

Snapkeys Is a New Take on the Virtual Keyboard



Snapkeys, a whole new take on the virtual keyboard, officially launched in beta Tuesday.

Rather than use the traditional QWERTY layout for keys on the screen of your Android phone or tablet, Snapkeys instead uses four virtual buttons on the screen, each providing access to three different letters. All of the other letters you may need are accessed by tapping the center of the screen.

Keys are translucent, so they don't interfere with what you might be looking at, often an issue when it comes to typing on a mobile device. So, you can do things like see instant search results as you type them into your mobile web browser, or comment on a video you're watching without having to transition between the keyboard and another screen.

In order to try and keep things accurate, the app uses a unique word processing technology to determine what you're trying to type based on the keys you use. It also learns your own personal typing style as you go, over time allowing it to predict a word your typing in just a few characters. Names and slang words Snapkeys might not know off the bat can also be added to the dictionary so it will know them the next time.

Once a user gets familiar with the keyboard and it with the user, Snapkeys says people can type up to 45 words per minute with 99 percent accuracy on the keyboard, often a difficult feat on a mobile device.

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While providing access specifically to just 12 letters might seem odd, Snapkeys CEO and founder Benjamin Ghassabian told *Mashable* that those 12 letters are traditionally used 85.1% of the time.

"Despite innovations in smartphone and tablet technology, mobile devices today are still reliant on QWERTY-based keyboard designs, which were originally intended for typewriters and computers as a separate peripheral from the screen," says Ghassabian. "The screen space of small mobile devices is precious and cannot be occupied by many keys."

The idea may sound a bit familiar. Snapkeys showed off an earlier version of the Android keyboard [at CES in January](#) [1] of this year. The keyboard got a good amount of attention at the event, and throughout the year at other trade shows, however, had not reached the market until Tuesday.

Snapkeys is [available as part of a private beta](#) [2] starting Tuesday, with a public launch expected some time in January.

Do you think it's time for a new type of virtual keyboard?

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