

14 June 2012

A FESTIVAL BOOST

Vodafone UK reveals an innovation in festival gadgets - the Booster Brolly

Vodafone UK has unveiled the latest innovation in mobile communications with its multi-purpose *Booster Brolly*. The unique prototype has been created in partnership with University College London (UCL) to ensure that festivalgoers stay connected with their friends during this summer's biggest outdoor events.

The concept umbrella has been designed to function as an eco-friendly mobile phone charger, powered by a series of flexible solar panels within the canopy. The electrical current generated from the panels also powers a micro antenna, boosting a phone's 3G signal wirelessly. The innovative gadget, which will be trialled at the *Isle of Wight Festival* next weekend, also boasts an LED torch for night time navigation and a 'hands free' smart phone cradle.

The Booster Brolly works with a wide range of mobile devices, charging a smartphone battery in under three hours. The design allows for one handset to charge through a USB port in the brolly handle. However, any friends making calls from under the canopy could also benefit from the umbrella's signal boosting functionality, as the 3G signal is wireless. Underpinning the pioneering technology of the Booster Brolly is a durable carbon fibre skeleton, which houses the electrical circuitry and a double layer wind and waterproof canopy that protects festivalgoers from the worst the British weather can throw at them – whilst doubling as a sunshade during sunny times.

Danielle Crook, Director of Brand Marketing at Vodafone said: *"We wanted to create a practical but high tech innovation that could genuinely improve a festivalgoers experience. The concept Booster Brolly does just that by merging cutting edge technology with a trusted and reliable British umbrella."*

Dr Kenneth Tong PhD, Lecturer in Electronic & Electrical Engineering at UCL explains the technology involved: *"The custom canopy has been fitted with 12 lightweight amorphous silicon triple junction solar cells that have the ability to convert light into electricity, through a series of highly sensitive photovoltaic semiconductors. The current generated is then transferred, via a voltage regulator, to the handle of the umbrella where it is stored safely in high capacity rechargeable batteries, or used to directly charge a mobile device through a USB port."*

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The antenna concealed at the top of the umbrella's central pole uses the same power source to obtain a low strength network signal. The in-built low noise booster then amplifies this signal, within a 1-metre radius of the canopy, allowing smartphone users around the Booster Brolly to make and receive calls, exchange text messages and even browse the Internet with maximum signal strength."

Notes to editors:

The Booster Brolly has been created as part of Vodafone's VIP campaign and will be unveiled for testing at the Isle of Wight Festival on June 22.

Through Vodafone VIP customers can go to some of the biggest festivals in the UK this summer, including the Isle of Wight Festival, Wireless, Reading and Leeds and T In the Park. Vodafone VIP is Vodafone's way of saying thank you to its customers, giving money can't buy access to the hottest Festivals, Fashion and Formula 1 events of the year. Customers can register at vodafone.co.uk/vip

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