

Washable keyboard, mouse are easy to clean but not very functional

August 13 2009, By Victor Godinez



SpillSeal S6000K - Washable Antibacterial Keyboard

Your toilet is probably cleaner than your computer keyboard. Sad (and disgusting) but true. One researcher at the University of Arizona found that the average desk has 100 times more bacteria than a kitchen and 400 times more bacteria than the average toilet.

Much of that gunk ends up embedded in your [keyboard](#) and [mouse](#), but cleaning those devices out can be tough, even with disinfecting wipes and compressed air.

Dallas-based Unotron Ltd. has the solution: keyboards and mice that you can wash in the sink.

I tested out the S6000K antibacterial corded keyboard and the M11 antibacterial mouse. (Both purport to have antibacterial material in the plastic.)

The only warning that comes with both accessories is not to get water in the plugs.

So I popped out the scroll wheel on the mouse and dumped the keyboard, mouse and scroll wheel into my kitchen sink.

I hesitated for just a moment, but then turned the water on full blast, poured on some dish soap and began scrubbing.

After a couple of minutes, I rinsed, drained and left everything to dry overnight.

The next day, I lugged all the gear to my office, plugged it all in and started working.

And everything worked. It's really rather amazing.

Unfortunately, neither the keyboard nor the mouse functions particularly well as a keyboard or mouse.

The keys on the keyboard are stiff and a bit creaky.

The spacebar is the biggest offender and requires a much harder press than other keys, which often left me with run-on words when I tried to type too fast.

The optical mouse seemed small in my hands, and, again, the buttons squeaked as if I were squeezing an actual mouse.

The M11 is also missing forward and back keys on the side - which might not be a big deal for some people - and you can't click the scroll wheel.

Instead, there's a little rubber button in front of the scroll wheel that you can click, but the button is so tiny that it's hard to toggle.

Many of these complaints might be the sort of thing that you stop noticing after extended use, but they jumped out at me almost immediately.

Those defects perhaps are an unavoidable byproduct of making both devices waterproof and germ-resistant, but for a combined total of nearly \$100, most buyers would probably expect something a bit more functional.

There are other options out there.

For example, a company called Seal Shield sells keyboards and mice you can put in your dishwasher, although I haven't been able to test those devices.

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