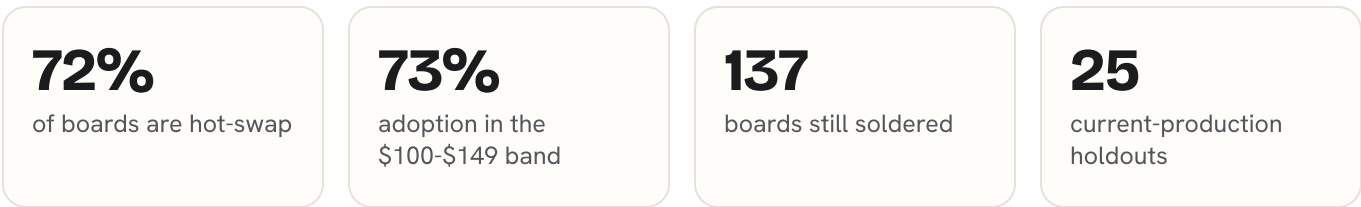


Hot-Swap Adoption Report 2026

Hot-swap sockets, which let you change switches without soldering, have gone from enthusiast luxury to default spec: **72% of mechanical keyboards** in the database ship with them (358 of 495 with a published value). Adoption is strongest exactly where most people shop, on entry-level boards, and the 137 boards without sockets are now the exception. We name **25 current-production holdouts** that still solder their switches.



Entry-level boards lead, boutique kits lag

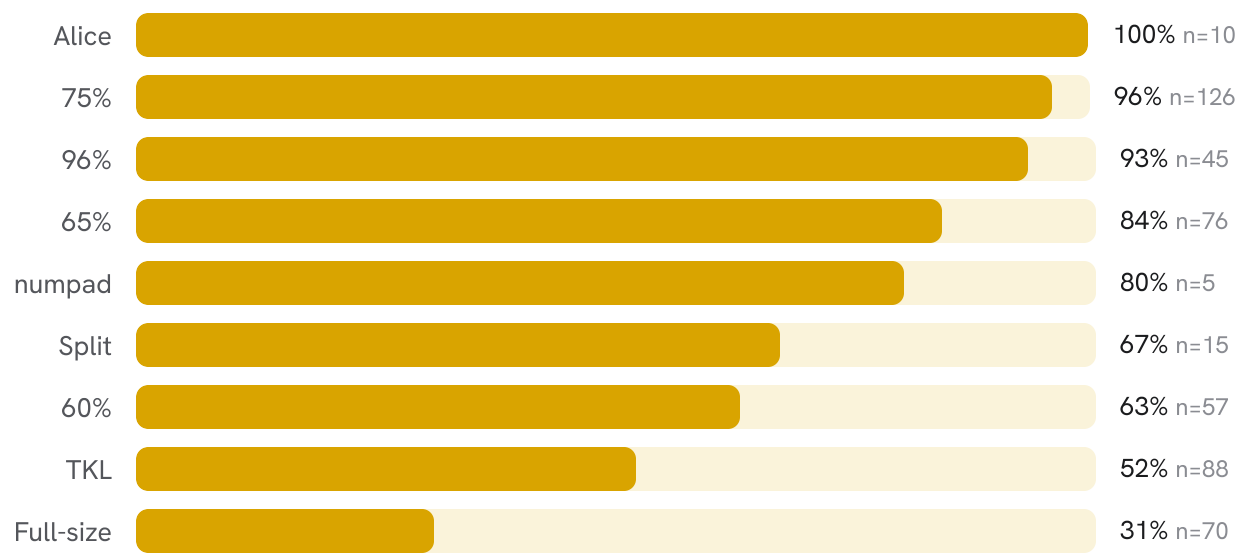
Adoption does not depend on budget anymore; if anything it runs backwards. The entry level leads: 87% of boards under \$75 include sockets. The share then tapers as price climbs (82% at \$75 to \$99, 73% at \$100 to \$149, 60% at \$150 to \$249), because expensive boards skew toward boutique custom kits that expect the buyer to solder by choice. The feature that used to justify a premium board now ships standard on the cheapest ones, which is why buying a soldered mainstream board in 2026 needs a specific reason, like optical switches or a particular typing feel.



Share of boards with hot-swap sockets, per listed US price band.

Compact boards lead, full-size lags

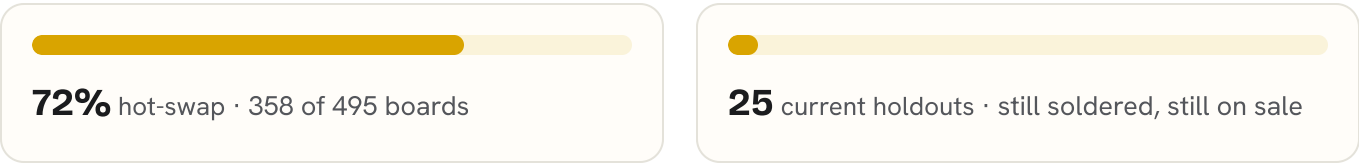
Adoption by layout is anything but uniform. Compact and enthusiast sizes lead: Alice boards at 100% and 75% boards at 96%. The laggard is Full-size at 31%, dragged down by older office and gaming flagships that still ship fixed PCBs, with TKL only halfway there. A soldered mainstream board in 2026 is mostly a big-brand gaming artifact.



Layouts with five or more boards that publish hot-swap status.

The holdouts

137 boards in the database still solder their switches. Availability is published for only a minority of the catalog, so most of them cannot be dated from our data; among boards with a known status, **25 are current-production holdouts**, and the list skews toward big gaming brands whose optical or analog switches need special PCBs anyway: Cherry G80-3000 (Cherry); Cherry G80-3000N RGB TKL (Cherry); Cherry KW X ULP (Cherry); Cherry MX 10.0N RGB (Cherry); Cherry MX 2.0S (Cherry); Cherry MX 3.0S Wireless (Cherry), among others. If one of these is otherwise right for you, know that changing its feel later means a soldering iron or a new board.



Shop only boards with sockets: the [hot-swappable keyboards guide](#).

Methodology and citation

Every figure is computed live from the [KeebScout keyboard database](#) (502 mechanical keyboards as of August 2026; 495 publish whether the PCB is hot-swappable). Specs are normalized to one schema and units, and unpublished fields are excluded rather than guessed, with the sample size noted wherever a spec is missing. Prices are the listed US retail price where available. Nothing here is weighted by sales, sponsorship, or affiliate payouts, because the database is not; the full method is on the [about page](#). As the database grows, these numbers update on their own.

CITE THIS PAPER

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<https://keebscout.com/research/hot-swap-adoption-report-2026/>

Free to quote and link with attribution. The raw comparison lives in the [keyboard database](#) and [switch database](#), and every paper in this series is listed on the [research index](#).