you typed on it a full 8 hour work day, 5 business days a week, at 70 wpm, that stretches the lifespan out to about 33 months, nearly 3 years of constant usage during work hours. In that time you could type out Shakespeare's complete works nearly 3 times over.

Standard Features:

The SPOS QWERTY comes standard with keyboard, advanced programming software, and key cap remover. Num lock, Caps lock, and Scroll lock are illuminated with amber LEDs when active. The keyboard weighs in at a hefty 3 lbs, but that inertia keeps it stable and resistant to jostling that may occur in retail environments. It's also balanced in such a way that you could fend off quite a few zombies before it breaks.



Drawbacks:

The main drawback I noticed with the SPOS QWERTY was the size. For extended periods of typing, the 14" keyboard layout can lead to repetitive strain injuries. Fortunately, the SPOS QWERTY was designed with light usage in mind, and so the problems shouldn't occur in a retail environment. If you are still concerned about RSI with the SPOS, Cherry also sells the LPOS line of full size keyboards with the same features as the SPOS line.

Performance Testing:

We ran the SPOS QWERTY Keyboard with Touchpad and MSR (Part #G8661411EUADAA) through a battery of tests designed to show the keyboard's programmability, ease of use, and relegendability. Our tests showed the SPOS QWERTY to be above average for its class.

Initial setup of the SPOS QWERTY keyboard is incredibly easy. Without any configuration or software installed, the keyboard will act as any other keyboard you may plug into your PC. The optional magnetic stripe reader and trackpad work without initial configuration, making the SPOS QWERTY a good fit even if just used as a space-saving keyboard/magnetic stripe reader combo.

If you do wish to reprogram the keys, the included Cherry Tools software has a nearly nonexistent learning curve, making macro setup a snap. The software walks you through setting keys to send different commands or sets of keystrokes, saving the configuration to the firmware in the keyboard itself. This allows the device to be set up as a central location, and then distributed as necessary. It also eliminates the need to have configuration software installed on the end user's PC, preventing accidental reconfigurations. We were able to program up to 10 keystrokes per key, including modifier keys. We were told by Cherry that third party software is available to extend that keystroke limit greatly, but would have to be maintained on the host PC instead of the keyboard itself.

Programming the optional magnetic stripe reader is equally easy and available through the included Cherry Tools software. Tracks can be enabled or disabled with ease and header information or encoding options can be altered as well.

Removing key caps requires a bit of finesse and the included key cap removal tool. The tool grips either side of the plastic cap and pops it off of the key, allowing for adding or changing key labels as needed, or placing larger caps for bigger buttons. The only problem we found while removing caps was that sometimes the tool would only get a firm grip on one side, causing it to pop loose incompletely.

Conclusion:


The Cherry SPOS QWERTY Keyboard is an excellent addition to any point of sale location requiring keyboard input in a small space. The inclusion of trackpad and magnetic stripe reader further minimize space usage, creating a durable and easy to use solution that will last for quite some time.



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	Ideal Setting	Description
 <p>SPOS</p>	Retail, Countertop Restaurant, anywhere requiring small form factor and programmable keys	A durable small form factor keyboard, the SPOS line provides relegendability and key reprogramming in a 14" body

 7000 Compact	Retail locations requiring scanning and typing, back office inventory stations	Similar to the SPOS, the 7000 includes optional barcode scanner, magnetic card reader, and has a >50 million operation per key lifespan
 8000 Series	Retail locations with greater amounts of data entry required	Full size complement to the 7000 Compact series, the 8000 features optional barcode scanner or magnetic card reader, and has a >50 million operation per key lifespan

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