

## ZERO CENTS PER MINUTE — UPDATE



Blyk, the mobile virtual network operator we [covered](#) earlier this year, launched in the UK yesterday. The company, which bills itself as a pan-European free mobile operator for young people, offers 16 to 24-year-olds 217 texts and 43 minutes every month, for free. As can be expected, the free part is made possible by advertisers keen to reach the age group up close and personal on their cell phones. Advertisers (“brands you like”) can send the youthful eyeballs up to 6 messages a day. Once they’ve run out of free minutes, users can top up their account and pay as they go. Blyk is currently limiting membership to users in mainland Britain who have a Blyk invite and a mobile phone with picture messaging—the better to see those colourful ads with. Ads are served via software built by [First Hop](#), which enables targeted and personalised ad insertion, with an emphasis on consumers interacting with branded messages. Pekka Ala-Pietilä, Blyk’s CEO, explains: “We have spent the last year developing a unique, robust advertising content engine, and whilst the technology we are using is incredibly advanced, the main premise of Blyk is driven by three basic principles—ease of use, interaction, and relevance of communication.” Sounds like a [free love](#) mantra 😊

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