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Week 4 Writeup – Emotional Design: Keyboards

To be remembered and to carry on through other’s memories is a common wish among many. With an oversaturated market for almost any product it is important for designers to be able to catch people’s eye in conjunction with having a good enough product to be remembered and recommended to other users. A brand that has made its way across the gamer community is Razer, specifically for their visceral design. In contrast almost everyone has had the dread of working on the cheap, somehow always broken, office keyboards.

When it comes to visceral design Razer’s keyboards excel with classic RGB lighting effects. The settings of the keys allow the light to pass through along with the letter display. The letters on the keys are made with semi-transparent plastic instead of an opaque black. This allows the RGB light to pass through and allows the letters to also be lit up. The slick shape of the keyboard also draws in users, especially with the angle of the board being more customizable than that of office keyboards. Office keyboards all have that same grey color, with white paint for the letters. Comparatively there is almost no competition. Like moths to a flame, light will draw more people in than grey that blends in with the environment.

Keyboards are simple. You press a key, that letter appears in the document, what we expect, happens. This doesn’t mean that there are no mistakes when the process occurs. Typos are not an uncommon occurrence when it comes to typing on a keyboard. The physical feedback from the keys, the shape of the keys themselves, and key layout all play a role in this. Razer’s keys are a thick, independent unit on the keyboard. They are separate from the main body of the keyboard and are connected by switches. Due to the independence of the keys, fingers don’t tend to run off the keys to accidentally click another letter. Additionally, because they are connected by switches this leads to the keyboard to be customized to allow the user to choose what kind of physical feedback, they want from pressing the keys. Office keyboards do not provide this luxury. The keys are almost surface level with the body of the keyboard making it more likely for typos and due to the membrane of the keyboard there is no customization for feedback.

Due to the features Razer keyboards have and the performance they provide people have a positive experience with them and recommend them to others, especially to those who are just starting out in the gaming space. It starts with one product; a consumer is happy and then buys more from the company to complete the set up. This is especially more enticing with Razer’s light software that connects devices. This greatly differs from the horrors of going to a lab lifting the keyboard and finding that the stands are broken. This is common with office keyboards and has caused them to have a worse reputation along with just how cheap and simple they are.