

China Mobile unveils mobile TV service



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Hong Kong – Just 30 years ago, we would be disconnected as soon as we step away from a landline; just 20 years ago, music was confined in CDs, where we'd then record onto cassette tapes and play on our walkmans on the go.

Now, the mobile phone has become a part of our bodies, and countless music files can be stored into a miniscule chip. So what baffled Sean Lee (pictured on the left), director and chief executive officer of China Mobile Hong Kong (CMHK), is the lack of change in television.

“Even after so many years, I still hear people rushing home to catch a certain finale. Even after so many years, there's still not much change,” he said.

And it's this bewilderment that brought on the launch of CMHK's cross-network multi-platform mobile TV service, UTV.

The new technology integrates cellular, internet and broadcasting services to deliver content to a variety of platforms including smartphones, tablets, computers, TV boxes as well as portable media players installed with China Mobile multimedia broadcasting software.

iPhone users will need to buy a "dongle" - a device that picks up the broadcast signals from CMHK's self-developed mobile TV network. The content received through the dongle will not incur any extra data costs.

The company has yet to develop a dongle for Android users, and they can download an app to draw the content from internet streaming.

CMHK has partnered with Mei Ah Digital Technology to craft the TV experience as well as with the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology to develop a cloud-based content delivery network technology.

This new network offers better picture quality with less buffering time, which lowers bandwidth costs by 70% and hardware costs by 30%, CMHK claims.

UTV will feature a free home-grown channel UOne, which offers programmes on entertainment, food, travel, culture, technology; award-winning short films from the Fresh Wave film festival; as well as the new “U Shoot I Shoot” – a platform that broadcasts viewers’ home-made movies.

In the future, UOne will also hosts short films directed by local celebrities like Jade Kwan and Tin-Yau Tsui.

Also for free is the 24-hour TVB iNews. Paid channels include Mei Ah HD Movie Channel, channel MN HD, Nat Geo Wild HD, Star Chinese Channel, Cartoon Network and MNC International.

“We’re extremely proud to be contributing to a more vibrant mobile entertainment market with the launch of our new UTV service, providing Hong Kong residents with even more choices,” said Lee.

“We look forward to bringing Hong Kong consumers some of their favourite channels and the hottest content no matter where they are or what screen they’re watching.”

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