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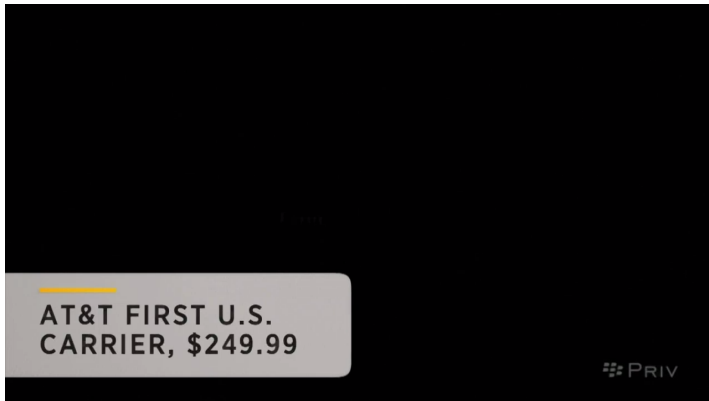
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# BlackBerry ships its Android phone...is it a comeback?



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The fall from grace of the Canadian technology firm **BlackBerry** has been well documented, but a new release on Friday featuring some **Google**-developed software has won over critics who are calling it the "best BlackBerry in a decade."

Officially launched in the U.S and the U.K. Friday, industry websites have been beaming out favorable reviews for the new BlackBerry Priv. [Thenextweb.com](#) called it probably one of the best Android phones it has ever used and the U.K.'s [Daily Mirror](#) newspaper described it as "the comeback that gadget fans have been waiting for." Technology website [AndroidCentral](#) stated that "BlackBerry can make one hell of an Android phone."

What's different about the new product is that it combines the usual guarantee of rigid security, the traditional keyboard that was once so popular, and an Android operating system that opens itself up to a world of applications.



### Blackberry CEO: Our new phone is an Android

"Priv will be the solution for smartphone users who are learning daily of the lack of privacy they have on their current devices. Priv will be the answer for former BlackBerry users who miss the physical keyboard but needed apps," John Chen, executive chairman and CEO of BlackBerry, said in an opinion piece on [CNBC's website](#) back in September.

"We're responding to current — and prospective — BlackBerry users who need it all: choice, innovation, security, privacy and productivity.

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The reviews will be a welcome bit of good news for the struggling technology group. The smartphone pioneer once produced products so in vogue that arguably the world's hippest chief executive, President Barack Obama, famously refused to part with his BlackBerry.



### BlackBerry posts loss as turnaround continues

BlackBerry says it has not turned its back on its own operating system but the software now holds only 1.5 percent of the U.S. mobile platform market, according to research released in June by ComScore.

In terms of devices, research firm International Data Corporation (IDC) predicts that BlackBerry's worldwide market share is nearer 0.3 percent. Francisco Jeronimo, research director for European mobile devices at IDC, told CNBC via telephone that it was "already too late" for the company, despite the device itself being "pretty good."

"If it was released two years ago it would have been a very interesting proposition," he said, explaining that the likes of Samsung and Apple had improved the security on their devices, which was once a unique selling point for BlackBerry.

Other device makers like HTC have released very decent handsets but it's the brand and the price point that are seen as key issues for consumers, Jeronimo said

AT&T is the first U.S. carrier to offer BlackBerry's first Android smartphone on Friday and it's priced at \$249.99 with a two-year contract, according to its website. It will be \$739.99 without an annual contract, according to AT&T. IDC's Jeronimo deemed that to be pricey compared to Samsung models that were around half the price and offered similar features.

Ian Fogg, head of mobile at IHS, told CNBC via telephone that BlackBerry had actually made a "smart move" with the new device.

He said the company could test how successful an Android phone could be, which potentially reduces its research and development costs as it is using another company's software.

But, he added that it would also be gaining valuable expertise into the Android software if it did stick to developing its own operating systems.



**Matt Clinch**  
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