

In this issue...

Cool Converged Devices
Spyware
Fighting Spam, Update
Price Watch

Cool Devices--Converged Blackberries, Treo600, and Samsung i700

If you've always wanted a converged phone and web/email device, now is the time to be alive. There are three devices you'll want to see: The new converged Blackberries, the Treo600, and the Samsung i700. Before you jump in and buy one, though, there is a little due diligence you may want to have:

Networks and Coverage. Right now, there are two competing "3G" networks in the US: CDMA (properly CDMA2000 from Sprint and Verizon) and GPRS (from AT&T, Cingular, and T*Mobile). While in theory, these two networks each have advantages, there are a few factors that will make the most difference to people reading this newsletter:

1. CDMA has much better coverage in the Bay Area
2. Sprint and Verizon have far and away the best pricing plans now (this can change quickly, though)
3. CDMA is proving to have better bandwidth
4. GPRS coverage in the many parts of the of the Bay Area is poor
5. #1-4 don't matter if you don't have coverage at home or work

If you had Sprint and switched away because of coverage more than 6 months ago, Sprint's network has gone through major upgrades, and now has better coverage than the old AT&T network. *And* this Sprint network carries data!

Now, don't confuse these two new networks with the AT&T network that worked so well for the past 5 years in the Bay Area and all over the US. The old AT&T network (called TDMA) cannot do data and as you've probably noticed if you're an AT&T customer can no longer handle all the phones that are on it. There is also another network called iDEN from NextTel, with "push-to-talk" but the coverage is much more limited.

I wouldn't choose your wireless carrier based on customer service, though. All of them are fiercely competing for last place.

Device 1: Treo 600 using Good or SnapperMail. Palm (whichever iteration of the company it is now), has made a truly incredible device. The Treo 600 has a very nice screen with both good resolution and strong contrast for outside use. It is pretty small and light, probably the smallest internet/mail capable device. The keyboard is usable

(although really just for a couple of sentences per email). It has calendar, ToDo list, and a bunch of Palm applications (though not all Palm apps work on it). If you are a Palm person, this is the device for you.

If you have already spent enough on the device (\$600 before \$200 rebate on a two-year plan),



SnapperMail is a cheap method of getting mail on the device and is similar to the Blackberry in functionality. It can get mail from any POP server (like Earthlink, most ISPs, and most Exchange Servers), and can be set to fetch mail at short intervals, or just when you want to see what you're missing. Snapper is about \$30, and aside from the data fee (\$5-10/month depending on the

carrier and plan), there is no additional charge for data.

The Treo can also do simple web browsing, albeit limited by the small screen. Sometimes it can be very handy (e.g. Mapquest and Google), and although much better than the Blackberries, it is like surfing in 1996 over a modem. Battery runs about 1 1/2 days with heavy use.

Now, for those with a slightly bigger budget, the best of all solutions is using Good Technology on the Treo 600. Good truly synchronizes all mail folders on an Exchange server (no POP, though), including calendar and contacts, real-time over the air. There is never a need to "sync" it using a cable. It is the most reliable of all the solutions, and is really like having your desktop Outlook on your device. Although less than the Blackberry, it is not cheap. Iteon can usually get the price of the Good Server waived (\$2000), but you'll still need to come up with a computer to use, and each mail account is \$330/year. There is also an annual fee--doing less than 5 devices is rarely worth it, and you need to be running Exchange. Good runs right now on the Sprint network only.

There has been a rumor of a new Treo (with the all-illusive Bluetooth), but given the delays on the first one (and also its success), I wouldn't count on the Treo610 before late-June.

Device 2: Blackberry. Research in Motion (RIM) has a variety of Blackberries that look basically the same as the old ubiquitous "957" devices, but these are converged devices. RIM set the standard in the late 1990s for wireless email, and it was the first to truly work with Exchange. These newer devices now have color screens, decent battery life (2-3 days with medium to heavy use), and the best keyboards of any of the devices. On the downside, they tend to have poor coverage (because of poor protocol design), both on the cell phone side and on the data side. Another strike against the devices is that the screens are pretty low resolution. I'd look for both of these to improve in the next 3-6 months. Most of the new Blackberry devices work on GPRS (poor Bay Area coverage), but there is one that works

on iDEN (NexTel) and one that works on CDMA (Verizon). Unfortunately, the CDMA one is black-and-white only.

If you like Blackberries, you'll appreciate these devices. They have the same user interface (which is not pretty unless you love it). The desktop/server side is still their biggest weakness. Like all Blackberries, these get email and calendar notifications virtually live and can have contacts sync'ed by cradle from Outlook. The Blackberries do not have the ability to truly sync mail, though--it is more like pager notification, until you sync it via cradle (vs. the Good devices). While the devices can "surf" the web, the screen does not have the resolution to make even the simplest searches worthwhile.



The Blackberries run about \$350-\$550 depending on the deal you get and the term of the contract, and the data will probably run you \$35-50 on top of your phone bill. Blackberry is the most expensive of the three solutions.

Device 3: Samsung i700. The Samsung i700 is a fancy new iPAQ-type converged device. It is touch screen, but with no keyboard. It is Windows CE based (also called Pocket PC), which means that you can run "real"

Applications, like Pocket Outlook, Pocket Word, etc. This wasn't really a big deal until the advent of Outlook 2003 (and Exchange 2003), which now really works. Big attachments no longer will cause the devices to freeze, and the device can actually do things with attachments now. Likewise, moving mail from one folder to another in Outlook will reflect back to the Exchange server (although POP is still just viewing incoming mail and sending messages).



While the lack of a keyboard is a disadvantage, the ability to use Outlook almost makes up for it. The device is roughly the same cost as the others above (and this isn't the only converged PocketPC phone). Like using SnapperMail, the monthly data costs are nominal, relatively speaking. Each carrier will be offering the device of their choice--right now Verizon is featuring this Samsung device. You can get similar devices, if you look hard enough.

The Pocket PC devices have the shortest battery life (about a day with medium to heavy use), and can carry a big penalty if the devices fully run out of juice--sometimes all data and applications are lost. But these devices can run a bunch of business applications than can only be imitated on other devices.

So, which do you buy? My money went with the Treo 600 and SnapperMail. I'd get the Good if I could afford it. Some people will make the choice on style and familiarity. On the network-side, I'd go with Sprint (or Verizon) if at all possible, but again, go with what works at home.

Imagine...

...that you're out of town and you realize that you've left your front door open all night long. Got a picture in your mind? Now imagine that you live in a really bad neighborhood. This is your computer on the Internet. Most home computers have only the most rudimentary protection, and these are the computers most likely to have viruses, worms, trojan horses, and spyware. This article addresses spyware: what you can do to avoid it, and how to get rid of it. While it can, in some cases merely be a harmless tracking of your browsing habits, it can be, and often is, much worse.

Performance Enhancements. If a stranger offers to clean your house and help you perform better in bed – free of charge – would you let them in? There is free software on the Internet claiming to clean your computer, make it faster – open your eyes to a whole new world. More often than not, if you install something that you get for free (sometimes even stuff that you pay for), you'll end up with "spyware" on your computer. Spyware can range from merely irritating software that slows down your computer or pops up advertisements, to targeted spamming software, to software that impersonates you on the Internet spamming others. The worst spyware collects information like social security numbers, credit card numbers, and passwords and sends them off to be sold. (The going price on the Internet for a known-good credit card with all verifying information is about \$5).

So what should you avoid? SBC, Yahoo, and MSN are three of the worst, although neither steals your credit card numbers. Kazaa is also very bad. The worst part is that the software is probably already there, and you probably agreed to let them collect data from you when you were downloading the software (by not scrolling down and unclicking a check-box). Being vigilant does help, but it isn't foolproof.

Getting Rid of Spyware.

1. Use an up-to-date Anti-Virus package (like Symantec or AVG). This will help prevent a lot of spyware from ever being installed as much of it comes from attachments, viruses, and worms (though not all).
2. Install LavaSoft Ad-Aware. It is available for free at www.tucows.com/preview/236049.html After updating the signature files, it will detect and remove a lot of registry entries and likely also bad software. Again, even this purpose-specific software is not perfect.
3. Make sure you have a good firewall. If you don't tame rattlesnakes or chew gum off the bottoms of restaurant tables, there is no longer any good reason not to have a firewall at home. Iteon recommends the Linksys VPN firewall (runs about \$79).



Finally, it is smart to have someone good manually clean out your registry, and check for spyware at least once or twice a year, but **immediately** if your computer seems slow or seems

to be behaving worse than it used to. This manual cleaning should take between 15 minutes and two hours depending on how healthy the system is.

...



"On the Internet, nobody knows you're a dog."

Fighting Spam, Update

Iteon now has a new Spam record--one of our clients (a company with 10 mail accounts) receives approximately 2500 spam messages per day.

Qurb for the desktop has come forward as the best (although not perfect) solution (www.qurb.com). While Postal Inspector (recommended as a solution in the last newsletter) has the best method of getting rid of spam, it proved to be less than stable over time. Qurb does cause Outlook to slow down and can "interrupt" as incoming mail is checked. Right now it is the best solution among a field of emerging products.

Server solutions have not come down in price and still are overly complex. Without a significant time and money investment, they are not as accurate as desktop solutions, and only make sense in the largest environments and when spam is truly out of control.

Price Watch--LCDs, PC Prices Down

In the past few months, computer prices have fallen due to the component price drops in the middle of last year.



Likewise LCD prices (especially for 15" and 17" models) have dropped significantly. Prices from white box manufacturers are already low and big brands (especially Dell and Compaq/HP) have started falling--there are good, fast computers

with LCDs for under \$1000. A few notes:

1. Desktop computers should be bought with 512MB-1GB of RAM, a 120GB HD, and an 800MHz Front Side Bus, but compare prices--aftermarket RAM is a good deal.
2. DVD burners are a good buy!
3. Look for laptop prices to begin falling in April or May

Iteon Consulting News

Iteon celebrated its first full year in business this month! We're looking forward to many more. We have also recently hired our first employee. Many of you will likely be seeing Les Dunston around. He is a great engineer, and a very nice guy.

Again, we would not be here without you. Thanks!

Steve Walker

swalker@iteontech.com

510.289.3226

Sejo Jahic

sejo@iteontech.com

415.203.9213