

Your Hardware Bugs May Be More Serious Than Software Ones

Written by Bob Snyder
11 April 2009

CyberClean, Swiss Compound, Cleans Up Office “Staph” and Solves Keyboard “Grime Scene”

The keyboard is well-known to hold more germs than your toilet seat. Hey, don't blame us for this info. In 2004, a researcher at University of Arizona found desks can support 10 million bacteria and the average office contains 20,961 germs per square inch. Keyboards averaged at 3295 per square inch and computer mice 1676. The toilet seat only averaged only 49 germs per square inch.

Which? (a consumer association) in UK commissioned a microbiologist to test more than 30 keyboards in its offices. Compared to toilet seats and toilet door handles, one keyboard was 5X filthier. One keyboard held 150X over the level of acceptable bacteria and two other keyboards were found to contain Staph germs.



And now the filthy nature of keyboards is legend. You can catch diarrhea, meningitis, flu and other nasty stuff from your high tech office. Yet only 22% of workers clean their keyboards monthly (and 10% confess they have never, ever thought about cleaning their keyboards.)

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And one reason why people don't clean their keyboards is...well, it's awkward to clean. The real bad stuff is in the cracks of the keypads.

At CeBIT, we found an easier to solve your customer's keyboard "grime scene." CyberClean was shown on the stand of Joker AG from Switzerland. CyberClean boasts "Swiss Formula Patented Cleaning Action," a high-tech cleaning compound that cleans and kills germs from between those cavities and crevasses found on keyboards and other hard-to-clean surfaces.

But they can't fool us: this stuff is the adult equivalent of the Silly Putty we used as kids. You remember, that alien glob stuff that seemed to have a life of its own. You could stretch it, stick it, mould it, shove it into any crevice...it even copied images off newspapers. It entertained us for weeks...before it ran out of possibilities to amuse.

Invented by a GE engineer, this brand of plastic putty sold more than 300 million egg-shape container in a career that has lasted more than 50 years. It went on to inspire other makers of "Putty Slime". We even saw a Belgium journalist refer to it graphically as "Smurfensnot."

In an age requiring green technology, somebody had the presence of mind to radicalize the Silly Putty concept and harness its absorbing characteristics. CyberClean is a Hulk-like yellow-green, fluorescent in color, and you smush it into the keyboard. (I don't care what Spell Check says, "smush" is halfway between "mashing" and "squashing" which is how we as kids described what we did with Silly Putty.)

You press it in, no rubbing. According to the makers, it has a one-way membrane-effect that sucks up dirt and germs. The CyberClean compound traps the germs. Like Silly Putty, it doesn't leave residue. But it does wear out. It comes in a re-sealable click-strip pack (other alternatives available) and when its fluorescence fades, it's time to buy a new one.

What you are going to like about this product (besides the fact that it is unique and attracts customers' attention) is that Joker is retail-oriented merchandiser. The product comes in shelf strips, re-sealable bags, countertop displays, pots with pop-up lids, maxi pots, and practically every available retail format. There are metal display racks, trial packs, planograms, and other

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POS material, including in-store DVDs, wobblers, and leaflets.

Joker tells us sell-through units track at 7-40+ sales per day. Of course, that must vary according to your type of store and traffic but the fact that they are counting puts the ahead of those vendors that won't clean up at retail...

Now before we leave this subject of cleaning up, we must inform you there is a high tech product even filthier than your customer's keyboard.

The office telephone (don't even think about hotel room phones) runs with an average 25,127 germs per square inch. Cellphones are even worse. The heat of the mobile phone combined with the germs from faces and hands create prime bacterial breeding ground.

The same researcher from Arizona once tested 10 phones from "Good Morning America" cast and crew. The cellphone used by the soundman on the TV show tested between 10 and 50 million bacteria. The researcher was quoted as saying, "If there is ever a new life form on this planet, it will be on this phone."

No need to worry about life forms on your cellphone: CyberClean works on phones, too.

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Go BBC on [University of Arizona report](#)

Go [Ingredients of](#) Keyboard Crumbs

Go [Silly Putty](#) Makes "Toy Hall of Fame"