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Project: **Hallo, Science! (Original title: Piacere, Scienza!)**
Take normal people to love science via radio broadcasting

Subject: Project and production information

Abstract: **Hallo, Science!** is a project about making science popular at a very basic level, after stimulating in “Mr./Mrs. Jones” curiosity and pleasure in understanding science and technology matters. Hallo, Science! exploits radio broadcasting as media for capillary and penetrating diffusion.

Producer: WOW (Women On Work) onlus

Support: University of Pisa
Collaboration: Welfare Councillor Office, Province of Pisa (Italy)
Funding: *Production:* European Social Fund, Ufficio Orientamento and Azienda per il Diritto allo Studio University of Pisa, Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di San Miniato, Progetto Lauree Scientifiche by the Italian Ministry for Research and University and by Graduation Courses in Mathematics, in Physics, and in Chemistry of the University of Pisa
Diffusion: Ufficio Comunicazione University of Pisa

Authors: Marilù Chiofalo, Sara P. Maggi

Coauthor in Series

Nobel, Why?: Marco Abate

1. State of the art and motivations

According to most recent official documents of European Union and research on the study of scientific disciplines at school, the average level of scientific culture remains dangerously low and limited to specific segments of population. We are often able to speak more than one language, but we are not sufficiently able in speaking scientific language. We might criticise an incorrect use of grammar and the like, while we likely consider normal to ignore what a square root is.

At any social level and type, perception and self-limiting belief are widespread according to which studying and understanding of scientific disciplines is limited to a few people with special brightness or even genius. In fact, most people, including young persons, are often not interested or else give up to satisfy their own curiosity, believing not to be inclined for scientific matters.

As a result, within wide parts of population are characterized by inadequate:

- acquisition of scientific method, as a useful mental structure and schematization for problem solving (not scientific only);
- acquisition of scientific knowledge, even just a basic one;
- understanding of usefulness of science and research for ethical, effective and balanced development of society.

Consequences of such a state of the art on society development are alarming because of a vicious circle: political decisors move starting from citizens needs, a social community with inadequate scientific culture are unable consider research as useful and important target of investments, local and national governments are unable to insert scientific research and technological development with maximum

priority in their own agendas, the level of scientific culture remains inadequate, and so on....

2. Aims

“Hallo, Science!” aims to contribute in modifying the scenario as described in point 1. above. Two general and two specific aims are identified.

General aims:

- a. communicate the message according to which everybody can love and understand science, because it's about language and method, not about specific attitudes.
- b. stimulate curiosity and pleasure to meet science (“Hallo, Science!”) and to understand the scientific side of everyday life and everyday world.

Specific aims:

- c. pass on basic information – after adopting a straight enough communication style, in order to pursue aim a. above on how to acquire scientific knowledge.
- d. pass on basic information – after adopting a straight enough communication style, in order to pursue aim b. above and knowledge in specific fields and disciplines (see paragraph below).

3. Contents

A radio product is realized that is agile, short and easy-to-understand, that empathically takes the listener to seize pleasure and usefulness of scientific reading of things. Each program episode is just 4 minutes short in a way to keep up with the attention of an initially not very curious listener.

Each episode is monographic, devoted to one among the following thematic areas:

- science and language – words and numbers
- method and ethics in science – searching for solutions
- energy and environment – taking care about Earth and resources
- neuroscience and biotechnologies – world's perception
- genetics and medicine – understanding and taking care human body
- everyday-life physics – how things work at any length scale from macro to nano and beyond
- applied physics – future technologies
- astronomy, astrophysics and astroparticle physics – understanding Universe
- news – events, results on frontier research at local, national and international level

Contents are presented after using smooth, straight and comprehensible language and exploiting a solid motivational approach. Explanations on each topics are helped after utilizing examples from everyday life and popular culture, in particular taking care of connections between Science and:

- Music
- Cartoons and comics
- Cooking
- Crime investigation
- Science fiction
- Movies

The format of Hallo, Science! is flexible and has been modulated according to special needs. Besides the standard series made of monographic topics across the various thematic areas, it includes the special series:

- **“Perche' Nobel” (“Nobel, Why?”)** broadcast every year a few months after

the assignment of the Nobel prizes (one episode for each Nobel, one for the Turing and one for the Abel prizes as well)

- **“Nobel Donna” (“Women in Nobel”)** a selection of the most recent Nobel prizes assigned to women, one for each discipline
- Special series on the International Galilean Year (in preparation)

Dedicated series can be planned and realized, for example focussed on specific topics which are subject of current and frontier research efforts. These dedicated series could be part of the diffusion and dissemination activity of specialized and broad interest research projects or networks, to favour among large segments of population the understanding of the importance of research with related investments in their everyday lives.

4. Staff

Reach of the goals in 2. above with the contents described in Par. 3 requires the setting of a multidisciplinary team with highly qualified individuals in the area of science, communication and science communication. The shortness of each episode and the absence of any visual tool needs a great effort in processing scientific concepts and ideas in a way to render the explanations straight but not oversimplified, maintain the content rigorous with an everyday-life language, and at the same time condense everything in 4 minutes.

We also believe that the success of the project and of the format calls for a few additional and significant characteristics of the individuals in the team: sharing the motivations, ability to integrate ideas and competences within the team, creativity, and last but not least having as basic attitude the pleasure of entertaining oneself and the listeners about science.

Coordination of the scientific area in **Hallo, Science!** is care of Marilù Chiofalo, physicist at the University of Pisa, while scientific coordination of **Nobel, Why?** is care of Marco Abate, mathematician at the University of Pisa and creator of the series of conferences of the same name.

Coordination of the communication and radio broadcasting area in **Hallo, Science!** is care of Sara P. Maggi, expert in communication especially social and scientific, author and director for radio, tv and multimedia, author of popular science programs for Swiss and Italian networks.

Production is care of the onlus for social communication WOW – Women On Work. Efficiency in communication and diffusion is strengthened by the collaboration with the staff of the Communication and Press Office of the University of Pisa, in particular Marco Gasperetti (coordinator external press activities) and the journalist Claudia Mantelassi (since a few months, Gianni Parrini).

5. Product and diffusion strategy

Considering the project goals, the radio broadcasts are better structured to be inserted in harmonic way inside the programming of commercial radios, “seeding” the message by means of a format whose temporal length is suited to fit the time during which the average listener might actively respond to the coming information.

Programmes should also persist over the time, so that project visibility and penetration is favoured.

Planning of the radio broadcasting is performed on broadcasters that can guarantee an effective broad covering within the whole Tuscany region, for illumination area, average number of listeners and complementarity of reference targets. During the last year Hallo, Science! has been broadcast within a radio network counting something like 54,000 contacts.

The product can also be diffused via web and pod casting, starting from the official website of the University of Pisa and of other institutions, including the portal of Regione Toscana.