

Steps for Clearing the Data on a BlackBerry

By Stacy Ranta

Who would want to clear all the data from their BlackBerry? There are several reasons wiping would be a solution to consider.

- You've gotten a hand me down BlackBerry from a coworker or family member and it's full of all their old junk you don't need.
- You've gotten an upgrade and want to sell your old BlackBerry but don't want the new owner to be privy to your information.
- It has a password set and you can't remember what it is.
- It just comes on and stays on the hourglass screen and never finishes loading.
- Your BlackBerry is just acting up and you want to start over from scratch.

In any case, the solution to your dilemma is to perform a master reset and clear the data from the BlackBerry, which will completely reload the BlackBerry operating system.

What Will Be Wiped

While following these steps will restore a BlackBerry, it's important to remember after completing them the BlackBerry will be completely reset and all the data on the device will be deleted. Data stored on a memory card or SIM card will not be affected, only the phone memory.

First you need to decide whether you care about your old data. If not, you can just skip straight to the next step. For users connected to a BlackBerry Enterprise Server (BES), this isn't a big deal. Data is automatically synchronized with the BES. For everyone else, the first step in preparing to clear the data is to back up their old data onto a computer.

Backing Up Your Data

You can do this by installing either BlackBerry Desktop Manager (BBDM) for Windows, or PocketMac for the Macintosh. Both programs are available for download from BlackBerry.com. You can use the synchronization option to save your data into another program such as Outlook or Entourage. Windows users have the option of using backup & restore instead to make an image of the BlackBerry and save it onto the computer. Restoring this image will make the BlackBerry exactly as it was before, but could cause problems if the BlackBerry was experiencing issues before the reset.

Wiping the BlackBerry

There are two ways to clear the data on a BlackBerry from the device. You can use the easier of the two if you can access the menus. Simply open the options icon, scroll down and open security options, then open general settings. Once in the general settings, open the menu either by clicking the BlackBerry key if your BlackBerry has a trackball, or holding down the alt key and clicking on the trackwheel on older BlackBerries. Then

scroll down and click on wipe handheld. It will pop up a warning on the screen saying all data will be erased and ask if you want to include third party applications. Click the continue button and the BlackBerry will ask you if to type in the word blackberry. Then hit enter or click on the trackball/trackwheel. The phone will then wipe itself and restart with no data.

The second method is used if you cannot access the menus and the BlackBerry is asking for a password. Simply put in the password wrong 10 times. You have to try a different password for each attempt to count. After the second attempt, a counter will appear on the screen. After the fifth attempt, it will prompt you to type in the word blackberry. After the ninth attempt, it will give you a warning saying the next failed attempt will wipe all the data. After the tenth attempt, it will also wipe itself and restart with no data.

The third method requires a PC with Windows and the BBDM installed. It does not work on Mac OS, but will work on a Mac running Windows as long as the BBDM is installed. This is for situations where the BlackBerry will power on but will not finish the loading process. The BBDM must be able to detect the phone in order for this to work. Look for a PIN number field on the bottom of the main BBDM screen. If it does not say (Inactive) then you can reload the operating system from application loader.

Download the BlackBerry handheld software for your phone, either from BlackBerry.com or your cellular carrier's web page. It will download as an .exe file, which you will need to run. Then open the application loader icon in the BBDM and click the advanced button. A list of available software will appear. Select the BlackBerry System Software and click next, then click finish. This process takes roughly 20-30 minutes and does not require further user input.

Recovering Afterwards

Once the BlackBerry is back on after any of these resets, it will automatically try to launch the setup wizard. You can run through the wizard to setup the BlackBerry's date and time, turn the antenna back on, and restore service books from the network or BlackBerry Internet Service personal email. The data can then be restored using the BBDM, either through synchronization or backup and restore. Users on a BES may need to contact their BES admin for Enterprise Activation instructions and passwords.

Make sure to back up your data on a regular basis, in case of a sudden failure or loss of the BlackBerry. If you have problems that persist after the reset, then it is likely the BlackBerry will need to be replaced.