WIRELESS DEVICES

Ken Arcia

KEN ARCIA: Hello. Good afternoon, everybody! First, I want to ask how many of you have a pager, a smartphone, or a PDA? I will be explaining about what each is, and how you have many choices available today.

First off when you're looking for a new device, you want to think about what you want to use it for. Do you want to use it for e-mail only? Or do you want to also use it as a phone, or maybe as a daily organizer? Do you want to have Internet access, or all of the above? It depends on what you want to use the device for. Think about that before you go looking for the devices because many of the devices out there include different or all of those options. Also, the thing that you need to remember is that you buy a phone or a pager, whatever you want to call it, then, you also buy service.

Some of you may remember a few years ago everybody called it the little pager device pager a Wyntell. That was misleading because Wyntell provided the service. The device was the RIM-850 or 950. But everybody associated the device name with the service. Now with the current technology, you want to talk about the phone and then talk about the service company that goes with the phone.

There are four major service carriers in the United States: Sprint, whom I work for, Verizon, Cingular formerly AT&T, and T-Mobile. I listed T-Mobile last because it has the weakest coverage in the United States. They haven't installed a lot of new towers anywhere. So some people with SideKick devices may notice that they don't have a lot of coverage. They all get the "X," which means no coverage. So when you are looking for a new device, you want to look at a phone, or whatever you want to call it, you want

to look at the device, and then you also want to look at service. Also, make sure that you have a return policy. Sprint has a 30-day policy where you can try out the phone for 30 days. If you don't like it or it doesn't meet your needs, you can exchange it for something else, or return it for a full refund. You only have to pay for the calls that you make, or the services that you use during that period.

Blackberry

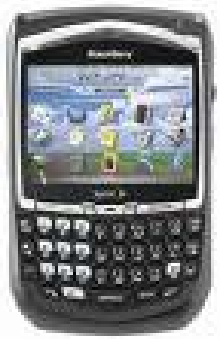
How many of you have heard of a Blackberry? I wonder if anybody knows where the name Blackberry came from? Basically, the name came from a marketing group in California. The group researched a name that they could patent that would give a friendly or nice feeling when you heard the name. They didn't want it to offend anyone, and they wanted it to be the same across several different languages. So they picked Blackberry. Have anyone heard of the lawsuit, the Blackberry lawsuit? First off, the good news is that the lawsuit was resolved earlier this year. There's no lawsuit anymore. Basically, the lawsuit related to a patent that another company had developed and they sued Blackberry. Everybody was afraid that Blackberry would fold or go under. Truth of the matter is that many legislators and people on Capitol Hill have Blackberries so they were not going to let Blackberry go under. There was a large settlement maybe something like $300 to $600 million paid by Blackberry to settle the case. The other company dropped the lawsuit. There is no chance of Blackberry going under any time soon.

Let's talk about who uses a Blackberry device. Actually, users can be anybody. People can use it as a phone or to access their e-mail. Here's a funny story, and it's a true story. Several Chiefs of Staff in the present administration have meetings way down at the bottom of the Pentagon. There is no signal. No coverage there. So when they have breaks, they have their assistants go out and walk their Blackberries. They go upstairs to where they get the signal, and they will send and receive their e-mails.

What can you do with a Blackberry? Well, pretty much anything. The brand-new Blackberry out there has a camera in it. The older devices you can use as phones, have e-mail, Internet access, daily organizers, full contact lists, notepad, all kinds of different things. Including Sprint provides relay service through the Blackberry so that you can download that software for free.

Here are a few pictures of the Blackberry devices. My PowerPoint screen is not big enough to show all of the different models that Blackberry make. They easily make over 25 different models. However, the actual devices may be exactly the same, depending which wireless carrier sells that device. They just give it a different model number. Sprint sells a 7250 model, and that is exactly the same as the 7290 model that's sold by T-Mobile and Cingular. The only difference is they are on different networks. The exact same processor, same memory, same features, everything is exactly the same.

I am at trade shows a lot and people will ask me, “Which one is better, the 7290 or 7250?” I say they're exactly the same. Sprint's is this model, and that company is a different model. But they are exactly the same. Here is the latest Sprint Blackberry..the 8703e



Sidekick

Who here has a SideKick or has had one? Danger.com is the company that makes it. They market under Hip-top, which is their product name. They gave the device they have a contract with T-Mobile, and T-Mobile calls it the SideKick. This is easily the most popular device in the deaf community today. That's changing though because T-Mobile doesn't have a very good network. It depends on how much you travel. If you don't travel a lot and it works fine in your area, then, great. That may be the perfect device for you. SideKick also has AOL Instant Messenger, e-mail, Internet access, phone, and a calendar. SideKick up until very recently was the only device out there that came pre-installed with AOL, and AIM.

Here are a few pictures of the SideKick device: SideKick I, II, and III. One nice feature that the III has is a tiny track ball. Instead of a mouse or a wheel, it has a little tiny track ball so that you can move around on the screen. Here is the SK-III.

Palm Treo

How many of you have heard of the Treo? Basically, Palm has been known for year for the PalmPilot and all of their devices and products. They originally were designed as daily organizers, PDAs.

Over the years thousands of programs have become available out there, and hundreds of them are free. They are caked the smartphone because it looks like a phone, works like a phone, but has added features.

Here are some pictures of the Treo. This one on the far left here is the Treo 300; then below that we have the 600, 650, 700s, The 700s are the newest models. There are two different versions. There is the Windows version, and the traditional Palm version. One thing that you may have noticed is that all of these devices have keyboards. So the deaf community uses them to send and receive e-mail or text messages. Here is the Treo 700 WX

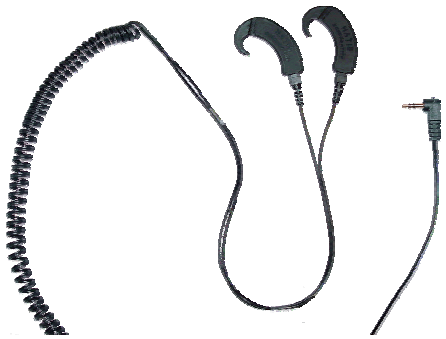
If you are hard-of-hearing or you have a slight hearing loss, another thing that you want to ask yourself is do you want the phone to work like a phone with a few extra features? Or do you want it to work as a pager or a PDA device. What's your priority? One of the other devices coming out, or is available now is the MDA. I believe that it's available through Cingular and T-Mobile. Another device is the Motorola "Q," which is available through a couple of companies now. Sprint will have that available in January. Motorola "Q" is based on Windows. Then there is the Nokia, which has been known for their phones for years. Lastly there is the PPC-6700, also Windows-based. Sprint will be selling these in a couple of weeks. They're starting at the Deaf Nation in California.

Relay services

A lot of people ask me how I can use the relay service through my device? Well, if you have a Blackberry, then you can download Sprint IP on the device. If you have any type of device with AIM, then you can add Sprint to your buddy list. Other companies allow that also. If you already have AOL Instant Messenger on your phone or pager, then you just add Sprint relay to your buddy list. Then you contact Sprint and you can talk back and forth to the relay to contact a hearing person.

One thing I want to talk about is access as related to hearing aid compatibility. If you are

hard-of-hearing, maybe you know that you can use some cell phones or devices with your hearing aid with your T-coil. That depends on the rating that they have. Some phones are louder and clearer than others; some are not so good. You may try a device that uses a GSM technology, and it may create a buzz for some people in their hearing aid. Also, you can use accessory devices like the HATIS.



This goes with your hearing aid right next to the T-coil switch. It plugs into the phone. You talk into the HATIS microphone. You can buy these online for about $100, $120. Other companies now are also making similar devices that plug into your cell phone that let you hear only the phone. You won't hear the background or any outside noise interfering with you. It makes the signal much clearer.

Emergency, or 911 access

All new cell phones and pager devices sold I believe it was 2003 are required to have a GPS chip built in. That helps people locate you in case of an emergency. It depends on the services in your area whether or not they have the technology to use that to find you. But all new phones have that GPS chip built in.

If you can use relay service on your device, or TTY with your device, you can call 911 and try to speak to them and tell them where you are. Or just wait because the GPS chip can help track the general area where you are. It depends on the technology just how accurate it is.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: What's the cost of some of the better models that are coming out?

KEN ARCIA: Good question. It depends on which company you talk with and who the service carrier is. Sprint is selling a couple of the Blackberry models $99 and $129. Then you have your monthly service plans. So if you are only talking about data only, only e-mail, Internet access, it's a lot cheaper than a regular plan, which includes charges for minutes. For people who want to talk on the phone, that depends on the device that you are using and which company. I can give you some links about where to search because I can't tell you all about the different devices out there or all of the different prices there are.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: You talked about AOL IM. What about Yahoo IM?

KEN ARCIA: Good question. There are four or five different instant messaging programs out there. It depends on which relay company has developed software for those different Instant Messaging. Right now Sprint only has relay on AOL IM. I know that they are working on relay for Yahoo and MSN. I know a couple of different companies also have their relay service available on AIM. I'm not sure what other companies provide Yahoo or MSN Instant Messaging.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: .I have a Blackberry 7230. Will it download AIM? Or do I need to purchase a new Blackberry?

KEN ARCIA: It really depends on the exact device and which company it's through and how much memory that it has. What I mean is who your wireless carrier is.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: T-Mobile.

KEN ARCIA: You should be able to do that, but it depends on the memory in the device. I've had a couple of people come to the booth to download Sprint, and they don't have enough memory on their device to download it, or they have an older operating system so it wouldn't allow them to download that software. It depends which device that you have and how much memory that you have.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I am currently getting involved in Homeland Security issues, and how do we notify people of the Homeland Security issues out there in terms of your own personal safety. Do you know whether or not there is a nationwide plan put together that would allow the system to notify people with these devices that their lives might be in danger?

KEN ARCIA: That's a great question. And what's interesting is that just about 10 minutes ago I got a message on my pager about emergency services in a situation in California related to the weather. So they have an emergency notification system. You can sign up using any e-mail address, including your paging device, and then you can tell them you want to be notified about, for example, a tornado warning, or something more severe. If there is a fire in your area, or the recent earthquake as in Hawaii, or an Amber Alert you can sign up for all of those different services. You can sign up at www.indicent.com for alerts. This weather notification I get is through the Governor's Office of Emergency Services in California. There are other nationwide services, I believe. Christine Seymour was involved with that. That was her last job. TDI has been strongly involved with the emergency notification system.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: That's a tremendously important issue about notification, particularly in the case of local, regional, or national emergencies. It's true that there are places where you can sign up and get notification on your pager. However, there are limitations on the information that you're receiving. Our problem is how do we update the entire 911 emergency system? There are places in our country that still don't have basic 911. There are places that don't have enhanced 911. There are people with pagers who can't access enhanced 911 directly. You can't necessarily go to an

enhanced 911 through relay service. They may do it for you, but the call is delayed and it takes extra time, and we don't want that in emergencies. So let me just briefly say that TDI has convened now two meetings of what is called the 911 Stakeholders Council. Sherry from California is involved in chairing that council that has over 20 consumer groups involved, and over 10 industry representatives including CSD, Sprint, et cetera. We're trying to work with the FCC to figure out a system where we can, in fact, get adequate notification in case of emergencies to all deaf and hard-of-hearing people regardless of the technology that they use.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I was at Christine Seymour's workshop this morning where she talked about that. One thing that I learned in that meeting was that you need to check with your board Hmm..dunno what board. It's possible to get emergency alert through your pager at your place of employment. At Gallaudet, we have a loop-on. Any kind of emergency notification can be sent to my pager even at 6:00 in the morning or before, whenever the emergency is

KEN ARCIA: We're talking about paging devices. You can use your pager for a lot of different things. I use mine for information. Last night on the cruise, I was checking the score on the Cardinals' game. I can e-mail a friend of mine with plans to meet for dinner. I can use it, like I just said, for emergency notification. You know, you can use it for a wide variety of things. A lot of people just want a pager device for peace of mind. In case something happens, if they're in an emergency situation, or if they want to contact their friends or family, et cetera, they use a pager.

So think about what you want to use the device for when you go to the stores. And go to your local store even though you might not buy from them. But go there and try out the different devices because they really range from device to device how much you can hear on them, or what features they have, what the costs are, what the monthly costs are, all of these different variables. Ask your friends.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I just want to pass on some information. The Homeland Security department had entered into an agreement with the National Weather Bureau. So if there is a Homeland Security issue, and we have one of those national weather alert radios, that will activate to let you know that there is a national emergency. If you don't have a weather alert radio, I'd like to encourage you to invest in one because it could save your life. The agreement between the National Weather Bureau and Homeland Security provides that for a national emergency Homeland Security will use the same signal that activates a weather alert.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: If I were to buy a Blackberry, could I use my own e-mail address?

KEN ARCIA: For most devices out there today, you can install and use several different POP e-mail addresses. For instance when you sign up for a Blackberry, it creates its own e-mail address. But if you have one you are already using, if it is a POP e-mail address, like Comcast.net, or Yahoo.net, you can add it on to that device.

I want to show you something real quick here. POP is a type of e-mail. If you use Outlook as part of Microsoft Office, usually an e-mail you get through Outlook is your POP mail. Corporate e-mails are a little bit different. At home you sign up for high speed Internet that includes a few e-mail addresses. Those are POP e-mail accounts. I think POP means post office protocol. Suppose that you have Yahoo, or Road Runner, or Cox.net, or Comcast.net, you can put that same e-mail address on your device.

When I was talking about the ratings for the different e-mail devices, I meant different phones, such as Blackberry, et cetera, have ratings. Ratings show how well the phone works with hearing aids. It will show rating of "M" or "T". On the device name will be the ratings M4/T4. That tells whether it works with your T-coil setting or the microphone setting on your hearing aid or a CI. Whenever you go to any store or any provider, you can ask them if the device has a rating for your hearing aid or your CI. Then test it, try it out, and see how well it works for you.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Do cochlear implants have the same rating at this point?

KEN ARCIA: I don't believe that there is a separate rating for CIs. They have rating whether or not it works in the microphone setting, or the telecoil setting because your CI has each one of those settings.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I know not all of the cochlear implants have telecoils. I got mine in 1999, and it doesn't have a T-coil on it. Some of the newer ones do. My question is, are there any of the companies out there that offer a package where you can get e-mail, text messaging, Internet, everything except the actual cell or voice communications? Voice would be pointless for a lot of to us have.

KEN ARCIA: When I was talking about the devices that Sprint sells, I forgot to mention we have a couple of different Blackberries that we sell. And soon we'll be selling the PPC-6700, a Windows-based device. All of those have a data-only plan. This means that you can use it for e-mail, text messaging if you would like, Internet access, and the regular organizer functions, calendar, contacts, only $30 a month. That includes no voice minutes. So it's not for using voice. If you want to call, it's available to you and cost you about 20 cents a minute. So then there are separate plans. If you wanted something like 100 voice minutes, or 1,000 voice minutes a month, would you go to your local store and just check with your local store on what the different prices are. There's no way that I can really give you a price breakdown because they vary. There are literally 40 or 50 different pricing plans depending on the carrier. Sprint has a data-only plan for deaf and hard-of-hearing customers who want to use that, just data only, e-mail and instant messaging, Internet access.

Let me add why the cellular costs are very high. That is true because it's a real money-maker. I mean, I don't know how many people here have completely stopped their regular wired home phone service. A lot of people are doing that. They're just completely cancelling their phone service and only using the pager, a cell phone or

high-speed Internet. There's no phone line. A lot of people are switching to just cell lines. That's the wave of the future. You won't really see the prices dropping very much.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I've had my SideKick for about a year. Not only has it given me freedom in terms of at least approaching the freedom the people who use regular cell phones have, but I've really been impressed by the power of this when I use it as a PDA. When all my technology is working right, I can have my home computer, my work computer, and my hand-held device all synchronized with my calendar, my to-do list, and all of my contacts. When I am away from the office, I might get an e-mail that says that I need to call somebody else, or I want to give somebody a phone number, It's all in the palm of my hand. I see so many people using these devices merely to send text messages or IM or to send e-mail. I just want to say that there's a whole lot more power in them. Most of us have Microsoft Windows, and it works with Outlook. It's a really, really powerful device.

KEN ARCIA: I agree. Just one thing that you have to be careful about is that if you rely on your device, make sure that you back up the information in there because a lot of people, you know, call this their lifeline. They've got all of their contact information in there. And if they lose that, they're stuck. So most of the newer phones, smartphones, PDAs allow to you synchronize. They just sync your information between your device and the computer, and that way it also backs up all of that information. I sync at home, at work, and on my device, all three. That keeps me up to date with my appointments. You can set reminders and have all your list of contacts in there. What's really nice is since I work for Sprint, a corporation, I get all my e-mails synchronized with my device automatically over the air. When I reply or delete something from my device, it also deletes it is from my computer at work. So that's a different type of e-mail because it's corporate. It's great when you have that freedom like you said.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Do many of the devices have memory cards beside the cables for downloading?

KEN ARCIA: I don't really see the connection with memory cards. Most Blackberry or Treo devices, and a lot of the newer devices out there if you want to download something it's called OTA, over the air. It's sent like an e-mail. It goes directly to the device. You don't need a wire at all. If you want to synchronize you can also use the wire or a lot of the new devices come with BlueTooth, and that's another way of communicating between devices a short distance. There's are a lot of other accessories available for BlueTooth including headsets. Some are hearing-aid compatible so you can use them to talk or listen on the phone without the device being right here. You can put it in your pocket and communicate with your headset wirelessly. No wire. Pretty nice!

AUDIENC MEMBER: Is it possible to add memory to a new Blackberry?

KEN ARCIA: Adding operating memory like they call RAM, no, it's not. We upgrade the device after a couple of years and get something with more memory. If you are talking

about something like storage, saving programs, downloading attachments, including music, pictures, things like that, then you can do that with some devices that have memory cards. The my Treo has a one gigibyte SD card. It has 100 songs on it. Depends on the device whether it has storage cards. I believe that the new Blackberry Pearl has one. I have to verify that. The Treos have it. The SideKick I don't believe has a storage card reader on that. But those are used for storage. As part of running programs, you can't really add memory that way. What some people is if they have a lot of programs they want to put on their device, they put them on the card. It runs from the card.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Are some cell phones better for the T-coil function than others?

KEN ARCIA: Yes. Definitely. That's why I mentioned about accessories. You can use a device like the HATIS, which works great with a telecoil. It blocks out background noise. In fact, I plug it into my Treo and use it to listen to music. I don't even have to use it as a phone. Just plug in and listen to it as a MP3 player. So, again, I really strongly recommend that if you are considering a device, do your research online. Ask your friends. Make sure that you go to a store and get one in your hand and try it out. That's vital because if you order something through the Internet, they send it to you, and uh oh, that's not what you wanted. Sometimes you are stuck. You want to be careful about that.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: When you are doing your own business for the company and yourself, which device do you actually use?

KEN ARCIA: My 700-P Treo is my personal device. It runs on the Palm system. I use it because it has all the bells and whistles. I use it for music, e-mail, Internet access, like I said, checking scores. The other devices that I have here on my utility belt I use for demos. When I show people what else Sprint has to offer, I use that mostly.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I am confused about the HATIS and its relationship to the T-coil. When you use the T-coil, it blocks out the background sound. So how does the HATIS further block the background sound?

KEN ARCIA: The HATIS is like a neck loop. Because it's closer to your hearing aid, it's stronger and clearer than the neck loop is. I don't know if you are like me, but sometimes I will try a neck loop and it doesn't work very well. I have to hold it up close to my ear to make it louder and clearer. Well, HATIS replaces that because it's right next to your hearing aid.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I'm sorry I came in late, so you might have covered this. But is there anything that you recommend better for the people using a CI? A cochlear implant?

KEN ARCIA: The only thing I will mention is that it depends on the rating of the phone. The phones are rated as being better for telecoils or microphone settings. So you can

check with that. Also the HATIS device plugs into the bottom of the ear phone or headset jack on most phones. Find out if your CI company has a patch cord from the phone directly to your CI processor. I know that they're out there. I've seen them at different websites. A direct connection from the phone directly to your CI processor would block out any background noise also.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Where do you find these ratings that you just mentioned?

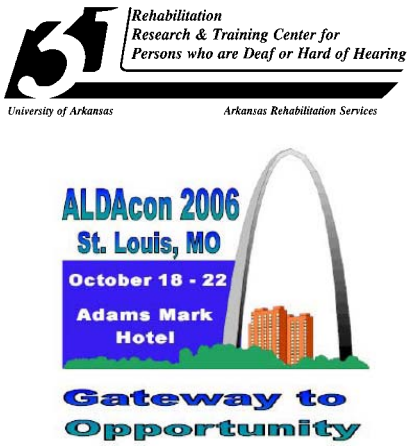
KEN ARCIA: I did a Google search on "sprint, phones, accessibility." That brought me to the accessibility page with the ratings for the different phones. You may not know that the Blackberry device is the only device out there that you can increase the font size on for all your e-mails. For me with glasses here, it always helps if things are a little bit bigger. The Blackberry helps with that. The Blackberry devices are rated better for people with visual impairments.

Back in February of this year I went to the Sprint headquarters in Kansas City, for a sort of a game we did for the whole Sprint relay team. It was based on "Amazing Race." We had to visit all of the spots in town and find different clues. One of them was go to the local Sprint store and see if they have hearing-aid compatibility ratings on their phones. We walked into a Sprint PCS store and found about half of the phones in there had been rated. Some had not because the manufacturer never submitted the phones for testing. Those that were tested and rated listed very clearly all of the features that you have about the phone. At the bottom it says "Hearing aid rating." So like I said, I can't talk about what other companies do, but know what Sprint does.

Well, thank you, again, for coming.

Biographical

Ken Arcia is a Past President of ALDA and has attended the last 11 ALDAcons. He is a member of ALDA Inc., ALDA East Bay and ALDA San Jose. He is one of two Account Managers for Sprint Relay in California and has maintained the ALDA Inc. website since 1996. He has designed and maintained several websites for both business and pleasure.



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