



RESEARCH BRIEF

Name	Oscar Vian L. Valles
Student ID number	2018-06491
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Name of Supervisor	Dhong Fhel K. Gom-os

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1.1 Background of the Study

There are a lot of educational typing tests available that help people learn touch typing, including Monkeytype, TypeRacer, or Keybr. These typing tests list out words that are then typed out. The inputted keys are then compared to check if the user has typed the expected letter. At the end of the test, the time taken is calculated and certain metrics is given. These metrics include words per minute (WPM) and accuracy (Bartnik, 2021).

However, this method of examination leaves out a crucial part of typing — ergonomics. Ergonomic typing prevents a lot health issues in the future like repetitive strain injury or carpal tunnel. One important factor that affects ergonomics is the typing procedure and posture. This means proper placement of the wrist, hands, and hitting the keys using the right finger that is assigned to the key.

Correct finger placement is usually taught at the beginning using a diagram, with each key being associated with a specific finger. For instance, the letter Q in a QWERTY layout should be hit using the fifth digit of the left hand, and this is shown by coloring the fifth digit and the key Q with the same color or by placing the letters directly on the fingers (Dobson, 2009).

Incorrect finger placement may cause these hand and wrist positions: ulnar deviation, forearm pronation, and wrist extension (Serina et al., 1999). These three are hand and wrist positions that are common in all activities, however, prolonged periods in these positions may cause cause injuries such as Carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS) (Toosi et al., 2015)

In addition, this type of typing is frequently taught in the beginner level (Donica et al., 2018). This means that there is a need to weed out bad habits that may develop, like using the index finger for pressing the spacebar or backspace. However, it is impractical for an educator to check each individual student if they are not performing these movements as these may only show for a specific which may not be common.

Thus, there is a need for automatically detecting which finger is used during typing, and for the position of the wrist in relation to the arm. One way to do this is through finger and hand tracking. One solution for tracking is by using image processing and machine learning. An example of this is MediaPipe by Lugaresi et al., 2019.

MediaPipe allows for various applications for machine learning in the field of image processing. This includes, hand tracking, pose estimation, object detection, and others. Another example of a library that allows for hand and finger tracking is OpenCV by Bradski, 2000. This is a tool that simplifies for computer vision, and image processing. Machine learning can also be used with OpenCV.

This research aims to improve touch typing training by combining hand and finger tracking, with educational typing tests to determine if the finger used to type is correct and if the overall posture of the hand ergonomic and healthy.

1.2 Significance of the Research

This research is beneficial for all users of physical keyboards. These include a vast majority of the population as there are a lot of professions that heavily rely on keyboards. Examples include developers, physicians, educators, accountants. By having better ergonomics while typing, wrist injuries can be prevented, and typing speed may be increased

This research also helps educators, especially early educators teaching beginner typers. Through automatically checking for ergonomics and posture, the burden of checking each individual students is lessened, and directed interventions for bad habits can be easily created as students with these bad habits are easily identified

This research has a direct impact on people that has onset RSI or other hand/wrist injuries that are caused by poor typing habits. By correcting these poor habits, pain from these injuries will be lessened, and even be prevented from occurring in the first place. A specific example of this is by reducing ulnar deviation which affects the nerve that is indicative of CTS (Toosi et al., 2015).

References

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