

Innovative products from The Innovation Hub's hi-tech environment

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[Blue Square Technologies](#) (Pty) Limited, a leading wireless communications technology company, is set to launch two innovative products. The company is resident at [The Innovation Hub](#), one of the Gauteng Provincial Government's Blue IQ initiatives to invest in economic infrastructure development in the province.

Blue Square Technologies CEO, [Charl van der Merwe](#), says the company has been following the new products and product concepts from the ever-evolving wireless data and mobile markets with great interest. The company specialises in the design and development of easy to use wireless connectivity solutions for OEMs, delivering wireless networking solutions that enable PCs, PDAs, access points, mobile phones, car-radios and headsets with Bluetooth wireless technology. Blue Square Technologies has also been an associate member of the Bluetooth Special Interest Group since November 2002.

"We are now launching two exciting new products. The one is Bluebook, a Mobile Computer with a built-in GSM (current cell phone network) and GPRS (next generation cell phone network) modem, bundled with iPhone. This product format is the ultimate mobile computing experience, taking the best features from personal digital assistants [PDAs], cell phones and laptop computers," he says.

Explaining how the product works, Van der Merwe says: "Bluebook allows quick and easy use in a mobile environment. It operates on Microsoft Windows CE Net 4.1, which takes only one second to start up. For display we have chosen a screen that can display most Web sites in full-width, so that users don't have to scroll sideways." In addition, Blue Square Technologies is launching BlueTrac, a personal tracking device that operates in a similar manner to car tracking devices. Based on the company's experience in automatic vehicle location (AVL) tracking systems, this portable device is mainly designed for personal safety and asset protection. It operates like a cellular phone that can be used for speed dialling and two-way voice communications, with three users on predefined contact numbers. The device has three buttons: one that activates a predefined number, another that goes through to a call centre and a third one for emergency services (similar to 911).

Van der Merwe says this portable, lightweight device is ideal for young children and the elderly, as well as people who take part in sports like hiking and mountain biking who often walk or ride through isolated areas on their own. "The Blue Trac is equipped with a special emergency function. If the SOS button is pressed for two seconds, the unit triggers a short message alarm to all configured contacts. Every message contains user information, including location, time and GPS data. In addition, it will start dialling the number of the first designated contact person."

The Blue Book and Blue Trac products are the latest to come out of The Innovation Hub's hi-tech environment. In recent years, the Hub has attracted some of the country's bright young researchers, professionals and entrepreneurs. As Van der Merwe says: "The Innovation Hub offers an integrated suite of services that reflects the demand of today's intensely competitive, technology-reliant global business. We like the Hub's unique approach of creating a growth area to unlock technology's full potential by integrating innovative companies and outstanding infrastructure in an attractive and eco-friendly environment. The Innovation Hub aims to revolutionise how South Africans and others in the region conduct business in the digital age - we want to actively participate in this exciting initiative."