







ERIC BOUVE/TIMARNA LARSON

## WAITING IT OUT

Forget the New Year's Eve party! Many Y2K professionals want to be at the office at midnight to see how their efforts turn out. Page 46



PETER FERGUSON

## AFTER THE WALL

Ten years after the collapse of the Berlin Wall, IT in Central Europe is catching up to the ways of the West. Page 42

# COMPUTERWORLD THIS WEEK

NOVEMBER 8, 1999

## NEWS

4

- 6 MEGAMERGER POSES** huge SAP R/3 integration challenge for Warner-Lambert, American Home Products.
- 8 LEVI BACKS OFF** online clothing sales, citing channel conflict; plans to sell through J. C. Penney and Macy's sites.
- 10 DIGITAL SIGNATURES** approach legal status as Congress tries to add provisions allowing them, while protecting consumers.
- 12 MICROSOFT REVEALS** complex pricing for Win 2000, with price breaks for competitive upgrades. Remains mum on cost of high-end version.
- 14 CAPACITY-ON-DEMAND** plan from Sun and others may let users buy big servers, but pay only for power they use.
- 16 WHITE HOUSE** gears up for Y2K with command center to contain panic.
- OPINION**
- 30 LOGISTICS POSE** the biggest problem for e-commerce, not technology, John Gantz warns.
- 32 WEB BUSINESSES RISK** federal ire and regulation if they don't act on privacy, other issues, Bill Laberis charges.

### MORE

- Editorial/Letters ..... 30, 31
- How to Contact CW ..... 84
- Shark Tank ..... 86
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## BUSINESS

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- 38 BOEING REPLACES** clipboards with Palm IIIx handhelds to improve quality of military planes.
- 38 TESTS FAIL** to find ERP weaknesses if they're too cursory or if they check only a few modules.
- 40 DOT-COMS TURN** to Internet maintenance companies that can actively monitor e-commerce sites to make sure they stay fast and available.
- OPINION**
- 41 IT MANAGERS** lack communication skills in some organizations even though their job is to align IT with the business, gripes Peter G. W. Keen.
- 44 JOB-SEEKERS** demand the most ridiculous things. In a hot job market, even individual contributors sometimes ask for perks a top exec might not rate.
- 48 TWENTY COMPANIES** snap up 60% of all H-1B visa professionals; how do you get your share?
- QUICKSTUDY**
- 52 INVENTORY ALLOCATION** saves money, reducing product delays and the need for overstocked product discounts — and IT is a primary factor in how to make it work.
- 54 READ THE FINE PRINT** in licenses, especially if your vendor was recently acquired, cautions Joe Auer, who helped one client dodge a bullet on a faulty Y2K warranty.

## TECHNOLOGY

57

- 58 LESS EXPENSIVE**, easier-to-use product data management software is helping more customers link to their business partners.
- 58 TURNING AN INTRANET** into an extranet means beefing up security and prettying up the user interface.
- 61 NETWORK INTEGRITY** and Imation team up to offer real-time backup and storage services over IP connections as low as 56K bit/sec.
- EMERGING COMPANIES**
- 62 START-UP NEXPRISE'S** ipTeam claims to expedite Web-based collaborative engineering and design.
- EXEC TECH**
- 63 WHICH WIRELESS** e-mail device is right for you? We check out new models from Sprint PCS, Palm and Research in Motion.
- QUICKSTUDY**
- 65 HOW SPEECH** recognition works — and why sometimes it doesn't.
- FLASHBACK**
- 68 IN 1993**, personal digital assistants were Pretty Darn Annoying, which is why Apple's Newton crashed and burned in the marketplace.
- 70 TWO TRANSPLANTS** to Atlanta share their experiences scouting out, negotiating and landing jobs in this lucrative IT market. Both say it's the quality of life that got them hooked on Southern charm.

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ARE LIKE DOING  
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WHAT HERSHEY  
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NOW YOU'RE  
TALKING HEART,  
LIVER AND LUNG  
TRANSPLANT.

CHRIS SELLAND, AN ANALYST AT THE YANKEE GROUP IN BOSTON, ON WHY HERSHEY HIT SNAGS AFTER SQUEEZING A FOUR-YEAR SAP IMPLEMENTATION INTO 30 MONTHS. SEE PAGE 1.

www.computerworld.com

# DOCKET ALARM

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# Three New Wireless E-Mail Devices

BY DAVID STROM

**T**RAVELING EXECUTIVES looking to cut the cord on their e-mail habit have lots of choices these days. I looked at three of the latest wireless e-mail devices — the Palm VII, the Touchpoint phone with a built-in Web browser from Sprint PCS and an updated two-way pager from Research in Motion Ltd. All three do more than wireless e-mail, of course: You can jot down notes, keep track of your schedule and, in the case of Touchpoint, make cellular phone calls.

Although each unit has its frustrations and problems, all are improvements over the trio of devices I reviewed Feb. 15.

I've used one form or another of wireless e-mail for more than eight years and suggest that you consider the following:

- Can you get e-mail on these devices with the same corporate e-mail account that you use on your desktop? Most devices require some effort and some combination of software and services to do this.
- How much

skill is required to type a typical reply message? None of the devices is as handy as a full-size keyboard. You should try one out before buying to make sure you're comfortable with its controls and key layouts.

- Do these devices work indoors and in out-of-the-way places? All three I tested work best outdoors and in major metropolitan areas. The farther inside buildings and away from the city you take them, the worse the radio reception gets. This is just physics.

■ Is the price reasonable and predictable? All the devices come with an array of monthly service plans and fees. Make sure you understand the pricing plan you need up front.

In an ideal world, each device would come with everything you need to extract e-mail from your existing corporate account. However, these devices aren't there yet. Each comes with its own e-mail account, separate from your existing corporate e-mail account. If your corporate e-mail system has message-forwarding features, you can turn that on when you leave town and have your mail forwarded to your device.

I took all three devices with me on several business trips and also carried them all over town to determine coverage capabilities and battery life. I also connected them to a Windows NT desktop and tested their synchronization software

and other utilities. Of the three, the Palm offers the most promise: It has the largest and most active developer community and the best software. However, to be a really effective Palm user, you will need to learn its Graffiti scripting language to compose messages. ▶

*Strom is a freelance reviewer in Port Washington, N.Y.*



## Palm VII

Palm Computing Inc., a subsidiary of 3Com Corp. [www.palm.com](http://www.palm.com)

**Wireless service:** BellSouth Wireless Data

**Price:** \$499, plus various plans (\$10 to \$40 per month, depending on volume) and \$10 activation fee

**Keyboard/screen:** Touch screen with Graffiti script; 3.5-in. diagonal Palm screen

**Batteries:** Two AAA batteries last for two or more weeks

**Available:** In New York since May; nationwide since October

The Palm VII has a variety of ways to read and respond to e-mail. It comes with its own built-in e-mail software, called iMessenger. However, it doesn't have as many features as I'd like, such as filtering, scheduled forwarding and mass message deletes. For example, you have to log in to the Palm.Net Service Web site to delete multiple messages at once. To obtain these features and to read

your existing e-mail account, you will need to make use of either Visto Corp., Yahoo Mail or MonkeyMail services. Another choice is to use ThinAirApps.com's ThinAirMail client software, a free product that is my favorite of the current alternatives available for wireless e-mail.

No matter which service or software you use, you have to use Graffiti to compose messages. It will take a while to learn this language, but it's easier than typing responses on the Touchpoint phone's keypad.

## Blackberry Interactive Pager

Research in Motion Ltd. [www.blackberry.net](http://www.blackberry.net)

**Wireless service:** BellSouth Wireless Data (850 model uses Ardis)

**Price:** \$399, plus \$40 per month for unlimited usage

**Keyboard/screen:** Full QWERTY keyboard but very small keys; screen has up to eight-line display

**Battery:** One AA lasts up to three days

**Available:** Now

The Blackberry has the best keyboard of the three, with a full typewriter layout of keys, albeit only 3 in. wide. Given its size, I could type fairly easily and compose longer messages than on the other devices. It comes with relatively weak desktop synchronization software, because you can't synchronize your e-mails yet between the device and your desktop. It also has the most confusing set of models.

There's one that works only with Microsoft Exchange servers, another that works with Internet e-mail and a third that runs over American Mobile's Ardis wireless networks. This



latter model has a \$60-per-month usage plan and works with e-mail accounts through American Mobile's eLink Agent.

GoAmerica Communications Corp. ([www.goamerica.net](http://www.goamerica.net)) offers e-mail access for varying fees and will sell you a reduced-price Blackberry as well.

## Touchpoint Phone With Wireless Web

Sprint PCS (manufactured by Denso Corp.) [www.sprintpcs.com](http://www.sprintpcs.com)

**Wireless service:** Sprint PCS with service from Phone.com Inc.

**Price:** Various pricing plans for both voice and data start at \$10 per month, plus price of phone

**Keyboard/screen:** Seven lines, with 12-button phone keys with Tegic script

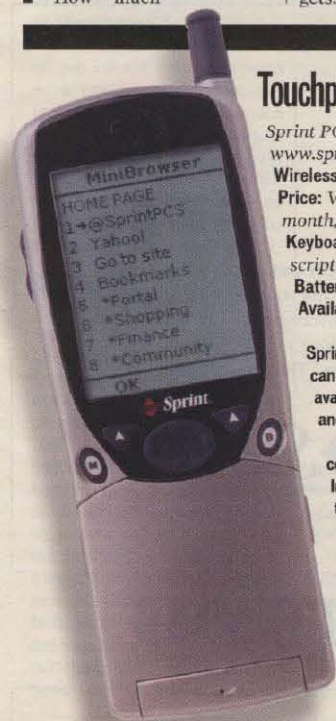
**Batteries:** Rechargeable; lasts up to two days

**Available:** Now

Sprint PCS has introduced its Wireless Web service, through which you can browse some Web sites using your cellular phone. Several phones are available for this service, including ones from Motorola Inc., Nokia Corp. and Qualcomm Inc.

I tested a phone from Denso called Touchpoint. Any of these phones come ready to read e-mail: You can set up a free account with Yahoo Inc. and have it collect your corporate e-mail. And if you don't need to reply to your messages, you can forward or copy mail to Sprint's short messaging feature (every Sprint phone is equipped to receive e-mail at [phonenumber@messaging.sprintpcs.com](mailto:phonenumber@messaging.sprintpcs.com)). I wanted to use the phone to read my mail at Infinite Technologies Inc.'s Mail-AndNews.com site, but Infinite is still working out the bugs with Sprint.

Built in to the phone is software from Tegic Communications Inc. called T9. Because you have only 12 buttons to key in any text, Tegic has developed a way to predict what you're going to type and to facilitate the process. Although it's no substitute for a QWERTY keyboard, it does a credible job.





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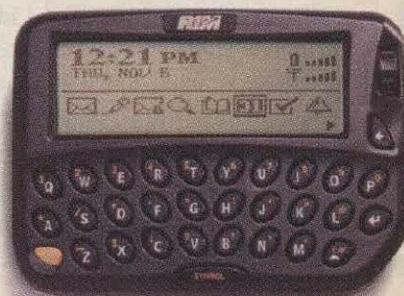
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