

## Chapter 1

# Your BlackBerry Is Not an Edible Fruit

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### *In This Chapter*

- ▶ Checking out your BlackBerry behind the scenes
  - ▶ Seeing what your BlackBerry can do
  - ▶ Managing memory
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**W**ith all the talk about how the BlackBerry can change the way you work, communicate, and are entertained, you probably have an idea of what the device is — although it's okay if you don't (as long as you're not trying to eat it). Before we jump in to how the BlackBerry can change your lifestyle, we're curious — what convinced you to buy this particular handheld mobile device? Was it BlackBerry Messenger, or always-connected e-mail, or the multimedia player that replaces your iPod or iPhone, or a good app you saw on a friend's BlackBerry? For whatever reason you bought your BlackBerry, congratulations: You made an intelligent choice.

The same smarts that made you buy your BlackBerry Pearl are clearly at it again. This time, your native intelligence led you to pick up this book, perhaps because your intuition is telling you that there's more to the BlackBerry than meets the eye. Your hunch is right. For example, your BlackBerry is a whiz at making phone calls and checking e-mails, but it's also a social networking do-it-all smartphone that can update your Facebook account and let you instant chat with your business partner in another continent. And, of course, you can surf the Web and download apps at an amazing speed.

But that's not all. With the BlackBerry, help is always at your fingertips instead of sitting on some desk at home or at the office. You can use your BlackBerry to

- ✓ Check the reviews of that restaurant on the corner
- ✓ Find out — right now — what's showing at your local movie theater, or the weather forecast for tonight, or the best place to shop the sales
- ✓ Retrieve news headlines and check stock quotes

- ✓ Get directions to that cozy bed-and-breakfast
- ✓ Chat or view photos online
- ✓ Network with your old classmates

You can also improve your productivity, become better organized, and increase your cool factor. Watch out, world! Person bearing a BlackBerry Pearl coming through!

## *How the Pearl Works*

For those of you who always ask, “How do they do that?” you don’t have to go far; this little section is just for you.

### *The role of the network service provider*

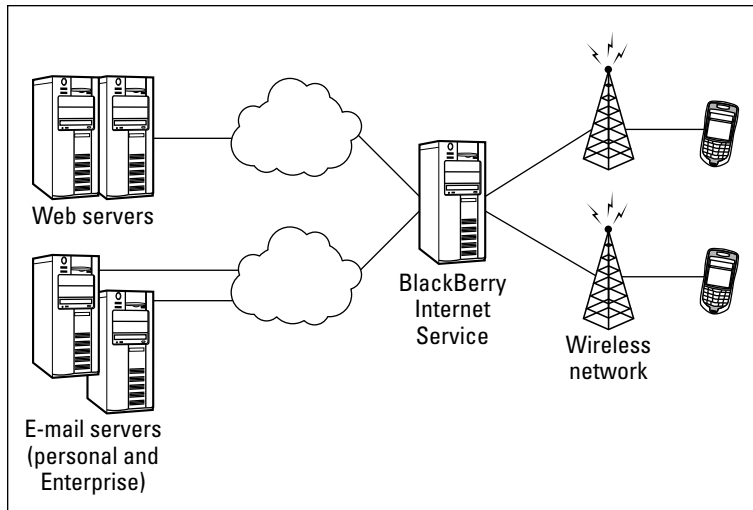
Along with wondering how your BlackBerry actually works, you may also be wondering why you didn’t get your BlackBerry from RIM instead of a network service provider such as Cingular or T-Mobile. Why did you need to go through a middleman? After all, RIM makes BlackBerry.

Here’s a quick-and-dirty answer. RIM needs a delivery system — a communication medium, as it were — for its technology to work. Not in a position to come up with such a delivery system all by its lonesome, RIM partnered (and built alliances across the globe) with the usual network service providers — the big cell phone companies.

These middle-providers support the wireless network for your BlackBerry so that you have signals to connect to the BlackBerry Internet Service — which means you can get all those wonderful e-mails (and waste so much valuable time surfing the Internet). See Figure 1-1 for an overview of this process.

Network service providers don’t build alliances for nothing, right? In return, RIM gave them the right to brand their names on the BlackBerry they offer for sale. For example, a T-Mobile Pearl may look different from a similar model you would get from Vodafone. Which leads to another question: Do BlackBerry functionalities differ from phone model to phone model? Quick answer: In the core BlackBerry apps (such as Tasks and Address Book), you find no major differences. However, some BlackBerry features, such as instant messaging, might or might not be supported by the network service provider. (See Chapter 8 for details on instant messaging.)

**Figure 1-1:**  
Your e-mail  
travels  
to your  
BlackBerry  
via a  
wireless  
network.



## *Connecting to your personal computer*

A personal computer is a household necessity, so it should come as no surprise that BlackBerry works hand-in-hand with your PC or Mac. The USB cable that comes with your BlackBerry does more than just charge your device. All the chapters in Part IV are dedicated to guiding you in making use of this important connection with the help of BlackBerry Desktop Manager and all the utilities that come with it. You find discussions in Chapter 17 on how to sync your device with the personal information manager data that you keep in your PC or Mac. Chapter 19 guides you on how to back up almost anything in your BlackBerry, down to your desktop. Lastly, Part V shows you what accessories to buy and which apps will help you be most productive!

## *Oh, the Things You Can Do!*

Always-connected e-mail is likely first in the long list of reasons you got your device. And, if you need to go global, you can use your BlackBerry in more than 100 countries. Just hop off your flight, turn on your BlackBerry, and voilà: You can receive and send e-mails whether you're in Hong Kong, London, or Paris. Your significant other can get in touch with you wherever you are — just to say hi or to remind you that you promised Aunt Edna a bottle of Chanel No. 5.

## *Social networking*

Want to update your Facebook page so your fans know your whereabouts? Tweet about the latest stock news? Upload your quick snapshot to Flickr? Have other buddies with BlackBerry phones? You and your buddies will never be out of touch with BlackBerry Messenger (see Chapter 10). You can be socially connected all the time with your BlackBerry. (Is that such a good thing? Well, that's up to you!)

## *All-in-one multimedia center*

Previously, many people hesitated to buy a BlackBerry due to its lack of multimedia functions. Now, however, BlackBerry has a high-resolution camera and a memory slot for a microSD chip, so your BlackBerry can function as

- ✓ A music player
- ✓ A video player
- ✓ A portable flash drive
- ✓ Your personal photo collection

## *Internet at your fingertips*

With the new BlackBerry Web browser, you can surf the Net nearly as smoothly on your smartphone as you can on a desktop computer. Even better, you can continue chatting with your friends through Instant Messenger, as though you never left your office. You can get an alert when your stock is tanking. True, that isn't fun, but you want this information as fast as possible.

Intrigued? Read how BlackBerry can take full advantage of the Web in Chapter 11.

## *Me and my great personal assistant*

You might be saying, "But I'm a busy person, and I don't have time to browse the Web. What I *do* need is an assistant to help me better organize my day-to-day tasks." If you can afford one, go ahead and hire a personal assistant. The next best thing is a personal *digital* assistant (PDA).

Whip out that BlackBerry of yours and take a closer look. That's right; your BlackBerry is also a full-fledged PDA, helping you

- ✓ Remember all your acquaintances (see Chapter 4)
- ✓ Manage your appointments (see Chapter 5)
- ✓ Keep a to-do list (see Chapter 6)

## *Me and my chatty self*

Your Pearl is also a full-featured phone. With voice dialing and the capability to carry out conference calls with you as the moderator, your Pearl isn't like other cell phones out there. To find out more about your Pearl phone, see Chapter 7.

## *Look, Dad, no hands!*

Your BlackBerry is equipped with an earphone that doubles as a microphone for hands-free talking. This accessory is your doctor's prescription for preventing the stiff neck that comes from wedging your BlackBerry against your ear with your shoulder. At the minimum, it helps free your hands so that you can eat Chinese takeout.



Some places require you by law to use an earphone while driving and talking on a cell phone. We recommend that you avoid using your cell phone while driving, hands-free or not.

RIM didn't stop with just your standard wired earphones. BlackBerry also supports cool wireless earphones based on Bluetooth technology. How can a bizarrely colored tooth help you here? *Bluetooth* is the name for a (very) short-distance wireless technology that connects devices. See Chapter 7 for how to connect your BlackBerry to a Bluetooth headset.

## *Final BlackBerry Tidbits*

The main concerns most of us have when buying a product are quality and reliability. Will the product last? Will it perform as the flier says? Will I regret having bought this item six months down the road? This section looks at some of the hardware features that make buying the BlackBerry Pearl a wise purchase.

## *Power efficiency*

Now, anyone who has had an ear to the ground regarding BlackBerry knows its reputation as a highly efficient little machine when it comes to power consumption. Even with the addition of color and high-resolution screens, the Pearl still has an 18-day *standby time* (how long a single battery charge will last on your Pearl without actively using it) and close to 5½ hours talk time. So, when the salesperson offers you a special deal on a second battery, simply tell him or her that you'll think about it. With the Pearl's standard battery, you'll have more than enough power.

## *Memory management*

When you first receive your BlackBerry Pearl, the device definitely has ample free memory. However, you're stuck with a fixed amount of memory, which can prove limiting over time as you download apps. In fact, you could eventually run out of memory altogether.



Don't confuse this fixed amount of memory with the memory available through the microSD slot. A microSD chip can store MP3s, portable videos, and pictures that you download or load from your computer.

Does your device die when you run out of memory? No, thank goodness. Your BlackBerry monitors the free memory on your device. If you're ever in danger of reaching your upper limits, the BlackBerry has a memory management tool that cleans house to free this limited resource.

BlackBerry apps right out of the box are capable of figuring out what data isn't that important. For example, the BlackBerry Browser caches data to enhance your experience when browsing the Web. *Caches* use local copies of Web pages to speed up the reloading of previously visited Web sites, so they are generally good things to have around. However, the cache also takes up space. When the OS tells Browser that the device is reaching its upper memory limit and it needs to do some house cleaning, Browser deletes this cache. In addition, the Message app deletes e-mails you've already read, starting from the oldest and working its way backward, when the Pearl is short on memory.

Curious about how much available space your device has? From the Home screen, press the Menu key. Select Options (wrench icon), and then select Status. In the Status screen, the File Free field tells you how much space is left.

## *Sentry on duty*

As the history of human existence shows, humans are capable of some nasty things. Unfortunately, the virtual world is not exempt; every day, a battle is fought between those who are trying to attack a system and those who are trying to protect it. Included among those attacking the system are people who are trying to steal corporate data for their advantage or steal personal data to carry out identity theft.

A computer connected to the Internet faces an extra risk of being hacked or becoming infected by a computer virus intent on simply annoying the heck out of you or (even worse) wreaking havoc on your computer. Fortunately, security is one of the strong points of the BlackBerry. RIM has built in to its software features that allow companies to curtail activities for their BlackBerry users that they deem risky, such as installing or running a third-party app. Data transmitted on and from the device is encrypted to prevent snooping. RIM also has a Signature process for app developers, which forces developers to identify themselves and their programs if they are developing any apps running on the BlackBerry platform that need to integrate with either BlackBerry core apps or the OS.



The security measures RIM implemented on the BlackBerry platform have gained the trust of the U.S. government as well as many of the Forbes Top 500 enterprises in the financial and health industries.

Although mobile viruses pose no immediate threat to your BlackBerry, spyware can redirect your e-mails and SMS messages to another destination without your knowledge. Spyware is usually installed without the user knowing, which is why we recommend that you set a password with a security timeout (see Chapter 3). In addition, you can install third-party software such as SmrtGuard to perform a spyware scan.

