

Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates Hearing – May 2009

Department of Finance and Deregulation

Finance and Deregulation Portfolio

Outcome 3, Program 3.1.1

Topic: Mobile Personal Digital Assistant (MPDA)

Question reference number: F52

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Senator Polley asked:

Just further in terms of the features that we currently are entitled to, could you tell me whether or not through the BlackBerry the Google Map feature is available—and, if not, why it isn't when in fact that is a very useful tool when you are travelling to appointments and finding your way as part of your duties and responsibilities?

Answer:

When the BlackBerry pilot was initiated, the devices were initially locked down to test their capacity to manage the provision of the entitlements for mobile telephony, email, contacts and calendar. Upon agreement by the pilot participants that the devices were able to successfully deliver these services, some of the options available within the hardware of the devices were enabled, including the camera and the Java Script functions for internet banking and general internet use. Other options were not enabled as they are either outside entitlement, pose a security threat or could enable other options that would involve additional licences and costs that are outside the scope of entitlement for the devices.

Among these other options are the Google maps. While the Google maps themselves are enabled, it is only the basic map that can be viewed. To have full access to the Google maps requires the underlying Java software language to be enabled. This software is identified by DSD as a security risk which may make the devices vulnerable to attack from malware or other malicious code. We have asked the Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS), as our service providers for BlackBerry, to speak to DSD to provide an assessment of this risk before considering the issue further.