BlackBerry maker shows new phone, tablet software

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BlackBerry maker Research In Motion Ltd. unveiled a new operating system Tuesday in hopes of grabbing some attention away from the iPhone and Android phones.

The new BBX system combines existing BlackBerry elements with RIM's previously announced QNX operating system for phones and tablet computers.

RIM said BBX will incorporate the reliability and security features of QNX — which RIM snagged in 2010 by purchasing QNX Software Systems. It will also enable software developers to create more advanced, dynamic apps for the devices.

RIM co-CEO Mike Lazaridis introduced BBX on Tuesday at the company's annual developer conference in San Francisco.

He began his remarks by speaking briefly about the service outages that frustrated tens of millions of BlackBerry users last week. He said the company restored service as quickly as possible and is working on figuring out the causes and "making this right" for BlackBerry users worldwide. On Monday, BlackBerry tried to soothe customers by offering more than $100 worth of free software to each one and giving some a month of technical support.

The disruption came as RIM, once dominant in smartphones with its secure BlackBerry email service, has been losing ground to more consumer-friendly offerings such as Apple Inc.'s iPhone and smartphones running Google Inc.'s Android software.

RIM has sold 165 million BlackBerrys through August. Apple had sold 129 million iPhones as of June, but its device has been on the market for a much shorter amount of time.

RIM has also lagged in the market for apps that run on smartphones and tablets. Its BlackBerry App World, which includes apps for its smartphones and its PlayBook tablet computer, includes more than 46,000 apps. That is just a fraction of the hundreds of thousands of apps offered for the iPhone and Android phones.

RIM, which is based in Waterloo, Ontario, is trying to encourage developers to be more prolific, though, by showing off new software Tuesday that makes it easier to build apps and get them into the company's online store.

The company's stock rose 52 cents, or 2.3 percent, to $22.91 in afternoon trading.

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