

Palm seeking applications for Pre smartphone

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The new Palm Pre smartphone. Palm is inviting outside developers to tailor applications for eagerly-awaited Pre smartphones that will be taking on heavyweights such as iPhone and BlackBerry.

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Palm senior vice president of application software and services Michael Abbott made the appeal during a keynote presentation to software savants at a Web 2.0 Conference taking place this week in San Francisco.

Developers can apply online at developer.palm.com to get a Mojo software developers kit (SDK) that lets them design programs for Pre devices.

A small number of developers will initially get kits, which will be eventually be widely available, according to Palm.

"Developers are an incredibly important part of the webOS ecosystem, and we're eager to get the SDK into their hands," Abbott said.

A Palm App Catalog that will be launched when Pre devices hit the market will be an online mini-application shop in keeping with a trend started by Apple's App Store for iPhones and followed by other mobile telephone makers.

Palm previewed a few Pre apps this week at a wireless telecommunications technology conference in Las Vegas.

Among the software demonstrated were Pandora Internet radio and Fandango movie ticket services for Pre devices.

Outside developers will be able to submit Pre mini-applications to App Catalog after it opens. Palm did not reveal a date for release of the Pre or the App Catalog.

The new smartphone from Palm was crowned best product in a cellphone and smartphone category at the annual Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas in January.

The Pre was also named "Best in Show" at CES and received the most votes in a "people's choice" Internet poll.

Palm was once a pioneer in handheld devices but it has been suffering

hard times lately.

The touch-screen Pre features a new operating system and notably allows users to move seamlessly from one application to another, as with a desktop computer, and run multiple applications at the same time.

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