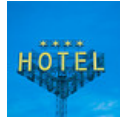


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By Quentin Fottrell



Research in Motion (RIMM) posted its [first quarterly loss](#) in more than seven years Thursday. Business is now so rough for the smartphone pioneer that wireless carriers are effectively giving away Blackberrys for less than the troubled company's \$8 share price.

The Blackberry runs a distant third place to both Apple's iPhone and the vast array of Android handsets, studies show. iPhones account for about a third of the U.S. smartphones, Androids make up around 48%, while the once dominant Blackberry now represents less than 12% of the market, according to Nielsen data. "RIM is doing everything it can to stay relevant, but it can't compete with iPhone and Android," says Rick Singer, CEO of [GreatApps.com](#). "Network carriers are trying to give something away that few people really want." (RIM declined to comment.)



Getty Images

And though some investors had pinned hopes on the RIM's new BlackBerry 10, the company said Thursday its revamped device won't be released until 2013. In the meantime, carriers keep rolling out deals for free Blackberrys. Verizon Wireless is currently offering \$50 off any Blackberry model, and has a range of packages offering \$299 [Blackberrys for free](#) with two-year contracts. AT&T offers the \$400 [Blackberry Torch for one cent](#) with a two-year contract. On July 10, Boost Mobile, a pre-paid division of Sprint, will also offer the [Blackberry Curve with no contract](#) for \$100 and unlimited talk, text, and messages for as little as \$30-a-month. Another plan offers unlimited text, voice and data for \$60 per month.

Customers continue to ditch old Blackberrys for rival smartphones, studies show.

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Nearly 40% of iPhone users were former Blackberry and Android owners, according to recent research from Consumer Intelligent Partners. In fact, used Blackberrys are being sold online for less than the price of an [iPhone case](#). On eBay, the [Blackberry Curve sells for roughly \\$10](#). By contrast, most iPhones start at \$200 on resale sites. "The iPhone is wiping the floor with Android and BlackBerry in terms of resale value," according to a recent [study by Priceonomics](#), a price comparison site.

Despite the bargain basement prices, experts say customers should be wary of purchasing the phones as RIM may not regain anything resembling its once dominant position in the market. The company confused consumers with the sheer number of models on the market, Sutherland says. Some Blackberry models have a mini-keyboard, while others have a dual combination of keyboards and touch-screen – a hybrid of the original Blackberry and iPhone. Consumers are more excited about the latest iPhone or Samsung Galaxy, Sutherland says, and are longer holding their breath for the long-awaited and much-delayed Blackberry 10.



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