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## technopolis

**Cruise the highways and rat runs of Gizmo City with the grand wizard of gadgetology, Jonathan Margolis**

### MOBILEPA

Every now and then, an item, e-mail or press release turns up at Technopolis Towers and goes straight where the sun don't shine – i.e. into my bottomless “possibly important but boring” drawer, from which there is no escape. Such was nearly the fate of a service offered by a new British company, Southampton-based Sirenic – until I discovered that it was, in fact, a magnificent offering for anyone wanting to keep abreast of their e-mail without being dominated and swamped by it, BlackBerry-style.

Sirenic's quietly introduced MobilePA product, with its remarkably sober and non-gimmicky (i.e. boring) website is to my mind - and I've been using it for a few months now with increasing enthusiasm - the most comprehensive BlackBerry squasher there has been to date. The perfectly excellent BlackBerry doesn't quite suit me - nor, I suspect, a lot of people, not forgetting my US global corporate acquaintance who heave-hoed his into the Thames because he was fed up with receiving e-mails 24/7 and being expected to respond instantly. It's no longer necessary, of course, to buy a BlackBerry-branded device to use BlackBerry - Siemens has a great BlackBerry-enabled phone, the SK65, which I reviewed here recently, and even boring old Nokia has a splendid one, which I'll tell you about next month. Even so, BlackBerry is like having a demanding toddler in your pocket. Its system of “pushing” e-mails, rather than having the user “pull” them when he requires is an acquired taste at best. Enter, then, the world of “pull” mobile e-mail, in which the boring but genuinely important MobilePA is at this moment Roger Federer, Fernando Alonso and possibly even Wayne Rooney combined.

I ought to say at the outset that MobilePA does an enormous amount - maybe too much - only the main features of which I will touch on here. But you can gain a huge amount from it even without using its more arcane functions.

This is the stuff that interests me and has revolutionised my mobile life of late: MobilePA harvests your e-mail as it comes in from up to five addresses and brings them all onto one server, down in Hampshire. It then makes the lot available to you on a single site. By keeping the MobilePA site spare and graphics-free, you can get it to display almost instantaneously on any GPRS phone, smartphone or mobile phone. This is a huge boon in itself. To get up Hotmail or .Mac e-mail from a mobile device can take a minute or more, while AOL mail takes five to 10 minutes, if you get it at all.

There's more. MobilePA archives up to 10,000 e-mails and makes them searchable at the most extraordinary speed from your mobile. This is amazing, enabling you to find long-forgotten e-mail in seconds from wherever you happen to be. The killer feature, however, and currently unique, I believe, is MobilePA's voice e-mail function. If you are, say, driving or walking along, you can call a number and have your e-mails read over to you by a reasonably intelligent robot.

There are other things, too. Just one is that MobilePA will send you a text message to warn you of incoming e-mail from a particular sender. All in all, then, a distinguished former resident of my boring but important drawer. If you have the time, try comparing MobilePA with its current competitors - [www.Good.com](http://www.Good.com), [www.IntelliSync.com](http://www.IntelliSync.com), [www.Visto.com](http://www.Visto.com) and [www.Seven.com](http://www.Seven.com), plus a soon-to-be-announced Microsoft system, Magneto.

*Fully managed service from £10 a month. See [www.mobilepa.com](http://www.mobilepa.com) or call 02380-574 744.*

