

Association of Legal  
Administrators  
Puget Sound Chapter

# Soundings

## *The Blackberry Addiction - and What It Can Do for You*

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# A Cr@ckBerry: “It can do more than just email?”



By: Richard Wood,  
Accounting Manager,  
Summit Law Group

**B**lackBerry: A word that strikes fear into the hearts of those who are “not tech savvy.”

I am one of those awful people who walk, talk, eat and sleep with my BlackBerry in-hand. I jump when it vibrates. I believe that I “cannot live without it.” It’s never further than 6 feet away. I’m most comfortable with it attached to me, but since I’ve nearly ripped the cable out of the computer by trying to walk away with it plugged in, I’ve broken myself of that habit.

Some people believe it’s because I’m SO dedicated to my work that I just HAVE to make sure I know what’s going on at all times... ok, that’s partly true (sorry to disappoint you, Marc). But the real reason is that I’ve integrated it into so many different parts of my life.

So, picture this: 6:45 on Monday morning departing from Tacoma (yes, I live in Tacoma) on the Sounder Train. Sure, just like half the riders I have a BlackBerry and use it to check email. But that’s just the beginning! Some service providers have EV-DO capabilities (technical jargon for “really fast”, also known as “3G” or Third Generation data) giving the user a data plan that allows surfing along at speeds similar to what you would have at your desk (not all service providers are created equally in these matters). So how do I harness that pure exhilarating power? Well, I connect my laptop to my BlackBerry and go online! What can I do online? Just about anything! Some mornings I access my computer at work directly to finish up a project that I promised Marc I would have to him three days ago. Other mornings I’ll just surf online to catch-up on the news. Both of these things save me a lot of time in the morning at work! I have a great time relaxing and finishing up all

the personal online dealings that otherwise would have started my day once I got to the office.

On the way home, most days (and right now as I type) I login to work to finish up some minor things that otherwise would have been left until the next morning. OR I take care of an emergency that came up JUST as I was getting ready to take the last train out of town.

So, what else? Well, I have IM (instant messenger - most are \*free\*) programs to message with colleagues and friends while I’m not sitting at my desk. My new BlackBerry allows me to listen to music or watch TV shows that I record on my computer. One program I sought out on my own (not Summit related - is not \*free\* - I purchased it myself) is a nifty application that allows me to login to my work computer and see everything on my screen and use any application that on my computer. Sure, it’s REALLY small, but in a pinch it’s very helpful! I also use the same program to login to my home when I’m away. I check that all my TV shows will record, or perhaps I forgot to shut off the computer - I can do that, too. I also have a home security system that allows me to login over the web to check the status of the alarm. If I see the alarm hasn’t been armed, I can arm it from my BlackBerry. I can also see the log of events (arm, disarm, pending alarms, REAL alarms, etc.)

So, of course, this is probably more than what 80% of users actually want to do with their BlackBerrys for, but for me it works. So, what are some things you can use it for to simplify your life? I’m glad you asked! First and foremost, discover the mobile internet. It’s amazing these days what can be done from your PDA. Some banks have developed actual applications to install on your BlackBerry to securely manage your account. You can check balances, see transaction history, pay bills, and transfer between accounts. What more could you ask?

To continue on the mobile web conversation, did you know you can actually surf on most HTML (standard) websites? It’s sometimes a little difficult to navigate, but

you can get a pretty good idea of what’s going on. Some websites are actually designed for mobile browsers. Some can detect your device and give you only content that works best on the PDA. One of my favorites is Weather Underground (<http://mobile.wunderground.com>). If you access this site on your PDA, you’ll find a very easy to use weather site; just punch in your zip code and VOILA! You’ll find current temperature, day-by-day weather for the next week, weather maps, etc. Another COOL and very useful site is Wiresoft Traffic ([www.wiresoft.net/traffic/](http://www.wiresoft.net/traffic/)). You can get current traffic maps online to show you where all the congestion is (a much needed tool in the Puget Sound).

OK, only one more of my favorite applications - Google Maps ([www.google.com/gmm](http://www.google.com/gmm)), an application you download from your BB Browser, not just a website to visit - \*free\*). This is the MOST amazing mapping and search tool I’ve ever used - period! I can “search for a business” - when I type in the name of the business and the zip, it not only finds it on the map, but offers me directions. In some cases, the site has details about the business that it has pulled from other sites like CitySearch. So, things like business hours, whether they accept Visa or MasterCard, etc., are all available at your fingertips. You can also call them directly. Just click on the phone number and VOILA someone on the other end (usually) picks up!

There are two more features that are worth mentioning:

1) Traffic - not only does it show you a colored map depicting the patterns of congestion, but it will estimate your travel times based on current traffic conditions.

2) GPS - one of the newer BlackBerrys (8800) has a GPS unit built into it. This means Google Maps will find *you* on the map. And BlackBerry has its own mapping application that will give you verbal turn-by-turn directions (additional charges apply for GPS usage).

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# Community Service Committee Update

by Karen Turner and Barbara Paige

The Technology Access Foundation (TAF) had their Sixth Annual Leadership Breakfast on May 31, 2007 at Seattle's Westin Hotel. It was an extremely successful event, with a record breaking number of attendees - about 450 people. The day started at 6:00 a.m. for our six volunteers from the PSALA Community Services Committee (Karen Turner, Barbara Paige, Carol Anne Nitsche, CLM, Cara Hohenstein, and Yvonne Steed.) True to the spirit of PSALA, they quickly rolled up their sleeves and jumped in wherever needed, including setting up the tables and assisting at the registration table. Time flew by; suddenly it was 8:00 a.m. and time to kick off the breakfast. The morning was filled with informative and touching stories. Speakers included TAF Executive Director Trish Millines Dziko, who spoke about the past, present and future of TAF. There were also inspiring presentations from TAF students

and other community and TAF leaders.

There were many things to celebrate that morning, which marked the 10th year anniversary of TAF. A loud round of applause went to the 2007 graduates of TAF, including 12 who have been accepted to various universities and colleges. Perhaps most inspiring of all, when the event was over and

the donations were counted, contributions came to just under \$140,000. Another record breaker for TAF!

Congratulations to TAF and a big thank you for our volunteers and all the others who made donations and attended the breakfast. Your contributions and support of TAF are amazing and much appreciated. ■

## Diversity Committee Update

by Susan Robbins and Michelle Grant

Hard at work again in 2007, the PSALA's Diversity Committee is committed to another year of success. The core values and goals of the committee remain the same — to broaden diversity in our firms while leveraging new opportunities for women and minorities.

We all agree that a commitment to diversity in our firms and thus our communities requires more than good intentions. If the role of attorneys is truly to balance the scales and maintain social stability then it is imperative to take a hard look at how we can more successfully diversify our firms.

In the interest of full disclosure, the Diversity Committee openly shows its true colors to be of little color at all. It is made up of all Caucasian woman and one Caucasian male. One might justly ask what it is we know about the struggles of a diverse workforce and the answer is this: We know enough to ask those in the know.

Accordingly, we will once again this year present a Diversity Panel. The panel was a great success in 2006 and will continue in the same form with a new focus for 2007. Last year, the focus was on minority associates and their experiences as young lawyers starting their legal careers. This year, the focus will be on minority lawyers who have built successful practices, and are interested in sharing their successes with others. Composed of representatives of local minority bar associations, the panel speaks from first hand experience and will cover the following topics:

- Evolution of diversity
- Existing barriers to the hiring and retention of minority attorneys

- Practices that created those barriers
- Initiatives that are improving diversity and words of wisdom

The event will take place on November 6, 2007 from 12:00 noon to 1:30pm at the Washington Athletic Club.

In addition to developing the Diversity Panel, the Committee is preparing to receive submissions for the Achievement in Diversity Award to be presented at this year's Managing Partners Dinner on October 30 at the Seattle Sheraton Hotel. We welcome those firms who are "walking the walk" in the pursuit of a more diverse workforce to submit an application for the PSALA Achievements in Diversity Award (applications are located on the psala.org website). There were many spectacular submissions last year and the judges are anxiously awaiting your submissions again this year! ■

## Cr@ckberry continued from previous page

Conclusion (I know you've been wondering if this would ever come): Don't just look at that chunk of plastic as a burden that ties you to the office, look at it as an integral device that makes your life better and more liberated.

NOTICE: As a follow-up to this article Richard Wood and Ryan Hui will be hosting a lunch "how-to" BlackBerry session on September 18 from 12-1PM. Please email Richard at richardw@summitlaw.com or Ryan at RHui@perkinscoie.com to RSVP for the meeting. ■

*DISCLAIMER: Richard is not an IT professional. Richard is merely a CrackBerry Addict enthusiast. Please check with the IT professionals at your firm to be sure your system supports these individual applications or web capabilities. Check with them about which applications are permitted under your firm's IT policies. Be kind to your IT folks - they may be willing and/or able to help you. = )*

Download nomination forms  
for the

Community Service Award  
and

Achievements in Diversity  
Award

from the PSALA web site:  
[www.psala.org](http://www.psala.org)

Awards to be announced at the  
Managing Partners Dinner,  
October 30, 2007