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Search

Research in Motion Inter@ctive Pager 900

Dublin Core

Title

Research in Motion Inter@ctive Pager 900

Subject

hardware: mobile communications device

Description

Historical Context

The Inter@ctive Pager (models 800 and 900) was the first hand-held communications device designed and built by Research In Motion Limited (RIM, now Blackberry), a Canadian company founded in 1984 and based in Waterloo, Ontario. The Inter@ctive was announced in September 1996 during the Personal Communications Services conference (PCS'96) in San Francisco. The pager was the forerunner of RIM's successful line of BlackBerry smartphones.

In the 1990s, pagers (small, portable, wireless communications devices) were used to display simple messages or alert users to messages and events. The first and, in 1995, the only two-way pager--the Motorola Tango--also allowed users to reply to messages with a limited number of canned responses.

Taking advantage of rapidly expanding wireless telecommunications infrastructure, the Inter@ctive represented a new generation of "interactive" pagers by incorporating the benefits of email, paging, fax, and the Internet into one device. As a two-way pager, it was designed to receive and send messages. Furthermore, it offered a calendar, address book, task manager, real time clock, and an alarm function.

Nicknamed "Bullfrog" (due to its rather bulky design), the Inter@ctive was a data-only device (no voice support) that run on the Ericsson's Mobitex and DataTAC networks in North America. The device featured a scroll wheel, a small QWERTY-style keyboard, and an LCD display for easier messaging as well as for entry and organization of data. It was provided with enough storage space for saving hundreds of names, e-mail addresses, fax numbers, incoming and outgoing messages in its calendar, address book, and task manager.

At the time of its introduction, the Inter@ctive Pager was viewed as delivering the complete wireless communications solution, as an "e-mail on your belt", a device always on and always connected. It was named Top Product for 1997 in the category of "Innovative Devices: Voice and/or Data" by *Wireless for Corporate User* magazine. By early 1998, the company had signed a contract to supply IBM with

Inter@ctive pagers for use by its field service representatives. Other notable customers included Panasonic Corp., Mobile Integrated Technologies, and Telxon Corp. The Inter@ctive Pager was followed by RIM's Inter@ctive 850 (or 950, depending on network) pager announced in July 1999, by the Wireless Handheld 857 (or 957, depending on network) introduced in April 2000, and finally by RIM's first smartphone--the BlackBerry 5810--unveiled in March 2002.

Technical Specifications:

- processor: Intel 80186 EB
- memory: 650KB Flash ROM, 128KB Static RAM
- message storage: 100KB received messages, 5KB canned responses
- ports and connectors: RS-232C-compliant serial port, specialty mobile phone connector, interface adapter for cable
- display: LCD, monochrome, 4 line by 30 character text
- controls: keypad with cursor buttons, function buttons, and QWERTY-style keyboard with embedded numeric keypad
- networks: DataTAC and Mobitex
- Interface protocol: support for Native Control Language 1.2, MASC, and RIM's Radio Access Protocol
- power: 2 x AA removable batteries

External Design:

- housing: clamshell, ruggedized, plastic housing
- dimensions: 76mm(L) x 99mm(W) x 35mm(H)
- weight: 277 grams (without batteries)

Main Features:

- sending and receiving Internet e-mails,
- sending and receiving pager messages
- sending FAX transmissions from the pager to any FAX machine
- sending text to speech messages to a telephone
- data transfer to and from an external computer through data port
- configurable message notification: audible beeper and mechanical vibrator
- real time clock

Software:

- communication software to enable device configuration and data transfer through serial port
- third-party custom applications developed using RIM's Software Developer's Kit (SDK)

The museum has Inter@ctive models 800 and 900 as well as *Inter@ctive Pager User's Guide*, Research in Motion, 1997.

Creator

Research in Motion

Date

1996-

Coverage

North America, 2nd half of the 1990s

Files



Tags

[blackberry](#), [pager](#), [RIM](#)

Citation

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