

Presentation of “Hola, ¿qué tal?” the Spanish as a foreign language course on television and internet

- The *Hola, ¿qué tal?* Spanish as a foreign language course is aimed at all those people interested in learning the Spanish language anywhere in the world and it enables millions of people speaking the same language to interact together.
- An innovative project to teach the Spanish language on television and internet using 2.0 technology.
- Promoted by the Instituto Cervantes, Radio Televisión Española, Servitecsa, the BBVA Group, the SM Group and the Regional Government of La Rioja, it is expected to have an enrolment of one and half million students within three years.



Javier Palop, Deputy General Manager of SM; Manuel Castro, BBVA Innovation and Development Manager; Pedro Sanz, President of La Rioja; Carmen Caffarel, Director of the Instituto Cervantes; Pepa Bueno and Luis Fernández, Chairman of RTVE, at the presentation of the Spanish course, Hola, ¿qué tal?

Last Friday, the BBVA Innovation and Development Manager, Manuel Castro; the Director of the Instituto Cervantes, Carmen Caffarel; the President of the Regional Government of La Rioja, Pedro Sanz Alonso; the Chairman of Radio Televisión Española, Luis Fernández and the Deputy General Manager of SM, Javier Palop, presented the Spanish as a foreign language course, *Hola, ¿qué tal?*. This course aimed at anyone who is interested in learning the Spanish language anywhere in the world thanks to television (TVE Internacional) and to internet using 2.0 technology. It is forecast that this innovative project will be used by one and a half million students within three years. Its launch constitutes a milestone in the dissemination of the Spanish language and its remote teaching-learning using new technologies.

The course takes off thanks to the participation of five entities of diverse missions but all sharing one in common - promoting the Spanish language throughout the world.

After English, Spanish is the second most widely used language for international communication and one of those in greatest demand by language learners. It currently has around 500 million speakers and is the official language in some twenty countries. It is also the official language in several of the main international political and economic organisations.

Moreover, it is the second language with most students in the world; according to figures from the Instituto Cervantes, a total of 14 million people are studying Spanish. It is, in short, a language in definite expansion. This is compounded by the popularity of everything Spanish, which is having a positive impact on the growing interest in this culture.

All of this, together with the advances offered in language learning through new technologies has resulted in the five entities collaborating on this project, joining forces to launch the *Hola, ¿qué tal?* course.

Course Contents

The course is entitled *Hola, ¿qué tal?* because this is the most common greeting in everyday Spanish. It is estimated that it will have one and a half million students enrolled worldwide within three years.

It begins next January and Spanish classes will be delivered using leading edge technology and high quality teaching materials. The programmes will be broadcast by Televisión Española Internacional (the Spanish public TV corporation's international channel) and students will be able to follow them on the internet portal, www.holaquetal.com

The course offers different services and materials:

- 207 15-minute television programmes, produced by RTVE, with scenes of outstanding pedagogical value.
- 8,000 screens containing interactive and multimedia activities via the virtual platform.
- 9 virtual books (three per year) published by SM, bringing together the various elements comprising the course.
- 3 student guides, published by SM with suggestions and advice for taking full advantage of all the material.

Students will have access to a web-page created by Servitecsa-BBVA Group on which they will be able to obtain information, enrol, pay and receive all the course materials, services and tutorials.

Furthermore, through the individual tutorial service, students will be able to practise Spanish through chat-rooms, videoconferencing or on the telephone with a personal tutor, with whom they will be able to hold conversations on everyday matters, review exercises and clarify doubts.

Spanish Accents

The course will cover all the accents and variants of Spanish thanks to the different nationalities of its presenters.

In the first academic year (comprising three terms) the programme will be presented by a Spaniard, Laura More and by a Venezuelan, Gerardo de Pablos. They will be accompanied in each programme by six actors: Nidia Moros, from Venezuela, John Ramírez from Colombia and Javier Rey, Bernard Bullen, Esperanza de la Vega and Emma Aguirre from Spain. There will also be other secondary characters who will demonstrate the different accents. Through this group as a whole, the course will show all the phonetic features that comprise the Spanish language.

Years two and three of the course also have three terms each and there will be different presenters, while retaining the formula showing the variants of Spanish spoken in Spain and in the Americas.

Five participant entities

To bring this project to fruition, five different entities of acknowledged prestige have taken part in its design and preparation; five entities with a common denominator: Their interest in disseminating the Spanish language.

• Grupo BBVA Servicios Tecnológicos Singulares S.A. (Servitecsa). • Instituto Cervantes

- • Corporación Radio Televisión Española
- • Grupo SM
- • Gobierno de La Rioja