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# BlackBerry Case Study

Oxford University Medical School  
*Education*

# Medical school picks BlackBerry as remedy for mobile groupware access

*Mobile access to calendar and email cure "out of the office" blues*

## The Challenge

The IT department of the Oxford University Medical School, led by Dr. Nigel Rudgewick-Brown, Director of Information Management, was running out of options. For months they had been trying to solve what seemed like a straightforward problem: how to give staff mobile access to Novell GroupWise email and calendar.

The department had tried using PDAs, but the users simply didn't like having to go back to their desks for manual synchronisation. Further, they found that the battery life was wanting on most PDAs. They also flirted briefly with remote access via mobile phones, but the user interface just wasn't suitable.

The problem was a serious one. Faculty members, who spend the majority of their time in lecture halls, research facilities and the wards of the John Radcliffe Hospital, felt cut off from the School's GroupWise system when they were away from their offices. The problem was even worse for senior staff, who travel frequently to medical conferences around the world.

Scheduling conflicts were the biggest source of daily headaches, followed fairly closely by email access. The problem was especially acute among senior faculty members, who would make appointments while out of the office, only to discover that their secretary had scheduled a meeting at the same time.

## The Solution

Then one day at a GroupWise workshop, Rudgewick-Brown attended a presentation by the Interchange Group, a UK IT company specialising in mobile data solutions. The speaker explained how BlackBerry® devices could be used to give mobile workers remote access to GroupWise email and calendar. "Right away, I turned to my colleague and said 'that's exactly what we need,'" remarks Rudgewick-Brown.

Rudgewick-Brown could plainly see that BlackBerry could "solve lots of little problems, immediately," as he puts it. When BlackBerry Enterprise Server™ for Novell GroupWise was released in the UK, Rudgewick-Brown engaged with the Interchange Group and his carrier to organise a trial.

Interchange installed the BlackBerry Enterprise Server and Rudgewick-Brown selected BlackBerry 7290™ handhelds for 10 members of the School's IT department. "We wanted to test it first with technically savvy users, just in case," explains Rudgewick-Brown. "But our fears were totally unfounded. It was immediately obvious that BlackBerry was the way forward. A no-brainer – just right for our environment."

The installation of the BlackBerry Enterprise Server was "a piece of cake," says Rudgewick-Brown. "It's very stable, very reliable. We have had no issues with it at all."

On the strength of the trial, the IT department rapidly rolled out BlackBerry to a first group of 36 senior faculty members. "We gave them 10-15 minutes training in the basics, just to get them up and running. Very few of them ever came back for any more help – they figured out how to use it right away. Another benefit is that the BlackBerry solution is highly scalable – the School expects to increase the size of its deployment to some 200-250 BlackBerry devices in 2006.



## The Advantages

BlackBerry has put an end to scheduling conflicts. "People really like having a real-time view of their diary. In fact, the personal organisation functions, including the address book, have turned out to be the features that have won everyone over," according to Rudgewick-Brown.

Next on the list is email, which is particularly appreciated by travelling staff members. "They no longer have the inconvenience of needing to find a PC and a network connection to remotely log into our GroupWise system," comments Rudgewick-Brown. "Some of them can actually get by without a laptop on short trips."

End users are not the only group that is pleased with BlackBerry. The IT department is equally satisfied. "The devices are really easy to administer and manage. Since rolling out the first devices, there hasn't been an increase in calls to the help desk. The deployment of BlackBerry hasn't added to our workload at all", says Rudgewick-Brown.

"Another thing we like about the BlackBerry is that we can manage the handhelds remotely. Users don't have to fiddle with installing this or configuring that. The IT department can push out software and provisioning updates to the devices over the air," explains Rudgewick-Brown. BlackBerry also meets all of the School's security requirements. Rudgewick-Brown appreciates being able to remotely disable a lost device by sending a kill packet over the air. "It's quite a powerful feature," he says.

When asked if BlackBerry has changed user behaviour, Rudgewick-Brown mentions what he calls corridor working. "I regularly see faculty members using the BlackBerry device as they walk around the hospital," he says.

But perhaps the most surprising tale is that of an administrator, who doesn't have a BlackBerry device but chooses to borrow one when she goes on holiday so she can keep on top of email when she has some downtime. "For her there's nothing worse than coming back to a pile of unanswered mail – with BlackBerry this is a thing of the past" concludes Rudgewick-Brown.

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## **About BlackBerry**

BlackBerry is an end-to-end solution developed by Research In Motion® Limited.

Founded in 1984, Research In Motion is a world leader in the wireless communications market.

## **For more information**

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