

Meta Update III

-ThereminGoat, 03/11/2021

Well, it certainly has been quite a bit of time since I've written one of these. In fact, it's been so long that I had to take a long look back to Meta Update II to see just how far I've come over the course of the last year. So, in case you are wondering why I've posted this shortened, definitely not-about-switches articles on a Thursday of all days, it's because the website is officially one year old as today. One year ago, I moved my then handful of Google Doc reviews painstakingly onto this website, opened up social media I had sworn to myself years ago that I would never have, and took this step down this long journey to where I am today. And damn am I glad I did it.



Figure 1: While I am a big fan of professional grade bakery cakes, there is something that can't be beat about from-the-can buttercream frosting.

A long time ago when I did my second Meta Update, the idea was simply a long-form way to share my progress, ideas, and plans with everyone that I simply don't have the space for in the short word count allotted to me by things like Twitter and Instagram. While those around me often in Discord servers or in DMs have heard me discuss some of these ideas and updates already, I've always found it important to share with you all the things that I am thinking, planning, and feeling about content since you all are the ones who have brought me to this point today. So, please allow me to give a less than formal recap of how the last year has been and some of my thoughts and feelings about the future.

A Year In Review

Content

-Over the course of the last year, I've expanded from 10 long form documents up to 40 with the breakdown of the 30 articles from the past year being as follows:

- 1x Meta Update
- 24x Switch Reviews
- 4x Switch Related, Non-review articles
- 1x Compilation Document

-The top 5 performing articles for the year are, in order:

- #1: Glorious Panda Switch Review
- #2: Gazzew's Boba U4 Switch Review
- #3: Alpaca V2 Switch Review
- #4: Novelkeys Blueberry Switch Review
- #5: Balling on a Budget: Gateron Yellow Switch Review

-With respect to long form articles, the following changes have been implemented over this time

- Implementation of Switch Comparisons
- Introduction of the 'From The Vault' series of reviews
- Significant improvement of photography of switches
- Introduction of scoring system
- Recent heavy emphasis on mold-based markings and differentiation within JWK

-While I have no data on scorecard viewing numbers, the entirety of the website saw a total of *380,455* pageviews.

-Additionally, the scorecard repository on the GitHub was introduced

- In this time, 67 scorecards have been implemented with the following breakdown
 - 34x Linears
 - 18x Tactiles
 - 4x Silent Linears
 - 3x Silent Tactiles
 - 8x Clickies

Social Media

-Over the course of the last year, I successfully opened social media accounts on the following platforms:

-Instagram

- Currently, Instagram stands at about 1570 followers with 79 posts made in the last year
- Implementation of (roughly) monthly Q&A sessions through my story
- Implementation of weekly mail day shoutouts when new, cool switches come in

-Twitter

- Currently, Twitter stands at about 850 followers with a total of 413 tweets made last year
- Implementation of weekly mail day shoutouts in tandem with Instagram
- Mostly just for spamming Glarses' posts with shitty jokes

-GitHub

- Current home of the scorecard repository
- Implementation of Hard/Soft/Overall scoring sheet designations in both CSV and Excel formats

-Patreon

- Currently, Patreon is sitting at 20 patrons
- These wonderful people are immortalized on my 'About' Page and have helped me afford the following shiny objects for the website:
 - Website fees for the year
 - Lightbox where all recent photography has taken place
 - (Soon) an incoming set of high precision micrometers to add numbers to reviews.

Upcoming Year Plans

Much like in Meta Reviews of the past, I hold no promises on actually following through on any of this content as plans that I feel like making today might not be how I feel about content a month or even several months from now. From the current driver's seat, these are the things that I would like to do and/or plan on doing.

Content and Social Media

- I plan on continuing the posting schedule that I have roughly worked into in the last years' time, with long form reviews being published every other week, with the in between weeks being filled with scorecards, Q&A on Instagram, or other 'lighter' content.
- I definitely am interested in continuing to work on expanding the scorecard repository and getting many more scores up than I have now. I genuinely think they are valuable information for people who only want quick rundowns on switches.
- I plan to stick to my current social media presence, if not aim to be more engaging with my social media platforms.

The following three points are a list of potential ideas that I am considering exploring. I am making particular note here to everyone reading that this is all still up for debate on my end.

- One long form, compilation style article I would like to do is to fully map out mold differences of JWK switches that are currently available on the market. Needless to say, this is not a weekend task and will likely take some time.
- I've been considering for awhile doing *some* form of supplemental audio content on a platform like YouTube. While I have some interesting ideas for these things I don't quite want to share, this would consist of a mix of short, quick discussions on topics as well as long form 'solo' podcast style discussions on in-depth topics.
- I have been considering streaming to some extent, but this appears to have the most time and monetary based constraints out of the alternative content I am considering.

Supplementary to Content

- Create interesting partnerships with vendors and sellers for you all to use as well as to help benefit me and the reviews in the form of affiliate links and discount codes.
- As of today, I am introducing an affiliate link with Mechbox.co.uk which you can access through the following link here: <https://mechbox.co.uk/?ref=theremingoat>
 - Mechbox has been super supportive and critical in helping my collection obtain some interesting pieces and I could have been more happy to have partnered with them. So, if you're looking for more switches to add to your collection and/or want to try out without buying a pack of 90 go give them a visit! (It also helps support my content and reviews for you all)
- I would absolutely *love* to do more partnership with streamers and other content creators. Even if it is something as simple as stopping into a stream or pitching in a line for a video, I am absolutely willing to collaborate!

Personal Life Updates

While there are far too many of you to interact with on a daily basis, I've been made quite aware by all of your love and support that many of you are interested in how my life is progressing behind the scenes and what kind of things I have going on. As well, the things that I have going on in my life besides switches (and yes, there are other things) does dictate my ability to do content and may explain why I've not explored things as quickly as you all may have liked.

- I will officially be completing my undergraduate degree in Chemical Engineering here in May with an honors research distinction.
- My research distinction will be culminating very shortly here with my undergraduate thesis defense being scheduled for March 31st. This is for research that I've completed over the course of the last few years in my research lab, and will comprise the most scary document I've ever written on my own in my life.
- As of a few weeks ago I am also now *officially* published as a co-author on my first scientific research article.
- In biggest news, I've very recently accepted an offer to attend graduate school! Starting in the fall of this year, I will be attending the University of Minnesota to complete my PhD in Chemical Engineering and have strong plans to stay in academia for as far as it will carry me. (Yes, that does mean the scary potential reality of Dr. Goat someday being a professor for one of your classes.)

Final Conclusions

Even after publishing of this article, I was still uncertain about even including a 'Final Conclusions' section. I've found that even after coming to accept the website, the reviews, and the social media as part of my weekly routine that I still struggle with the idea of being a 'content creator'. While I recognize that what I am producing is by definition *content*, I've always seen it as more of a duty and an obligation to give back to the community that has supported me through so much over the last few years. I got into switch collecting following a pretty rough patch in life a bit over two years ago now, and ever since I stepped into it deeply, I can't imagine having never taken the step down this path what feels like forever ago.

Do not get me mistaken here; I've collected many different things over the course of my life. I find switches to be an absolutely fascinating thing to fall into collecting, and the chase to always try and stay on top of the latest and greatest is more rewarding than any collection I've ever built before. However, the difference between this and other collections has been the community that has surrounded me here. The amount of support I felt in the first year or so of collecting, all of the interesting stories I heard, and all of the people I met is what spurred me into first making reviews and content to try and fill the growing void in knowledge about modern switches. Ever since then, while the switches are still my focus, the reception of the content and how widely I've been able to help people new and old alike in this hobby learn about switches has given me more satisfaction than I could have ever imagined. And in turn, the support for the reviews and the collection has grown alongside it.

So, the reason I struggled with writing 'Final Conclusions' for an article like this is that it fundamentally *feels* like its supposed to cap off and bring finite resolution to something that isn't ending. If anything, I hope this only marks the beginning of another year of switches, another year of content, and another year of giving back to you all whatever I can about switches. I hope I don't let you down.