

5 May 2008

By: Bogdan Botezatu, Hardware Editor



Dell's Vostro notebooks come with an extra key
Dell

Dell Confirms Vostro Notebooks with Misconfigured Keyboards

The standard configuration has been mistakenly equipped with an extra key

System vendor Dell has confirmed that it shipped an undisclosed amount of Vostro notebooks with an improper keyboard configuration. According to Jennifer Davis, a Dell spokeswoman, some units of the company's [1310 and 1510 notebook models](#) come with an additional forward slash key placed between the left-hand shift and the Z key.

The new notebook offerings started shipping on April 5th on the European market, but the units will become available worldwide on May 6. Despite the fact that the company would not disclose the estimative number of affected units, Davis claimed that there are some "defective" units on stock. Dell also estimates that there might be some delays in shipment, given the fact that all the units on stock have to be "corrected".

Users who have ordered the respective units got quickly alerted about the keyboard layout misconfiguration. The keyboard flaw is allegedly making typing a rough experience, given the fact that the keycaps are not in their usual position.

"Looks normal, right? Look at your own keyboard... notice anything different?", Jake Gordon, one of the Vostro 1310 buyers, wrote on his blog. "The keys are all there... it's just that the left shift is too big, forcing everything over too far. The Z has to be between the A and S... look on ANY other keyboard and that's where it sits. This is not a U.S./U.K. layout issue, just a general monumental flaw", he continued.

However, Dell announced that the affected customers can have their keyboards replaced and a BIOS update for free, or they can wait for a technician to have the issue fixed on the spot.

The keyboard issue comes at a bad time for Dell, as the system vendor plans to boost its presence on the notebook market. The flaw is especially annoying since it has been spotted too late, and managed to pass through all the quality assurance processes.

"It does not bode well for their quality assurance. That's a major faux pas, especially since no one noticed it. It definitely won't make corporate consumers happy. It definitely doesn't make you look good", said Jim McGregor, an analyst with In-Stat.