





# INTERFACING AND USING THE G.R.I. MODEL 756 KEYBOARD

## READ CAREFULLY BEFORE ASSEMBLING OR USING YOUR KEYBOARD!

1. The Model 756 Full ASCII Keyboard is designed to be used with almost any available micro-computer-related product which requires alphanumeric data input. Because of the lack of standardization among manufacturers of input-output boards, video display boards, TVT boards, etc., it is impossible to furnish step-by-step instructions for using our keyboards with a particular unit. What we will attempt to do, however, is to outline the basic procedure for interfacing keyboards, so that you will have a minimum of difficulty. We believe the 756 will work directly with most interfaces available today, but like any rule, there will almost surely be exceptions!
2. To begin with, get out your manuals, and study up on the keyboard input structure of your interfacing equipment. Pay close attention to the logic requirements of the "Strobe," "Data Ready," or "Key-pressed" inputs, since several options are available on the 756, and this area seems to be the most troublesome of all. A sketch, with the input port on one side and the keyboard output connector on the other is the best way to keep things straight.

3. Most interfaces use a keyboard strobe signal to indicate that keyboard data is ready. The 756 provides the following strobe signals:

Positive Strobe Level (goes high with any key depression)

Negative Strobe Level ( " low " " " " )

Positive Strobe Pulse (a 1 ms. pulse following key depression, going high)

— Negative Strobe Pulse ( " " " " " " " " low)

Determine the correct strobe signal for interfacing with your equipment, and connect the keyboard connector pin associated with this signal to your interface.

4. Next select the appropriate data signals. The connector pins marked B1 through B7 correspond to the LSB through MSB of the ASCII code outputs. Attach your interface cable to the keyboard, making sure the LSB goes to B1, and so forth. You will notice there are two signals for bit 6, called B6A and B6B. This bit determines whether a character is upper case, or lower case, and B6A allows selection of the two by using the Shift key. B6B provides upper-case codes only. To further confuse the situation, you will notice another pin marked "Bit 6 Alpha" on the connector. You will connect the bit 6 signal from one of these three points to your bit 6 input. Here is how they differ.

1. B6A provides upper-and-lower case, selectable by shift keys.

2. B6B provides upper case only, with the shift keys selecting punctuation like (!) instead of numerals (1), etc.

3. Bit 6 Alpha is an output from an optional Alpha Lock circuit provided on the keyboard PC board. Alpha lock or Caps lock differs from the standard Shift Lock in that it only shifts Alpha (A-Z) characters, without affecting punctuation, numerals, etc.

The standard 756 keyboard PC board has jumpers (2) near the Shift Lock key, which connect the keyswitch as a Shift Lock key. As long as the keyboard is jumpered this way, the user may only select between B6A and B6B. A manual SPDT switch, like that supplied with our 702 enclosure, may be used to select between the two bit 6 outputs.

Optionally, the shift lock key may be converted to an alpha lock key. This is done by adding two parts, changing two jumpers, and moving the bit 6 output connection. The added parts are a 7400 or 74LS00 IC, and a 4.7K ½ watt resistor. Change the jumpers by moving the jumper from COM-SHIFT to COM-ALPHA (change both jumpers). Finally, move the bit 6 interface lead from wherever it is to the pin marked Bit 6 Alpha. Now, the selection of upper-lower case is made electrically, on the keyboard, by the status of the Shift Lock latching type keyswitch. This is an Alpha Lock switch now, and this feature is much preferred by many users of electronic keyboards. When depressed, the keyboard will output upper case only, but the shift keys will still be active for selecting between numerals and punctuation. When released, the keyboard outputs normally shifted upper and lower case. In any event, the control key may be used to generate control codes and functions.

ASCII is a seven bit code, with the eighth bit used for error-checking, called Parity. The 756 provides parity, and for inversion of the parity bit, but most interfaces ignore it anyway. Sometimes the strobe is connected to the eighth bit, or it is just tied high or low, or allowed to float. A check of the interface board schematic or manual will be the best

guide to determining how to treat bit 8. (If you are confused, a hardware-oriented friend will no doubt be able to shed some light on the darkness!)

5. The final step is to supply power to the keyboard. Two supply voltages are needed: +5 @ 20ma., and -12 @ 20ma. The current requirements are small enough the needed voltages can usually be "stolen" from an existing supply or board. Remember to connect the two supply leads, and ground to the keyboard connector. Above all, check the voltages at the IC socket, BEFORE inserting the chip. Encoder ROMs are an expensive way to discover a wiring error! Also, for those who don't have a source of -12 volts, GRI make available, a small DC-DC converter that plugs into the 756 PC board. No wiring changes are needed, however, to insure reliable operation, the .05uf bypass capacitors should be increased to 10uf, tantalum or electrolytic. Failure to do so can lead to erratic operation.

### T R O U B L E S H O O T I N G

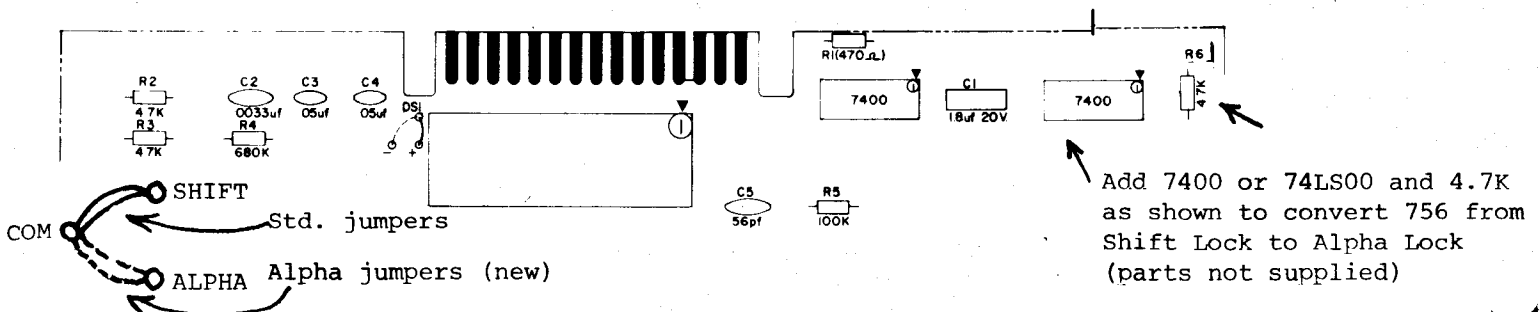
Because the keyboard is based upon a MOS LSI encoder, troubleshooting is largely a matter of checking the obvious (parts placement, wiring, voltages, connector insertion, etc), or replacing the chip. Most of the problems we have seen are attributable to the former, but the static-sensitive PMOS chip does get blown occasionally.

1. If you suspect the encoder, replacements are available from stock at GRI for \$7.50. Also, we offer a same-day checkout and repair service for \$15.00, for returned boards. If you are returning a board, please call or write for a Return Authorization first to assure prompt turnaround.
2. Chances are, the encoder is not to blame. We 100% test them just before shipping, and many problems can simulate a bad device. For instance, lack of a data-strobe invert jumper will cause sporadic outputs. Shorts between matrix scan lines will cause two or more outputs for a given key. Be sure to remove the encoder IC when measuring or you may damage it.
3. The designers of the 2376 encoder (G.I. or SMC) used PMOS technology, which is static sensitive. Use all normal precautions for handling and soldering. Also, please observe loading rules of one std. TTL load max. per output. Buffers like 7408s are suggested for driving heavy loads.
4. Normal cables of 5-6 feet pose no problem. Again, buffers or line drivers are suggested for longer cables.
5. The 2376 encoder is a scanning type device, which allows the data outputs to fluctuate between key depressions. Some systems see these fluctuations as rapidly changing data entries, and "glitch". The solution is to rewrite keyboard routines to first check for a valid strobe before reading any data from the keyboard. The strobe signals valid and debounced data. Alternatively, buffering each data line through a 7408 AND gate, with the strobe signal (buffered) gating each AND gate on will result in a stable output, resting low, and going true only with a valid strobe.
6. If everything seems right, but data just won't "take", perhaps the strobe pulse is too short. Increasing the value of the 1.8uf capacitor will stretch out the pulse, conversely, decreasing the value will shorten it.

If all else fails, remember our repair policy and/or replacement policy. Even with careful handling, static sensitive parts can get "blown".

Murphy's Law as applied to keyboards says "It can happen to anyone!"

NOTE: Use only 2376 encoders obtained from GRI in the 756, since this part contains a custom-programmed ROM. "Standard" parts WON'T work!



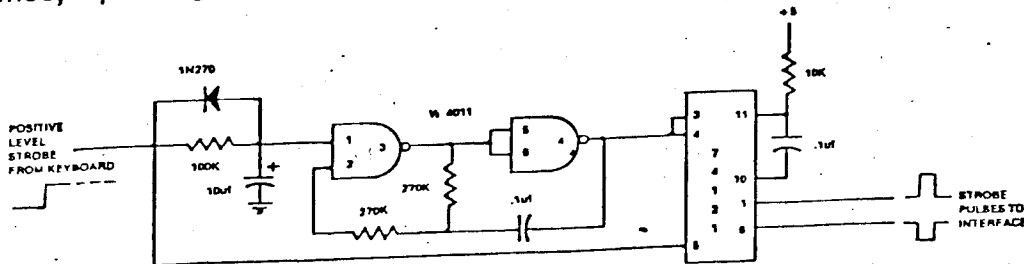
With Shift Lock option (STD) connector pin B6A provides both upper and lower case, B6B provides upper case only. Shift Lock key locks 756 into upper case shift mode. With Alpha Lock modification, connector pin Bit 6 Alpha becomes the new bit 6 output from the keyboard. Alpha Lock key locks 756 alpha keys (A-Z) only.

# KEYBOARD TRICKS YOU CAN USE... (FREE!!!)

As an OEM keyboard vendor, GRI has accumulated a few little "tricks of the trade," which come in darned handy now and then. Here are a few:

## AI-O-REPEAT (usually found on only the max1-buck equipment)

Repeat is neat, but ever try to generate a slew of control Q's? Using a separate repeat key can try one's patience. If not tie one's fingers in knots! This circuit uses two I.C.'s and provides control over the delay before auto-repeat begins, the repetition rate, and the strobe pulse width. It works by merely generating one pulse for each normal key depression, and outputting numerous pulses if the key is held down for a certain length of time. Each pulse signals valid data, hence, repeating characters appear!



## NUMERIC PAD (decimal numerics, for people with 1x10<sup>1</sup> computers!)

Another premium feature in some equipment, is the numeric pad. Useful for entering numeric data (like for accounting or games uses) the pad usually shares the keyboard's encoder and data lines. Contrary to some stories, they do not output hexadecimal, etc., but just plain old ASCII. The key is, they are unaffected by the shift or control keys. For those who need or want one, GRI offers a numeric pad accessory for the 756 keyboard. Wires connect the Model 710 Numeric pad to the mother board, allowing use of the same input port. At \$9.95 from most stores, you won't mind coming up with a box or longer enclosure for it. (won't fit GRI 701 or 702 enclosures.)

## SINGLE SUPPLY OPERATION

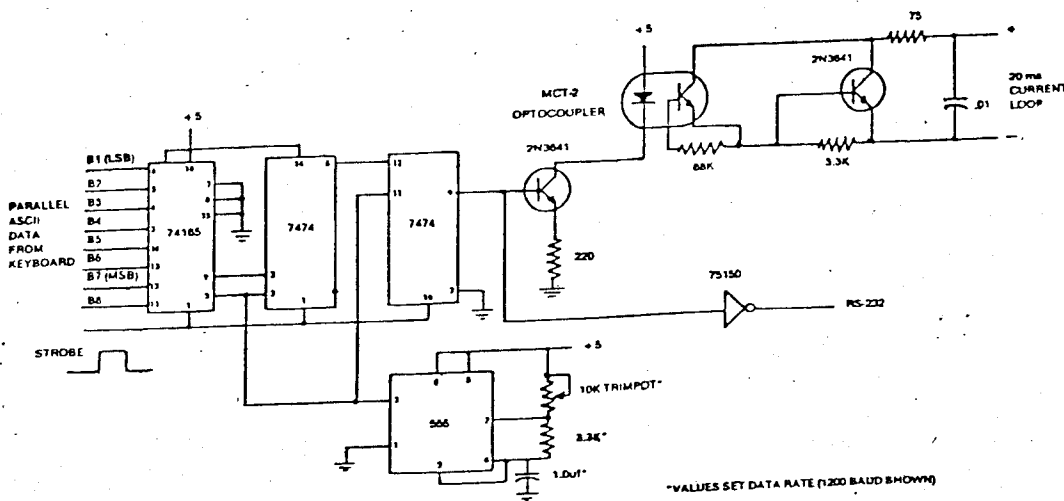
What? No minus 12v supply? Never fear, because the clever guys at Elexon Power Systems have an under \$10 solution to your problem which will not put more lead (iron?) in your pants. The DC-512 dc-dc converter manufactures its own minus twelve volts, with just a little 5 volt input! And the best part is, it plugs right into the holes provided on the upper left hand corner of the pc board. Order model DC-512 (be sure to include the "dash") from GRI or:

Elexon Power Systems  
3131 S. Standard Ave.  
Santa Ana, CA 92705

(714) 979-4440

## SERIAL OUTPUT

Sure you can use a UART, but here is a little circuit which requires only 5 volts, is easily built with regular TTL parts, and is easily adjusted to any desired baud rate without crystals. The 555 oscillator is steady enough (1%) for most uses, and the output can drive either a 20 ma current loop, RS-232, or what have you.



\*VALUES SET DATA RATE (1200 BAUD SHOWN)