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**BELIEVE IT OR NOT:** Eating at your desk and poor personal hygiene will make your keyboard filthier than a toilet seat or toilet door knob.

# Guess which is the germ magnet

CANBERRA

**THINK** twice before eating those dropped crumbs off your computer keyboard – you might as well be eating off a toilet seat, according to a new study on the amount of germs on keyboards.

A study by British consumer magazine Which? Computing asked a microbiologist to examine 33 keyboards in a typical London office, a toilet seat and a toilet door handle, for bugs generally found in unhygienic places.

Four keyboards were judged potential health hazards and the microbiologist recommended the removal of one keyboard as it had 150 times the pass limit of bacteria – five times filthier than a swabbed toilet seat.

“Most people don’t give much thought to the grime that builds up on their PC, but if you don’t clean your computer, you might as well be eating your lunch off the toilet,” said Ms Sarah Kidner, editor of Which? Computing.

The study found that eating lunch at desks is the main cause of a bug-infested keyboard. Dropped crumbs and food encourages the growth of millions of bacteria.

Poor personal hygiene, such as not washing hands after going to the toilet, may also add to the dirtiness of keyboards.

But despite the health hazard of a dirty keyboard, a survey of 4,000 people by the magazine found one in 10 people – or 11 per cent – never cleaned their keyboard while another two in 10 never cleaned their mouse.

Almost half – or 46 per cent – cleaned their keyboard less than once a month.

To clear out bugs, the magazine recommends users unplug keyboards, turn them upside down and shake them.

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