Rented smartphones for tourists offer free international calls and unlimited internet access

Tourists who don't travel abroad often can sometimes face steep price increases for making phone calls and texts if their tariff doesn't include international minutes and roaming charges come into effect. Bearing this in mind, Hong Kong-based handy is leasing smartphones out to visitors, pre-loaded with free calls, 3G internet access and apps to help them navigate their destination.

The service provides an Android smartphone – either a Samsung Galaxy Note or Google Nexus – that can be picked up from Hong Kong International Airport and used in place of their usual device for the duration of the trip. Customers pay HKD 68 per day for the handset, which comes with unlimited local and international calls as well as internet access. The phone can be used to connect laptops to the internet and helps tourists avoid spending time looking for free wifi hotspots. The device also comes with apps pre-loaded – such as Skype, Facebook, Kayak, BBC News and public transport planners – that may be useful for tourists, although they can also download their own apps. Customers also get discounts for popular attractions delivered to them through the phone.

Much like Madrid's PadInTheCity, handy helps those unfamiliar with a city to guide themselves using technology they can carry around with them. Could this work in your part of the world?

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