**Multimedia Edutainment Projects in Global Media:**

**Cases of BBC, Deutsche Welle, Russia Beyond the Headlines**

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In the twentieth century, communication theory centered around three concepts of mass media: power agent, social integrator and public enlightener. The latter - education role of media - has become more and more recognized as technology advanced and facilitated contributions to public knowledge [5, p. 50]. International media has soon become regarded as a supplement for popular education, especially for a foreign language acquisition.

As early as their nascent stage, major public service broadcasters - BBC, Deutsche Welle, Radio French Internationale, - augmented their programming with educational content in English, German, and French respectively. As the use of computer technology and Internet exploded in the 1990s, formerly homogeneous TV and radio programs have morphed into full-fledged online edutainment content, equipped with multimedia (video, audio, texts), and interactive elements (quizzes, gap-fill exercises).

Stating a mixture of entertainment and education, the “edutainment” strategy was initially employed by teachers to exhilarate their students with multimedia software [1, p. 1233]. Later it was adopted by media to engage their audiences. The use of computer technologies to promote educational experience has been generally referred to as CALL (computer-assisted language learning) [7, p. 1]. Today, global media, like BBC, Deutsche Welle, and Voice of America, comprise a substantial part of the CALL system, along with social networks, like Busuu and Livemocha, and e-learning platforms, like Babbel and Duolingo. But in order to compete with the multilingual services, public service broadcasters got to use their own journalism content as a dominant force. Thus, BBC Learning English provides Lingohack feature with authentic video news bulletins that help users learn key phrases to make sense of the news [2]. Deutsche Welle contains section *Deutsch Aktuell* that allows advanced learners to experience authentic German language and catch on the current events [3, p. 136].

With the established providers of English and German language didactics, like BBC and DW, is it plausible for a Russia-based medium to create a similar multimedia project with Russian as a foreign language component? Current talk abstract outlines the concept of perspective dissertation that sets out to analyze the language teaching initiatives of BBC World and Deutsche Welle for further development of a content strategy for Russia Beyond The Headlines (RBTH.com) - a potential provider of Russian language teaching.

Russia Beyond The Headlines is an international multimedia project about Russia launched by Rossiyskaya Gazeta in 2007. Its mission is to contribute to a better understanding of Russia in the world, while explaining, educating and entertaining readers [7]. RBTH Education online project currently includes three sections - University rankings, Learn Russian and Study in Russia [6]. Until recently the Learn Russian part featured only grammar tests for certificate levels; the capacity of the web site, however, allows for more diverse content. In order to create engaging content that would enhance the RBTH audience’s Russian language skills, clear strategy must be adopted. That includes understanding audience, branding, creating experiences, choosing multimedia and platforms, implementing social media policy and content management [4, p. 2].

**References**

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