

Meta Update IV

-ThereminGoat, 03/11/2022

I guess sitting here to flesh this one out that I've come to realize that what used to be my only means of communication between my audience and I has now simply morphed into the annual 'year in review' for when the website ages one more year along. In case it wasn't apparent by the giant birthday cake image below, the website is now officially two years old! While there are no parties to be had here and not any more alcohol than would normally be drunk on a Friday night, I figured that the best thing I could do for the website would be the one thing I've done seemingly endlessly over the past year of content – provide way too much detail that only I and a handful of people will really take to heart. That's by no means a shot at you, dear casual reader, though I do recognize that my audience has significantly grown since the third 'Meta Update' and you're probably sitting here wondering what the hell this is and/or how you missed the three previous ones.



Figure 1: Look, I wanted something more German Chocolate-esque this year, but apparently the average 2-year-old doesn't have such a refined palate according to Google Images.

In a very plain and simple fashion, the annual Meta Updates are a means by which I can sit down and review the content that I've released over the course of the past year, some of the interesting statistics behind it all, and also discuss some plans I have both for the future of the website and myself, personally. In prior iterations, the first and second Meta Updates were much more focused around notifying my then extremely small audience in regard to changes to my content and/or posting locations as I did not have any social media setup until the day of the second Meta Update. With the adoption of my various social media platforms, though, the third Meta Update focused on a more broad 'year in review' in which I effectively talked about some of the highlights of the year, new features which were introduced, and rough plans for the future. And as you will see below, this format will roughly follow that of Meta Update III.

A Year In Review

Note: There was a time in which I was making content *prior* to the existence of this website. Thus while this is the true 2nd birthday of the website, I have classified three separate years of content by their associated dates.

Full-Length Review Content

Taking into consideration that my regular every-other-week posting schedule for full length reviews really set itself into stone over the course of the past year of content, here is a breakdown of the article types which I released over my third year of writing switch reviews as well as how that stacks up to previous years.

Year 1 – (Nov. 11th, 2019 – Mar. 10th, 2020)

10 Total Articles

- 6 Reviews
- 3 Historical/Compilation Articles
- 1 Meta Update

Year 2 – (Mar. 11th, 2020 – Mar. 10th, 2021)

30 Total Articles

- 24 Reviews
- 2 Guides
- 3 Historical/Compilation Articles
- 1 Meta Update

Year 3 – (Mar. 11th, 2021 – Mar. 10th, 2022)

28 Total Articles

- 24 Reviews
- 2 Historical/Compilation Articles
- 1 Discussion Article
- 1 Meta Update

For Year #3, the top five performing articles for the year are, in order:

- #1. Alpaca V2 Switch Review
- #2. Gazzew's Boba U4 Switch Review
- #3. Everglide V3 'Water King' Switch Review
- #4. Lavender Switch Review
- #5. Durock POM Linear Switch Review

As of today, the website has had a total of 1,280,574 page views across its entire time live.

In addition to simply posting these longform articles, the following changes to their formatting and design have been implemented over the past year:

- Implementation of the switch ‘Measurement Sheet’ and its associated Google Drive repository.
- Expansion of the ‘Appearance’ section of reviews in order to document all mold points of interest for all switches.
- Shifting the focus of the ‘Other’ section towards details focused on packaging or extrinsic features related to the switches in the review which would not otherwise be captured as easily.
- *Very recent* introduction of the ‘Break-In’ testing section
- Regularization of 6 switches for comparison with occasional ‘Bonus Rounds’ for special reviews as well as hyperlinking of comparison switches to their associated scorecards or reviews, if they exist.
- Introduction (and expansion of) the ‘Sponsors/Affiliates’ section at the bottom of each review.

Scorecards and the Github Repository

While the scorecard system was first introduced in Year 2 and at the beginning of this year featured 67 scorecards, it has drastically expanded and changed since then. The amount of scorecards released as well as their changes includes the following.

Year 2 – (Mar. 11th, 2020 – Mar. 10th, 2021)

67 Total Scorecards

- 34 Linears
- 18 Tactiles
- 4 Silent Linears
- 3 Silent Tactiles
- 8 Clickies

Year 3 – (Mar. 11th, 2021 – Mar. 10th, 2022)

87 Total Scorecards

- 51 Linears
- 32 Tactiles
- 0 Silent Linears
- 0 Silent Tactiles
- 4 Clickies

In addition to the scorecards posted, the following changes were made to the scorecard content:

- Introduction of the ‘Overall’, ‘Hard’, and ‘Soft’ comparison categories as well as associated composite sheets.
- Introduction of the comparison chart by brand in the Composite Excel sheets.

- Introduction of a ‘new’ scorecard table for individual switches featuring the type of switch as well as manufacturer in the scorecard, explicitly.
- Introduction of the ‘Scorecard Update Project’ which has updated a total of 42 scorecards with the new, aforementioned scoring table and adjusted scores where deemed necessary.
- Briefly reorganization and restructuring of the Scorecard Github Repository.
- April Fools ‘Artisan Scorecard’ Repository was started for April Fools 2021.
- Start of behind the scenes tracking of day-by-day viewer traffic to the Scorecard Repository. (This was not previously done before Jan. 1st of 2022.)

Social Media

Given that my various social media accounts were opened sometime during Year 2, there is no Year 1 statistics as seen below.

Year 2 – (Mar. 11th, 2020 – Mar. 10th, 2021)

Instagram

- 1570 followers with 79 posts

Twitter

- 850 followers with 413 tweets

Patreon

- 20 patrons at the end of the year

Year 3 – (Mar. 11th, 2021 – Mar. 10th, 2022)

Instagram

- +4172 followers with 102 new posts
- 5742 followers total with 181 posts overall

Twitter

- +1374 followers with 388 tweets
- 2224 followers total with 801 tweets overall

Patreon

- +12 patrons at the end of the year
- 32 total patrons currently

Sponsors

In Meta Update III, I actually announced the beginning of my first sponsorship/affiliation with a keyboard company and had expressed a desire to further expand this number over the course of the coming year. Needless to say, this has gone over pretty damn well. The current list of sponsors has expanded now to include:

Mechbox UK



- A small but enormously valuable UK-based operation which sells singles of switches that I've used in my review comparisons as well as personal collection. Matt has gone out of his way numerous times over the past few years to not only get me to this point, but to keep me afloat of all the awesome switches out there. You should definitely go check him out and buy something as it supports both him and I!

KeebCats UK



- A switch peripheral company based out of the UK, these guys sell everything switch-adjacent that you could possibly think to ask for and have been lifesavers with getting me things like lube, films, and other stuff I always forget about until I sit down to build. Using code 'GOAT' at checkout with them gets 10% off your order, as well.

Proto[Typist]

proto[Typist]
Keyboards

- An all-things keyboard vendor based out of the UK as well, proto[Typist] and Jae are regular stockers of everything from switches to the keyboards and even keycap groupbuys as well. While I've bought things from the many times in the past, they also are a sponsor of my work and allow me to get some of the great switches I write about!

MKUltra Coporation



- Based in the US, MKUltra is an excellent company that fills in all the gaps that other vendors simply forget exist. Switch peripherals, foam, odd keycaps, and a growing line of switches make them someone you should definitely check out. (Oh, and if you do, use code 'GOAT' for 5% off your order when you check out!)

Divinikey



- Quick shipping, constantly growing, and all super friendly. Divinikey has been a super awesome US vendor to me over the past few years of modifying switches and they're even releasing more and more switches of their own as of late. You should go check them out purely to see what is new, but if you stop by and buy anything along the way, use code 'GOAT' for 5% off your order when you check them out!

Zeal



- I know them. You know them. Probably your dog knows them. Zeal and crew kicked off the custom switch scene all those years ago and are continuing to release stuff even I am excited for this deep into the switch scene. When you buy some switches for yourself, though, shave a bit off the Zeal Tax with code 'GOAT' for 5% off or using my affiliate link here.

Switch Collection

As you may or may not have seen from the social media posts today, the collection has expanded quite a substantial amount over the previous year of collecting and reviewing switches. While I don't have any data on a year to year basis of how the collection has grown, I've added my fourth 500-slot display tester as well as passed the 1000 and am nearing the 1500 unique switch mark overall. For a deeper look into what all I *do* have in my collection, please see the following link to my collection tracking sheets here.



Figure 8: The (almost full) family photo as of today with 1458 unique mechanical keyboard switches.

An additional shoutout is well deserved here to Space Cables for not only cutting my fourth and latest tester, but also the third one as well. They've been more than awesome in willingly taking on that project for me and I can't thank them enough for all their help!

Upcoming Year Plans

Much like in the Meta Reviews of the past, I hold absolutely zero promises on actually following through on any of this content as the plans that I make today may not be feasible nor hold up well in a week, a month, or a year down the road when I write another one of these updates. This is simply a list of things that I think would be neat doing over the course of the next year.

Content

- I would like to stick to the normal, as established review schedule while still continuing to sprinkle in the occasional alternative article here or there when it seems fitting. So far, this procedure has worked well in years prior and I see no reason to stop it now.

- I want to continue to expand and add to all of my alternative, non-full length review content including the Scorecard Repository, the Scorecard Update Project, the Measurement Sheet, and the Photo vault.
- I plan on starting to fully utilize my new camera setup (Lumix G85 with a Panasonic 30mm f/2.8 Macro Aspherical MEGA O.I.S Lens) in order to take significantly better switch photos for the website and for social media. Obviously, this will need a shit ton of practice and time for me to get up to what I would consider 'par' on the matter.
- I would like to crash some streams and/or audio-visual content creators' work out there, though broadly speaking I'm uncertain of how feasible this is or may be given graduate school.

Supplementary to Content

- Continue to grow interesting partnerships with vendors and sellers via affiliate/sponsor links in order to provide you all with interesting discount codes you all can use.
- Continue to expand my social media presence, somehow, alongside keeping to my fairly normal posting schedule as it seems to work well for both me and you all.
- Perhaps find a way to become more involved with and/or provide consulting-like services to vendors and or manufacturers looking to try and develop a good switch within certain specifications which they've lined out.

Personal Life Updates

While the beginning of my articles have begun to sort of belay information about my life outside of keyboards and switches, and yes that is actually a real thing, I do wish to carve out a little section here to explain what I am up to most other times of the day. Additionally, these kinds of details do dictate my ability to create content and may explain why I've not only not done everything I've set out to accomplish in previous Meta Updates, but also why I am just slow in general relative to your favorite full-time content creators.

- Currently, I am in my second semester of my PhD track in Chemical Engineering. As this goes, this means that I am taking four graduate level engineering classes which quite literally keep me busy 14+ hours per day, 6-7 days per week. These should be done here in the first couple of weeks of May, but then I will be doing research in the summer beyond full time.
- My research project, broadly speaking, is working on attempting to make plastics recycling as we understand it today more economically and commercially viable such that we can cut back on the unbelievable amounts of plastic waste generated each year.
- I'm including a third point because humans tend to like groupings of odd numbered things. My life is incredibly boring outside of switches as the past two semesters have quite literally been packed sunup to sundown with classwork.

Final Conclusions

Having looked back to Meta Update III in structuring this article, I was met with a rather interesting Final Conclusions section which read slightly differently than what I had remembered. In it, I had mostly talked about my struggle with coming to accept myself as truly being a “content creator”, instead opting to just be “that dude with the switches” instead. While my website and reviews certainly didn’t have the traction that they have today, I don’t particularly think that the comparatively low readership was the rationale for feeling that way. Switch collecting was at the time, and still very much is, a hobby that I take up in my free time when I’m not bogged down with life, school, or some other thing that I should be doing if not for school. The reviews, by extension, always seem to be something I end up doing in order to not only share my love of switches, but to get to introduce everyone out there to the interesting switches coming through my mailbox week in and out. The idea of being a “content creator” hardly ever crossed my mind at any point in time, and back then being called one here and there felt strange. However, over the course of the past year or so this has most certainly changed. Do not get me wrong in any way, shape, or form here – I still do not *personally* consider myself a true content creator in name. I think, though, that I’ve simply gotten used to being called that in time, perhaps as a natural function of my audience growing with time. It’s because of this audience growth, as well as the development of a regular readership that I feel as if I’ve been truly pushed into the role of a content creator.

What has also changed, in addition to my acceptance of the term ‘content creator’, is my general feeling about you all, my dear readers. Back around the time that Meta Update III was posted, I felt as if the views the content, and the overall messages I shared were sporadically accepted and as if random people were popping in and out of the viewership of the website. With the growing audience that has developed over the past year, though, I feel as if I’ve grown a much closer connection to those of you who come week in and out. While the new individuals stumbling across my social media platforms and the GitHub Repository are still incredibly cherished and I’m glad that they can join us all here, it’s you all who are likely reading this far and will read the review posted this weekend as well that have put me in this position where I am today. I see your feedback and appreciation on social media. I notice it when you share my content and/or cite it as fellow content creators. I can tell when you all seemingly really enjoy my articles. It’s because of these things that I’m incredibly lucky as a content creator. Even without the face-to-face interaction that many of the fellow Twitch streamers in this hobby space have, I feel like I’ve developed a real following that supports me and encourages me to keep writing these reviews week in and out. So thank you, everyone, for all the support you’ve shown me not only in the past year but over my sum total time of posting reviews, of collecting switches, and being in the hobby altogether. In very uncharacteristic fashion for my normal articles, I’ll keep this one short as I’m not sure I can keep the thanks, the appreciation, nor the general warm feelings to less than 10,000 words if I left this uncapped. I look forward to seeing where we all end up after this year, and just how many more switches I’ve gotten to try.