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BBC to put programs online

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28 August, 2005

THE ARTICLE

BBC to put programs online

BNE: The British Broadcasting Corporation hopes to start a new service next year that will make its TV programs available on the Internet. Web surfers will be able to download television and radio programs up to a week after they were originally aired. Director General Mark Thompson unveiled the plans for the service, provisionally called "MyBBCPlayer", at the Edinburgh International Television Festival on Saturday. The plan is central to the BBC's strategy to use the Internet to increase its global presence and reach people all over the world. He did not disclose whether viewers would have to pay a fee to download the programs.

Mr. Thompson is seeking new ways to utilize the Internet. He said: "Every creative leader in the BBC is wrestling with the question of what the new technologies and audience behaviors mean for them and their service." Other options the BBC is toying with include a simultaneous broadcast of its two main channels. However, this will be restricted to the UK only. In "a departure from past corporation policy", another potential service is being able to buy BBC music and programs online. Mr. Thompson said: "The idea that in the age of the iPod that the public would not welcome the opportunity to buy a piece of music they heard on the site seems to me to be ridiculous."

WARM-UPS

1. TELEVISION: Talk about your history with television with your partner(s). Use these words to help your conversation:

First memories Favorite kids' programs Black and white TV maker Importance
My daily viewing Life without TV Best programs Couch potato Internet TV

2. INTERNET: In pairs / groups, talk about what you use the Internet for. How often do you use the Internet for the following?

- News and weather
- Studying
- Music
- Games
- Mail / Messenger
- Travel information
- Shopping
- Other

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

BBC / television / TV programs / radio / downloading / download fees / global presence / wrestling / Internet TV / toying with ideas / BBC shop / iPods

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. BBC: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the BBC. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

5. BROADCASTERS: Talk with your partner(s) about television and broadcasting from other countries. How is the quality of programming in your country?

6. TWO-MINUTE DEBATES: Debate each of the fun arguments below with a partner for just two minutes, before moving on to the next one. Student A agrees with the first argument, Student B, the second.

- a. BBC news is best. vs. CNN news is best.
- b. Televisions will be with us forever. vs. Televisions will disappear.
- c. Internet television is a terrible idea. vs. Internet television is a great idea.
- d. The BBC must charge for downloading. vs. The BBC should never charge a downloading fee.
- e. MyBBCPlayer will change our lives. vs. MyBBCPlayer will have minimal effect on our lives.
- f. Internet TV will help world democracy. vs. Internet TV is just entertainment.
- g. MyBBCPlayer will make the world more British. vs. How ridiculous.
- h. It is ridiculous you cannot buy BBC programs today. vs. It is ridiculous you'd want to buy BBC programs.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. The BBC will put its computer programs online. T / F
- b. The entire library of BBC TV programs will be available for download. T / F
- c. The BBC will release a new piece of software called "MyBBCPlayer". T / F
- d. The BBC has plans to set a charge to download its products. T / F
- e. Creative leaders in the BBC are wrestling with different questions. T / F
- f. The BBC wants to promote programs about children's toys. T / F
- g. The BBC's main channels will also be available to the world. T / F
- h. The head of the BBC said buying music online was ridiculous. T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|------------------|----------------|
| a. aired | playing around |
| b. unveiled | pivotal |
| c. provisionally | exploit |
| d. central | fighting |
| e. fee | tentatively |
| f. utilize | deviation |
| g. wrestling | broadcast |
| h. toying | charge |
| i. departure | absurd |
| j. ridiculous | revealed |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| a. make its TV programs | the plans for the service |
| b. up to a week | past corporation policy |
| c. unveiled | viewers would have to pay a fee |
| d. increase its global presence | with the question |
| e. He did not disclose whether | include a simultaneous broadcast |
| f. seeking new ways | available on the Internet |
| g. the BBC is wrestling | welcome the opportunity |
| h. options the BBC is toying with | after they were originally aired |
| i. a departure from | and reach |
| j. the public would not | to utilize the Internet |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

BBC to put programs online

BNE: The British Broadcasting Corporation hopes to start a new service next year that will make its TV programs _____ on the Internet. Web _____ will be able to download television and radio programs up to a week after they were originally aired. Director General Mark Thompson _____ the plans for the service, _____ called "MyBBCPlayer", at the Edinburgh International Television Festival on Saturday. The plan is central to the BBC's _____ to use the Internet to increase its global _____ and reach people all over the world. He did not _____ whether viewers would have to pay a _____ to download the programs.

Mr. Thompson is seeking new ways to _____ the Internet. He said: "Every creative leader in the BBC is _____ with the question of what the new technologies and audience _____ mean for them and their service." Other options the BBC is _____ with include a simultaneous broadcast of its two main channels. However, this will be _____ to the UK only. In "a _____ from past corporation policy", another potential service is being able to buy BBC music and programs online. Mr. Thompson said: "The idea that in the _____ of the iPod that the public would not welcome the opportunity to buy a piece of music they heard on the site seems to me to be _____."

unveiled

disclose

available

presence

strategy

fee

surfers

provisionally

age

behaviors

toying

utilize

ridiculous

restricted

wrestling

departure

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'radio' and 'program'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the gap fill. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "BBC" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about the BBC and Internet television.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- | | |
|--------------|----------------|
| • start | • utilize |
| • surfers | • wrestling |
| • originally | • simultaneous |
| • central | • restricted |
| • reach | • age |
| • disclose | • ridiculous |

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What were your initial thoughts on this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. What do you think of the BBC's idea?
- d. Will you be downloading BBC programs?
- e. Would you like your own national broadcaster to offer the same service?
- f. What do you think of the BBC?
- g. Would you pay for the kind of service the BBC is proposing?
- h. Do you think all programs will one day be searchable on Google?
- i. Are you surprised you cannot already download TV programs?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. How important is TV in your life?
- d. Do you think the ability to download past TV programs means you'll watch more television?
- e. What do you think of the idea of one day being able to watch more than 1,000 TV channels from all over the world?
- f. Do your national television stations have any programs the rest of the world would be interested in?
- g. Have you been wrestling with any questions recently?
- h. Have you been toying with any new ideas recently?
- i. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

EXPANDING INTERNET: Discuss with your partner(s) your thoughts on the following uses of the Internet. Talk about their pros and cons.

USES	PROS	CONS
Live broadcasts from high school lessons		
Live broadcasts of all university lectures		
Accessing any TV program ever made		
Live coverage of all sporting events		
Live broadcasts of police prison cells and interrogations		
A 24-hour webcam in the Oval Office in the White House		
Access to all of the world's books		
Access to all of the world's music		

Change partners and discuss what you heard from previous partners.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

BBC to put programs online

BNE: The British Broadcasting Corporation _____ a new service next year that will make its TV programs _____ on the Internet. Web surfers will be able to download television and radio programs up to a week after they were originally _____. Director General Mark Thompson _____ the plans for the service, provisionally called "MyBBCPlayer", at the Edinburgh International Television Festival on Saturday. The plan is _____ to the BBC's strategy to use the Internet to increase its global _____ and reach people all over the world. He did not _____ whether viewers would have to pay a fee to download the programs.

Mr. Thompson is seeking new ways to _____ the Internet. He said: "Every creative leader in the BBC is _____ with the question of what the new technologies and audience behaviors mean for them and their service." Other options the BBC is _____ with include a simultaneous broadcast of its two main channels. However, this will be _____ to the UK only. In "a departure from past corporation policy", another _____ service is being able to buy BBC music and programs online. Mr. Thompson said: "The idea that in the _____ of the iPod that the public would not welcome the opportunity to buy a piece of music they heard on the site seems to me to be _____."

HOMEWORK

- 1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.
- 2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find more information on the BBC. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.
- 3. LETTER:** Write a letter to the head of the BBC. Tell him what you think of his new idea to put programs online and to sell BBC products. Read your letters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?
- 4. TELEVISION:** Write an essay about how important TV is in your life. What would happen if you had no television? Tell your classmates the main points of your essay in your next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F b. F c. T d. F e. T f. F g. F h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|------------------|----------------|
| a. aired | broadcast |
| b. unveiled | revealed |
| c. provisionally | tentatively |
| d. central | pivotal |
| e. fee | charge |
| f. utilize | exploit |
| g. wrestling | fighting |
| h. toying | playing around |
| i. departure | deviation |
| j. ridiculous | absurd |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| a. make its TV programs | available on the Internet |
| b. up to a week | after they were originally aired |
| c. unveiled | the plans for the service |
| d. increase its global presence | and reach |
| e. He did not disclose whether | viewers would have to pay a fee |
| f. seeking new ways | to utilize the Internet |
| g. the BBC is wrestling | with the question |
| h. options the BBC is toying with | include a simultaneous broadcast |
| i. a departure from | past corporation policy |
| j. the public would not | welcome the opportunity |

GAP FILL:

BBC to put programs online

BNE: The British Broadcasting Corporation hopes to start a new service next year that will make its TV programs **available** on the Internet. Web **surfers** will be able to download television and radio programs up to a week after they were originally aired. Director General Mark Thompson **unveiled** the plans for the service, **provisionally** called "MyBBCPlayer", at the Edinburgh International Television Festival on Saturday. The plan is central to the BBC's **strategy** to use the Internet to increase its global **presence** and reach people all over the world. He did not **disclose** whether viewers would have to pay a **fee** to download the programs.

Mr. Thompson is seeking new ways to **utilize** the Internet. He said: "Every creative leader in the BBC is **wrestling** with the question of what the new technologies and audience **behaviors** mean for them and their service." Other options the BBC is **toying** with include a simultaneous broadcast of its two main channels. However, this will be **restricted** to the UK only. In "a **departure** from past corporation policy", another potential service is being able to buy BBC music and programs online. Mr. Thompson said: "The idea that in the **age** of the iPod that the public would not welcome the opportunity to buy a piece of music they heard on the site seems to me to be **ridiculous**."