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Canada

THE IMPACT OF THE BLACKBERRY ON COUPLE RELATIONSHIPS

By

Jurgen Dieter Czechowsky

Masters of Theological Studies, Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, 1993

DISSERTATION

Submitted to Waterloo Lutheran Seminary

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for

the Doctor of Ministry in Pastoral Counselling and Marriage and Family Studies

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Abstract

This research focused on the BlackBerry developed by Research In Motion and its impact on couple relationships. The areas examined were couple communication, time spent together, and marital satisfaction using grounded theory, a demographic survey, the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale and interviews. Ten couples participated and reported that the BlackBerry offered many practical applications for their relationship. The research showed that communication via the BlackBerry resulted in fewer face-to-face interactions. There was no increase in time together and for some time decreased. Marital satisfaction had increased for two couples, decreased for two couples with no influence for the rest of the couples. The research revealed that for some couples where both partners had BlackBerrys, the mobile device facilitated the resolution of disagreements via email.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The focus of this research “The Impact of the BlackBerry on Couple Relationships”, discussed in this dissertation arose from my clinical work with couples. Couples in the process of marital counselling mentioned at times that technology, especially mobile technologies, such as the BlackBerry, could be a source of disagreement or tension in their relationship. However, no observations or comments were made about the benefits of mobile technology. As a result of this clinical experience with couples the researcher began to wonder about the advantages and disadvantages of mobile technologies. Some of these questions were: Could there be a correlation between the use of mobile technologies, such as the BlackBerry, and marital satisfaction? Did the use of these devices enhance marital relationships or were they seen as a hindrance to enhancing marital relationships? Could mobile technologies actually increase the time spent together by couples and live up to their promises of being time saving devices? How did couples communicate using these devices and did their communication increase or decrease? Lastly, could the information gained from this research contribute to enhancing the lives of couples?

This research explored these questions through those, with BlackBerrys in their lives, who participated in the study. The research was conducted using grounded theory, a demographic survey and the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale to pursue the question what is the impact of the Blackberry on couple relationships?

Chapter 2

Literature Review

More studies are being done now than ever before on the impact of technology on families and work. Nevertheless, little research appears in the literature regarding technology's impact on couple relationships. The focus of any study on the impact of technologies could look at a variety of technologies; desk computers, cell phones, notebooks, laptops or smart phones but the choice of technology for this study is a particular smart phone, the BlackBerry, manufactured by Research In Motion, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. Smart phones can function as a personal information manager (PIM) or a personal digital assistant (PDA), can handle software for specific applications, take pictures and video clips, have navigational capabilities such as GPS, provide instant access to emails through "push technology" without connecting to the internet, and now enable the user to watch TV. BlackBerrys usually have a QWERTY keyboard, which is the same as standard typewriters and keyboards used in North America today.

Only the BlackBerry device appears to stand out, epitomizing the current trend in mobile technologies called smart phones and meets the criteria of the growing "must have" electronic gadgets. Even the recent launch of the Apple's iPhone seems to have had a limited impact on RIM. "Friday's [July 11, 2008] launch of Apple Inc.'s (AAPL) latest iPhone device had a "limited initial impact" on sales of Research In Motion Ltd.'s (RIMM) BlackBerry smartphone, according to a survey by UBS Investment Research."

(SmartMoney.com 2008, retrieved Aug 5, 2008 from

[http://www.smartmoney.com/news/ON/index.cfm?story=ON-20080714-000533-](http://www.smartmoney.com/news/ON/index.cfm?story=ON-20080714-000533-1441)

1441). The BlackBerry is experiencing exceptional growth. A spokesperson for Research in Motion in a recent press release (Feb. 21, 2008) notes:

RIM now expects net subscriber account additions for Q4 to be approximately 15-20% higher than the 1.82 million net subscriber account additions forecasted by RIM on December 20, 2007. The total BlackBerry® subscriber account base is expected to be approximately 14 million at the end of the quarter.

Middleton and Cukier (2006) stated in just three years RIM has increased their number of subscribers by 3.25 times from 2005 at which point in time they had greater than 4.3 million subscribers.

RIM describes the BlackBerry as follows:

No matter what your individual needs, a BlackBerry® solution will enable you to accomplish more by keeping you in touch with information, colleagues and friends. It consists of smartphones integrated with software that enables access to a variety of data and communication services.

Stay in touch with everything that matters to you while you're on the go with a BlackBerry smartphone. Email, phone, maps, organiser, applications, games, the Internet and more. Some smartphones even include a multi-media player and/or camera so you really have everything you need in one stylish device.

The BlackBerry solution supports leading enterprise email platforms and can be customised to meet the needs of one person or an entire enterprise, to any scale,

in any industry.

BlackBerry users know exactly where they're going in life. We're here to help you get there. (<http://na.BlackBerry.com/eng/ataglance/BlackBerry.jsp>)

According to Middleton (2007) there already exists a vast body of literature on consumer usage of mobile technology focussing much of it on mobile telephony (see, for example, Brown *et al.*, 2002; Fortunati, 2002; Gordon, 2002; Haddon, 1997; Humphreys, 2005; Katz & Askhus, 2002; Ling, 2004; Middleton, 2007; Nyiri, 2003; Oksman & Turtianinen, 2004; Peters & Allouch, 2005). Chesley (2005) indicates that a number of scholars have shown interest in the technological usage implications for family and individual functioning (Chesley 2005; Hughes & Hans, 2001; Rakow & Navarro, 1993; Watt & White, 1999,). Chesley (2005) supports the notion that there are few studies that explore the effects of technology on family and individual wellness (Papadakis & Collins, 2001). Mobile devices allow the boundaries of work and life to be blurred or as Chesley (2005) describes this blurring, the "work/family boundary permeability" (Chesley, 2005).

These devices allow users to become an extension of their work environment as they can access and respond to work 24 hours a day. It should be noted that before the availability of mobile technology, many people brought work home or worked on weekends at the office. The extension of work into one's personal life is not new, but what is new is the ability to be connected to work in many different environments and geographical settings. Towers, Duxbury and Thomas (2005) refer to mobile technologies as those devices that allow one to expand work both in the realms of time

and space, which they call “work extending technology (WET)” (2005, p. 4). Work extending technologies give the ability to be in any geographical space and time creating the potential blurring of personal and social boundaries. Work can now infiltrate all spheres of one’s life. Cousins and Robey (2005) studied four mobile individuals in an Information Technology (IT) department of a large mortgage finance company who were able to manage their work and life quite well. Middleton (2007) studied thirteen Canadian BlackBerry users representing a variety of occupations and observed “that work extension and intensification behaviours are likely to increase work-life conflict” (p. 175). Few studies, whether or not related to technology, seem to address the work-life balance and whether or not corporate policies have addressed potential issues (Kossek & Ozeki, 1999, Premeaux, Adkins & Mossholder, 2007).

Many of the studies that discuss the work-life balance do not take into consideration the extent to which mobile technologies have become part of our organizational cultures, nor how much these technologies have really created a virtual office (Middleton 2008). While some of the literature does state that mobile technologies such as the BlackBerry can influence a person’s work-life balance either positively or negatively (Davis 200; Jarvenpaa & Lang 2003; Sarker & Wells 2003; Schlosser 2002), much of the work on ‘work-life’ or ‘work-family’ does not reflect this use or how far work outside of the office has been extended (e.g. Golden, Veiga, & Simsek, 2006; Hill et al., 2003; Middleton, 2008). The nature of always being connected to mobile technologies and work extending around the clock gives the potential for an increase in conflict and work-life imbalances (Menzies, 2005;

Middleton 2008). Hislop and Axtell (2007) indicated that “an integrated approach [making work/life boundaries permeable] provided less work life balance than a segregated approach” (as cited in Middleton, 2008, p 18).

We also know that work impacts family life, and family life impacts work
Voydanoff (2005) observed that;

During the past several decades, extensive theoretical and empirical work has demonstrated that work and family are interconnected domains. This research has documented that demands and resources associated with participation in the work or family domain directly affect role quality and performance in the other domain. In addition, demands and resources in one domain are related to appraisals of conflict or facilitation across domains (p. 666).

Bringing mobile technology such as the BlackBerry into the work/family domains may then provide a resource that either adds to the quality of life or detracts from the quality of life.

Middleton (2008) recognizing the work of other researchers observes:

Work extending technologies are thought to enable improved productivity (Smith, 2005) and help workers to achieve greater balance between work and non-work environments (Cousins & Robey, 2005; Schlosser, 2002), but others suggest that this technology-enabled extension of work is invasive and counterproductive (Hallowell, 2005; Jackson, 2007, p.5)

A considerable amount of literature exists on computer and communication

devices, but few studies appear on their impact for individuals, family life and relationships (Chesley, 2005). There are studies that look at various technological devices as in Branden Hayes Henline's PhD dissertation (2006), "Technology Use and Intimacy Development in Committed Relationships: Exploring the Influence of Differentiation of Self", in which he studied 323 individuals who were "young adults in committed relationships with high access to technology" (p.108). Heline (2006) concluded:

Conjoint uses of technology have been found to be useful in building intimacy in relationships, while extensive solitary use of technology tends to cause problems in intimate relationships. Additionally, people that struggle to be differentiated and form stable satisfying relationships can benefit by using technology in ways that facilitate greater connection with an intimate partner (p. 106).

He warned of potential harmful effects by spending too much time on-line, especially with unknown people, or watching too much TV or playing video games. He noted from the study that technology could actually be used to "avoid intimacy and conflict in relationships" (p. 107).

A study by Mazmanian, Orlikowski and Yates (2006) focussing specifically on the BlackBerry, involved a financial company in which they interviewed twenty-three employees and five spouses of employees. They had two rounds of interviews, first with all twenty-eight people, then a second round of in depth interviews with sixteen employees. Their study highlighted a number of interesting "conflicting dualities in

their [employees] everyday communication practices” (p. 9). These dualities were: “continuity and asynchronicity, engagement and withdrawal, autonomy and addiction” (p. 9).

The employees interviewed in this study seemed to think that being able to keep constantly in contact (continuity) with the office was a good thing and stated that:

Others appreciate[d] the asynchronicity of the BlackBerry email, using it to choose when and how they respond to their communication. Such members batch their emails responses thus exerting a certain degree of control over the time and place of their interactions (p.12).

Engagement in the world of continuous emails allows a connectedness in a virtual world, but as the Mazmanian et al (2006) state:

This engagement comes at the cost of a concomitant withdrawal from the face-to-face interaction of the proximate situation. This local disengagement so as to engage virtually generates significant tensions for the quality of relationships both at work and home. It also has implications for work/personal boundaries, increasing stress and extending work concerns into almost all possible micro-moments of everyday life (p. 16).

Most employees felt that the BlackBerry had given them a great deal of autonomy to make choices to stay at work or engage in some other activity, such as a family activity because they were “connected” (Mazmanian et al, 2006, p. 15-16). However, it also produced paradoxical consequences, in particular, the increased

autonomy comes at the cost of shifting the community's expectations of individuals' availability, thus escalating their commitment to stay connected, and generating what some have called an "addiction" to BlackBerrys" (Mazmanian et al, 2006, p. 16).

Hence the current term coined for BlackBerrys as "Crackberrys". As one spouse in the study observed, "I think that they're addicted to the idea that someone needs them all the time. That they can be important to someone and that things can't go smoothly unless they're involved" (Mazmanian et al, 2006, p. 18).

Mazmanian et al (2006) suggests that the checking and sending of emails produces more emails which in turn produces more emails which some compulsive individuals have to answer therefore, you have "a self-reinforcing loop" (p.19).

The study revealed that family members and friends often resented the presence of the BlackBerry and experienced the person using the BlackBerry as not paying attention. It often interfered with personal and quiet time and hence "reduced opportunities for downtime and reflection, possibly increasing stress and burnout in the long term" (Mazmanian et al, 2006, p. 20).

This study reinforced the idea that the use of the BlackBerry has many benefits, but that its use can also have detrimental effects. Many people do not think about these detrimental effects, such as constantly answering emails, and they may not even be aware of the "self-reinforcing loop" (Mazmanian et al, 2006, p. 19) in which they are caught.

The theme of duality is further supported in an article by Jarvenpaa and Lang

(2005) “Managing the Paradoxes of Mobile Technology”, in which the authors examined “the experiences of mobile technology users in Hong Kong, Japan, Finland and the United States” (p. 7) using a focus group methodology. They identified eight paradox themes:

1. Empowerment/Enslavement Paradox. The user has a new found sense of control and “allows people to take charge anytime, wherever they are, whether it concerns business, family, or friends” (p. 10), however, on the other hand you cannot get away from those “with whom you would presently rather not communicate” (p.11).

2. Independence/Dependence Paradox. The user can be connected without the limitations of time and space, but this very independence created a dependence on the device itself. People found it quite difficult to break the “always on” habit they had acquired and admitted quite bluntly that they had become dependent on total connectivity”, (p. 12) so much so that some had anxious moments or frustration if they did not have their device with them.

3. Fulfills Needs/Creates Needs Paradox. While the device provides solutions to a user’s problem, ie: being able to talk in public places, it created a need for privacy, as some participants noted that people could hear what they had to say (p. 13).

4. Competence/Incompetence Paradox. The user feels competent in being able to do many things that previously were limiting and now create a new set of issues when learning a new device or a new service that does not function as perceived it should.

Comments from participants indicated that if they were unsuccessful in trying a service

they often did not try again. (p. 15).

5. Planning/Improvisation Paradox. While users can use their mobile device to schedule and plan, often what happens is that scheduling a meeting becomes a flurry of emails back and forth actually hindering the effective scheduling of meetings. The study revealed that “some people seem to lose the skill to plan ahead and simply “are not able to make appointments in advance anymore.” Several participants described situations in which vague planning of a meeting led to numerous changes and improvisations, resulting in extra coordination efforts, modified agendas, and, in the end, increased lateness, leading to less time spent together” (p. 15).

6. Engaging/Disengaging Paradox. Participants noted that while mobile devices allowed one to engage in conversations they also were disengaging, ie: phone or device ringing in the middle of a conversation, “less family life and social interaction” and fewer “face-to-face social activities” (p. 17).

7. Public/Private Paradox. Participants noted that conversations that in the past were considered private, were now public, whether that was on buses, trains, or planes. It appeared that for a number of them this was disturbing (p. 17).

8. Illusion/Disillusion Paradox. Participants often had certain expectations of their providers of mobile technology such as the BlackBerry and looked forward to the promises they made, only to discover the coverage was often limited, restricted, or would not work under certain circumstances. Often what appears to be an upgrade by the provider sometimes was disappointing ie: accessing the web on a cellphone was not

the same as access on a desktop computer (p. 17).

Jarvenpaa and Lang (2005) study's supports the work of Mazmanian et al (2006), and offers some insight into the complexity of issues facing mobile device users.

On the RIM website are a number of testimonies from BlackBerry users (See Appendix A). A number of themes emerged from these testimonies:

- 1) Accessibility - the ability to contact anyone, anywhere.
- 2) Responsiveness - the ability to respond to family, work or clients via email or phone unhampered by physical or geographic locations.
- 3) Increase of time spent with family.
- 4) Control of life and destiny.
- 5) Loss of control without the BlackBerry.
- 6) Working on business while in the presence of family.
- 7) Controlling the BlackBerry and not letting it control you.
- 8) Participating in a parental role at a distance.

These themes paint a positive picture of the BlackBerry, but they also raise questions. Can one really parent from a distance? What does it take to become disciplined in using the BlackBerry so it does not control you? Is there a decrease in face-to-face interactions in our culture and what are the long range implications of this decrease? If one is physically present to another individual though working on work

how satisfied is the other individual in the relationship? Does communicating by a BlackBerry satisfy people's need for individual attention or is it an adequate substitution for face to face communication? What are the implications or consequences of an always "on" environment? As Middleton (2008) observes:

Users are adamant that their BlackBerries allow them freedom, and contribute to work-life balance by allowing them to spend more time with friends and family. But their friends and family often resent the presence of the BlackBerry, seeing it as a means for users to extend their work into spaces where work is not welcome. Rather than interpreting this as work-life balance, friends and family view anytime, anywhere BlackBerry usage as always-on work. Rather than experiencing less conflict as a result of being able to better manage their work and life commitments, BlackBerry users may face increased conflict, as their friends and family actively resist the device. BlackBerries have been successful because they can turn any place into a work place, which is exactly the reason why they are reviled by those who want to contain work within well-defined agreed upon boundaries (p. 13).

When in the presence of family or friends, is the BlackBerry user aware of the internal (family) and external (friends) reactions their use of the BlackBerry is creating? When BlackBerry users talk about time, what is their definition of time and what do they mean about the quality of time? Most of the testimonies indicated that BlackBerry users were able to keep in contact with family members so does this type of communication increase or decrease the quality of communication?

The testimonies do not indicate whether or not people had discussed the use of the BlackBerry with partners or whether or not they had a strategy for its use. Perhaps a strategy around its use could increase the quality of the couple/marital relationship.

Middleton and Cukier (2006) conducted interviews with thirteen BlackBerry users in which they explored both the functional and dysfunctional side of mobile email users. On the functional side there was greater efficiency (using the BlackBerry in the car to save time), there was minimal disruption (answering the BlackBerry while engaged with others), there was immediacy in responsiveness to clients, and there was freedom. Emails could be obtained anywhere, therefore answered anywhere. Towers, Duxbury and Thomas (2005) in their study of 845 Canadian Federal Government Department employees also found that on the functional side participants perceived that “WET - work extending technologies” such as the BlackBerry, gave them increased flexibility around work and family time, and they thought they were more productive (p. 13). On the dysfunctional side Middleton and Cukier (2006) found that there was danger (driving and emailing at the same time), there was anti-social behaviour (answering the BlackBerry in the presence of others), there was distraction (notification by the device that there was an email), and there was infringement of boundaries (using the device on vacations, on the golf course, during engagement with a spouse, etc.). Some of the respondents indicated that their spouses were not pleased that they had to share a vacation with the BlackBerry. Schlosser’s (2002) study supported the notion that handheld devices may represent a danger for while it may be socially unacceptable, some participants chose to drive and answer work-related

messages). Towers, Duxbury and Thomas (2005) found on the dysfunctional side that some participants felt that due to the “always on” nature of WET devices they had less ability to balance their work and life. There was little ability to say “no” to addressing work related issues on the weekend due to the fact that they had a WET device. Some participants actually felt their workload increased as the employer expects things to get done faster due to the technology. Many of the participants did not appreciate the disruptions devices caused, especially in meetings.

Middleton and Cukier (2006) suggested metaphorically that BlackBerry users may be actually in a psychic prison where “behaviours that are seen as dysfunctional in the external environment are cast in a functional light in the internal environment” (p. 258). BlackBerry users may justify their dysfunctional behaviours as acceptable as the functional usage outweighs these dysfunctional behaviours. Middleton and Cukier (2006) state:

We understand that users believe their behaviours are justified and we recognize that such behaviours are a reflection of the business environments in which they exist. Nevertheless, we encourage people to challenge assumptions about necessary work practices, including the perceived need to be available, anywhere (p. 258).

Schlosser (2002) observed in her research with 11 individuals from different public and private sector organizations that the BlackBerry can be seen as an “artefact of prestige” (p. 410). She studied two municipalities where only senior employees and those on call were able to obtain these devices. She notes, “A desire to be part of the

senior 'in-group' with its perks and prestige may have expressed itself through a desire to have this, the newest gadget" (p. 410). Bell (2005) supports the notion that people may want the BlackBerry for status, but "becoming part of the BlackBerry tier, however, brings its own status-anxieties: now your boss knows you have a BlackBerry, he or she will be expecting you to use it properly, i.e. instantly, constantly" (p.18).

Towers, Duxbury and Thomas (2005) found in their study "a strong association" with job position and the demands of the job as one worked up the organization's hierarchy. Managers ended up working the most hours and were part of the manager/professional group that were "high users of WET" (p. 7). What was interesting to note in their study was the percentage of WET users who supported work at home in the evenings, 60%, those who supported work at home on the weekends, 72% and those who supported work on vacation, 44%. While many tried to keep a separation between work and family life, most saw it as a continuing challenge which met with little success (p. 8).

Towers, Duxbury and Thomas (2005) point out that because WET technologies such as the BlackBerry permeate the life component it may legitimize working at home, on vacation or during leisure time. They see this as problematic in relation to the roles one plays in the family and at work. Who really are you when you are at home if the ability to work is present all the time? They surmise this may actually increase conflict at home and increase stress, and this in turn spills over to the work environment and there may be "increased absenteeism, increased turnover, poor morale, poorer mental and physical health, and reduced productivity" (p. 12).

In Towers, Duxbury and Thomas's (2005) study, five different kinds of WET technologies were studied: mobile phones, BlackBerrys, PDAs, Laptops and Home PC's. The largest percentage of users chose the BlackBerry. For a large part of the participants the BlackBerry correlated positively for an increase in workload, an increase in productivity, and an increase in stress. The ability to balance their work-life was considered neutral (p.16). They questioned participants as to what they might expect their spouses to say about their use of WET technologies. According to the participants, 50+% stated their spouse understood their use of the technology on holidays and weekends, and 48+% stated their spouse understood their use of the technology on weeknights.

Twenty percent of the participants stated that their spouse did not like them using their technology on holidays, 33% of the participants stated their spouse did not like them using it on weekends, and 30% of the participants stated their spouse did not like them using it on weeknights. Seven percent of the participants reported that their spouse liked their use of their technology on holidays, 5% of the participants reported that their spouse liked their use of it on weekends, and 13% of the participants reported that their spouse liked their use of it on weeknights. Twenty-five percent of the participants stated their spouse did not notice the use of the technology on holidays, 3% of participants stated their spouse did not notice the use of the technology for weekends and 13% of the participants stated their spouse did not notice the use of the technology on weeknights (p. 17). These results could be skewed as the authors did not actually interview the spouses. It would have been interesting to see how closely

the perception of the employees was to the spouse's perception had they been interviewed.

Towers, Duxbury and Thomas (2005) discuss the issue of time by examining the work of Gleick (1999) and Eriksen (2000). Both Gleick and Eriksen (2000) came to the conclusion that the pace in our society has increased and that this has actually decreased our quality of life. From Gleick's (1999) point of view our amount of time to eat or do our work has decreased. Towers et al recognizing Gleicks' contribution to the field state:

He holds that modern technology is the *sine qua non* of this move towards speed and that the outcome of the ability to complete tasks more quickly is not an increase in the amount of free time available to an individual, but rather an increase in the number of tasks to be completed. He argues that the effect of this on the individual is a feeling that there is 'no time to waste', resulting in a feeling that they should be doing something 'productive' at all times, rather than relaxing (p. 18).

Eriksen (2000) breaks time into two categories: "fast time" (that which "happens when people multitask", or "carry out another activity rather than simply relax") and "slow time" (that which happens when people use time for "personal gratification"). Towers, Duxbury and Thomas (2005) note that according to Eriksen, "fast time is causing the distinction between work and leisure to be erased, and, for Eriksen, the use of technology [such as the BlackBerry] is to be one of the main reasons for this" (p. 18).

Silver and Crompton (2002) found that many activities that would have normally have been undertaken during the week such as “shopping, hobbies and pastimes, household and domestic work, and child care” are now being carried out during the weekend (Silver & Compton as cited in Towers et al, 2005, p.19). The factors of less time, greater workloads, and a decrease in the quality of life only serve to compound the issues around our use the BlackBerry and other mobile technologies.

Towers, Duxbury and Thomas (2005) noticed that most participants in the survey justified or rationalized their use of WET technologies even when they interfered in their family or social life. The perception was that if one could save some time now during family time then they would be saving time at the office. However, if they thought about it, completing a work related item at home would only enable them to do more work at the office thereby actually increasing their workload. The authors did note that half of the people saw a correlation between the technology, the ability to “work more efficiently”, working more hours and career “advancement” (p. 26). Whether or not this correlation actually existed was not determined.

The current research project explored the impact of the BlackBerry on couple relationships. The three areas of exploration were time, communication and couple satisfaction. According to the literature, time spent together appears to have a positive effect on a couple’s relationship in the areas of satisfaction and intimacy (Duck & Pittman, 1994) and produces higher marital quality and satisfaction (Kingston & Nock, 1987). Other research has corroborated that spending time together was related to marital satisfaction (Gilbertson, Dindia, & Allen, 1998; Kilbourne, Howell, & England,

1990). The length of the time spent together increases the closeness couples experience (Emmers-Sommer, 2004) and that time together and long interactions have positive outcomes for a relationship (Duck & Pittman, 1994). If a couple could increase their time together through the use of mobile technologies we might expect an increase in relational satisfaction.

Couples often seek professional help because of communication difficulties. (Veroff, Kulka & Douvan, 1981) They often state that poor communication is an issue (Broderick, 1981) and therapists confirm it is the most mentioned problem in their work (Geiss & O'Leary, 1981). The literature makes a distinction in the communication between distressed couples and nondistressed couples and their behaviours. Distressed couples in their communication often exhibit the following:

1. frequent interruptions (Schaap, 1982),
2. criticisms and complaints (Christensen & Shenk, 1991; Fichten & Wright, 1983; Heavey, Layne, & Christensen, 1993; Revensdorf, Hahlweg, Schlindler, & Vogel, 1984,),
3. resorting to ineffective solutions (Weiss & Tolman, 1990; Ziegler & Hiller, 2001),
4. less vulnerability in self-disclosure and fewer positive solutions (Birchler et al., 1984; Burman, Margolin, & John, 1989),
5. exhibit less ability in being specific about issues and verbalizing issues (Birchler et al., 1984; Margolin & Wampold, 1981).

Verbal communication does not appear to be as closely related to relational satisfaction as nonverbal communication (Gottman, Markman, & Notarius, 1977; Krokoff, 1987; Smith, Vivian & O'Leary, 1987). Fincham (2004) observed:

Indeed, when one studies the interactions of happy couples, what stands out are the pleasurable emotions, the smiles, laughs, affection and warmth. Similarly, it is the agitation, tears, distress, anger, and coldness in distressed couples that are often immediately evident (p. 5).

In distressed couples one sees fear, anger, disgust, sadness and withdrawal and they use their body language to turn away from their partner (Weiss & Heyman, 1997).

Fincham (2004) notes that the sign of a distressed couple "is the existence of reciprocated negative behaviour" (p. 6). Fincham concurs with other studies that in couples where there is physical aggression, the more negative behaviours increase in number and negative patterns are more recognizable (Burman et al. 1992; Gottman, 1994). Couples who have a negative pattern of interacting have the challenge of finding a way to exit from their negative cycle (Gottman, 1998).

Communication is comprised of two components, first, communication skills which achieve goals when the couple is interacting and secondly, communication behaviours which are comprised of verbal and nonverbal behaviours during interactions (Burlison & Denton, 1997). It does not necessarily follow that good communication skills result in good communication interactions (Burlison & Denton, 1997). Fincham (2004) building on the work of Burlison and Denton (1997) argues

“that communicative behaviour may say as much about the intent or motivation of participants as about communication skills. Hence a failed communication may reflect an unclear communication goal just as easily as it may reflect a lack of communication skills” (p. 12). Another issue is what are the elements of ‘good’ or ‘bad’ communication and who decides this (Jacobson & Christensen, 1996)?

It appears that communication is a huge issue in couple relationships and most therapists would concede that it is the one most often reported by couples as causing distress in their marriage (Geiss & O’Leary, 1981), however, Gottman (1999) states “Perhaps the biggest myth of all is that communication – more specifically, learning to resolve your conflicts – is the royal road to romance and an enduring, happy marriage” (p. 8). Being able to resolve conflict is seen as a “cure-all for troubled marriages but [also] as a tonic that can prevent good marriages from faltering” (p. 10). Gottman concluded that active listening in conflict resolution was not practiced by most couples (he studied 650 couples and tracked them for up to 14 years) especially when they were upset (p. 11). He discovered many couples reported deep and satisfying relationships despite the fact they often had significant differences of opinion. These couples were not afraid to argue or to engage in conflict (p. 18). He describes these marriages as “emotionally intelligent” where on a day to day basis negativity is kept in check by the positive thoughts and feelings for each other (p. 3).

Gottman (1999) discovered

that happy marriages are based on a deep friendship. By this I mean a mutual respect for and enjoyment of each other’s company. These couples tend to

know each other intimately – they are well versed in each other’s likes, dislikes, personality quirks, hopes, and dreams. They have an abiding regard for each other and express this fondness not just in the big ways but in little ways day in and day out (p. 20).

In the process of his research Gottman (1999) discovered seven principles for making marriage work, these were: 1. Enhancing love maps (p. 47). Collect information on your partner that is important to them. Use it in daily life to enhance your connection. For example: knowing favourite foods, things they like, how they feel in certain circumstances; 2. Nurture your fondness and admiration (p. 61). Treat your partner with honour and respect; 3. Turn towards each other instead of away (p. 79). Do not ignore your partner. Pay attention in everyday conversation, and build good will towards each other; 4. Let your partner influence you (p. 99). Share power and decision making. Find common ground. 5. Solve your solvable problems (p. 157). Solve those problems which have no underlying conflict to perpetuate the conflict; 6. Overcome gridlock (p. 217). Help each other realize dreams, accept differences, and find compromises. Know and accept those issues that will be a source of ongoing conflict; and 7. Create shared meaning (p. 244). Talk about those things which are important to your and your partner. Create rituals and symbols which reflect inner (personal) and family (group) values.

Gottman (1999) appears to have a high regard for the positive aspects of a marriage in which couples are invited to look at their marriage from many levels, from deep friendship to shared meanings. This view may acknowledge that a couple may

appear dysfunctional yet have a highly meaningful and satisfactory marriage.

Dysfunction from this point of view then is actually a key component for learning to change certain aspects of the marriage and accepting others without destroying the marriage.

Whether a couple was dysfunctional or functional was not a key component of this research, however, whether or not we were dealing with satisfied or non-satisfied relationships was an important aspect. Hence, the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale (See Appendix G) was used to ascertain the global satisfaction of the couples. In this research it was hoped to discover the effect of the BlackBerry on participant's marital satisfaction and communication process. An essential part of the research then was to see if the BlackBerry influenced both communication and satisfaction.

From earlier research some of the questions going into the project were: did couples actually spend more time together as a result of owning or using a BlackBerry. What was the nature of that time when they engaged each other? Did this technology enhance communication or did it actually inhibit communication? Did it enhance couple satisfaction (intimacy and closeness) or did inhibit it? From some of the studies mentioned was the duality or paradox (on the one hand it brings many benefits, and on the other hand it has some disadvantages) around the use of the BlackBerry reflected within the couple relationship?

The methodology described in the next chapter was used to explore these questions.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The design of this research was both quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative portion of the study used two instruments, a demographic survey (see Appendix F) and the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Survey (see Appendix G). The participants completed both surveys before the interviews. The demographic survey provided data about the participants in the following categories: age, gender of the participants, professions, whether or not they used a BlackBerry, and if so, for what purpose and if not, what other communication technologies were used and for what purpose, and length of time they had used a BlackBerry.

The ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale developed by Dr. David H. Olson in 1985 was used to ascertain the global satisfaction of the marriage before the interviews took place. During the interviews the interviewer asked the participants to rate their marriage on a scale of 1 to 10 (1, low satisfaction, 10, high satisfaction). The interview score was compared with the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale (Appendix G) to check the consistency and validity of their answers. Participants were asked during the interviews if the use of the BlackBerry had any impact on their marital satisfaction.

The qualitative approach was designed using grounded theory methodology, by Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin (1998). Due to the limitations in using quantitative methodologies to analyze human emotional and subjective responses, grounded theory was the methodology chosen to work with the qualitative data. The grounded theory

approach was chosen over other qualitative approaches such ethnography, phenomenology, case study and narrative inquiry. In this study ethnography was not chosen because of its focus on culture, which is made up of shared beliefs, language, norms, and values. There was no attempt in this research to study the culture around the BlackBerry or those who use BlackBerrys. The focus of phenomenology is on the experience of people, what meaning they make of that experience, and to discover an essence or invariant structure of their experience (or how people structure their experience). In this research while the focus was on people's experience and what meaning they assigned to that experience, there no attempt to see how that experience was structured. The interviews were not structured to be as in-depth as needed for phenomenological interviews in order to gain the richness and descriptiveness of a particular experience. The case study method was not used as the sample size was greater than normally chosen for case studies (one or two cases). A variety of experiences were required for this study and a case study would not have given the breadth of experience. Narrative inquiry was not employed as the research did not focus on one particular question or experience but was very diverse in the interview questions. Though people told their stories in relationship to the BlackBerry, attempting to weave together the meaning of their lives was not part of this research project. The grounded theory approach was chosen to enable the researcher to obtain an understanding of the subject matter by letting the experience of the participants speak for itself. Grounded theory allows the researcher to keep combing through the data until inductively a central concept, a phenomenon or a theory emerges.

Research on the BlackBerry and mobile technologies appears to be in its infancy stage, however the literature is increasing. While our society has adopted these technologies we have given little thought to the impact of these technologies on ourselves and on those around us. The easy adoption of these technologies may speak to a cultural assumption that technology is neutral or inherently positive. It could be that the easy adoption may be due to the convenience these devices offer.

Grounded theory allowed the researcher to get closer to the reality of the participant's lived experience with the BlackBerry. Grounded theory also allowed the researcher to interact with the data drawing the researcher in and out of the data to view it from various angles and different approaches, producing a creative process that "manifests itself in the ability ... to aptly name categories, ask stimulating questions, make comparisons, and extract an innovative, integrated, realistic scheme from masses of unorganized raw data" (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p. 13). The advantage of this approach is that the data can be coded into categories from which themes emerge and hence theories or theory. Strauss and Corbin (1998) state:

Theory derived from data is more likely to resemble the 'reality' than is theory derived by putting together a series of concepts based on experience or solely through speculation (how one thinks things ought to work). Grounded theories, because they are drawn from data, are likely to offer insight, enhance understanding, and provide a meaningful guide to action (p. 12).

The grounded theory methodology in this study used the following steps;

1. The data was gathered by semi-structured interviews.

2. The data was organized and transcribed.
3. Open coding was used to break the data “down into discrete parts, closely examined, and compared for similarities and differences” (p 102). Categories were then selected. A closer examination of the discrete parts lead to axial coding.
4. Axial coding was used to “begin the process of reassembling data that were fractured during open coding. In axial coding, categories are related to their subcategories to form more precise and complete explanations about phenomena” (p. 124).
5. Selective coding was used to refine and define the phenomena.
6. The main phenomena were listed and discussed in the discussion chapter.

The following is an example of the use of the above process from Strauss and Corbin (p.114):

Phenomenon	Concepts	Categories	Properties	Dimensions
Flight	Self propelled. Mechanically driven.	Sharing the characteristic of flight, such as birds, planes, and kites.	Speed Height Duration	How fast How long How high

“Provid[ing] a meaningful guide to action” (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p. 12) is an important aspect of this study. In the study it was found that couples had few or no strategies on how to use the BlackBerry to their advantage in their relationship when it came to enhancing their marital satisfaction. The research found that none of the couples had thought about using the BlackBerry for increasing marital satisfaction.

Future research might focus more on how mobile technologies might enhance marital satisfaction.

This study should have some practical application not only to the individual, but also to the workplace. Those in the study who were employed stated that their companies had no written policies regarding the use of BlackBerrys. At most there were ad hoc requests, such as shutting them off during meetings or limiting their use in certain circumstances, but even these requests had a nebulous quality for there was no concrete adherence to these unwritten rules.

Grounded theory is an ongoing process where one delves into the data, comes out with theory and then can delve back in and arrive at some different angle of the theory. Grounded theory is a reminder of Gerkin's (1984) idea in the "Living Human Document", that one has praxis (practical application of the theory in practice such as counseling), then theory (drawn from the experience of the interaction with clients), then praxis again, and this repeats itself over and over again. It is an ongoing process, which in terms of grounded theory could be stated as data, theory, data repeating itself until a category becomes saturated out of which theory emerges.

The researcher believed that grounded theory was the most practical and effective way of gathering data, and interpreting the data from the interviews. It was practical in that a number of interviews could be completed in a short time span and the coding process could begin immediately after the interview.

The study incorporated methodological triangulation, which is the combination of two or more methodological approaches "to decrease, negate, or counterbalance the

deficiency of a single strategy thereby increasing the ability to interpret the findings” (Thurmond, 2001, p 253). In this study the two methods used were: the qualitative method of grounded theory and the quantitative method of using an instrument, the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale. Using these two methods is known as a “between- or across-method triangulation” (p. 254) because they incorporate both participant interviews (qualitative method) and Likert-scale surveys (quantitative method).

All of the participants were individuals who lived in the Waterloo Region of Ontario between January 1st, 2008 and July 31st, 2008, except for one couple who lived in Europe. The couple from Europe agreed to participate in the study after being approached by a couple related to them who had already agreed to participate in the study. The couple from Europe were interviewed by phone and all other participants were interviewed in person by the researcher and/or assistant, who had been trained in confidentiality. The ethics approval for this study was obtained from the Wilfrid Laurier University Research Ethics Board.

Qualitative Study

Procedure

The research was to explore the impact of the BlackBerry on couple relationships through focus groups. The solicitation of participants involved contacting the Human Resources managers of various local organizations and companies. The nature of the research would be explained to them on the phone and as required the

researcher would go on-site and explain the research in person and request volunteers for the study. Human Resource managers yielded only two responding organizations, one a municipality and the other a major company. Both organizations sent out an email with an introductory letter (see Appendix D), a consent form (see Appendixes B), a demographics survey (see Appendix F) and The ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale (see Appendix G). There were no responses to the request for volunteers. Since the response to this method of interviewing was poor, it became apparent that focus groups might not be the most viable and expedient method for interviewing couples. The next step was then decided to solicit couples from personal and business acquaintances who were in long-term couple relationships. The researcher contacted a wide variety of personal and business acquaintances where one or both partners had to be using a BlackBerry. Once a couple had shown interest in participating verbally or by email they were asked to fill out a consent forms (see Appendix C.), a demographic questionnaire (Appendix F) and the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale (Appendix G). They were also sent an introductory letter (see Appendix E). Two couples were interested in a dyadic interview. The rest of the participants were interviewed separately. The couple that was interviewed as a dyad did not appear to respond differently to the interview questions when compared to those who were interviewed individually. Interviews were typically twenty to forty-five minutes in length.

The consent letter explained to participants that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time. It indicated that the interviews would be audio recorded and that participants would be quoted anonymously, though they could

decline being quoted. The letter informed them of the measures that would be taken to ensure confidentiality, and the risks and benefits of the research. As the research might invoke disagreements between partners thereby possibly resulting in psychological and/or emotional risks to the relationship, the researcher offered professional counselling for a maximum of three sessions. Any further professional interventions would be at the couple's expense. None of the couples sought the counselling offered.

Procedure

A semi-structured interview was used as a framework to explore how participant's used the BlackBerry and to gather information of their perceptions of their own communication, time spent together and their marital satisfaction. Everyone was given the same interview questions (see Appendix H) and participants were encouraged to expand or explain their responses by questions such as "Are there any comments you would like to make?" "Can I clarify something you said?" "Can you explain to me ...?" "I was just wondering" "Any other comments you would like to make?" Since questions generated during the interviews were beyond the original questions the interviews took on a semi-structured format.

The interviews were transcribed by a research assistant and a professional transcription service, Vantage Verbatim Reporting Inc. who signed a non-disclosure agreement (see Appendix K) and agreed to destroy all information relating to the research once the requirements of the Doctorate were completed.

The Ethics Committee of Wilfrid Laurier University approved the questions for the interviews.

Quantitative Study

Procedure

The quantitative section of the research was comprised of a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix F) and the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale (see Appendix G). The demographic questionnaire gathered information regarding age range, gender, purpose of the BlackBerry, whether it was used for work, home or both, and how long had the BlackBerry been used and what other technologies were used, for what purpose, and the participant's profession.

Participants

It was anticipated 18 to 20 couples would be interviewed, however only 10 couples volunteered for the research. There were four couples where both partners used a BlackBerry and six couples where only one partner used a BlackBerry. The participants fell into the following age ranges: six (30%) ages 50-59, ten (50%) ages 40-49, one (5%) ages 31-39 and three (15%) 21-30.

The occupations of the participants represented, four (20%) homemakers, three (15%) administrative assistants, four (20%) clergy positions, two (10%) consultants, two (10%) IT positions, one (5%) administrator, one (5%) teacher one (5%) manager and two (10%) executives. Three of the participants also had other occupations: student, writer and small business owner. The BlackBerry played a significant role in these occupations. For the student it was to stay emotionally connected (relationship building with spouse) and practically connected (children, time schedules, errands)

with their partner. It allowed the writer to be involved in on-going projects and at the same time to stay connected with publishers and clients who might be offering new work. For the small business owner they were able to stay on top of issues regarding their small business and work in their other occupation as well.

Instrument

The researcher in trying to assess the impact of the BlackBerry on couple relationships wanted to have some way of measuring the current marital satisfaction of a couple's relationship. It was decided to use David H. Olson's (1996), ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale (see Appendix G) to measure the overall global state of the relationship. The scale is a Likert-type scale which uses 10 dimensions of a couple's marriage: conflict resolution, communication, egalitarian roles, personality issues, leisure activities, financial management, sexual relationship, children and parenting, family and friends, and religious orientation, to assess the participant's perceived quality of the marriage. The responses are measured on a 5-point scale ranging from 1; strongly disagree, 3 undecided to 5 strongly agree. The responses are then scored and a raw score is obtained which then corresponds with a percentage score and level of marital satisfaction (Appendix G). The ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale is one of the scales from Olson's 14 scale ENRICH Marital Inventory. The Inventory was designed for use by marriage therapists and researchers. "Clinicians require a diagnostic tool that is reliable, valid, clinically useful, and that can provide a multidimensional perspective on couples coming for therapy. Researchers require a scientific sound scale that will discriminate between various types of couples" (Fowers

& Olson, 1989, p.1). The ENRICH Marital Inventory has been assessed with regards to its validity and clinical utility using 5039 American couples. Fowers and Olson (1989) state:

The consistency of measurement of the scales across the satisfied/dissatisfied comparison adds empirical support to the multidimensional measurement of marital satisfaction, as well as providing evidence for ENRICH's discriminant and construct validity. These results point to a strong relationships between marital satisfaction and the various aspects of marital relationships. There was also a high degree of consistency between husbands' and wives' mean scores. The major test of ENRICH's discriminant validity was conducted using discriminant analysis. The results were significant, showing that the inventory can be used to distinguish between distressed and nondistressed couples with considerable accuracy. Virtually all of the ENRICH scales were utilized in the categorization equations. These findings demonstrate high discriminant validity, and that the various scales of ENRICH exhibit a great deal of consistency. Further, the fact that the majority of the scales added significantly to the prediction is a strong indication of ENRICH'S multidimensionality and the importance of multidimensional measurement. The proportion of couples correctly classified using discriminant analysis compares favourably with similar analyses done with the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Hayes, Folingstad & Sullivan, 1979) (p. 15).

During the interview, participants were asked how they would rate their marital satisfaction on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being low, and 10 being high satisfaction.

This score was then compared with the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale (Appendix G) to see if participant's interview answer was consistent with their ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale (Appendix G) score.

Once the methodology was applied to the research a qualitative analysis was produced which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

Qualitative Analysis

In this chapter, I will be discussing the qualitative data, arising from the interviews with the 10 couples that participated in the research. Nine couples were from the Region of Waterloo in Ontario. The couple from Europe was interviewed by telephone. The participants represented a variety of occupations. The participants were asked seventeen questions (See Appendix H), though these questions led to other questions, hence the interview used a semi-structured interview format.

The researcher conducted and audio recorded each interview except one interview with a couple which was conducted and audio recorded by a research assistant. The interviews were transcribed by both Vantage Verbatim, a transcription service, and by the research assistant.

All of the interviews were coded using open coding, then axial coding and finally arriving at a phenomenal code. The original open codes appeared to present eighteen categories. It soon became clear that many of these categories crossed over each other and shared dimensions and properties. Some categories were eliminated due to lack of data supporting a separate category, so in the end a category with other data was created to respond and make note of what this data also indicated.

The research found that nine out of ten couples were consistent in rating their marital satisfaction at approximately the same level both before (by completing the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale, see Appendix G) and during the interviews (by

being asked to rate their marital satisfaction a scale of 1, low marital satisfaction, to 10, high marital satisfaction). For example, if one partner rated themselves at a nine and the other partner rated themselves either the same or one point above or below that number, the researcher evaluated the couple as having the same level of marital satisfaction. However, one couple was the exception where the husband rated the marital satisfaction at a ten and the wife rated it at a six. (See quantitative chapter for results of the marital satisfaction scale and interview score).

One of the features of grounded theory is to enable the voices of the participants to be heard. This research intends to add to the continued discussion about the impact of the BlackBerry and other similar devices on individuals, couples and families. What was discovered in the data was that there were advantages (for example, being able to work anywhere) and disadvantages (for example, constant interruptions) to owning a BlackBerry, but that it directly impacted relationships depending on how the user perceived and used the device.

The coding resulted in four main categories: presence, responses to emails, the BlackBerry, and other revealed discoveries. Included in the category of presence were the following groups: boundaries, awareness, work/life balance, connecting and strategies. Under responses to emails the following groups: responsiveness, monitoring and volume. The BlackBerry category included: calendar, other uses, service disruption and policies. The final category had no groupings but individual items of interest.

In the following sections it will be noted at the end of the quote if the participant is a BlackBerry user or a non-BlackBerry user to provide a context for the quote. It will not be noted if the context makes it clear that the participant is or is not a BlackBerry user.

Presence

The most prominent theme was that of presence, and by presence the participants meant having their partner in their lives in a face-to-face interaction. Not only being face-to-face, but actively involved and paying attention to them. Many of the participants spoke about presence by referring to the absence of their partner indicating that they would have preferred their partner to be more present. The participants noted:

- He's home very seldom anymore. And so I feel that when he's home I want - I want there to be an end to work. I'd like him to be focused on home for the short time, he's home on the weekend at this point and then he leaves again Monday. And like, I mean the Blackberry, he's wearing it and I mean there have been times when we've been out for a meal together and I'm talking to him and he's on the Blackberry. (Non-BlackBerry user).
- We've never kept the telephone in the bedroom. When the telephone goes off, somebody always wants to scramble to answer it. During an intimate moment it's easier to ignore the telephone ringing in the next room than it is the Blackberry beside the bed. (Non-BlackBerry user).

- Thank goodness we don't sit in a room and text each other. We still talk. (Non-BlackBerry user).
- If I'm being frankly honest, I would say it has decreased our time together and it makes me feel unimportant. I used to feel that when H was with me that I was important to him and, I felt was the center of his attention and stuff like that when we were together and now I don't. I feel like he pays attention to me if the Blackberry isn't there. But definitely I would come second place after the Blackberry. (Non-BlackBerry user).
- Sometimes I'll speak up and say something and then he'll usually say "sorry" or even if I don't say anything he'll kind of be halfway into it and he'll go "sorry". Sometimes. Now, one time he did it when we were out for lunch, we were at a restaurant and the Blackberry went and he was Blackberrying and then his cell phone went so he was talking on his cell phone and Blackberrying while I sat there and sat there and sat there so finally I picked up my lunch and moved to another table and read the paper. And he finally felt terrible and he came over and he said why did you move? I said, well, we weren't having lunch together so I decided I'd just sit somewhere where I could spread out. So I felt like that was a message sent. (Non-BlackBerry user).
- But after a while, even before I got mine there was a point at which I had to say "look, take it off at the dinner table, I don't want these interruptions because it's family time and we've always made a point of having the family sit down to dinner". So at least, you know, three to four times a week we would all be

eating together and when the thing would ring at dinner time, oh, I need to get this, it's important. Can it not wait an hour? Is it really an emergency? Is there anything blowing up somewhere, you know? You know, or could it wait? Could you just start making some boundaries with your people? Sure they can send you an email or call you, but can you set some healthy boundaries that will protect our family time? So it took him a while because they do tend to be very addictive. I think it gives people a sense of needing to be needed all the time.

One of the participants stated that their child was often frustrated with them when they used the BlackBerry and would say things like:

- Dad, put your Blackberry down. Dad, quit using your Blackberry. Dad, we're on vacation. Dad, do you love your Blackberry more than you me?

Partners often encouraged their children to participate in a conspiracy against the parent with the BlackBerry:

- Oh, yeah. A (Non-BlackBerry user) has trained the kids to tell me to put it away and the kids will say oh, so a Blackberry's more important than kids. And when they say that, then I put it away because I'm embarrassed, of course. And A will say she has seen me looking at it more often when I'm playing with the kids or when we're walking around and I shouldn't be. So she's told the kids to say that to me when they see me playing with it and the kids do that. You know, even my S, who can barely talk, when I was in the grocery store pushing him and I was in the middle of watching him, A was shopping and I was just pushing him and I was kind of reading it [the BlackBerry]. He was

saying something and I didn't understand at first and then he was saying put it away or something, in his own words. And when I put it away, he thought it was okay, and he kept saying it over and over again. So she's trained them. I know when it is getting to the point where it's interfering.

- And after B's gone to bed, that's kind of our time at night and most of the time he's got it with him or he's on it. So our time is then but not our own because if I talk to him or if I'm saying something to him he will sometimes not even realize that he's composing an email. (BlackBerry user).
- [The BlackBerry] allows me more time to be present in the house. So in that sense yes, quality has improved because if I was not able to retrieve emails in a timely basis while being out and about, even being at home, or maybe even running an errand with the family, then I would say it would be less quality. It's given me quantity and quality in a sense that allowed [me to be more present]. So that sense, it's improved the quality of my relationship with my spouse.
- Because of the [BlackBerry] – just the sheer presence of me being around, so being in the house or being in the vehicle when we're going – let's say she's going shopping and I can go with her and be with the kids, be present physically.
- No. I don't think it's taken [away from us]– like when B is at home and he is available then I think he is not in home mode completely because maybe he's thinking oh, I should check my email to see if someone's contacted me or got

back to me. So I don't think he is in the state of mind that he's home now and he can switch off. (Non-BlackBerry user).

- T is often distracted with what's going on in his hand. And so conversations could be happening all around him and he's like really zoned out. The kids could be trying to say something to him and he's totally zoned out. So again, I'm trying to think of anything positive to come of it, but no. (Non-BlackBerry user).
- If I say something, there's this delay. When the kids were little we had this little phrase like "come in, Tokyo". We had to have him tune in to us. We want to talk to you right now. But I don't know how much that is him, or him at work, or if it's that male compartmentalizing thing that happens that men can do that women can't. I don't know. So I don't know what that is but he definitely takes time to reengage to whatever's going on in the house. (Non-BlackBerry user).

Instead of face-to-face interactions many are opting to use the BlackBerry as a means to stay connected in some intimate ways. Presence could also mean the electronic written word. Couples, where both partners used a BlackBerry, appeared quite willing to use it to express their feelings, expressions of affection and for bridging back into the relationship after an argument. They often used it to solve issues in their marriage.

- So now with this vehicle [the BlackBerry] she actually uses it to send it [feelings and thoughts] and it feels really good. I guess if it's important, sort of

feeling loved it made a huge difference in some ways. (BlackBerry user).

- I think it has played a significant role for me in just knowing. And in writing she's very, very expressive. F isn't the most expressive person [verbally]. She is getting a lot better at it. But, you know, having that vehicle [the BlackBerry] has been really quite nice.
- It's tough. It could be something as small as sending a smiley face or sending an "I love you". When we first got married we had some issues and we went and saw a marriage counsellor. Tools that we learned like ... one of her issues was that I didn't say I love you often enough. So every morning she would leave and I would send her a message on her BlackBerry that said I love you today. And that just became kind of habitual and she looked forward to that but it was something that was quirky... just like two nerds on their BlackBerrys sending each other a message but it's kind of helped us that way in being more productive individually which has helped us be more productive together. So to answer your question, yes it's improved.
- I think that you can say so much more in an email than you probably could face to face. For example if we've had an argument the night before, then one or both of us can email to say we're sorry and without having to do it face to face. I think it makes it a little easier that way. Or if you wanted to say something sweet it might just come out differently if you tried to say something face to face rather than in an email.

- Whereas if she emails me she can take a little bit more time to type what she wants and I can read that and think about it, maybe even 15 minutes later send her back a nice little message. But we've also had situations where we've had an argument and you use that as a toe in the water to see if all's forgiven.
- I've certainly got lots of messages from her and sent lots of messages when one or the other is really stressed out or things are just kind of yucky. And you can send a message saying "hi, just thought I'd let you know I'm thinking of you today", and that kind of thing. We've had some "oh, that's really sweet", "love you, Honey", sort of stuff back and forth on it for sure..

While the issue was presence, one participant also noted that another factor was the decrease in time that was not directly related to the BlackBerry, but to work demands, particularly for someone who is self-employed and working from home. She observed:

- Especially when the kids were off at school I knew I had certain times to do things and so I felt he was a bit of an intrusion on my space, my life, or whatever. And he felt it. I know I made him feel that way. We've talked about it since but again, maybe it has something to do with the way I feel about sort this home/work thing. (Non-BlackBerry user).
- I would say definitely, yeah, it's impacted the amount of time we spend together because now that he brings his computer home more often, which means we don't spend as much time together. (Non-BlackBerry user).

While presence appeared to be the over arching phenomena, it was permeated by other areas such as boundaries and work/life balance.

Boundaries – Work/Life Balance

The boundaries between the personal and work spheres in one's life have now been crossed and made permeable by such mobile devices as the BlackBerry. Often it is difficult for individuals to know what sphere they are supposed to be in. Some of the participants noted:

- What it's taken away is that sense of where's the boundary between when I'm supposed to be in work mode and when I'm supposed to be in non-work mode, relaxation mode.
- And it is nice to be available to people but again you have to place those boundaries because your personal time becomes not your personal time anymore.

Some participants felt there was a violation by the device into their couple space resulting in the creation of rules around the use of the BlackBerry in the home and outside the home. They noted:

- The only thing that we agreed on is I don't carry it around on Sundays. Occasionally I deal with people in Asia, so sometimes their workdays are different, so - but not at church, not at social functions.
- I have established in our home or tried to establish in our home, Blackberry free zones. And so far I've only succeeded in two areas but I think that that's

progress. One is the bedroom and the other one is the dining room table when we have guests.

Boundaries are even more difficult to sustain if the job itself has certain expectations of the individual. The participants observed:

- It's kind of eliminated that boundary. Now, that boundary in terms of pastoral work, I think has always been hazy so I don't think it really heightens that haziness or made that even more fuzzy because it's always been fuzzy for a pastor, at least in the way my philosophy of ministry is. I'm never not in pastor mode because who I am at work and who I am at home is the same thing. Like I don't go to my job and all of the sudden become a pastor.
- Particularly in his job where I know he's COO (Chief Operating Officer) in this position. In other positions it hasn't necessarily been that kind of a height, but even in sales, oh, well, we have to get this deal done tonight or tomorrow or whatever. So there's a sense of importance in what has to be done. Before BlackBerrys people waited until the next morning or they got you before you left the office and that was the boundary. So I just said to him, look I really need you to create these boundaries again and not let this get out of hand because it was irritating. (BlackBerry user).

Work/Life balance appears to be something people struggle with or strive for, yet, is this a concept that depends on the individual's idea of how much they should work and what constitutes leisure or family time? As one participant observed;

- There's always the question of when does work end and when does home life begin? (BlackBerry user).

Another participant realized the impact the BlackBerry could have for work/life balance:

- I mean the Blackberry by its very nature destroys your work/life balance if you let it. (BlackBerry user)

A couple of spouses were aware of the balance and how skewed it was or could be. They observed:

- I think the balance is way off. I think its more work and less home. But I think it seems easier for him because he's able to get more hours in his day, I guess. So if he has to deal with something then he can deal with it at seven o'clock or eight o'clock at night, it's not a big deal for him. (BlackBerry user).
- He has trouble that way anyway. He's not wired to leave work aside for very long, no more than a couple of hours, and so this enhances that. Like it makes it much easier for him to stay at work. So that – there's potential there for it to be a problem. (BlackBerry user).

Some participants saw the BlackBerry as something that contributed to their ability to balance work and life, and in one case actually decreased the stress in their life. They reported:

- The only thing I can say about work life balance is basically it allows me to get things done that I normally would have had to take time out of my home life to do.

- I haven't found it to be something that throws my life out of equilibrium. I find it's more the other way, having access to the information in a timely way so that when I do go back into the work context I'm already kind of aware of what's going on and I'm not getting any surprises. I think it actually decreases stress for me anyway.
- I find that I could pick up and leave home or work at any time and still be seamless. I can get work done. I can keep things progressing. Same with home, I can be working late and still not miss a beat with either activities or things that are happening either with immediate family or in-laws or stuff. It just allows me to be outside the office or outside the home and still be productive.

From the comments above we can see that there are advantages and disadvantages to using the BlackBerry in one's personal sphere. Most participants realized that their usage of the BlackBerry would cross over into their family life so became more aware of what they were doing and when they were doing it. The next section discusses this awareness.

Awareness

Participants for the most part appeared to be conscious or more aware of those around them in social or work settings. There were a number of references to awareness. They noted:

- I'm more cautious about where it is in the house and when I use it if I'm at home. So gave me sensitivity, I guess.

- It's funny. If I look back and think about how long I've had it, I'm much more aware of its presence with myself and with other people.
- I think out of courtesy for the most part I try not to utilize it while I'm sitting at lunch with somebody or I'll say oh, just let me check and see if that's the kids or if everything's okay or whatever. But for the most part I think if I'm out for an hour or two hours with somebody the world's not going to fall apart.
- So I may check my email if I'm on my own. I typically try not to check my email on my Blackberry if S is around. So, like tonight it's upstairs in the bedroom and it's been there since quarter to five and it won't get looked at until I probably get to work tomorrow morning. I would say that not atypical.
- Sometimes I see him and he's sitting in the bleachers watching games. I mean, people would be reading the newspaper on their Blackberry and different things, and D has never searched the web or done that kind of stuff. So he's really limited his use, I think, and has been pretty sensitive to me. (Non-BlackBerry user).
- The person in my office has a higher value in my mind, just because somebody is phoning me doesn't give someone priority to my time at that moment. But when I'm out I might peak at it if it's ringing to see if it's the kids and okay it could be a crisis ...I'd better answer it.

For some this process of awareness is a learning process, as one spouse said:

- He's learning to look at it less and less, I think. Or just being more careful about when he chooses to look at it and what he chooses to do on it. (Non-BlackBerry user).

Participants using the BlackBerry became more aware of their partners, children, family and friends. This awareness either prompted the participants to adopt behaviours which enhanced their relationships or not to adopt these behaviours in which case a decrease satisfaction occurred in their overall relationships. Whether or not participants adopted positive behaviours had no impact on their use of the BlackBerry as a device for connecting with partners, children, family and friends as discussed in the next section.

Connecting

Many participants used the BlackBerry to stay connected with their partner, children, family and friends. The participants reported:

- Actually yes, in the car on my way to work he'll always send me a note saying I love you or send me a list of things he wants done in the house today.
- She can just fire me off little things on email and I can stay in the family loop. So I would say it would be almost akin to being at home and talking just as we are now, to some degree. Last night I heard from two high school friends that I haven't seen in 22- 23 years. I just got an invite from them through my Blackberry on Facebook.
- L and my other friends are the ones that communicate with me with email because they know that I travel all over, so it's easiest for me to communicate

that way. You know, like J was in Toronto today and I was in Lansing, Michigan, telling me he'll be at breakfast tomorrow. So that's nice. It's a positive thing.

- My brother lives in Europe and he and H. have always been really close. He has the Blackberry of all BlackBerrys. And so they're constantly, Berrying each other, back and forth and I think that's a good thing. It's allowed them to maintain a close relationship, instead of being thousands of miles apart, which I think is terrific. (Non-BlackBerry user).

There is also the practical side to connecting through the BlackBerry from picking things up to finding the other person and especially an emergency, as noted:

- I'm more likely to send N a message by Berry for something that's not critical than I would previously and try to communicate with him and try to phone and whatnot. I would never bother to phone him and say do you want Shepherd's Pie for supper where I can send him a message by Berry and he can say....and everything's fine.
- But the Blackberry, she can send me a little letter saying so and so did that and we need to do this and that. Like this whole functional relationship has improved, I guess, that part of it. She's able to enter my work day.
- I'll put in the text line 911 or if it's not quite that urgent I'll just put urgent. Or if there's something relating to one of the kids, I put one of their names in the subject line.
- We definitely carry them – we have at least one on when the two of us go out

so that the kids can contact us. Now, they all just have cell phones but they can text to our BlackBerrys. If we are going to separate events, then we would probably have them on to communicate to each other I'm almost done, what time will you be home? Or that sort of thing. If the two of us are just going to a friend's house or whatever, we're not likely to wear them or have them right on our person, although I might have mine in my purse and keep it on in case the kids need something.

Connecting through the BlackBerry as noted by the participants can have a positive effect on social networking as well as assisting in getting the practical tasks of life completed. However, none of the couples had discussed any strategy about how the BlackBerry might enhance their relationship before purchasing a BlackBerry. The following section talks about how participants developed strategies for using the BlackBerry as a resource for their relationship.

Strategies

None of the participants had discussed how the BlackBerry could enhance their relationship before participating in the research study. For most it was a process of having the BlackBerry in their lives and adjusting to it and learning what works for them. The participants commented:

- We didn't [discuss any strategies] when we first got them. I think it's something that's evolved over time, realizing that it's a big help. Even just doing this survey has made me realize that when A. started talking about doing it, it's actually made me realize there's a lot of things that we now incorporate

in our lives because we've been using them - I've been using mine for almost five years I would say and she's probably two years, somewhere in that range. And it's evolved, like the communication has evolved.

- I am now at a point where I don't wear it physically on weekends. I try and take it off when I come home at night. It was a very difficult thing for me before but it's a very addictive piece of technology. It wasn't good for us when I was the only one with it. Now that she has one the ability for us to communicate is very good. We haven't really had a strategy nor did we sit down and talk about how we can use it.
- The only strategy we had was kind of an orientation on how to use it, more than I'd say there's nothing strategic at all about how we would use it. That was very unplanned.
- Well, I think in fairness there's been quite a bit of me showing her how to use the thing and explaining to her how she can use it to stay in touch with other friends. She does use it now much more than originally. Originally she just pretty well used it for us to do device to device...communications. So what we call PIN to PIN.
- I don't know if we talked about how it could help our relationship. If we're away or if we're out somewhere it's good because I can get a hold of him at any time. So I guess – we didn't really specifically sit down and say well this is what it's going to do for us.

What was interesting was one couple's perception of having discussed strategies regarding the use of the BlackBerry. One partner thought they had talked about the use of the BlackBerry, however the spouse indicated she did not think they had talked about it. Was this due to the spouse's lack of interest in the BlackBerry, was it due to a disconnection between the couple, or was it due to a gender difference when talking about technology? Unfortunately there was no way to go back and ask these questions of the couple.

The next section discusses how participants managed email, both the receiving and responding to email.

Responses to Emails

The category of emails included the following grouping: responsiveness, monitoring of emails and volume of emails.

Responsiveness

Most participants appreciated the ability to receive emails in a timely fashion, especially when there was an emergency or they needed to connect with their partner. Here are some statements they made:

- Because I know he's always available. Even if in the middle of the night sometimes I've called him on his Blackberry and he's been there. (BlackBerry user).
- I can contact him more easily when I need to. (Non-BlackBerry user).

- My sister-in-law who is married to my brother have a system that if it's an emergency, if it's something like "do not ignore me", and if it's not misused but "I have to speak to you", all she does is email him in the subject line 911.
- So it's a great tool for emergency use.

Emails are also used to stay more connected during the day even if it just to remember to do something. Emails have the advantage of being a record of the reminder or conversation so eliminates the piece of paper that gets lost or where the writing is indecipherable. Some comments that were made:

- The difference is to be able to communicate without having to wait until you get home to say by the way, you need to do that next week.
- So now there's a bit of a - if you want to call it a paper trail, except it's a digital trail or if she thinks of something I need to get on the way home or vice versa. If I would like her to pick something up or go pick up some of my drugs or whatever it turns out to be, then again it can be done on the fly. It doesn't have to be a phone call. It doesn't have to be something you have to try to remember. There's actually something you can go back, click on and there you've got it so that you can do it right away. For example, even when you are in a grocery store picking up a few things for tonight's party, there's messages coming through versus being on a telephone rather than having to have a piece of paper.

While participants used emails in a practical way from emergencies to lists it was interesting to note how they decided to deal with the volume of emails and their

thought process around deciding who and who not to reply to.

Monitoring Emails and Volume of Emails

Responding to emails is a time consuming task and often during the interviews participants would discuss how they responded to emails. They had developed some ways to scrutinize email, prioritize and answer their email. Sometimes emails didn't get answered right away, rather some liked to think about their responses and some even found it necessary to use their desktop computer to compose a reply. Some of the participants stated:

- So I tend to look at who wrote it and then I'll check the subject line.
- A hundred and fifty emails a day. So I've become very efficient at screening, sort of being ruthless about an email triage. But it is interesting because it's something you just kind of keep track of. You get it and if I'm carrying it and it buzzes I will pull it out and have a look and see what came in. And if it's something I need to deal with immediately, then I can just stop and send a response. So it's kind of a triage that takes place. If it's something that actually needs to be dealt with immediately with a short response, something that is important but I can't really deal with it effectively with my two thumbs, I'd rather do it on my laptop. I'll wait until I can sync up with my laptop. And thirdly, it's either someone sending an FYI or a general interest that I may want to read or may not want to read and it ends up getting buried in the email pile and sometimes I'll just look at it and delete it. And then other stuff, I just delete immediately, at a kind of core level of decision making. The nice thing about

email is it's impersonal so you can read it. I guess I will on occasion ignore something if I feel I've been copied on it and I don't need to know. Somebody wants my opinion on something that I don't have time to deal with; they can make the decision themselves anyway. Sometimes it's unintentional.

- I haven't even answered them yet. I'll have a look at it. It's complicated. I need to have time where I can sit down and concentrate on answering the questions without the kids interrupting me either. Like I need to be completely alone so I can answer these emails.
- I mean you get 20 emails from somebody who is just forwarding stuff, every article they read on the computer they are sending to you ... well I don't care.
- I can look at the subject line and if it's interesting I can always request more and it will pull down the body of the message.
- No matter what the email might be I like to get it but I also like choosing whether or not to respond to it. I had access to email on the phone before where you can't really reply you just get to read it. I like the BlackBerry side because I can give a quick answer or make a quick decision but I can also choose to ignore it until a later day.
- So it's not so much like I start responding to emails but it's more like monitoring the emails as they're happening and seeing what's going on.
- I haven't even answered them yet. I'll have a look at it. It's complicated. I need to have time where I can sit down and concentrate on answering the

questions without the kids interrupting me either. I need to be completely alone so I can answer these emails.

While some people like to sit down, take their time and compose an email whether or not it is on the BlackBerry, there appears to be a tendency to be more concise on the BlackBerry. Getting to the point seems to be the point for this participant:

- Don't write an epistle to me. Write something that's two lines long and, you better be able to communicate in the first couple of seconds with what's going on or else I'm not going to get it, its severity or whatever else.

The BlackBerry has some features such as a calendar that was very important for functioning on a daily basis. It does have other uses and these will also be discussed in the next section.

The BlackBerry

Calendar

The interviews highlighted that the BlackBerry was very practical though the users needed some time for adjustment. As well, there were issues with service disruption. One of the very practical issues was the calendar feature of the BlackBerry. Couples appreciated the fact that they could put items into their spouse's calendar and this prevented double booking. It also acted as a reminder for appointments. The participants noted:

- It helps to make sure that we're going to the same appointment at the same

time, but before the Blackberry we'd just write things on the calendar. And we have doubled booked on our calendar because someone forgot to write it down.

- She can go right into my diary and pop things in. If we're having dinner at say at B and D's house, she can put it in that night and I can see it on my schedule. Which before if she forgot to tell me I'd come home, I'm dead tired, et cetera, I hadn't planned for it, you know, blah, blah, blah.
- The only difference it would make is now I've always got my calendar with me. I can query and I can tell him what's happening.
- The other thing is the calendar feature which sends me reminders. There's a reminder that reminds me that I have a meeting so when life does tend to get busy with kids, it actually acts as an alarm clock for me to remind me of the things I've already planned in advance that I may have a tendency to forget.

One participant stated that having the calendar reminder feature was a stress reducer.

- I had a breakfast meeting this morning that I booked two weeks ago and I didn't feel like the least bit anxious going to bed last night about what are we doing tomorrow because I know that this will remind me. The challenge is I have to remember to put it in there.

In speaking about how the BlackBerry has had a positive effect on the marital relationship one participant said:

- So I would say it probably has enhanced it because again it's one area that I go to consistently versus pre[BlackBerry] I had a book, I had a computer, I had

little notes and post-its and it's now all in one area. So I would say it definitely has allowed me to concentrate more on today. For example, I want to go with P out for a drive and we're going to go and look at some furniture and have some fun with my twenty-year old daughter. But because it's planned in there I know I'm not going to distract from that. So I would say it probably has [enhanced our relationship].

There was a convenience factor about being able to schedule appointments even on the way to the cottage for one couple.

- I think from a calendar point of view it's good. The other day and K got a call on his Blackberry while we were driving to the cottage and he set up an appointment for next week and so I put his appointment in his calendar right then and there while we were driving. It took all of five minutes so that was pretty convenient. It was a workday I didn't feel like that was an intrusion. That was a Friday and he had sort of taken the day off, so if he has to take the odd call then, that's not a big thing.

Not all of the spouses were willing to change how they had always done things.

- So I'm just sort of old fashioned. I like the little calendar hanging in the kitchen inside my cupboard door? (Non-BlackBerry user).
- She'll put it in a calendar, kind of a master family calendar [which was a paper version versus an electronic version]. (Non-BlackBerry user).

For some participants it was still easier to schedule on their own computer rather than the BlackBerry. The small keyboard did present a difficulty for some.

Participants stated:

- When I do my scheduling on the Blackberry I'm not doing it on the Blackberry, I'm actually doing it on my computer and then you hook the two together and they talk to each other. But I almost never schedule things on the Blackberry. I schedule on the computer.
- It's much easier to type on a whole keyboard than, you know, on that little thing. So I schedule on my computer and then they [the computers with the BlackBerrys] get in sync with each other.

As stated above the calendar function was important, however, some of the participants found other features of the BlackBerry which make it desirable in many different situations.

Other Uses

The BlackBerry has many uses and as we have already seen the calendar feature was a predominant one, however, there are other features that appear to provide a benefit as well. The participants reported:

- I have so many relational points of contact both at the church and in other work environments. The BlackBerry is one of those things that once you get it you don't know how you did without it. Because I recall going all day without having access to email and running home, running downstairs booting up the computer and hitting the send/receive button to see what came in. Sometimes

there would be fairly time sensitive things that you'd wished you'd had six hours previously so I find it's a great tool to stay on top of things that are happening. For me anyway I've found it's been a really good tool because it's increased my effectiveness.

- I use it for everything. I have all my information on it. I also use it as a camera and for obviously my email as well as my social networking and for my satellite navigation wherever we travel for business or pleasure.
- I download sermons onto it and when I walk to work or if I ride my bike to work I can listen. If I walk it takes me about 25 minutes, if I bike it is 15, so 25 minutes is almost just enough to get a sermon done between my house and church. So I've used it for that as well.
- I'm in the process of putting some bible translations on it right now.
- I spend a lot less time on the computer because I can respond to emails when I'm in the car with P. It helped me do things instantly rather than putting things off and having to sit at the computer for hours.
- I certainly liked the freedom of not having to sit down at the computer for email. I think in one sense it's freed up a little bit of my time. Because once you get on the computer, for some reason, you end up surfing the net. It's a little different with the Blackberry where you can check through your email. Okay, that's not important, that's not important, blah, blah, blah. I can respond really quickly with a brief, yes, got it. Thanks. And it's not quite as much of an effort. So in that sense it's freed up some time. I think with a lot of things

you kind of tend to go almost to the maximum at one end and then you come back and regain some balance or whatever.

- Think tanks don't have to be four people like in the old days, in a cigar filled room trying to come up with new ideas. Now you can throw something out there [via email], three other guys look at it and it can be whipped around a little bit and it could be at my lunch hour in Cincinnati, and the other guy in Winnipeg and the other guy in Halifax and the fourth guy is in China. And we're all good. I always feel bad for the guy in China because I know he's up at twelve midnight ... his choice not mine.
- It allows me to do things, paperwork and messaging that normally I would have to wait till I could get to a computer someplace to do. Laptops are not convenient because if you don't have Wi-Fi somewhere around, your laptop is only good in your motel room, or on the desk. It's no good in an airport. I find on a plane it's always hit and miss.

The Global Positioning System (GPS) is available on some BlackBerrys and it comes with a price at least with some providers. Some participants noted its convenience:

- Yes GPS with Bell. I've used it a couple of times but it is \$9.00 a day to use the GPS so I've refused to pay so I don't try to use it very much. I have MapQuest on there and I uploaded a little map and got on my way. I've had to use that once.
- Yesterday, actually I was stuck in London and I had to find a place. I used the

GPS. So it's got a really cool GPS thing. It allowed me to get to this thing I had to get to from the hospital down there. So that's the first time I've ever used the GPS.

As useful as some of the discussed functions are when there is a disruption of service it can create chaos in a person's life. This next section addresses these disruptions.

Service Disruption

Whether service disruptions were due to the BlackBerry server going down or other factors the level of individual frustration was impacted. Sometimes there were financial costs to losing service. Participants reported:

- I felt like I was out of control in that sense and it was frustrating. So, that was a time when I remember it going down but it wasn't because of the Blackberry, it was because of our office.
- When it went down on me it was over an evening and I didn't know that I wasn't getting things. It was just sitting there very quiet.
- The last one took 3 hours of my work day out in Halifax which meant that I was up till 9:00 p.m. responding to email because I still had to continue on with my day that was going to run past 6:30 p.m. or 7:00 p.m. When you've got 15 emails sitting there, then you've gotta do them. I retrieved them off of Yahoo. I had to go into Yahoo to get my emails. I noticed something was wrong because I went about 3 hours and there was nothing.

- I had a deal going on some product and it had to be sampled. It had to go out that day. I needed to hold the price and I didn't get the email until later. I wasn't going to go to an empty warehouse and pick it up to do the paperwork and submit it and take it out to him. So, it cost and the cost was enough that I was upset.
- I was getting a little ticked off because the service was lousy but they ended up taking mine for a repair and they gave me another model. The adjustment of going from one model to the other, which was quite different, was interesting. The habit you form using this tool in a certain manner to begin with and adjusting to essentially the same tool, but with different components and different buttons and different configurations - it was intriguing. So, now I'm hoping they don't call me back to pick up my old one because I'm finally getting used to this one. I actually started to like it a bit more.

Service disruptions can have an influence on a user's life with the BlackBerry, but what about company policies, how do they affect the user and their use of the BlackBerry? The next session covers some of the responses to the policy issue.

Policies

One of the questions asked of the participants was "If you use a BlackBerry for work does your company have a BlackBerry policy?" It was rather surprising that the unanimous reply was 'no' for an official policy, however there were unwritten or verbal rules about its use.

Participants reported:

- No, it pays the bill. That's the policy.
- None [no policies] at all, none at all, No.
- The policies that would be in place would be related to just general policies so they're not specific to the Blackberry, necessarily.
- And other than coffee breaks nobody was allowed to look at it and I didn't have to enforce it which led me to believe maybe it was actually an interesting meeting. No, we don't generally enforce it. It's quite usual to hear that telltale tapping through meetings in our company.

One executive did not want to mandate a policy rather have people base their use of the BlackBerry on common courtesy.

- So I've made a whole bunch of adjustments, personally, around when I carry it. I have to take a bit of responsibility for again how our company uses them as well without policy driving or mandating to people. You know, it's along the lines of common courtesy. Don't have it on in meetings. Don't have it on when you're talking to someone. Stay focused on that; don't answer the phone, et cetera, et cetera. So I think it's been evolving. It still continues to evolve.

Again, we have another example of trusting people's judgment. It is interesting to note that there are general guidelines around technology use but not specifically the BlackBerry. One participant commented:

- There needs to be a policy or guideline of some kind with technology use. We do have in our staff manual a basic policy that has to do with inappropriate sites and things like that, inappropriate use, personal use, too much personal time

during work hours. It's very difficult in a setting like ours to enforce that because the staff hours are all over the place, evenings, Saturday mornings, they're really program driven. So, I'm inclined to put in a general guideline and trust their judgment unless there is evidence of a breach or transgression of approach.

One company did not have an official policy on BlackBerry use but they did on the cost of the cell phone portion. In this case it was 10%, but it was with the understanding of not abusing it.

- If you want to use 25 percent, don't abuse it, don't get it to silly amounts, but we're just going to assume 10 percent and then you don't have to carry that other cell phone. It's a much lesser cost. So of course if somebody has, you know, a \$500 bill, \$50 for all the long distance. We take it off their payroll. If they use \$200, then it's \$20. A hundred, then it is \$10, right? And of that \$100, \$50 might be still personal use but we're only charging for \$10 because we have given them the Blackberry, we are expecting them to use it. So it works very well. Out of a significant number of people, over 100 people that have them, one person has complained over the last couple of years.

An issue that came up in the research which had not been addressed regarding email communication was the cost of storage. One company asked their people when replying or forwarding an email they delete everything that was there from before, therefore not sending the body of the previous message to the recipient as this takes up time reading the message and costs more for storage on a server.

- It's hard for people to do because again the easier path is just to forward the whole thing or reply to the whole thing as opposed to take the extra three to five to ten seconds to delete it. But, we have a culture and this has only been something over the last I'm going to say year where if we suggest to people in your emails doing it [not adding the body of the previous message]. There are two main reasons why we would like you to do it this way. One is time, so you don't have to read through it all and the second is cost on the back end.

This company also recognized that change can be difficult for people.

- And it's hard, like somebody at home may think well, they've got all kinds of storage space but now I have to adjust to this at work.

While we may think we get all kinds of free storage space from companies like Google, Yahoo or Microsoft, the reality is that someone is absorbing the costs of that storage. Often it is advertisers or consumers in some form. This is an issue outside of the scope of this project. The reality for most companies is that they have to pay for storage in the form of buying servers, hard disks or paying someone else to store their data.

It appears that the whole area of policy may deserve more research. One would have expected perhaps one or two people out of the sample size to have a written policy around technology use, but it appears no one did in this study. This may be a subject for future research including asking these questions: "should there be written policies", "what would they contain", "who would develop these policies", "are they being developed and implemented now" and "should unwritten or verbal policies be

the norm”?

One of the fascinating findings from the research was that some participants experienced the BlackBerry as an extension of themselves. In a sense it became a part of their everyday life and they found it difficult to imagine life without one. The next section addresses this phenomenon.

Extension of Self

One of the prominent categories that came out of the research was that of seeing the BlackBerry as an extension of one’s self. For the majority of participants who use a BlackBerry there was a sense of being very connected with the device to the point where phantom buzzes would be experienced when the device was not worn. There were moments of anxiousness if the device was forgotten or email was not functioning. It appeared that most could not go back to being without one.

The participants noted:

- This is really spooky but probably not uncommon. If I don’t have it with me I’ll feel like phantom buzzes. Where it would be. So sort of like, I think the sensations people have if they have a limb amputated they can still feel their arm, that phantom feeling. So you get phantom buzzes. And I’m sure that would be equally interesting to a therapist but we just sort of ignore that. The way to get around it is not to take it off.

I asked a business colleague if he had any unusual experiences after he stopped using a BlackBerry for business. He stated that he had not had one for four years and still gets phantom buzzes occasionally where he used to carry his BlackBerry. The

experience of the participant does not appear to be an isolated one. Other participants commented:

- No, I just feel like I instantly go into panic mode if I can't turn it on or send an email or something. When it's not there, when I grab it and it's not there working for me, I do feel some kind of anxiety come over me. I start to panic. I rely on it for everything. I rely on it for a clock; I rely on it for everything. I haven't been affected by RIM's black outs but hardware failure just kills me.
- I can't live without it and I really can't imagine our relationship without each of us having one. We couldn't go back to just one person having one.

Some participants commented on the propensity in themselves to allow the BlackBerry to become addictive for them. One participant remarked on how it is similar to a person dealing with alcoholism:

- It's like an alcoholic trying to explain that he's just having a medicinal drink or something. Ain't no such thing. If you're an addict, you can't drink.

One spouse commented:

- You know, it's utterly addictive to him, I think. He doesn't even realize how addictive it is and that if it rings or if it vibrates, he cannot wait to see who it is that emailed him. (BlackBerry user).

Another participant remarked on their own personality and tendency that may contribute to the addictive nature of having a BlackBerry.

- I like being needed. I also think I have kind of a – there's something in my personality, but I like to be in the loop and I like to be where the action is. I

like to know what's going on and be, you know, feeling needed or feeling that busyness and there probably is a bit of a tendency to towards workaholism, maybe a little bit. I think I lean in that direct more than being too lazy. And maybe this is fulfilling a need in me to feel important or as you said a need to feel needed. So I would say yes, that strongly resonates with me and I'm aware of that and I think back to the days before I had the Blackberry and I think it would be easier to never have had one for my kind of personality.

Some people become very dependent on the BlackBerry in their lives:

- There are times that I have totally forgotten that I have a meeting and the BlackBerry reminded me ... OKAY then! Off I go. I have become somewhat dependent on that.
- I've left here during the day without my Blackberry, only for me to turn back, to come back to pick it up. It would be like some people, you know, losing or forgetting their cell phone.
- I do not feel dressed if I'm not wearing my Berry.
- Yes, I was without it from about 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. or 2:30 p.m. that day and the first thing N and I did that day was go out and buy me a BlackBerry. Cause that was the worst part of not having a job because all of a sudden my hip was naked. I couldn't talk to the friends I was used to talking with on a regular basis. I felt out of contact with the world. I no longer had my watch; I no longer had my calendar.

Another element of the BlackBerry as an extension of self is the notion of

status. For some it represents an elevation of the self so a person feels in a different class than other people. Some participants observed:

- Well the BlackBerry's not quite that craze. It was a classy way of saying I'm an executive and you should know that.
- I had to make a conscious decision that I was just not going to get trapped in the trappings. So, I haven't done it for months and months and months, since the first month I had it. But it is a bit of a red tie Which I have both of. It's a bit like a gratification. I suppose it wasn't really that I needed to be needed but I needed to show you that maybe somebody needs me. And that's the difference. I didn't need to be needed. I needed you to think I was needed. And that's what happened for about a month and then after that, not so much anymore. Now, I'd really don't like to wear it.
- Dealing with people in their 30s the X generation to their 40's it's a red tie. That's a lot of times what it is. It's a status symbol. But for me it's functionality.
- Everybody wants to emulate the red tie [status seeking] crowd, the Donald Trump crowd. If you notice, Donald Trump doesn't carry one. I've never seen him with one ... ever. His people have them ... but he doesn't. But he is in the echelon that is even above the best of the best, he is one of the richest men in the world so those people don't need it. Those people pay people to keep them up to date.
- I think that there's an element of an ego stroke. I'm in such demand and I can

reach out and touch anybody whenever I want. I think there's an element of that.

- So I would say when I see somebody else with a Blackberry I do. I guess I think oh, I wonder what they do for a living. I usually take note of how they're dressed or that kind of thing. Do I see that person in first class on the airline instead of in back by the toilets? So, I certainly think that there's a bit of a - oh, I see you've got the old model. I've heard people say it's the poor man's Porsche.

The last section contains a number of interesting comments made by participants that did not fit the previous categories but still warranted inclusion.

Interesting Comments

This last section contains thoughts and reflections which add to the discussion of the BlackBerry and its impact on people.

One participant was impacted by the fact that even in a social setting one can be alone. People are on their BlackBerrys and not paying attention to those around them. As the participant was not asked what this means to them, it still invites some questions. What is the importance of presence (face-to-face interactions) in people's lives? Have people lost or not developed the skills to interact socially? Has technology become more important in the live of peoples? It would be interesting to see if other people had this experience. The participant noted:

- Sometimes there's a bunch of silence while people go just a minute and you hear all this clicking. It's kind of sad. With a Blackberry you can sometimes

be alone in a crowd. So yeah, I typically bring it in a social setting, although sometimes not without a little bit of a battle. Like not without a question of why do you have to bring that, right? Unless we're going out, we've got a sitter, in which case that's our phone.

Some participants were forthcoming with their use of the BlackBerry while driving, whether it was using the phone or the email components. Cell phone usage while driving has become an issue due to safety concerns. Many provinces including Ontario are considering a ban on the use of electronic devices while driving.

Participants reported the following:

- I have texted. I do periodically text while I'm driving and it's not the best, I know. I've caught myself a couple of times lowering it instead of raising it so I can see the road at the same time. Women multi-task very well, I might add. That could be another study. But I know my kids don't like it when I am doing it. They prefer to have my attention on the road which I understand so I try to – if they're in the car I'll say here, can you respond to Daddy and I'll pass it to them. When nobody else is in the car I answer. The other thing I do like about the Blackberry is that my phone has a pairing device, it's got a Bluetooth pairing device with the car and so the Blackberry when it rings, rings automatically on the car stereo system. I can drive hands free, so which is no more complicated than driving with two or three children in the car, let me tell you. You don't have to take a swat at anybody on the phone. So, it's actually very helpful having a hands free device.

- Only if I'm stopped in traffic. I don't even like phoning but I can, I've got an earpiece and I am pretty cautious about that but it's an auto dial up arrangement. It's too tempting. Usually it's to say to T I'm on my way home.
- I carry it with me all the time. If I'm driving it's on the seat beside me and I will actually check my email while I'm driving. I've been known to actually type emails while I'm driving. I was driving up north on the 400 once. Traffic was stop and go and a parking lot at times. I was sending a message to somebody and I was driving and typing at the same time going 3 or 4 km per hour and about a week later I read an editorial in the Record by some woman who said she ... the previous Thursday was driving up north on the 400, there was stop and go traffic and there was somebody beside her typing away on their BlackBerry and she just thought that was the silliest thing she'd ever seen. I thought that could very well have been me. I've seen other guys do the same thing. I know it's not a smart thing to do.

Text messaging for one participant is an issue while for another it is a way to connect with children. One participant reported:

- I don't understand the whole concept of text messaging. Like when my daughter and my kids do it all the time and I would always be saying to them, this is so incredibly clunky. Why don't you just call them? The whole thing would be over within half the time. I don't understand what the appeal of this is. And so I think that maybe that's it. It's not something that I really buy into and share. Maybe I would if I had one. If I had a Blackberry for a week I'd

suddenly become addicted to it as everybody else seems to be. I don't know.

So, I try to be fair in my thinking in that way to realize that I don't have one so

I can't really judge because maybe I'd be just the same way.

While another reported:

- They'll tend to text their dad because that works the best for them. They each have their cell phones so they just text. (Non-BlackBerry user).

While the BlackBerry has benefits to it, not everyone wants one. A participant voiced this opinion:

- I'm not a techie person so I've never had a cell phone and cell phones have been around for how long? I don't think I've ever had a desire. I don't think I've ever told B. I want a cell phone. B has often told me you should get a cell phone when you're out in the car with the kids and the car breaks down. And I've always just said, you know what, I'll call – I'll do whatever. Like my kind of standpoint is there's so many other people that do have them that, I'm sure if someone stops they could just call. (Non-BlackBerry user).

One parent was concerned with what's happening to children with technology.

She related this story:

- First of all, I think they're lazier, to be blunt. You know, when we wanted to talk to the neighbour next door when we were 15 years old, we walked to the neighbour next door and we knocked on the door. Can Louise come out to play or whatever you say at 15 anymore? What I find really funny sometimes is that my son will be sitting in the basement and our next door neighbour's son will

walk in and go downstairs. I'll say what on earth just happened and I'll realize well, they've been on email or MSN or something like that and P. probably just told him to just come in, the door's open. But I mean in that case they're still using it to get to the face to face. But I find with my youngest one E and with my middle daughter in particular, they're always on the computer and they are doing less physically than I did at that age or that they could, I think. I know we live out in the country so we are kind of cut off a little bit in some ways from people but getting together physically I think is just much more fulfilling than talking to somebody on an email. (BlackBerry user).

The data from the interviews reflected many views and opinions of the BlackBerry and its impact on relationships and everyday life. Their responses further our understanding of technology, how we use it, and how it impacts our world and in particular our relationships.

Chapter 5

Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative data will be summarized in this chapter based on the demographic survey (see Appendix F) and the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale (see Appendix G). Ten couples participated in the research

The following table summarizes the age ranges:

Age Range	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
21-30	1	2	3	15%
31-39	1	0	1	5%
40-49	4	6	10	50%
50-59	4	2	6	30%

The ratio of male to female BlackBerry users was:

Male	%	Female	%	Total	Ratio M:F
9	64%	5	36%	14	1.8:1

The Length of Time the BlackBerry user had their device:

Length of Time	Male	Female	Total	%
Less than one year	2	1	3	21.4%
One year, less than two years	3	1	4	28.6%
Two years, less than three	1	1	2	14.3%
Three years less than four	0	0	0	0%
Four years less than five	1	2	3	21.4%
Five years and greater	2	0	2	14.3%

The number of BlackBerry users who used their BlackBerry for work was 11 out of 14 participants or 78.5%. Of this number, two females (18.2%) and 9 males (81.8%) used their BlackBerry for work. All 14 BlackBerry users used their device for personal use.

All but one participant used a personal computer. Five of the participants used cell phones, and of this group one person had a BlackBerry and a cell phone. Only one person used a PDA/PIM (Personal Digital Assistant/Personal Information Manager).

The occupations of the participants represented, four (20%) mothers, three (15%) administrative assistants, four (20%) clergy positions, two (10%) consultants, two (10%) IT positions, one (5%) administrator, one (5%) teacher one (5%) manager and two (10%) executives. Three of the participants also had other occupations in addition to those listed above. These were: student, writer and small business owner.

The responses to the Enrich Marital Satisfaction Scale Results and the response to the scaling question in the interview are summarized below:

		Enrich Raw Score	Enrich Percentage	Enrich Descriptive	Interview Score (1-10)
Couple 1	Husband	48	100%	Very High	10
	Wife	49	100%	Very High	9
Couple 2	Husband	40	80%	High	9
	Wife	42	90%	Very High	10
Couple 3	Husband	36	80%	High	8
	Wife	40	65%	High	8
Couple 4	Husband	41	85%	Very High	9
	Wife	34	55%	Moderate	8
Couple 5	Husband	36	65%	High	6
	Wife	33	55%	Moderate	7
Couple 6	Husband	41	85%	Very High	8
	Wife	41	85%	Very High	8
Couple 7	Husband	46	100%	Very High	9
	Wife	36	65%	High	8
Couple 8	Husband	32	50%	Moderate	7
	Wife	32	50%	Moderate	6

Couple 9	Husband	46	100%	Very High	10
	Wife	31	45%	Moderate	6
Couple 10	Husband	31	45%	Moderate	7
	Wife	36	65%	High	7

The comparison chart above shows that most couples rated themselves in the same range or as least very closely to the same range. Only couple number nine had a wide spread in their ratings. This was a couple where the female partner stated their marital satisfaction decreased due to the impact of the BlackBerry on their relationship, yet the male partner did not view it that way. While it was not an aspect of this research it would have been interesting to discover the factors behind the difference in perception.

The ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale and the Interview scores indicate that most of the couples were satisfied with their marriages. Even those who did not score as high or where there was a difference found a way to accept each other's differences.

The next chapter discusses the various findings from the qualitative and quantitative analysis.

Chapter 6

Discussion

In this chapter I will be discussing the general findings, important aspects of the research, and points consistent and inconsistent with what I anticipated to find. There will also be a discussion of the practical implications, the strengths and limitations of the research and the implications for future research.

General Findings

From the qualitative data four main categories were revealed: presence, emails, the BlackBerry as a device, and other discoveries.

The phenomenon of presence was the over arching theme in the study. It was a primary concern to most couples. However, the male research participants did not recognize it as being as significant. Experiencing their partners as present within the relationship through face-to-face contact and attentiveness was sought after by the female partners whether or not they had a BlackBerry.

The amount of time spent on work related matters was another factor, especially if their work situation demanded more hours. This was particularly evident for those in a professional position (i.e. CEO) or being self-employed. These professional demands decreased the amount of time partners spent with each other. In fact none of the couples reported having more time due to the BlackBerry.

Notably, most of the research participants were aware of their interaction with the BlackBerry and its impact on those around them. Some participants chose to enact

some control or discipline around the use of the BlackBerry, others did not. Those who controlled themselves were trying to not irritate, annoy or frustrate their partner. Those who did not use discipline considered their work to be of primary importance, though they recognized it was a source of frustration for their spouse. However, none of the couples had developed any strategies before using the device to enhance their relationship. None of the couples before purchasing a BlackBerry had thought about the possibility of using the BlackBerry as a means to enhance their relationship. Also, none of the couples had developed any strategies around the use of the BlackBerry as a communication device or as a way to enhance their marital relationship. However, some of the couples had developed strategies as a result of using the BlackBerry. One couple declared some parts of their home “BlackBerry free zones”, one couple upon coming home put their BlackBerrys in their battery charges for the balance of the evening, another couple made a rule not to have them at the dinner table and one couple made it a point not to have the BlackBerry in the bedroom.

An important aspect of the BlackBerry was its ability to connect not only with partners, but to act as a social networking device. They used the device to connect with family members and extended family members, especially those who live at a distance. It was used to connect to children who were at university or going out for a night. The BlackBerry was used to stay connected with friends for both planning events or to chit chat about various things.

Emails and the monitoring of emails was an important aspect of owning a BlackBerry. For the research participants, this was the primary reason for having a

BlackBerry. However, not everyone monitored and controlled the flow of email in the same way. Some performed email “triage” deciding who was and was not important to reply to, while some felt the need to reply to every email every time. Due to the volume of emails some participants experienced most filtered their emails by the subject line, the person who sent the email or the length of the email. Participants reported that a shorter message was most likely to receive a quick reply.

The BlackBerry as a device was appreciated for its ability to be an all in one device, especially the calendar function, email and phone. Some BlackBerrys had cameras, video ability, voice recorders, GPS (Global Positioning System) and MP3 (Motion Picture Experts Group, Audio Layer 3) players. The ability to take a picture and send it immediately to someone else, such as a spouse that could not be at a child’s sports event was valued. A feature that many participants appreciated was the GPS function where they could find routes to destinations or get back on route if they were lost. Some participants listened to music using the MP3 player function.

When it came to service disruptions the BlackBerry showed it “Achilles” heel for it caused anxiety and stress for participants who relied exclusively on the device. Any disruptions could cost money by not being able to reply to a customer, unable to work or call people.

The research participants were asked whether or not their companies or organizations had any written policies around the use of the BlackBerry. It is notable that none of the companies or organizations that employed the research participants had any written policies regarding the BlackBerry. At best, most companies or

organizations had unwritten policies about repayment of personal calls on the BlackBerry at either an actual usage cost or a predetermined percentage cost.

One of the things that became clear was that some participants reported becoming quite addicted to the BlackBerry. In fact it appeared in some cases to be an extension of an individual. Even the games could be used in mind-distracting ways. Some participants expressed their need of the BlackBerry and could not do without one. It also came across that the BlackBerry could be very much a status symbol, just as cars, house or boats.

The research found that most couples had a fairly high marital satisfaction rating. (see Quantitative Chapter & Appendix G). Using methodological triangulation both the qualitative interview and the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale supported the notion that most of these couples were satisfied with their marriages. However, this did not explain the frustration and emotional distance created by the lack of presence for spouses of BlackBerry users. There appears that there may have been an adjustment to the BlackBerry being present or a reluctant acceptance of it. Where both spouses used a BlackBerry only one spouse was frustrated with the lack of presence of her husband. The literature review listed Gottman's (1999) principles for making a marriage work. Some, but not all of the participants in the research exhibited these principles. Gottman states that one principle is to turn towards each other instead of turning away and to pay attention to your partner in everyday conversation. Many of the participants reported that they learned to do this by trying to increase the experience of presence with or their spouse, though not always successfully or to the partner's

satisfaction. Three of the couples in particular communicated through their BlackBerrys to be involved in their partner's everyday life. Two couples communicated through the BlackBerry to carry on discussions arising from a disagreement or an area of conflict. Gottman also suggested letting your partner influence you. Some participants cooperatively listened to their spouses and created "BlackBerry free zones" in their homes. Solve your solvable problems was another principle by Gottman, and a few participants were able to overcome their own addictiveness to the BlackBerry for the health of the relationship. Gottman also talks about overcoming gridlock whereby partners accept differences. Even though some spouses did not like their partners the BlackBerry in front of them they still accepted it. It appears from the study that most of the couples knew each other well enough to adapt to technology in their lives, though not always liking it and sometimes reluctantly accepting it.

Lastly an important safety issue was raised in the study for many of the research participants used their BlackBerrys while driving. Some of the participants recognized that this was not a safe practice but did it anyways.

Important Findings

The phenomenon that was the most prevalent in the study was the experience of presence. It was important to have one's partner physically in the same location, and attending to the person (being in the present, the here and now) and not being preoccupied with something else. Some female participants shared a perception, due to a lack of presence, that they took second place to their husband's work, addictiveness

to the BlackBerry or their husband's own needs. Having their husband present was an important factor in their relationship with their spouse. For the male participants in the study it did not seem as important.

The study affirmed the BlackBerry was a tool that had its advantages and disadvantages. Many participants found the BlackBerry very practical to schedule appointments, to make phone calls and to answer emails. It was also advantageous for staying connected to family and friends. Many participants found the BlackBerry provided order to their daily routines, kept them on track, reminded them of appointments and enabled them to be productive when waiting for others.

The findings in this study support the paradoxical nature described in Mazmanian et al (2006), and Jarvenpaa and Lang (2005). The BlackBerry allows a person the freedom to be anywhere and still stay connected, however a disadvantage is the expectation people will answer their BlackBerry immediately. While emails can be answered the disadvantage is that emails can generate more emails and this can lead to a perpetual cycle of emails. Work can be accomplished at home but this is a disadvantage for family members who want attention, as well, the health and well-being of the individual. When the BlackBerry is functioning well or the service is functioning well it is a productive and cost-saving tool however, when the hardware does not function or the service goes down the disadvantage is people feel anxious or frustrated.

Consistent and Inconsistent Findings

The research began with the anticipation that couples through the use of the BlackBerry would increase their communication, have more time together and increase their marital satisfaction. Communication was increased in two ways first; there was an increase in communicating about day-to-day issues, such as scheduling appointments, picking up children, and addressing household chores or responsibilities. Secondly, was an unanticipated finding that communication through the BlackBerry increased when a couple had a disagreement or argument to express their feelings and to reach a resolution. This finding was unexpected due to the personal nature of the emails or pins (sending messages directly from one BlackBerry to another). I did not expect participants to share this information over a network due to the intimate nature of such discussions. Perhaps there are some security features that address this matter which was not part of the research. However, this type of interaction may create a way to resolve issues, or serve as a bridge to face-to-face discussions.

It was anticipated if couples were able to schedule more effectively and were more productive (efficiency and productiveness is consistent with Middleton and Cukier's findings (2006)) there would be an increase in time and therefore an increase in marital satisfaction. It was unanticipated that all of the participants would report that there was no increase in time spent together, and in some cases there was actually a decrease in time together due to the availability of partners via the BlackBerry. There was no evidence in the literature to support or refute this.

For years our culture has been promised that technology would reduce workloads and increase leisure time. This was not the experience of the research participants, in fact there appeared to be an increase in workload due to technology. Towers, Duxbury and Thomas (2005) in their study found an increase in workload and productivity along with increase in stress however, the ability to balance work and life was neutral. In this study an increase in stress was noted in couple relationships if the BlackBerry was not used in a disciplined way. Work –life balance was not necessarily achieved through the use of the BlackBerry. The experience of many of the research participants was that work/life boundaries have been crossed and work has permeated family and personal time due to the availability of people who use technologies such as the BlackBerry. Most spouses and children of partners who had a BlackBerry expressed dissatisfaction with the constant interference on personal and family time. This is consistent with Mazmanian (2006) et al and Middleton (2007) whose studies revealed that family members and friends often resented the presence of the BlackBerry.

Some of the participants did reveal that they used the BlackBerry while driving posing a safety risk to themselves as well as others on the road, and this was consistent with Schlosser's (2002) study. Another finding that is consistent with Schlosser's study is the perception that prestige and status comes from owning a BlackBerry.

The study was consistent with the findings of Mazmanian et al (2006) regarding the idea that people think that they are needed all of the time. Some participants found that they did need or wanted to answer their email all the time.

The study found that participants became very dependent on the BlackBerry and were anxious and/or frustrated when the device was not on them or service was disturbed, which is consistent with findings by Jarvenpaa & Lang (2005). Another finding in the research was the “self-reinforcing loop” (Maxmanian et al, 2006, p. 19) of sending emails that perpetuate other emails that generate more emails. This is also consistent with the findings in the study conducted by Jarvenpaa & Lang.

The issue of BlackBerry etiquette was not raised in other studies in the literature review but was raised by participants in this research. Some participants expressed that some cell phone users had developed cell phone etiquette in public however, that does not appear to be the case for the Blackberry. One participant stated:

- That even now with cell phones there has evolved some etiquette with them, so that if for example you were out with someone and their cell phone rang and they were going to take the call if they had good cell manners, they would at least turn to you and say oh, excuse me, “ I need to take this or excuse me” or “ I’m expecting a call or something”. Or that they might glance at it or say “oh, sorry, I meant to put that on vibrate” or something like that. None of those rules seem to apply to BlackBerrys. When people use them they see nothing wrong with emailing someone while they’re talking to them. Every time it vibrates it must be answered and there’s never ‘an - I’m sorry’ or ‘excuse me’ or anything. It’s just there’s no etiquette around using the Blackberry. You can interrupt everything and it’s just supposed to be just an accepted thing. You don’t have to excuse it.

Having covered in this section the main points that were either consistent or inconsistent with what I anticipated to find, the next section covers the practical implications of the research.

Practical Implications

The research indicates that there is an educational process that needs to go along with the use of the BlackBerry or any other mobile technology. This educational process might include teaching users about the potential negative impacts on their relationships and how to address these preemptively. The educational process could also address how to use the device effectively and productively, how to develop discipline regarding usage, what is acceptable and unacceptable etiquette, and how to improve your relationships through the use of the BlackBerry.

The research also affirmed the need to be aware of one's work/life balance and the impact of the BlackBerry on family and friends. The device itself is neutral but it depends on how the individual intentionally monitors the usage of the BlackBerry in both their personal and work life.

The research found that companies that employed the research participants had no official written policy for the use of mobile devices. As the digital world expands it will be important for companies to implement such policies in order assist their employees in using technology in a healthy way and to contain costs and improper use of a company device.

Twenty percent of the research participants in this study using BlackBerrys represented those working in the pastoral field. As companies did not have a written

policy around the use of the BlackBerry, neither did the churches. This was an interesting revelation since the participants reported that pastoral work is one of those occupational fields where personal and work boundaries often blur. It would be even more imperative that an educational process to teach pastors and pastoral staff how to use their BlackBerry in a healthy way. This could also be extended to congregations who might not be aware of the impact the use of technology is having on themselves and those around them.

Having discussed the practical implications, the next sections cover the limitations and strengths of the research.

Limitations and Strengths of the Research

This research contributed useful information to the growing literature on mobile technologies though it had limitations as discussed in the previous section.

One of the limitations of this research study was the sample size of ten couples. This sample size is not representative of all couples where one partner has a BlackBerry or where both partners have a BlackBerry. The sample size is also not representative of most age groups as 16 out of the 20 participants were over 40 years old, only one participant was between the ages of 31 and 39, and 3 participants were between the ages of 21-30.

A second limitation was that all, but one couple resides in the Region of Waterloo in Ontario. One couple lived in Europe and was interviewed by telephone. This prevented the interviewer from reading and discerning body and facial language.

A third limitation was the skewed representation of professions. The research was skewed towards pastoral positions since 20% or 4 participants were involved in pastoral work.

A fourth limitation was that the research did not take into consideration gender differences when it comes to the use of technology. All the females in the study, with one exception, viewed the BlackBerry as a tool whereas some males and one female viewed it as a tool, but also as an extension of themselves. It would be interesting to further explore the question, 'do females and males view technology differently, and if so what other differences are there, if any?'

A fifth limitation was that the research represents two groups of couples: one group (six couples) where only one partner had a BlackBerry and one group (four couples) where both partners had a BlackBerry. It would have been preferable to have equal number of couples in both groups.

A sixth limitation was the creation of a dual relationship if the researcher saw the couple in counselling after the completion of the study. One risk that may be created is that of bias, where the researcher, then therapist, might favour one spouse or the other, and the reverse could be true where one of the spouses favours the researcher. Potentially another risk might be that the couple may blame the researcher for their disagreement and the therapeutic joining process may be inhibited.

The strengths of the research were:

- The research appears to be the first to explore the impact of the BlackBerry on couple relationships.

- The study added to the discussion of the impact of the BlackBerry on many levels.
- That the participants were from all walks of life.
- The research was representative of people who had used their BlackBerry for only a few months to many years. Those who had their BlackBerrys longer had more time to discover the advantages and disadvantages of a BlackBerry, which may not be the case for those who had their BlackBerrys for a shorter period of time.
- The research represented a variety of professions and occupations.
- The research had couples whose marriages ranged in length of time from a few months to several years.
- Participants had not been asking how the BlackBerry would impact them before the study, but because of the study may now be more aware of the positive and negative aspects of using their BlackBerry
- Since couples were not questioning the impact on their lives before the study there was no bias towards the research questions.

Implications for Future Research

Future research might look at the issue of presence on a deeper level and ascertain the dynamics around the avoidance or engagement of presence with a partner. Repeating this study would be helpful at looking deeper at the implications of not being present with one's partner and the dynamics behind the avoidance behaviour. A

study on a larger scale might not only confirm the results of this study, it might add to the knowledge gained in this study.

Companies will benefit from looking at how the work/life balance as well as the use of mobile devices has an impact on performance and employee well-being.

Companies will also benefit from examining their unwritten and written policies around mobile technology use.

Further study will prove beneficial in examining mobile device usage between professions. For example, do accountants use their BlackBerrys in the same way marketing managers use them? Is there a difference in the impact on relationships for accountants using a BlackBerry and for marketing manager using one? Do accountants use them more effectively and productively than sales managers?

Another question for future research could be, does gender affect BlackBerry usage and if so, in what way does it affect usage?

Further research might investigate through the use of different questions to determine if there is a closer relationship between communication, time spent together and marital satisfaction than discovered in this research.

Another area for future research might be to examine the length of time couples have been married or in a relationship, and does the length of relationship have anything to do with the impact of the BlackBerry on the relationship?

Research in the future might examine different cultures and their response to the use of mobile technology and impact on their relationships, for example, do Asian

cultures view mobile technologies different from Hispanic, American or Canadian cultures?

Further research might also discover the long term effects on partners who do not experience their spouse's presence in a way that is psychologically and emotionally helpful to them. How do couples deal with being present in their relationships? How do you convince someone that "being there" or present for their partner is important? The one fact that is for sure is that technology is here to stay. The question will be can we manage technology effectively, especially when it comes to our relationships? The findings in this research would suggest that the BlackBerry does have an impact on relationships and we are just in the early stages of discovering and understanding the impact of this technology on couple relationships.

Chapter 7

Theological Reflection

Never allow yourself to become public property, where anyone can walk in and out at will. You might think that you are being generous in giving access to anyone who wants to enter or leave, but you will soon find yourself losing your soul. (Nouwen, 1996, p. 84-85)

This chapter begins with a summary of the research findings as a way of setting the context of the theological discussion.

In the research there were six couples where only one partner had a BlackBerry and four couples where both partners had a BlackBerry. The research found from a practical standpoint that the BlackBerry provided many useful features such as email, internet, calendar, contact manager, camera, music player, and phone. For those couples where both partners had a BlackBerry it was found to lessen stress in relation to the practical issues such as organizing couple and family life and relaying information. The two features mentioned most often were the ability to send and receive emails and scheduling through the use of the calendar program. Email and “pining” (direct communication between devices) provided a means of communication for the everyday household functions, where partners would email each other about things that needed to be done, things to pick up, or schedules that needed attention. Email was used to stay connected with one’s social network such as friends and family. While there were many benefits to email, the research found that it could be addictive,

for example, needing to reply to each and every email. For some people receiving emails gave them a feeling of importance and the more emails they received the more they felt needed.

The calendar function was useful especially where both partners had a BlackBerry. It was very convenient to schedule appointments on each other's calendar, reducing any frustration of reminding one's partner of events. Partners were also aware of what was going to happen each other's day.

While technology over the past few decades has promised to increase our leisure time, this was not the case in this study. In the study couples reported that using the BlackBerry did not increase any time together. Time together actually decreased for some spouses as their partners would be using the BlackBerry at home to engage in work related correspondence. Work actually increased due to a person's accessibility through the BlackBerry.

The study found that two of the participants rated their marital satisfaction higher due to the use of the BlackBerry. Two couples rated their marriage lower due to the use of the BlackBerry. One couple was split on the influence of the BlackBerry where one partner stated their marriage satisfaction was greater and the other partner stated it had no influence. The rest were neutral about the effect of the BlackBerry on their relationship. One participant would not give the BlackBerry any credit for improving their marriage, and one stated: "I think if your relationship is bad, the Blackberry is not going to be the thing to fix it".

An interesting finding was that couples used the BlackBerry to relate when they had a disagreement or an argument. They used the BlackBerry to communicate via texting, email or pinning what was going on for them and to bridge to a resolution. Two participants reported that writing down electronically what was happening for them was a preferred way of doing things versus a face-to-face confrontation.

The finding that was the prominent theme in the study was that of presence, the desire of one person to have the other person's undivided attention. It was important that their spouse was present with their whole body and mind. Children too, wanted their parent to be there and not be distracted by the BlackBerry. John Gottman (1999) would call "this turning towards each other instead of away" (p. 79). Yet, through the BlackBerry, couples were able to stay electronically connected by communicating with each other during the day. Some even used the BlackBerry to continue to discuss or to resolve an issue. Whether one partner or both partners had a BlackBerry, the ability to be present to each other was the most important and therefore will be the aspect discussed in the following theological reflection.

In reflecting upon the theological issue of presence the following process of theological reflection was used as described in "The Art of Theological Reflection" by Patricia O'Connell Killen and John de Beer (1999). Killen and de Beer comment that when we experience an event or situation we often find meaning in that event or situation from either a stance of certitude that is seeing "the unfamiliar only in terms of what we already believe" (p. 4) or a stance of self-assurance where we "trust only

ourselves, our own experiences, how we think and feel now, in each new situation. We choose our own compass, map and guide and reject our need for any other” (p. 10).

The issue with a stance of certitude is that we already have a predetermined interpretation of the event based on our own biblical or religious truths, traditions and Christian heritage. The problem with this according to Killen and de Beer (1999) is that it “misses God’s dynamic action in present human experience” (p. 8). We forget that biblical truth is based on “God’s self-revelation to human beings in history” (p. 8) and that God’s revelation is in on-going interaction with us. Killen and de Beer (1999) would not have us forget our biblical or religious truths, tradition and Christian heritage but rather use them to speak to us in a new way as we reflect theologically.

Self-assurance potentially leads an individual wanting to maintain control which makes theological reflection difficult. From the place of self-assurance the tendency is to:

Create agendas for ourselves, whether these consist of maintaining all our options or achieving a fiercely desired goal. We are tempted to become calculating in the way we relate to people, information, and activities, always considering them in terms how they benefit our goal or us. In the standpoint of self-assurance our projects – family, work, creative ventures – easily become idols that serve only our own desires to be righteous, to see ourselves as good and worthy (p.12).

Further, this standpoint “dulls our awareness of how much we are shaped by contexts and communities” (p.13). We forget the importance of our interactions with

others and the cultural context that formed us. This standpoint seeks to use religious truths and traditions for its own benefit and therefore “denies the tradition’s integrity and blocks our openness to the tradition’s revelatory power” (p.13).

Instead of coming from a standpoint of certitude or self-assurance Killen and de Beer invite us to come from a standpoint of exploration. From this standpoint:

We enter into our experience and describe from inside, the evidence of our senses. We may find ourselves caught up in a movement of discovery, what we are calling the *movement to insight*. Following this movement will lead us on new paths and change our ways of understanding the world and our place in it (p.17).

The standpoint of exploration includes our experience as well as the experience of our community. We need companions who become “sources of wisdom from outside ourselves that can help us interpret our experience” (p.17). Out of our exploration comes insight and insight then propels us to action.

Killen and de Beer (1999A) summarize theological reflection in this way:

Theological reflection is the discipline of exploring our individual and corporate experience in conversation with the wisdom of a religious heritage. The conversation is a genuine dialogue that seeks to hear from our own beliefs, actions and perspectives, as well as from those of the tradition. It respects the integrity of both. Theological reflection therefore may confirm, challenge, clarify, and expand how we understand our own experience and how we

understand the religious tradition. The outcome is new truth and meaning for living (p.51).

The first area to be examined in this theological reflection is that of presence. In the Christian tradition it is believed that God was incarnate (Latin in=in, carnis=flesh) in Jesus Christ. God became flesh in Jesus, “and the Word became flesh and lived among us” (John 1:14, New Revised Standard Version). It was through the Incarnation that God is present to us. We receive an understanding of what it is like to be present with God by reading the narratives of Jesus in the Gospels.

However this was not the first time God was present to humankind. For this we need to go back to the creation story in Genesis. God “formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being” (Genesis 1:7). God then placed man in the Garden of Eden to till and keep it. God brought all the animals to man to name them. It is evident that God does not hide from man at this point in time and is present to him. God then creates woman out of man and a pivotal statement is made: “Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife and they become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed,” (Genesis 2:24-25). Becoming one flesh makes a powerful statement about presence. The couple is so intimately connected that there is an oneness where they are truly present to each other. In the “one flesh” they encounter each other knowing that presence is essential to their wellbeing and relationship. Martin Buber (1970) in discussing what is necessary to renew marriages suggests that presence comes about when “two human beings reveal the You to one

another” (p. 95). Being naked and not ashamed might suggest that they could be present to each other without inhibitions regarding mutual concerns. Perhaps such honesty existed between them where defensiveness and guesswork were not present. The couple here is really in an ideal state where they are present to each other and God as well.

This ideal state does not last for both eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and “then their eyes were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves” (Genesis 3:7). Here they recognize that something has come between them and the presence they once had with each other is different. No longer can they go about “naked” with each other, rather a barrier has been created. But the barrier is not only between the man and the woman; it now becomes a barrier with God.

They heard the sound of the Lord God waking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” He said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.” He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.” Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” (Genesis 3:8-13).

We know from Genesis that after this God made skin garments for Adam and Eve and cast them out of the Garden of Eden resulting in them no longer being in the presence of God. God no longer walks among humankind. Since they now had to work off the land they were not able to be present to each other in the same way they were in the garden. The stage is set for work, leisure, childbearing, distractions, and the struggle for presence with one another and with God.

The barrier between humankind and God is established and the sin is the lack of presence. This becomes a major biblical theme throughout the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. Couples in this study struggled with being present to each other which is a reflection of the barrier between humankind and God. This sin as they named as a lack of presence in their relationship. Hear the struggle in what some of the participants stated:

- Like I used to feel when M was with me that I was important to him. I felt like I was the center of his attention and stuff like that when we were together and now I don't. I feel like he pays attention to me if the Blackberry isn't there. But definitely I would come in second place after the Blackberry.
- He would be answering the Blackberry at the dinner table or when we'd be out. It just adds a dimension that you're not accustomed to.
- It takes away quality time from him as well. Anywhere he is at any time he can just be accessing that. I find that sometimes during conversation his mind is on the emails.

Adam and Eve hid themselves from God, so too couples in the study started to

hide things from each other, further creating even more distance through secrecy.

Secrecy is an act of sin which creates distance between spouses, decreases trust, and intimacy. One participant shared:

- So off we went on our trip and when we were almost in Michigan I was looking for something in the car. I don't even remember what it was, and he has this console thing in the middle that has a little lid on it and I went to open it and he just about had a fit. And he said "No". Why? So you know what was inside, the Blackberry. He smuggled it into the car. I think that's pathetic. So when we sat on the beach together, it ended up that we sat on the beach and I read a book and he BlackBerryed.

Another related the following:

- He was sitting at the table and he was holding his Blackberry like down here and I said X., I know you have your Blackberry in your hand.

Presence is even more difficult when we get caught up in our work and in the tools we use. As one participant observed:

- Has it influenced the time we spend together? I think it's detracted from it because it's something he's distracted with. So, his focus is often elsewhere.

The struggle for presence is difficult by itself without adding external forces such as the BlackBerry to the scenario. As one participant reported:

- Oh, yes. We talk about it a lot. It's probably one of the worst things about our relationship. I don't want to be so crude but it's just one of the components of our relationship that isn't really going well at all.

The story of Adam and Eve relates to us the idea of presence both to one another and with God. This story suggests for me the beginning point where people find it difficult to be present with one another and God. The struggle for presence is an ongoing issue and that has been there for a long time. Consequently, I do not feel alone in my struggle for presence with my spouse, others or God.

The struggle to find God's presence is exemplified by King David in the Psalms. Hear what David said:

- My God, My God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning? O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer and by night, but find no rest (Psalm 22: 1-2).
- Out of the depths I cry to you. O Lord. Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications! If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with you, so that you may be reverted. I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; my soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for morning, more than those who watch for the morning (Psalm 130: 1-6).

As David cries by day and night for the word of the Lord, so too couples long to hear words that help them to connect and experience each other's presence. Perhaps we need to be open to the new forms of communication that are taking place in our culture. It was observed in the study that some couples did show grace to each other by using the BlackBerry to deal with tough issues and work through their thoughts and struggles by using texting, emailing or pinning each other through the BlackBerry.

Truly being present with another person takes effort and in the world of the BlackBerry this can be difficult to achieve, without thought to its use, without an awareness of others, and without discipline. At the beginning of this chapter Henri Nouwen (1996) was quoted:

Never allow yourself to become public property, where anyone can walk in and out at will. You might think that you are being generous in giving access to anyone who wants to enter or leave, but you will soon find yourself losing your soul. (pp. 84-85)

I find this quote quite applicable in terms of thinking about the BlackBerry for in essence one does become “public property” by being available to everyone who has access to a person’s BlackBerry. It truly is a device where everyone has access to enter and leave at his or her discretion. One can lose one’s soul if one is preoccupied with the device and lets it become an idol. We are reminded in Matthew that a person cannot “serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth” (Matthew 6:24). If we think about this in terms of marriage a person will either concentrate on the essential things of marriage (such as presence) or will be distracted (sinful) and not give the other person what they need. The study has already shown the dissatisfaction that some spouse expressed in their marriage when they do not receive from the other person their presence and attention.

So what is one to do? The study would suggest setting boundaries and being in control of the device instead of the device controlling you. Once again we can turn to the participants for their comments:

- It literally has ... if not governed ... disciplined ... it will consume you pretty fast.
- I think you have to be [disciplined]. I think you can get carried away to the point where your relationship is more with the Blackberry than with the person you're with.
- So there has to be some controls and some discipline put in place, which is essentially self-discipline so that it's not intruding or taking too much time.
- Well, I think one of the things that has become a habit is just checking it regularly to see if I have any email. So in that sense, I'm becoming responsive. That's a discipline that I have to work on. We talked about disciplines earlier and I know, for example, someone who will only check their email once or twice a day. Well, that's not the case with me right now. However, now it's not on a mode where it's ringing every time I get an email. I've controlled it that way.
- I think it's all about self-discipline and the ability to decide this is where I draw the line.
- I definitely think it has taken away from quality time and - and focused time with each other. It's improving because I think he knows how much it irritated me, that thing. He is learning to control it.

Setting boundaries, being disciplined and controlling the device appears to be the key to using it effectively. I think Nouwen gives us a warning and a solution in the following words:

You give whatever people ask of you, and when they ask for more, you give more, until you find yourself exhausted, used, and manipulated. Only when you are able to set your own boundaries will you be able to acknowledge, respect, and even be grateful for the boundaries of others (p. 9).

I would like to end this section with a comment by a participant who I believe has caught the essence of what it takes to be a couple and understands how to use the BlackBerry.

- I see our relationship has more to do with our intentionality to be committed to each other as two people than how we achieve that. The BlackBerry then is more of a tool that's a convenient tool.

Being disciplined is a way of extending grace (that which is helpful) to a spouse. It is an act of love which places the other before one's self. It places the BlackBerry in its rightful place, as a tool, just as Adam and Eve had tools to till the ground so too the BlackBerry can be something that helps in everyday living.

The BlackBerry can be used for sin or grace, the choice is always ours.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

This research set out to explore the impact of the BlackBerry on couple relationships as it pertains to communication, time spent together and marital satisfaction.

Communication between partners where both had a BlackBerry appeared to have a beneficial impact on the relationship as it applied to the practical and organizing side of life. Communication via the BlackBerry, as an electronic tool, was used to discuss one's feeling and opinions when there was an upset in the relationship. This appeared to work well for some couples.

Communication appeared difficult for those couples where only one partner had a BlackBerry as it related to the use of the BlackBerry in the other spouse's presence. The constant distraction of the BlackBerry adversely impacted the relationship. In these couples there was either a reluctance to address the issues, i.e. attentiveness, or it was not discussed. The spouse without the BlackBerry would experience resentment or there was reluctant acceptance that this was the way it was going to be.

Presence was an important aspect whether or not each partner had a BlackBerry. Presence represented the desire for attentiveness, and connection. There was a difference between presence and being present. A person could be present with their spouse yet not be paying attention to them. While presence can include quality

time, the word quality represents a measurement and comes from one's perception of what that should look like.

When people talk about quality time it sometimes appears that it is something to be attained or grasped for from outside of the relationship, as if you could insert quality into a relationship and everything is great. However, presence is greater than that and it comes from within oneself. A person needs to decide how important their marital relationship is, and decide if they are willing to create presence, quality time, and attentiveness.

The whole area of boundaries between work and personal life for some participants was a struggle. They hoped for decrease in work and increase in personal time that the BlackBerry seemed to offer had not been realized. In this study more work was created due to the availability of a person through the connectivity of the BlackBerry and the "always on" environment that it allows or creates. Some participants realized the importance of being disciplined with the BlackBerry however, for others it was an addictive source of feeding one's own need. They felt important and needed by the number of emails they received and answered.

This study underlined the importance of not blindly accepting technology without thinking about its impact on our family, our work and us. For those couples where only one spouse had a BlackBerry, the spouse without one, often reluctantly resigned herself to accepting the BlackBerry in her life. The attentiveness to the BlackBerry in two of the couples' relationship lowered their marital satisfaction scale in the interviews.

The one aspect of the research is that we cannot assume that technology has no impact on us. It is very easy to be drawn up in the importance of being connected through technology. We must strive to question and debate technology's influence in our lives and respond in a way that respects others and us. When we get drawn into blind acceptance of technology our eyes no longer focus on those we care about most. This study showed that being distracted and loss of attention to one's spouse is easy to do under the seduction of always being connected and the sense of being needed. Perhaps we need to see the BlackBerry for what it really is; a tool, then our blindness will be healed.

Appendix A

Rim Testimonials

12 of 62 Stories on the BlackBerry website.

1. "I can be an active Daddy from thousands of miles away."

Marcio S., OH

I was landing in Asia and had to tell my wife something important about the kids. It was too late at home to call in. A quick email via my BlackBerry fixed everything. My wife got the message in the morning (her time) and the thing with the kids was fixed. I could be a participative and active Daddy even being thousands of miles away.

<https://www.BlackBerry.com/ask/storyDetail.do?code=365>

2. "It lets me give clients the high level of responsiveness they expect."

Kristen J., NY

My BlackBerry integrates perfectly into my busy life. At work, my BlackBerry enables me to give my clients the high level of responsiveness that they expect. As a healthcare consultant, I am often out in the field. From waiting at the airport to meeting with nurses in a hospital, my BlackBerry allows me to read and respond to my clients' email messages wherever I am. And BlackBerry isn't just email; it is also my phone, web browser, calendar, address book and morning alarm. With all of the easy-to-use, built-in functionality, I can use the calendar to schedule a meeting, look up the score of the basketball game, speed dial my brother--honestly, I can't imagine my life without it!

<https://www.BlackBerry.com/ask/storyDetail.do?code=111>

3. "It gives me access to everything in my life."

Devon S., DC

My BlackBerry gives me access to everything in my life, when I want it! I can travel with everything I need, in my pocket--necessary for business, while allowing me to stay in contact with friends and family, almost anywhere, anytime. Unfortunately, I would be lost without it, so let's not mention the possibility!

<https://www.BlackBerry.com/ask/storyDetail.do?code=73>

4. "My BlackBerry is like family."

ALMA ROSA M., NY

My BlackBerry (or "BBerry" as I sometimes call it) has changed my life. I lived abroad for 6 months and lived and died by my BlackBerry (thank God for the "+" function on international calls!). I travel with it and it saves my life. I take road trips and I don't have to carry maps. It's the last thing I look at when I go to bed and the first thing I look at when I wake up (literally--it's my alarm). It's my single best source of information. It's my journal on a long cab ride home. I don't actually know how to survive without my BlackBerry. it holds everything I need to access (both for work and for play). It's such an integral part of my life and we have such a complicated relationship that the only way to describe it is to say that my BlackBerry is like family. <https://www.BlackBerry.com/ask/storyDetail.do?code=69>

5. "I can be in two places at once."

Scott N., MA

The BlackBerry is one of the most important pieces of technology in my life and it never leaves my side. I can go almost anywhere and still be in contact with my office, family, and friends, all with one simple device. When I see the BlackBerry's gentle green LED flashing on the top of the device I somehow feel that all is right with my world. I rest assured in the knowledge that should someone need me I am always going to be available to respond in an instant whether by phone or email. It's truly a relaxing feeling.

Unfortunately, there are times when I must turn the device off such as when I'm on a plane. But the moment we touchdown on the runway, I eagerly switch the BlackBerry on and watch it talk with the network, anxiously awaiting the incoming emails and messages I missed while in flight. When I sleep at night the device rests next to me on the table and has even replaced my alarm clock. It really does everything I need. It even has my full calendar synched to my work and personal Outlook® files. When I'm on the go I can always access my schedule and see what pending items are on the horizon and modify my schedule on the fly.

This is a great campaign as the BlackBerry is quite viral in nature. Thanks for making my life easier and more efficient. Thanks for empowering me with the ability to be in two places at once. <https://www.BlackBerry.com/ask/storyDetail.do?code=65>

6. "I have been loving it for over 6 years now."

Holger M., CA

Both with extensive travel and no travel at all, the BlackBerry has saved me hours of work in front of a PC doing email. On weekends it lets me check in seconds if there is something important, which happens as I work in a global role. It allows me to visit

places when I travel, instead of sitting in a hotel room waiting for email to synch.

It allows me to have more time with my family as I can do work easier/earlier and more flexibly. It allows me to keep up to speed with the information I want to know (e.g. football scores on the weekend) while not being tied to a PC or a TV. I have been loving it for over 6 years now. And my wife hated it until she got one. Now we "fight" over who drives as the other can do email in the meantime.

<https://www.BlackBerry.com/ask/storyDetail.do?code=58>

7."BlackBerry enables me to spend quality time with my my family."

Ediz E., CA

BlackBerry enables me to spend quality time with my my family without staying too far away from my business. Now I am able to commmunicate and develop my business even when I am with my children. It may sound like it is interfering with the quality time my family deserves but it is the opposite--now I can do more while I am in touch with my customers via phone or email, browsing the Internet to find a destination, or accessing our sales force automation application when I am away.

<https://www.BlackBerry.com/ask/storyDetail.do?code=87>

8."I am now in control of my time, life, and destiny."

R.T. F., TX

Whether at home, on a tractor, at an airport in Europe, or even while riding my horse, I am in constant contact with not only my office but the world. My BlackBerry has freed me from thinking that I am required to sit in front of my computer, waiting for or responding to some pressing need. Instead, I can go and do whatever moves me and while living my life, I can check in with the rest of the world, at my leisure. I am now in control of my time, life, and destiny. I love my BlackBerry!

<https://www.BlackBerry.com/ask/storyDetail.do?code=42>

9."I can talk with my travel agent while playing with my grandkids."

Kathy D., MT

Today I talked with my travel agent to make trip arrangements while I stood on the pitcher's mound playing softball with my 8 and 10 year old grandkids. They were happy I was with them. They teased me for always working, but they were thrilled that I was there with them during a fast trip to San Antonio where they live.

<https://www.BlackBerry.com/ask/storyDetail.do?code=34>

10. "I can stay on top of business and pleasure all at one time."

Richard H., NM

My BlackBerry and I are inseparable. I have the BlackBerry Pearl, which might I add looks visually stunning. Some people say that a dog is man's best friend but I beg to differ--the cell phone has taken over. The BlackBerry Pearl ensures that wherever I am I can stay on top of business and pleasure all at one time.

If I want to skip out early to get a haircut, I don't have to worry about missing an important email. I can read and reply to sender without anyone ever knowing I was out of the office. In a pinch, the BlackBerry can give me movie times or the weather for that spur of the moment trip to the theater or a jaunt to a resort. I also use it to pass time while waiting in line.

Productivity in life is key, the BlackBerry aids in this aspect by letting me do anything from checking my bank accounts to playing Sudoku to keep my wits sharp. When I'm traveling, my BlackBerry helps me to not only navigate and find places to eat, but also insures I wake up on time with the alarm clock and insures I don't miss any appointments with my calendar.

<https://www.BlackBerry.com/ask/storyDetail.do?code=19>

11. "I have even closed deals on ski lifts, and on the trails while mountain biking!"

Kashy G., CA

My BlackBerry is a priceless tool. Being in sales, I am always on the go. I always have the contacts and my schedule when I need it. It's also amazing that it seamlessly mirrors my calendar on my PC at work without wires. I wonder how I functioned before I had my BlackBerry. I have even closed deals on ski lifts, and on the trails while mountain biking! When I get back in my office, I don't have to deal with a mountain of emails as I am able to stay on top of them while traveling in the field and visiting my accounts. This allows me to spend more time with my little baby girl and my lovely wife. All of the above is priceless.

<https://www.BlackBerry.com/ask/storyDetail.do?code=17>

12. "I quickly realized that it's less about accessibility and more about flexibility."

Sandy M., IL

In the beginning I was a skeptic, and not sure that I wanted to be that accessible to colleagues at work. I quickly realized that my BlackBerry is less about accessibility

and more about flexibility. I'm a single mom, working full-time, traveling internationally--I'm everywhere. The BlackBerry allows me to manage two separate calendars (work and personal) in one place. It enables me to stay connected to my children, their teachers, their caregiver, their coaches etc. in a way that cell phones cannot. As their schedules change, I can adjust--even if I'm sitting in an airport somewhere.

Being connected all the time means that I no longer have to sift through a sea of voicemail and email to know what's going on. With my BlackBerry, I can also stay current with work, and take advantage of what would normally be downtime--waiting for a flight, riding in a taxi, sitting at hockey practice, before the soccer game/skating competition/play rehearsal etc. So, what do I tell people when they are thinking about buying a BlackBerry? It's great--as long as you remember that you control it and not the other way around!

<https://www.BlackBerry.com/ask/storyDetail.do?code=12>

Appendix B

WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

The Impact of the Blackberry on Couple Relationships: A Focus Group Study

Researcher: Jurgen Czechowsky

Advisor: Dr. Marsha Cutting

You and your partner are invited to participate in the following research study. The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of the Blackberry on couple relationships. The factors that will be explored are: marital or couple satisfaction, communication, and time spent together. The researcher is a Candidate in the Doctor of Ministry program at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, Wilfrid Laurier University.

Information

I am looking for couples where both partners use the Blackberry and couples where only one partner uses the Blackberry. The study will take the form of focus groups which will be approximately one and half hours in length. Each partner of the couple will be asked to participate in a separate focus group. The focus groups will be audio recorded.

Each person will be asked to complete the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale and demographic questionnaire prior to the focus groups. The ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale and demographic questionnaire will take approximately 10 minutes each to complete.

There will be approximately 32 to 40 participants in total in the research. The study period will be January 31 to March 31, 2008.

Risks

Couples may experience a difference of opinion which possibly could result in psychological and/or emotional risks to the relationship. However, this should be a manageable situation. Should the couple require further assistance, I will provide a maximum of 3 (50 minute/each) counselling sessions at no charge. Any further professional interventions will be at the couple's expense.

Benefits

Participants may benefit by having their views and opinions expressed as to how they use the Blackberry to enhance the well-being of their couple relationship. Participants may also discover ways in which the Blackberry detracts from the well-being of the

couple relationship and therefore have the opportunity to re-evaluate how and when to use this device. Companies may benefit by understanding employees use and management of the Blackberry and develop company policies which enhance relationships across the family/work boundary. It is anticipated that the research will be submitted for presentations and articles for publication.

Participant's initials _____

Confidentiality

Individuals are invited to participate anonymously and no identifying information will be released in the publication of this research. The researcher and/or assistant will be addressing confidentiality at the beginning of all focus groups, however all participants of the focus groups will hear what each other has to say; therefore, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. It is anticipated that 8-12 individuals will be in each focus group. While direct quotations may be used in the final research, no identifying features or characteristics of participants will be used. However, participants can consent to taking part in the research but not have their quotations used in the final report. Participants have the right not to answer questions. All audio tapes of the focus groups sessions and all surveys will be destroyed after the completion, acceptance and fulfillment of the doctoral program.

Participation

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will be destroyed.

Contact

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, or if you experience any adverse effects as a result of participating in this study, you may contact the researcher, Jurgen Czechowsky, at 151 Frobisher Drive, Suite D-115, Waterloo, Ontario, Phone: 519-884-6784, Email: jurgen@actassociates.ca. or Dr. Marsha Cutting, professor at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, Phone 519-884-1970 X3576, Email: mcutting@wlu.ca. This project has been reviewed and approved by the University Research Ethics Board. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Bill Marr, Chair, University Research Ethics Board, Wilfrid Laurier University, (519) 884-0710 extension 2468.

Feedback and Publication

Results of the research will be included in a doctoral dissertation by the researcher and will be available on or about June 1st, 2008. Participants are welcome to contact the researcher at the above address or phone number after that date.

Consent

Do you agree to being quoted anonymously? Yes __ No __ Participants initials _____

I have read and understood the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's signature _____ Date: _____

Investigator's signature _____ Date: _____

Appendix C

WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

The Impact of the Blackberry on Couple Relationships: A Focus Group Study

Researcher: Jurgen Czechowsky

Advisor: Dr. Kristine Lund

You and your partner are invited to participate in the following research study. The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of the Blackberry on couple relationships. The factors that will be explored are: marital or couple satisfaction, communication, and time spent together. The researcher is a Candidate in the Doctor of Ministry program at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, Wilfrid Laurier University.

Information

I am looking for couples where both partners use the Blackberry and couples where only one partner uses the Blackberry. The study will take the form of focus groups which will be approximately one and half hours in length, or individual interviews which will be approximately 30 minutes to 1 hour in length. Each partner of the couple will be asked to participate in a separate focus group or be interviewed individually. The focus groups and the individual interviews will be audio recorded. Each person will be asked to complete the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale and demographic questionnaire prior to the focus groups. The ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale and demographic questionnaire will take approximately 10 minutes each to complete.

There will be approximately 32 to 40 participants in total in the research. The study period will be January 31 to August 31, 2008.

Risks

Couples may experience a difference of opinion which possibly could result in psychological and/or emotional risks to the relationship. However, this should be a manageable situation. Should the couple require further assistance, I will provide a maximum of 3 (50 minute/each) counselling sessions at no charge. Any further professional interventions will be at the couple's expense.

Benefits

Participants may benefit by having their views and opinions expressed as to how they use the Blackberry to enhance the well-being of their couple relationship. Participants may also discover ways in which the Blackberry detracts from the well-being of the couple relationship and therefore have the opportunity to re-evaluate how and when to use this device. Companies may benefit by understanding employees use and management of the Blackberry and develop company policies which enhance relationships across the family/work boundary. It is anticipated that the research will be submitted for presentations and articles for publication.

Participant's initials _____

Confidentiality

Individuals are invited to participate anonymously and no identifying information will be released in the publication of this research. The researcher and/or assistant will be addressing confidentiality at the beginning of all focus groups, however all participants of the focus groups will hear what each other has to say; therefore, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. It is anticipated that 8-12 individuals will be in each focus group. While direct quotations may be used in the final research, no identifying features or characteristics of participants will be used. However, participants can consent to taking part in the research but not have their quotations used in the final report. Participants have the right not to answer questions. All audio tapes of the focus groups sessions and all surveys will be destroyed after the completion, acceptance and fulfillment of the doctoral program.

Participation

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will be destroyed.

Contact

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, or if you experience any adverse effects as a result of participating in this study, you may contact the researcher, Jurgen Czechowsky, at 151 Frobisher Drive, Suite D-115, Waterloo, Ontario, Phone: 519-884-6784, Email: jurgen@actassociates.ca or Dr. Kristine Lund, professor at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, Phone 519-884-0710 X2246, Email: klund@wlu.ca. This project has been reviewed and approved by the University Research Ethics Board. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated

during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Bill Marr, Chair, University Research Ethics Board, Wilfrid Laurier University, (519) 884-0710 extension 2468.

Feedback and Publication

Results of the research will be included in a doctoral dissertation by the researcher and will be available on or about October 1st, 2008. Participants are welcome to contact the researcher at the above address or phone number after that date.

Consent

Do you agree to being quoted anonymously? Yes ___ No ___ Participants initials _____

I have read and understood the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's signature _____ Date: _____

Investigator's signature _____ Date: _____

Appendix D

Introduction letter to be sent from the HR department by email to employees.

WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY RESEARCH

My name is Jurgen Czechowsky and I am a Doctoral Candidate in the Doctor of Ministry in Marriage and Family Therapy and Pastoral Care Program at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, Wilfrid Laurier University. I am conducting research to explore the impact of the Blackberry on couple relationships. The aim of the research is to understand how this particular technology is being used, and to understand the impact, both positively and negatively on couple relationships. The factors that will be explored are: marital or couple satisfaction, communication, and time spent together. I am looking for couples where both partners use the Blackberry and couples where only one partner uses the Blackberry. The study will take the form of focus groups, which will be approximately one and a half hours in length. Each partner of the couple will be asked to participate in a separate focus group. Each person will be asked to complete the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale prior to the focus groups and a demographic questionnaire. The study period will be January 31 to March 31, 2008.

The research will take place during the months of February and March. A final report will be ready June 1, 2008. Participation is totally and completely voluntary. Individuals may end their participation at any point in time and do not have to finish if they so choose.

This research will provide couples with a more in-depth understanding regarding the positive and negative impact on their relationship due to the use of the Blackberry.

There could be potential psychological and/or emotional risks to the relationship when couples discuss their answers and may find that there are differences of opinion. However, this should be a manageable situation. Should the couple require further assistance, I will provide a maximum of 3 (50 minute/each) counselling sessions at no charge. Any further professional interventions will be at the couple's expense.

Individuals are invited to participate anonymously and no identifying information will be released in the publication of this research. The researcher and/or assistant will be addressing confidentiality at the beginning of all focus groups, however all participants of the focus groups will hear what each other has to say; therefore, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. It is anticipated that 8-12 individuals will be in each focus group. While direct quotations may be used in the final research, no identifying features or characteristics of participants will be used.

All responses to the survey and demographic questionnaire are confidential. The researcher guarantees that your personal identity and any personal information will be protected. Disclosure of personally identified information will not be used without your written consent. The research is in compliance with the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA). If you wish to review the final document, you may contact the researcher, Jurgen Czechowsky at (519)884-6784 after June 1, 2008.

This research has been approved by the University Research Ethics Board. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Bill Marr, Chair, University Research Ethics Board, Wilfrid Laurier University, (519) 884-0710 extension 2468. If you wish to participate in this research, please email Jurgen Czechowsky at jurgen@actassociates.ca with the subject line: Wilfrid Laurier Research, as well as the time you and your partner can participate in the focus group.

The consent form, the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Survey, the demographic questionnaire and the focus group schedules are attached to this email. If you wish to participate please sign the consent form, fill out the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Survey, the demographic questionnaire and bring them with you to the focus group. My contact information is: Email: jurgen@actassociates.ca , or telephone 519-884-6784.

Appendix E

WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY RESEARCH

My name is Jurgen Czechowsky and I am a Doctoral Candidate in the Doctor of Ministry in Marriage and Family Therapy and Pastoral Care Program at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, Wilfrid Laurier University. I am conducting research to explore the impact of the Blackberry on couple relationships. The aim of the research is to understand how this particular technology is being used, and to understand the impact, both positively and negatively on couple relationships. The factors that will be explored are: marital or couple satisfaction, communication, and time spent together. I am looking for couples where both partners use the Blackberry and couples where only one partner uses the Blackberry. The study will take the form of focus groups, which will be approximately one and a half hours in length. Each partner of the couple will be asked to participate in a separate focus group. Each person will be asked to complete the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale prior to the focus groups and a demographic questionnaire. The study period will be January 31 to March 31, 2008.

The research will take place during the months of February and March. A final report will be ready June 1, 2008. Participation is totally and completely voluntary. Individuals may end their participation at any point in time and do not have to finish if they so choose.

This research will provide couples with a more in-depth understanding regarding the positive and negative impact on their relationship due to the use of the Blackberry.

There could be potential psychological and/or emotional risks to the relationship when couples discuss their answers and may find that there are differences of opinion. However, this should be a manageable situation. Should the couple require further assistance, I will provide a maximum of 3 (50 minute/each) counselling sessions at no charge. Any further professional interventions will be at the couple's expense.

Individuals are invited to participate anonymously and no identifying information will be released in the publication of this research. The researcher and/or assistant will be addressing confidentiality at the beginning of all focus groups, however all participants of the focus groups will hear what each other has to say; therefore, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. It is anticipated that 8-12 individuals will be in each focus group. While direct quotations may be used in the final research, no identifying features or characteristics of participants will be used.

All responses to the survey and demographic questionnaire are confidential. The researcher guarantees that your personal identity and any personal information will be protected. Disclosure of personally identified information will not be used without your written consent. The research is in compliance with the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA). If you wish to review the final document, you may contact the researcher, Jurgen Czechowsky at (519)884-6784 after June 1, 2008.

This research has been approved by the University Research Ethics Board. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Bill Marr, Chair, University Research Ethics Board, Wilfrid Laurier University, (519) 884-0710 extension 2468. If you wish to participate in this research, please email Jurgen Czechowsky at jurgen@actassociates.ca with the subject line: Wilfrid Laurier Research, as well as the time you and your partner can participate in the focus group.

The consent form, the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Survey, the demographic questionnaire and the focus group schedules are attached to this email. If you wish to participate please sign the consent form, fill out the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Survey, the demographic questionnaire and bring them with you to the focus group. My contact information is: Email: jurgen@actassociates.ca , or telephone 519-884-6784.

Appendix F

Demographics Questionnaire

1. Age Range: Under 20
 21 - 30 years of age
 31 - 39 years of age
 40 - 49 years of age
 50 - 59 years of age
 60 - 65 years of age

2. Sex: Female Male

3. Do you use a Blackberry? Yes No If not, go to question 7.

4. How long have you had your Blackberry?

5. Do you use your Blackberry for work? Yes No If not, go to
question 6.

What are the main functions you use your Blackberry for at work?:

6. Do you use your Blackberry for personal use? Yes No
If not, go to question 7.

What are the personal uses for your Blackberry?:

7. Do you use other technology devices? Yes No
If so, which ones, indicate all that apply:

- Personal computer
PDA/PIM
Cell Phone

For what purposes?:

8. What is your profession?

Appendix G

ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale 2006 and Interpretation of Scores



PREPARE/ENRICH
Life Innovations, Inc.
www.prepare-enrich.com

2006

ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale

David H. Olson, Ph.D.

The **ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale** is taken from the *ENRICH Marital Inventory* and it contains ten items. Information on the validity and reliability of ENRICH is contained in the following two articles:

Fowers and Olson (1989) ENRICH Marital Inventory: A discriminant validity and cross-validity assessment. *Journal of Marriage and Family Therapy*, 15, 65-79. (A few of the marital satisfaction items reported in this article have been updated for this 2006 version of the scale).

The **ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale** cannot be used or copied without written permission. To receive permission, please submit the Abstract Form. The reference for this scale is *Olson, David H. (1996). Counselor's Manual for PREPARE/ENRICH: Version 2000. Life Innovations, P.O. Box 190, Minneapolis, MN 55440.*

In closing, if you have questions, you can contact us at Life Innovations or email: research@lifeinnovations.com.

ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale

David H. Olson, Ph.D.

1	2	3	4	5
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Undecided</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

Indicate how strongly you agree or disagree.

1. I am happy with how we make decisions and resolve conflict.
2. I am unhappy with our communication and feel my partner does not understand me.
3. I am happy with how we share our responsibilities in our household.
4. I am unhappy with some of my partner's personality characteristics or personal habits.
5. I am happy with how we manage our leisure activities and the time we spend together.
6. I am unhappy about our financial position and the way we make financial decisions.
7. I am pleased with how we express affection and relate sexually.
8. I am unhappy with the way we (will) each handle our responsibilities as parents.
9. I am happy with our relationship with my parents, in-laws, and my partner's friends.
10. I feel very good about how we each practice our religious beliefs and values.

Scoring of the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale

1. For scoring the *ENRICH Marital Satisfaction* scale, add all the positive items (1, 3, 5, 7, 9 and 10).
2. Items 2, 4, 6 and 8 are negative questions and the responses should be reversed. The 1 becomes a 5, a 2 becomes a 4, a 4 becomes a 2, and a 5 becomes a 1 and the response of 3 is left unchanged. Once reversed, add these four items.
3. Total score is the sum of the positive and negative items. The range of scores is from 10-50.

	<u>Mean*</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>	<u>Internal Consistency</u>	<u>Test-Retest</u>
Marital Sat.	32.2	8.6	.86	.86

*Mean and scoring levels based on a national sample of 21,501 married couples with data on ENRICH collected in 2000 and reported in the book by David Olson and Amy Olson (2000) *Empowering Couples: Building on Your Strengths*. Minneapolis, MN: Life Innovations.

Marital Satisfaction: Interpretation of Scores

Percentage and Levels	Marital Satisfaction	Marital Satisfaction	
		Raw	Percent
Very High 85-100	You are very satisfied and really enjoy most aspects of your couple relationship.	46-50	100 %
		44-45	95
		42-43	90
		41	85
High 65-80	You are satisfied with most aspects of your couple relationship.	40	80 %
		38-39	75
		37	70
		36	65
Moderate 40-60	You are somewhat satisfied and enjoy some aspects of your couple relationship.	35	60 %
		33-34	55
		32	50
		30-31	45
		29	40
Low 20-35	You are somewhat dissatisfied and have some concerns about your couple relationship.	27-28	35 %
		26	30
		25	25
		23-24	20
Very Low 0-15	You are very dissatisfied and are concerned about your couple relationship.	21-22	15 %
		15-20	10
		10-14	5

ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale

David H. Olson, Ph.D.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

Indicate how strongly you agree or disagree.

- 1. I am happy with how we make decisions and resolve conflict.
- 2. I am unhappy with our communication and feel my partner does not understand me.
- 3. I am happy with how we share our responsibilities in our household.
- 4. I am unhappy with some of my partner's personality characteristics or personal habits.
- 5. I am happy with how we manage our leisure activities and the time we spend together.
- 6. I am unhappy about our financial position and the way we make financial decisions.
- 7. I am pleased with how we express affection and relate sexually.
- 8. I am unhappy with the way we (will) each handle our responsibilities as parents.
- 9. I am happy with our relationship with my parents, in-laws, and my partner's friends.
- 10. I feel very good about how we each practice our religious beliefs and values.

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Appendix H

Focus Group/Individual Questions

1. Has the Blackberry changed the quality of your relationship with your partner?
2. If so, how has it changed it?
3. If so, in what areas of your relationship has it changed it?
4. What strategies have you and your partner employed for the use of the Blackberry to enhance your relationship?
5. Has it influenced the amount of time spent together?
6. Some couples have said that the Blackberry has increased the amount of time they spend together, has this been your experience?
7. Has it influenced the way you communicate?
8. In what ways have you adjusted to the presence of the Blackberry in your life?
9. Would you say your relational satisfaction has increased or decreased due to the presence of the Blackberry?
10. If you use a BlackBerry for work does your company have a BB policy?
11. How does having a BlackBerry allow you to balance work/life?
12. What filters does your BlackBerry have to screen the type of information you receive?
13. Have you experienced the BlackBerry going down and what were your first thoughts when the BlackBerry went down, what happened to you? Were you concerned about reaching your partner?
14. How would you react to your partner being on the Blackberry while in your presence?
Does the Blackberry fulfill your need to be needed?
15. How do you feel about your partner when they communicate with those outside of the relationship?

16. If you were to rate your marital satisfaction on a scale of 1-10 how would you rate it?

One being low, ten being high.

17. Do you have any comments that have to do with time, communication, and marital satisfaction, or would you like to add anything?

Appendix I

Focus Group Script

Good (Morning/Evening/Afternoon) ladies and gentlemen. Thank you very much for time in deciding to participate in this research. I hope we have an informative and enjoyable time.

Before we start I would like to address a few items; first, I would appreciate your assistance in protecting the confidentiality of those participating in the group, any discussions outside of the focus group should be describing your personal experience and not the experience of anyone else; secondly, if at any point you wish to withdraw from the research you have the right to do so; thirdly, the focus group is being recorded therefore it would be helpful for transcribing the session for people to talk one at a time.

While direct quotations may be used in the final research, no identifying features or characteristics of participants will be used. After the defence of the dissertation all data and tapes will be destroyed.

The research will take place during the months of February and March. A final report will be ready June 1, 2008. Feedback will be only be supplied to those who request it. You can contact me by email or phone.

Again, let me remind you there could be potential psychological and/or emotional risks to your relationship if you discuss your answers with your partner and may find that there are differences of opinion. However, this should be a manageable situation. Should the you require further assistance, I will provide a maximum of 3 (50 minute/each) counselling sessions at no charge. Any further professional interventions will be at your expense.

Do you have any questions?

Anything else?

Then, let's get started.

Appendix J

Telephone Script

My name is Jurgen Czechowsky and I am a Doctoral Candidate in the Doctor of Ministry in Marriage and Family Therapy and Pastoral Care Program at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, at Wilfrid Laurier University. I am conducting research to explore the impact of the Blackberry on couple relationships. The aim of the research is to understand how this particular technology is being used, and to understand the impact, both positively and negatively on couple relationships. The factors to be explored are marital or couple satisfaction, communication and time spent together. I am looking for couples where both partners use the Blackberry and couples where only one partner uses the Blackberry. The study will take the form of focus groups, which will be approximately one and a half hours in length. Each person will also be requested to fill out the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Survey a demographic questionnaire prior to the focus groups.

I am wondering if there might be individuals from your organization who would be interested in participating in this research. Hopefully communication with individuals would occur by email through your HR department with the consent form, the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Survey, demographic questionnaire and a schedule of the focus groups attached.

The research will take place during the months of February and March 2008. A final report will be ready June 1, 2008. Any participation in the survey is entirely voluntary and the volunteers have the right to withdraw at any time during the research.

Participants may benefit by having their views and opinions expressed as to how they use the Blackberry to enhance the well-being of their couple relationship. Participants may also discover ways in which the Blackberry detracts from the well-being of the couple relationship and therefore have the opportunity to re-evaluate how and when to use this device. Companies may benefit by understanding employees use and management of the Blackberry and develop company policies which enhance relationships across the family/work boundary.

There could be some potential psychological and/or emotional risks to the relationship when couples discuss their answers and may find that there are differences of opinion. However, this should be a manageable situation. Should the couple require further assistance, I will provide a maximum of 3 (50 minute/each) counselling sessions at no charge. Any further professional interventions will be at the couple's expense.

All responses are confidential and the researcher guarantees that the personal identity and any personal information will be protected. Disclosure of personally identified information will not be used without the written consent of the participants. The research is in compliance with the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA). General statistics will be made available in the final report due out in June, 2008. If you wish to review the final document, you may contact the researcher, Jurgen Czechowsky at (519)884-6784 after June 1, 2005.

This research has been approved by the University Research Ethics Board. If you have any questions about this research you can contact Dr. Bill Marr, Chair, University Research Ethics Board, Wilfrid Laurier University, (519) 884-0710 extension 2468.

I would appreciate the opportunity to come to your office to introduce myself and discuss any questions you might have regarding this research.

Appendix K

Confidentiality Agreement

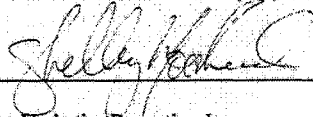
Between Vantage Verbatim Reporting Inc.

and

Jurgen Czechowsky
Doctor of Ministry Candidate
Waterloo Lutheran Seminary
Wilfrid Laurier University

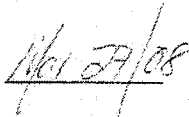
Vantage Verbatim Reporting Inc. has been retained to transcribe interviews for Jurgen Czechowsky's research project entitled "The Impact of the Blackberry on Couple Relationships". Vantage agrees to hold all tapes, transcriptions and documents in confidence. No copies of tapes, transcripts and documents will be kept by Vantage after the research is complete.

Signed

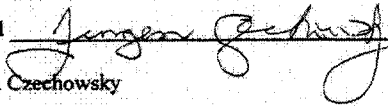


for Vantage Verbatim Reporting Inc.

Date:



Signed



Jurgen Czechowsky

Date:



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