

## Conceivium partners with Microsoft to support its mobile ambitions in the cloud

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**Conceivium Business Solutions** has partnered with **Microsoft** Online Services to manage BlackBerry deployments among Microsoft's hosting customers. There is a major shift in enterprise IT as companies look to cloud services to reduce their IT costs by hosting products such as Exchange and SharePoint. Microsoft chose Conceivium because it supports both BlackBerry and Windows Mobile devices.

### The 451 Take

Conceivium is building on its support for BlackBerry smartphones to manage a wide range of Windows Mobile and ActiveSync devices in the enterprise. This gives Conceivium better reach into the enterprise and hosted markets. While an economic recovery may be approaching, companies will continue to manage costs with a heavy hand. Supporting employee-liable devices will reduce the cost of mobile deployments, but this must go hand in hand with device and service management. Conceivium will continue to ride the wave of BlackBerry and the resurgence of Windows Mobile devices. To maintain its growth rate and fend off larger competitors, Conceivium will need to continue to add partners, and Microsoft is a great start.

### Context

Conceivium continues to run with just 10 people since its founding in 2004. The company is headquartered in McLean, Virginia, with an office in London. Conceivium has more than 200 customers; among these are a number of large companies that have built the number of devices it manages to around 420,000. This is an increase of over 100% since we last profiled the company in early 2008.

The company is self-funded and claims to be profitable, which is attributable to its lean management style and rapid growth in the size of its average deployments. Conceivium states that it is not looking for outside funding. The company started with deployments in the 800-1,500 range, but now the majority of deployments are in the 5,000-10,000 range. Its largest customers are **Bank of America** with 40,000 users and **IBM Global Services** with 30,000.

### Partners

While known for supporting **RIM** in the enterprise, Conceivium has partnered with Microsoft to support the Redmond company's cloud-computing efforts. Microsoft Online Services offers hosted versions of Exchange, SharePoint, Office Communications and Live Meeting. To mobilize Exchange email, Microsoft Online Services support both BlackBerry and Windows Mobile smartphones. For companies with BlackBerry deployments, Microsoft chose Conceivium to provide the interface between Microsoft services and BlackBerry Enterprise Servers. Microsoft uses Conceivium's MobileAnalyzer to provide an interface for customers to self manage BlackBerry devices and first-level support. This is a big opportunity for Conceivium since Microsoft has over 750,000 seats across all its services, and it is pushing to mobilize 25-30% of these users.

In addition to supporting BlackBerry smartphones, Conceivium has partnered with **Odyssey Software** for detailed management and control of Windows Mobile devices. Conceivium sees the addition of Windows Mobile as the key to its future growth. It points to the use of employee-liable devices brought into the enterprise that don't require additional cost born by the company to mobilize email. Odyssey Software's device client software will allow Conceivium to provide the same monitoring and management it provides for RIM devices.

## Strategy

A key driver for Conceivium's continued growth in number of users under management is multi-tenancy deployments. Conceivium is adapting its MobileAnalyzer and MobileMonitor products to support several organizations on one instance. This will reduce the deployment costs for partner services providers like Microsoft, which look for economies of scale in hosting IT for their margins.

By adding ActiveSync devices to Conceivium's mobile management products, the company is tapping into the consumerization of mobile enterprise. While Windows Mobile has lagged far behind BlackBerry in the enterprise, Microsoft will (and needs to) make a major push with Windows Mobile 7, which will be a major advance in UI over 6.1 and 6.5. While iPhone and Android devices are brought into work by users, Windows Mobile will have a distinct advantage with its large installed base of Exchange users. Conceivium's support for Windows Mobile devices will position the company well for Microsoft's renewed focus on Mobile.

## Competition

Conceivium is not alone in the mobile infrastructure management space. There are three other pure plays: **BoxTone** and **B\*Nator** are focused on BlackBerry environments, and **Zenprise** also supports Windows Mobile devices. All of these are relatively small companies that have some very large customers. That said, Conceivium's partnership with Microsoft will give it a distinct advantage over its pure-play competitors.

Larger competitors exist, such as **Hewlett-Packard**, but they have remained relatively quiet in mobility. As these companies become more serious about mobile, pure plays such as Conceivium will likely become key acquisition targets for larger companies wanting to strengthen their mobile management capabilities.

## SWOT analysis

### Strengths

Conceivium has products that support a very wide range of enterprise smartphones, having moved to support ActiveSync devices before some competitors.

### Weaknesses

With a tough economy, winning customers on its own requires a lot of effort and staff that is in limited supply with a small company. Partnerships are the key.

### Opportunities

While posing difficulties, the economic situation also boosts demand for outsourcing IT, and as companies look to outsource mobile deployments, Conceivium and its partners are there.

### Threats

As a small company, Conceivium could be outspent or acquired in the race to acquire users. That said, an acquisition would not be all that bad for the company.

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