

Meta Update VI

-ThereminGoat, 03/11/2024

And just like that we are back here again after another entire year of writing switch reviews and working on all manner of content for this website. That's right, the website is officially *four* years old as of today, making it more tenured than a sizable chunk of the keyboard community that joined during the peak of and in the years following the COVID-19 pandemic. In parallel to the website's continued growth and expansion, I too have had quite a year establishing my life as a full time working adult. In spite of the fact that I've moved around and changed employment less over the last year than nearly any year in my life previously, life around me never seems to slow down and I'm not sure at this point if it ever will. Throughout all of these changes, the website and the switches have always been here with me and have long since been one of my creative outlets in trying times. While I have said many a time before in the past that I would continue to work on all of this without any of you here to read it, know that your continued readership, support, and love over the past few years have been one of the biggest reasons I've maintained the pace of all of this around my otherwise chaotic life. As is tradition, let's go ahead and bring out some cake to celebrate making it to this milestone!



Figure 1: Something about the ice cream cone really stood out to me on this one.

Unlike a more traditional birthday party setting, I've never really brought gifts or any sort of accompanying sweets to the celebration of this website getting one year older. Instead, I usually celebrate it with the only thing I know how to do well here: with sharing way too many words and details that the vast majority of you did not ask for. For those of you who are new here over the course of the last year, Meta Updates are my yearly check-in content where I sit down and break down the numbers regarding content, readership, changes made in the past year, as well as some loose expectations I have of myself in the year moving forward. In the earliest iterations of this format in Meta Updates I and II, these updates were structured around notifying my smaller audience about life and content changes as I did not have any broader social media accounts for my website until the day that Meta Update II was released. As my readership and social media platforms have grown substantially over the past few years, I've grown this into a sort of yearly recap article that has always been criminally skipped over by a lot of readers. (There's a lot of *really* interesting numbers in these articles and you get a pretty good glimpse into how I view all of this from the back end!) For those of you who are familiar with Meta Updates, you will see that this will loosely follow the format of Meta Update V and those before it.

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 4th birthday of the website, I have classified five separate years of content by their associated dates.

Long and Short Written Content

Full Length Article Content

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

10 Total Articles Released

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

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

30 Total Articles Released

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

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

28 Total Articles Released

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

Year 4 – (Mar. 11th, 2022 – Mar. 10th, 2023)

25 Total Articles Released

- 23 Reviews
- 1 Meta Update
- 1 April Fools Content – Ultraclearine Switch Review

Year 5 – (Mar. 11th, 2023 – Mar. 10th 2024)

23 Total Articles Released

- 21 Reviews
- 1 Meta Update
- 1 April Fools Content – NOVELKEYS X KAILH BIG DARK YELLOW SWITCH REVIEW

For Year #5 of the website, the top five performing articles for the year are, in order:

- #1. A Beginner’s Guide to Switches
- #2. Wuque Studio Morandi Switch Review
- #3. Gateron Oil King Switch Review
- #4. Alpaca V2 Switch Review
- #5. Gazzew’s Boba U4 Switch Review

As of today, the website has had a total of 2,739,724 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 or largely worked on over the past year:

- Conceptually, the background sections have taken on more of a “contextual” role than a “historical” one over recent years. While switches such as the Cherry MX Purple and Zeal 3-in-1 Clickiez did have quite the deep dive into their history as a result of their immediate historical implications and wide swathe of marketing content, a lot of newer switches these days are getting reviewed when they are less than one or two months old at the time. To not do away with this section in those cases, I’ve chosen to contextualize this release relative to other switches of that type or use their features – such as type, design, or manufacturer – to facilitate a larger discussion about those concepts.
- A couple of reviews have had post-hoc additions of comparative force curves added to their switch comparison sections. While this is something that I had stated in Meta Update V that I had wanted to do, this wasn’t as rigorously pursued as I may have suggested it might be then.

‘Shorts’ Content

As of the start of 2022, I added a new tab to the website banner titled ‘Shorts’, with the explicit intent of publishing 1-2 short length articles per month in addition to my other written content. In some part due to the bulk of writing that I’ve also taken on with my Off-Site content, as well as changes to my day to day life and weekly schedule, I have certainly not been as good about writing these sorts of short articles as I could be. Over the course of the previous year, I created a total of 6, which is closer to 0.5 per month than the 1-2 I had intended for. Regardless of this, I think that all of these articles were pretty well received and I have been positioning myself to try and continue expanding this short article collection more moving forward.

Year 4 – (Mar. 11th, 2022 – Mar. 10th, 2023)

2 Total Short Articles Released

Year 5 – (Mar. 11th, 2023 – Mar. 10th 2024)

4 Total Short Articles Released

Off-Site Content

Starting off at the end of 2022, I was approached by Drop to begin writing short form content on switches specifically for their website. Soon thereafter, I was approached by a few other companies in the form of Kinetic Labs and Dangkeeps to also begin writing similar styles of short, switch-focused content for their websites. While there have been a sporadic few one-off engagements over the course of the past year, these three companies largely remain as the ones that I am writing for and the number of combined off-site articles has grown from 12 over the course of Year 4 to 39 in total. (27 being released in Year 5) Links to this content can be found in the ‘Archive’ tab of the website and will only ever be hosted on their respective platforms. Content ideas, edits, etc. *are* subject to their approval as part of our agreements set out in advance.

Largely, this content appears to be being received rather well by the community members on the various platforms these are posted on. As well, I personally have been enjoying the structure and timing of these articles as they allow me to flex my writing muscles a bit and push me to work in a style and format that is a bit more restrained than my day to day work. Given that this is demonstrably helping expand the reach and community awareness of my content, as was an intangible goal of mine that I laid out in Meta Update V, I see this as being among one of the most successful initiatives that I’ve taken up in the past few years. I expect to see it continue similarly to how it did in the last year of writing.

Year 4 – (Mar. 11th, 2022 – Mar. 10th, 2023)

12 Total Short Articles Released

Year 5 – (Mar. 11th, 2023 – Mar. 10th 2024)

27 Total Short Articles Released

- One off release for Artisancollector.com

Supplementary Content

Scorecards and the Github Repository

While the scorecard system was first introduced in Year 2 and at the beginning of this year featured 223 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 Released

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

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

87 Total Scorecards Released

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

Year 4 – (Mar. 11th, 2022 – Mar. 10th, 2023)

69 Total Scorecards Released

- 35 Linears
- 21 Tactiles
- 5 Silent Linears
- 2 Silent Tactiles
- 6 Clickies

335,541 Total Views on GitHub

Year 5 – (Mar. 11th, 2023 – Mar. 10th 2024)

63 Total Scorecards Released

- 29 Linears
- 13 Tactiles
- 6 Silent Linears
- 5 Silent Tactiles
- 10 Clickies

341,719 Total Views on GitHub

In addition to the scorecards posted, the following progress was made on force curve content:

- The Scorecard Update Project has seen minimal updates and progress over the course of the last year. A large part of this has been due a focus shift on producing numbers and data at large for several new switch measurement projects I've introduced in the past year.
- A second full year of behind the scenes tracking of day-by-day viewer traffic to the Scorecard Repository. (This was not previously done before Jan. 1st, 2022)

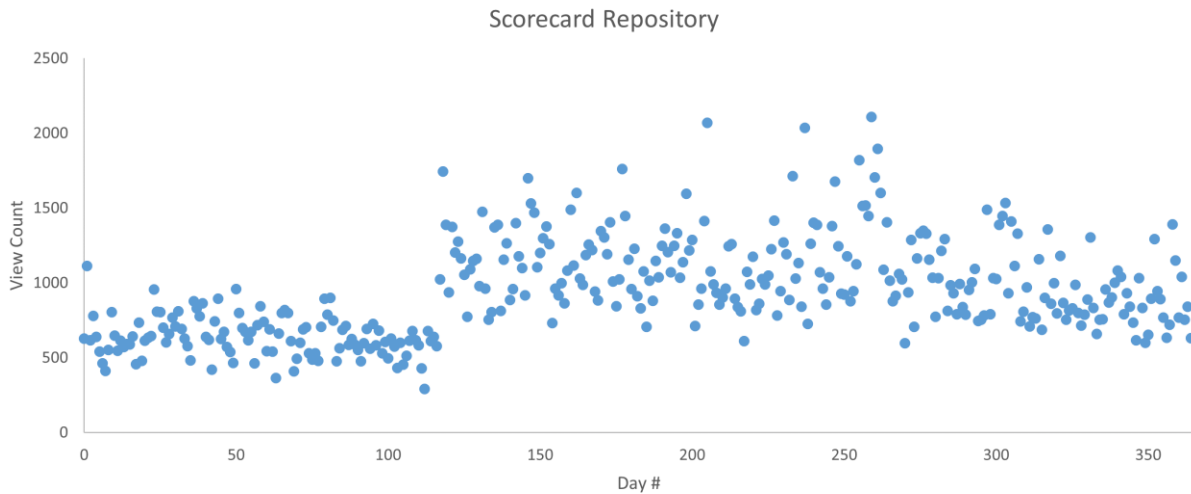


Figure 2: Daily Scorecard Repository view count. (341,719 total for the year)

Force Curves and Github Repository

Perhaps the single largest data driven project on this website has been focused on continuing to document force curves for as many switches as possible and storing those in the Force Curve Repository hosted on GitHub. Started in May of 2022 after Drop graciously gifted me an Imada FSA-MSL-0.4 Portable Force/Displacement Tester, which is a professional piece of lab equipment for the record, it has since expanded to include over 1,000 different force curves of well over 950 different switches.

At the onset of this project, I had stated that I was largely focused on getting force curves for as many distinct switches as possible and was not so much focused on getting replicates of single switches at that time. While my philosophy on this has largely remained the same, I *have* begun doing replicate measurements of any switches which are getting full reviews written about them. This was done in large part to allow for a 'best representative' curve to be chosen without potentially misconstruing my larger reading audience over one bad force curve.

Year 4 – (Mar. 11th, 2022 – Mar. 10th, 2023)

568 Total Measurements Live

47,655 Total Views on GitHub*

- *Repository started in end of May, 2022

Year 5 – (Mar. 11th, 2023 – Mar. 10th 2024)

1102 Total Measurements Live
- +534 New Measurements Added
95,310 Total Views on Github

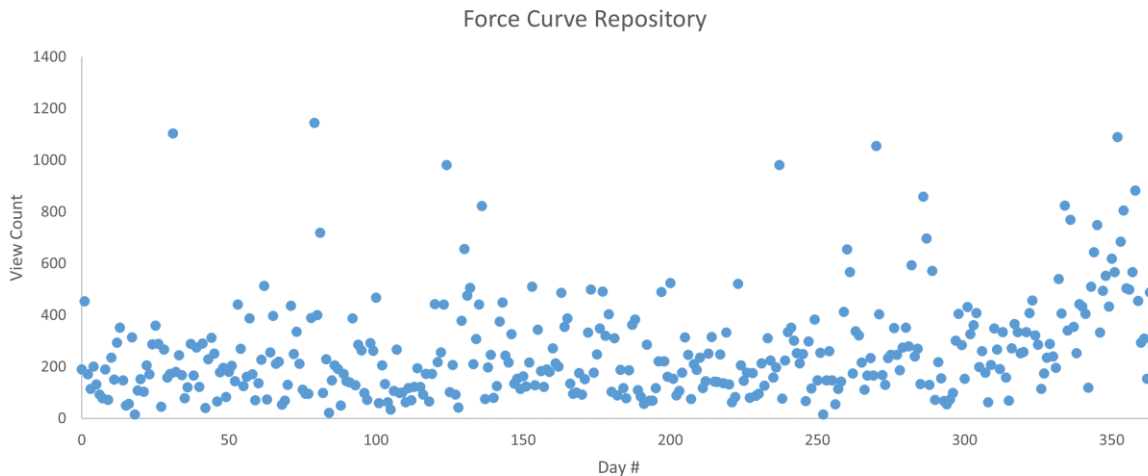


Figure 3: Daily Force Curve Repository view count. (95,310 total for the year)

Composite Measurement Sheet

One of my lesser known forms of content that I have is the Composite Measurement Sheet I use to track the caliper-based measurements of stem dimensions and switch components that I display in my full length reviews. Much like with all other supplementary content, this sheet also includes *many* more switches than what I just review at length and this is usually updated on my ‘off weeks’ in between written reviews. This, like all of my other extraneous content, can be found under the ‘Archive’ tab of the website and links to a Google Drive containing the excel sheet with the measurements and an update log. Note: In order to properly view the box and whisker plots for comparisons between brands you must download the sheet for Excel, as Google Sheets is a piece of shit software and should be scrubbed from existence.

While the sheet and its contents remain largely the same as they did at this time last year, one thing worth noting is that there was a reorganization of switch manufacturers and an expansion to include Grain Gold, Jerrzi, LICHICX, and SOAI in October of 2023. These changes and the reasons for them are well tracked in my ‘2023 Manufacturer Update’ short article.

Year 3 – (Apr. 18th, 2021 – Mar. 10th, 2022)

100 Total Measurements Live

Year 4 – (Mar. 11th, 2022 – Mar. 10th, 2023)

275 Total Measurements Live
- 175 New Measurements Added

Year 5 – (Mar. 11th, 2023 – Mar. 10th 2024)

461 Total Measurements Live

- 186 New Measurements Added

Artisan Addendum

Debuted on May 8th, 2023 as part of my one-off contest article submission to Artisancollector.com, the ‘Artisan Addendum’ project is a parallel Excel sheet of caliper-based measurements that aims to measure the widths of the keycap mounting posts on various MX-style switches and is available in the same spot as the Composite Measurement Sheet. While it initially started with 250 different switches measured, it has since grown to 442 over the course of the rest of the year and is being regularly updated alongside the Composite Measurement Sheet regularly.

Year 5 – (Mar. 11th, 2023 – Mar. 10th 2024)

442 Total Measurements Live

Linearity

As of the time of this Meta Update, the concept of Linearity and my Excel sheet to track such is *exactly* 8 days old. As detailed in my non-review, full length article titled ‘On Differences In Linear Switches’, I will now begin tracking the slope and linearity (or straightness) of various linear switches as a way to attempt to better quantify the differences between them. This is also available in the same place as the Composite Measurement Sheet and Artisan Addendum, as well as in the Force Curve Repository GitHub.

Year 5 – (Mar. 11th, 2023 – Mar. 10th 2024)

219 Total Measurements

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 new tweets
- 2224 followers total with 801 tweets overall

Patreon

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

Year 4 – (Mar. 11th, 2022 – Mar. 10th, 2023)

Instagram

- +1173 followers with 91 new posts
- 6915 followers total with 272 posts overall

Twitter

- +850 followers with 456 new tweets
- 3074 followers total with 1257 tweets overall

Patreon

- +2 patrons at the end of the year
- 34 total patrons currently

Year 5 – (Mar. 11th, 2023 – Mar. 10th 2024)

Instagram

- +181 followers with 96 new posts
- 7096 followers total with 368 posts overall

Twitter

- +118 followers with 385 new tweets
- 3192 followers total with 1642 tweets overall

Patreon

- -3 paid patrons at the end of the year
- 45 total patrons, 31 paid

Other Points of Note

Sponsors

Over the span of the last year of writing, there haven't been that many changes to my loyal core group of sponsors who have largely been with me for well over a year now. That being said, I did add Keebhut to the list as a result of their variegated and always interesting spread of switches available for purchase. As well, MKUltra Corporation was dropped as a result of their closure in the middle of last year.

Mechbox.co.uk

- A wonderful UK based operation which sells singles to switches that I've used above in my comparisons for collectors and the curious alike. Matt has gone out of his way to help me build out big parts of my collection, and buying something using this link supports him as well as my content!

KeebCats UK

- A switch peripheral company based out of the UK which sells everything switch adjacent you could ask for, they've been a huge help recently with my film and lube supply for personal builds, and they want to extend that help to you too. **Use code 'GOAT' for 10% off your order when you check them out!**

Proto[Typist] Keyboards

- An all-things keyboard vendor based out of the UK, proto[Typist] is a regular stocker of everything from switches to the latest keyboard and keycap groupbuys. 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!

Divinikey

- Not only do they stock just about everything related to keyboards and switches, but they're super friendly and ship out pretty quick too. Divinikey has been a huge help to me and my builds over the last year or two of doing reviews and they'll definitely hook you up. **Use code 'GOAT' for 5% off your order when you check them out!**

ZealPC

- Do they really need any introduction? Zeal and crew kicked off the custom switch scene many years ago with their iconic Zealios switches and the story of switches today couldn't be told

without them. Use code **'GOAT'** (or click the link above) for **5% off your order when you check them out!**

MechMods UK

- A rising vendor based in the UK, Ryan and crew have been a pleasure to work with and have nearly everything you'd need to build your first or fourteenth keyboard. **Go build your latest or greatest one right now with them by using code 'GOAT' at checkout for a 5% discount!**

Dangkeeps

- A longtime supporter of the website and the collection, Dangkeeps has quite possibly the widest variety of switches of any vendor out there. Not only is their switch selection large, but it rotates and is constantly adding new stuff too. **You're going to need 5% off your order with my affiliate to save off the cost of all those switches!**

SwitchOddities

- The brainchild of one my most adventurous proxies, SwitchOddities is a place where you can try out all the fancy, strange, and eastern-exclusive switches that I flex on my maildays with. **Follow my affiliate code and use code 'GOAT' at checkout to save 5% on some of the most interesting switches you'll ever try!**

Cannonkeys

- Does anybody not know of Cannonkeys at this point? One of the largest vendors in North America with keyboards, switches, keycaps, and literally everything you could ever want for a keyboard always in stock and with an incredibly dedicated and loving crew. **Follow my affiliate link above in their name to support both them and I when you buy yourself some switches!**

Kinetic Labs

- One of the most well-rounded keyboard vendors out there, Christian and crew have been supporters of all my switch and switch-adjacent needs for some years now. **I'm honored to have them as an affiliate and think you should check them out using my affiliate link above to support both them and I when you check out their awesome products!**

Keebhut

- Want to try out some switch brands that fly under most vendor's radars? Keebhut is always seeking out that next latest and greatest and has been super helpful in hooking me up with new brands over the past year. **They are all about sharing that love as well, and want to give you 5% off your next order with them when you use code 'GOAT' at checkout!**

Switch Collection

While my switch collecting does feel as if it has slowed up a tiny bit over the course of the past year, that does not mean that the collection has stopped expanding and growing to a point that it makes taking photos of it all very difficult! As of the last Meta Update, I had just passed the 2000 mark for the collection, meaning that over the course of the past year the collection has grown by another 30% or so up to 2792 different mechanical keyboard switches as of today. Mind you, this still does not include the world's largest vintage switch collection behind me which I'm only just now starting to dig into and slowly add to the collection. As well, all of the combinations of both Tecsee Ice Cream switches *and* Wuque MM switches seen on their respective testers, below, actually are only counted as 1, single switch. I have no reason to think that the 3000 switch mark isn't just over the horizon from here!



Figure 4: Family photo as of 3/11/24 with 2,792 unique, different keyboard switches.

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 short list of ideas and projects that I think would be neat to attempt over the course of the next year.

Content

- Continue on the ever constant path of full length reviews every other week as well as maildays, Scorecard Sundays, and other fairly common types of content. The pacing, variety, and details that each of them brings to the table continue to hold my interest and efforts after all of these years.
- Sink deeper into the concept of linearity and attempt to produce spin off content from it in the form of Shorts articles or more rigorous claims within full length reviews. While the response from readers has been overwhelmingly positive regarding the functionality and usefulness of linearity and slope metrics for linear switches, I don't think many have truly grasped just how much depth of analysis can be extrapolated from these claims.

- Strive for continuity. While its possible that later in the year that larger projects that pique my curiosity may show up, right now I feel like there is a solid amount of resources around me that I need to dedicate my time and effort to in order to keep them afloat. Attempting to expand beyond these current content styles, at the moment, feels like it would stretch me a bit thin.

Supplementary to Content

- Really strive to hit ‘big number milestones’ for each of the measurement repositories such as 500 unique switches for caliper-based measurements and 1000 or 1500 unique switches with completed force curves. While these numbers don’t inherently mean anything, they are targets for me to reach towards with dedicated effort to expanding these resources.
- Continue to implement more vintage switches into mailday posts on Instagram and Twitter throughout the year. I’ve been sort of loosely doing this over the past few months as I’ve begun to dig into my acquired vintage switch collection and people have been rather positive about the variety shared in this fashion. As well, this likely stands to be the first photographic documentation that some of these switches will have ever received!
- Perhaps consider some other keyboard but not switch related content to be posted or constructed throughout the year. While I am far from an expert on anything other than switches, one of my contracted articles with Drop last year focused on why keyboard meetups are so important for the community and the change of pace and content focus with that article felt pretty refreshing. To be entirely honest, I have no idea what a realistic execution of this idea would look like.

Personal Life Updates

If you read the very beginning of my articles every time they’re posted, there’s no doubt that you’re pretty well in tune with my life and the subtle changes that have been taking place over the past year. While it’s nowhere near as hectic and crazy as it was last year, there’s still enough to fill out some sections there. Knowing that people do often skip over this section, though, I always wanted to include a few brief life updates here since this directly impacts both how I do the normal content you’ve all come to expect and the changes to or expansions of content that I attempt in the upcoming year.

- As of last week, I officially passed one year at my current company that I work for. While this hasn’t exactly been the smoothest of times and there’s been quite a whirlwind of issues within that position, where I am now seems to be a lot more stable and will likely be better for me the whole way around. In spite of the stress that it has put on me for various reasons in the past few months, I genuinely enjoy the position and pay and thus don’t imagine this much changing in the near future.
- I’ve sunk a lot further into Magic: The Gathering as an additional hobby alongside mechanical keyboards. If anything, MTG has strengthened my appreciation of what I have within keyboards while also serving as a competitive and social outlet that I otherwise didn’t really have access to in keyboards. I am really thinking of giving this upcoming US-regional tournament qualifying season a go, so for any of you out there who also play Pioneer don’t hesitate to reach out!
- Mentally I am in a much better, more stable place than I was when I was in graduate school. While work still has its up and down days, the stress it places on me is not even remotely in the same league as to what I have dealt with in years prior. There is still plenty of work for me to do

on myself, don't get me wrong, but for the first time in quite a long time I feel like I'm actually more or less on solid ground again.

Final Conclusions

At the end of yet another year of switch content and this latest Meta Update, I can say that I feel rather markedly different about my place in all of this than I did at this time last year. I can tell by looking back at Meta Update V that I had a lot more aspirations about content expansion and had really taken on a perhaps more grandiose view of my role in all of this than I really should have. After having gone through the content and audience expansion that I had had that year and the year prior, I can completely understand that sentiment retrospectively. However, times and the keyboard community are quite a bit different than they were one or two years ago. We are noticeably in a 'shrinking' period and the money, viewers, and overall fervor surrounding the community is more dampened than it has been in recent years and I think that I've adjusted my expectations accordingly. As of right now I feel a lot less compelled to be *the* superlative of things: the biggest, the best, etc. are not things that so much matter to me anymore when it comes to the switches and the content. Rather, I simply want to stabilize the good things in front of me and continue slowly growing and expanding my documentation of switches at a pace that won't burn me out, won't burn others out, and will weather the changing seasons of the community at large. What I have here is what I believe to be a great body of work and focusing on constant expansion, alteration, or adjustment rather than continuing to fill the niche in the community that I occupy feels like it will result in not actually meeting any of the goals or responsibilities that I have. Or, at the worst, I fear it will make me not want to engage with the work at all. The resources established in the Force Curve Repository, Measurement Sheet Folder, and all of the written review content as is are excellent in their current form and can survive and continue to grow in numbers and impact, but only if I focus on making sure that they continue to steadfastly deliver on their intended goals and outcome week over week. Thus, the singular word that I think encapsulates my goals and feelings for Year 6 is 'longevity.' I'm striving for longevity.

Completely separate of my own feelings about content and how my focus and efforts surrounding such will change in the upcoming year, the fact that I even have a project of this scope that I need to be concerned about the longevity of is, well, heartwarming. No documentation project grows to this scale and breadth without readers, viewers, and an audience engagement that has pushed it to that point. I demonstrably know that to be true. It is because of you all that the website, the content, and my social media platforms feel incredibly alive even as other documentation projects and platforms across the community dry up or shutter their doors indefinitely. My sponsors, my Patreon donors, and every single person who has ever engaged with my work has played a definitive, notable role in growing all of to where it is today, and without all you here I'm not sure it would have ever gotten there. Thank you for letting me be the one to expand your horizons about modern, mechanical keyboard switches. I hope that you'll continue to engage with my work as we move forward, into year number *six* of writing switch related content, and I hope that you continue to push me to be better, do better, and further stack up this pile of documentation that I've amassed thus far. For once I have no glorious send off or personal call to action of you all or of me. I am just curious to see what this all will look like when we gather back here next year. I'll be working on more documentation in the meantime.