

17 May 2008

By: Bogdan Botezatu, Hardware Editor

[iKey's Membrane Keyboard, the Washable Die-Hard](#)

The new peripheral is designed for harsh, industrial environments



The iKey rugged keyboard comes with an integrated touchpad
iKey

Industrial hardware manufacturer iKey has just announced a new keyboard addition to its rugged hardware portfolio. The new device features a waterproof rubbery membrane that is said to keep water off the delicate circuitry inside. According to the company, the device is especially built for industrial environments with increased humidity and dust. It is also equipped with a hardcoated, textured, polyester film that offers increased ruggedness to the conventional silicone rubber keypads. "What's great about the membrane keyboard is there are no crevices," said Joel East, Director of Technical Design at iKey. "If you're working around processing byproducts, grease, or other things that might accumulate between the keys of a regular keyboard, you can just spray it down and know that it's clean," East continued. The keyboard's design includes raised, mechanical snap-dome keys with an integrated Synaptics touchpad, similar to the notebook mouse trackpad. Therefore, the keyboard can substitute for a conventional mouse, which adds extra usability and cuts down on physical space requirements. The company said that the membrane product line currently includes a conventional desktop design, as well as a panel mount model, that can be easily deployed into industrial equipments using a stainless steel case. Moreover, the manufacturer provides customers with an OEM kit that packs additional hardware for hassle-free integration. The membrane keyboard can be easily cleaned up, either by using a wet piece of cloth, or even by using direct hose water. The polymer membrane is also guaranteed for prolonged use, with a lifespan that easily surpasses a conventional keyboard. The Synaptics touchpad is also waterproof, as it comes completely sealed and covered by an additional layer of PVC membrane. The company also plans to introduce a backlit keyboard model later this year, that will not only add extra functionality when used in dimly-lit environments, but also make the keyboard more appealing to desktop users who would like a die-hard keyboard.