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TO COPPER

# Copper mice



Computer input devices are well-known germ traps, but US company Operator Interface Technology has the answer: antimicrobial copper keyboards and their newly-launched, matching mice.

As a recent special report from Infection Control Today (1) notes, inanimate objects can serve as reservoirs of infection, with one hand depositing germs that can then be picked up by another, potentially resulting in an infection. Some of the most widely-used and shared surfaces in the healthcare environment are mice and keyboards, and the report cites several studies implicating them in the spread of infection.

Copper is inherently antimicrobial, meaning it will rapidly kill bacteria and viruses on contact. It shares this property with many alloys – including brass and bronze – and this family of materials is known as 'antimicrobial copper'. Hospitals have already begun replacing frequently-touched surfaces such as taps, door handles and light switches with

antimicrobial copper equivalents, and other areas where the spread of infection is a concern – including airports, schools and childcare facilities – are increasingly seeing a move towards antimicrobial copper touch surfaces. Now, offices look set to follow.

In a clinical trial of antimicrobial copper surfaces, three US hospitals replaced just six key touch surfaces in intensive care unit rooms – including computer input devices – with antimicrobial copper equivalents. The result was a 58% drop in a patient's risk of acquiring a healthcare-associated infection.

OIT have offered antimicrobial copper keyboards with built-in trackballs for some time (and these have been installed in facilities including Finland's Jorvi Hospital) and now they have launched accompanying USB mice.

For more information, visit [www.antimicrobialcopper.org](http://www.antimicrobialcopper.org) and [www.copperkeyboard.com](http://www.copperkeyboard.com).

## Reference

(1) Infection Control Today Special Report  
Cross-Contamination Prevention: Addressing  
Keyboards as Fomites  
Kelly M. Pyrek, May 2014

More information on the uses of copper in the home can be found at:  
[www.come-home-to-copper.co.uk](http://www.come-home-to-copper.co.uk)

