

RIM seeks broad industry-gov't talks on encryption

August 26 2010, By PETER SVENSSON , AP Technology Writer

(AP) -- Research In Motion Ltd., the maker of the BlackBerry, said Thursday it is seeking to involve other technology companies in its talks with the Indian government, which wants access to the e-mails of BlackBerry users.

RIM, which is based in Waterloo, Canada, said it has offered to lead an "industry forum" on the use of encrypted communications, on which law enforcement can't be easily eavesdrop.

India has set a Tuesday deadline for RIM to give access to the e-mails, or the service would be shut down in the country. There are about 1 million [BlackBerry](#) users in India, and travelers would probably be affected as well.

RIM is battling similar concerns in other countries, including Saudi Arabia and the [United Arab Emirates](#).

In its statement Thursday, RIM said the forum would work closely with the Indian government to develop recommendations aimed at preventing the "misuse of strong [encryption](#) technologies while preserving its many societal benefits in India."

"Strong," or practically unbreakable, encryption is a cornerstone Internet technology that enables online shopping and corporate communications that's impervious to spying by competitors. It's used to secure e-mails not just on BlackBerrys, but on other smart phones as well, at least for

corporate users.

Encryption also is used to secure Skype SA's Internet-based calls and [Google](#) Inc.'s [Gmail](#) e-mail service. According to an Indian government document obtained by The Associated Press, it may shift its focus to these services once it deals with RIM.

RIM's offer came well after business hours in India. Earlier Thursday, the Sachin Pilot, the minister for communications and information technology, reiterated that Indian phone companies have to make BlackBerry e-mails available in a readable format by Tuesday.

RIM says it doesn't have the encryption keys for BlackBerry e-mails - only the phones do - so it can't give any government access to the content of the messages.

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