

# How to...

## Design training for BlackBerrys



With their apparent ubiquity amongst office staff, their ease of use, and their mobile connectivity, BlackBerry phones make an attractive platform for e-learning. Here's our list of things to consider when designing training for this new and different learning environment.

### 1 Choose the right development model

BlackBerry offers different ways of developing programs for use on its phones. You can use their Web Development approach to create light weight web based tools that users access via their mobile internet. Alternatively you can use BlackBerry's Java Development environment for fully functional applications that can be installed on the user's phone.

### 2 Keep things simple

Remember users will be viewing a small screen and will have to scroll to see more than a dozen lines of text. Reading through lengthy text can be dull and disorientating. Keep text short and pertinent. Equally, keep interactions effective, but fuss free. This doesn't mean things have to be boring; in fact brevity can lead to more engaging content.

### 3 Use what BlackBerry gives you

There are many controls that are native to a BlackBerry that you can use for free. Things like drop down menus, buttons, gauges and sliders are part of the development toolkit and it makes sense to use these rather than reinventing the wheel. This will make your application intuitive to use and ensure much of your testing is already done for you.

### 4 Utilise images smartly

Size and space may be limited, but by using images smartly you can still produce good looking programs. Use slim headers and footers to frame the page and lift content. Produce images with gradients and transparency which can seamlessly merge into static background colours. Design images that can be reused by resizing gracefully.

### 5 Test it everywhere

Testing on BlackBerrys has its own challenges, but can be managed successfully using the tools that are available. Even within the BlackBerry product range there are big differences in the nature of the phones. Luckily BlackBerry provides emulators for all its phones, so you can test your application on any device just by using your PC.