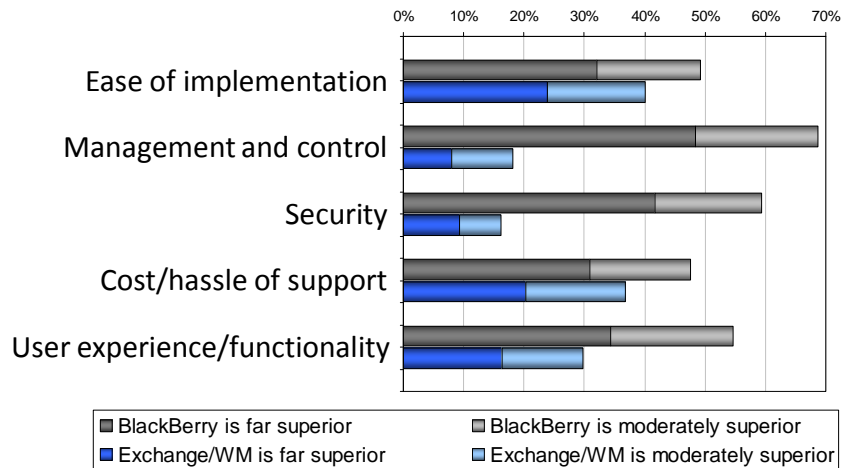


BlackBerry versus Microsoft

Results and feedback from online poll conducted via The Register

June 2007

Relative perceptions of the BlackBerry Enterprise Server (BES) and MS Exchange/Win Mobile solutions



The above results are from a poll conducted via The Register news site in June 2007, during which 306 responses were gathered. Approximately two thirds of respondents declared experience of implementing and/or running **both** the BlackBerry BES and Microsoft Exchange/Windows Mobile environments.

At 40,000ft level, the picture we are seeing is one of a solution from RIM that is clearly very mature, having been designed from the outset to meet the needs of larger scale deployments, competing against a rapidly evolving solution from Microsoft that still has some growing to do before it properly fills its enterprise shoes, particularly in the areas of management, control and security.

But the debate rages on and there are points and counter points supporting both options. For those currently trying to choose between these two competing solutions, we have therefore summarised a representative sample of freeform comments received from respondents during the poll on the following pages. So, have a browse through and come to your own conclusions.

NB The poll was conducted online so the usual caveats with regard to the self selection of the sample and self declaration of experience, etc apply. Please therefore take the contents of this document as input for consideration only.

Quotes from respondents regarding the BlackBerry architecture as superior with regard to ease of implementation

(Responses are to the follow up question: "Why do you say this?")

Less setup headache in terms of firewall configuration and certificates, and devices are quick to activate. User training is also quicker as the devices are simpler.

The deployment via our SP and their specialist partner was first class.

Once BES is set up and policies in place all is fairly straight-forward. Not so with WM.

Having worked in the mobile applications space for 10 years and being a previous fan (plus user) of Microsoft mobile based solution - I actually used to sell against BlackBerry! BlackBerry is by far the most superior solution, its usable, its simple to manage and just works.

I have experience of BES and Exchange/WM, and for the core service of secure and reliable email service the BES solution wins hands down. But then my preference is BES with Exchange/Outlook rather than Groupwise or the excruciatingly painful Domino/Notes combo. Meanwhile, BES is getting better at apps as well....

Much better device management suite. Platform has been built from ground upwards and is robust. Devices are intuitive.

Because I have managed 500+ Blackberries!

I've just done it for my company

Never had the problems with BB that I did with Exchange/WM

Long use of both platforms

BB is far easier to configure and run

Ease of use, functionality, speed of configuration, remote policy control. It 'just works'.

The BES software is simple and easy to work with.

Security, security and security. Robust devices with long battery life. Extremely low support overhead - wireless activation.

Unlike the MS combination it just works

Because it's not Windows and therefore the controls are buried so deeply in the interface that you need spelunking gear to even find them.

Proven over many years of use inc Exchange 2000.

Because, it is

Blackberry basically just worked, out of the box. Exchange took ages to install.

I support blackberries.. they tend to have more flexibility in rollout solutions and more reliability. We have over 10,000 Blackberry users and maybe 1% of them have problems any given day. M\$ devices would be more support costs.

"Enterprise activation" on BBs is a snap compared to getting a wm device talking to the exchange servers. Also, WM requires an exchange server to be at the edge of the network, or outside the firewall, whereas BES has no issues operating from behind the firewall."

Exchange Push email is reliant on some of the functionality of OWA, certain things in the Exchange UI can break push email (e.g. turn on forms-based authentication, then turn it off again). If you have SSL certificates on OWA, you obviously need them on push email too - this mean having to manually install the certificates on the WM device.

From personal and painful experience of trying to setup WM5 devices and windows server certificates. Blackberries 'just work', and if they don't you get a clean device and that generally fixes the problem

In the WM model, you are dependent on the phone manufacturer to make sure the firmware is actually up to date, and in some cases, I've seen the actual implementation of provisioning a device be different from device to device in the WM world. In the BES environment, there are multiple ways, yes, but it is consistently found on all their devices.

Experience has shown me

Just is

BB "just works", this is not something that can be said for any MS product "

Simple install - easy to manage centrally

The "easy" bit of a Blackberry implementation is "stick a new box on your LAN, let it talk to RIM, and you're done". The "difficult" bit is (with Exchange) setting up user rights to allow it to send email (not actually that difficult). The "easy" bit of an MS WM5 implementation is that you don't need to "stick a new box on your LAN" - but the difficult bit is that you need to upgrade the server to at least Exchange 2003 SP2 and the clients to WM5 + MSFP for it to work at all. Of course, MS direct push with Exchange is only an option if you run Exchange. Some people out there still do run other mail servers, honest...

At first sight WM seems to be superior because the push functionality is just there! But then you have to deploy the handhelds, take care of connection settings and certificates (if you wish to have any security). To manage and secure the WM environment you need to implement more software packages so the implementation becomes increasingly more complex. BlackBerry does need a sound implementation right at the start but gives a solid product with all the control options for the admin.

After the initial hassle of provisioning the BES server, user setups are a breeze. Contrast to WM where you can get random errors on setup that seem to depend on the phase of the moon...

Speed of implementation, clueful tech support.

Exchange administrators will harp on about all the infrastructure needed to get a BES running, when for most folks it's the addition of one server. In our environment, it's a virtual machine at that. Compared to the exchange cluster sitting behind it, it's quite minimal and is superbly simple to set up.

Very easy installation. No brainer.

RIM have yards more experience, and it shows when your setting up BES, its much quicker !

I have greater actual work experience with BES. WM seems to change with every version of Exchange and Service Pack. I have also in the past implemented the now defunct MS Mobile Info Server.

Blackberry is a one step system plug in add your user on the one end and run the enterprise activation program on the device all done. The only problems we have seen with Blackberries is they tend to just stop collecting data from time to time and the users feel lost (usually a removal of battery does the job), Also spam filters sometimes take away the activation email that the BES server usually takes from the mailbox to authenticate to start the ball rolling. The biggest problem we had on the MS Exchange side was certificates and getting them on the devices when the devices had this 'walled garden' thing regarded signed applications etc. A reg hack was required....on a mobile as ask ya.

Our blackberry service was provided through a mobile operator which provided access to emails by picking them up from our exchange Outlook web access site. Windows mobile was a little harder to set up with SSL certificates.

Not having to install certificates on devices is the biggest advantage.

Quotes from respondents regarding the Microsoft architecture as superior with regard to ease of implementation

(Responses are to the follow up question: "Why do you say this?")

No additional server

The existing Exchange infrastructure has all the functionality to support windows mobile out of the box and needs no additional hardware. Setup is easy and fast.

Better documentation of setup steps, less proprietary infrastructure.

No additional software required with Exchange/WM, plus my experience of BES was that it sucked a bit to be honest.

If you have an existing exchange 2003 architecture and wm5 or wm6 devices it is all there for you.

Assuming pre-existing exchange it almost works out of the box.

Blackberry requires more servers, additional software and licensing/activation. WM just uses your existing Exchange server, ISA server (which you probably use for web access), and Exchange 2007 helps.

No third-party software to install, and a greater choice of devices.

Installation of the BlackBerry components in a secure and sane manner requires a lot more than enabling Windows Mobile support under Exchange 2003.

No third party involvement.

Server setup way easier on E2K3 SP2 (assuming server already in place..). Blackberry device easier to activate for users

As an AD/Exchange admin I know what's going on... I'm a little disturbed by the fact that some admins probably don't have total control over their networks (I don't just do MS) and have a 'uber' worry scheme regarding the company data. Surely good user training, unheard of these days, makes a network secure. More to say little time to talk...

If you have the Exchange expertise, then it is part of the native environment. Blackberry installation allows a third party app to dictate your Exchange management plans

if you're using exchange wm is much easier to setup. BB requires extra software and configuration.

Almost nothing to do to make it work!

Cost of goods is lower with Exchange as it's already deployed to handle the mail service for the company. With BES, we had to purchase another box, as well as the software.

Built in capabilities of an already purchased and installed product

No need for a BES server. Better integration, better phones.

This is SBS only, mind, which is all I've experience of. Windows 2003 SBS, set up Exchange, open the ports on the firewall, and you're done from the system implementation side. Not that the Blackberry ES is THAT hard to set up, but there are a lot of steps at a new client. I do lots of different clients, working outsourced IT. This all may be a different kind of deal for those working for one Corp.

Installed along with OWA server.

Assuming you implement OWA from the internet, then Exchange Activesync is trivial to get to.

Install Exchange 2003 SP2 or later and it just works

Exchange/WM is more elegant solution due to less complexity, customer not dependent on operator, therefore not tied to any contract.

Dead easy works out of the box

Very easy to deploy. No enterprise activation. Active sync is a breeze to setup

No additional infrastructure needed

Just a few clicks in Exchange 2007

Exchange does not require an extra server and uses my existing OWA Server

The architecture is simpler

We currently use Blackberry and WM for mobile e-mail. We are migrating to exchange 2k7 and the ability to configure WM email with ISA 2006 publishing is superb. The only hang-up of the project is migrating the Blackberry server - it has "mysterious black box in the corner" status.

There is no bolt on product required for exchange, users can setup their own devices rather than requiring Service Desk to register them, and WM is the same interface that the whole world is used to, so very easy for users to setup.

When compared with the out of the box functionality of Exchange/WM, the added complexity of installing BES (and additional cost of the separate server to run it on!) means the MS solution was a clear winner for us.

Have deployed both, the ease of use and integration with MS Exchange

If you already have exchange then most of the hard work is already done!

Easier to use, configure and more features

We have used the Blackberry system, its BES admin server is flaky and takes up too much resources, the devices themselves are looking better, but not very user friendly as they used to be. Microsoft however are doing much better in this area.

Active Sync and Mail Push is simple to install and integrate with exchange with no issues

No extra software required on server side

No need for a separate BB server

Exchange/WM is an integrated solution, where as blackberry requires additional software/hardware.

BB poor interoperability

Blackberry has much higher IO requirements (MS say 5x the IO, per blackberry user than a online Outlook Client) that destroy any benefits it would have provided (better stability than WM5, user "looks cooler").

"I am a manager, I don't base anything I say on fact. MS's said it was better so it must be".

Because I use a WM Device, if using Blackberry you have to install BES which adds eight services. Then you may need to re-spec your Server regarding memory requirements. Do you really need to use BES when WM Active Sync to part of the SBS 2003, etc.

Price, ease of install

One tick box on server, couple of setting on phone and it's done, no messing around with rubbish BES software.

They just work, are easy to set up and are familiar to Windows users.

Integration of applications, integration with Active Directory, support for policy enforcement

No extra hardware or software is required. Just turned on the feature in exchange server.

Quotes from respondents regarding the BlackBerry architecture as superior with regard to ability to manage and control

(Responses are to the follow up question: "Why do you say this?")

New policies in BES allow complete control of devices and server based synching of calendar and memos and addresses take care of the rest

Easier to manage and less administrative headache

Again more experience with both. BB IT policy is awesome

Experience

There are no decent management tools for Exchange Push and no IT policies to set. There is also no reporting of device statistics back to the server. All of these are features of BES.

All required options for mgmt & ctrl are available within BB. Many are lacking within Exchange/WM platform.

I have used both platforms and other variants and having run an ASP business with a couple of thousand BlackBerry devices, the end customers don't lie. The management and control of BlackBerry is leagues ahead of Microsoft. Yes, the MS platform is more functional; however I would very much argue that this is not a good thing. MS was and is a nightmare to manage, BlackBerry is just simple - username and password done.

The devices are not running windows mobile, and therefore insecure, unreliable, buggy, etc.

With BES I have greater control and it's simpler too.

Sheer volume of policies that can be applied to the user and user groups.

Because I have managed 500+ Blackberries!

It is far easier to manage a blackberry server, as is the training simpler. It is much harder to learn an exchange server due to the excess certifications of the Microsoft Corporation

BlackBerry/Rim has better support and tools.

Remote administration and policy control for BB good, reliable and consistent. WM devices too flaky to respond consistently to remote admin, tools are less mature.

Encryption is built into BB, policies allow the forcing of passwords to the device

Policies, remote activation on BES, latest devices are great

The BES software is clearer and simpler, yet more functional.

WM is more flexible which can be useful, but it's much harder to enforce a policy upon it effectively.

Extremely low support overhead. 170+ policies available on BB.

IT policies ROCK in BES. They are practically non-existent in Exchange/WM

Profile lockdown is as near as possible absolute

Because it's not Windows and therefore the controls are buried so deeply in the interface that you need spelunking gear to even find them.

For us, simpler administration is a major point. We've noticed a trend for Blackberry to improve various facets of the offering gradually, but MS Exchange doesn't seem to have moved for 5 years.

I support blackberries.. they tend to have more flexibility in rollout solutions and more reliability. We have over 10,000 Blackberry users and maybe 1% of them have problems any given day. M\$ devices would be more support costs.

BES management tools are far more deep and developed than MS's. There's nothing MS/WM can do that BES can't, but there's plenty BES does that WM won't.

Central console to manage, far superior security

A paranoid BOFH can have complete device control (including of web traffic to the device). This simply isn't possible the MS way. Whether this is good or bad may depend on whether you're a user in the field trying to browse dodgysite.com or someone in charge of network security.

Hundreds of IT-policies to control your BES and the BlackBerries (wireless). Full insight in use and predictable data usage (no Bill Shock)

Exchange policy control is minimal and feels like an afterthought.

Out of the box the BES service includes functionality to manage and control - these are all add-ons in Exchange/WM

MS offering is fine for a low volume of users in a small business but on an enterprise scale. I shudder to think of the carnage that could be created trying to manage many users via MS.

Windows mobile offers very little in the area of central administration, while RIM has a rich set of tools for managing every aspect of the handheld and security.

BlackBerry IT policy is extremely detailed. Exchange is lacking.

Many more options, much more control and from an end users point of view it just works.

Dedicated console. Full policy control. Wireless Activation.

You need to ask? In general we expect to put in a dedicated device management platform for Windows Mobile (and Nokia) smart phones.

Because the administrator can basically have control over the device remotely.

In terms of registering new devices against the BES it takes much less time than registering a new WM device, with much less faff.

Exchange/WM provides no control on the device. Blackberry add lot of control/information on devices, but kind of lock the device to the user

Again the BES environment is much easier to manage from a relatively single user interface without having to resort to multiple downloads to install the management tools which should be included by default in Exchange.

Policy enforcement built into platform not implemented as an afterthought. Feature upgrades do not require the user to buy a new device.

Better policy control on the BlackBerry.

BES console is easier to use

Of course, there is more flexibility in IT Policies and MDS on the Blackberry Platform - but I cannot comment on enhancements made with Exchange 2007

More device configuration options w/ central management

Exchange has better group functionality, but worse device handling. It's more integrated in blackberry but proprietary)

Remote wipe and REBUILD of a device with all of its config is far superior than Exchange.

Remote wipe is easier to use then exchange 2003 management utils

BES gives you more granular control of handhelds, more stats, etc. Exchange 2007 is moderate improvement over 2003. Managing your own device in OWA is nice.

Quotes from respondents regarding the Microsoft architecture as superior with regard to ability to manage and control

(Responses are to the follow up question: "Why do you say this?")

The remote manageability included especially with Exchange 2007 is much better on the Exchange/WM front.

Simple wiping if a user loses the device, and no issues about users switching devices and then finding the ID is assigned to someone else.

BES is another GUI to deal with, whereas Exchange is something everyone is already using/used to. Familiar interface, built on existing AD with no messin!

It has more of a clear cut interface, and you still have the same level of control.

I have always found sync'ing a bb either works or is a real pain. I have never had any issues with WM

Policies are set at server level

All you need is your username/password and exchange address - Ta Dah!!

Exchange 2007 has feature built into webmail that put the control in the hands of the user

"The MS rep took be down the pub and helped be to reach this conclusion"

Admins already ms trained

Can be easily managed with the same tools I use for my desktop (and server) platform.

Analyst note: *There are relatively few comments presented here as few respondents regarded the Microsoft solution as superior with regard to management and control.*

Quotes from respondents regarding the BlackBerry architecture as superior with regard to security

(Responses are to the follow up question: "Why do you say this?")

You have a lot more control via the BES server, with the ability to apply policies and easily wipe the device from the BES. And that is with the bb being on the network anywhere. The windows devices will only wipe the data, when they connect again to the exchange server, but that does not include any data on any SD cards these devices have.

Choice of either Triple DES or AES, plus you can layer SMIME or PGP on top

Remote kill is instant not user initiated, and Triple DES and AES encryption standards make the solution more secure.

Due again to mgmt control with BES environment and its inherent reliability as a system that just works - its more secure.

Dedicated infrastructure. It's not being routed over the public internet. Fundamentally RIM is providing a managed service on behalf of its users. From a device perspective a BlackBerry is 'locked down', there are no known viruses. Microsoft is wide open to the internet.

BlackBerry is secure - end to end. Exchange is basically insecure. AD is pretty leaky. Windows mobile devices - when they work - are completely insecure.

Properly encrypted emails for a start.

Because I have managed 500+ Blackberries!

It is far more secure with individual names and numbers in the blackberry naming schema

Too many holes/backdoors/faults in MS solutions.

Encryption is built into BB, policies allow the forcing of passwords to the device - Exchange is still full of holes - and subject to spreading viruses

Better encryption and when we have had the inevitable losses, the security features mean that we have not been at risk.

Well, the better policies allow security to be enforced better.

It's not even close. Outbound initiated connections only. End to end encryption. CERG approval says it all.

Best security of mobile devices available today

S/MIME encryption and the AES/3DES keys are important to us for device security. Microsoft barely supports either.

Because it's not Windows. Full stop.

Never had a single issue.

FIPS...NSA approved.

So many policies, strong security

Same reason as the previous question, plus the ability to prevent third-party guff running on a handheld in the field.

Policy implementation, the blackberry verifies its environment every boot, automatic updates of encryption keys, remote disable.

Because I don't have to worry about it - it's all up to the carrier and RIM...

Out-of-the-box the security offered by BlackBerry is great. Good on the device side with content encryption (incl. micro- SD), remote control of the features that can be used and perfect 'wipe' possibilities. The data path is either 3-DES or AES encrypted. The BES is also well protected from the internet. WM offers basic security but can be extended with other solutions. Yes, there is no NOC in the middle, but is it safer to have a mobile device connected directly to the internet? For all security features from both solutions goes that you need to have a plan. Make sure that your implementation fits your needs and regular IT security policy.

AES encryption and proprietary devices.

Because in case of theft or loss of a device, the admin can delete it completely.

Built into the fabric of the platform.

More of a closed platform means better security.

No question, all the wireless IT Policies we can control everything.

The experience of our users

We're always having security issues with Exchange, but very little from Blackberry.

They are pretty locked down when you get a good security policy on there. I haven't found a way to circumvent it yet... and I'm pretty good at circumventing security :D

3DES or AES encryption even on the device - on device firewall (default)

Again, out of the box BES provides unalterable security (PIN settings) and endpoint protection (by disabling/remote wipe). These have to be configured, possibly as third-party add-ons, for Exchange (though SP2 provides some of this)

Blackberry, can lock device, and supposed to encrypt data. But the addition of third party server where data goes through is not secure. exchange/wm just provide same security as laptops

While both provide security layers, I've found that it's easy to bypass the encryption with Exchange, making data security a joke. With BES, you are required and cannot (that I am aware of) disable the encryption capabilities.

Experience has shown me

Blackberry has the security features on by default, WM takes some tinkering.

WM reuses large parts of Microsoft's codebase, which has been proven insecure time and time again. While I'm sure there are flaws in RIM's technology, they don't seem to make front page news.

3DES over SSL is better, but the idea of a 3rd Party passing your storing your emails is very worrying...

More encryption options, automatic device security control etc.

Less user control

Slightly fewer known security barn doors in the RIM gear.

Exchange 2007 helped here, but BB might still be ahead a bit - its security overhead is bigger which hurts its implementation & support

Blackberry has full device wipe while WM requires an add-on to enable wiping of SD cards - even with WM6 enhancements it's not quite up to blackberry spec.

Just because it's not a MS product...

Analyst note: *In response to this question, many RIM advocates referred us back to their comments on manageability and control as a fundamental pre-requisite for security.*

Quotes from respondents regarding the Microsoft architecture as superior with regard to security

(Responses are to the follow up question: "Why do you say this?")

Emails go directly from phone to Server only passing through one MS software.

Not got too much experience of security of BB, but this is easy to config on a windows platform

The ability to remote wipe devices and set security settings and policies is great.

Uses SSL and is easier to trust. I must trust blackberry to be doing it correctly.

Exchange 2007 has feature built into webmail that put the control in the hands of the user

I don't fully know what I'm talking about with regard to the comms side of this but I always find it more secure to have as little badly designed software on my server as possible.

You're using a 1-2-1 link, 1 being you own devices, 2 being your network. With BB you're relaying through several parties!

Quite simply Exchange does not involve a 3rd party handling your email.

BB uses send as, this is a security flaw

All traffic from BB must traverse their network, as opposed to WM devices which communicate through SSL directly to the user's organization.

We're able to implement 3 factor authentication:

- 1.) User / Password
- 2.) User Certificates
- 3.) Locking a range of devices to a user account.

"You taking the p155 everyone knows Microsoft has no security issues, so it can be taken as read that Exchange/WM is more secure than raspberry"

Use Group Policy

Complies with existing infrastructure, can set policies from server to phone, and anybody, inc remote user can wipe device from OWA

It is a very well researched platform, and has no big issues.

Analyst note: Again, there are relatively few comments presented here as few respondents regarded the Microsoft solution as superior with regard to security.

Quotes from respondents regarding the BlackBerry architecture as superior with regard to the cost and hassle of support

(Responses are to the follow up question: "Why do you say this?")

Never had to place a support call after initial setup. Windows Mobile has been nothing but a headache.

Data costs are far lower with BB especially where attachments are concerned

More server cost but less hardware cost put implementation costs on a par. BlackBerry steams ahead on support though because the devices are easier for users to grasp and the server solution is so robust.

Far more support issues are generated by WM than BB.

The typical user i.e. who is non-IT literate (95% of the population) can use and provision a BlackBerry. Everything can be managed remotely by competent technicians. MS platforms, you can install other apps, they are unstable and not easy to support.

BlackBerry stuff just works. It's really boring. Windows ? Naaa. Keeping Exchange up by itself is a nightmare. Keeping the Windows mobile devices running is a complete nightmare.

Most of the time you install the BES and.... nothing! Other than user and device admin, you usually don't have anything to do until an upgrade.

Because I have managed 500+ Blackberries!

Blackberry is excellent at customer support. They people I had dealt with definitely knew what they were talking about.

Does not require dedicated administrator, BES support is quite decent and reasonably priced (flat rates).

It's all set up with BB, point and click kind of thing

Contract charging model is better, functionality seems to be more reliable, and the handsets are nicer.

There's much less that can go wrong with BlackBerry compared to WM, so it suits most people fine.

Little or no hassle support is easy

Providers have dedicated Blackberry helpdesks to refer to. Not so for Exchange/WM, where the support comes partially from handset manufacturers, Microsoft, carriers and so on.

The mobile operator has a far better level of support than Microsoft.

The size of the support teams is a giveaway - for a similar sized user base, the Blackberry support team is one fifth the size of the Exchange team.

Blackberries only have a few platforms and devices. WM has more devices and takes more knowledge to support.

Microsoft's own site is riddled with how-to guides that are useless because they don't have a consistent user interface and management style. That, and the fact they also have to support older WM connection models makes it more difficult.

Blackberry does what is says on the tin, WM has more options for users to fiddle with (and break).

Had to use far less support.

Blackberry support is fantastic, normally sort all my problems out in 1 go. Ever rang MS Support .. exactly !

There are more specific blackberry support channels, than there are for WM. There are Blackberry techs everywhere, I am one....WM, harder to find.

A lot of the hassle is offloaded in blackberry land

Don't need intervention routinely on bb

Have you checked the prices on MS phone support these days?

Blackberries are dearer to run but the benefits outweigh the cost.

You don't tend to see "I can't get email" support queries with Blackberry - you do with WM (I work for an organisation that provides both BB and WM support, FWIW). The Blackberry queries tend to be "application X doesn't work", but given that email always does work, they're (usually) lower priority to the user.

BlackBerry needs little support. The BES and handhelds are generally stable and the blackberries can be re-activated remotely if necessary (wireless back-up comes standard). WM devices are slightly more difficult to support, but the use of memory cards for configuration and back-up purposes helps. Initial costs for BlackBerry are much higher than for WM, but the costs are very predictable and recurring costs are mostly fixed. WM becomes increasingly expensive with extended security and management software (and also the support costs). Usage is not as predictable as with the BB due to unoptimized data traffic and the possibility to connect directly to the internet (if allowed)

It just works

Blackberry is more robust and easier to configure

No active sync headaches. BB/BES "just works"

Blackberry Enterprise server combined with blackberry devices offers much more functionality than the Exchange/Windows Mobile equivalent. Blackberry is much easier to configure, but there's just more to set.

Easier to provision and control blackberry devices centrally than what exchange/wm devices are.

BB just seems to work and users get it. I think WM devices need a bit more tweaking and are for more advanced users.

The greatest support problems come from windows mobile devices. User settings, devices lost, deploying new devices - these are all simpler in blackberry land.

Unless you want to pony up for MS support incidents and speak to the people that "really know" you just get the vanilla brand of MCSE "experts" helping you out with the MS offering, but with RIM the people you get on the phone tend to know what they are talking about in excruciating detail

Quotes from respondents regarding the Microsoft architecture as superior with regard to the cost and hassle of support

(Responses are to the follow up question: "Why do you say this?")

WM devices tend to be more varied and thus cheaper to acquire and replace.

Blackberry just add a cost (BES licence), and support (need to support exchange AND blackberry), it doesn't reduce work on the Exchange server. WM setup is pretty straightforward

MS platform = easier to source support.

But only if a separate device management platform in place, without, slight advantage to Blackberry

Blackberry is an extra software platform to support

Exchange/WM does not have a service fee to operator/RIM, support is more fuzzy though (does it come from the operator, SI, etc.?)

Even in the hardest to setup exchange environment (self certified secure owa which means you need to get a copy of the root ca certificate onto each WM device) once you are over the initial setup the devices then just work. I have had lots of experience with various providers unsuccessfully getting them to enable the blackberry package for contracts (you know if its enabled or not by what case the letters gprs are in lower = no, upper = yes) having this small but extremely vital part of the setup completely out of my hands is very frustrating, which is something you don't have to deal with WM

BlackBerry BES Server is a nightmare, and the fact that each device needs to be setup by an admin is crazy. Again, users are used to windows, so support load is negligible as ActiveSync is very simple and intuitive for the users.

We would have exchange 2k3 anyway so BES is extra cost. But the BB units are slightly cheaper (with less compatible apps in my opinion)

It's free - the BES solution isn't.

Cheaper to deploy and operate, wider range of devices.

BB=extra software. If you're already using exchange WM is cheaper and easier (with exceptions)

Familiar product layout

Able to leverage the Windows platform and integration into Active Directory, which makes management not too terribly different from managing any other system

Again, If you're using 2003 SBS, Exchange is essentially free. You just have to buy the phone. And once it is set up, I've never had any problems that weren't the fault of a network provider. Of course, I've never had any Blackberry problems that weren't the fault of a network provider either.

Most people get on very well using a WM device because they are used to the interface.

No bes server

Very easy to setup, less hassle, BB has the extra licences/activation to worry about, users locking the damn thing up requiring a new PIN/activation

You know what you are dealing with for WM support - all MS software and kit means no third party issues with patches etc...

No special skills need too support Exchange/WM any Exchange admin can do the job

There is no additional cost

Easy to use and support if you are already a Microsoft house

I can e-mail anyone 3 step directions for ActiveSync and be done with them.

No monthly fee for WM

More people know Exchange in detail

No third party involvement.

Exchange is already used in the enterprise. BES is another server.

Easy and pleasant online support

As long as your IIS and exchange services are running....

Goes through existing infrastructure - no need to install/configure/patch Blackberry enterprise software.

No extra hardware/software

I have always had issues sync'ing BB devices

RIM is notorious for disabling an SRP key - essentially killing all BB services for a particular BES server - based on their anti-piracy measures. The problem is that they are indiscriminate, and routinely cause business disruption.

Again, everything ties into Exchange and IIS. WM 5/6 is more compatible and offers extra features over the BlackBerry os.

"Press releases"

WM devices just require a simple data tariff

Integrates with AD, so support is far easier

No server side software and exchange WM "just works".

Quotes from respondents regarding the BlackBerry architecture as superior with regard to the user experience and functionality

(Responses are to the follow up question: "Why do you say this?")

All my users miss their Blackberries.

No brainer, anyone can figure out 90% of BB functionality in minutes

Badly worded question. User experience is easier with BlackBerry because the device is simple, but not as feature rich. The reality is though do you want users watching movies all day or sending emails?

It just works. It's simple and reliable and fast.

BlackBerry is task and goal orientated. The whole point of 'mobility' is to make fast, informed and instant decisions. If i need to look/edit a word document then i will plug onto a wifi hotspot and power the laptop up.

Everything just works and works well on a BlackBerry. Windows ? omg. Random.

We had a solid BES solution, but management decided to trial WM. We had zero volunteers. We even tried to bribe them with 3G capable handsets with no download limits during the trials, this didn't even appeal to the GPRS-only BB users still on 7100s! In the end we had to force a number of users to try the WM devices, and all asked for their BES/BB solution back at the end of the trial.

Because I have managed 500+ Blackberries!

Blackberry is the easiest system I have ever used for email and web surfing basics.

Reliability, battery life, function/form

100% of my users prefer BlackBerry.

BB much better designed for messaging and interface. Even the most tech-retarded users did not call with questions, which was a miracle akin to flying pig or honest politician. Also stable and predictable, fairly resistant to abuse, fairly friendly to 3rd-pty apps (Opera, Google).

Love the interface

Blackberry is without doubt the easiest solution to access email.

The interface is clean and easy. Activation is a breeze.

Markedly better UI design in the BBs put WM to shame. Whoever thought that putting windows on a phone was a good idea is an idiot

Users find new 8800 devices "cool" and easy to operate.

Blackberry is purpose built for email and there's common software across all models.

Okay, so windows mobile has greater support for third-party apps. However the interface itself is awful. It's a PC operating system trying to be a PDA. This is the wrong approach and leads to the kludge that is windows mobile. Just ask nokia, sonyericsson, or apple - a pda or smartphone must have a UI that is simple and functional.

Anyone can use it!

Experience has shown me

Not having yet used a WM6 device I have only got the WM5 to go on and I would say it is more fiddly to move around and work quickly. The BlackBerry 2 button approach is much quicker and easier to get into.

Blackberry devices are designed to do e-mail and phoning, WM devices are designed to try and do just about everything which doesn't work that well for a less advanced user. They don't want slide out keyboards and a stylus they want a standard phone design in my experience.

The BlackBerry does not require a stylus to use it properly, therefore you can use it with one hand if you want too. It also has a far superior "where is the function that I want now" interface.

It's built solely for the job and does it well with an intuitive interface

Users are too used to 'Nokia' type phones to get used to WM.

I'd say BlackBerries are more reliable, and hence the experience is better. WM offers some more functionality though.

There is nothing Blackberry cannot do now in terms of applications, digital paper, mobile CRM etc. Editable office docs.

Not as visually attractive or as familiar to Outlook users, but more stable, with longer battery lifetimes and quicker to use.

Probably a thing of preference, and I believe it to be faster.

More stable, less feature rich.

Our users have a definite preference for Blackberry

Blackberries only have a few platforms and devices. WM has more devices and takes more knowledge to support.

While the WM side is better with email attachments, the Blackberry side's functionality is by far a winning hand. Different vendors cram in different add-ons to their product which can affect the usability of their device as a whole. This makes it less functional, overall, if you move to a new device, because then you need to learn a new interface to the device. With the Blackberries, the interface is consistent across the board, with newer features actually bringing value to the interface, and not getting in the way.

It's simple and clean and does a very specific thing.. allows you to read your mail.. no playing videos or listening to music or downloading software ..just that.

The Blackberry doesn't crash frequently, nor reboot spontaneously.

Mobile devices have worse battery life but better functionality - but Blackberries are catching up

Battery life on BB devices is superior. Device software upgrades do not require hardware upgrades for additional functionality.

New BB's (Pearl, Curve, etc...) have come a long way into unifying the UI experience.

Windows mobile isn't quite as instantly intuitive to a first-time user. But there's not much in it.

Peer pressure. Like the iPod, there is cachet with a Blackberry device, less so with a WM device.

Users tell me that Blackberry is very much superior

With BlackBerry being a native push solution, the end users don't have to think about if they received an e-mail because of a missed OMA sync

Blackberry has an easier to use interface for the technically challenged, MS better for geeks.

Quotes from respondents regarding the Microsoft architecture as superior with regard to the user experience and functionality

(Responses are to the follow up question: "Why do you say this?")

Better apps / document and full outlook support on WM devices tips it for us

Beyond voice and messaging, BB functionality is very limited, and you need add-ons to run other standard applications - Office - or GUI redesign in some cases. WM can handle this either natively or via Citrix

Users appreciate added functionality

My boss said: blackberry is good because you can increase a lot fonts for his old eyes. Apart from the BB messenger, Windows got all the same functionality and even more (which sometime actually are too much for users)

Purely from the user interface, WM takes this, though generally I think they are about the same. One other thing in WM favour is that it is a Microsoft platform so there are millions of developers writing for this platform (e.g. TomTom)

Our users prefer the functionality of WM, but have been disappointed by the battery life of the WM devices compared with Blackberry

Again its Windows easy to use

When you start moving beyond the core EMail & calendar the Windows platform is far more capable and open

HTML mail on WM6 with Exchange 2007. Exch2007 also improved the presentation of HTML mails on WM5 (which doesn't support HTML mail) - less completely blank e-mails.

General purpose platform allows a wide range of other applications.

Exchange/WM supports contact and task sync over mobile network. Blackberry requires sync to PC for this

General flow is better in WM, but blackberry has better performance and it's simpler.

Both of the UI's really suck, but WM is slightly better than BB. So many thumb clicks just to enter a single activity.

More similar feel to outlook than what the blackberry interface is.

If we're are talking about the handset experience, WM is far clearer, with easier access to email folders and more Outlook style calendar.

Much richer applications are available for Windows Mobile.

Especially when you get to WM6 with html email

This is personal of course, but I find WM a far richer experience, also with thousands of 3rd party apps...

People are used to Windows.

Office Mobile version. Hugel!

Application availability

Most people get on very well using a WM device because they are used to the interface.

WM is much more fun and usable

The phones are much more fully featured - read "touch screen" it makes them much easier to use & the multiple form factors of devices means there is something to suit everyone.

Better integration with Exchange calendar. More control over message delivery.

Attachment/docs with Mobile Office, VPN, RDP client

Media, games, about 200 apps on Handango...

Remote access to my desktop at work from my mobile phone = the win. WM has cooler phones too.

Additional options such as webmail and less hassle setting up, WM 5/6 can also be developed for.

If you can work with MS Outlook you can work with Exchange/WM

Much prefer the sync abilities of Windows Mobile

Users prefer using the phones for functionality/GUI - similar to outlook. Phones don't need to install extra software in vista (no need for ActiveSync)

Windows Mobile is a much more featured platform, and we're able to use both PDA's and Smart phones

"My wife's company CEO thinks it is, we tend to base decisions around this"

User Friendly

WM able to sync everything, both ways. WM supports the exchange appointments functionality properly

About Freeform Dynamics



Freeform Dynamics is a research and analysis firm. We track and report on the business impact of developments in the IT and communications sectors.

As part of this, we use an innovative research methodology to gather feedback directly from those involved in IT strategy, planning, procurement and implementation. Our output is therefore grounded in real-world practicality for use by mainstream business and IT professionals.

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