

China telco turns on mobile TV for HK viewers

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State-owned China Mobile has launched a mobile television service in Hong Kong for any phone users regardless of their carrier.

The application provides both free and paid channels on Android tablets and smartphones.

But iPhone users will have to wait until next year to get the app.

Known as UTV, the service offers free entertainment content including user-generated videos, a 24-hour news service provided by TVB and the UOne channel, created by China Mobile providing entertainment as well as food, travel, culture and technology programs.

Paid packages of HK\$58 a month give users access to content including MNC International, Mei Ah HD Movie Channel, channel M HD, Nat Geo Wild HD, Star Chinese Channel, Cartoon Network and MNC international.

"Hong Kong provides us a special testing ground to develop new services. We have spent about two years preparing for today's launch," said China Mobile Hong Kong chief executive Sean Lee Fan-fung.

"We can see there is room for mobile and multimedia platforms to emerge."

Lee said people who have portable media players using China Mobile Multimedia Broadcasting software can also access the service.

He believes the software, which was launched three years ago, will become a new trend for mobile users.

"It occupies 25 MHz bandwidth within which it provides 25 video and 30 radio channels in the mainland," he said. "I have confidence it will become a new trend for local mobile users as it won't use data from their mobile carriers."

China Mobile said in October that data traffic over the carrier's wireless network in the first nine months has increased 61 percent to 626 billion megabytes compared to the previous year due to more downloaded videos and e-books.