

BlackBerry Seeks Innovation and Security Balance

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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BlackBerry maker Research In Motion said Russia could help development of new technologies by finding a balance between state security and innovation.

Co-chief executive Jim Balsillie said Monday that the Canadian company had "ambitious plans" in Russia and offered President Dmitry Medvedev — an avid user of Apple's iPad — a new BlackBerry tablet at a meeting on developing new technology.

RIM, whose BlackBerry products are used by executives and politicians including U.S. President Barack Obama, has faced demands from countries such as India and Saudi Arabia to give authorities access to its encrypted communications services.

Speaking to reporters before the Medvedev meeting, Balsillie said: "A very important [question] for Russia is how do they balance the need for letting innovative things happen, but managing state security. Many countries grapple with this around the world." He added

that a balance was needed that "allows innovation to happen, but still [allows] state security to be looked after."

Russia's two biggest carriers began offering BlackBerry services in late 2007, after years of negotiations between RIM and the Federal Security Service that did not involve handing over encryption codes.

The FSB said earlier this month that uncontrolled use of such services like Gmail, Hotmail and Skype could threaten national security.

Communications and Press Minister Igor Shchyogolev told Reuters ahead of Medvedev's meeting that the government wanted international companies like RIM to be present on the Russian market, offering "the most up-to-date technologies".

"If there are some network security demands, and they exist globally, we need to seek compromise to provide security and at the same time not to set up barriers for companies," he said.

Balsillie said Russia was still a relatively small market for RIM, meaning that it had "extremely ambitious plans to sell BlackBerry in Russia, invest in R&D, [and] also to invest in start-ups".

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