

Microsoft Mouse 2.0

Since the launch of its graphical operating system, Microsoft has received numerous requests from users for a more functional and comfortable mouse. The development of the optimum pointing device, however, meant discarding all existing mouse concepts—including Microsoft's own award-winning design—and beginning again from scratch.

To establish the proper design criteria, Microsoft's team of designers and engineers worked with experts in the fields of office safety, product psychology, biomechanics and hand/upper limb anatomy to research the physical and psychological interface between the user and the Windows environment. After hundreds of hours of observation, the designers tested more than 50 models on right-handed and left-handed workers for comfort, performance and overall appeal. Further testing of grip architecture, finger placement, and movement patterns was conducted using a VPL Data Glove.

The resulting product is a balanced pointer that works efficiently within the Windows environment, while encouraging a neutral hand posture with reduced wrist and forearm strain. Comfortable in either hand, the design allows the user to anchor the lower palm near the mouse's "tail," position the fingers on the keys and glide the device across a pad for precise cursor control. "The success of this product is a testament to the value of consulting users and conducting research before choosing the final design," said Gherardi. "With repetitive stress injuries growing to epidemic proportions, this company should be applauded for its enlightened approach to worker safety and comfort."



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RESEARCH

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ERGONOMICS

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DESIGN