The method of the present invention relates in part to Applicants discovery that if each of the individual keys of the chord keyboard **10** are designated to correspond, respectively, to the 5 vowels, "a", "e", "i", "o", "u" that the key associations with the vowels and in fact all associated consonants of the English alphabet are easier to remember. That is key "**1**" corresponds to the vowel "a"; key "**2**" corresponds to the vowel "e"; key "**3**" corresponds to the vowel "i"; key "**4**" corresponds to the vowel "o"; and key "**5**" corresponds to the vowel "u". This is easily and readily remembered because the five vowels correspond to each of the five fingers of the operator's hand. Therefore, the feel associated with respect to fingers of the hand, as they depress keys on a keyboard, actually assist in the memory of these conventions.

Another reason that it is advantageous to designate the five vowels as corresponding to the five alpha keys is that vowels of course are the most often used letters in the typing of words. Therefore, it is important to have a simple method of remembering the vowels, and to associate each vowel with one of the five keys provides this simplicity. Furthermore, actuation of the vowels is the simplest of any of the actuations because only a single key actuation is required for generating an electrical signal representative of a vowel.

Therefore, the designation of the vowels as corresponding to the respective five keys of the keyboard is an important aspect of the present invention and these vowels can be used as landmarks or roots for determining the chords (key actuation combinations) which represent the remaining consonants of the alphabet.

Applicant has discovered that a chord combination designated to represent a consonant is more easily learnable if an alpha input key designated to represent the last vowel preceding that consonant in alphabetical order is included in the chord combination. For example, referring to FIG. **2** if key "**1**" associated with the thumb is the vowel "a", consonants B, C, D are generated by chord combination key actuations as follows:

A=Key **1**
B=Key **1** and Key **2**
C=Key **1**, Key **2**, and Key **3**
D=Key **1**, Key **2**, Key **3** and Key **4**

Therefore it can be seen by referring to FIG. **2** that if one knows that key "**1**" is the vowel "a", and key "**5**" is the vowel "e", that the successive consonants B, C, D are learnable because they include key actuation combinations including the landmark or root vowel "a" (key **1**). Furthermore, if one were to put one's thumb and forefingers on the keys of the chord keyboard of FIG. **2** and actuate key and the chords associated with letters B, C and D in sequence, one can feel the relationship associated with the rolling of the fingers from left to right on the keyboard. This feel is fed back to the typist's brain and is actually a learning aid to the typist for the coding and chord conventions of the keys.

It should also be noted with reference to FIG. **2** and the above-described example of the chords relating to consonants B, C, D that successive consonants moving in alphabetical order are defined by a chord combination which includes the addition of the next successive alpha key moving seriatim from the thumb to the little finger of the operator's hand. As described above this arrangement and the rolling motion of one's fingers from left to right functions as a mnemonic to the operator of the chord combinations.

There are 31 key actuation combinations available with a five key keyboard wherein single key actuations of each of the respective keys correspond to the five vowels. Utilizing the encoding techniques of the method of the present invention as described above the entire 26 letter English alphabet has been developed as follows wherein the numbers **1** to **5** to the right of each letter define the key actuation combinations of the respective chords, or in the case of the vowels, the number of the single key actuation required to generate an electrical signal corresponding to that vowel.

CHORD ALPHABET TABLE I

A	=	1
B	=	1,2
C	=	1,2,3
D	=	1,2,3,4
E	=	2
F	=	2,3
G	=	2,3,4
H	=	2,3,4,5
I	=	3
J	=	3,4
K	=	3,4,5
L	=	1,3
M	=	1,3,4
N	=	1,3,4,5
O	=	4
P	=	1,4
Q	=	1,2,4
R	=	1,2,4,5
S	=	2,4,5
T	=	4,5
U	=	5
V	=	1,5
W	=	1,2,5
X	=	1,2,3,5
Y	=	2,3,5
Z	=	3,5

Referring to the above table, key actuation combinations **2,4** and **3,5** are still available and these combinations could be utilized to generate a period and a comma. The **1, 2, 3, 4, 5** combination is reserved for a carriage return.

Referring again to the above table of conventions it can be seen that the letters A–K are readily generated by the above-described method and therefore easily remembered and it is not until one reaches the letter L that the mnemonic becomes more difficult. However, even at this point it can be seen that successive consonants M and N and so on build on the preceding adjacent combinations so that the feel from the typist's hand functions as a mnemonic as well as using vowels as root chords.

In summary the encoding method of the present invention enables relatively fast typing speeds for a one-handed, five key keyboard which is easy to use, learn and memorize.

The invention being thus described, it will be obvious that the same may be varied in many ways. Such variations are not to be regarded as a departure from the spirit and scope of the invention, and all such modifications as would be obvious to one skilled in the art are intended to be included within the scope of the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A method of encoding alphabetic characteristics and inputting electrical signals defining those characters to a computer comprising the steps of:

a) providing a keyboard having five adjacent individual alpha input keys, one alpha input key being operatively associated with an operator's thumb