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**RIM's Race with the Clock.** *Credit: By Heather Green*

The BlackBerry saga continues. NTP, the Arlington (Va.) company that's suing BlackBerry maker Research in Motion (RIMM) for patent infringement, says a flurry of proposals and counterproposals aimed at ending the bitter dispute have been exchanged in recent days. Yet, according to NTP co-founder Don Stout, both sides remain at odds, leaving the specter of a court-ordered injunction hanging over the U.S. BlackBerry service. RIM's lawyer declined to comment. Advertisement

As a result of all the back-and-forth, a negotiating number is now on the table. Stout says that NTP will settle the case for 5.7% of RIM's projected U.S. sales through 2012 (when the patents in dispute expire), minus an agreed-upon discount rate.

Though most Wall Street analysts don't project longer than three years for RIM, a back-of-the-envelope calculation puts such a lump-sum settlement at somewhere in the range of the \$650 million to \$1 billion -- around what the Street had been expecting, says SG Cowen analyst Robert Stone (see BW Online, 12/08/05, "The BlackBerry Widow's Tale").

"FAIR OFFER." That's higher than the \$450 million settlement tentative reached by the two companies in March, 2005. That agreement fell apart two months later over disagreements about the deal's scope. RIM, though, has the wherewithal to pony up. As of its last reported quarter, it has about \$1.9 billion in cash and cash equivalents on hand.

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#### **Disappearing text messages unveiled.** *Credit: By Julie Clothier for CNN*

LONDON, England (CNN) -- It sounds like something only Tom Cruise would have access to in a "Mission Impossible" film, but thousands of British people are now sending self-destructing text messages. A British-based company has developed software for telephones that deletes SMS messages about 40 seconds after they have been read.

Staelium UK told CNN that thousands of users had downloaded the software to their phones since it launched the "StealthText" technology Sunday. It says the service is a world first. Described by the company as a service for: "hedge fund managers, spooks and people with complicated lives," StealthTexts cost 50 pence (88 cents) to send, though users must sign up for at least 10 messages. To download the service, users must text the word "stealth" to a number, and then download the software via a WAP connection.

Once they are signed up, the software creates a new text message inbox in the phone in an "undisclosed location," from which the self-destructing messages are sent. When the message has been read, they disappear after about 40 seconds. Staelium UK chief executive officer Carole Barnum told CNN the main aim of the service was to protect sensitive information. "Business leaders are conveying information and communicating using mobile phones more and more and there is a need to protect sensitive information," she said.

"The technology behind StealthText is derived from military technology, so the comparisons with 'Mission Impossible' are justified." Barnum said the company had been approached by financial services companies, the British Ministry of Defence and celebrity agents about the service. One of the most high-profile victims of embarrassing texts was the England football captain David Beckham, who sent explicit messages to his personal assistant Rebecca Loos. They were published in the tabloid press in April 2004.

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### **Made to Order** *Credit: By Tara Seals*

A market for specialized wireless solutions to business problems is proliferating: Companies with field forces and in vertical markets like health care can leverage a dizzying array of mobile applications to improve productivity and digitize the paper trail.

Increasingly, businesses are relying on VARs and consultants to bring applications to the table, slice through the complexity, integrate mobility with the existing network and manage all the devices. As this solutions-driven business market heats up, carriers, vendors and wireless distributors have taken notice of what the indirect channel brings to the table.

“There is now a strategy shift for many companies in the wireless space,” says Steve Rowley, vice president of sales, Indirect Channel, for Sprint Corp. “Before, they would focus on the individual user, and now it’s the enterprise in the crosshairs, with smart devices. In the VAR space, value-added services and advanced applications are hot. Vertical solutions, especially in the health care space, enable mobility and are proving very sticky. It’s one thing with a voice account, it’s another to switch if you have this highly specialized application running on these phones. And VARs can actually create applications and solutions for them.”

While the retail channel is still a focus for distributor Brightpoint, its enterprise-oriented Advanced Wireless Services (AWS) division is working with more VARs, consultants and integrators as converged devices and emerging technologies mature. Businesses can customize wireless form applications via a portal and wizard at the AirMobility.Net Portal.

“Through us, they make margin on products and accessories, and have subagent agreements for wireless service, where they make commissions on the activations,” says Dave Brown, senior vice president of AWS at Brightpoint Inc. “When they go in to an account, they can easily prove an ROI with horizontal or vertical applications. And that means they can perform IT integration so that the devices become a part of the overall network design. There’s certainly a professional services element.”

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### **What Makes SMBs Pull the Trigger on VoIP?** *Credit: By Dave Clark*

When it comes to advancements in telecommunications, SMBs historically have gotten the short end of the technological stick. Large corporations and consumers have been among the early adopters of VoIP due in large part to large corporations having the money to invest in emerging technologies like VoIP in order to save themselves money in the long run. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, consumers are being offered VoIP services at rock-bottom monthly rates from service providers willing to sacrifice profit margins in order to gain widespread adoption.

SMBs fall into the middle of this paradigm; they are too small to afford the investments larger corporations can make easily and too large to ride on the coattails of consumer VoIP offerings. This presents a tremendous opportunity for hosted IP telephony providers, but also a significant challenge in convincing the SMBs to change their communications infrastructures. While VoIP is attractive — with the main benefits consisting of flexibility, simplification of infrastructure, scalability, improved productivity, wireless compatibility and most of all, a

reduction in operating costs — SMBs have proved slower to change their telephony infrastructures than originally predicted. Once the benefits are understood, there are a number of factors that can trigger the migration to VoIP, however.

Many small companies are considering hosted PBX in the context of events that require attention to the communications situation. Any events related to growth of the company are high on the list including: A PBX system that is out of gas. A key trigger for SMBs is when they have exceeded the capacity of their existing phones system. A large capital expenditure is required because the current system's "modular" capacity (i.e., cards in slots) has been exceeded and/or the system is obsolete and no longer supported by the manufacturer.

The addition of branch offices. When SMBs expand, so does the complexity of their communications systems. With VoIP, SMBs will be able to seamlessly manage campuses of geographically dispersed offices or remote workers and make administration of adds/moves/changes with ease.

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