Google open-sourced a hat shaped like a giant keycap—and it actually types

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34 with

Is it a key-cap or a keycap cap? We here at Ars are having trouble nailing down the terminology for this cephalic peripheral. But whatever it's called, Google Japan's latest DIY project is for people who can't get keyboards off their heads.

Google isn't making this product. Instead, the Gboard CAPS project is another of Google Japan's joke keyboard ideas, like the 5.25-foot-long, single-row Gboard Stick Version keyboard shown off last year, used to promote Google's Gboard app. However, Google Japan seemingly prototyped the keyboard in real life. Everything you need to make this typing topper, including the firmware and hardware, is open source and available on GitHub.

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So how does one type with a hat, you ask? Inside the hat is a 6-axis inertial sensor that can read the hat's positioning. The wearer turns the hat to the left and right, and each angle represents a different character code. Then, the wearer presses the top of the hat, which has 20 mm of travel, to enter the character. The keyboard connects with a device via Bluetooth and runs on a 3.7 V, 120 mAh battery. Google Japan even ensured it charges over everyone's favorite connector,

USB-C.

Google Japan’s video about the keyboard playfully imagines different uses for its key-cap, including different looks and having a magician stealthily communicate with its assistant. Its blog post muses on a version of the keyboard with a smartphone case, built-in display, and solar power—a real hat trick.

Again, this isn’t a product you’ll be able to buy. Keyboard and/or hat enthusiasts will have to DIY one or settle for Google Japan’s video:

[embedded content]
Gboard CAPS
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