

BlackBerry in a squeeze

Research In Motion, maker of the *BlackBerry* mobile email device favoured by corporate high-fliers, faces a potentially disastrous injunction over an alleged patent infringement which could stop the service for its 3 million U.S. users – despite the expected rescinding of the original patents held by NTP

COUNTDOWN TO CUT-OFF

1994: NTP co-founder *Thomas Campana Jr.* files for U.S. patents on wireless email system

1999: RIM launches *BlackBerry* service

2001: NTP sues RIM for patent infringement

2002: Federal jury awards NTP damages of \$23.1m, royalty rate of 5.7% of RIM sales

2003: Injunction issued on BlackBerry service in U.S. but stayed pending appeal

2005: RIM announces \$450m final settlement but deal later collapses

2006: U.S. Dept. of Defense files brief saying BlackBerry is “crucial to national security”

Feb 22: U.S. Patent and Trademark Office issues final rejection on one of NTP patents – rejection of four out of five key claims expected

RIM claims it has new code to bypass infringement

HOW IT WORKS

1 Incoming e-mail from internet arrives at mail server



2 E-mail forwarded to BlackBerry server

Corporate intranet access



3

Email encrypted and “pushed” over cellular network to handset



4 Reply to email – or access internet – via reverse route

E-mail, web, information management



Full QWERTY keyboard