

Chapter 1

Your BlackBerry Isn't a Fruit

In This Chapter

- ▶ Checking out your BlackBerry behind the scenes
 - ▶ Seeing what your BlackBerry can do
 - ▶ Handling the hardware
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Because you're reading this book, you probably have a BlackBerry (and we're pretty sure that you're not eating it). We're just curious, though — what actually convinced you to buy this particular handheld mobile device? Was it the always-connected e-mail, the multimedia player to replace your iPod or iPhone, or a really good sales pitch? We know; the list could go on and on — and we might never hit on the exact reason you got yours. For whatever reason you bought your BlackBerry, congratulations; you made an intelligent choice.

The same smarts that made you buy your BlackBerry are clearly at it again. This time, your intelligence led you to pick up this book, perhaps because your intuition told you there's more to your BlackBerry than meets the eye.

Your hunch is right. Your BlackBerry *can* help you do more than you thought. For example, your BlackBerry is a whiz at making phone calls, but it's also a computer that can check your e-mail and surf the Web. We're talking *World Wide Web* here, so the sky's the limit. Help is always at your fingertips instead of sitting on some desk at home or at the office:

- ✔ Need to check out the reviews of that restaurant on the corner?
- ✔ Need to know — right now — what's showing in your local movie theaters, or what the weather will be like tonight, or what's the best place to shop the sales?
- ✔ Need to know your current location and get directions to that cozy bed-and-breakfast, or retrieve news headlines, or check stock quotes?
- ✔ Want to do some online chatting or view some pictures online?
- ✔ Hankering to network with your old classmates?

You can do all these things (and more) by using your BlackBerry.



BlackBerry is also a full-fledged *personal digital assistant (PDA)*. Out of the box, it provides you with the organizational tools you need to set up to-do lists, manage your appointments, take care of your address books, and more.

Being armed with a device that's a phone, an Internet connection, a PDA, a GPS, and a full-on media player all built into one makes you a powerful person. With your BlackBerry (along with this resourceful book), you really can increase your productivity and become better organized. Watch out, world! BlackBerry-wielding powerhouse coming through!

If you stick with us, you find out all you need to get the most out of your device or maybe even save a troubled relationship. (Well, the last one is a bit of an exaggeration, but we got your attention, right?)

How It All Works: The Schematic Approach

For those who always ask, “How do they do that?” you don't have to go far; the following sections are just for you.

The role of the network service provider

Along with wondering how your BlackBerry actually works, you might also be wondering why you didn't get your BlackBerry from RIM (Research In Motion) rather than from a network service provider such as AT&T or T-Mobile. Why did you need to go through a middle person? After all, RIM makes the BlackBerry.

That's an excellent question — and here's the 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 what developed into its network service providers — the usual suspects (meaning the big cellphone companies). These middlemen support the wireless network for your BlackBerry so that you can connect to the BlackBerry Internet service — and get all those wonderful e-mails (and spend so much valuable time surfing the Internet). See Figure 1-1 for an overview of this process.

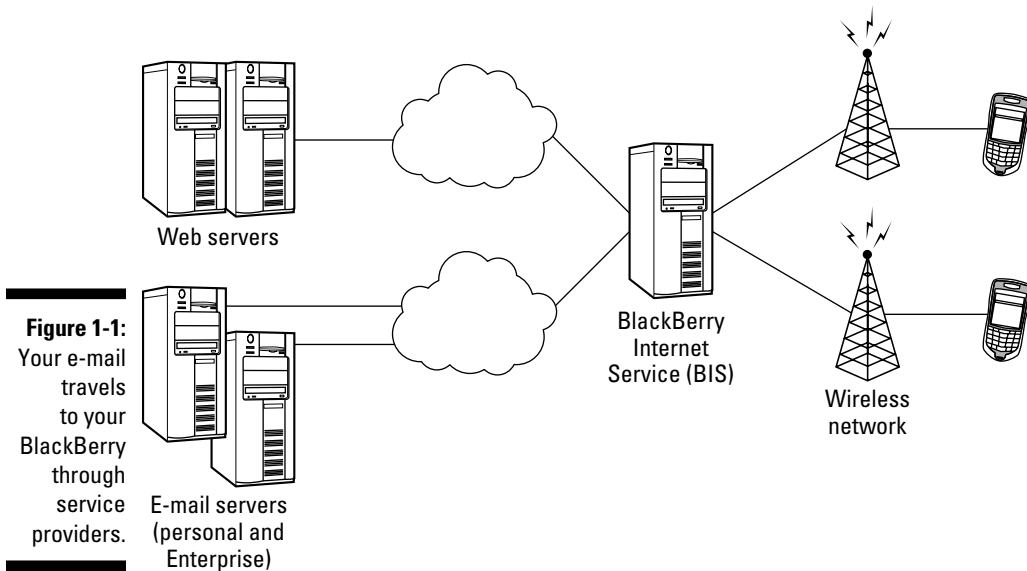


Figure 1-1:
Your e-mail travels to your BlackBerry through service providers.

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 BlackBerry looks different from a similar model you get from Vodafone.



Which leads to another question: Do BlackBerry functionalities differ from phone model to phone model? Quick answer: On the core BlackBerry applications (such as Tasks and Address Book), you find no major differences. Other features, such as Instant Messaging, might or might not be supported by the network service provider.

Just to keep the score card straight, when we talk about features available from one network service provider that aren't available from others, we point them out.

Connecting to your computer

Nowadays, a personal computer is a household necessity. People spend so much time using them, and so much information is stored in them. No surprise that BlackBerry works hand in hand with your PC. The USB cable that comes with your BlackBerry does more than just charge your device.

Part IV helps you use your PC connection with the help of BlackBerry Desktop Manager and all the utilities that come with it. For instance, in Chapter 15, you find how to sync your device with the Personal Information Manager data that you keep in your PC. You can also read Chapter 16 for directions about switching from another device (even a non-BlackBerry device) to a new BlackBerry. For example, you find out how to import your contact list into your new BlackBerry. Chapter 18 tells you how to protect your data. Last, Chapter 19 talks about installing new applications to your BlackBerry with the help of your PC.

Note that if you have a Mac instead of a PC, you can still sync with the PocketMac Sync on your Mac. Research In Motion does not actually support the application but does provide the software for free.

BlackBerrying the world with your BlackBerry

If you received your BlackBerry from T-Mobile or AT&T, chances are that your BlackBerry will continue to work when you travel to, say, London or Beijing. All you need to worry about is remembering to turn on your BlackBerry (and maybe the extra roaming charges).

Because your BlackBerry is quad band, it works in more than 90 countries. What is *quad band*? Basically, different cellphone networks in different countries operate on different frequencies. For example, the United States operates on 850 and 1900 MHz, Canada operates on 850 and 1900 MHz, and Europe and Asia Pacific operate on 900 and 1800 MHz.



Your quad-band BlackBerry is designed to work on 850 MHz, 900 MHz, 1800 MHz, and 1900 MHz, so you're covered almost wherever you go. Check with your network service provider to see whether your BlackBerry will work at your destination before you hop on a plane, just to be sure.



Nothing stands still in this world, and this saying is proven by the fact that GSM (Global System for Mobile Communication) has spawned *High Speed Downlink Packet Access (HSDPA)*, technologies that have been growing because they work on the same GSM phone infrastructure. This HSDPA is now available in the United States through most major network service providers. HSDPA competes in the marketplace against CDMA's (Code Division Multiple Access) EvDo.

What's it to you? CDMA and GSM aren't compatible. Your phone works on only one technology. When you travel outside North America, you face the burning question: CDMA or GSM? (Read: Will my BlackBerry work on this country's network or won't it?)

If you currently work with GSM, you should be okay to travel outside the United States. Most non-North American countries are on GSM networks. If you're a CDMA kind of person, you might have some "issues," as they say. When in doubt, talk to your network service provider.

Oh, the Things You Can Do!

In the BlackBerry world, always-connected e-mail used to be the primary factor that made BlackBerry very attractive and was likely first in the long list of reasons you got yours. And, if you need to go global, you can use your BlackBerry in more than 100 plus 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.



One caveat here — you need to make sure that your network service provider has the technology to go global. See the preceding section of this chapter for more info. Generally speaking, you can receive and send e-mails just like you do when you're at home.

Know your BlackBerry history

Your BlackBerry is truly a wondrous thing, boasting many features beyond your ordinary mobile phone. And its "sudden" popularity didn't happen overnight. Like any other good product, BlackBerry has come a long way from its (relatively humble) beginnings.

In the days when the PalmPilot ruled the PDA world, Research In Motion (RIM, the maker of the BlackBerry) was busy in its lab, ignoring the then-popular graffiti input method, and designing a device with a QWERTY keyboard — the kind of keyboard people were already used to from working on their computers. RIM didn't stop there, however. It added an always-connected e-mail capability, making this device a must-have among government officials as well as finance and health professionals.

To meet the needs of government officials and industry professionals, RIM made reliability, security, and durability the priorities when manufacturing its devices. Today, the BlackBerry comes from the same line of RIM family products, inheriting all the good genes while boosting usability and adding more functions to its core BlackBerry applications. As a result, BlackBerry is popular among not only *prosumers* (professional customers) but also consumers. Starting with BlackBerry Pearl, RIM has been targeting the mainstream consumer market. Clearly, with BlackBerry, RIM is winning the hearts of consumers while maintaining its hold on the enterprise market.

Although e-mail is BlackBerry's strength, that's not the only thing it can do. The following sections go beyond e-mail to point out some of the device's other major benefits.

All-in-one multimedia center

Previously, many people hesitated to buy a BlackBerry due to the lack of multimedia functions. They wanted a camera and audio and full video playback. BlackBerry has changed all that and has more features than you may expect. Not only does BlackBerry have a high-resolution camera — but it also has a memory slot for a microSD chip (see Chapter 2). What does that mean?

Well, it means your BlackBerry can function as the following:

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

Internet at your fingertips

Yup, with the new BlackBerry Web browser, you can surf the Net nearly as smoothly as you do on a desktop computer. Even better, you can continue chatting with your friends through Instant Messenger, just as if you never left your office. You'll 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 9.

Me and my great personal assistant

You might be saying, "But I'm really 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, by all means go ahead and hire a personal assistant. The next best thing is a personal *digital* assistant (PDA). Just like people come in many flavors, so do many PDAs.

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

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

A computer in the palm of your hand

Remarkable communication device? Check.

Full-fledged PDA? Check.

Full-featured media player? Check.

These capabilities are just the tip of the iceberg. Don't underestimate the device because of its size: Your BlackBerry is also a powerful computer.

Need convincing? Here goes. Out of the box, with no fiddling, it comes with a great set of organizational and productivity tools in the form of programs. Software developers besides RIM are taking advantage of this growing market — which means that hundreds of applications are out there for you. For example, you can download graphic-intensive games or a mortgage calculator.

Download? Absolutely! BlackBerry supports the downloading of applications through BlackBerry Browser. And of course, downloading of the application can be done both wired and wireless (or OTA — over the air). By the time you read this book, Research In Motion will have rolled out the Application Store Front, which is a single icon that allows you to browse through applications made by third-party developers. (For more information on downloading third-party applications, see Chapter 9.)



To be honest, we have no way to foresee how many applications will be on the market when you're reading this book. And the price of an application varies, depending on how sophisticated the program is, so we can't really give firm numbers. But if you're curious, check out Chapters 14 and 21, where we describe some of the best business applications. You should be able to find some treasures suited to your field of work.

Look Dad, no hands!

Your BlackBerry is equipped with an earphone that doubles as a mic 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 (but only when you're talking on a cellphone, of course).



We recommend that you avoid using your cellphone while driving, hands-free or not.

But RIM didn't stop with just your standard wired earphones. BlackBerry also supports cool wireless earphones based on Bluetooth technology. How could a bizarrely colored tooth help you here? *Bluetooth* is the name for a (very) short-distance wireless technology that connects devices. See Chapter 12 for how to connect your BlackBerry to a Bluetooth headset.

Chewing on Hardware

Reliability and quality were probably your main concerns when you decided on a BlackBerry. Will the product last? Will it perform like the manufacturer says? Will you regret having bought this item six months down the road?

The following sections look at some of the hardware features that make the BlackBerry device a wise purchase.

Saving power

Anyone with BlackBerry experience knows it's a highly efficient power consumer.

The addition of a color, high-resolution screen, GPS and Bluetooth support have weakened the power efficiency. Power requirements have increased so much that you need to recharge roughly every two days. But hey, now you have a GPS on deck!

Putting a sentry on duty

The virtual world isn't exempt from general human nastiness; in fact, every day a battle is fought between those who are trying to attack a system and those who are trying to protect it.

A computer connected to the Internet faces an extra risk of being cracked by a hacker or infected by a virus. Viruses try to replicate themselves and generally bug you.

Fortunately, security is a BlackBerry strong point. Viruses often come as e-mail attachments. However, BlackBerry supports very few file types out of the box (mostly images and documents). You won't face threats from e-mails with these attachments. And data that you send to or get from the PDA is *encrypted* (coded) to prevent snooping.



RIM also has a Signature process for application developers that forces developers to identify themselves and their programs if they're developing any applications for the BlackBerry that need to integrate with either BlackBerry core applications or the OS.

Remember the *I love you* and *Anna Kournikova* viruses? These are virtual evils transmitted through e-mail, scripts, or sets of instructions in the e-mail body or attachment that can be executed either by the host e-mail program or, in the case of an attachment, by the program associated with the attached file. Fortunately, BlackBerry's Messages does not support scripting languages. BlackBerry's viewer for such files doesn't support scripting either, so you won't be facing threats from e-mails having these attachments.



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.

