

German ministers told to avoid BlackBerrys, iPhones

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A user tries out the new Blackberry Torch 9800 smartphone on August 3 in New York City. The German government said Monday ministers and senior civil servants have been told not to use iPhone and BlackBerry mobile devices as the interior minister warned a "dramatic" rise in cyber attacks.

The German government said Monday ministers and senior civil servants have been told not to use iPhone and BlackBerry mobile devices as the interior minister warned a "dramatic" rise in cyber attacks.

An interior ministry spokesman told reporters they had been told to use instead Simko devices offered by Deutsche Telekom because of "urgent" advice from the federal IT security agency, the BSI.

BlackBerry smartphones, made by Canadian firm [Research in Motion](#) (RIM), offer a high level of protection for data and emails, but Berlin is

reportedly uneasy that all data pass through two RIM centres in Britain and Canada.

Thomas de Maiziere, the interior minister, told the Handelsblatt business daily that there was a risk that malicious software might find its way onto government and corporate IT networks via the devices.

"The government must therefore keep it very much in mind that it has to protect its own network effectively," he told the newspaper in comments published on Monday.

"BlackBerry's infrastructure is a company-owned closed system. But the access standard must be capable of being set by the government and not by a private company."

The advice dates from 2009 but it has attracted German media attention because of efforts by Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates, citing security concerns, to gain access to BlackBerry's encrypted data.

De Maiziere said that Germany was experiencing a "dramatic rise in attacks against our networks and in particular against government networks" at the hands of foreign intelligence agencies and organised crime.

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