

BlackBerry tries to grate an Apple

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA: The head of BlackBerry has taken a swipe at Apple, saying in an interview the iPhone's operating system was outdated, while promising thousands of new apps as it prepares to launch its new Z10 handset.



Thorsten Heins

Image: BlackBerry

Thorsten Heins said there were signs users were switching to the Canada-based firm, which rebranded itself on launching its BlackBerry 10 platform this year, as it works to win back those who had shifted to the iPhone or Android devices.

He told the *Australian Financial Review* that big name apps such as Instagram and Netflix were being attracted by the reaction to its new BB10 operating system.

"Apple did a fantastic job in bringing touch devices to market. They did a fantastic job with the user interface. They are a design icon," he said. "The user interface on the iPhone, with all due respect for what this invention was all about, is now five years old."

While BlackBerry helped create a culture of mobile users who were glued to the company's smartphones, many of those customers have since moved to Apple or Samsung.

Apple's iPhone remains hugely popular but its iOS system is almost unchanged since 2007 and the firm's chief executive Tim Cook last week sought to allay fears over what some suggest is a lack of innovation, saying it still has the ability to "create magic".

The touchscreen Z10, operating on the BB10 system, is seen as critical to BlackBerry's future. At the Z10 Canadian launch in January, many observers praised its technical prowess but suggested a relatively small amount of available apps, then just 70,000, could prove a problem.

Heins said the company now expected 100,000 apps to be ready for the US Z10 launch later this week and negotiations were advancing with photo sharing service Instagram and video provider Netflix. "We are working constantly on getting these important apps on board," he told the newspaper.

"I think we are seeing the dynamic changing over time as they want to watch and see how BlackBerry 10 is making it in the market," he said.



Image: BlackBerry

"They want a ROI (return on investment) on their development dollars as well. I think this is a very respectful way of looking at your business and it is our job to convince them that BB10 is a successful platform."

Heins added that the company was in a robust financial position and was boosted last week when a mystery buyer ordered one million handsets, which he said was the biggest order in BlackBerry's history.

"This is huge. Those customers take on inventory and a financial risk and in doing so this shows that they have a very strong belief that they can be successful with BlackBerry 10," he said.

Source: *AFP* via I-Net Bridge