

What BlackBerry do I choose?

It can be difficult to pick just the right BlackBerry. Standing in the store before the growing array of models, how do you decide which one to get? How do you know which carrier? Rogers? Telus? Bell? Such a variety of unique shapes and pretty colours, but which one works best for you? The Curve, The World phone, The 8830? 8100? 7250?

The BlackBerry phenomenon is huge and the choices daunting. Swirl Solutions tests and uses every model out there and we want to give you a heads up on how to choose the best one to suit your needs. We have trained thousands of users and get a feel for what most people like. Although there are many colours and styles of BlackBerry, the basic functionality is the same. What it boils down to are a few factors:

- If you are you just going to use it for Email and Phone then keep it simple and choose any older model: 7250 (Telus/Bell), 8700r(Rogers) or 8703e(Telus/Bell) will do. These models seem to be \$00 to \$99 with a 3 year plan and the price increases with extra bells and whistles, like camera and memory cards, on the newer models.
- If your needs lean more to music and videos, as well as email and phone, then you require a model that comes with a memory card: Micro SD: The World Phone (Telus/Bell), 8800 (Rogers), the Curve (Rogers), or the Pearl (any carrier).
- If you require a camera then you will need the 8800 (Rogers), the Curve (Rogers), or the Pearl (any carrier).
- If you're looking for something more cell phone like and prefer a smaller and sleeker design, then it would have to be the Pearl (any carrier). The one and only issue I see with this model is the SureType technology. What is SureType? The keyboard is similar to a regular cell phone and it uses predictive text (meaning that it remembers and learns from you). In theory a great idea but most people either love or hate the SureType technology. If you can go to a reseller and at least see how it works, possibly demo it or borrow a friends, then that will help your decision.

Tip for SureType users: Do not look at the screen while typing. Just touch type.

If you have the patience and inclination to learn SureType, which will be much faster in the end, then you get the best of all worlds.

My favourite model is the Curve for a few reasons. It brings back the QWERTY keyboard which has some spacing between the keys, making it much easier to type. The resolution is better. And as a consumer I get to use the camera and MP3 player. If you are with Telus and Bell their version will be out in late Spring and who knows maybe with pretty colours to choose from.

Finally, I encourage consumers to educate themselves. Check out friends' and colleagues' BlackBerrys and test some units in the stores. Taking a little time is a worthwhile investment in your future enjoyment of these marvelous little devices.

Swirl Solutions offers these tips:

- If you type in #TAXI in the phone field, this will connect you to an automated voice that will ask which city you are in and connect you to the local cab company. (Works anywhere in Canada) Keep in mind there costs involved, \$1.25 plus applicable taxes and airtime.
- How come I get phone logs in my Email inbox? To change this go to your phone application > Bring up the menu > Options > Call logging > none
- On TrackWheel models: how to scroll vertically? Hold the ALT key down while you scroll.
- Voice dialing driving you crazy? Try saying the persons first AND last name.

