

Mechanical Keyboards

In a Nutshell

Hi I'm Cassidy and I'm addicted to keyboards

(hi Cassidy)

What are mechanical
keyboards?

What are mechanical keyboards?

- A keyboard built with high quality, typically spring activated, key switches
- They became popular because of the drop in quality of keyboards in the 90s



Why mechanical keyboards

Why mechanical keyboards

- Switches, framing, functionality, type print methods, key construction, PCB board, LED lighting (sharpness, brightness, adjustability), and more are far superior
- It just feels good

Switches

Switches

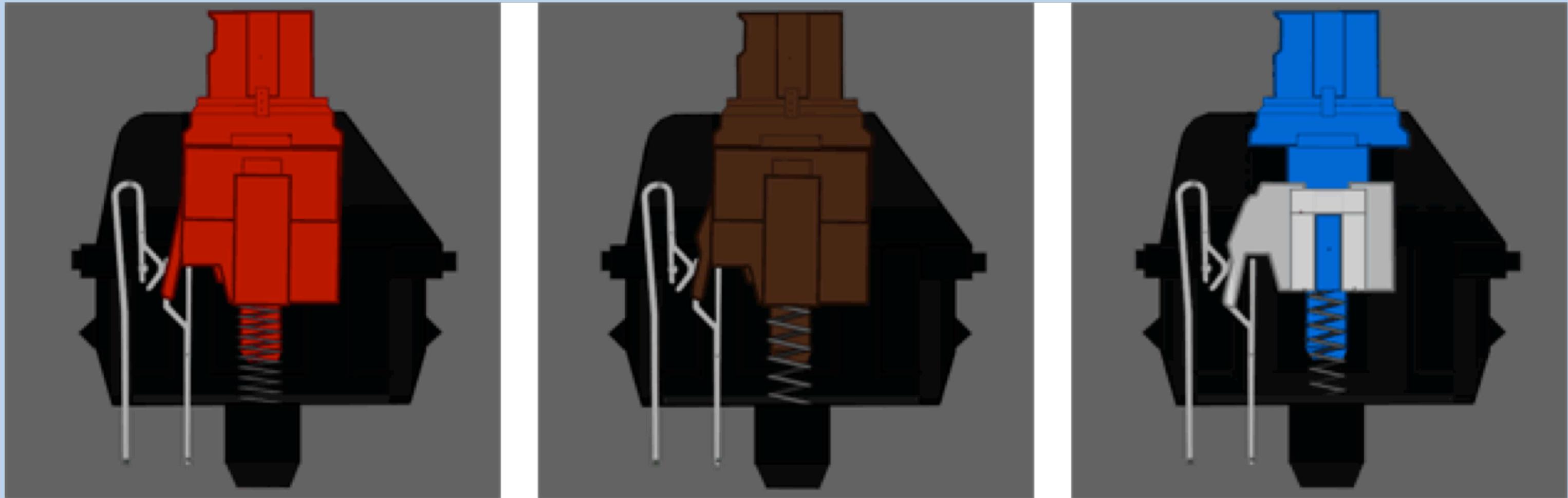
There's dozens of switch types available for mechanical keyboards.



Switches

- *Linear*: Have no bump before bottoming out. They travel smoothly.
- *Tactile*: Have a bump you can feel in the key press before bottoming out.
- *Clicky*: Make an audible 'click' when typing.

Switches



Switches

- There's other aspects of switches that I won't cover today
 - Actuation force per switch (how hard you have to press to register a keypress)
 - Custom switches (you can take apart switches and add your own features)
 - Non-standard switch brands/types (Gateron, Matias, Topre)

Keycaps

Keycaps

- Keycaps make no real difference to how your keyboard works
- They are pretty
- They come in different profiles

Keycap Profiles

SA Family



DCS Family



DSA Family



SA Keycaps



DCS Keycaps



DSA Keycaps



Keycap Profiles

- I've gone through the most popular keycap profiles (there are more)
- Some profiles and colors are more rare than others

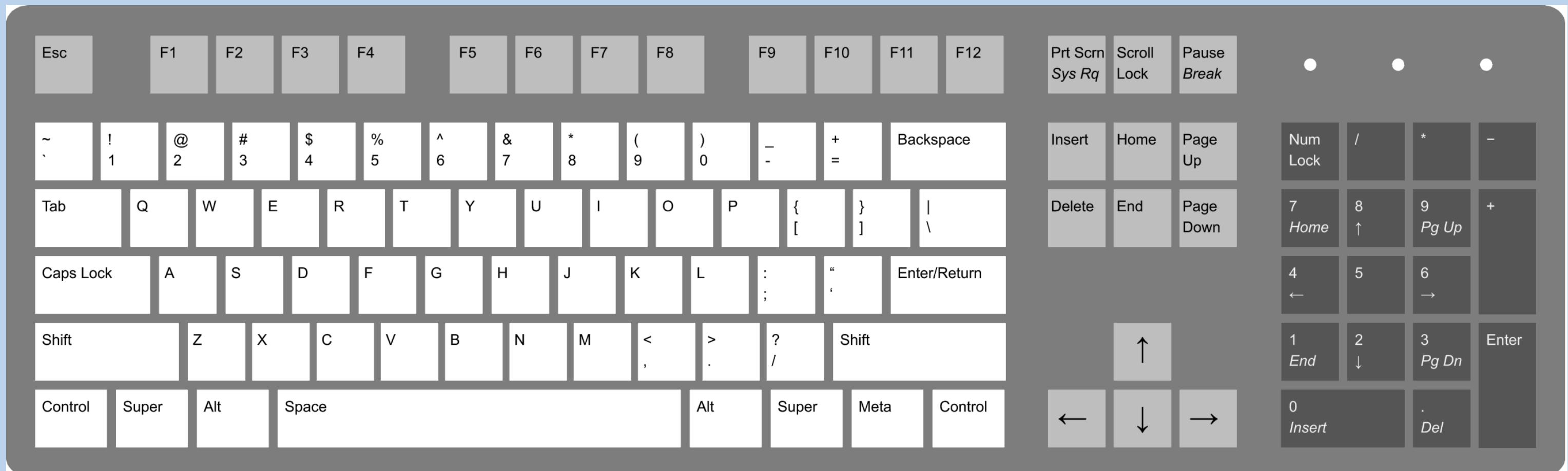
Artisan Keycaps

- Artisan keycaps are keycaps made by artisans (whaaat)
- Some are cheap, as one might expect, and some are obscenely expensive

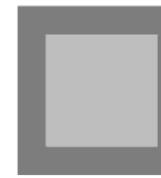


Keyboard Sizes

Keyboard Sizes



60%



80%



100%

ANSI Keyboard Form Factor







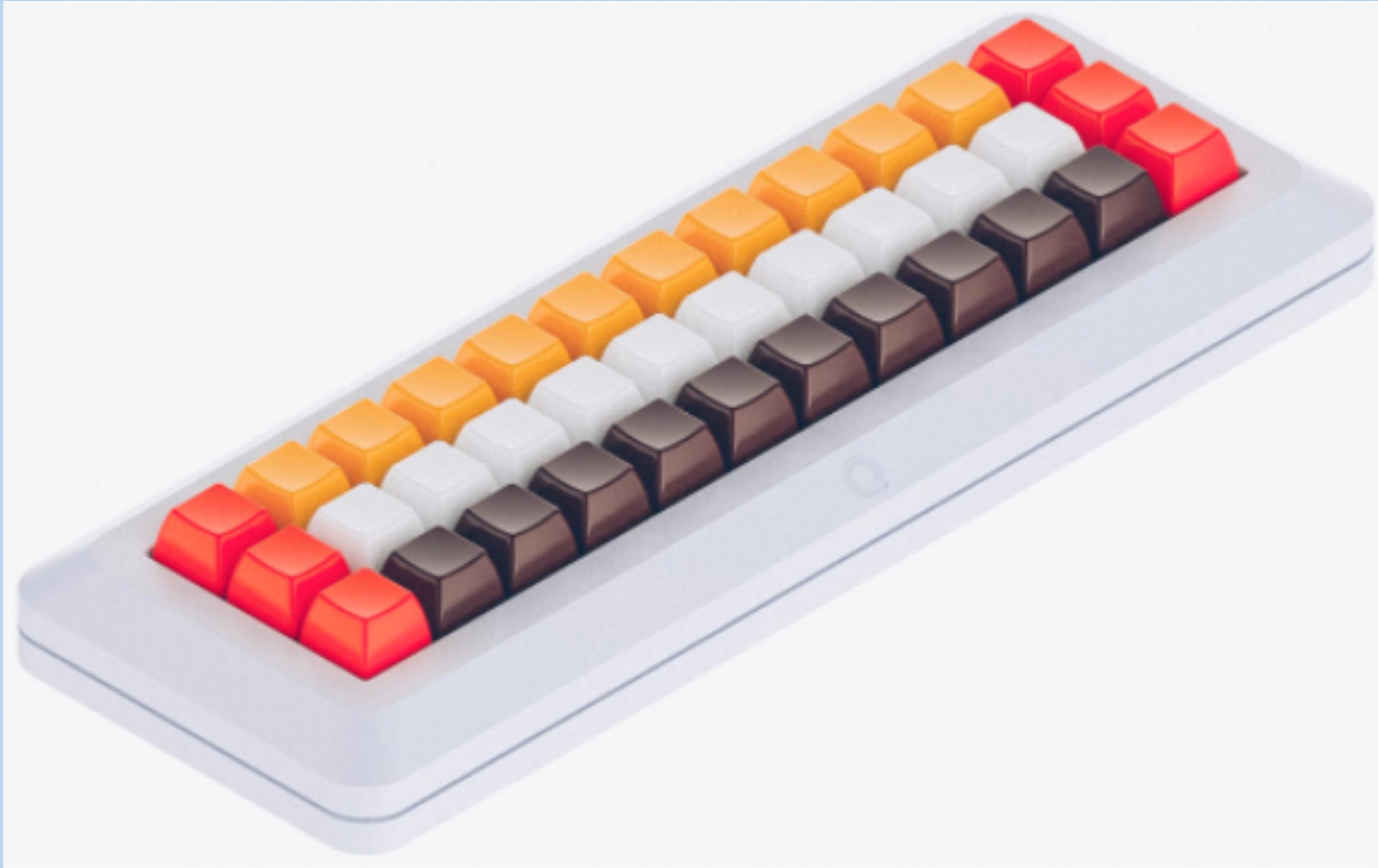




Ortholinear Layouts







Irregular Layouts







Custom Cables

Custom Cables

- Yes, people go so far as to getting their own custom USB cables
- It's common to get a cable that matches your keycaps
- There are kits available online for making your own, as well as ready-made ones

Programming

Programming

- The fun NEVER ENDS when programming is involved
- Many mechanical keyboards are completely programmable
 - Keymap layers
 - LED programming
 - Sometimes audio

Programming



**Getting a
Mechanical
Keyboard**

Getting a Mechanical Keyboard

- Because it's a niche community, buying keyboards (and parts) is *very* community-based!
- Massdrop, GeekHack, and /r/mechmarket are all community-driven buy sites
- For all else: Amazon, PimpMyKeyboard.com, wasdkeyboards.com, MechanicalKeyboards.com, Sentraq.com, GeekKeys.com, KeyClack.com, Originative.co
- ...Or you could just ask Cassidy to help



Thank you!