

# i-technology

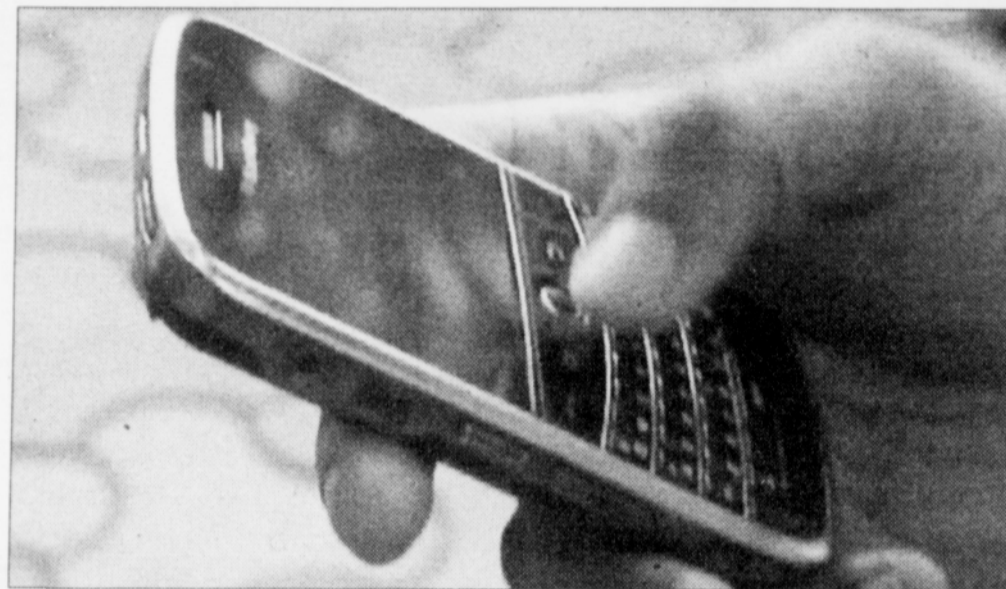
## Bans Reflect Unease with Encryption

### Technology a hurdle for law enforcement

(AP) -- Threats by the governments of India, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia to shut down BlackBerry's corporate e-mail services reflect unease about a technology that the U.S. government also took a while to accept.

The foreign governments are essentially a decade behind in coming to terms with encryption, a technology that's fundamental to the Internet as a medium of commerce.

Encrypted communications are scrambled in a complex process to ensure that only the intended recipient can read them, using the proper digital key. This often takes place behind the scenes, without the user needing to do anything. When you submit your credit card



Governments in India and the Middle East have considered shutting down BlackBerry's corporate e-mail services because of encryption, a technology that keeps correspondence private, but poses problems for law enforcement.

number on a shopping site, the communication is encrypted. When you log in to your bank's site, that connection is encrypted as well.

Most companies use encrypted connections for their corporate e-mails, at least if employees need to access e-mail outside the office through virtual private networks and other secure systems. One of the reasons Research In Motion Ltd. has been so successful with its BlackBerry phones is that it brought that level of security to e-mail-capable phones.

Encryption, however, poses a problem for law enforcement officials. They can intercept encrypted messages, but can't read them, unless the encryption is poor and agents have vast computer resources to use in unscrambling them. Traditional investigative tools such as wiretaps don't work. Canada's RIM and other technology companies stress that they agree to legal requests from law enforcement, but in RIM's case, it can't decrypt the messages on its corporate e-mail service.

BlackBerrys seem to have been singled out by foreign governments because the devices provide an easy and convenient way to communicate securely. But there are many other ways to communicate in an encrypted fashion, and any government that's serious about squelching encrypted communications would need to go after them as well.

According to a representative of Indian Internet service providers, the Indian government plans to go after Google Inc., presumably for its Gmail service, and Skype SA for its voice and video conferencing software.

The U.S. State Department has waded into the issue, saying it hopes to broker a compromise that addresses the legitimate security concerns of some governments while ensuring that the free flow of information is not compromised.

That's somewhat ironic, considering the U.S. restricts exports of encryption technology. The restrictions are light, but were quite comprehensive before 1999. The U.S. was concerned that it couldn't easily spy on foreign countries that used encryption for military and government communications.



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## Smart Phone Apps Keep the Faith

### Technologies merge with beliefs

(AP) -- The most ancient traditions of Islam are going high-tech, with a slew of modern offerings for those observing the holy month of Ramadan, which began this week.

Cell phone applications such as "iPray" or "iQuran" offer a beeping reminder of requisite prayer times, while the "Find Mecca" and "mosque

finder" programs help the Muslim traveler in an unfamiliar city find the nearest place to pray.

The applications aren't just for Ramadan; there are Islamic-themed programs that help users find the nearest Costco offering foods prepared according to Islamic dietary rules, learn the correct Arabic pronunciations in a daily prayer, or count how many pages of the Quran they've read that day — all on a mobile phone.

There also are applications, or apps, for the holy books of several other religions, from the Catholic Holy Bible to the Bhagavad Gita, a



Jim Otun uses his iPad to read the Quran.

sacred Hindu scripture.

The first time Sumeyye Kalyoncu heard the Adhan — or call to prayer — through surround-sound speakers on her iPhone dock, she was overcome with nostalgia for her native Turkey. Such applications are especially popular in the U.S., Kalyoncu said, as U.S. mosques do not broadcast daily calls to prayer from external loudspeakers, as they do in Muslim countries.

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