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BlackBerry users find many ways to annoy

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Last week's column about PDA etiquette sparked some venting. "Thank you, thank you, thank you for your article on BlackBerry and cell phone etiquette," one reader wrote. "You would think common sense would prevent many of the missteps mentioned in your article but obviously not."

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I thought you'd enjoy reading some of the feedback I received as readers shared their own frustrations with the device and its prevalence:

"One of the most annoying things about BlackBerrys is when they are placed near the microphone during phone telecom meetings. All you can hear is the digital signal going back and forth between the BlackBerry and the cell phone tower every time an e-mail or text is being delivered. It completely drowns out the voices on the telephone and is very irritating and disruptive to an otherwise productive meeting."

Bob Alexander

"A few months ago I was interviewing a person for a sales representative position. As I was asking him background questions, he kept pulling out his BlackBerry and checking his messages. It appeared that he had more important things to do. He was otherwise very qualified for the position, but I felt that if he was that rude in an interview, what would he do in front of a customer. I honestly believe that it was such a habit for him to check his messages immediately that he did not realize how it made him look."

Jeff Dunning

"Last summer we were visiting a relative in Washington who is a federal agent. Every few minutes our visit was interrupted when his BlackBerry would ring with a general-circulation text message about some kind of terror-related concern, like a suspicious package discovered on a street corner in Georgetown. Not one of them directly concerned him or his work. It is natural that eventually the overflow of meaningless messages would cause him to turn it off, so he would miss something that was truly important. The noise would simply drown it out.

"Text messaging can be useful, but mostly it is a dangerous annoyance. I see people texting while driving all the time. Texting while you are trying to hold a conversation with them. Groups of people sitting around a table in a restaurant ignoring each other while texting to people who couldn't bother to be present. The other day while driving home, I was almost hit by a little girl who was texting while riding her bike down the center line of a busy street. I don't text message."

David Edward

Reader Susan Diacon shared this quote with me, which I think sums it up best: "Good manners is the art of making those people easy with whom we converse. Whoever makes the fewest people uneasy is the best bred in the company."

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Jill Haney's Cincinnati-based business, JH Image Consulting, conducts individual and corporate group training on appearance, behavior, and communication. She is a certified image consultant with the Association of Image Consultants International. Reach her at 513-505-2732, jill@jimage.net, or www.jimage.net.

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