PORTABLE KEYBOARD

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to keyboards. More particularly, the present invention relates to a two-piece keyboard having mutually cooperating components which reversibly engage with one another to alternate between an open first typing configuration and a portable or size-reduced configuration.

2. Description of the Prior Art

Numerous inventions for portable keyboards have been provided for in the past. For example, some inventions known in the art involve compact versions of standard keyboards wherein the size or placement of the particular keys on the keyboard are optimized for space saving purposes, e.g. reduction in the size or number of keys. Still other keyboards known in the art such as the keyboard on the IBM THINKPAD are multi-pieced and expand from a compressed-like position to a standard typing position once the computer is opened.

By and large, the prior art keyboards are overly-complicated in design, cumbersome, expensive and difficult to manufacture.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

While apparently generally acceptable for their intended functions, so far as is known, none of the prior art devices afford a keyboard which comprises a first portion and a second portion, wherein each of the portions comprises a top side, a bottom side and a plurality of keys located thereon. The two portions mutually cooperate between an open typing configuration and a portable configuration. Whereas when the keyboard is oriented in the open configuration, the top sides, the bottom sides and the typing keys of each of the portions are aligned for typing purposes. When the keyboard is disengaged from the open configuration, the first portion is rotated relative to the second portion and the second portion receivably engages the first portion so that the top side of the first portion and the top side of the second portion oppose or face one another and each bottom side of each portion acts as an outer protective cover for the keyboard.

Accordingly, it is an object of the present invention to provide a keyboard which is portable and easy to manipulate between a typing configuration and a portable configuration.

It is another object of the present invention to provide a keyboard which is economical to manufacture, durable, and relatively of simple construction and design.

Still another object of the present invention to provide a keyboard which can be manipulated in such a fashion so as to protect the typing keys from undue wear and tear during storage, transport and or prolonged periods of non-use.

Yet still, it is another object of the present invention to provide a keyboard which can be locked in either an open typing configuration or a closed transport or storage configuration.

Yet still another object of the present invention is to provide a keyboard which is collapsible and/or reducible to a convenient size for easy transport and storage.

Moreover, it is another object of the present invention to provide a keyboard which can optionally contain personalized indicia or information for security purposes.

Certain of the foregoing and related objects are attained in accordance with the present invention by the provision of a keyboard having a first portion and a second portion wherein each of the portions comprises a plurality of keys located thereon. The first portion and the second portion mutually cooperate between a first position and a second position wherein when the keyboard is configured in the first position the keys of each portion are aligned for typing. When the keyboard is configured in the second position at least one section of the first portion is selectively receivable or telescopically receivable within the second portion.

Preferably, the keyboard comprises at least one means for locking the keyboard in either the open typing position or the closed transportable position. Most desirably, the keyboard comprises at least one protective cover for protecting the typing keys of the keyboard when the same is engaged in the portable configuration.

Advantageously, the keyboard is provided with a channel or conduit located therein for selectively storing a cord for attachment to a computer. Preferably, the keyboard further comprises a handle or other convenient carrying device to aid in transport of the keyboard.

Most desirably, the keyboard comprises a guiding member for facilitating movement of the keyboard from the open configuration to the portable configuration. In one particular preferred embodiment of the present invention, the keyboard comprises a spring-loading mechanism for further facilitating movement between the two configurations.

Preferably, one of the portions is telescopically received within the other portion. Advantageously, the two portions reversibly engage one another to form a protective housing for the typing keys, i.e., the typing keys for each of the portions oppose one another in close proximity within the housing and are sufficiently protected from undue harm during transport because the bottom sides of each respective portion form an outer protective shell for protecting the internally housed typing keys.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Other objects and features of the present invention will become apparent from the following detailed description considered in connection with the accompanied drawings which disclose several embodiments of the present invention. It should be understood, however, that the drawings are designed for the purpose of illustration only and not as a definition of the limits of the invention.

In the drawings, wherein similar reference characters denote similar elements throughout the several views:

FIG. 1 is a top view of one embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a side view of one embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 3 is a top view of another embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 4 is a side view of the embodiment shown in FIG. 3;

FIG. 5*a* is a top view of another embodiment of the present invention shown in an open typing position;

FIG. 5*b* is a top view of the embodiment shown in FIG. 5*a* with one of the portions rotated relative to the other portion;

FIG. 5*c* is a side view of the embodiment shown in FIG. 5*b*;

FIG. 5*d* is a side view of the embodiment of in FIG. 5*a* shown in portable configuration; and

FIG. 5*e* is a perspective view of the embodiment of FIGS. 5*a*–5*d* during transformation from open typing position to portable configuration.