

# RIM Welcomes Android Apps to PlayBook

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It looks like Research In Motion (RIM) has managed to find a way around the application problem for its BlackBerry PlayBook tablet. The company announced plans yesterday to greatly expand the application ecosystem for the BlackBerry PlayBook by launching two optional "app players" that provide an application run-time environment for BlackBerry Java apps and Android 2.3 apps.

These new players will allow users to download BlackBerry Java apps and Android apps from BlackBerry App World and run them on their BlackBerry PlayBook. In addition, RIM will shortly release the native SDK for the BlackBerry PlayBook enabling C/C++ application development on the BlackBerry Tablet OS.

For game-specific developers, RIM is also announcing that it has gained support from two leading game development tooling companies, allowing developers to use the cross-platform game engines from Ideaworks Labs and Unity Technologies to bring their games to the BlackBerry PlayBook.

Having an ample number of applications available for download at launch for any new piece of hardware, whether smartphone or tablet, has become a top priority for OEMs. The move by RIM greatly increases the number of apps available to those who purchase a PlayBook when the device is released in the U.S. and Canada on April 19.

"The upcoming addition of BlackBerry Java and Android apps for the BlackBerry PlayBook on BlackBerry App World will provide our users with an even greater choice of apps and will also showcase the versatility of the platform," said Mike Lazaridis, RIM's president and co-CEO.

The new optional app players will be available for download from BlackBerry App World and will be placed in a secure "sandbox" on the BlackBerry PlayBook where the BlackBerry Java or Android apps can be run.

Ideaworks Labs, developers of the multi-platform Airplay SDK, also announced that developers will be able to use the Airplay SDK to develop and deploy native games and enterprise applications on the BlackBerry PlayBook tablet.

The move means that the BlackBerry Tablet OS would immediately be open to tens of thousands of developers who have applications developed in standard C or C++ and can now deploy these to the Playbook.

Going forward, developers will repackage, code sign and submit their BlackBerry Java and Android apps to BlackBerry App World. Once approved, the apps will be distributed through BlackBerry App World.

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RIM said it expects the new app players to be available from BlackBerry App World this summer. More information and demonstrations of the new app players will be shared at BlackBerry World. The BlackBerry Tablet OS NDK will be available in beta later this year and will also be showcased at BlackBerry World.

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