

WASA DAILY

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Finnvera

University of Vaasa

Ostrobothnia to be a Blue Zone

Gunnar Bäckman's exhibition in Helsinki

The Future of Swedish Newspapers

Vera Rubin Telescope

WASA DAILY



HERE WE ARE:
vpress.ovh

TONIGHT!

TODAY

The Future of Swedish Daily Newspapers in Finland



BONNIER NEWS 2023-2024 acquisition of Finland's Swedish-language newspapers represents a historic shift in Nordic media ownership, marking the first time Finnish daily newspapers have fallen under foreign control.

This transformation, while potentially saving these publications from extinction, raises fundamental questions about media independence, cultural preservation and the price of survival in the digital age, according to the recent study "Strategic media ownership across borders: Insights from case Bonnier News in Finland" by Jenny Stenberg-Sirén, Jens Berg, Klas Backhom and Carl-Gustav Lindén.

The Economic Imperative

The acquisitions were driven by stark financial realities. Hufvudstadsbladet faced annual losses of 2.5-3.6 million euros, while both Konstsfundet and Harry Schaumans Stiftelse recognized they lacked the resources for necessary digital transformation and technological development. Bonnier's integration strategy—consolidating administrative functions while investing in journalism—offered a lifeline these newspapers could not achieve independently.

A Tale of Two Outcomes

The integration reveals a dual impact. Journalistic functions have largely benefited, with reporters gaining access to advanced analytics tools, AI assistance, and extensive knowledge-sharing networks across Bonnier's 50 publications. Editorial teams now enjoy enhanced professional development opportunities and resource-sharing that

would have been impossible under independent ownership.

However, administrative consolidation has come at a significant cost. Over 20 jobs have been eliminated, local decision-making authority has been centralized to Sweden, and crucial functions like print editing have been moved to Sundsvall. This centralization raises concerns about maintaining local cultural context and linguistic nuances essential to serving Finnish-Swedish communities.

Cultural and Democratic Implications

Perhaps most troubling is the gradual erosion of local institutional memory and community connection. The shift away from small, local advertisers toward larger clients—a byproduct of centralized sales—weakens newspapers' ties to their regional economic ecosystems. When headlines are written and articles edited by staff unfamiliar with Finnish contexts, something essential may be lost despite shared language.

The arrangement also reveals uncomfortable dependencies. Hufvudstadsbladet's improved financial performance relies heavily on Konstsfundet's continued 3.5 million euro annual subsidy—essentially a "private press subsidy" that highlights ongoing economic fragility despite integration into a major media conglomerate.

The Survival Paradox

The research suggests these acquisitions provide "a greater chance of survival for the Finland-Swedish newspapers," and the evidence supports this conclusion. Bonnier's technological capabilities, professional resources, and digital expertise offer oppor-

tunities these publications never could have achieved alone.

Yet this survival comes with transformation that fundamentally alters what these newspapers represent. The challenge moving forward lies in preserving their cultural value and community connections while operating within the constraints of international media conglomeration. The Swedish daily newspapers in Finland have not simply been saved—they have become something entirely different.

Success will ultimately be measured not by profit margins or technological capabilities, but by whether these newspapers can continue serving as authentic community voices while meeting the demands of corporate efficiency. This experiment may well define the future of regional newspaper publishing across the Nordic countries, making its outcome crucial for understanding media consolidation's broader implications for democratic discourse and cultural preservation.

Image: Peter Worodarsky, Editor-in-Chief of Dagens Nyheter, and Niklas Nyberg, Editor-in-Chief of Vasabladet, at a press conference on the sale of Vasabladet to Bonnier News in the spring of 2024.



NEWS

VAASA CITY THEATRE

Édith Piaf's Fascinating Life as a Musical Play. Premiere at the City Theatre on 11 September 2025



KNOWN AS THE “Little Sparrow of Paris,” Édith Piaf’s life was marked by extremes: poverty and sudden success, deep love and devastating sorrow. Born into hardship, she grew up in the slums of Paris, at one point losing her sight as a child—only to recover in what many considered a miracle.

She endured tragedy early, including the loss of her own child. Yet from singing in small cafés she rose to become the queen of French chanson. Piaf’s voice carried the passion of her tumultuous romances and the grief of losing her great love, boxer Marcel Cerdan, in a plane crash. Her later years were clouded by illness and addiction, but her songs—*La Vie en Rose* and *Non, je ne regrette rien*—remain timeless echoes of her triumphs and sorrows. Piaf did not simply live life; she let life carry her.

The Play: “Piaf – I Regret Nothing” in Vaasa

Vaasa City Theatre opens its autumn season with a journey into Piaf’s dramatic world in the musical play “Piaf – I Regret Nothing,” premiering on Thursday, 11 September 2025, on the Romeo Stage (sttinfo.fi).

The play, written by British playwright Pam Gems, blends fact and fiction while bringing Piaf’s greatest hits to life: *Non, je ne regrette rien*, *La Vie en Rose*, and *Hymne à l’amour*.

The production is directed by Maiju Sallas, returning to Vaasa with renewed passion. “I have admired Édith Piaf since my youth... she never compromised her unique style,” Sallas explains. Sonja Halla-aho takes on the demanding lead role, donning Piaf’s iconic black dress and channeling the singer’s intensity—her joys, loves, sorrows, and beauty. The artistic team includes conductor Sauli Perälä, choreographer Antton Laine, set designer Mika Haaranen, costume designer Emilia Eriksson, and sound designer Jouni Ilari Tapio.

The play runs about 2 hours and 30 minutes including an intermission, with Swedish subtitles, and is recommended for audiences over 12 years of age (sttinfo.fi).

The ensemble cast features Anna Lemmetti-Vieri, Mari Hirvi, Oiva Nuojua, Toni Ikola, Ville Härkönen, Jorma Tommila / Panu Valo, Konsta Reuter, Timo Luoma, and Miika Alatupa, alongside new company members Milla Kangas and Anni-Maija Koskinen, and guest actors Anna Arola and Olli Tulkki from Tampere University of Applied Sciences.

In summary: Piaf – I Regret Nothing promises an intense cultural experience, where Édith Piaf’s passion, tragedy, and musical legacy are reborn on stage in a visually striking performance. The premiere on 11 September at Vaasa City Theatre’s Romeo Stage will be a highlight of the autumn theatre season—a chance to feel Piaf’s spirit once more, as only chanson can deliver.

IMAGE: Piaf – en kadu mitään (2025). Sonja Halla-aho. PHOTO: Kasper Dalkarl

NEWS

YOU CAN READ THIS NEWSPAPER ANYWHERE



You can read this paper wherever You are. Like here in Björköby

BLOG WRITERS

Join Wasa Daily as a Blog Writer!

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Contact us at wasadagblad@gmail.com for more details. We can't wait to hear from you!

PHOTO EXHIBITION

Gunnar Bäckman's Exhibition at Helsinki Arbis Continues Until September 12

The exhibition "*Houses Where Nobody Lives*" by Vasa photographer Gunnar Bäckman is currently on display at Helsinki Arbis on Dagmar Street. The photographs depict abandoned houses in Ostrobothnia – buildings that evoke both memories and reflections on the passage of time.

The exhibition is created in memory of Bäckman's Grandmother, Aino Juliana Bäckman, giving the works a particularly personal touch.

The exhibition has attracted considerable interest and can be visited until September 12.



NEWS

LUNAR ECLIPSE

A Rare "Blood Moon" Tonight: What to Watch For



What is a lunar eclipse?

A lunar eclipse occurs when the Earth moves directly between the Sun and the Moon, casting its shadow across the lunar surface. Depending on alignment, this can result in a penumbral, partial, or—most strikingly—a total lunar eclipse. During a total lunar eclipse, only red or coppery light refracted through Earth's atmosphere reaches the Moon, which gives rise to the dramatic visual we call a "Blood Moon."

When and where can it be seen in Finland?

The next total lunar eclipse falls on the night of September 7–8, 2025. In Finland

you'll be able to see the Moon rise already entering Earth's shadow. From that point, observers can witness the progression from the totality phase onward. The peak of the eclipse, or greatest eclipse, is expected at approximately 21:11.

. The full duration of totality will be about 1 hour and 21 minutes, with the entire eclipse (including penumbral and partial phases) lasting roughly 5 hours and 27 minutes

. It will be visible throughout Europe, including Finland, as part of a widely observable phenomena across Africa, Asia, and Australia

Historical concept: "Blood Moon"

The term "Blood Moon" comes from the Moon's deep red or copper coloration during totality—a result of Earth's atmosphere bending red light toward the lunar surface. This evocative name has roots both in astronomy and cultural lore

Historically and across numerous cultures, a red-tinted Moon inspired awe, curiosity, and sometimes superstition. In ancient societies, eclipses were often interpreted as omens—of change, ill-fortune, or divine displeasure. In more recent history, explorers used the predictability of lunar eclipses to their advantage. For example, Christopher Columbus famously leveraged his knowledge of a lunar eclipse to persuade Jamaican natives to provide supplies during his 1504 voyage—a striking example of science used as strategy.

Tnight's lunar eclipse promises to be both a beautiful astronomical spectacle—visible from Finland—and a powerful reminder of our long-standing fascination with the skies. Don't miss the chance to observe the Moon's fiery transformation under Earth's shadow.

NEWS

BLUE ZONES

Åbo Akademi: Swedish speaking Ostrobothnia could be a blue zone



WHAT IS A BLUE ZONE? The term refers to regions where extraordinary numbers of residents live significantly longer than average, often exceeding 100 years. Such areas are thought to combine longevity with lifestyle factors like gentle daily physical activity, plant-rich diets, strong social bonds, and a sense of purpose

New Study Highlights Promising Findings in Western Finland

A recent study published by Åbo Akademi on 1 September 2025 found that Swedish-speaking Ostrobothnia in Western Finland shows preliminary potential to be considered a Blue Zone.

Researchers compared three regions: Swedish-speaking Ostrobothnia, Finnish-speaking South Ostrobothnia, and Åland. The study found that among these, Swedish-speaking Ostrobothnia most closely aligns with the health-promoting lifestyle characteristic of established Blue

Zones—showing good overall health and longevity alongside strong adherence to lifestyle traits such as healthy eating, moderate physical activity, community involvement, and purposeful living

Interestingly, Åland demonstrated the highest life expectancy and best overall health, yet did not follow many of the lifestyle patterns typically associated with Blue Zones—suggesting its success may be driven by different factors

Also notable: South Ostrobothnia mirrored Swedish-speaking Ostrobothnia in following Blue Zone-like lifestyles, but lagged in health outcomes—highlighting that adopting those habits alone may not be sufficient without further demographic study

Why This Matters

The findings suggest that cultural and linguistic context can play a vital role in promoting healthy aging. However, researchers caution that more robust demographic data is needed to confirm whether Swedish-speaking Ostrobothnia truly exhibits extraordinary longevity—particularly through independent validation

Postdoctoral researcher **Sarah Åkerman**, principal investigator of the “Blue Zones in the Nordics” project, emphasizes that while lifestyle alignment is promising, further demographic confirmation is a ne-

cessary next step

Broader Context: The Blue Zone Concept and Its Challenges

The Blue Zone concept—initially identified in renowned longevity hotspots such as Sardinia, Ikaria, Okinawa, and Martinique—has gained global recognition. But it has also drawn scientific criticism. Some recent studies have raised concerns about reliability, including potential errors in age records and data quality in certain regions

Nevertheless, lifestyle traits commonly associated with Blue Zones—natural physical movement, plant-based diets, strong social networks, purposeful living—remain widely regarded as beneficial habits for promoting long and healthy lives

While Swedish-speaking Ostrobothnia shows promising alignment with Blue Zone lifestyle patterns and healthy aging indicators, definitive classification as a Blue Zone awaits further validation. This research marks a significant first step in exploring longevity and well-being in a Nordic context—but more investigation is needed before Ostrobothnia can officially join the ranks of the world’s longevity hotspots.

NEWS

UNIVERSITY OF VAASA

Rector of Vaasa University: Finland's Future Depends on Competence



MINNA MARTIKAINEN, Rector of Vaasa University, emphasized in her opening speech for the academic year that Finland's future rests on education and internationally high-quality research. Only through top-level expertise can the country attract investments, boost exports, and secure economic resilience.

Martikainen warns against the Ministry of Finance's proposal to cut university funding by a total of €90 million next year. The plan also includes a two-year index freeze, which would lead to further substantial reductions. The rector

highlights that this threatens student places and the national goal of raising the higher education attainment rate to 50 percent.

– Cutting resources for education and research at a time when the economy needs expertise is the wrong strategy, Martikainen stresses.

She underscores research, development, and innovation (RDI) as the engine for future growth. The target of raising R&D investments to four percent of GDP by 2030 is crucial for Finland's competitiveness and welfare.

Energy transition presents particular opportunities. The Vaasa region

hosts the Nordic countries' largest energy technology cluster, where the university works closely with companies. Initiatives like the Energy Transition Valley aim to build a leading ecosystem for energy research, innovation, and new business.

Martikainen concludes that universities are an investment in national resilience. In an uncertain world marked by climate change, geopolitical tensions, and technological shifts, expertise and research are essential for security and sustainable development.

– Universities are not a cost—they are Finland's future, Martikainen asserts.

IMAGE: University of Vaasa/
Christoffer Björklund.

NEWS

HANKEN

Hanken Opens 117th Academic Year – Rector Highlights Education’s Role in Finland’s Future



Rehtori Ingmar Björkman. Matilda Saarinen/Hanken

HANKEN SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS opened its 117th academic year in Helsinki and the 46th in Vaasa on 1 September. In his address, Rector Ingmar Björkman emphasized that while Finland faces major economic challenges, the way forward lies in sustained investment in education and research.

Over the past fifteen years, Hanken

has increased the number of new bachelor's and master's students by 77 percent. The university carries a special responsibility for educating Swedish-speaking economists, while also attracting a growing number of Finnish-speaking and international students. This year, Hanken's English-language bachelor's programme was the most popular of its kind in Finland.

Björkman also underlined that state funding per student has declined sharply since 2010, calling on

policymakers to direct part of the increased research and innovation investments to universities. "An investment in universities is an investment in Finland's future," he stated.

The opening ceremony also featured speeches by Christoph Vitzthum, Chair of Hanken's Board, Alma Portin, Chair of the Student Union, and Hanken alumna and diplomat Nicola Lindertz.

NEWS

EKONOMY

FINNVERA: The best time to invest was yesterday, but the second-best time is today



THE BEST TIME TO INVEST was yesterday, but the second-best time is today. With these words, Finnvera's CEO **Juuso Heinilä** urged Finnish companies to act quickly and boldly. During a panel discussion at Team Finland Day in Helsinki, he emphasized that the country's economy is on the rise and that demand is now growing across many sectors.

Heinilä highlighted that several factors favor investments right now. Labor is more readily available than it has been in years, and the costs of loans and guarantees remain at a reasonable level. At the same time, all of Europe is looking toward significant opportunities related to Ukraine's reconstruction—something that also entails intense competition for resources, workforce, and market shares. Companies that act first will gain a clear advantage.

Finnvera has already strengthened its support for companies this year. From January to June, loans and guarantees totaling €600 million were granted within Finland, while export guarantees and special guarantees amounted to a total of €3.7 billion—more than double the amount in the same period in 2024. According to Heinilä, this reflects a stronger confidence in both growth and internationalization among Finnish companies.

"The outlook is significantly brighter than a year ago. Large export deals are back on the agenda, and both investments and major growth projects are underway in small, medium, and midcap companies. This is clearly reflected in Finnvera's financing," Heinilä said.

The panel discussion at Team Finland Day also included **Juhapekka Ristola**, Head of Department at the Ministry of Employment and the Economy;

Jaana Korhonen, Senior Director at the Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (NTM); and **Lassi Noponen**, Director General of Business Finland. The discussion was chaired by **Juho Romakaniemi**, CEO of the Finnish Chamber of Commerce.

The event was opened by the President of the Republic, **Alexander Stubb**. The Minister for Foreign Trade and Development **Ville Tavio** stressed the importance of exports for Finland's future. In total, around 650 representatives from Finnish growth companies and the Team Finland network participated.

The conclusion is clear: according to Finnvera, now is the right time to invest. Companies that take the initiative today can build competitiveness for tomorrow's tougher international market.

NEWS

ALKO

Alko reports expected drop in sales and profits – but customer service earns praise



Customer satisfaction remains strong

Despite weaker financial results, customer feedback remained positive. In a survey on product selection, Alko received a record-high rating of 8.64 (on a 4–10 scale), compared with 8.61 last year. The customer experience index (on a 1–5 scale) rose to 4.60 from 4.58. Age verification also remained at a very high level: 98.2% of test purchases were correctly checked, up from 97.3% last year.

New sustainability initiatives

This spring, Alko introduced the “Certified Alternative” concept, aimed at giving customers the opportunity to make sustainable choices with regard to cultivation, production, and working conditions.

Role in society and operating environment

Alko emphasized its continued role in Finland’s welfare model: the company positions itself both as a preventive force against alcohol-related harm and as an enabler of responsible enjoyment.

For Alko, the first half of 2025 was financially challenging: sales volumes and revenues declined, and profitability weakened. The development is directly linked to the Alcohol Act reform of summer 2024, which allowed stronger beverages to be sold in grocery stores. At the same time, customers expressed continued appreciation for Alko’s service, product range, and sustainability efforts – strengths that stand out in a period of change.

Source: Alko

ALKO OY RELEASED its half-year report for January–June 2025 on Tuesday, showing the clear impact of last year’s changes to Finland’s Alcohol Act. Sales volumes declined as expected and profits weakened, but customers continued to rate the company’s service and selection highly.

Sales and revenue development
Alko’s total sales during the first half of the year amounted to 30.7 million liters, down from 34.8 million liters a year earlier. Al-

cohol-taxable revenue fell from €536.4 million to €479.3 million – a decrease of €57 million.

Impact on tax revenues

The Finnish state also collected significantly less in alcohol excise tax: revenues dropped from €278.1 million to €248.4 million.

Weaker profitability

Operating profit fell sharply to €4.6 million, compared with €15.8 million in the same period last year. Net profit stood at €4.3 million, down from €13.1 million in January–June 2024.

NEWS

ASTRONOMY

Vera Rubin: A Trailblazer in Cosmic Exploration



The Vera C. Rubin Observatory is shown here amidst a colorful display of clouds around sunrise.

Credit: Vera C. Rubin Observatory/NOIRLab/AURA/NSF/J. Fuentes

Vera Florence Cooper Rubin (1928–2016) was an American astronomer whose observations in the 1970s revolutionized our understanding of the universe. By studying the rotation rates of galaxies, Rubin and her colleague Kent Ford discovered that stars at the outer edges of galaxies orbited at similar speeds to those near the center—evidence for an invisible gravitational force. This finding provided some of the first compelling proof of dark matter, an unseen substance that makes up about 85% of the universe’s matter. Rubin’s groundbreaking work helped reshape cosmology and paved the way for the Vera C. Rubin

Observatory, which was named in her honor in 2019.

The Observatory’s Ambitious Vision

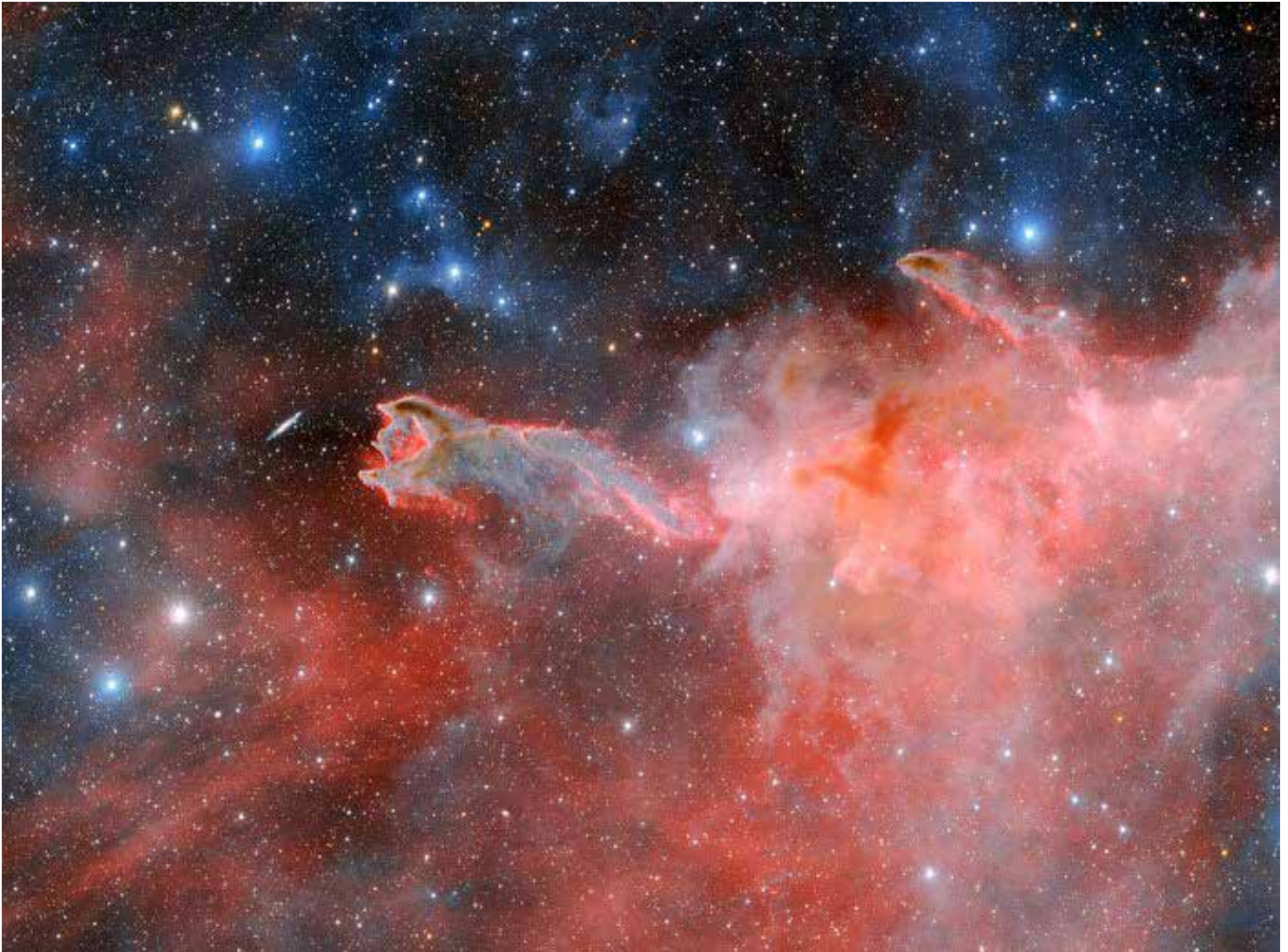
Situated atop Cerro Pachón in Chile at an elevation of about 2,682 m, the Vera C. Rubin Observatory houses the 8.4-meter Simonyi Survey Telescope and the largest digital camera ever built for astronomy—a 3.2-gigapixel marvel comprising 189 CCD sensors integrated into 21 rafts.

The observatory will conduct the Legacy Survey of Space and Time (LSST)—a ten-year, ultra-wide-field

survey imaging the southern sky every few nights. With a novel three-mirror design enabling a 3.5-degree field of view, this facility will capture roughly 800 visits per sky location over a decade, generating an unprecedented flood of data, including a complete time-lapse “movie” of the cosmos.

Its scientific goals span four frontiers:

- Dark matter & dark energy: probing their nature via weak gravitational lensing, supernovae, and cosmic structure
- Solar System inventory: detecting millions of asteroids and other small bodies
- Transient phenomena: cap-



This cloudy, ominous structure is CG 4, a cometary globule nicknamed 'God's Hand'. CG 4 is one of many cometary globules present within the Milky Way, and how these objects get their distinct form is still a matter of debate among astronomers. This image was captured by the Department of Energy-fabricated Dark Energy Camera on the U.S. National Science Foundation Víctor M. Blanco 4-meter Telescope at Cerro Tololo Inter-American Observatory, a Program of NSF NOIRLab. In it, the features that classify CG 4 as a cometary globule are hard to miss. Its dusty head and long, faint tail vaguely resemble the appearance of a comet, though they have nothing in common. Astronomers theorize that cometary globules get their structure from the stellar winds of nearby hot, massive stars.

Credit: CTIO/NOIRLab/DOE/NSF/AURA

Image Processing: T.A. Rector (University of Alaska Anchorage/NSF NOIRLab), D. de Martin & M. Zamani (NSF NOIR-Lab)

turing supernovae, variable stars, and shifting cosmic events in real time

- Milky Way history: mapping its structure and formation via its stellar populations

The observatory will produce around 20 terabytes of data per night, culminating in a catalog database spanning 15 to 500 petabytes over its lifetime

Milestone Achievements During Early Operations

On June 23, 2025, the public was treated to stunning first-light images from Rubin. These early captures included breathtaking views of distant galaxies,

stellar nurseries like the Trifid and Lagoon Nebulae, and dense regions such as the Virgo Cluster

By using image composites (e.g., 678 exposures over seven hours), the observatory revealed fine details of stellar birthplaces, along with a colorful tapestry of galaxies that had previously appeared as dark voids

Within just 10 hours of operations, Rubin identified 2,104 previously unknown asteroids, including seven near-Earth objects (NEOs)—none pose an immediate threat. Projections suggest the observatory will catalog over 5 million asteroids and around 100,000

NEOs during its first decade—vastly exceeding existing inventories. These breakthroughs underscore Rubin's unprecedented data volume—expected to surpass all previous ground- and space-based optical telescopes combined in its first year alone

Why It Matters

- Technological Frontier: Combining rapid sky coverage, the world's largest CCD camera, and powerful data pipelines capable of issuing alerts within 60 seconds, Rubin delivers a scale and responsiveness previously unimagined in astronomy



The spiral galaxy NGC 925 reveals cosmic pyrotechnics in its spiral arms where bursts of star formation are taking place in the red, glowing clouds scattered throughout it.

Credit: KPNO/NOIRLab/NSF/AURA Acknowledgements:

PI: M T. Patterson (New Mexico State University)

Image processing: Travis Rector (University of Alaska Anchorage), Mahdi Zamani & Davide de Martin

- **Scientific Discovery:** From quantifying dark energy and dark matter to uncovering millions of small solar system objects and transient cosmic events, the observatory stands to spark a new wave of discovery—some expected, some unforeseen
- **Global Engagement:** Data and alerts will be broadly accessible—first to U.S. and Chilean scientists, then globally—empowering both professionals and the public. Education platforms and tools for citizen scientists amplify its outreach ambition
- **Perspective on Our Place in the Cosmos:** The image nicknamed “Cosmic Treasure Chest” captures millions of galaxies in a single frame—a humbling reminder of our tiny place in the vast universe, yet a celebration of human curiosity and collective endeavor.

In essence, the Vera C. Rubin Observatory fulfills the visionary legacy of

Vera Rubin herself: opening our eyes to what is unseen. With each snapshot and alert, it is not just unveiling the sky—it is narrating the cosmic story of existence in motion.

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RUSSIA

A Critical Analysis of Russian Government Narratives on Ukraine

THE RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT's attempts to justify its February 2022 invasion of Ukraine represent a masterclass in historical revisionism, deflection, and the weaponization of legitimate geopolitical concerns to mask imperial ambitions. The standard Russian narrative, consistently promoted through official channels, relies on several interconnected falsehoods that deserve systematic debunking.

The NATO Expansion Myth

Perhaps the most persistent Russian claim is that NATO expansion "forced" Russia's hand. This argument fundamentally misrepresents both the nature of NATO membership and Russia's own role in driving Eastern European nations toward the alliance. NATO membership is voluntary and requires extensive democratic reforms—qualities that made these nations safer and more prosperous. The suggestion that Russia has a legitimate sphere of influence over sovereign neighbors is a throwback to 19th-century imperial thinking that has no place in modern international law.

Moreover, Ukraine was never on a fast track to NATO membership. The 2008 Bucharest Summit offered only vague future possibilities, not concrete membership plans. If NATO expansion truly concerned Russia, invading Ukraine—thereby guaranteeing permanent NATO reinforcement on Russia's borders—

represents spectacularly counterproductive strategy.

The "Denazification" Fabrication

Russia's claim that Ukraine needed "denazification" is particularly cynical given that Ukraine elected a Jewish president in 2019 with 73% of the vote. While far-right elements exist in every society, Ukraine's far-right parties consistently receive minimal electoral support—often less than 2%. This contrasts sharply with Russia's own Wagner Group, which openly used Nazi symbols and recruited from extremist networks.

The historical irony is profound:

Russia invokes the memory of fighting fascism while conducting a war of aggression that mirrors fascist tactics—targeting civilians, forcibly relocating children, and attempting to erase Ukrainian national identity. Historical Distortion and Imperial Nostalgia

Russian narratives consistently portray Ukraine as an artificial construct rather than recognizing its millennium-long distinct cultural and political development. The claim that Russians and Ukrainians are "one people" who were artificially separated ignores centuries of Ukrainian resistance to Russian rule, from Cossack uprisings to the independence movements of the 20th century. This historical revisionism serves to legitimize territorial conquest by denying Ukrainian agency and statehood—a classic imperial tactic used throughout history to justify absorption of neighboring territories.

The Western Provocation Excuse

Perhaps most fundamentally flawed

is the argument that Western actions "provoked" the invasion. This narrative strips Ukrainians of agency in their own democratic choices while portraying Russia as a passive victim rather than an aggressive actor. The timeline alone undermines this claim: Russia began its aggression in 2014, not in response to any immediate NATO action, but following Ukraine's democratic revolution that threatened Putin's own authoritarian model.

The Reality Behind the Rhetoric

The evidence overwhelmingly suggests that Russia's invasion stems not from legitimate security concerns but from Putin's determination to restore imperial control and prevent the success of democracy on Russia's borders. Internal Russian documents and statements reveal goals of regime change, territorial partition, and cultural elimination—objectives that have nothing to do with NATO or Western "provocation."

The tragedy is that these false narratives not only justify devastating aggression but also trap Russia in a conflict that serves no genuine Russian interest. By promoting these myths, the Russian government ensures continued international isolation, economic damage, and military losses—all while Ukrainian resistance continues to demonstrate the bankruptcy of imperial dreams in the 21st century.

True security for Russia would come from peaceful coexistence with prosperous democratic neighbors, not from the impossible task of maintaining unwilling imperial subjects through force.

UKRAINE

UKRAINE PRESIDENT

Slovakia Will Stand with Us and Other Partners in Work for Peace – Volodymyr Zelenskyy Following Meeting with Robert Fico



5 SEPTEMBER 2025

Slovakia will stand with Ukraine and other partners in the work for peace and is ready to define its position regarding security guarantees for our country. This was stated by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy following his meeting with Prime Minister of Slovakia Robert Fico in Uzhhorod.

The key topics of discussion were matters of principle for Ukraine and matters of principle for Slovakia: bilateral relations, efforts for peace, security guarantees, Europe's energy independence, and joint energy projects. In particular, an agreement

was reached to hold a session of the intergovernmental commission in October.

"The Prime Minister of Slovakia has been to Uzhhorod before, but this is our first meeting, right here, and it is important to maintain a pragmatic approach in our work, as we did today. It is also crucial that this continues at the level of ministers and our institutions, not only at the level of leaders," said the Head of State.

Volodymyr Zelenskyy informed the Prime Minister about his conversation with U.S. President Donald Trump yesterday, as well as the work with the leaders of the Coalition of the Willing to advance peace and ensure security. Robert Fico shared information about his

contacts in China.

"We count on support for our peace efforts, and Robert assured me that Slovakia will stand with us and other partners in this work for peace," said the President of Ukraine.

The discussion also touched on the topic of security guarantees for Ukraine. Slovakia is ready to define its position on this and is open to dialogue.

"As a small country, Slovakia cannot play the leading role, but we support all initiatives that may lead to peace," added Robert Fico.

Additionally, Slovakia is ready to cooperate with Ukraine in the Shelter Coalition format, primarily concerning schools

and kindergartens. Ministers must ensure relevant results.

Energy independence for Europe and cooperation between Ukraine and Slovakia on energy sustainability were also discussed: electricity imports for Ukraine and the export of Ukrainian energy resources through Slovak territory to third countries. The Prime Minister noted that such cooperation has great potential.

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ART EXPERIENCE OF THE WEEK



Elin Danielson-Gambogi

3.9.1861, Noormarkku

31.12.1919, Antignona, Italia

Naisen muotokuva Kvinnoporträtt Portrait of a lady

EVENTS

KONSTRUNDAN 2025

6-7.9.2025 at 11-17

The Art Round, which is being organised for the 18th time this year, brings together 480 artists, craftsmen and designers, as well as artist residences from all over the country. Artists can be searched by region, art form or accessibility, and found on the Konstrundan map. During Konstrundan, you can fill in a free digital ticket at each visitor point – and if the visitor is lucky, they win a work of art.

4 artists from Närpes are included, 10 from Vaasa and 3 from Korsholm.

<https://konstrundan.fi/>

VAASA CITY THEATRE

PIAF

Premiere 11.9.2025 AT 6 PM

Romeo Hall

"In September 2025, the musical play Piau – I Don't Regret Anything will premiere on the Romeo stage of the Vaasa City Theatre, which tells the unique and multi-stage life story of Édith Piaf, who rose to world fame from the streets of Paris."

The role of Piaf is interpreted by theatre actress Sonja Halla-aho.

<https://www.netticket.fi/piaf-vaasa>

Jorma Panula - Conductor Course Concert

19.9.2025 at 6 pm

Vaasa City Hall

In cooperation with Panula Academy. Vaasa City Orchestra cond. Students of the conducting course

"Over the decades, Jorma Panula's courses in Vaasa have seen both future world stars in the world of conducting and pedagogues doing important basic work. Maestro Panula, who has an enormous amount of experience, finds the essence in music, and the popularity of the courses shows that he also knows how to pass it on to his students. In the final concert of the conducting course, we will put the lessons learned during the week to full use!"

Las Vegas

2.10.2025 at 6 pm

Vaasa City Orchestra

cond. Antti Rissanen

sol. Juki Välipakka & Chiara Orlandi

Come Fly With Me, Fly Me to the

Moon, My Way, I want to be Loved by You.... <https://www.vaasa.fi/koe-ja-nae/kulttuurivaasassa-ja-seudulla/vaasan-kaupunginorkesteri/las-vegas/>



MUSTASAARI CHURCH

DIANDRA

17.10.25 at 6 pm

Mustasaari Finnish Parish

VAASA CITY THEATRE

UNNECESSARY PEOPLE

Premiere 23.10.2025 AT 7 PM

Juliet Hall

One of the most influential dramas in Finnish playwriting.

<https://www.netticket.fi/tarpeettomia-ihmisia-vaasa>



HELSINKI BOOK FAIR

23.-26.10.2025

in Helsinki Exhibition Hall.

The Helsinki Book Fair was founded 25 years ago at the request of the book industry – now the event is bigger than ever.

This year, the Helsinki Book Fair is being held for the 25th time, and last year it had almost 98,000 visitors.

This is the most important cultural event of the autumn,

The theme of the Book Fair 2025 is Education and Joy!

At the same time, with the same ticket: Wine & Food event

<https://kirjamessut.messukeskus.com/>

VAASA CITY THEATRE

FOREVER YOUNG

Premiere 31.10.2025 AT 7 PM

Romeo Hall

"Forever Young is a joyful musical comedy full of vibrant joy. As we get older, do we get old? Or are we always forever young?"

<https://www.netticket.fi/ikuisesti-nuori-vaasa>

VAASA LITTFEST 2025

13.-15.11.2025.

Vaasa LittFest is a bilingual literary festival that has been held in Vaasa since 2001. The festival offers in-depth discussions that open up important themes and ideas. This year's theme is Border(s), in-depth days of literature have been promised!

vaasa.fi/littfest

KÄLKKÄBRA Kokkola Opera Festival

14-16.11.25

"From people to people and opera for opera's sake"

www.kpkamariooppera.fi

RUSK

18-22.11.2025

Chamber music at Jakbostad

Artistic Director

Anna-Maria Helsing

Composer of the Year

Dobrikna Tabakova

www.ruskfestival.fi

BEATLES GOES KOKKOLA

Snellman Hall, Kokkola

21.11.2025 at 6 pm

Vaasa City Orchestra

cond. Jussi Lampela

Markku Veijalainen, presenter

"The Vaasa City Orchestra will visit Kokkola with its popular Beatles programme together with Markku Veijalainen, who knows everything about 1960s pop culture. During the evening, we will hear great stories and, above all, rich arrangements of the songbook of Liverpool's Fab Four."

<https://www.vaasa.fi/koe-ja-nae/kulttuurivaasassa-ja-seudulla/vaasan-kaupunginorkesteri/beatles-goes-kokkola/>

CHRISTMAS ORATORIO

19.12.2025 at 6 pm

Vaasa City Orchestra

cond. Tomas Djupsjöbacka

sol. Kathrin Lorenzen, soprano

ROBOT TRANSPORTS

FOOD ROBOTS

In three days, they will be driving on the streets of Vaasa

On Wednesday 3 September, a historic experiment with robot deliveries began in Vaasa, when KPO Handelslag expands its online food deliveries. In our opinion, the sympathetic, all-electric transport robots that resemble a small baby elephant are sympathetic.

On Wednesday morning, 3 September 2025, a historic change took place on the streets of Vaasa, when KPO Handelslag will start robotic delivery of groceries at its seven S-markets. These emission-free and self-driving robots offer customers an easy and environmentally friendly way to receive their groceries on their doorstep, at the workplace or even at the nearest park – in just about an hour after ordering.

The service is part of the international trend in robotic transport. Autonomous walkers are already a familiar sight on the streets of many university campuses and cities around the world, especially in the United States and the United Kingdom. In Finland, the technology has established itself in Helsinki and Tampere, among other places, and now it is also coming to Vaasa at a rapid pace.

“Various express delivery options are growing in popularity all the time, and we want to enable even more comprehensive services related to our popular online grocery store,” says Antti Paananen, Director of Supermarket Trade at Osuuskauppa KPO.

The service initially started in three S-markets in Vaasa:

S-market Gerby, Vaasa

S-market Korsnäståget, Vaasa

S-market Vaasanpuistikko, Vaasa

It's easy to use: the customer places an order via the S-Store app. The robot will appear as a delivery option if the delivery address provided by the customer is in the robot's delivery area,



which typically extends within a radius of approximately 2-3 kilometers from the store.

In practice, the order is done as follows: the customer orders in the app. The store staff carefully collects the goods and packs them into a robot that can carry up to two full bags. The robot then travels to the delivery address, and its journey can be tracked in real-time in the app as a screen schedule. The order may also include chilled products, but not alcohol or other products that are subject to age restrictions. Finally, the customer receives a notification on their phone when the shipment has arrived. An important detail: the price of the products in the online store is the

same as in the store.

“We have a big goal to make the customer's everyday life easier, the robot brings the store closer. This is part of KPO's continuous work to improve the customer experience,” Antti Paananen continues.

The service is backed by a solid technology builder. The transports are carried out by the world-renowned Starship Technologies, whose autonomous robots have already made over 700,000 successful deliveries in Finland alone and traveled over a million kilometres safely. The people of Vaasa are thus stepping on board an international innovation.

EMPLOYMENT

VAASA

Employment Services Now Available at Tammipiha Service Point



OSTROBOTHNIA's Employment Services will open a new information desk at the Tammipiha joint service point in Vaasa on September 1. The desk will serve customers every Monday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. without the need for an appointment, providing low-threshold guidance on job searching, education opportunities, and filling in documents.

Visitors will also receive assistance in using Job Market Finland, along with general advice on employment, training, and integration-related matters. The service is open to anyone needing support in employment issues.

Pilot Project Inspired by International Model

The Tammipiha information desk will serve as a pilot for the so-called International House model, already adopted

in several Finnish and European cities. The idea is to bring together services related to employment, education, and integration under one roof, making the process more straightforward and customer-friendly.

The concept is built on cooperation between multiple authorities and service providers, ensuring that clients can receive help with a wide range of issues in one place—without having to search for the right office themselves.

Accessibility and Customer-Centered Support

According to **Sari Vahtera**, Head of Employment Services in Ostrobothnia, the model is based on tested solutions from other cities.

— “We want to test the *International House* model in Vaasa because it has already proven successful elsewhere. The aim is to make services easier to access, provide support from a single location, and bring public services clo-

ser to the people. If the pilot succeeds, it could form a strong basis for further development in our region,” Vahtera explains.

The pilot will help assess how accessibility can be improved and how low-threshold advisory services should best be organized in the future.

Opening in September

The new service point will welcome its first customers on Monday, September 1, when the information desk officially opens at Tammipiha. The project will be closely monitored, and the lessons learned will guide further service development.

For residents of Vaasa and the wider Ostrobothnia region, the new desk offers an easier way to handle employment-related matters—following the principle of “one-stop service.”

Source: vaasa.fi

ART

EXHIBITION

Jan Olof Mallander – Six Decades at the Forefront of Art



PIONEER of Conceptual Art Celebrated in Major Retrospective at Kuntsi

On September 6, the Kuntsi Museum of Modern Art in Vaasa will open a wide-ranging retrospective dedicated to **Jan Olof Mallander** (b. 1944), one of Finland's most influential pioneers of conceptual art and avant-garde. The exhibition highlights his multifaceted career as an artist, critic, gallerist, and collector, spanning more than sixty years.

Since the 1960s, Mallander has played a central role in bringing international avant-garde and underground

art to Finland. He was instrumental in the country's artistic internationalization and in introducing radical new ideas. In the 1970s, he founded the Cheap Thrills/Halvat Huvit Gallery in Helsinki, which became a hub for experimental art and an important part of the international Fluxus network. Mallander was also a founding member of the artist group *Elonkorjaajat*, which challenged conventions through cross-disciplinary events and collective artistic experiments.

Artist and Collector

The Kuntsi exhibition showcases around 200 works from Mallander's collection of more than 300 pieces, which include both international and Finnish

artists. The collection also reflects his longstanding fascination with Eastern religions and philosophies, particularly Buddhism.

– *“Following art, engaging with it, and supporting artists by purchasing their works is deeply meaningful and brings joy to life. It is inspiring to discover the winners, the genuine talents, the great artists,”* Mallander says.

Among the highlights is *Extended Play* (1968), a sound piece regarded as a classic of conceptual art. Visitors will also encounter paper sculptures, minimalist installations, and charcoal drawings. In the 1980s, Mallander created a series of white brick installations

titled *Towards the Pure Land*, while his later work incorporates Tibetan Buddhist concepts, such as the ritual *Wang*.

International Outlook

The Cheap Thrills Gallery in 1970s Helsinki presented photography, comics, installations, postcards, conceptual art, and performance—art forms that were not yet fully recognized in Finland at the time. Through the gallery, Mallander introduced major international figures such as Jasper Johns, Andy Warhol, and video art pioneer Nam June Paik, whose works will also be on view in Vaasa.

A Versatile Cultural Figure

Beyond his role as an artist, Mallander has worked as an art critic in Finland and Sweden and has founded several art and cultural journals. His writings introduced Finnish audiences to emerging international art trends, while his own conceptual works often played with language and philosophical paradoxes.

The retrospective is curated by exhibition manager **Maarja Salo** in collaboration with the artist. Produced by Vaasa Museums, it will be on view only at the Kuntsi Museum of Modern Art from September 6 to December 13, 2025. On October 11, Mallander will be present at the museum to discuss his works and career with visitors.

The exhibition is supported by the Finnish Heritage Agency and the Veljekset Gröndahl Foundation, and it has been selected for the national Art Testers 2025 program.

ENERGY

WÄRTSILÄ and WASALINE

Wärtsilä and Wasaline Push Boundaries with World's Largest Marine Battery Hybrid System



THE FERRY LINK between Vaasa and Umeå is about to become a global pioneer in sustainable shipping. Technology group Wärtsilä and ferry operator Wasaline are extending their close collaboration with a groundbreaking project: the expansion of the hybrid battery system on the ROPAX ferry Aurora Botnia.

The ship's current 2.2 MWh battery capacity will be increased to 12.6 MWh—a fivefold boost that will make it the largest marine battery hybrid system in the world. Commissioning of the system is planned for early 2026.

Hybrid propulsion, where conventional engines work in tandem with powerful batteries, is widely seen as one of the most promising ways to cut greenhouse gas emissions from shipping. By storing energy and optimising fuel use, batteries allow vessels to reduce fuel consumption and run more quietly and

cleanly when manoeuvring in ports.

"Wasaline's commitment to decarbonised shipping operations is central to everything we do," says Wasaline's Managing Director Peter Ståhlberg. *"Our cooperation with Wärtsilä not only benefits both our companies but sets standards for the entire marine sector."*

The Aurora Botnia has already been celebrated as one of the world's greenest ferries. In service since 2021, it runs on dual-fuel engines capable of burning biogas and uses batteries for propulsion. It also functions as a floating test laboratory.

Wärtsilä's role in the new project goes beyond simply supplying batteries. The company will deliver an upgraded Energy Management System, power drives, and control integration—ensuring the extended battery works seamlessly with the ship's engines and onboard systems.

Industry observers note that while electrification is advancing rapidly on land, the leap to large-scale marine batteries has been slower, largely due to the immense power demands of ships. In this light, the Aurora Botnia's upgrade represents an important milestone: a practical demonstration that battery-powered shipping is not just a futuristic dream but a viable reality on one of the most challenging transport frontiers.

As Wärtsilä's Marine President Roger Holm puts it: *"Our latest contribution will optimise operations even further, creating fuel savings and a significant reduction in emissions."*

For passengers crossing the Gulf of Bothnia, the technological transformation may pass quietly beneath their feet. But for the maritime world, the Aurora Botnia is making waves far beyond Vaasa and Umeå.
Source: Wartsila.com-

ENERGY

WÄRTSILÄ

Wärtsilä to Deliver 217 MW Dual-Fuel Power Plant in Kentucky to Boost Grid Reliability

FINNISH technology group Wärtsilä has secured a major contract to supply engineering and equipment for a 217 megawatt (MW) dual-fuel power plant in Kentucky, United States. The project, commissioned by East Kentucky Power Cooperative (EKPC), is aimed at strengthening grid capacity and ensuring reliable power for thousands of residents in the state.

The new facility will be built in Liberty, Kentucky, and will operate with 12 Wärtsilä 50DF dual-fuel engines. These engines are designed to run primarily on natural gas, while also having the capability to switch to alternative fuels if gas supplies are disrupted. The flexibility of the technology is seen as a critical advantage in a region where demand for dependable electricity is steadily rising.

Delivery of the Wärtsilä equipment is scheduled for mid-2027, with the plant expected to enter service in early 2028. Once operational, the plant will run for roughly 5,000 hours annually, providing much-needed balancing power to the grid. EKPC, a not-for-profit utility, supplies electricity to 16 member-owned cooperatives across Kentucky, serving approximately 1.1 million residents.

Supporting Kentucky's Energy Needs

In announcing the deal, Wärtsilä highlighted the importance of flexible and reliable generation capacity in today's evolving energy markets. "We are delighted to support EKPC's energy initiative. Our experience and broad scope of capabilities have formed the basis of this project, which will be one of the largest Wärtsilä dual-fuel plants installed in the United States," said Risto Paldanius, Vice President, Americas at Wärtsilä Energy.

The Liberty plant represents one of Wärtsilä's most significant undertakings in the



U.S. energy sector. Dual-fuel technology is particularly valued for its adaptability, providing operators with the ability to maintain energy security even during fuel market volatility or supply chain disruptions.

Wärtsilä's Growing U.S. Footprint

Wärtsilä has been present in the United States since 1979 through its subsidiary Wärtsilä North America, Inc. Today, the company employs professionals in eight regional offices across the country, serving both the marine and energy sectors. In addition to its core power plant and engine business, Wärtsilä operates specialized subsidiaries including LOCK-N-STITCH, Wärtsilä Energy Storage Inc., and Defense Maritime Solutions.

Globally, Wärtsilä Energy is focused on supporting the transition to renewable energy. Its portfolio includes flexible engine power plants, energy storage solutions, optimization technologies, and lifecycle services. According to the company, more than 30 percent of its installed operating base worldwide is under long-term service agreements, covering a total of 79 gigawatts of power plant capacity and over 130 energy storage systems in 180 countries.

A Step Toward a Balanced Future

For Kentucky, the addition of 217 MW of reliable capacity is expected to strengthen resilience against peak demand periods and help stabilize the grid as renewable energy integration grows. While the plant will rely largely on natural gas, Wärtsilä emphasizes that its engines are "future-proof," capable of operating on sustainable fuels as energy systems evolve.

With U.S. utilities under pressure to deliver reliable, affordable, and increasingly sustainable electricity, Wärtsilä's latest project highlights the continuing role of flexible, engine-based generation in bridging today's power needs with tomorrow's clean energy ambitions.

Image caption: Wärtsilä will supply the engineering and equipment for a 217 gross MW power plant in Kentucky, USA. © Wärtsilä Corporation

INTERNATIONAL TRAFFIC

NEW TRAFFIC ROUTES

Think tank Agenda: Motorway to Tampere and bridge to Umeå

The think tank Agenda presents an ambitious vision for Finland's infrastructure with two large-scale projects: a motorway between Tampere and Vaasa and a fixed link across the Kvarken to Umeå. Both projects are considered to be socio-economically profitable in the long term.'

In its report "In step with the times: A roadmap for Finland's future infrastructure", the think tank Agenda presents a vision for a Finland that invests in strengthening its infrastructure and future competitiveness. The report, written by economist Theo Herold from Hanken School of Economics, highlights two key infrastructure projects that could transform Finland's transport landscape.

Motorway would save 30 minutes per journey

The Tampere–Vaasa motorway section would reduce travel times by up to half an hour per journey and save more than five days per year for commuters and freight transport. According to the report, the current stretch of road is one of the country's most congested and accident-prone, with 46 identified dangerous connections.

The cost of the motorway is estimated at around €1.38–1.54 billion, which would be financed through EU support, customs duties and public-private partnerships. In addition to shorter travel times, the project would mean increased productivity, lower logistics costs and better road safety.

The Kvarken Bridge would shorten the journey from eight hours to one hour

The second large-scale project is a fixed connection across the Kvarken between Vaasa and Umeå. Today, it takes eight hours to travel by land between Vaasa and Umeå. With a fixed Kvarken connection, it will be shortened to one hour.

According to Herold's report, the bridge would create an integrated economic zone between Finland and Sweden and open up

new opportunities for exports, educational cooperation, tourism and joint security of supply within the EU and NATO.

Costs and financing

In the latest feasibility study by the Finnish Transport Infrastructure Agency from 2025, the cost of a bridge and road connection would vary between EUR 5 billion and EUR 8 billion. In her report, Herold proposes a cost of 3–5 billion euros for a road connection.

According to the proposal, the financing would be provided through 30 percent EU support, while the remainder would be covered through government loans and fees. With EU funding, customs duties and possible public-private partnerships, investments can cover their running costs.

Political support from the government

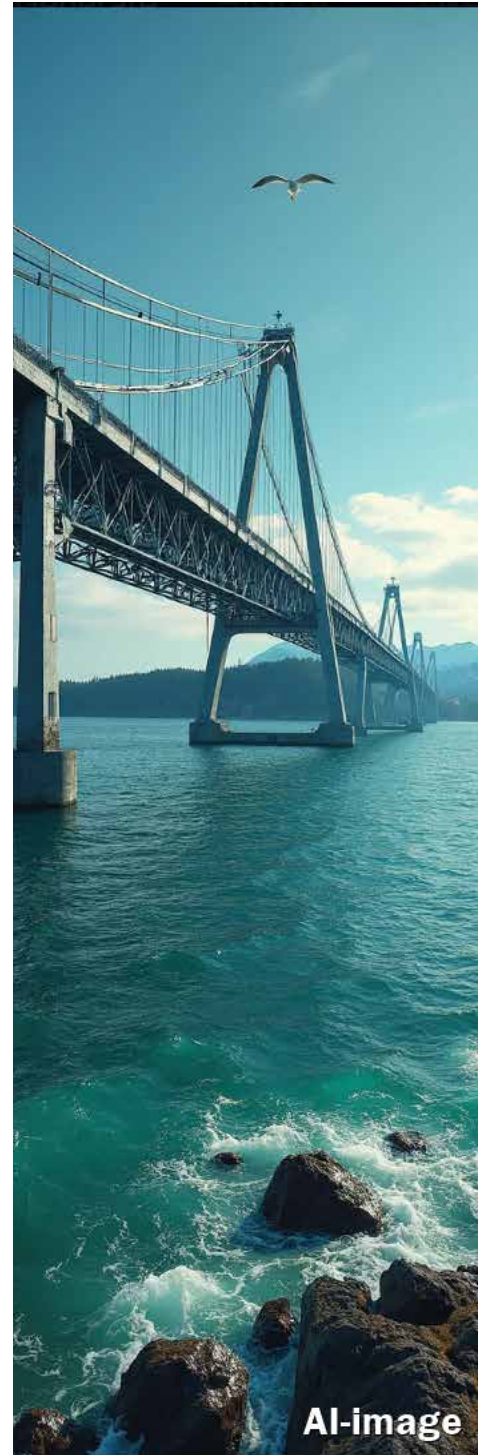
At the report launch in Vaasa, Minister of Education Anders Adlercreutz, who is also chairman of the think tank Agenda, expressed support for the vision. "The government has made many decisions that benefit growth, and in order for us to turn the trend around, we now need a social climate that breathes optimism," says Adlercreutz.

Minister for European Affairs and Ownership Steering Joakim Strand, who has written a comment to the report, emphasizes the importance of daring to invest. "This is not just road and concrete – it is an investment in jobs, security and faith in the future. When others hesitate, we have to lead," says Strand.

Long-term societal benefit

The report argues that both projects would provide significant socio-economic returns through shorter travel times, reduced transport costs and increased road safety. The Kvarken Bridge would also strengthen integration with Sweden and Europe and improve Finland's strategic position in the EU and NATO.

The motorway and the Kvarken Bridge entail large expenditures, but at the same time they are investments that connect Finland with the Nordic countries and Europe, strengthen the country's preparedness and make the regions more attractive places to live, work and invest in.



AI-image

Agenda Think Tank

Agenda Think Tank is a liberal think tank with strong Nordic and European roots that works in Swedish, for a vibrant bilingualism in Finland, in a global world. Agenda is part of the Swedish Association of Education

GOOD AND HEALTHY



Sea buckthorn – The healthiest berry in the world

Sea buckthorn, that thorny shrub growing on the barren shores of the North, is a true superfood of nature's own. Although it is not as popular as many other domestic berries, it is a real vitamin bomb with amazing health benefits.

The history of sea buckthorn dates back far to Asia, where it has long been considered a valuable medicinal plant. Although sea buckthorn is not eaten in large quantities in Finland, it has slo-

wly established itself as one of the healthiest berries in the world.

Prickly but useful

Sea buckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides*) is native to Asia and has been an important part of traditional medicine in China and Russia. In Finland, sea buckthorn grows wild mainly on the coasts of the Gulf of Bothnia, where it thrives in rocky and sunny areas. Sea buckthorn is a dioecious plant, that is, the male and female flowers are located in different specimens, which means that there must be fruit bushes near the bushes producing berries for pollination to be successful.

Sea buckthorn is hardy and requires plenty of light to grow, but it is not demanding on nutrients.

The bacteria that live in its root buds bind nitrogen from the air, which helps the bush survive in harsh conditions. This makes sea buckthorn an excellent plant for tying soil on erosion-prone slopes, among other things.

Nutritional values of sea buckthorn – a real health bomb

Sea buckthorn is known for its particularly high vitamin C content. One hundred grams of sea buckthorn provides up to 10-20 oranges of vitamin C, which makes it one of the most effective sources of vitamin C. However, the health benefits of sea buckthorn are not limited to this; It is also rich in polyunsaturated fatty acids, which are vital for cardiovascular health.

Sea buckthorn oil, which is obtained from the seeds and husks of the berry, is especially nutritious. It is rich in vitamin E, which is an important antioxidant. Sea buckthorn oil has been found to lower both total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol, making it a good addition to a diet that promotes heart health. In addition, sea buckthorn has a diverse range of vitamins, including vitamins of groups A and B, as well as minerals such as potassium, magnesium and iron.

Sea buckthorn at the dinner table – Versatile uses

Although sea buckthorn berries are known for their health benefits, their use in the home kitchen



is still quite limited. The tangy taste of sea buckthorn can be challenging for many, but when handled correctly, it makes a versatile ingredient for both sweet and savory dishes. The most traditional way to use sea buckthorn is to squeeze juice from it, but you should also use the husks and seeds. The husks contain a lot of fiber, and the remaining part after juicing can be mixed, for example, with bread dough or porridge.

The tangy taste of sea buckthorn pairs perfectly with sweet fruits such as apple or peach. It can be used to make jams and marmalades, or mixed into smoothies for an extra boost. In addition, sea buckthorn powder is easy to add to snacks, yoghurts or milkshakes to provide nutrients throughout the day. Especially with game dishes, sea buckthorn is an excellent taste cup, and its strong aroma complements the rich flavors well.

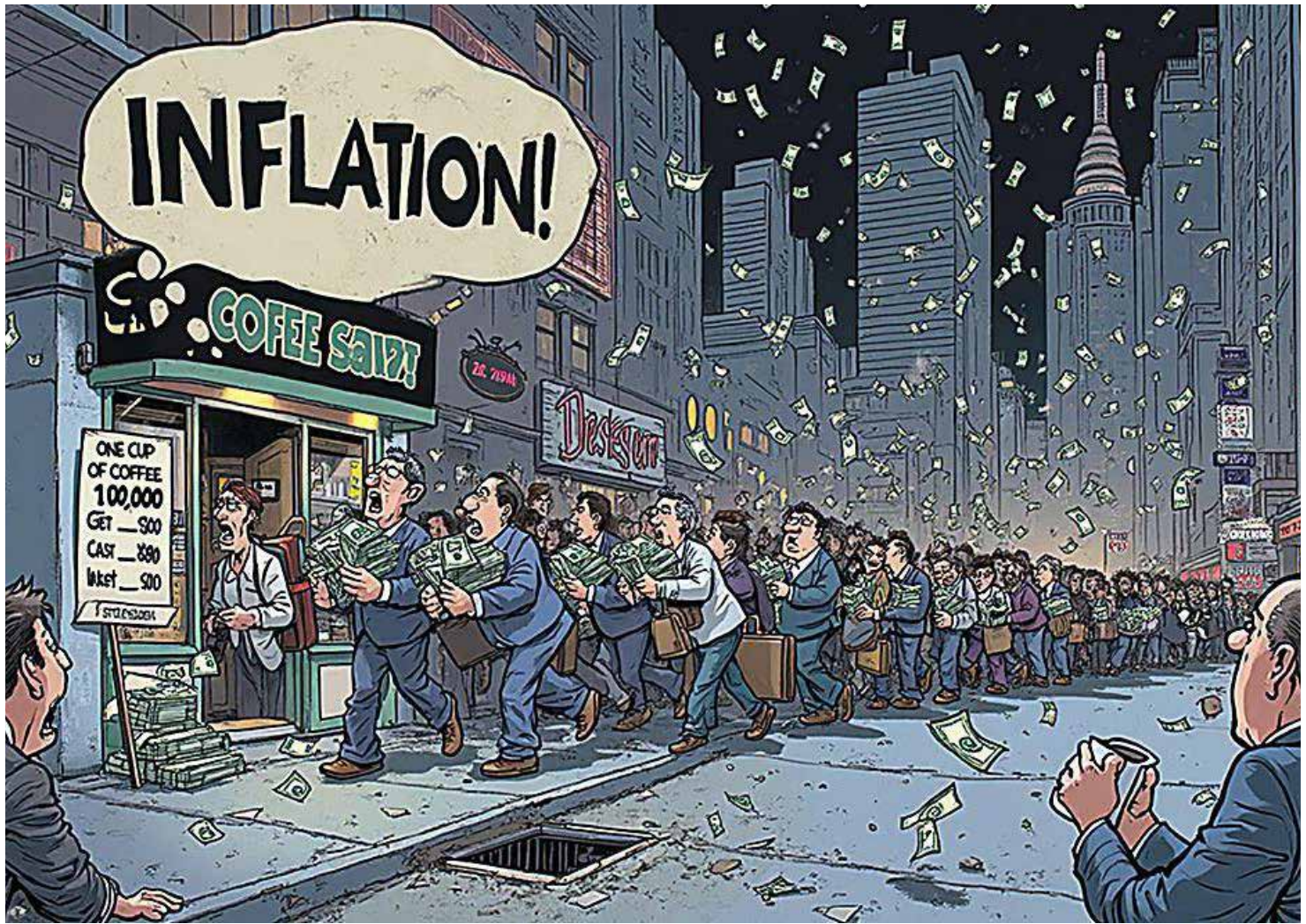
The uniqueness of sea buckthorn

Although sea buckthorn is not eaten in large quantities, its impact on health is significant. Nutrients in sea buckthorn berries develop during a long growing season, which makes them especially valuable. The content of vitamin C and antioxidants in sea buckthorn make it a berry that is not only a delicious addition to the diet, but also a real health bomb. The healthiest berry in the world – a title that sea buckthorn deserves.

Although picking and using sea buckthorn may require a little more effort than other berries, its benefits are worth the effort. It's a berry that offers much more than just a mouthful – it's nature's own pharmacy, full of strength and vitality that helps maintain health and well-being. Whether it's part of breakfast, snack or dinner, sea buckthorn is a berry that deserves a place at your dinner table.



ECONOMY



Pirouettes of inflation: A wheelbarrow with money for the store and the crazy price of coffee

One Saturday morning, with the sun shining gently through the curtains, I decide to buy a cup of coffee at the local café. I'm not a coffee connoisseur, but something about the aroma of freshly ground coffee is hard to resist. With my hand in my pocket, I reach for my wallet, but instead of just grabbing for a couple of bills, I find a thumbtacked map of the residential area. On the map, I've drawn a route that takes me from home, past the bank to pick up a wheelbarrow full of money, and on to the café.

It's easy to marvel at how the world is changing, but just

this morning, inflation has taken hold of me. I look out the window and see the neighbors struggling to drive their own wheelbarrows to the convenience store. It's a sight that could belong in an absurdist play, but it's reality.

A cup of coffee for the price of a month's salary?

We've all heard stories about how much a cup of coffee costs in some high-end places. But it's not exotic coffee beans from the Andes or gold flakes on top that are driving up the price. No, it is simply money that loses its value faster than an ice cream melts in

the sun. I remember a conversation I had with a friend who was visiting Zimbabwe during their inflation peaks. He told me about how he paid several billion Zimbabwean dollars for a single cup of coffee. It's like asking someone to trade with Monopoly money – even though those notes were actually real money, and the craving for coffee was very real.

Hungary in the 40s: An inflation record

But nothing beats inflation in Hungary during the 1940s. At that time, people lived in a time where numbers on banknotes began to look like phone numbers rather than money. In 1946, in

the midst of the chaos of World War II, prices rose so quickly that it became almost impossible to keep track of them. The prices of all goods doubled every 14 hours. If you bought a cup of coffee in the morning and waited until the afternoon to drink it, the price could have doubled. And no, I'm not exaggerating. In fact, they finally launched a banknote, 100 quadrillion money, as a desperate measure to deal with the situation.

Try to estimate how high inflation was in Hungary at this time. 100%? 1000%? Even higher? Ok, let me tell you! In July, 1946, the inflation rate was 41,900,000,000,000,000%.

Imagine walking into a store and handing over a note with so many zeros that you can barely count them, to buy a loaf of bread. It's almost comical, but for those who lived in it, it was a nightmare. The value of money became so devalued that people had to put their faith in something else. In Hungary, the use of the pengő was finally stopped and the forints were switched to, and with that the economy stabilized.

What is actually driving inflation?

But what is it that drives inflation? Why are we going from buying coffee for a couple of coins to needing wheelbarrows to shop for basic goods? There are several factors, but perhaps the most common culprit is an excessive amount of money in circulation. When central banks print more money than is needed in the economy, this money loses its value. Imagine you're in a market where everyone has a thousand apples to sell, but there's only one buyer. What happens to the price of apples? They fall, because there are too many of them. The same thing happens with money – when there is too much of it, its value drops.

Another reason is cost-driven inflation, where it becomes more expensive to produce goods and services. When commodity prices, wages, and other production costs rise, these costs are passed on to the consumer, driving up prices. And as we all know, when prices go up, and wages don't keep up at the same rate, we all start to feel it in our wallets.

Wheelbarrow logistics and everyday life

Now I'm back at my door, ready to go out for that cup

of coffee. The wheelbarrow is ready, filled with money that is almost worthless if I wait too long. I think back to the stories of Germany in the 1920s, where children played with bundles of money as if they were Lego. Or how families lit fire in their stoves with banknotes because firewood was more expensive than money.

But what exactly is value? It may not be the coffee or the money, but the ability to trust that one's money still has the same value tomorrow as it has today. And therein, my dear readers, lies perhaps the greatest challenge for all economies – maintaining confidence in the currency. Because when it's lost, we're all standing there with our wheelbarrows, ready to shop – but with wallets that feel emptier than ever.

So, with this in mind, I'm going to trudge down to the café. And while I enjoy my cup of coffee, I will reflect on the value of money, both historically and in my own life. Because no matter how much inflation rises, there's one thing that always retains its value – a great story to share with friends, maybe over a cup of coffee, or two, if I can afford it.



The image above shows banknotes with a total value of \$150,010,850,000. If you would have these and if it were US dollars, well, I would be a rich man! But unfortunately, these dollars are from Zimbabwe.



The banknote with the largest face value ever, a Hungarian banknote from 1946, with a face value of 100.000.000.000.000.000 zeros pengő. Image from Wikipedia Commons, public domain.

OPERA

OPERA

Circus and opera together is a fascinating experience



**Kuva: Ooppera Baletti
Emma Suominen**

THE FINNISH NATIONAL OPERA opens a new season in August in a way that leaves no one cold. CircOpera 2.0 is back on stage – and with it, the Opera House is once again transformed into a magnificent circus arena.

This is no ordinary opera evening, but a multi-sensory experience where acrobatics, classical opera and modern technology merge. There will be an intense ensemble of more than 20 scenes, which will take the audience from the thrill of the wheel of death to sopranos floating in the air. This time, the magic starts even before the doors of the performance hall – there are also programs in the Opera House's foyers and outdoors.

CircOpera 2.0 will feature six opera soloists as well as a full-fledged orchestra and choir. Combining such a large ensemble with contemporary circus is rare in the world. The performers also sing and play in unusual and wild places, making every moment surprising.

The performance is directed by Jere Erkkilä, the orchestra is conducted by Nick Davies and the circus is conducted by Sanna Silvennoinen. The dance choreographer is Reija Wäre and the award-winning Erika Turunen is responsible for the visuals and costumes. The end result is colorful, fast-paced and breathtaking.

CircOpera 2.0 is not only a very promising show – it has already lived up to its reputation. In 2023, the eighth graders Konsttestarna named the performance Art Experience of the Year at the Culture Gala, and audiences and critics have praised it as "a visual firework display without boring moments".

The Finnish National Opera promises that the combination of bold circus acts, opera's most beautiful gems and stage splendor will make for an unforgettable evening. CircOpera 2.0 invites the audience to step into a world where the boundaries between art forms are blurred – and where each viewer gets to experience something unique.

CircOpera 2.0– Premiere 22.8.2025 at 7 pm– Other performances 26.8.–30.9.2025

MINIATURE TOWN

ONKILAHTI TRAFFIC PARK

Vasa's Newest and Smallest District



ONKILAHTI TRAFFIC PARK, which celebrated its first anniversary this year, has quickly become a popular destination for families with children. Located in Metviken Activity Park, it gives kids a chance to learn about traffic rules and everyday city life in a playful and fun way.

The 640-meter-long track can be explored with pedal cars, bicycles, or on foot. The traffic park functions as a miniature version of Vasa, where children can drive around among small-scale models of the city's most iconic buildings and landmarks. Visitors will find the City Hall, the railway station, Alkula Manor, the University on Brändö, wooden houses from Sandviken, the ice cream kiosk at Fiskstranden, and the bell tower at Old Vasa's ruins. The park also includes the Market Square, roundabouts, level crossings, traffic lights, its own Lifti bus, a gas station – and even a water tower.

– We like to say that the traffic park

is Vasa in miniature. Children get to practice their traffic skills in a fun way, while also learning a bit about the city's history, says the city's youth services, which operates the park.

The park provides its own pedal cars and bicycles. The recommended age for driving a pedal car is 6–12 years, but children aged 4–6 may also drive if accompanied by a parent walking alongside. Helmets are recommended, and visitors may not bring their own vehicles.

Driving sessions are booked on-site. On weekdays, new sessions start every half hour, while on weekends, they change every 20 minutes. The final session begins half an hour before closing. Group bookings can be made by email.

Opening hours:

Monday–Friday 12:00–18:00

Saturday–Sunday 12:00–16:00

With its unique combination of play, learning, and cultural heritage, Onkilahti Traffic Park can rightfully be called Vasa's newest – and smallest – district.



INDUSTRY DAY

OSTROBOTHNIAN INDUSTRY

Botnia Industrial Day 2025: Industry Day at the City Hall on 9 September



Vaasa City Hall will be filled on Tuesday, 9 September, when Botnia Industrial Day (BID) brings together decision-makers, experts and business leaders in industry to discuss the future of industry and the vitality of the region. The event will provide a broad picture of how Ostrobothnian industry can strengthen its competitiveness with the help of the green transition, security of supply, RDI funding and expert solutions.

BID has established itself as one of the most significant networking and expert events in the region. The goal is to build bridges between different actors and highlight the most current industrial issues.

Open perspectives on politics and large-scale industry

The day will begin with a keynote speech by Member of Parliament Janne Jukkola. Jukkola highlights the importance of industry both as an engine for national growth and as a source of regional investment potential. According to him, regions such as Ostrobothnia have a crucial position in Finland's pursuit of sustainable economic growth.

Immediately after the opening, the focus will be on current projects in large-scale industry. In-

dustrial Info will present projects from Arctial, Hitachi and Wärtsilä, among others. The discussion will be moderated by Paula Erkkilä, Managing Director of the Ostrobothnia Chamber of Commerce, who will emphasise the importance of investments in the regional economy.

Funding and innovations

Industrial renewal depends on research, development and innovation. Maija Lönnqvist, Senior Adviser at the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, will talk about the current situation and future opportunities for RDI funding. He points out that public support not only enables individual projects, but also creates a basis for new innovations and renewal of the entire industry.

Hydrogen hype was replaced by realism

One of the most anticipated speeches of the day is an overview of the state of hydrogen technology by Matti Malkamäki, founder of Hycamite TDC Technologies Oy. According to him, the "hydrogen hype" from the first years has subsided, and the focus is now on more realistic solutions. Malkamäki emphasises that a clean transition can only be achieved in a technologically and economically sustainable way – even in the current geopolitically challenging situation.

Logistics, responsibility and security of supply In the afternoon programme, Vaasa Region Development Ltd highlights the central importance of logistics and responsibility for the future of industry. The panel, led by Anna Måttis-Fransén, examines how companies can build logistics

solutions that are safe and economically sustainable. Hanna Malkamäki, for her part, presents concrete ways in which sustainability work can create added value for companies.

Expert solutions and success stories

The shortage of experts is a bottleneck for growth in many sectors. At the end of the day, we will hear companies' case examples of how sustainable solutions have been found to talent challenges and how they have supported business success. The interviewer of the discussion is Jasmin Granholm.

Exhibitors present their solutions

Around 50 exhibitors are expected to attend the event, presenting their latest products and solutions. Participants include the region's top names in industry, Danfoss, Hitachi, VEO and Wärtsilä. The exhibition area offers participants the opportunity to learn about the latest innovations and network with experts in the field.

AfterBID continues the discussion

After the official program, the event will continue at JälkiBID from 5 pm to 6.30 pm, where the day's themes can be deepened in a more relaxed atmosphere.

Event details:

Botnia Industrial Day

Tuesday 9.9.2025 at 9–17

Vaasa City Hall

JälkiBID at 17–18.30

More information and registration: <https://botniaindustrialday.expomark.fi/>

UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY

Used lubricants and pulp by-products as a solution to the emission challenges of ships and machinery



MITIGATION OF CLIMATE CHANGE also requires solutions in sectors where electrification is progressing slowly. Ships and heavy machinery still need high-performance internal combustion engines, for which electric and hybrid technologies do not yet offer a practical alternative. In her doctoral thesis, which will be reviewed at the University of Vaasa, Michaela Hissa presents promising alternatives: fuels refined from waste and industrial side streams, which can significantly reduce emissions without major changes to existing equipment.

Waste fuels and industrial side streams

In his doctoral thesis, Hissa studied two particularly interesting fuel alternatives. The first is renewable naphtha, which is obtained from crude tall oil, which is a by-product of pulp production. The other is marine diesel refined from used lubricants.

"When renewable naphtha is used together with fossil diesel, it burns efficiently and reduces smoking. Marine diesel, on the other hand, reduces emissions of hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide. Both significantly reduced particle

emissions that are dangerous to humans," says Hissa.

What makes marine diesel particularly interesting is its raw material: used lubricating oil is classified as hazardous waste, which is generated in significant quantities worldwide. Lubricants are needed in all rotating machines, from power plant turbines to paper machines to ship and vehicle engines. Collecting and using them as fuel could provide both environmental and waste management benefits – as long as the collection and further processing can be made to work on a large scale.

Drop-in solutions make the transition easier

The fuels being studied belong to the so-called drop-in fuels. This means that they can be implemented in existing engines without costly technical modifications.

"The number of existing ships and machinery is significant, and it is not possible to replace them overnight. From the perspective of emission reductions, it is important to find solutions that support the transition and do not require the entire infrastructure to be replaced," Hissa emphasises.

The advantage of drop-in fuels is that they are suitable for the needs of the transition period: they make it possible to immediately reduce the use of fossil fuels, while new technologies are developed and electrification progresses.

Finland's strong position in wood-based fuels

Wood-based residues, such as crude tall oil,

could become a significant source of raw material for renewable fuels in the future. Finland is particularly well placed to do this, as forestry and the forest industry are strong and there are raw materials.

However, the challenges of large-scale expansion are availability, cost-effectiveness of production and competitive fuel prices. Without a solution to these, the potential of drop-in fuels cannot be fully exploited.

Engines of the future and versatile fuels
Hissa's research also highlights the need to better understand how different fuels behave in engines. In the future, engines will be required to be more flexible with a wide range of renewable and recycled fuels.

Future engines

"Future engines will need to adapt to an increasingly diverse range of fuels. Therefore, more research is needed on how different fuels affect engine operation and emissions," Hissa summarises.

The dissertation shows that solutions can be found closer than we think: waste and industrial side streams can be refined into cleaner energy, which helps to reduce emissions from heavy-duty and maritime transport immediately – without the need to revolutionise the entire technology at once.

Image: In her doctoral dissertation, Michaela Hissa shows that fuels refined from waste and industrial side streams can be used to reduce emissions in current engine applications. University of Vaasa. Image free to use.

VACATIONS

SCHOOL SUMMER HOLIDAYS

School Summer Holidays Should Be Moved



Minister of Education and chair of the Swedish People's Party, Anders Adlercreutz, wants to move the start of school summer holidays two weeks later. He argues that the current system no longer meets today's needs and makes it difficult for families to plan their time off.

According to Adlercreutz, Finland is out of step with the rest of Europe. In most European countries, school breaks and family holidays take place in July and August, while in Finland the school summer holiday often begins already in early June.

This creates challenges for both families and working life.

"Our current system is a legacy from the past, when the school year was tied to the rhythm of farming, with sowing and harvesting. Today, the work calendar looks very different," Adlercreutz says.

Easier for Families

For most parents, it is easier to take their annual leave in July and August than in June. A later school start would therefore make family life easier and support well-being. At the same time, the change would benefit businesses, which often struggle to adapt to the current holiday schedules.

"Moving the summer holiday would be a win on

many levels. Families could plan their free time better, companies would have more predictable conditions, and domestic tourism would gain a longer season," Adlercreutz explains.

A Boost for Tourism

Tourism is one of the sectors most clearly affected by the timing of the summer break. In the archipelago, for instance, domestic demand often ends abruptly when schools resume in early August.

"Since much of European travel takes place in August, it is difficult to attract foreign tourists to Finland if domestic demand drops as schools begin. This has a direct impact on services and businesses," Adlercreutz points out.

Study Underway

The Ministry of Education and Culture has already launched a

study on the proposal. The aim is to assess both the opportunities and the challenges of moving the summer break. The issue is complex, as it also concerns matriculation exams, university admissions, and early childhood education.

"It is important that the spring term doesn't become too long. A longer Easter holiday could be a natural part of the solution," says Adlercreutz.

Once the study is completed, discussions will continue within the government. Since the proposal is not included in the current government program, political negotiations will be required to move forward.

"I hope we can find solutions that strengthen both family wellbeing and business opportunities. Where there is a will, there is a way," Adlercreutz says.

MORNING COFFEE

COFFEE

Morning Coffee Improves Your Mood



WAKE UP, pour that coffee—and you'll likely feel better. A new study published in *Scientific Reports* reveals that caffeine consumption, especially in the morning, is consistently linked with a boost in positive mood.

Real-Life Evidence, Not Just Lab Settings

Researchers from Bielefeld University and the University of Warwick asked over 230 young adults in Germany, aged 18 to 29, to report their mood multiple times daily for several weeks. Participants noted whether they'd had caffeine in the past 90 minutes and rated how they felt: happy, enthusiastic, content—or the opposite.

Mornings Matter Most

Results showed a clear pattern: positive

moods—particularly feelings of happiness and enthusiasm—jumped notably when caffeine was consumed within the first 2.5 hours after waking. A smaller boost also appeared around 10 to 12.5 hours after waking.

The effect was less about reducing negative emotions; after caffeine, people did feel slightly less sad or upset—but those changes were far weaker and didn't depend on the time of day.

Who Benefits? Pretty Much Everyone

The positive mood boost was remarkably consistent across individuals—regardless of sleep quality, anxiety, depression, or typical caffeine use. This consistency surprised the researchers.

Why Does Coffee Work Its Magic?

Caffeine blocks adenosine, a brain chemical that promotes sleepiness. This allows mood-enhancing neurotransmitters like dopamine to flourish, fostering alertness and a brighter mood.

It's less clear whether this effect is simply easing mild withdrawal overnight or has a deeper neurochemical basis.

In everyday life, that morning cup of coffee or tea appears to do more than wake you up—it's likely giving your mood a real lift. So if you've ever felt notably more enthusiastic after that first sip of coffee, science confirms your experience.

Especially in the morning, caffeine may be one of the simplest ways to start your day on a brighter note.

Source:

Hachenberger, J., Li, Y.M., Realo, A. et al. The association of caffeine consumption with positive affect but not with negative affect changes across the day. *Sci Rep* 15, 28536 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-025-14317-0>

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The text above is a summary written as a news text.

ART

ART

Artist Elin Danielson-Gambogi back in the spotlight



ONE OF FINLAND's most distinctive but long-overlooked artists, Elin Danielson-Gambogi (1861–1919), is now receiving renewed attention. The interest has been aroused especially after the author Salla Leponiemi recently published a book about her life and artistry.

Danielson-Gambogi was a pioneering artist, known as much for his uncompromising lifestyle as for his painting. She travelled alone through Europe, sought out the bustle of the big cities and enjoyed restaurants, where she did not hesitate to smoke, eat oysters and participate in nightly parties. She lived as she wanted – a life characterized by freedom and independence, far from the female conventions of the time.

Her independence also created friction in professional life. As a teacher, she was seen as too bohemian and self-indulgent, and despite her great knowledge, she was never chosen as head of the art school's painting department. Still, no one could question her artistic talent. Danielson-Gambogi was considered one of the very best of his

generation.

What aroused the most discussion was often her motives. She painted subjects that were not considered "appropriate" for a woman to depict – everyday scenes, intimate moments, sometimes with a rawness that violated the aesthetic norms of the time. One of her most famous works, "After Breakfast", shows precisely this distinctiveness. The painting, with its direct and at the same time quiet realism, made a strong impression on the contemporaries and aroused both admiration and dismay.

Today, Elin Danielson-Gambogi stands out as a pioneer of artistic freedom and a pioneer of female artists who refused to be limited. Leponiemi's book not only highlights her art, but also her life that was characterized by courage, curiosity and a willingness to challenge conventions.

With exhibitions, new research and increased interest from art critics, Danielson-Gambogi is taking the place in art history that has long been denied her.

After Breakfast

Elin Danielson-Gambogi's "After Breakfast", painted in 1888, was a striking and provocative work for its time, which attracted great criticism because of its subject matter.

The painting depicts a young woman, se-

emingly a maid or servant, in a home environment. He sits with a cigarette in his hand and a palpable feeling of fatigue or perhaps a hangover.

At that time, social norms dictated a certain decency, especially when it came to the portrayal of women. A young woman, especially a woman from a lower social class, who smoked and showed signs of a hangover, was considered by many to be very inappropriate and scandalous.

Critics' reactions often focused on the perceived vulgarity and immorality on stage. They saw it as a departure from the idealized representation of women in art and, according to some, as an unwavering, perhaps even judgmental, look at the reality of life.

However, Danielson-Gambogi was known for his realistic attitude and his interest in honestly portraying the lives of ordinary people, often women. "After Breakfast" can be seen as a bold stand against the sentimentality and hypocrisy of the time. It challenged viewers to confront the less glamorous side of everyday life and forced them to question their assumptions about class, gender, and morality.

The controversy surrounding the painting, which perhaps shocked modern audiences, eventually cemented Danielson-Gambogi's reputation as a progressive and courageous artist who dared to portray the unvarnished truth, even when it was uncomfortable.

IMAGE: Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain

AI

CHAT GPT 5.0

GPT-5 has been unveiled: A top AI model that is free!



OpenAI has launched GPT-5 – the most advanced version of ChatGPT to date. The model was introduced in August 2025 and is described by CEO Sam Altman as “a significant milestone on the road to artificial general intelligence”.

Improvements over previous models

GPT-5 offers significant technical upgrades. The model uses a “smart router” that automatically switches between rapid response and deeper processing depending on the complexity of the query. It can handle advanced tasks in coding, math, medical advice, and multimodal understanding, with shared text and

image capabilities

GPT-5 significantly reduces hallucinations, provides more accurate answers in the field of care, and can better handle complex multi-stage problems. It introduces “Safe Completions”, which means it weighs security and usability in the responses

Ease of use and accessibility

GPT-5 is available to everyone, even free users, making it the first time a top-of-the-line model has been accessed at no cost in OpenAI’s history. The model is offered in different variants – standard, mini and nano – which provides flexibility in performance and costs.

Developer Pricing

For API users, the price for GPT-5 is: \$1.25 per million input tokens and \$10

per million output tokens. GPT-5 mini and nano are significantly cheaper with prices down to \$0.05 per million input tokens

For whom is GPT-5 particularly valuable?

“Developers and businesses can create more advanced tools with improved code generation, debugging, and integration into complex workflows.” Researchers and medical professionals benefit from natural multimodal understanding due to the model outperforming previous versions in medicine-related tests arXiv+1.” Content creators, journalists and students get more precise and coherent texts with fewer errors and higher credibility than previous models.

Criticism and user reactions

The launch has not been without problems. Some users experienced the new tone as more loathed and less empathetic than GPT-4o, leading to some criticism. There were also reports of technical bugs and that the model’s “personality” had changed.

When is GPT-6 coming?

OpenAI has not announced a launch date for GPT-6. Sam Altman, on the other hand, has emphasized the company’s continued high level of ambition and significant investments in AI research and infrastructure

GPT-5 is a big step forward with increased intelligence, stability, and accessibility. Free users get access to a powerful model for the first time, while developers and pro users are offered flexible options as needed. The model is particularly valuable in complex domains such as medicine and coding. However, the criticism shows that user experience still needs to be polished. GPT-6 is on the horizon, but timing and details remain to be seen.

ASTRONOMY

ASTRONOMY

Astronomers Get First Glimpse Inside a Dying Star with Unusual Supernova SN2021yjf



A SUPERNOVA DETECTED in late 2021, named SN2021yjf, has given astronomers an unprecedented view into the heart of a dying star — and it's unlike anything seen before. Located about 2.2 billion light-years from Earth, this stellar explosion has revealed secrets about how massive stars are structured — and how they can end their lives in surprising ways.

When massive stars die, they typically explode in a brilliant supernova, shedding their outer layers made of light elements like hydrogen and helium. However, SN2021yjf behaved very differently. Astronomers observed that it lacked these usual outer layers. Instead, the explosion was rich in

silicon, sulfur, and argon — elements usually buried deep inside a star.

This rare chemical signature offers the first direct evidence of the long-theorized onion-like layering inside massive stars: light elements on the outside, heavier ones deeper in, leading down to an iron core. SN2021yjf appears to have lost even more than expected — its hydrogen, helium, and carbon shells were gone, exposing the inner silicon- and sulfur-rich layers right before the explosion.

The discovery was made by an international team led by Northwestern University astrophysicists using data from the Zwicky Transient Facility (ZTF). A sudden flash of light signaled the supernova, but getting detailed chemical data proved difficult — many telescopes were clouded out or unavailable. Luckily, just when hopes were fading,

a colleague at UC Berkeley managed to secure a spectrum using the W. M. Keck Observatory in Hawai'i — capturing the light that revealed the star's unusual chemical enrichments.

"This is the first time we have seen a star that was essentially stripped to the bone," commented astrophysicist Steve Schulze, lead author of the study published August 20 in *Nature*. *"It shows that stars can lose a lot of material — not just outer layers but deep inside — and still explode in a way visible across the universe."*

How did this dramatic stripping occur? The team proposes several possibilities: unusually violent stellar winds, a massive eruption just before the explosion, or perhaps interactions with a companion star. The favored idea is that a catastrophic event — possibly related to the star's tightly squeezed core — blasted away successive shells, and when one of those ejected shells collided with another, the collision sparked the dazzling supernova we observed.

While SN2021yjf offers a remarkable peek into the hidden depths of a star, scientists are cautious. It's only one example, and they need more observations of similar events to confirm whether this is a rare oddity or a clue to hidden star death pathways.

Northwestern Now
IFLScience

In short, SN2021yjf has rewritten part of the cosmic storybook — showing astronomers a deeper, stranger way that massive stars can end their lives, and opening the door to new theories about how the universe's most powerful explosions unfold.

CULTURE

VAASA LITTFEST

Vaasa LittFest in November – A Cultural Festival to Look Forward To



Pajtim Statovci. Foto: Ano Kurki / Otava

As November's darkness settles over the city, Vasa will once again light up—through literature, culture, and engaging dialogue. Vasa LittFest, taking place from November 13 to 15, 2025, brings together literature enthusiasts, renowned authors, and timely themes for a unique and thought-provoking festival weekend.

The theme of the 2025 festival is Border(s), inviting reflection on physical, cultural, linguistic, and mental boundaries—and the ways literature helps us cross them. Literature, by its nature, constantly moves beyond borders, opening windows into other realities.

Among the first confirmed

guests are a number of celebrated Finnish and Nordic authors. *Pajtim Statovci*, twice awarded the Finlandia Prize, will present his latest novel *Lehmä synnyttää yöllä* (2024), which has become an international literary sensation. Translation rights have already been sold to publishers in the U.S., Germany, Italy, and beyond. Statovci's previous works, including *My Cat Yugoslavia* and *Bolla*, have earned critical acclaim at home and abroad.

From Sweden, *Mikael Niemi* will join the festival. He is best known for his August Prize-winning novel *Popular Music from Vittula* (2000). Niemi's storytelling explores life in Tornedalen, where three cultures intersect. His latest novel, *Sten i siden* (2025), is a multigeneratio-

nal family saga set in the far north.

The festival will also feature multi-talented artist *Laura Malmivaara*, who performs with the Vaasa City Orchestra and composer-percussionist Arttu Takalo. Together, they will present excerpts from Malmivaara's recent novel *Iltatähti* through a unique combination of literature and live music—a rare treat for festival audiences.

Among the featured Finnish authors is folklorist and novelist Mikko Kamula, known for his popular *Metsän kansa* series. Kamula delves into the historical borders of Finland through richly detailed novels rooted in 15th-century Finnish folk beliefs.

Science journalist and author *Marcus Rosenlund* will explore the planet's natural boundaries. His works traverse the realms of meteorology, outer space, and microorganisms. His latest book takes a closer look at the underground world—the life and systems that exist beneath our feet.

But the tone isn't all serious. Beloved dialect poet and author *Heli Laaksonen* will bring laughter and warmth to the stage at Vaasa City Theatre. Known for her witty and nature-themed verse, Laaksonen rose to fame with her debut *Pulu uis* (2000) and has since written both

poetry and nonfiction about the Finnish landscape and environment.

One of the festival's most unique events is a late-night session that explores folklore and true crime. Author duo *Tiina and Marko Hautala* will host an evening with religious studies scholar Tuomas Äystö, whose new book *Paholaisen perilliset* (2025) dives into the history of Satanic Panic. The evening will also feature a panel on mythology and magic, with folklorist and author *Jenna Kostet*, Finland's most famous modern witch Kuparikettu, and writer-crafter Riina Peltonen, who has studied magical sites in Ostrobothnia.

— The festival program offers a chance to explore identity, politics, history, and society from both personal and global perspectives. We aim to inspire dialogue not only about literature but also about contemporary issues, says cultural producer Ilkka Nyqvist.

Vasa LittFest is more than just a literary event—it is a space for encounters that transcend generations, languages, and borders.

Vasa LittFest 2025 – a festival that crosses borders and connects people through the power of stories.

VAASA UNIVERSITY

VAASA UNIVERSITY AND VAMK

University of Vaasa and VAMK - Stronger and More Competitive Together



The University of Vaasa and Vaasa University of Applied Sciences (VAMK) have taken a significant step toward a shared future - a new higher education consortium has now been officially established.

This historic merger is strengthened by the university's 70% ownership stake in VAMK, while the City of Vaasa retains 30%. Both institutions will keep their

names, but the consortium's new name will be announced this fall.

This strategic initiative creates a strong, internationally competitive higher education community in Ostrobothnia that addresses workforce skill gaps and enhances research impact. The collaboration isn't new - the institutions have long worked closely together, particularly in engineering education through Technobothnia's laboratories and the Tritonia Academic Library.

"Our goal is to create an internationally significant higher education unit that offers students flexible study paths and high-quality learning environments all the way up to doctoral education," says Minna Martikainen, Rector of the University of Vaasa.

The new consortium aims for regional, national and international influence. Resources will be used more efficiently, research groups will be strengthened, and cooperation with businesses will intensify. "We're developing research infrastructure, which will also strengthen Finland's export potential," empha-

sizes Hannu Vahtera, Managing Director of VAMK.

This merger isn't just an administrative change - it's a strategic investment in a future where education, research and working life interact even more effectively. The combined strengths of these institutions will create new opportunities for students, researchers and businesses throughout the region and beyond.

Image: Vaasa University. The image can be freely used.

ONLINE COURSES

AI-COURSE

VAMK and University of Vaasa Offer AI Course for Entrepreneurs and Professionals – Free Online Course Explores AI's Business Potential



Artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming businesses at an unprecedented pace, enabling automation, improved customer service, and even entirely new business models.

But how can small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and entrepreneurs harness AI in practice? Vaasa University of Applied Sciences (VAMK) and the University of Vaasa now offer a solution: a free online course to help identify AI opportunities in business.

AI Isn't the Future—It's Here Now

The new AI2Business online course is designed for SMEs, entrepreneurs, and professionals who want to learn how AI can enhance business growth. The course provides practical knowledge without requiring deep technical expertise.

"Companies need concrete

guidance on AI implementation. Our goal is to accelerate AI competence building," says Sanna Peltonen, project manager of AI2Business at VAMK.

The self-paced course is available in English, making it ideal for busy professionals.

How AI is Reshaping Business

While many see AI as just a tool for automation, its impact is far broader. "AI doesn't just streamline processes—it changes business logic," emphasizes Marko Kohtamäki, professor at the University of Vaasa.

The course covers AI from three perspectives:

Business – How can AI create competitive advantages?

Technology – What applications exist?

Design – How to develop user-friendly AI solutions?

"AI adoption isn't just about technology. If a solution doesn't serve users, it remains disconnected," Peltonen notes.

Real-World Examples: How Businesses Use AI Today

The course features three company-driven AI experiments demonstrating practical applications:

Document processing – Automated data extraction and report generation.

Price prediction – Dynamic pricing models based on market conditions.

Production quality control – Machine learning detects defects in real time.

"These experiments are based on real business needs, showing how AI can be applied across industries," says Jani Boutellier, assistant professor at the University of Vaasa.

How to Join the Free Course? Currently in pilot phase,

the course is free and ideal for SMEs, managers, and anyone interested in AI.

Participation is simple:

Register on the AI2Business Moodle platform: <https://moodle.muovadigital.net/mod/page/view.php?id=680>

Study at your own pace – 24/7 access.

Receive a certificate upon completion.

As part of the EU-funded AI2Business project, participants are encouraged to join the project's monitoring system to help measure AI training impact in Finland.

"No need to worry about details—we guide you every step of the way," assures Peltonen.

AI is the Future—Start Learning Now

AI offers vast potential for businesses, but leveraging it requires understanding how it fits into operations. This course helps companies take their first steps into AI without major investments.

Ready to future-proof your business? Enroll now!

AI2Business is an EU-funded project promoting AI skills for SMEs. Learn more: VAMK website.

WASA DAILY
Nr 23 Sunday, June 8, 2025
ISSN 2965-2456
The year of the City Theatre
Korsholm cheapest in Finland
Prostate Cancer
Inkeri Julkunen
A new era in weight loss
A New Dwarf Planet

WASA
DAILY

Wasa Daily



Welcome to a new era of newspapers! Say hello to **Wasa Daily** - the smart news source that you can read anywhere and that keeps you well-orientated.

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In a world full of boring news, someone like us is needed to spice things up. Welcome to **Wasa Daily** - we make news easier to swallow!

AI

AI MUSIC

The Best AI Music Generators in 2025 – From Rap Beats to Opera Masterpieces



Imagine a 16-year-old aspiring rapper who wants to craft the next viral hit but doesn't know how to produce beats. Or a retired music teacher dreaming of composing an opera but lacking the technical skills. Maybe even a podcaster looking for the perfect background track without paying expensive licensing fees.

In 2025, AI music generators have become so advanced that they can turn anyone—regardless of musical training—into a composer.

But with so many options available, which AI tools truly stand out? We tested the top platforms to find the best AI music generators of 2025, catering to different needs, genres, and skill levels.

Suno AI 3.0 – The King of AI-Generated Songs

Suno AI made waves in 2024 with its ability to generate full songs—lyrics, vocals, and instrumentals—from simple text prompts. In 2025, Suno AI 3.0 has refined its algorithms to produce even more natural-sounding vocals and genre-specific compositions.

Best for: Aspiring singers, songwri-

ters, and content creators.

Why it's great: Type in a prompt like "upbeat pop-punk song about summer love", and Suno generates a complete track in seconds

Perfect for: Our teen rapper who just typed "hard-hitting trap beat with aggressive flow" and got a studio-quality demo in minutes.

Udio Pro – The Ultimate AI Music Collaboration Tool

Udio took a different approach by focusing on human-AI collaboration. Its 2025 "Pro" version lets users start with a melody, hum a tune, or even upload a rough recording, which the AI then refines into a polished track.

Best for: Musicians who want AI assistance rather than full automation.

Why it's great: Udio Pro's "Smart Remix" feature can transform a simple piano riff into a full orchestral arrangement or a synth-heavy EDM drop.

Perfect for: Our opera-loving senior, who hummed an aria idea and watched Udio turn it into a sweeping, orchestrated piece complete with synthetic operatic vocals.

AIVA 4.0 – The Classical and Film

Score Specialist

While many AI tools focus on pop and electronic music, AIVA 4.0 remains the go-to for classical, jazz, and cinematic compositions. It's used by indie filmmakers, game developers, and even professional composers for inspiration.

Best for: Composers, filmmakers, and game devs.

Why it's great: AIVA's "Emotion Engine" lets users adjust the mood of a piece (e.g., "more melancholic" or "heroic climax"), making it ideal for scoring scenes.

The Future of AI Music?

While AI music tools still can't fully replace human creativity, they've become indispensable assistants—helping beginners create professional-sounding tracks and giving experts new ways to experiment.

The best part? Most of these tools offer free tiers, so anyone can start composing today. Whether you're a teen rapper, a retired opera enthusiast, or just someone who loves making music, 2025's AI music generators have something for you.

AI

AI-Generated Podcasts: A New Era of Audio Content with NotebookLM



**Podcast in English:
Russian disinformation**
<https://vpress.ovh/podcasts.htm>

In the rapidly evolving landscape of digital media, artificial intelligence continues to push boundaries, reshaping industries and redefining creative processes. One of the most groundbreaking developments is Google's NotebookLM, an advanced language model with the potential to revolutionize the podcasting world. With its ability to generate human-quality audio content, NotebookLM is paving the way for a new era of AI-driven storytelling, education, and entertainment.

The Emergence of AI-Generated Podcasts

As the podcasting industry continues to grow at an unprecedented rate, content creators and media companies are always on the lookout for innovative tools to streamline production and enhance creativity. NotebookLM, initially celebrated for its ability to generate high-quality written content, has now ventured into the realm of audio. This cutting-edge

technology is capable of producing podcasts that are nearly indistinguishable from those created by human hosts, opening up exciting possibilities for the future of digital content.

The appeal of NotebookLM-generated podcasts lies in several key features that set them apart from traditional podcasts:

Natural-Sounding Voice: NotebookLM can produce audio content with a voice that mimics the natural cadence and tone of human speech. This makes it difficult for listeners to discern that the podcast is AI-generated, offering a seamless listening experience.

Diverse Range of Topics: Whether it's breaking news, current events, or light-hearted storytelling, NotebookLM can tackle a wide array of subjects. Its versatility makes it an ideal tool for content creators looking to explore different genres without the constraints of time and labor-intensive production.

20 Everyday Abbreviations You Need to Know (and Maybe a Few You Don't)



Abbreviations are everywhere these days. From texting acronyms to technical jargon, those handy 3-letter (and sometimes longer) combos can be confusing if you're not in the know. But fear not, fellow abbreviation adventurer! This article will equip you with the knowledge to decipher 20 of the most common abbreviations you'll encounter in everyday life.

1. **LOL:** Laughing Out Loud (This one might already be a classic for many!)
2. **BRB:** Be Right Back (Perfect for a quick bathroom break during a chat)
3. **OMG:** Oh My God (Expresses surprise or strong emotion)
4. **IMHO:** In My Humble Opinion (A way to preface your opinion politely)
5. **** ASAP:** As Soon As Possible (Lights a fire under someone... nicely)
6. **FYI:** For Your Information (A heads-up for someone)
7. **ETA:** Estimated Time of Arrival (Lets you know when to expect someone)
8. **RSVP:** Please Reply (Formal request for a response to an

invitation)

9. **PDF:** Portable Document Format (A common file format for documents)
10. **JPG:** Joint Photographic Experts Group (A popular image file format)
11. **GIF:** Graphics Interchange Format (Another image format, known for animations)
12. **TIFF:** Tagged Image File Format (Used for high-quality images)
13. **WWW:** World Wide Web (The foundation of the internet we know)
14. **HTTP:** Hypertext Transfer Protocol (The language webpages use to talk)
15. **GPS:** Global Positioning System (Helps you navigate the world)
16. **ATM:** Automated Teller Machine (Your friendly neighborhood cash dispenser)
17. **DIY:** Do It Yourself (For the handy folks out there)
18. **VIP:** Very Important Person (Someone who gets special treatment)
19. **TBA:** To Be Announced (Stay tuned for more information)
20. **TBD:** To Be Determined (We're still figuring things out)

This is just a taste of the abbreviation world, but with these 20 under your belt, you'll be well on your way to deciphering the everyday lingo, from casual texts to technical documents. So, the next time you see an abbreviation that leaves you scratching your head, remember this list and keep on exploring the wonderful world of shorthand communication!

Wasa Daily

A modern newspaper with a layout with features of the press of the 1870s. Back then, newspapers had only 4-8 pages. Lots of text, but no images at all, so there's a lot to read on a few pages. Our paper is one of the very few newspapers in English serving English-speaking inhabitants in the Osthrobotnia region

The magazine contains quotations from old daily newspapers taken from the National Archives (digi.kansalliskirjasto.fi). GPT3, Gemini, Aria and Monica do some of the routine editing work, such as translation, corrector reading, and short notice writing. All texts have been checked by journalists and the editorial staff is responsible for all the content of the texts.

Wasa Daily is a daily newspaper type publication, so far it is published on Sunday mornings. But our goal is for it to come out every morning in the future.

The magazine is available online for free.

Editor-in-chief Hans Björknäs.

Readers' writings are welcome!

The magazine is locally owned and will remain so. For ever!

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HOROSCOPE FOR SEPTEMBER 2025

September Horoscope for the Gluten-Free Stars ☐ ☐

Aries (March 21–April 19)
You'll boldly march into September – straight past the bread basket. Friends admire your willpower, even if the garlic bread flirts with you.

Taurus (April 20–May 20)
Comfort food calls, but your inner gourmet finds joy in new gluten-free recipes. September's motto: brownies can still be life-changing.

Gemini (May 21–June 20)
You'll be double-booked socially – luckily, you've mastered the art of discreetly asking waiters about cross-contamination. Your charm smooths every menu question.

Cancer (June 21–July 22)
Your sensitive stomach meets your sensitive soul. Good news: the stars show an abundance of gluten-free snacks arriving just when you need them most.

Leo (July 23–August 22)
Spotlight's on you at the dinner table. With confidence, you show others that gluten-free isn't a restriction – it's a culinary adventure. Applause guaranteed.

Virgo (August 23–September 22)
This is your month! Organization shines: you label your flours, conquer the kitchen, and become a gluten-free wizard. Friends beg for your recipes.

Libra (September 23–October 22)
You'll weigh your options between oat milk and almond milk – balance is everything. Don't worry, both go beautifully with your cookies.

Scorpio (October 23–November 21)
Passion is your theme – and it even applies to gluten-free pasta. September brings intensity, but remember: not every debate about pizza bases needs stings.

Sagittarius (November 22–December 21)
Adventures await! You'll discover a new gluten-free café or a recipe that makes travel less risky. Your optimism is more infectious than sourdough starter.

Capricorn (December 22–January 19)
Practical as always, you plan ahead: snacks in your bag, gluten-free crackers in the car. September rewards your foresight with stress-free outings.

Aquarius (January 20–February 18)
Innovation rules your diet this month. Chickpea flour pancakes? Cauliflower crust pizza? The stars applaud your bold experiments. Even skeptics will ask for seconds.

Pisces (February 19–March 20)
Dreamy September brings comfort in soups and safe bread alternatives. Trust your intuition – it will guide you toward the coziest gluten-free gatherings.

☐ **September is proof: you don't need gluten to sparkle.**



HUMOUR ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

.WEATHER FORECAST?

-Miss Johanzon, you are the sunshine of my life. Your smile falls like a gentle dew on my soul. By your side, I could defy all the storms and storms of the world.

-Is this a marriage proposal or a weather report?

CONSCIENCE

Auntie: Your conscience always tells you when you're not doing the right thing.

Lillan: Who is it talking to?

Aunt: For you.

Lillan: It was too good then! I thought it would gossip for you or mom

EXACTLY BECAUSE.

Man: I don't think you'd take that maiden, Henrietta. Think, she has been with no less than ten families in the course of a year! Wife: That's exactly why I'm taking her. What interesting stories she must be able to tell about these ten families.

HELPFULNESS.

The conductor: You really have to get on, if you want to join; the train is going now! Miss: But first I want to give my sister a kiss. Conductor: Get up now, I'll take care of the rest.

THE EXPLANATION.

Police constable: I cannot understand where you got

the strength to hold the big, strong thief. Wife: Well, you see, it was really dark, and so I thought it was my husband who wanted to run away with the maid.

ADVERTISEMENT FROM THE DAILY PRESS.

"Impure fantasies" cleaned at Augusta Blomberg's.

THE CAUSE.

I just can't stand the sound of a car horn. Why not? I will tell you that some time ago my driver stole my car and ran away with my wife, and every time I hear a car horn, I fear that he will come back with her.

Astronomic picture of the week:

Gemini South Captures Planetary Nebula CVMP 1

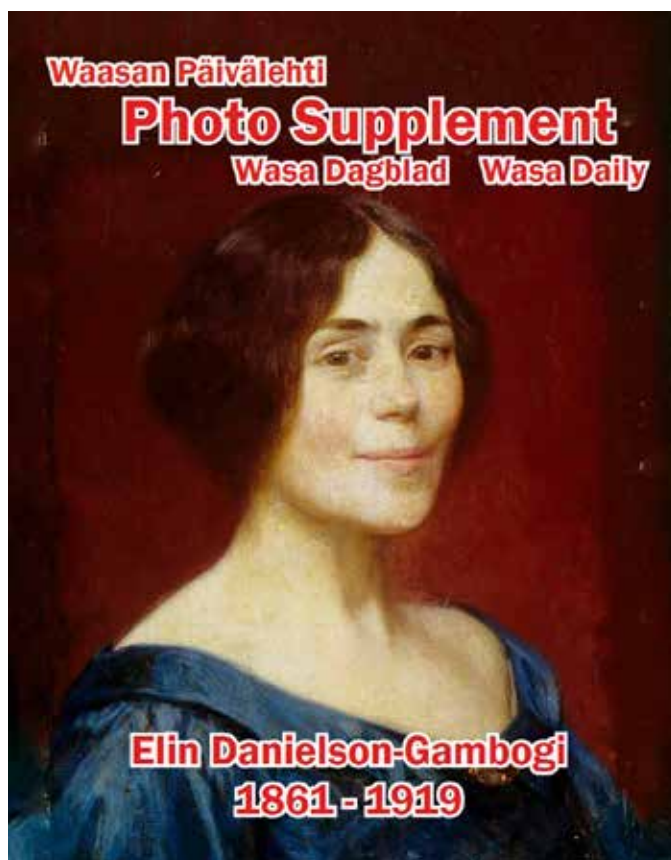


The international Gemini Observatory composite color image of the planetary nebula CVMP 1 imaged by the Gemini Multi-Object Spectrograph on the Gemini South telescope on Cerro Pachón in Chile.

Credit: International Gemini Observatory/NOIRLab/NSF/AURA

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Next week:



From our readers

We very much welcome submissions from our readers. Comments, stories, memories, debate, news from home. Probably this will be the most important part of this spring paper. But space is limited, so please write as short as possible! So please send posts to:
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