

## E-mail service for basic mobile phones unveiled



By Eric Auchard

Tue Nov 21, 7:07 AM ET

A start-up founded by a group of successful European entrepreneurs is set to bring e-mail, instant messaging and other communications services to low-cost mobile phones, its chief executive said on Tuesday.

Babur Ozden, the head of Berggi Inc., said his company plans to offer a simplified alternative to the Blackberry e-mail delivery service from Canada's Research In Motion, which dominates the mobile professional market.

Berggi aims to offer messaging services for basic mobile phones that still represent two-thirds of the U.S. mobile market. Users of Blackberry or rival e-mail services on Palm or Microsoft software need more expensive, so-called smartphones.

Consumers can send and receive e-mail on their phones from Internet services such as Yahoo, Microsoft or Google, along with popular instant-messaging services. Berggi delivers any text in the body of an e-mail, but not document attachments.

"Our uniqueness is that we are the only application that runs on mid- to lower-end phones," Ozden said in an interview.

U.S. consumers can sign up on the company's Web site at <http://www.berggi.com>, beginning on Thursday, Thanksgiving Day. Mobile phone users in Spain can start using Berggi on Friday.

During the first half of next year, Berggi plans to offer the service in Britain, Italy, Mexico and Turkey, Ozden said.

The U.S. service costs \$9.99 a month. European users pay by the data they consume. One euro covers 10 or 20 e-mails.

While targeting the price-sensitive end of the consumer market, Berggi is essentially trying to encourage users to bypass the billing systems that mobile carriers use to lock consumers into rates.

"For the majority of consumers with fixed-rate data plans, that's a risk," said Forrester analyst Charles Golvin.

Ozden said Berggi works as a simple download on most U.S. mobile carriers, except for Verizon Communications and the Nextel service of Sprint Nextel, which have billing system conflicts. Berggi also assumes that Blackberry or Palm users will rely on higher-end services for these devices.

"My customer is a private e-mail user or a small business user," Ozden said, in contrast to corporate e-mail users.

Forrester's Golvin said Berggi is looking to partner with established consumer brands to help them allow consumers to stay connected with like-minded mobile phone users in wireless versions of social networks like MySpace.

Ozden said initial U.S. distribution partners are Blinko USA, a unit of Italian mobile entertainment company Buongiorno S.p.A., and the America One Television, a Western U.S. TV network gearing up to launch its own mobile service.

Berggi was founded by Jorge Mata, who is now chairman. He sold MyAlert.com, a Spanish company that delivers marketing via text message to mobile phones, to Italy's Buongiorno in 2001.

Ozden, who joined Berggi in May, is a serial entrepreneur who in 1993 founded SuperOnline, Turkey's biggest Internet service, a unit of top mobile carrier Turkcell.

The Houston-based company, which employs 18 and operates a research facility in Madrid, received \$3 million in April through a funding round led by Adara Venture Partners, which makes early-stage investments in mobile consumer services.

Oz Communications of Montreal offers similar e-mail and instant message services through major U.S. and European carriers. The difference is that Berggi offers service directly to consumers instead of relying on carrier partners.

---

Copyright © 2006 Reuters Limited. All rights reserved. Republication or redistribution of Reuters content is expressly prohibited without the prior written consent of Reuters. Reuters shall not be liable for any errors or delays in the content, or for any actions taken in reliance thereon.

Copyright © 2006 Yahoo! Inc. All rights reserved.

[Questions or Comments](#)

[Privacy Policy](#) - [Terms of Service](#) - [Copyright/IP Policy](#) - [Ad Feedback](#)