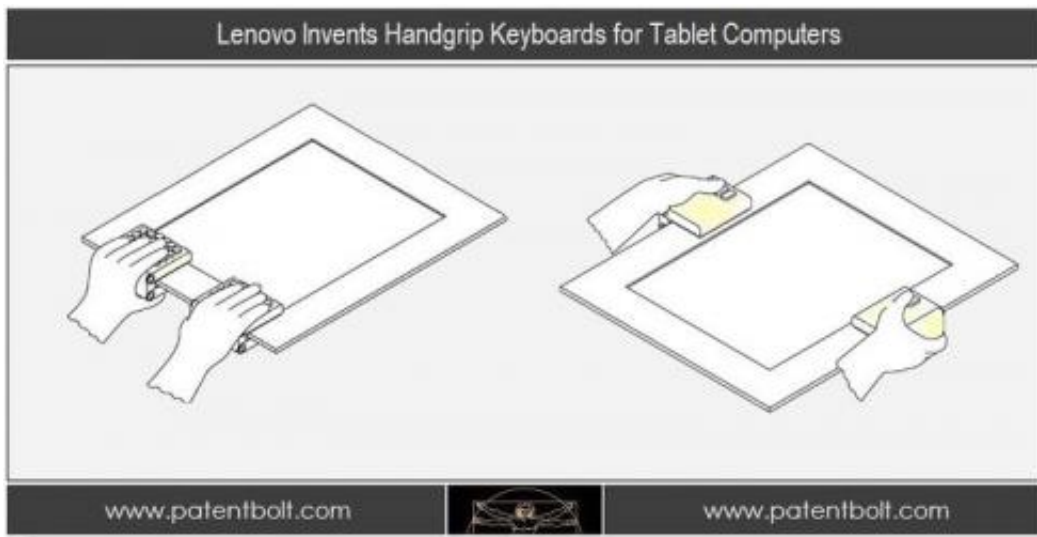


Lenovo applies for a patent for a grip tablet keyboard

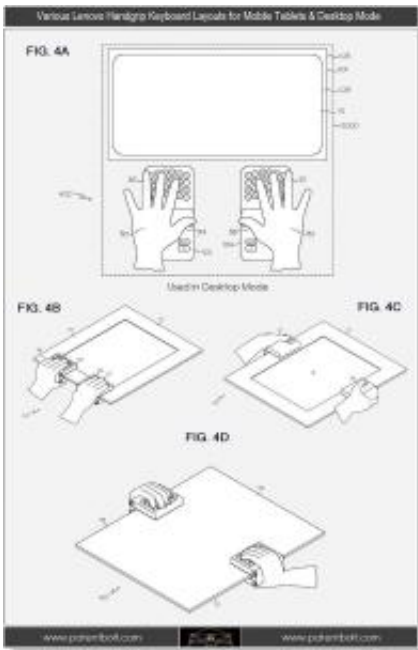
May 29 2012, by Bob Yirka



(Phys.org) -- With the introduction of the tablet computer, users of such devices have been forced to make some tradeoffs regarding keyboards. Virtually all tablets make use of image display and finger touching or tapping to create a virtual keyboard, which for many, is not nearly the same as one that provides the tactile feedback of keys being pressed and released. To get around this, many have resorted to purchasing wireless keyboards, which do offer the ease of typing, but detract from the portability that is so critical to the tablet experience. Now, according to [Patentbolt](http://www.patentbolt.com), Chinese hardware maker Lenovo has applied for a patent that

gives users the best of both worlds.

The idea is rather clever. Instead of going with a standard keyboard shape or trying to create a big overlay, Lenovo has come up with a way to clamp two tiny keyboard devices to either side of a tablet with tiny cell phone size keys on both top and bottom. Users hold onto their tablet by holding onto the keyboards, or more descriptively, their keypads. Each keypad has keys on both the top and bottom part; one has the keys for typing words and numbers, the other for [control mechanisms](#) such as the space bar, or Ctrl key. If the lettered keys are on the bottom side, users can type with their fingers as they grip. Conversely, if the keys are on the top side, they can type as they do with messaging on their cell phones, i.e. using their thumbs.



The [patent application](#) was apparently made back in 2010, but thus far, [Lenovo](#) has not made such a device available for sale. It's not known if they plan to, or if the company decided the idea wouldn't sell. At any rate, the dual keypads talk to the tablet wirelessly either through Bluetooth or infrared, and because they are clamped on when needed, can be placed anywhere on the tablet. Their small size also makes them much more portable than a wireless keyboard.

The patent application also notes that the original design calls for a standard QWERTY keyboard, though others might be added as well and that the dual keyboards can also be placed flat on a table in front of the tablet, if desired, to serve in a more conventional way.

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