

BlackBerry gets 'CrackBerry' tag

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RIM's BlackBerry is growing in popularity and addictiveness, lending it the new nickname of 'CrackBerry'.

Research in Motion's BlackBerry wireless communications solution is now so popular that many have tagged it the CrackBerry due to the addictive nature of email and other services on the move.

Charmaine Eggberry, the somewhat appropriately named vice president of the company's enterprise business unit, said the BlackBerry's nickname underlined market acceptance of the product, which now has around 2 million users.

"I like the idea the product has proved useful for people and the fact people understand the value it has – that's not related to crack, by the way! – and that it's not just seen as a business tool any more, but as a lifestyle tool ... Whether they call it the CrackBerry or not is irrelevant to me," she said during the 3GSM World Congress in Cannes this week.

The BlackBerry solution is facing increased competition on the market as more converged devices emerge. But Eggberry thinks the company is well positioned as an end-to-end developer and manufacturer to maintain its lead.

"I welcome competition, but people need to realise we have three distinct businesses in services, software and hardware," she explained.

She continued: "We have launched BlackBerry Built In, taking our software and implementing it into other devices. We've launched the BlackBerry Enterprise Server version 4.0 this week, which allows technology officers to remotely manage staff devices. We're behind the firewall and use triple DES encryption, and all that's built into the back end. This is not a consumer solution; it's used by the Whitehouse and the Pentagon. It's a corporate grade solution."

RIM expects massive growth in the BlackBerry device through its latest announcement, the Fast 100 Programme. This will see the company launching 100 new small carrier partners around the globe in emerging markets during its next financial year, beginning in March, at the rate of two per week.

"Fast 100 is a very big opportunity for us. We will see Blackberry being sold in every corner of the world. We're going to be very busy this year," Eggberry stated.

