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BLACKBERRY DECLARES WAR ON THE SMARTPHONE MARKET

BlackBerry has announced the launch of five new ultra-slim handsets in a bid to recapture some of its ebbing market share.

Commenting on the news **Ernest Doku, technology expert at uSwitch.com**, says: "For more than a year now, BlackBerry's market share has been under siege. At the top end of the market, its core customer base of business users have been increasingly wooed by the iPhone and the top Android models. It has previously fought back by introducing cheaper models which appealed to younger users with their BBM free text messaging system. Although this has seen them gain 7 million users in the UK alone, it has only won them the battle – not the war.

"Now it has launched an all-out attack on its rivals, in a concerted attempt to win back market share. The five new ultra-slim phones come with no end of new features, while the new Bold Touch has the highest resolution screen ever seen on a BlackBerry.

"While a revamped operating system and a more powerful browser marks a step change in their efforts, I worry if there's enough in these phones to tempt those who aren't already BlackBerry users to stray from their current smartphones. Will features like NFC and augmented reality save Research in Motion from the harsh reality of the smartphone market? A revamped touch-friendly interface in OS 7 represents a step in the right direction, but RIM must play this very carefully if it is to avoid the fate that befell Nokia.

"Trying to be all things to all men is fraught with danger. If it alienates its core users by failing to build on its core strengths, and doesn't deliver a big enough "wow" factor to attract new consumers, it will end up in a deadly limbo. In a fast-paced smartphone market crammed with feature-rich rivals, the stakes could not be higher."

For more information visit www.uswitch.com or call 0800 093 0607

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