

New BlackBerry VoIP service

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Raketu has launched a Skype-like service for the 12-million-strong BlackBerry users using a web based application that requires no download for the relatively limited Blackberry processor to operate. The service uses P2P technology and offers free calls within 40 zones, cheap international calls as well as IM and TXT services. Raketu also has TV and Video on Demand functionality it wants to deploy in later releases.

I set up the service. While the lean and mean interface leaves a lot to be desired, the service quality is very good; at 2 cents a minute to ring distant international destinations (Australia) from a mobile, it's definitely going to bring down those call charges.

Skype itself demonstrated some of its mobile apps at CES including its 3Skypephone phone it is promoting with mobile operator 3 in the UK, Australia, Denmark, Austria, Ireland, Italy, and Sweden. Sony's newest Erickson phones also support free Skype-to-Skype and Skype-in-and-out calls.

Skype and Sony announced a deal for free calls from Sony's portable PlayStation as Sony sought to beef up its PSP which has been losing market share. Sony also said it linked up with BT to enable PSP users to make video and voice calls, as well as send instant messages. The commercial launch of Go! Messenger is due this month.

The Raketu play is among the first of many mobile IP apps which look like being a very disruptive (and costly) technology for the cellular players which have spent billions on spectrum and network setup.

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