

Developing an Addiction to Your BlackBerry in 13 Easy Steps

By Judge Herbert B. Dixon Jr.

Some of my colleagues have fought valiantly, kicking and screaming, against the BlackBerry thrust upon them. They have wanted nothing to do with the addiction that has become epidemic. They have seen others with their eyes glued ridiculously on that little screen in their hands, arms bent and slightly outstretched, fingers making various pushing motions on the addicting little device, and they have resisted the temptation. We'll see how long they can hold out.

I want to help both those who are addicted and those who have not yet taken the plunge. I have taken my cue from the 12-step programs that have so successfully addressed drug, alcohol, and other addictions. Mine, though, is a 13-step program (13 being a so-called unlucky number), and it is designed to help my colleagues *develop and maintain* their addiction to that new electronic device. Yes, you read correctly. I myself am caught in the throes. I am determined to live with my BlackBerry addiction, and happily so.

How can *you* coexist peacefully with your BlackBerry? Just watch.

But first, note that as you follow along with my 13-step program, you should consult your *Basics Guide*, if needed, or any other documentation that came with your new toy, as I am unable to supply their helpful diagrams. Also note that many of my proposed steps will work with the BlackBerry Curve, Bold, and Tour—BlackBerry devices with a trackball or trackpad—but not with all of them. If your BlackBerry is nonresponsive to any of the suggested commands or gives you a different result, consult the BlackBerry Help function or the Internet to see if you can find how the feature works on your device.

STEP 1. Know Some of the Important Multipurpose Keys.

Before reviewing additional BlackBerry features, the new addict—uh, reader of this column—must become familiar with the name, location, and function of certain important multifunction keys on the BlackBerry.

The Escape key is to the immediate right of the trackball. It is used to close menus and go back to previous screens. To the right of the Escape key is the red phone (power on, or end) key. It is used to power on, power off (press and hold), reject or terminate a phone call, and permit multitasking by jumping to the home screen.

The Menu key is to the immediate left of the trackball. This key opens a menu applicable to each application and folder. To the left of the Menu key is the green phone (send) key. It is used to answer a call (you already knew that), activate dialing of a number, and jump to the call log.

STEP 2. Maneuver Around Your Mailbox.

Almost instinctively, everyone knows rolling the trackball upward advances message by message to the top of the mailbox, rolling the trackball downward advances message by message to the bottom, and pressing the trackball or the Enter key on a highlighted message opens the message. But now, how about a few tips?

- ☞ Press the letter **T** and you will immediately be taken to the top of the mailbox—the most recent message.¹
- ☞ Press the letter **B** and you will advance to the bottom of the

mailbox—the oldest message.

- ☞ Press the letter **P** to move to the top of messages on the previous (earlier) date.
- ☞ Press the letter **N** to move to the top of messages on the next (later or most current) date.

In addition, on any highlighted e-mail, press:

- ☞ **R** to reply;
- ☞ **L** to reply all;
- ☞ **F** to forward;
- ☞ **S** to search through all e-mails;
- ☞ **E** to find e-mail delivery errors (e-mail not sent due to a server or some other problem);
- ☞ **U** to find unread messages, including missed calls;
- ☞ **C** to compose a new e-mail;
- ☞ **J** to find messages with the same subject line, starting with the oldest;
- ☞ **K** to find messages with the same subject line, starting with the most current;
- ☞ **ALT + I** to see only incoming messages; and
- ☞ **ALT + O** to see only outgoing messages.
- ☞ To move down one screen, press **Space**. To move up one page, press either right-**Shift + Space** or left-**Shift + Space**.

There are more shortcuts but, hopefully, the craving that results from your new addiction will push you to search for other shortcuts on your own. However,

there are two additional points. If you want to close the shortcut you activated above and go back to a previous screen, press the Escape key; or press the multipurpose red phone (end) key to jump back to the home screen. CAUTION: If you push the red phone (end) key while you are on a call, that action terminates the call.

STEP 3. Maneuver Within an E-Mail Message.

After you have highlighted and opened a message by pressing the trackball or Enter key, you may move within the message by pressing the letter **T** (top), **B** (bottom), **R** (reply), **L** (reply all), or **F** (forward) as noted above in Step 2. Also, pressing the Space key or both the Shift and the Space keys will move you down or up one screen within a message. As your addiction develops, you will note that many of the same keys that are used to maneuver within the mailbox perform the same function within a particular message. Once again, there are more shortcuts. However, we will let your new addiction push you to find other shortcuts on your own. But as a teaser, press the letter **Q** after you highlight any name on a "To" or "CC" line. Notice that this action will toggle between the e-mail name (e.g., John Jones) and the e-mail address (e.g., JJones@fakemail.net).

STEP 4. Compose, Reply to, and Forward Messages.

Within an open message, press the Menu key to add a "To," "CC," or "BCC." If you are typing a new e-mail address that is not in your contacts, press the Space key to insert the @ sign, and later press the Space key again to insert a period. To send, press the Menu key, highlight "Send" using the trackball, and then press either the trackball or the Enter key. HINT: After pressing Menu, pressing the letter **S** will toggle between all menu options starting with the letter **S**, e.g., Send, Save Draft, Show Symbols, and so forth. When the desired choice is highlighted, press the trackball or the Enter key to make your selection.

STEP 5. Type and Spellcheck.

Type a capital letter in the traditional way by pushing the Shift key and the letter. Or merely hold down the letter key for approximately one second, which will convert the lowercase letter to a capital letter.

- ☞ Activate Number Lock by pressing the **Alt** key and then the left-**Shift** key.
- ☞ Activate Cap Lock by pressing the **Alt** key and then the right-**Shift** key.
- ☞ Type an accented letter by holding down the letter key and rolling the trackball. When you see the accented letter you want, release the trackball.

To check spelling, highlight any letter in a particular word, press the Menu key, and then select Check Spelling. HINT: After pressing Menu, pressing the letter **C** will toggle between all menu options starting with the letter **C**, e.g., Check Spelling, Clear Field, Close, and so forth.

STEP 6. Use the Menu Screen.

As previously mentioned, the Menu key is to the immediate left of the trackball. Pressing the Menu key at the home screen reveals all folders and visible applications. At any other location, pressing the Menu key will reveal several choices. For instance, open your mailbox and then press the Menu key. Several menu choices will be revealed. Or open a message and then press the Menu key. Again, several choices will be revealed. Whenever you have menu choices, you may rotate the trackball to highlight a selection on the menu, or you may press the first letter of your selection to toggle between all menu options starting with that letter.

STEP 7. Jump to and from the Home Screen.

You can save time by enabling a feature that allows you to start an application or access a file by pressing a single key. Press the red phone (**end**) key to access the home page, then press the

green phone (**send**) key, and then the **Menu** key. Next, select Options by scrolling with the trackball or pressing **O** (for options) and then General Options at the top of the menu list. Ensure that "Dial from Home Screen" is set to "No." If it reads "Yes," highlight the setting and press the Space key to change the setting to "No." Next, press the **Escape** key and save the change. Now you can use shortcut keys to access certain applications as follows:

- ☞ **A**—Address Book;
- ☞ **B**—Web Browser;
- ☞ **D**—Memo Pad;
- ☞ **F**—Profiles (Loud, Quiet, Vibrate, and so forth);
- ☞ **H**—Help;
- ☞ **K**—Keyboard Lock (or use Alt-Enter);
- ☞ **L**—Calendar;
- ☞ **M**—Mailbox;
- ☞ **O**—Options Screen;
- ☞ **R**—Alarm;
- ☞ **T**—Tasks; and
- ☞ **U**—Calculator.

Remember, the red phone (end) key is the multipurpose button that allows you to jump to the home screen, most times leaving in place, ready for your return, the last page or application you were viewing before pressing the red phone (end) key. From the home screen, there are several shortcuts as noted above. However, always remember that if you press the red phone (end) while you are on a call, that action will terminate the call. Do not ever press the red phone (end) key while you are on a call unless you want to disconnect that call.

STEP 8. Know Your Mute Key.

The Mute key is located on the top edge of your device. Pressing the Mute key will stop the ringing of an incoming call, an especially handy feature if you are located in a place that distains the ringing of cell phones (such as a courtroom). If you press the red phone (end) key, that action will stop the ringing, but it will also send the call to voicemail or advise the caller that you are not

available. The Mute key is also useful if you are on a conference call and merely need to listen. To turn off mute, press the key again. Finally, press and hold the Mute key to go into standby mode to save battery power. To awaken the device from standby mode, press the Mute key again. If your device receives a call or is set to alarm during a time that it is muted, it will automatically wake up and ring or vibrate as you have configured it. If you have a BlackBerry case, a specially located magnet mutes the device for the time that it is in the case.

STEP 9. Make a Conference (3-Way) Call.

This is a useful feature. While you are on a call, press the green phone (send) key, or press Menu and select New Call. Next, dial a telephone number or select a number from among your contacts to place your second call. Once you are on the second call, press Menu and then select Join. You have successfully completed the setup of your first conference call on your BlackBerry. Depending on the model of your device, you may be able to speak privately with one of the parties by pressing Menu, then Split



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Call, and then select the party with whom you would like to speak privately. Note that the Split Call feature is not available on all BlackBerry units.

STEP 10. Make Notes While on a Call.

Now you're getting into some of the extra features of your BlackBerry. First, ensure that the Call Logging feature is activated. Press the green phone (send) key and then the Menu key. Next, select Options and then Call Logging. Now ensure that Call Logging for all calls is selected by pressing the Escape key and saving any changes. While you are on a call, it is probably best to use the speakerphone feature to avoid moving the device back and forth between listening and writing notes. Select speakerphone by pushing the Speakerphone key or the Menu key and selecting Speakerphone. While you are on the call, press Menu and select Notes. Now you may type away to your heart's content.

To end the call, press the red phone (end) key per earlier instructions. To find your note, press the green phone (key) key to jump to the Call Log. Next, highlight the call during which you made the notes. To access your notes, depending on the model of your device, either open the message or select Menu and Edit Notes. Once you have retrieved your notes, you will have menu options to cut and paste the notes or forward them as you would any message in your mailbox.

STEP 11. Know Different Ways to Reboot Your BlackBerry (Read Step 12 Before Trying This Step).

One of the first trouble-solving techniques that a BlackBerry owner learns is to reboot the device by taking out the battery and reinserting it. That process, known as a hard reset, often solves most network, software, and hardware issues.

However, the solution to your problem may not require a hard reset, but merely a soft reset or a double-soft reset, which do not require the removal of the battery. A soft reset can solve communications problems between your BlackBerry and computer. A double-soft reset will correct more problems than a soft reset and is nearly as effective as a hard reset.

- ☞ To perform a soft reset, press **Alt** + right-**Shift** + **Delete**.
- ☞ To perform a double-soft reset, note that you must time your actions. First, perform a soft reset by pressing **Alt** + right-**Shift** + **Delete**. When the screen goes blank, again press **Alt** + right-**Shift** + **Delete**. You should then see another blank screen, followed by an hour glass or analog clock.

STEP 12. Back up Your BlackBerry.

Before rebooting your BlackBerry as discussed above in Step 11, or to guard against future loss of your device, you would be wise to back up all applications using the Backup and Restore tool on the BlackBerry Desktop Manager, which may be installed from the CD that accompanied your device. Not only is it possible on rare occasions that a reboot of your device can result in a loss of data or applications, you could accidentally drop your device in water as some unlucky owners have done. Don't think this event is an impossibility

because you never take your device near a pool, the ocean, kitchen, or bathroom. I once saw an unlucky BlackBerry owner take her device out of her pocketbook and somehow suddenly lose control of it. She and I watched the device miraculously fall in slow motion into a glass of water sitting on a nearby counter—talk about bad luck.

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STEP 13. **Explore Your BlackBerry on Your Own.**

As with many of today's electronic devices, the BlackBerry is a multifunctional device that provides many conveniences. It is a calculator, alarm clock, address book, telephone, camera, memo pad, personal organizer, GPS unit, MP3 player, Web Browser, minicomputer, and much more. Take the opportunity to explore the device on your own. You should strongly consider setting the unit to lock after the passage of a specified interval. Even if the unit is locked, you can configure it to make and receive calls without unlocking it. Personally, I prefer automatic locking of all access other than to receive calls. To save battery life, consider automatic shut-off at some hour after your normal bedtime. A good way to explore on your own is by pressing the letter **O** for Options at your home screen and then reviewing each of the menu choices. Or, try searching for tips on the Internet.²

If you have gone through the first 12 steps and have no desire to explore on your own, you have demonstrated an amazing resistance to the addiction of a BlackBerry, and I congratulate you. I, however, am hooked. I use my device as a backup alarm clock and often start the day reviewing late night e-mail and early morning news. The truth is, if a 12-step program could possibly cure my addiction to this neat little device, you wouldn't find me at the meetings. ■

Endnotes

1. I use the term *message* generically. The message may be an e-mail, a text, or an indication of a call made, received, or missed.

2. For example, try BlackBerry tips and FAQs at http://www.blackberryfaq.com/index.php/BlackBerry_FAQ or <http://forums.crackberry.com/f3/>.