

BlackBerry 10 Lands Security Certification

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While still months from launch, Research In Motion's forthcoming BlackBerry 10 operating system has met key government security standards.

BlackBerry 10 is now certified under the Federal Information Processing Standard (FIPS) 140-2. The certification ensures organizations that data stored on smartphones can be properly secured and stored.

Michael K. Brown, vice president of security and product management at RIM, said that achieving FIPS 140-2 certification means that BlackBerry 10 is ready to meet the strict security requirements of government agencies and enterprises at launch.

"What differentiates BlackBerry is that it integrates end-to-end security, and includes certified encryption algorithms for data at rest and data in transit," Brown said in a statement. "No other mobile solution has achieved the level of security accreditation that the BlackBerry solution has."

The certification comes at a time when RIM has been losing some of its core government customers to competitors like Apple. Just last month, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement said it would phase out its use of BlackBerry smartphones in favor of Apple's iOS smartphones and tablets.

The FIPS 140 standard is issued by the National Institute of Standards and Technology and developed through the Cryptographic Module Validation Program, which certifies products for use by U.S. government agencies and regulated industries that collect, store, transfer, share and disseminate sensitive information.

In the past, RIM's security and encryption has been seen as almost too good in many parts of the world.

In 2010, RIM squared off with India over its encryption technology. Indian law enforcement said the technology did not allow for lawful interception BlackBerry communications thus thwarting investigations into terrorism and other crimes.

Security certification is another milestone on the way to market for BlackBerry 10, but many wonder whether RIM's new QNX-based BlackBerry 10 devices are too little, too late in the ultra-competitive smartphone market.

The company has seen multiple delays of the new devices and will now miss out on the holiday quarter with an early 2013 launch.

Meanwhile, BlackBerry controls just 4.3 percent of the global smartphone market, down from 9.5 percent a year earlier, according to research firm IDC. Android now owns 75 percent of the smartphone market, while Apple took a 15 percent cut in

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