Staggered Keyboards: The Next Headphone Jack

Audience: Apple Product Design Team

The staggered keyboard layout was created for the first commercial typewriters in the 1870s. It was designed for the mechanical devices of that era, and it has not seen a significant update in the 150 year since.
Much like how Apple killed the headphone jack, we could be the company to replace the staggered keyboard with a modern, more natural approach - the ortholinear keyboard.

It uses a grid of rows and columns to position the keys in a way that more naturally aligns with the movement of our fingers.
Users who adapt to the layout report faster typing, higher accuracy, and less fatigue.

This could be the next big update to all Apple products that use a keyboard, but we need to study it first.

We should design a study to understand if these benefits actually exist for people broadly. If they do, we need to understand how to help our users transition.
This study needs to be detailed and thorough enough to detect any problem areas that may arise from changing how people interact with millions of Apple devices.
With the right plan, we can finally bring the keyboard into the 21st century.

Photo Credit:
Left: https://wi101.wisc.edu/qwerty-keyboard-and-morse-code/
Right: https://drop.com/buy/preonic-mechanical-keyboard