

BlackBerry app world: thumbs up or down?

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BlackBerry maker Research In Motion is inching closer to opening up its new mobile applications store. The company unveiled a new storefront last night. Users can register to be notified when the store opens up. They can also set up PayPal accounts to get ready to use the store.

Clearly, since the store is still closed, it's too early to judge. But a couple of things we already know about the BlackBerry App World have given me pause. First off, the applications sold through the site will have to either be free, or cost at least \$2.99.

That's way more than the average price of 99 cents at the iTunes App Store, which caters to iPhone owners. It seems like a very high price to charge in a recession, at a time when competitors who've launched months earlier are charging less.

Secondly, I am not sure that requiring customers to register with PayPal (it's the only payment method accepted at the App World at launch) is a good idea. Many consumers, myself included, prefer to use credit cards. That's the standard method of payment at iTunes and other mobile app stores like Handango.

Third, there's apparently a \$200 fee that developers have to pay RIM to register and submit their first 10 applications.

Apple charges \$99 for its standard developer program. RIM's higher rate could turn away some developers, such as college students who've been enthusiastic contributors to both iTunes and Android Market, a store that peddles applications for the T-Mobile G1.

Finally, some BlackBerry owners will find that some older phone models, such as 7290, aren't supported. Do you see these as issues that are big enough to hold BlackBerry App World back? Or do you think that RIM is on the right track?

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