

# BlackBerry 101:

## The hidden essentials



You can do much more with your BlackBerry by learning a few extra keystroke combinations and digging a little deeper into the device's range of functions. These shortcuts and other pointers will help you get the most bang from your favourite device.

An awful lot of stuff is crammed onto the average BlackBerry, and with only 45 keys to access all of it, many keys do double- and even triple-duty. But while much of the basic functionality of a BlackBerry is reasonably obvious, various keyboard shortcuts and functions just aren't so apparent.

That is a real shame because some of them are downright useful – if not essential – for making maximum use of this device.

For better or worse, I recently became a full-fledged BlackBerry user and want to share some of the device's features that I'm finding most useful.

*Note: I have a BlackBerry Bold (aka, the 9000 Series), so some of what I describe here will not apply, or be slightly different, on other BlackBerry models.*

### The critical keys

To start, let's all get on the same page as to the four critical keys that are mentioned many times in the following tips. To the immediate right of the trackball is the Escape key. You use it to close menus or go back one or more screens. Next to the right is the End/Power key. It ends a call or turns the device off.

To the immediate left of the trackball is the Menu key, which opens the menus that are within all the BlackBerry applications. Next to the left is the Send key, which starts or dials a phone call.

### Typing tricks

You want to make the most of that microscopic keyboard, right? It works reasonably well once you get used to it,

but here are some cool typing tricks you might not know about that will save you some time and effort in formatting and the like:

- To type a capital letter, press and hold the appropriate letter key.
- To type an accented letter, hold the letter key down, roll the trackball to view the available accented letters, and release to insert the one you want.
- To turn on Number Lock, hold the Alt key and press the left Shift key.
- To turn on Caps Lock, hold the Alt key and press the right Shift key.
- Pressing either Shift key will turn Number or Caps Lock off.
- To insert a period, press the Space key twice, and you'll find that the next letter will automatically be capitalized, too.
- To insert a period or at sign (@) into an e-mail address, just press Space.
- To type a symbol, press the Symbol key and type the letter that appears below the symbol on your screen (read this one twice so you don't miss the point – i.e., you don't have to scroll and click on the symbols you want, you just use the letters instead).

### Cut, copy and paste tips

Anything that helps you avoid unnecessary typing on that tiny BlackBerry keyboard is a lifesaver. Never retype text that is already on your device. Use the following steps to cut, copy and paste text in the same way you do on a computer.

To highlight a line of text, press Shift and roll the trackball up or down. To highlight text character by character, press Shift and roll the trackball left or right. Note: If you want to cancel a text selection, press the Escape key.

Now, to cut the highlighted text when typing, press Shift + Backspace/Delete. To copy highlighted text when typing, press Alt and click the trackball. And to

paste highlighted text when typing, press Shift and click the trackball.

### How to massacre e-mails and manage messages

Most of us spend the majority of our BlackBerry time reading e-mails – lots and lots of them. So here are some tips to help you more quickly deal with all those messages.

When you are within a message, try the following:

- To reply, press R. To reply to all, press L.
- To forward the message, press F.
- To view a contact's e-mail address, highlight the contact and press Q.
- To view the display name again, press Q.

When you want to move around a message list, use these tips:

- To move down one screen at a time, press Space. To move up one screen at a time, press Shift + Space.
- To move to the top of a message list, press T. To move to the bottom of the list, Press B.
- To move to the next date, press N. To move to the previous date, press P.
- To move to the next related message, press J. To move to the previous one, press K.

And here are more tips for when you are in a message list:

- To open a highlighted message, press the Enter key.
- To compose a new message, press C.
- To mark a message as opened or unopened, press Alt + U.
- To view only received messages, press Alt + I.
- To view only sent messages, press Alt + O.
- To view only voice-mail messages, press Alt + V.

- To view only call logs, press Alt + P.
- To view all your messages again, press Escape.

### There's a spell checker!

Bad spellers, rejoice: You can check spelling in a message, memo, task or appointment by pressing the Menu key and selecting Check Spelling. You can accept or ignore suggested spellings, and you can even add words to a custom dictionary (and you should do this whenever you're prompted to, so you aren't asked again next time).

To stop Spell Check, press the Menu key and click Cancel Spell Check.

### Mastering the mute key

The Mute key's name says it all – it kills the ring. Good to know that when your BlackBerry rings in a location it shouldn't, there's no need to fuss about pressing keys on the keyboard. But the Mute key also has a hidden function. Pressing and holding it puts the device in Standby mode.

In Standby mode, key presses and trackball clicks won't wake up the device or turn on the screen. This is a great way to ensure that you don't accidentally make a phone call or waste battery power when you put the device in your pocket or purse.

To turn Standby off, click the Mute key again. Note that in Standby mode incoming calls will wake up the device and it will ring or vibrate as it is configured to do.

Also, some BlackBerry cases and belt clips have a tiny magnet in them. (Look for a circle about the size of a dime near where the bottom back of the device will sit when in the case or clip.) This magnet trips a switch that turns off the screen and disables the keys – so there is no need to manually put the device into Standby mode.

### Right-clicking with your trackball

Right mouse clicks let you jump to menu settings or options on your computer. The clever BlackBerry programmers have set up similar abilities on the trackball. For example, one quick click on the device's trackball will let you do the following:

- Send a message that you have finished typing.
- Dial a number when you highlight it in Call Log.
- Use the Send Using field to pick the address you want to send a message from (if your BlackBerry is set up to use more than one e-mail address).

### Disabling your wireless transmit

Okay, let's be honest here, how many of you can actually obey the airplane pilot at takeoff when you're asked to disable your wireless transmit? For those of us that don't know how to do this (and I will admit, it wasn't obvious to me), click on Manage Connections on your home screen, and then click on Turn All Connections Off.

To turn things back on, do the same thing but select Restore Connections.

### Tricks for outgoing and incoming phone calls

Digging around through your contacts list to make a phone call takes too many keystrokes. To initiate calls faster, simply type any part of a contact name or phone number on your BlackBerry's home screen. The software will scan your address book and present you with the names that match the letters or number you have entered. Highlight the contact you want to call and press Send.

On the incoming side, there are certain calls you don't want to miss – such as ones from your spouse, partner or kids. Why not create a specific ring tone for each of them so you never miss their calls again? To do this, open the contact in your Address Book, click the trackball and select Edit, then click the trackball again and select Add Custom Phone Tone. Next, click the trackball to open a list of all available ring tones. Select one and save the change to the contact.

In addition, since you can easily take any picture with your BlackBerry camera, how about this? Take a picture of a contact and associate it with that contact to make that picture pop up when that person calls. To do this, just take the picture and then click on the Set As icon. It's 3-D caller ID!

### Voice dialing

Voice dialing might seem like a gimmick, but it's indispensable for safety and ease of dialing while driving. Here's how to use it. Press the Voice Dial button – it's on the left side – and you'll hear the prompt "Say a command." Wait for the beep and then say "Call" and the name or number you want to call (e.g., "Call 416-598-5863"). And this is cool: If you have more than one number stored for a person – such as a work number as well as a mobile number – simply indicate which one you want by saying "work" or "mobile" after the person's name (e.g., "Call Jim Calloway Work.")

You can also dial extensions using voice commands. Enable this in Phone Options, Smart Dialing. Then, in your contacts, you can put "x5864," which will let the Voice Dial function understand you when you say "Call extension 5863."

You can also check several things via the Voice Dial function, including the battery charge (say "Check battery"), signal strength, status, coverage and, last but not least, your BlackBerry phone number. Can you say "Check my phone number?"

And finally, these miscellaneous pointers for voice dialing: You can tweak several voice dialing options and settings to better fit your personal preferences (go to Device Options, Voice Dialing). And if you're the international type, you can configure it to support other languages. Also to note: Voice dialing doesn't work with all Bluetooth headsets.

### Try a few at a time

This column contains tons of tips: Don't try to learn them all at once. Identify the two or three that will initially be most helpful for you. Learn those first, then pick a few more. In no time at all, you will be flying around your BlackBerry keyboard and crunching e-mail messages faster than you ever have before.

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