

WASA DAILY

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New Plans for the Market Square

Rowing boats for free

A Second Career

Guests from Iceland

Kissing is not dangerous for Coeliacs

Street art in Vaasa

WASA DAILY



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TODAY

A Second Career Could Be Something for You

Retirement at 60 or 65 no longer means the end of your productive years—it could be the beginning of an entirely new chapter. With advances in healthcare and longer life expectancies, today's retirees can look forward to 20 to 30 years of active, healthy living ahead of them.

That's more than enough time to embark on a completely different career path, one that could prove even more fulfilling than your first.

The concept of a second career is transformative. Unlike your initial career, which was often chosen out of necessity or limited options, a second career represents true freedom of choice. You've already proven yourself professionally, built financial stability, and gained decades of invaluable experience. Now you can pursue what genuinely interests you, whether that's teaching, consulting, starting your own business, or diving into a field you've always been curious about but never had the chance to explore.

This shift in perspective can be incredibly beneficial for your wellbeing. Research consistently shows that having purpose and staying intellectually engaged are crucial factors in healthy aging. A second career provides structure, social interaction, and mental stimulation—all elements that contribute to both cognitive health and emotional satisfaction. Rather than facing the potential isolation or restlessness that sometimes accompanies traditional retirement, you're actively creating new challenges and opportunities for growth.

What makes this even more

compelling is how much more common second careers are in other countries compared to Finland. In the United States, for example, it's not unusual to see professionals completely reinvent themselves in their 60s. Former executives become teachers, engineers pursue art, and corporate managers open small businesses. This cultural acceptance of career transitions later in life creates an environment where experience is valued alongside fresh perspectives.

Finland could benefit tremendously from embracing this model more fully. One particularly promising approach would be implementing a 5% quota for seniors in universities and polytechnics. This isn't about charity or filling seats—it's about recognizing the immense value that mature students bring to educational environments.

Consider what a 60-year-old brings to a classroom that a 20-year-old simply cannot: decades of tacit knowledge. This is the kind of wisdom that can't be found in textbooks—the understanding of how theories work in practice, the ability to see patterns and connections that only come with experience, and the perspective that helps distinguish between what's truly important and what's merely trendy. When a former business manager studies social work, they bring insights about organizational dynamics. When a retired nurse pursues environmental science, they understand human behavior and community health in ways that enrich classroom discussions.

Young students would benefit enormously from this intergenerational learning environment. They gain mentors, role models, and a broader perspective on life and career possibilities. Meanwhile, senior students often bring a level of motivation and focus that can inspire their

younger classmates. They're not there because they have to be—they're there because they choose to be, and that enthusiasm is contagious.

The economic benefits are equally compelling. A society that fully utilizes the talents and experience of its older citizens is more productive and innovative. Second careers often involve entrepreneurship, consulting, or part-time specialized work that continues contributing to the economy while allowing for greater work-life balance.

The key is changing our cultural narrative about aging and productivity. Instead of viewing retirement as an

endpoint, we should see it as a transition point—an opportunity to apply decades of accumulated wisdom in new ways. Whether it's returning to education, starting a business, or pursuing a completely different profession, a second career offers the chance to remain engaged, challenged, and purposeful well into your later years.

The question isn't whether you're too old for a second career—it's whether you're ready to embrace the possibilities that your experience and freedom can create.

Photo Supplement

Waasan Päivälehti

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Wasa Dagblad Wasa Daily



3.1.1961

Lento-onnettomuuden muistomerkki Koivulahdessa
Minnesmärke över flygolyckan i Kvevlax den 3.1.1961
Memorial to the plane crash in Kvevlax on 3.1.1961
Пам'ятник авіакатастрофі в Квевлаксі 3 січня 1961 року

Photo Supplement - bpress.ovh

NEWS

MARKET SQUARE

Market Square to Become Our Shared Living Room!



Vasa's central square is being renewed – explore the plans and share your opinion!

The heart of the city of Vasa, Kauppatori (Market Square), is undergoing a major transformation. A new draft of the general plan for Salutorget and the adjacent Hovrättsplanaden is now available, and residents are invited to review the plans and submit their feedback by July 4th.

The plan is based on the winning entry "Vaasan helmi" ("The Pearl of Vasa") from a 2022 landscape architecture competition. The vision combines historical charm with the needs of modern city life. The aim is to create a vibrant, accessible, and inclusive city square – a shared living room for all citizens.

Green, Playful, and Accessible

The traditional market stalls will remain at the center of the square, surrounded by elevated, leafy zones designed for relaxation and social interaction. These areas will be defined by steps and plantings, and include benches, urban swings, game tables, and a playground with an archipelago theme.

A special feature will be a map of the Vasa archipelago engraved into the paving stones in the northern section of the square, between the existing pavilion structures. A playful art installation will also be added – a misting feature that sprays water vapor, providing both entertainment and visual charm, while still allowing the area to be used for events.

For Everyone, Year-Round

Accessibility is at the heart of

the design. Heated walkways, improved lighting, and new bike parking areas will ensure the space is welcoming and functional for people of all ages throughout the year.

At the southern edge of the square, a new public transport hub will be constructed. A covered waiting area will shelter up to three buses at a time, providing better conditions for passengers. More seating and climbing plants will be added to enhance comfort and aesthetics. The current pergola will be partially preserved and incorporated into the new structure.

The Esplanade as an Art Axis

Hovioikeudenpuistikko will be transformed into an artistic promenade, with public artworks used to shape intimate, room-like spaces. Cultural and historical values have been carefully considered, and the upgrades will be carried out with sustainability in mind. Tree rows, greenery, and eco-friendly materials will help strengthen the

area's identity while supporting the city's climate goals.

What Happens Next?

The renovation of Salutorget is included in Vasa's investment plan for 2027. However, the project's realisation will depend on available funding.

Now it's the residents' turn to speak up. Feedback can be submitted to the City of Vasa's registry office by email at registrituren@vasa.fi or delivered in person to Vaasanpuistikko 10. All input will be reviewed before the project proceeds to the construction planning phase and potential implementation.

For more information, visualizations, and the full plan, visit the city's website:

□ www.vaasa.fi/

The Market Square of the future won't just be a place to pass through – it will be a place to stay, meet, and enjoy.på.

NEWS

YOU CAN READ THIS NEWSPAPER ANYWHERE



You can read this paper wherever You are. Like here near the Vaasa Church

BLOG WRITERS

Join Wasa Daily as a Blog Writer!

Are you passionate about sharing your thoughts, stories, or expertise with the community? *Wasa Daily* is looking for enthusiastic blog writers to contribute engaging content for our readers.

Whether you love writing about local events, culture, lifestyle, business, or personal experiences, we welcome your voice!

Writing for Wasa Daily is a great opportunity to reach a wider audience, connect with fellow locals, and showcase your creativity. No prior experience is needed—just bring your ideas and enthusiasm! We value diverse perspectives and fresh voices that reflect the vibrant spirit of our community.

Interested? Send us your blog pitch or a short sample, and let's get your words published! Join us in making *Wasa Daily* a platform for meaningful conversations and inspiring stories.



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

SNLA

Guests from all Nordic Countries in Vaasa this Week



This week, Vaasa is hosting young women from all five Nordic countries as part of the Soroptimist Nordic Leadership Academy (SNLA).

The week-long training, held annually in one Nordic country,

aims to support women aged 20–30 in developing their leadership skills for the future.

SNLA, which began in Öland in 2017, rotates between Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark, and Iceland. This year, it's Finland's turn to welcome the 25 participants—five from

each country—to the inspiring surroundings of Vaasa.

The program, conducted in English, offers both theoretical and practical training in communication, presentation, feedback, leadership, project management, teamwork, and sustainability. The focus is on

building tools that can be used in both professional and personal life.

In addition to workshops and exercises, the participants will also engage in breathing and voice training, yoga, and physical activities like “walk-the-talk” sessions—an outdoor method for reflecting while walking.

The Soroptimist movement, a global network advocating for the rights and potential of women and girls, sees SNLA as a vital part of preparing the next generation of leaders. Vaasa's historical and cultural environment provides a fitting backdrop for this year's program.

Image: Guests from Iceland along with Helvi Riihimäki, one of the organizers

NEWS

STREET ART

Street Art Transforms Vaasa Into a Vibrant Open-Air Gallery



This summer, Vaasa comes alive with stunning street art as part of the global *Meeting of Styles* festival. Colorful murals are brightening neighborhoods across the city, creating free public art for everyone to enjoy.

Vaasa's urban landscape is getting a creative makeover as internationally acclaimed street artists and local talent collaborate on eye-catching murals. New works have already appeared in Palosaari, Hietalahti, and Vöyrinkaupunki, turning ordinary electrical substations into extraordinary works of art.

Art for Everyone

Residents and visitors can discover these urban masterpieces at locations including:

- Along the road to Mansikkasaari (Pikisaarencatu 1)
- Near Maasilla bridge in the city center
- Along Tiilitehtaankatu in Hietalahti (numbers 10, 44 and 45)
- At Tiklaspuisto park in Vöyrinkaupunki (Kalastajanka-

tu 14)

Additional murals will soon decorate pedestrian underpasses throughout the summer.

"Events like Meeting of Styles enrich our urban culture and bring new forms of expression to public spaces," says cultural producer Ilkka Nyqvist. "They also increase youth participation and create a more art-friendly city environment."

Global Art Comes to Vaasa

The main *Meeting of Styles* event will take place June 27-29 at Wasa Graffitilandia (Opistokatu 8), featuring live painting by top artists from around the world.

"Our goal was to create a 24/7 open-air gallery that's free and accessible to everyone," explains Aku Siik, chairman of Katukulttuuri Ry, the organization behind the "Back to the Streets" project.

Vaasa's new street art not only beautifies the city but also sparks conversations and brings communities together. Don't miss this chance to see world-class art being created in your neighborhood!





NEWS

HEALTHCARE

Are you 65 or older? – See a private general practitioner at the price of a public one starting in September



A new pilot study on freedom of choice in healthcare starts on 1 September 2025.

During the pilot study, persons aged 65 or over can see a private general practitioner and only have to pay up to the price of the local user fee charged by public healthcare providers. This price applies if the doctor is participating in the pilot study. The pilot study will affect more than 20% of the total population in Finland.

Parliament has approved a temporary amendment to the Health Insurance Act. After the amendment enters into force, persons aged 65 or over can see a private general practitioner at a much lower cost than usual. This means that persons aged 65 or over will have more say in

whether they want to use public or private general practitioner services.

The amendment is part of a pilot study on freedom of choice in healthcare. Kela will implement the pilot study in cooperation with private healthcare service providers between 1 September 2025 and 31 December 2027.

Clear prices, no unexpected costs

During the pilot study, each appointment with a general practitioner will cost EUR 28.20 or less (in 2025). Customers do not have to pay any other fees for their appointments, such as administrative or service fees.

“The goal is for senior citizens to get the healthcare services they need, when they need them. By setting a deductible in

advance, we ensure that customers know how much they have to pay for each appointment. This benefits the customer,” says Auli Valli-Lintu, Director of Legislative Development at Kela.

Customers who qualify for the pilot study can book up to two appointments in 2025 and up to three appointments per calendar year in 2026 and 2027. The appointments can be in-person appointments or remote video or phone appointments. Kela will publish a list of participating service providers closer to the start of the pilot study.

“During the pilot study, customers can choose the right doctor for them and then go back to that same familiar professional for further treatment, which promotes continuity in their care,” notes Valli-Lintu.

During the pilot study, Kela will also provide reimbursement for some tests and examinations the doctor orders for you during the appointment, such as laboratory tests and imaging tests. You pay half (50%) of the price of each test and examination. Maximum prices will be set for the tests and examinations to ensure that you know approximately how much you will have to pay before you make an appointment and to keep the prices of the services reasonable.

Over 20% of the total population of Finland is aged 65 or over, which means that the pilot study affects approximately 1.3 million people.

SOURCE: KELA, press release

NEWS

VAASA

Rowboats Now Available for Rent in Ukkokari and Vähäkyrö – Onkilahti's Boat Still Awaiting a Dock



Residents of Vaasa had the chance to decide how participatory budgeting funds would be used this year, and their choice led to the city acquiring three new rowboats.

These boats are now available for free rental in Ukkokari and Vähäkyrö, while the one in Onkilahti will be ready in July once a new dock is installed.

Three New Rowboats Available for Free Use

The City of Vaasa has purchased three rowboats along with life jackets for public use. The boats can be borrowed from three different locations:

Saaristoravintola Ukkokari
(in Gerby)

Café Kanttorila (in Vähäkyrö)

Café Onkilahti (boat rental available starting Week 33)

By Midsummer, the boats in Ukkokari and Vähäkyrö were already available, but the Onkilahti rowboat is still waiting for a dock to be built. Construction is expected to be completed by Week 33 (mid-August), after which the boat can be rented from Café Onkilahti near the outdoor gym.

How to Rent a Boat?

The rowboats can be rented for a maximum of two hours at a time. The borrower must be an adult, and each boat can accommodate up to four people. The boats are locked at the shore, and keys as well as mandatory life jackets can be picked up from the rental locations.

Opening Hours for Rental Points:

Saaristoravintola Ukkokari – Check the restaurant's website for hours

Café Kanttorila (Vähäkyrö) – Open Tue-Sun, 12 PM–6 PM

Café Onkilahti – Boat rental available starting Week 33

Participatory Budgeting Brings Residents' Ideas to Life

The rowboat initiative is part of Vaasa's participatory budgeting program, where residents get to influence how public funds are spent in their community. This year, €15,000 was allocated to the project.

Previous participatory budgeting projects have included:

A cherry tree park

A wildflower meadow

A winter swimming spot

Additional benches and trash bins along waterfront trails

The new rowboats provide a great opportunity for relaxation and exercise in Vaasa's beautiful archipelago. Since they are free to use, they make for a perfect summer day trip.

Comment:

This is a great example of how small but meaningful improvements can be made in collaboration with residents. The rowboats enhance outdoor recreation and bring more life to Vaasa's shores. Once the Onkilahti dock is completed in August, even more people will have the chance to enjoy a rowing adventure.

If you haven't tried rowing yet, now's the perfect opportunity—free and easy!

CREDIT: vaasa.fi

NEWS

VACATION

Finns Spending More on Summer Vacations – Domestic Travel and Safety in Focus



Finns are ready to splurge more on their summer getaways this year. According to Nordea's latest survey, the average summer vacation budget has risen by nearly 15% compared to 2024, reaching €1,178 per household.

Over half of Finns plan to vacation solely domestically, while safety concerns increasingly influence international travel choices.

Bigger Budgets – Especially for Families

Nordea's annual Summer Vacation Budget Survey reveals that Finns are opening their wallets wider this year. While 60% of households plan to spend no more than €1,000, the average budget has climbed to €1,178

(up from €1,032 in 2024). Families with children and Helsinki-region residents lead the spending: 20% of families budget over €2,000 for summer trips.

"Household finances have improved as inflation slows and interest rates drop. This growing purchasing power is already visible in vacation plans, and we expect the trend to strengthen," says Jani Eloranta, Head of Personal Banking at Nordea Finland.

Safety First: Finns Choose Cautiously

Domestic travel remains king—70% of Finns plan local trips, and 52% will stay entirely within Finland. Though slightly more Finns (27%) will travel abroad this summer versus 2024, safety concerns now heavily impact destination choices.

A striking 45% now avoid certain regions due to security risks (up from 38% in 2024), with military conflicts and political instability being key deterrents. Sustainability also weighs heavier: overtouristed spots are losing favor, while eco-friendly transport and human-rights-conscious destinations gain traction.

"Finns take responsibility seriously—it's refreshing to see climate and ethics playing bigger roles in travel planning," notes Eloranta.

Cost Hikes? No Problem

Despite rising prices, 76% say their vacation funds remain unaffected. Still, 55% acknowledge some impact, though this concern has declined for three straight years.

Salaries and savings cover most vacations. While credit card use

has edged up, personal loans play a minimal role. Savings remain pivotal, though their importance has dipped slightly since 2022's peak.

Survey Snapshot

Conducted by Kantar Finland (May 19–26, 2025; 1,005 respondents aged 18–79). Margin of error: ±1.4–3.1% at 95% confidence level.

Key Takeaways:

Bigger budgets: Average €1,178 (+15% YoY)

Domestic dominance: 52% staying in Finland

Nordea's findings confirm Finns prioritize safe, responsible travel—and are willing to pay for it. This summer, journeys lean domestic, but international trips are carefully curated for peace of mind.

Source: nordea.fi

NEWS

STATISTICS FINLAND

Number of Foreign-Language Speakers Has Doubled in Ten Years



Finland's population structure is changing rapidly. At the end of 2024, there were 610,148 people in Finland whose native language was something other than Finnish, Swedish, or Sámi.

According to Statistics Finland, this marks an increase of over 50,000 people in just one year — and a doubling of the number compared to ten years ago.

Foreign-language speakers now make up 10.8% of the total population. This growth is driven by both immigration and shifting birth rate trends. While the number of foreign-language speakers increased, the number of Finnish-, Swedish-, and Sámi-speaking people decreased by nearly 20,000 over the same period.

Russian Still the Largest Language Group

Russian remains the largest foreign

language group, with 102,487 speakers. They are followed by Estonian speakers (49,563) and Arabic speakers (43,534). Notably, the number of Estonian speakers actually declined, unlike the other major language groups.

Population Growth, Unevenly Distributed

Finland's official population at the end of 2024 was 5,635,971. The population increased by 32,120 people — the second-largest annual increase in 60 years. One key factor was the rise in the number of Ukrainian citizens gaining residency: in 2024, over 13,000 Ukrainians received a municipality of residence in Finland.

However, this growth is not evenly spread. While 85 municipalities saw population growth, 223 experienced a decline. The largest gains were seen in Helsinki, Espoo, and Tampere, while Kouvola, Savonlinna, and Kotka had the biggest losses.

Kainuu's Population Falls Below 70,000

At the regional level, population growth was concentrated in Uusimaa (+22,763) and Pirkanmaa (+6,097). The largest losses occurred in Kymenlaakso (-1,216) and South Ostrobothnia (-610). In Kainuu, the population dropped below 70,000 for the first time.

In relative terms, the fastest growth occurred in small municipalities such as **Kaskinen (+2.7%)** and Kustavi (+2.2%), as well as in Espoo (+2.2%). The steepest declines were recorded in Soini (-3.9%), Virolahti (-3.3%), and Hyrynsalmi (-3.0%).

Foreign-Born Population Concentrated in the South

At the end of 2024, there were 623,949 people in Finland with a foreign background, accounting for 11.1% of the population. Nearly half of them live in the capital region. The highest shares of foreign-background residents were in Vantaa (29.2%), Espoo (25.1%), and Närpes (23.0%).

Regionally, the highest proportions of foreign-background residents

were found in Uusimaa (19.3%) and Åland (18.7%). In Åland, 40% of foreign-background residents have Swedish roots. The lowest share was in South Ostrobothnia (4.5%).

1990 Cohort Now the Largest Age Group

At the end of 2024, the largest single age cohort in Finland was those born in 1990 — now aged 34 — with 78,162 individuals. Of these, 62,129 were born in Finland and 16,033 abroad. The second-largest cohort was those born in 1992.

These figures show that earlier waves of migration continue to shape the population profile today.

The growing linguistic and cultural diversity in Finland is more than just a demographic trend — it's reshaping everyday life in schools, workplaces, and public services. As the number of foreign-language speakers rises, so too does the need for inclusive policies and sustainable planning for a changing society.

AI

The AI Assistant Landscape in 2025: Which One is Right for You?



The artificial intelligence landscape has become remarkably diverse, with multiple powerful AI assistants competing for users' attention.

Each major player – ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, DeepSeek, and others – brings unique strengths and capabilities to the table. Understanding these differences can help you choose the right AI tool for your specific needs.

The Major Players and Their Strengths

ChatGPT remains the most recognizable name in AI assistance, excelling particularly in accessibility and user-friendliness. Recent updates have made image generation available to all users through its GPT-4o model, with both free and paid tiers offering robust functionality. ChatGPT's strength lies in its balanced approach to various tasks, though it sometimes lacks the technical precision found in specialized alternatives.

Claude has established itself as the go-to choice for complex reasoning and creative tasks. Users consistently praise Claude's thoughtful, nuanced responses and its ability to handle sophisticated analysis. Claude is particularly strong in coding tasks and provides

what many consider the most "human-like" conversational experience. However, Claude currently doesn't offer native image generation capabilities. Google Gemini leverages Google's vast resources and integration with existing Google services. With the recent upgrade to Imagen 4, Gemini now offers impressive image generation capabilities, producing high-quality visuals up to 2K resolution. Gemini excels in multimodal tasks and benefits from Google's search integration, making it particularly useful for research-heavy activities.

DeepSeek has emerged as a compelling alternative, especially for users seeking powerful AI capabilities without payment requirements. It rivals GPT-4 and Claude in many technical tasks, particularly excelling in programming and Chinese language processing. The trade-off is fewer additional features – no image generation, web browsing, or plugin ecosystem.

Image Generation Capabilities

Not all AI assistants create images equally well. ChatGPT offers image generation through both its integrated GPT-4o model and the classic DALL-E

system, making it accessible to both free and paid users. Gemini's recent Imagen 4 upgrade has significantly improved its visual creation capabilities, with users noting enhanced image quality and better text rendering within images. Claude, despite its many strengths, currently lacks native image generation. However, it excels at analyzing and describing images that users upload. DeepSeek also doesn't include image generation in its current feature set, focusing instead on text-based tasks and coding assistance.

Best for Different Use Cases

For general public use, ChatGPT often emerges as the most practical choice due to its balance of features, accessibility, and widespread documentation. Its free tier provides substantial functionality, while paid upgrades offer advanced features for power users.

Technical professionals and developers frequently prefer Claude for its superior reasoning capabilities and coding assistance, or DeepSeek for its strong programming performance and cost-effectiveness. Gemini appeals particularly to users already embedded in Google's ecosystem and those who need robust research capabilities combined with image generation.

Performance and Accessibility

Recent benchmark tests reveal interesting patterns in AI performance. DeepSeek consistently delivers high-quality technical outputs while remaining completely free to use. Claude maintains its reputation for thoughtful analysis and complex reasoning tasks. ChatGPT provides reliable, accessible performance across

diverse applications, while Gemini offers strong balanced performance with excellent Google service integration. The accessibility factor varies significantly among platforms. ChatGPT and Gemini offer robust free tiers, though with usage limitations. Claude provides some free access but encourages subscription for heavy use. DeepSeek stands out by offering powerful capabilities without requiring payment or even account registration.

Looking Forward

The AI assistant landscape continues evolving rapidly, with each platform developing distinct personalities and capabilities. Rather than one clear winner, users increasingly benefit from understanding which tool works best for specific tasks. Many power users maintain access to multiple platforms, switching between them based on the task at hand.

For most general users, ChatGPT provides the best combination of capability, accessibility, and support resources. However, those with specific needs – whether advanced coding (Claude or DeepSeek), research with image creation (Gemini), or cost-conscious technical work (DeepSeek) – may find specialized alternatives better suited to their requirements.

The key is matching the AI assistant to your primary use case while remaining open to experimenting with alternatives as these platforms continue their rapid development. The competition among these systems ultimately benefits users, driving innovation and improving capabilities across the entire AI assistant ecosystem.

NEWS

GOVERNMENT

Finland leads international coalition to promote media freedom



Vasemmalta oikealle: Viron ulkoministeri Margus Tsahkna, Saksan ulkoministeri Johann Wadephul sekä ulkoministeri Elina Valtonen. Kuva: EU

Finland will play a significant role in the international media field when it takes over the Presidency in The Coalition for Press Freedom.

The two-year work will be carried out together with Germany and will start in early July, when Estonia hands over the Presidency.

The Media Freedom Coalition is a country coalition founded in 2019 that brings together 51 countries from six continents. The coalition's goal is to promote media and freedom of expression, and to improve the safety of journalists worldwide. The initiative was launched under the leadership of the United Kingdom and Canada in re-

sponse to the growing threats to the media.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Elina Valtonen emphasised Finland's commitment to the task: "The focus of our joint Presidency is on protecting journalists, strengthening media literacy and more general issues related to global freedom of expression. It is a pleasure to work with Germany on these important issues."

The choice of Finland is no coincidence. The country ranked fifth in the latest World Press Freedom Index, demonstrating its strong commitment to media freedom. Finland considers media freedom to be a fundamental pillar of a democratic society and an important factor in creating comprehensive security.

The work of the coalition is

concrete and direct. It intervenes in cases where journalists, groups of journalists or media organisations are threatened. Influence is through public statements and direct diplomatic contacts with the authorities, either from the capitals or through the embassies of the coalition countries.

The work is not limited to crisis management. The coalition works in close cooperation with civil society, journalists and other media workers, as well as lawyers familiar with the theme. This wide-ranging approach ensures that actions are based on real needs and expertise.

Finland's Presidency is part of a broader commitment to media freedom. Issues related to media freedom will also be strongly on the agenda during Finland's Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2025, which shows a consistent

policy in international politics.

Strengthening media literacy is one of Finland's priorities. This is particularly topical at a time when disinformation and misinformation are spreading rapidly through social media. Media literacy is a key tool for citizens to distinguish between reliable and unreliable information.

The protection of journalists is another key theme. Around the world, journalists face threats, violence, and even life claims because of their work. International cooperation is essential to ensure the safety of journalists and their ability to carry out their work freely.

The co-presidency with Germany provides an opportunity to combine the countries' different strengths and experiences. Both countries have a long tradition of defending democracy and freedom of speech, which is expected to bring added value to the work of the coalition.

NEWS

GOVERNMENT PALACE

Historic Opportunity: The Government Palace Opens Its Doors to the Public – Explore the Heart of Finnish Governance Before Major Renovation



The Palace illuminated in blue and white in 2017, when Finland was 100 years old.
Foto: Htm. Wikimedia Commons.
Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0

A rare chance awaits on Saturday, September 6, 2025, as the Government Palace (Valtioneuvoston linna) opens its doors to the public from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

This iconic building, which has served as the center of Finland's government for over 200 years, invites visitors to explore its historic halls before a major renovation begins.

Engel's Architectural Masterpiece: A Living Piece of Finnish History

Designed by architect Carl Ludvig Engel and completed in 1822, the Government Palace has been the workplace of ministers and civil servants for nearly all of Finland's in-

dependent history. During the open house event, visitors will walk the same corridors where Finland's most pivotal political decisions have been made.

The tour includes the palace's grand staircase, a site of dramatic historical significance. It was on these steps in 1904 that student Eugen Schauman assassinated the Russian Governor-General Nikolai Bobrikov—an event that marked a turning point in Finland's struggle for autonomy.

"This building is like a living history book. Every room and hallway holds a story that belongs to all Finns,"

Inside the Seat of Power

Visitors will have the unique opportunity to step inside the Cabinet Meeting Hall, where Finland's laws and policies are shaped, and the Presidential Reception Hall, where state guests are welcomed. These spaces, though elegant, reflect Finland's understated and functional approach to governance.

Many are surprised by how modest yet dignified these rooms are. There's no excessive grandeur—just a sense of purpose and history.

Last Chance Before Renovation

This year's open house is particularly special, as it offers the last chance to see the palace before a multi-year renovation begins. While details of the project remain undisclosed, the work is expected to modernize infrastructure while preserving the building's historical character.

"The renovation is essential to ensure this landmark remains functional and intact for future generations," says a representative from the Government Secretariat.

Practical Information

- No pre-registration required—entry is free and open to all.
 - Guided tours will be available, with details announced in late August.
 - Expect crowds—the event typically draws thousands of visitors, so early arrival is recommended.
 - Location: The Government Palace sits at the edge of Helsinki's Senate Square, easily accessible by public transport.
- Don't miss this unique opportunity to step inside one of Finland's most important political landmarks!

NEWS

COELIAC DISEASE

A Relief for Everyone with Coeliac Disease - Kissing is Not Dangerous



For years, people with coeliac disease have faced a dilemma more nerve-wracking than a gluten-filled buffet: To kiss or not to kiss?

After all, what if your partner just devoured a pizza, a croissant, or—heaven forbid—a whole loaf of garlic bread? Would a romantic smooch turn into a gluten grenade?

Thankfully, science has

swooped in like a hero in a lab coat. A new study presented at Digestive Disease Week® 2025 confirms what hopeful romantics everywhere have been waiting for: Kissing is (mostly) safe. Even if your partner has just polished off a stack of saltine crackers, the gluten transfer is so minimal that it won't trigger your coeliac disease.

The study, led by Dr. Anne Lee at Columbia University, recruited 10 brave cou-

ples—each with one gluten-eating partner and one coeliac sufferer—to test the risks of post-snack kissing. The non-coeliac partners ate 10 crackers (because nothing says romance like dry, crumbly saltines) and then locked lips with their gluten-free sweethearts for 10 seconds.

In one scenario, they waited five minutes before kissing. In the other, they chugged a glass of water first—because nothing kills the mood like

"Hold on, honey, I need to hydrate for science."

The results? Gluten levels in the coeliac partners' saliva were so low they wouldn't even register as a threat. In fact, the amounts were less than 20 parts per million—the same safety threshold used for gluten-free foods.

So, what does this mean for coeliac sufferers? Well, unless your partner is actively chewing a bagel mid-smooch, you're probably safe. But if you really want to be cautious, Dr. Lee suggests a simple solution: "Have them drink water first." Because nothing says "I love you" like "Here's a glass of water—rinse out the gluten, please."

The study is a game-changer for coeliac patients who've been stressing over every kiss. No more interrogating partners—"What did you eat today? Was it gluten? Show me your grocery receipts!" No more panic after a surprise peck. And most importantly, no more avoiding romantic moments just because your date had a beer.

So go forth, coeliac warriors, and pucker up without fear. Just maybe keep a water bottle handy—for safety and hydration. After all, love should be the only thing making your heart race, not gluten anxiety.

ART EXPERIENCE OF THE WEEK



Albert Edelfelt

21.7.1854, Kiialan kartano, Porvoon mlk

18.8.1905, Haikko, Porvoon mlk

Portrait of a Young Lady, 1891

EVENTS

UMEÅ WOMEN'S HISTORY MUSEUM

IN THE SECRET SERVICE OF THE KINGDOM

4.5 - 20.8.2025

Meet the women in the Swedish intelligence service during World War II. Hotel cleaners, cleaners and secretaries are recruited to the Swedish intelligence service. They secretly act as informants, couriers, or infiltrators. Others are employees of the Postal Service, the Telephone Control, or the Defense Staff's cryptography department to write, decipher, translate, and search through letters and calls about suspicious things."

<https://www.kvinnohistoriskt.se/>

GUNNAR BÄCKMAN exhibits in Korsnäs library

Gunnar Bäckman is the artist of the month in June

The idyllic Vaasa, photo exhibition with about 30 photographs in color and black and white. From Bäckman's book My Vaasa, which was published in 2013.

23.6.2025 at 12:00 - 19:00

24.6.2025 at 12:00 - 15:00

25.6.2025 at 12:00 - 15:00

26.6.2025 at 12:00 - 15:00

27.6.2025 at 12:00 - 19:00

30.6.2025 at 12:00 - 19:00

Korsnäs Municipality, Municipal Library

Silverbergsvägen 9

66200 Korsnäs

Website: <http://www.korsnas.fi>

EVENING MUSIC

In Vaasa Church – enjoy the atmosphere of a classic summer evening

Feel the atmosphere of summer evenings with high-quality music in Vaasa Church. The Evangelical Lutheran parishes are once again offering free classical music concerts, which have already established themselves as the pearls of the city's summer programme over the years.

Classical evening music on Wednesdays from 4.6.25 at 19.30

25.6. Jonna Pirttijoki-Hela-

nen, harmonikka, laulu ja Sauli Perälä, piano, laulu.

2.7. Erica Nygård, huili ja Niels Burgmann, urut.

9.7. Loviisa Tuomisto ja Valtteri Tuomisto, urut, piano ja laulu.

16.7. Jenny Sandelin, sopraano ja Anton Ylikallio, piano. tiistai 22.7. kello 18.30 Pétur Sakari, urut. Yhteistyössä Korsholman Musiikkijuhlien kanssa.

6.8. Inka Pärssinen, trumpet ja Hanna Koljonen, urut.

13.8. Noora Karhuluoma, sopraano ja Marco Bonacci, sem-balo.

STUNDARS

Sommarsäsongen inleds / Kesäsesonki alkaa / The Summer Season begins

23.6.2025 at 11

During the summer season, we have guided tours every day at various fixed times. There will be tours with different themes in the museum village, as well as special tours for children and tours around the animal park a few times each week. If the weather allows, there will be a chance to try your hand at washing clothes the old-fashioned way, or to do some baking at the Smith's Cottage.

In the authentic atmosphere of Stundars, children can imagine they are part of old-fashioned country life. In the Play Barn, our wooden animals need to be fed and cared for by small farmhands. In the Children's Country Shop, young visitors can have fun weighing, measuring, buying, and selling goods.

<https://stundars.fi/>

PROVINSSI 2025

26.-28.6.2025

Provinssi Festival celebrated in Seinäjoki

Provinssi is celebrated annually in the last week of June and is one of Northern Europe's most traditional and largest festivals. The People's Festival, which has been organised since 1979 in the scenic surroundings of Törnävänsaari in Seinäjoki, always presents an

up-to-date and comprehensive selection from all sides of the music field, without forgetting surprises.

<https://www.provinssi.fi/>

DREAM FESTIVAL

5.7.2025

Yliopistonranta 5

Vasa

The summer's dreamiest festival, a mix of love, joy and community, with the music we all love!

<https://www.drommenfestival.fi/>

KASKINEN'S SUMMER OF MUSIC

9-12.7.25

A classical music festival in Finland's smallest town.

"The proximity of the sea, the history of the city of Kaskinen, bilingualism, the beautiful wooden house environment"

Artistic directors Anna-mari and Samuli Peltonen

Seinäjoki Tango Market

9.-13.7.2025

<https://tangomarkkinat.fi/>

BIG DAY SUMMER FESTIVAL

Vaasa

11.7.-12.7.2025

<https://www.bigdayfestival.fi/>

LOHTAJA CHURCH MUSIC FESTIVAL

22-27.7.25

Church music from thousand-year-old traditions

www.kirkkomusiikkijuhlat.fi

NÄRPES THEATRE

"Maskinisterna (The Machinists)", a Swedish-language play about the Wickström Brothers and their engine factory, with a script and direction by Erik Kiviniemi.

World premiere 28.6.25 klo 19

Other events:

1-.7 at 7 pm

3.7. at 7 pm

7.7. at 7 pm

8.7. klo 19

10.7 at 7 pm

13.7. at 5 pm

15.7. at 19

16.7. at 19

17.7. at 19

19.7. at 19

KORSHOLM MUSIC FESTIVAL

23.7.-30.7.2025

"Korsholm Music Festival

2024 and Tove Teuvalla Opera are over and autumn is approaching. Now we are already working on the Summer 2025 Music Festival. However, we want to return to the warm days and festival atmosphere of July and August."



A greeting from festival director Viktor Nygård: "I am very much looking forward to working with the Korsholm Music Festival and I have many exciting ideas for how we can continue to develop the festival. I can already promise that next year it will be a fantastic festival with something for everyone."

RITZ

25.7.25 at 7 pm

MARI PALO – TANGO

One of Finland's most sought-after sopranos dives into the world of tang.

Korsholm Music Festival

VAASA CITY HALL

27.7.25

CONCERT ROYAL

Amélie goes to Belgrade with her friends

Korsholm Music Festival

VAASA FESTIVAL 2025

31.7.-2.8.2025

Music, food and wine

In Vaasa's inner harbour

<https://vaasafestival.fi/>

WASA FUTURE FESTIVAL

11-16.8.2025

The Wasa Future Festival 2026 is set to take place from 11th to 16th August.

This event gathers knowledgeable and motivated individuals from the business world, universities, regional decision-making bodies.

HEALTH

COELIAC DISEASE

Should I consider getting a celiac disease test?

Receiving a new medical diagnosis is often a worrying event. The disease that is diagnosed can be difficult to treat, and even with treatment, many symptoms often persist. Regardless of efforts, many diseases tend to worsen and can lead to complications.

Celiac disease is not such a disease!

Receiving a celiac disease diagnosis is instead a very positive experience. After living with a variety of symptoms for most of your life, you now discover a disease that is easy to treat – without the need for medication. It is very likely possible to live a normal life and be symptom-free for the rest of your life.

Therefore, it is important to consider getting tested for celiac disease.

The good thing is that it is easy to confirm or rule out the possibility of celiac disease. A simple blood test is all that is required.

So when should you consider getting a celiac disease test? Consider the following factors that may be relevant to you:

SYMPTOMS:

- ☐ I have significantly more flatulence than anyone else I know
- ☐ I usually have diarrhea, not particularly severe but most every day
- ☐ I have severe constipation and no medication seems to help
- ☐ When I go to the toilet, my stool floats on the water
- ☐ My mother usually tells me that I was very “skinny” as a child and had difficulty gaining weight
- ☐ When I visited the dentist in my childhood, he said that I have “strange tooth enamel”
- ☐ When I was at school, the school nurse gave me a jar of iron tablets and said that I had “bad blood”
- ☐ Later, my doctor was also surprised that my hemoglobin was so low
- ☐ People tell me that they have a “foggy brain”, difficulty concentrating and sometimes difficulty finding words. I think I have that too.
- ☐ I have many more headaches and migraines than others
- ☐ I often have an itchy rash on the outside of my elbows and knees, sometimes with small blisters
- ☐ We have been trying to have children for a long time but have not been successful
- ☐ I have had several X-rays of my intestines over the years without ever finding anything wrong

DISEASES OF YOUR RELATIVES:

- ☐ My father/mother/sister/brother/child has celiac disease
- ☐ I have at least two more distant relatives who have celiac disease

PAST DISEASES:

- ☐ I have over/underfunction of the thyroid gland (hyper/hypothyroidism)
- ☐ I have patches of hairless skin on my scalp (alopecia areata)



- ☐ I have white pigment-free patches on my skin (vitiligo)
- ☐ I have been on sick leave for depression/burn out
- ☐ I am lactose intolerant
- ☐ I have insulin-treated diabetes diagnosed at a young age
- ☐ I have been diagnosed with osteoporosis even though I am not even 50 years old
- ☐ I have dry mouth and dry eyes and my doctor says it is Sjögren's syndrome
- ☐ I have numbness in my legs and my doctor calls it peripheral neuropathy

If you have ticked a box in any of these groups, ask your doctor to do a celiac disease screening with a simple blood test called S-KeliSeu during your next health check. If it is completely normal, you do not have celiac disease. But if the test shows that you have celiac disease, then congratulations! Because this is an important diagnosis that will make you feel much better than before for the rest of your life!

HEALTH

HEATH

University of Jyväskylä: Waist obesity increases urinary incontinence



A recent study shows a clear link between waist fat and stress urinary incontinence in middle-aged women.

In particular, fat that accumulates around the internal organs and in the abdominal area increases the risk of pelvic floor dysfunction. An extensive study conducted at the University of Jyväskylä reveals a worrying link between women's body composition and pelvic floor dysfunction. The study, led by doctoral researcher Mari Kuutti, followed 376 healthy women in Jyväskylä for four years and shows that waist obesity significantly increases the risk of urinary incontinence.

More than half of women have pelvic floor problems

An alarming finding in the

study was that already at the beginning of the study, more than half of the participants had some kind of pelvic floor dysfunction. The most common of these was stress urinary incontinence, which manifests itself as involuntary urinary incontinence when coughing, sneezing or moving, for example. The study focused on women who were between 47 and 55 years old at the beginning of the study. "The connection between body composition and the symptoms of pelvic floor dysfunction has been studied mainly by using only body mass index and waist circumference," Mari Kuutti explains the background of the study.

Waist fat as a special risk factor

The study revealed that fat accumulates especially in the waist area and around the internal organs increases the risk

of stress urinary incontinence. Significant risk factors included a higher total fat content, waist circumference and body mass index. "The results showed that a higher total body fat content and a higher fat content in the abdomen, waist and torso area and around the internal organs were associated with the symptoms of stress urinary incontinence," Kuutti explains. The study used more accurate measurement methods, such as bioimpedance and dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry, which allowed for a detailed analysis of body composition.

Lifestyle affects pelvic floor health

Pelvic floor dysfunction naturally becomes more common as a woman approaches menopause. Oestrogen deficiency and the aging of connective tissue weaken the functioning of the pelvic floor structures. Pregnancy,

childbirth and other factors that increase the pressure in the abdominal cavity also affect the development of the problem. However, the study emphasizes that lifestyle matters. Eating behaviour and physical activity affect body composition, which in turn is linked to the development of pelvic floor dysfunction. "Body composition is partly shaped by lifestyle, so measuring it can help identify the risk of dysfunction," the researchers note.

Prevention is the key to managing the problem

The results of the study give hope that pelvic floor dysfunction can be prevented by lifestyle changes. Healthy eating and regular exercise, which help manage weight, and especially waist obesity, can reduce the risk of urinary incontinence.

HEALTH

A SHORT STORY

"A New Era in Weight Loss "



Image: HFIF-bild

He walked into the clinic like he'd walked into a hundred dangerous places before — head high, eyes scanning, shoulders relaxed but coiled like a spring. Nobody noticed him. That was the idea.

But he noticed everything. The overweight man slumped in a plastic chair. The nurse tapping on a screen. The glossy ad on the wall: "A New Era in Weight Loss — Tirzepatide." He paused. Read it twice.

A miracle drug, they said. Better than anything before. Not some fake fat-burning pill. Not a starvation diet. Not the endless guilt of gym memberships and celery sticks. Tirzepatide worked.

And that made it dangerous.

He knew what people were saying. That this drug, this once-a-week shot, could melt away the pounds. That it was changing lives. That it could

end the obesity epidemic. People who had struggled for decades were now dropping fifty, even a hundred pounds. Fast.

But he also knew something else: when something sounds too good to be true, it usually is. Unless it comes with a price.

He sat in the waiting room and listened. The nurse called a name. A woman stood up — maybe late forties, carrying too much weight, but you could see hope in her eyes. She didn't walk. She floated. "Tirzepatide?" she asked.

The nurse nodded. "Weekly injection. You'll feel full faster. Eat less. Lose more. But we monitor closely. Nausea, constipation, even risk of pancreatitis. You need to check in weekly."

The woman didn't flinch. She'd heard it all before. What's a little nausea when you've been judged every day of your life?

He sat back and closed his eyes. Thought about what he'd read. Tirzepatide was

originally for type 2 diabetes. A GLP-1 and GIP receptor agonist. Complicated words. Simple result: it mimics the hormones your body releases after eating, so you feel full. But this drug went further. Clinical trials had shown people lost up to 22 percent of their body weight. Better than anything before it. Even better than semaglutide.

A game-changer. Which meant billions were on the table.

He opened his eyes. The woman was gone. A new poster caught his attention. "One shot. Once a week. Real results."

He stood up. Walked to the front desk. Asked for the brochure.

The receptionist looked up. "Thinking about trying it?"

He nodded slowly. "Just curious."

She smiled. "It's not just about looking better. It's about staying alive."

He didn't answer. He already knew. Obesity killed. Quietly. Heart disease, diabe-

FACTS;

Tirzepatide (sold under names like Mounjaro) is an in Finland approved medication originally developed for type 2 diabetes. It has now shown significant effectiveness in weight loss and is revolutionizing obesity treatment — but it also raises complex questions about access, cost, and medical ethics.

tes, joint failure. Tirzepatide was a weapon. A scalpel, not a hammer. And the world had been waiting.

But there were cracks in the miracle.

The cost — thousands per year. The supply — already strained. The ethics — still debated. Should healthy people use it to slim down? Should celebrities jump the line? And what happens when the weight comes back if they stop?

He walked out of the clinic and into the wind. Thought about the woman, and the hope in her eyes. About the millions waiting for salvation in a syringe. About the pharmaceutical execs who were already counting profits.

He thought about justice.

Then he turned up his collar and disappeared into the city.

Because something big was coming.

And he'd be ready.

HEALTH

TEEN HEALTH

THL School Health Survey: Young People Are Doing Better Than Before



Preliminary results from the 2025 School Health Survey show improved well-being among lower secondary school students. While girls report better health, anxiety and bullying remain key challenges.

Youth Health Shows Improvement

According to the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL), 78% of 8th–9th graders now rate their health as “fairly good” or “very good”—a 5 percentage point increase since 2023, according to a press release by THL.

However, a significant gender gap persists: 85% of boys report good health compared to 72% of girls.

“The trend is encouraging. After the pandemic years, these positive findings on youth well-being are welcome,” says Chief Physician Terhi Aalto-Setälä at THL.

Yet 22% of students still describe their health as mediocre or poor—28% of girls and 15% of boys.

“Many young people continue struggling with their health. Daily habits like sufficient sleep, exercise, regular meals, and balanced screen time form the foundation of well-being—areas families should focus on together,” Aalto-Setälä advises.

Anxiety Persists, Especially Among Girls

Anxiety levels—measured using the GAD-7 scale based on self-reported symptoms—remain elevated:

34% of girls experience moderate/severe anxiety

9% of boys report similar symptoms
(No significant change from 2023)

“Youth-reported anxiety spiked during COVID and remains prevalent,” notes Research Manager Olli Kiviruusu. “While pandemic effects linger, increased mental health awa-

reness means more youths recognize and discuss emotional struggles. Not all distress requires treatment, but persistent/severe cases need professional assessment.”

Bullying: 8% Face Weekly Harassment

Tracking since 1996, the survey reveals:

7% of girls and 9% of boys experience weekly bullying

Rates remain within the historical 5–10% range

“Both chronic bullying and isolated aggressive acts cause harm,” emphasizes Development Manager Jenni Helenius. “Schools need sustained anti-bullying efforts, often requiring home-school collaboration and multi-professional support.”

Full Dataset Coming September 2025

270,000 respondents (grades 4–5, 8–9, and vocational/upper secondary students)

Complete statistical report launches 17 September at thl.fi/schoolhealth-survey/results

Findings will be discussed at THL’s Wellbeing Arena event (22–23 September)

Key Takeaways:

Health gains: 78% feel healthy (+5% since 2023)

Gender divide: Girls trail boys in health/well-being metrics

Ongoing challenges: Anxiety (34% girls) and bullying (8%) demand attention

Prevention focus: Daily routines and early intervention prove critical

While trends are positive, targeted efforts remain essential to address persistent mental health and social challenges facing Finnish youth.

ART

GRAFFITI

Youth Co-Create Stunning Street Art Mural at Care Home



Young artists collaborate with graffiti pro to transform Vaasa service building

Vaasa's urban landscape has gained a vibrant new addition as local youth and professional graffiti artist Tony Laine teamed up to create a spectacular mural on the wall of Carl & Carolina service home's storage building. The five-day street art camp resulted in a colorful masterpiece now visible from the Fredrikinkatu parking area.

First-Ever Graffiti Camp Inspires Participants

The City of Vaasa Youth Services organized its inaugural graffiti art camp from June 2-6, attracting nine young participants of varying ages. Local street art veteran Tony Laine guided the aspiring artists through the creative process.

"This was the perfect way to combine artistic expression with youth work," explains Anne Lamminen, youth services coordinator. "The participants learned technical skills while understanding how street art can be both legal and valued."

Art With Purpose

The new artwork now adorns the

exterior wall of Carl & Carolina service home's storage building on Fredrikinkatu. The property's owner, a local foundation, gave the artists complete creative freedom.

"We immediately said yes when approached about this project. The result is absolutely stunning!" enthuses Lena Sjöholm-Fahlund, facility manager at Carl & Carolina.

Laine designed the composition so he handled the upper section while youth participants executed the lower portion under his guidance.

More Than Just Paint

The camp served multiple important purposes:

Community building: Participants aged 12-17 bonded despite age differences

Vandalism prevention: Providing legal outlets reduces destructive graffiti

Skill transfer: Professional artist shared techniques and ethical guidelines

"We established artists want to show this is legitimate art form," says Laine. "Projects like this help change perceptions about street art."

Future Plans

The successful pilot has organizers considering making this an annual event.

"We see great potential to develop this initiative," reveals Lamminen. "There's interest from both youth and property owners wanting to beautify their spaces."

For young participants, the experience proved transformative:

"It was amazing to help create something everyone can see and appreciate," shares one participant. "And learning from a professional was incredible!"

The mural has done more than brighten a service home wall - it's built intergenerational connections and demonstrated street art's positive potential.



PRESS

PRESS

Åbo Underrättelser almost entirely digital – the paper newspaper will only be published once a week



Åbo Underrättelser is the oldest daily newspaper in Finland. Its first issue appeared on 3 January 1824

Finland's oldest newspaper, Åbo Underrättelser, is significantly reducing the number of printed newspapers.

From October onwards, the magazine will be delivered on paper only once a week, whereas it is currently published five days a week. However, digital publishing will continue five times a week. The first to report on the change was Turun Sanomat.

The decision is based on rising production costs. In particular, the increase in postage and the price of paper has forced the newspaper to consider the cost-effectiveness of distribution and printing.

"I know that changes evoke emotions. But by reducing the number of publication days and investing in

a carefully produced printed magazine once a week, instead of paying distribution and printing costs for five publication days a week, we can preserve what is most important: reliable, local and unique Swedish-language journalism that lives on the terms of its time,” says Susanna Landor, CEO and Publisher of ÅU Media, according to Turun Sanomat.

Founded in 1824, Åbo Underrättelser (ÅU) is the oldest newspaper still published in Finland. The magazine is in Swedish and its circulation area covers the whole of Southwest Finland, especially the regions of Turku, Pargas, Kaarina and Kimitoön.

ÄU is distributed several times a year as a blanket distribution to all bilingual households in Southwest Finland, to all households and busi-

The front page of Åbo Underrättelser on 1.12.1939. The Soviet Union had attacked Finland the day before, and that was the beginning of the Winter War

nesses in the centre of Turku and in the archipelago areas. According to Wikipedia, the circulation of blanket distribution is about 60,000 copies at a time.

At the moment, ÅU is published from Tuesday to Saturday, but the exact day of the week when the paper version will be published in the future has not yet been announced.

The magazine is published by ÅU Media Ab, which rose to an exceptional position in the Finnish press after the Swedish media company Bonnier acquired the majority of other Swedish-language newspapers in Finland. In 2023, Bonnier acquired a majority stake in KSF Media (e.g. *Hufvudstadsbladet*, *Västra Nyland*, *Östnyland*) and in 2024 the entire HSS Media (e.g. *Vasabladet*, *Syd-Österbotten*, which will as a result be layout-

ed in Sundsvall, Sweden). In this way, ÅU Media became the only Swedish-language media house in mainland Finland that is fully Finnish-owned.

The Swedish-language press is undergoing a transformation in other ways as well. For example, *Vasabladet* is published only digitally on Mondays, and the other main newspaper in Vaasa, *Ilkka-Pohjalainen*, is published in print six days a week. Vaasa's newest newspaper, *Vaasa-Pohjanmaa*, is mainly digital, but is also published a few times a year as a paper newspaper – usually free of charge. And perhaps we can mention our own newspaper, *Wasa Daily*, one of the very few newspapers in English in Finland. This magazine is also part of a new trend: it is published digitally on Sundays.

PRESS

An interview with our newspaper's editor-in-chief in Hufvudstadsbladet

An inspiring story about a lifelong desire to learn and contribute.

The article in Hufvudstadsbladet on 17 June 2025 presents an uplifting interview with the 79-year-old Hans Björknäs, a person who refuses to let age set limits to his curiosity and willingness to work. His story is not only a celebration of the individual's drive but also an important reminder of the potential value of looking at aging and retirement with new eyes.

Retirement as a new beginning

Hans Björknäs is a living counter-image to the traditional view of retirement as a time of passive rest. Instead of retiring when he reached retirement age at the turn of the millennium, he has continued to develop – both professionally and personally. Today, he is studying journalism at the Swedish School of Social Science (Soc&kom), an education that complements his long career as a doctor. His attitude is both inspiring and thought-provoking:

"Retirement can be the start of something new."

This view of retirement as an opportunity rather than an end is something that more and more Finns share. According to Barbro Schauman, who works with the EU-funded project Restart, almost half of those who retired in 2023 want to continue working in some way. The project, which is run in collaboration with Åbo Akademi University, Novia University of Applied Sciences and Kimmoön Municipality, aims to break down prejudices against older people in working life and highlight their skills.

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The need to reassess age in working life

Although many older people want to continue working, they often face obstacles. Schauman points to a "rigidity in Finnish working life", where age discrimination and inflexible working models make it difficult for seniors to contribute. While Japan – a country with similar demographic challenges – has a more accepting culture around older people in working life, Finland still has potential for development in this area.

This is particularly important in view of demographic developments. Schauman points out that the Finnish pension system was originally created to guarantee five secure years after retirement – but today many people live "up to twenty years" after they stop working. At the same time, the number of gainfully employed people per pensioner is decreasing, which makes it increasingly important to exploit the potential of seniors.

Lifelong learning as a key to meaningful old age

For Hans Björknäs, the search for knowledge has always



Hans, 79, vill inte vara pensionär

Hans Björknäs, 79, vill inte vara pensionär. Han vill fortsätta att arbeta och lära sig. Hans har en lång karriär som läkare och är nu på väg att bli journalist.

Hans Björknäs är en av de få som vill fortsätta att arbeta efter pensioneringen. Han har en lång karriär som läkare och är nu på väg att bli journalist. Hans har en passion för att lära sig och vill fortsätta att utmana sig själv. Han har en positiv attityd till livet och vill fortsätta att bidra till samhället. Hans har en stor erfarenhet och vill dela den med andra. Hans har en stor vilja att arbeta och vill fortsätta att utmana sig själv. Hans har en stor passion för att lära sig och vill fortsätta att utmana sig själv. Hans har en stor positiv attityd till livet och vill fortsätta att bidra till samhället. Hans har en stor erfarenhet och vill dela den med andra. Hans har en stor vilja att arbeta och vill fortsätta att utmana sig själv.

been a central part of his life. As a doctor, he had to constantly update his knowledge, and this attitude has been carried over into his retirement. His studies in ecology and journalism show that it is never too late to learn something new.

"There are so many advantages to the so-called second career. You don't have to choose a career that will support the family. You can really do anything."

This philosophy is not only rewarding for the individual but also for society at large. Taina Leinonen from the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health points out that longer careers not only benefit the individual, but can be "necessary for the welfare system".

A positive vision of the future

The article provides a hopeful picture of how retirement can be redefined. Instead of seeing old age as a period of withdrawal, it can be a time for new challenges, learning and contributing. Hans Björknäs is a shining example of this – a man who, instead of stopping, has chosen to continue growing.

Finally, it is about finding your own way. As Hans himself says:

"You can enjoy your retirement days just as you want. As long as you don't sit at home, lonely and depressed."

With his approach and initiatives as Restart, there is hope for a future where age does not set limits, but opens doors to new opportunities. It is a vision that benefits not only the individual but the whole of society.

ASTRONOMY

ASTRONOMY

Astronomers Unveil Unprecedented Thousand-Color Image of the Sculptor Galaxy



In a groundbreaking achievement, astronomers have captured the most detailed and colorful image ever taken of a galaxy, revealing its intricate structure in stunning clarity.

The mesmerizing portrait of the Sculptor Galaxy (NGC 253), located 11 million light-years away, showcases a dazzling array of a thousand distinct hues, each representing different stellar populations, swirling gas, and cosmic dust. The image transforms the galaxy into a luminous tapestry, with its golden-orange core fading into deep blue spiral arms that dissolve into the darkness of space. Bright pink star-forming regions and dark dust lanes speckle the galaxy, offering a breathtaking glimpse into its dynamic evolution.

This extraordinary feat was accomplished using the European Southern Observatory's Very Large Telescope (ESO's VLT), equipped with the Multi Unit Spectroscopic Explorer (MUSE) instrument. By observing the galaxy in thousands

of wavelengths simultaneously, the team compiled an unprecedented dataset, capturing the life cycles of stars and the distribution of interstellar matter with unparalleled precision.

A Galactic Masterpiece

Galaxies are vast, complex systems, spanning hundreds of thousands of light-years, yet their evolution is governed by processes occurring at much smaller scales. "The Sculptor Galaxy is in a sweet spot," explains Enrico Congiu, an ESO researcher and lead author of the study published in *Astronomy & Astrophysics*. "It's close enough that we can resolve its fine details, yet large enough to study as a complete system."

Traditional astronomical images capture only a handful of colors, limiting the information scientists can extract. However, this new ultra-wide spectral map provides a comprehensive view of the galaxy's composition, motion, and star formation history. "Each color tells a different story," says Congiu. "We can now trace the ages of stars, the chemistry of gas clouds, and even the movement of material across the galaxy."

A Monumental Observational Effort

Creating this cosmic atlas required over 50 hours of observations, stitching together more than 100 individual exposures to cover an area spanning 65,000 light-years. The result is a powerful tool that allows astronomers to zoom in on individual star-forming regions or zoom out to analyze the galaxy's large-scale structure.

Kathryn Kreckel, a co-author from Heidelberg University, Germany, emphasizes the map's versatility: "We can examine stellar nurseries at nearly the scale of individual stars while also understanding how they fit into the galaxy's broader ecosystem."

Discoveries Hidden in the Data

Already, the team has uncovered around 500 planetary nebulae—glowing shells of gas ejected by dying Sun-like stars—scattered throughout the Sculptor Galaxy. "Beyond our local galactic neighborhood, detecting even 100 planetary nebulae in a single galaxy is rare," notes Fabian Scheuermann, a doctoral stu-

dent at Heidelberg University and study co-author.

These nebulae serve as cosmic yardsticks. "They help us measure the galaxy's distance with high precision, which is fundamental for all subsequent research," explains Adam Leroy, a professor at The Ohio State University and co-author of the study.

Unlocking Galactic Mysteries

The new dataset opens doors to future investigations into how gas flows through the galaxy, transforms into stars, and shapes its evolution. "The biggest puzzle," says Congiu, "is how small-scale processes—like individual star formation—can influence an entire galaxy, which is thousands of times larger."

As astronomers continue to analyze this treasure trove of data, the Sculptor Galaxy's thousand-color portrait stands as a testament to human ingenuity—a dazzling fusion of art and science that brings us closer to understanding the universe's grand design.

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SUMMER FLOWERS

VAASA

Summer Blooms Return – Vibrant Flower Displays Ready for Midsummer



Vaasa's city center has once again transformed into a living canvas of color and fragrance as its summer flower displays reach full bloom.

The plantings, completed just in time for Midsummer, bring joy to both residents and visitors. This year's arrangements feature a rich palette of lilac, soft pink, blue, and deep purple hues—a true visual feast that will last for approximately four months.

From Easter Bulbs to Midsummer Blooms – An Annual Floral Journey

Vaasa's flower season begins as early as March-April with the planting of Tête-à-tête daffodils. In May, violas take over alongside tulips and autumn-planted daffodils, showcasing yellow, lilac, and white blossoms. But it's now, on the cusp of Midsummer, that the city's real explosion of color begins.

"Preparations start in May with gre-

enhouse cultivation, and once the risk of night frost has passed, the potted plants and flower towers are moved out to the city's streets and squares," explains Åsa Enholm, a horticultural planner for the city's green spaces.

After the spring bulbs finish flowering, the soil is fertilized and carefully prepared for the summer blooms—a process that must be completed by Midsummer.

Flower Walk – Discover Vaasa in Full Bloom

For the fourth consecutive year, the city invites visitors to take a Flower Walk, a 3.5-kilometer route that passes by the most stunning floral displays in the center. The path winds through Esplanadi Park, around Market Square, and along the waterfront promenade—a perfect summer activity for those who want to enjoy nature's beauty in the heart of the city.

"Flowers have a unique ability to spread joy and create a sense of community. With the Flower Walk, we want to encourage both child-

ren and adults to pause, take a closer look, and appreciate the beauty around them," says Enholm.

For those curious about the flowers adorning the city's streets and squares, a special Summer Flower Brochure is available for download on the city's website. It lists all the species and their locations, making it easy to find your favorites.

More Than Just Decoration – Flowers at Work

Vaasa's floral displays aren't just beautiful—they also play an important role in the city's environment and well-being:

Biodiversity: The flowers attract bees, butterflies, and other pollinators essential to the ecosystem.

Urban Environment: Greenery and blooms improve air quality and help mitigate heatwaves.

Mental Health: Studies show that flowers and green spaces positively impact people's well-being.

This year, extra attention has been

given to extending the flowering period by combining different species that bloom in succession throughout the summer.

A Growing Tradition

Vaasa's floral displays have become a beloved tradition eagerly anticipated each spring. The project is a perfect example of how small details can make a big difference in urban spaces.

"It's wonderful to see how the flowers transform the cityscape and spark positive conversations. Many people stop to take photos or simply enjoy the scents," says Enholm with a smile.

For the best experience, take a stroll during the Midsummer weekend when the displays are at their peak. And don't forget your camera!

Download the Summer Flower Brochure (https://www.vaasa.fi/app/uploads/2025/04/kukkaesite_2025.pdf) to plan your own floral tour of Vaasa.

SOURCE: [vaasa.fi](https://www.vaasa.fi)



SUMMER READING



Fisherman and businessman in a modern version

This short story is available in different versions in several countries. One version is dedicated to Paulo Coelho. Here is a slightly updated version.

The big city businessman was on vacation in a small coastal town. One morning he saw a simple fisherman sitting casually in his boat next to the pier, coffee cup in his hand and a small catch of fish beside him. The businessman became curious and approached.

"Good morning!" said the businessman. "You seem to have a nice catch for the day. How long did it take you to fish for it?"

"Good morning," replied the fisherman. "It didn't take long, maybe a few hours."

The businessman looked confused. "Why don't you stay outside longer and catch more fish?"

The fisherman smiled and calmly replied: "I have had enough to support my family and myself today. The rest of the time I enjoy life."

"But what will you do for the rest of the day?" asked the businessman.

"I sleep a little longer in the morning, fish a little, play with my kids, have a siesta with my wife, and in the evening I go to the bar where I drink coffee and play guitar with my friends. I live a full and happy life."

A businessman who was very successful and always thought about business could not understand it. "I have an MBA from a prestigious university and I can help you. If you spent more time fishing, you could catch more fish. Over time, you can buy a larger boat and maybe several boats. Eventually, you could have a whole fleet of fishing boats."

The fisherman listened politely and nodded. "And then what would I do?"

"Thanks to the increased catch, you were able to open your own fish factory, eliminate middlemen and sell directly to retailers. You could move to a bigger city and run your business from there."

"And how long would all this last?" asked the fisherman.

"Maybe 15-20 years," the businessman replied.

"So what?" asked the fisherman.

The businessman laughed and said: "The best is coming! When the time is right, you can sell the company and become very rich. You could live like a king and retire with big money."

The fisherman thought for a moment, and then asked, "And then what should I do?"

"Then," said the businessman with a smile, "you can move to a small coastal town, sleep a little longer in the morning, fish a little, play with your children, have a siesta with your wife, and in the evening go to a bar where you can drink coffee and play guitar with your friends."

The fisherman smiled and looked at the businessman. "But that's exactly what I'm doing now. Why wait 20 years to do something I already enjoy?"

The businessman was speechless. He suddenly realized that he had lost the meaning of life in pursuit of success and prosperity.

And so he walked away, a little wiser than before, while the fisherman returned to his simple and happy life.

SUMMER READING

FAIRY TALE

The birch and the star – a timeless fairy tale with a strong connection to our time



The Birch and the Star is one of Finland's most famous fairy tales.

Most of us read it in elementary school, but many did not understand the tragic historical background at the time. The fairy tale was first published in 1852 in the Swedish-language fairy tale collection Sagor and has since touched readers across generations.

A journey home through suffering

The story is about two siblings – a boy and a girl – who were abducted to Russia during the Great War (1713–1721). Their only memory of home is a birch tree in the yard, where the birds used to sing in the mornings, and a star that shone through the branches in the evenings.

Despite warnings, they set off on a long and dangerous journey home. After a year of hiking, led by two small birds, they finally find their parents' farm. The parents, who have mourned their lost children, get an unspeakable joy when they are reunited. The children then realize that the birds that showed the way were their dead sisters in angelic form.

Great wrath – not just history

The subject is strikingly topical. This summer, the opera *Isoviha* 1713–1721 was staged at the Ilmajoki Music Festival, with the theme of The Suffering of the Great Wrath. The performances were sold out – but tickets can already be bought for next year's production.

But this fairy tale is not just a historical story. Today, in Russia's war against Ukraine, thousands of Ukrainian children have been forcibly relocated to Russia. The similarities are shocking.

Zacharias Topelius' own family history

The fairy tale has a real basis. Topelius' grandfather, Kristoffer Toppelius, was abducted as a boy during the Great War of 1714 from Oulu (Oulu) to Russia. There he was adopted by a Russian couple, given a new name and a Russian upbringing. Years later, he escaped and wandered west, towards sunset, until he reached Vyborg and was able to return to Sweden. Miraculously, he met his mother in Stockholm harbor – a scene that later inspired the fairy tale's re-

union. When he came home, the same birch was still standing in the yard, and through its branches the evening star could be glimpsed. This strong image became the heart of the Birch and the star.

A fairy tale that continues to speak

Topelius himself said that a true fairy tale always carries a deep truth. The Birch and the Star is not just about the past – it reminds us that history repeats itself, and that courage, hope and love for home can overcome even the darkest violence.

Part of the text is based on Wikipedia's text about this fairy tale (Creative Commons Attribution/Share-Alike)

FAIRY TALE

Zacharias Topelius The Birch and the Star

The language of the fairy tale has been modernized

A long, long time ago, during a difficult time in Finland, when war and misery spread sorrow over the country, it happened that two siblings – a little boy and a little girl – were abducted far away to a foreign land. There they lived with kind people who took care of them, and they grew up safe and well taken care of. But despite everything they got there, they always longed to go back to their real home, to their parents and the small farm they had come from.

One day they heard that the war was finally over and that anyone who wanted to could return to Finland.

"We want to go home!" the children said immediately.

The adults who took care of them shook their heads. "Why do you want that? Here you have everything you need – food, clothes, a warm home. In Finland, only poverty and sorrow await. Your parents are probably gone now, and the house you lived in may not even be there."

But the children replied, "It doesn't matter. We still want to go home."

They tried to forget their longing, but it only grew stronger. One night, when the moon was shining brightly, the boy whispered to his sister, "Are you sleeping?"

"No," she said, "I think of our home."

"Then there are two of us," said the boy. "Come, let's go home now. I feel in my heart that it is right."

Then they packed their things and sneaked away during the bright night.

The way home

"But how are we going to find it?" the girl wondered anxiously when they had come a bit.

"We're going northwest," the brother said. "There the sun sets in the evening, and there is



our home. And we look for a large birch tree in the yard – where the birds used to sing in the mornings. And in the evenings a star shone through the leaves."

"But what if we meet wild animals or dangerous people?" said the girl, holding his hand tightly.

"God protects us," the boy said. "Remember that prayer we learned when we were little?"

"Wherever I turn in the world, my happiness is in God's hands."

The girl nodded, and they walked on, brave after all.

The birds that showed the way

Days passed, and sometimes they became uncertain on the way. Once they came to a crossroads where two paths divided. They didn't know which one to take—until they heard two small birds chirping in the trees to the left.

"Listen!" said the boy. "They show us the right way. Maybe it's God's angels who help us."

The girl smiled, "Yes, perhaps the angels have dressed themselves like birds so that we can understand."

Then they followed the birds, which flew from branch to branch before them. Every day they found berries and clear springs to drink from, and every night they found a soft bed of moss



to sleep on. It was as if nature itself took care of them.

Over mountains and rivers

After many weeks, the country became hilly and difficult to go through.

"How are we going to get over the mountains?" sighed the girl.

"I'll carry you," the brother said, and so he did.

Later they came to wide rivers.

"How are we going to get across the water?"

"There's a boat!" said the boy, and just as if by a miracle there was always a little boat or a log to float on.

Finally – at home?

One beautiful Whitsun evening, after almost two years of wandering, they came to a small farm. There stood a large birch tree with pale green leaves, and through the branches shone a single bright star in the sky.

"There it is!" cried the boy. "Our birch! Our star!"

They ran into the yard, their hearts pounding with both joy and fear. Maybe the parents were dead? Maybe they didn't recognize them?

They sneaked up to the cabin and listened. Inside, a man and a woman sat and talked about their children who had disappeared during the war.

"If only they could come back," the woman said.

Then the children could not hold on any longer. They opened the door and stepped inside.

"Don't you recognize us?" they said in trembling voices.

And so they had the greatest joy in the world – their parents hugged them, cried and thanked God.

The angels who have come along

"But how did you find your way home?" the mother wondered.

"It was the birds," said the girl. "They showed us all the way. I think it was our little brothers and sisters who died – they became angels and helped us."

The boy nodded. "And now we're home. Forever."

The father smiled and put his hand on their heads. "Life is a long walk, my children. But if you always have God in your heart and the star as your guide, you will always come home – in the end."

And so they lived happily together, and no one ever forgot the wonderful journey home to the birch and the star.

Because sometimes, when you long enough – **you find your way home.**

MUSEUM

VAASA MARITIME MUSEUM

The Seamen's Mission's 150th Anniversary Exhibition at Vaasa Maritime Museum Summer 2025



Vaasa, a city that breathes the sea and its history, has the honor of hosting the Finnish Seamen's Mission's 150th-anniversary exhibition this summer.

The Maritime Museum in Palo-saari Sound offers a perfect and atmospheric setting for this unique dive into the past, showcasing the lives of seafarers and the church's significance as their support. The exhibition opened its doors in late May and will be open to the public throughout the summer, inviting everyone interested in maritime history to explore this fascinating heritage.

Vaasa was once a significant center for shipping and maritime trade, with traditions that still live on strongly. The Maritime Museum's permanent exhibition is itself a tribute to local maritime heritage, comprehensively presenting everything from 19th-century shipbuilding to today's cruise liners. Fascinating artifacts, detailed models, shipwreck finds, and old photographs offer a glimpse into the daily lives and adventures

of seafarers of yesteryear. The Seamen's Mission's anniversary exhibition fits perfectly into this environment – it's like two historical currents meeting and reinforcing each other.

The Seamen's Mission's Incredible Journey – 150 Years of Support and Hope

The history of the Finnish Seamen's Mission is a story of dedication and adaptation. Founded in 1875, the association was born out of a concrete need: to help Finnish seafarers abroad, who were often without language skills, financially struggling, and socially isolated. Early on, the Seamen's Mission's services were also used by immigrants and other travelers, whose challenges were similar.

The exhibition offers a peek into the Seamen's Mission's early years and the motivations behind its founding. How did the appeals of Johan Cordt Harmens Storjohann, a Norwegian seamen's pastor, lead to the association's creation? How did the first Finnish seamen's pastor, Elis Bergroth, begin his work

in distant Grimsby in 1880, laying the foundation for extensive international operations? The exhibition answers these questions and sheds light on how the Seamen's Mission established its activities with ship visits, hospital and prison calls, cafeteria services, and reading rooms – providing Finns with a place where language, culture, and faith felt familiar far from home.

A Story of Development and Adaptation

The Seamen's Mission's history is also a narrative of continuous change. As seafaring transformed from the 1960s onwards – ships grew larger, crews smaller, and ports moved away from city centers – the Seamen's Mission adapted. Staff began visiting ships more frequently, ensuring that help and support reached seafarers where they needed it. Later, with Finland's EU membership, operations expanded to non-port cities, such as Brussels, demonstrating the Seamen's Mission's ability to identify new needs and serve all Finns on the move.

Today, the Seamen's Mission is a versatile cultural center and a multi-functional hub promoting social well-being. The Vaasa exhibition shows how the association has evolved from "The Association for Providing Pastoral Care to Finnish Seamen in Foreign Ports" (its original name) to its current form, "The Finnish Seamen's Mission ry." It's a story of an organization that has always been present, adapted, and served Finns at sea and around the world for a century and a half.

A Unique Summer Experience in Vaasa

The Seamen's Mission's 150th-anniversary exhibition at the Vaasa Maritime Museum is open all summer, from June 2 to August 29, 2025, Monday to Friday from 1 PM to 6 PM. It's an excellent opportunity to delve deeper into the Seamen's Mission's significant work and simultaneously experience Vaasa's rich maritime history. Don't miss this unique opportunity – it's a journey that illuminates the grand story of a small nation from the perspective of its seafarers and their supporters.



HEALTHCARE

WELFARE REGION

How Customers Can Avoid Queues and Prevent Long Wait Times in Healthcare



Ostrobothnia Welfare Region implements new strategies to tackle overloaded phone lines and reduce patient waiting times

Healthcare phone lines across Finland's Ostrobothnia Welfare Region have experienced significant congestion during the early months of 2025, with approximately 92% of calls being answered on the same day compared to 97.5% during the same period last year. The region, which serves around 176,000 residents with over 8,000 employees, is now implementing comprehensive measures to address these delays while encouraging patients to adopt smarter approaches to accessing care.

The healthcare needs assessment phone line (06 218 9000) remains the most familiar contact method for patients, but new digital channels are expanding options for different situations. Peak congestion occurs between 8-9 AM and 11 AM-12 PM, with early weekdays experiencing heavier traffic than later in the week.

Strategic Patient Guidance

Healthcare officials are urging patients to consider their role in reducing queue formation by avoiding peak times and choosing alternative contact methods when appropriate. "We hope that each customer contacts us through only one channel," explains Ward Manager Erja Lahti. "For example, queuing both by phone and chat means the queue gets longer in

both channels. Similarly, we hope that people leave only one callback request."

The region has developed specific guidelines for patients to optimize their healthcare access:

For Non-Urgent Matters: Patients should contact healthcare services in the afternoon rather than during morning rush hours. Non-urgent issues include long-standing musculoskeletal problems, vaccinations, chronic disease follow-up visits, or requests for medical certificates. **For Urgent Matters:** Immediate morning contact is recommended for pressing health concerns such as urinary tract symptoms, ear pain, eye infections, wounds or bruises, flu symptoms, fever lasting over a week, or persistent abdominal pain.

Digital Healthcare Innovation

The region is piloting digital healthcare solutions to distribute patient load more effectively. Test group participants can now access nurse chat services, enabling direct communication with healthcare professionals who can schedule appointments or arrange remote doctor consultations as needed. A significant development is the integration of the Omaolo.fi digital symptom assessment platform, available 24/7. Patients complete symptom evaluations online and receive either self-care instructions or direct contact from healthcare staff through Omaolo messaging. This system operates continuously, providing round-the-clock access to initial healthcare guidance. During evenings and weekends, patients can access healthcare needs assessment through the emergency

assistance number 116 117. This service is particularly important for those considering emergency department visits, offering self-care guidance, emergency department referrals when necessary, or remote doctor consultations.

Short-term Solutions

Regional authorities presented a comprehensive situation analysis to the new regional board on June 9, outlining immediate interventions to address current challenges. Digital healthcare reception services have been introduced for half the population as a trial program, while additional staff recruitment through project funding is underway. Healthcare stations and community health centers are increasing their support for callback services, with ongoing treatment calls being directed to appropriate reception desks. Staff guidelines are being simplified to improve efficiency and reduce processing times.

Long-term Healthcare Transformation

The region's strategic vision includes several innovative approaches to healthcare delivery. Direct contact with personal care teams for long-term treatment relationships is being developed, while artificial intelligence integration for healthcare needs assessment support is under consideration.

Reception service procedures are being refined specifically for healthcare needs assessment, with staff participating in queue-free service training programs currently in progress. Management teams have conducted on-site evaluations at facilities in Mustasaari, Vaasa, and

Pietarsaari, gathering improvement suggestions directly from frontline staff.

Systemic Challenges and Solutions Sector Manager Pia-Maria Sjöström attributes the spring queuing issues primarily to the implementation of new patient information systems and associated learning curves. "Resolving the situation requires more unified operating methods, but above all, cooperation between our services," she explains. "We hope to soon handle all callbacks within the same day and reduce waiting times."

The welfare region's leadership monitors the situation daily, demonstrating commitment to rapid resolution of current challenges. The comprehensive approach combines technological innovation, process optimization, and strategic resource allocation to create a more efficient healthcare system.

This transformation represents a broader shift toward patient-centered healthcare delivery, where technology and traditional services work together to provide accessible, timely care. By encouraging patient participation in queue reduction strategies while simultaneously improving service infrastructure, the region aims to create a sustainable model for healthcare access that benefits both patients and healthcare providers.

The success of these initiatives will likely influence healthcare delivery models across Finland, as regions seek to balance increasing demand with available resources while maintaining high-quality patient care standards.

COTTAGE LIVING

KORSHOLM

The Finnish Home Owners' Association: Korsholm Offers Finland's Cheapest Cottage Living



Cottage owners in Finland face widely varying municipal fees depending on location. A comparison by The Finnish Home Owners' Association (Suomen Omakotiliitto) reveals that Korsholm is the most affordable place for summer cottages, while Savonlinna remains the most expensive.

The Finnish Home Owners' Association has released its annual comparison of cottage-related municipal fees, examining property taxes, electricity transmission, and waste charges in

the 25 largest cottage municipalities. The results show that costs for owners can vary by as much as double depending on the location.

Savonlinna Most Expensive, Korsholm Cheapest

In Savonlinna, property taxes, electricity, and waste fees for a holiday home and plot total €1,279 per year. Kuopio, Kangasala, and Mikkeli follow as the most expensive locations.

Meanwhile, Korsholm in Ostrobothnia offers Finland's most affordable cottage living—with the same fees adding up to just €634 per year. Other budget-friendly options include

Oulu, Pori, and Rovaniemi. On average, cottage-related municipal fees amount to €964 annually.

Puumala Added to This Year's Comparison

This year, Puumala was included as a new location in the study, allowing cottage owners to make even broader cost comparisons. The 25 municipalities in the survey have a combined total of around 149,000 summer cottages, representing roughly 30% of Finland's cottages.

Better Information for Better Choices

"We want to highlight the costs faced by cottage owners, which

vary significantly between municipalities," says Marju Silander, Executive Director of the Finnish Detached Houses Federation. "With this data, owners can better assess their expenses and explore ways to influence them."

One goal of the comparison is to encourage municipalities to compete for cottage owners by offering reasonable fees. Mustasaari's cost-effective conditions could make it an increasingly attractive destination for summer vacations.

(Source: The Finnish Home Owners' Association)

STUDYING IN VAASA

VAASA AS A STUDENT CITY

Vaasa's big secrets are revealed: The city rises to fourth place on the Finnish student map!



studentum.fi has spoken. And the message is clear: Vaasa is no longer just a peaceful coastal town.

It has grown from the dark depths of Finland's best student cities and has risen to fourth place in the comparison in 2025. What is the real cost of this increase? An annual, mysteriously conducted studentum.fi survey hides a mystery. How has Vaasa managed to get into the top five among 27 university cities and surpassed Tampere and Oulu, among others? Is it a coincidence, or is there something darker and more attractive in Vaasa that attracts students? The results of the survey, which is based on 1156 responses collected during October–

December 2024, make frightening reading. Helsinki, Rauma and Turku still consider their top positions to be the gloomy guardians of the Finnish student field.

TOP 10 student cities 2025

**Helsinki
Rauma
Turku
Vaasa
Tampere
Espoo
Oulu
Lappeenranta
Jyväskylä
Mikkeli**

But Vaasa, this unexpected challenger, is now hot on their heels. What is it that makes Vaasa so dangerously att-

ractive? Studentum.fi Krista Kalaja reveals a secret: "Vaasa constantly scores in the survey with several different parameters."

Even? Or is it a well-thought-out strategy? The city stands out especially in terms of indicators measuring student life, opportunities for further studies and working life. But what is the truth behind this shiny picture? Kalaja continues, perhaps a little trembling in her voice: "The work situation is challenging for highly educated people throughout the country, especially among recent graduates. However, unemployment in Vaasa is lower than in the rest of Finland, which is also reflected in the survey conducted by studentum.fi. Vaasa is in second place in the comparison of career opportuni-

ties." Is Vaasa the savior in distress or is there something that binds them closer together than they think? Three deadly features In the survey, the respondents highlighted the three most important qualities of a good student city. They are: High-quality teaching (62.20%): Is the teaching in Vaasa really superior, or is it a hypnotic illusion? Affordable housing (54.50%): What is the real price of this affordability? And why does it attract so many? Good career prospects (47.75%): These opportunities are like enticing siren songs that draw students to their destiny.

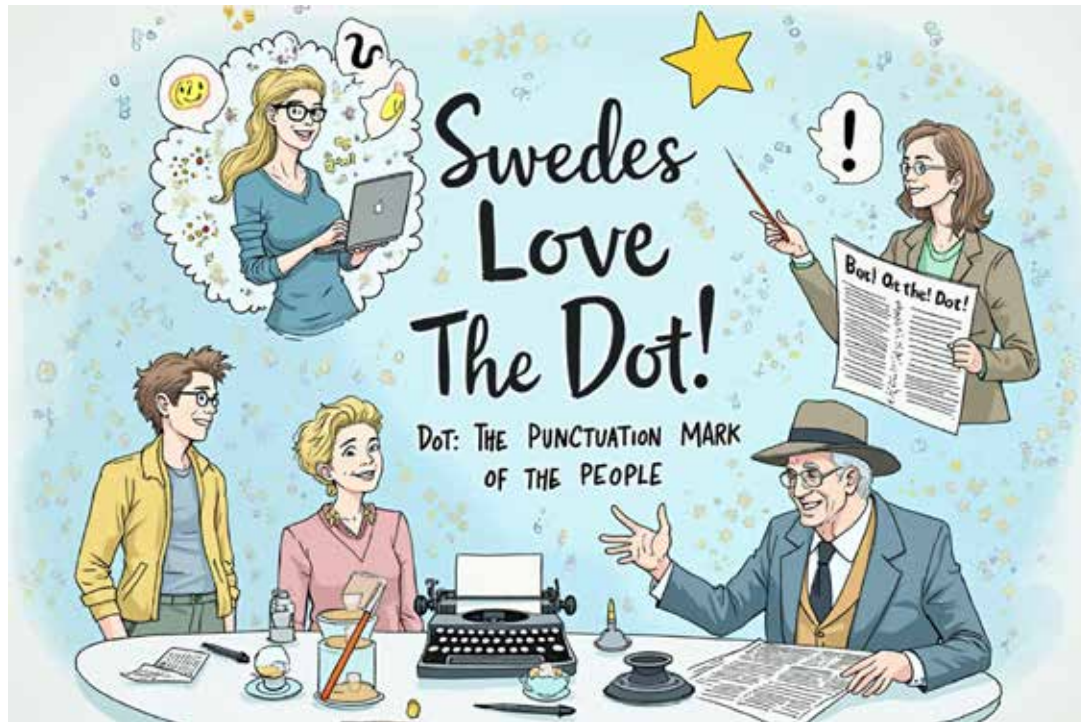
Other parameters, such as good opportunities for further studies and a lively student life, strengthen Vaasa's position.

Source: Studentum.fi

LANGUAGE

PUNCTUATION MARKS

Dot and exclamation mark are favorites



A new survey reveals which punctuation marks Swedes love the most – and the results show clear generational differences in our relationship to punctuation.

The Swedes have spoken, and the winner is a given: the dot reigns supreme as the most beloved punctuation mark in the country. But closely followed by the exclamation mark, which creates an interesting dynamic between the practical and the emotional in our writing.

The extensive survey, which was conducted by Novus on behalf of Språktidningen in March, shows that 18 percent of Swedes choose the dot as their favorite punctuation mark. The exclamation mark comes in a strong second place with 17 percent of the votes, while the comma takes bronze with 15 percent.

Anders Svensson, editor-in-chief of Språktidningen, sees the result as natural. The point is simply indispensable in our

written language, which explains its popularity. At the same time, the high position of the exclamation mark reflects our longing to express emotions and commitment in the text.

But the survey also reveals fascinating generation gaps. Among young adults between the ages of 18 and 34, only 12 percent choose the point as their favorite – a marked difference from the older population. This phenomenon is explained by the impact of digitalization on our written language. In the culture of texting and chat conversations, the point has taken on a whole new meaning: it is often perceived as aggressive or angry by younger users.

"It's no surprise that younger generations are skeptical about the point," Svensson explains. "In informal digital contexts, the point has become charged with negative emotions – something that affects its popularity among young people."

Another remarkable discovery is the special position of the semicolon in academic circles.

While only 7 percent of the population generally prefers this sophisticated punctuation, the figure rises dramatically to 19 percent among students. Even people with a university education show a marked preference for semicolons, with 9 percent choosing it as a favorite.

These punctuation marks are most popular in Sweden:

1. Dot: 18%
2. Exclamation mark: 17 percent
3. Commas: 15 percent
4. Three points: 9 percent
5. Semicolon: 7 percent
6. Dash: 5 percent
7. Question mark: 3 percent
8. Brackets: 2 percent
9. Colon: 2 percent
- Don't know: 32 percent

According to Svensson, semicolons function as a kind of linguistic sta-

tus marker. The complex regulations surrounding its use make it a tool for linguistic connoisseurs – a kind of intellectual accessory in the written language. The fact that it is so warmly embraced by highly educated and students confirms its role as a certificate of education.

The survey included a total of 1,043 people and is representative of the Swedish people between the ages of 18 and 84. The result reflects not only our linguistic preferences, but also how digital communication is reshaping our relationship with traditional punctuation.

Interestingly, as many as 32 percent of respondents answered "don't know" to the question about favorite punctuation marks, suggesting that many have not reflected on their relationship to these everyday but important linguistic tools.

The list is supplemented by three points (9 percent), dashes (5 percent), question marks (3 percent), and parentheses and colons, both of which received 2 percent of the votes. The result provides a unique insight into the linguistic soul of Swedes and shows how our writing habits continue to evolve in line with technology.

AI-NEWS

CLAUDE OPUS 4 , a review



Revolutionary AI Model Claude Opus 4 Raises the Bar for Artificial Intelligence

A new generation of AI arrives with unprecedented capabilities in coding, creative writing, and autonomous task completion. Anthropic has unveiled Claude Opus 4, marking what many experts consider a significant leap forward in artificial intelligence technology. The latest addition to the Claude 4 family promises to transform how we interact with AI, offering capabilities that extend far beyond simple question-and-answer exchanges.

Breaking New Ground in AI Performance

Claude Opus 4's most remarkable feature is its ability to maintain autonomous coding sessions lasting up to seven hours, representing a dramatic improvement in AI attention span and persistence. This advancement allows the model to tackle complex programming challenges without constant human supervision, effectively functioning as a digital collaborator rather than

just a quick-response tool. The model has achieved record-breaking performance on industry benchmarks, particularly in software engineering tasks. Claude Opus 4 scored an unprecedented 72.5% on the SWE-bench coding evaluation, significantly outperforming previous AI models including OpenAI's GPT-4.1.

What Makes Opus 4 Different?

Unlike earlier AI systems that provided rapid but shallow responses, Claude Opus 4 employs what Anthropic calls "hybrid thinking." The model switches from lightning response speed for simple tasks to extended thinking for deeper reasoning on complex problems. This adaptive approach allows it to provide quick answers when appropriate while dedicating substantial computational resources to challenging tasks that require careful analysis.

The model excels across multiple domains. It outperforms previous Claude models on creative writing, in addition to exceptional visual taste, making it particularly suited for artistic and literary endeavors. According to Anthropic, the model "can analyze thousands of data sources, execute long-running tasks, write human-quality content, and perform complex actions".

A Writer's New Companion

For aspiring novelists and professional writers, Claude Opus 4 represents a powerful creative partner. The model's enhanced capabilities in creative writing, combined with its ability to maintain context over extended periods, make it well-suited for long-form writing projects like novels. Writers can collaborate with the AI on plot development, character creation, dialogue refinement, and even complete chapter drafts while maintaining narrative consistency throughout lengthy works.

The model's 200,000-token context window means it can keep track of complex storylines, character relationships, and thematic elements across an entire book-length manuscript, providing coherent suggestions and maintaining stylistic consistency from beginning to end.

Internet Access and Real-Time Information

Claude Opus 4 does have access to current information through web search capabilities, allowing it to incorporate up-to-date facts, recent events, and contemporary references into its responses. This internet connectivity sets it apart from earlier AI models that were limited to their training data, enabling more relevant and timely assistance

across various tasks.

The Coding Revolution

Perhaps most impressive is Opus 4's programming prowess. Both Claude Opus 4 and Sonnet 4 were specifically tuned to perform well on programming tasks, making them invaluable tools for software developers. The model can handle everything from debugging existing code to developing complex applications from scratch, working autonomously for hours without losing focus or context.

Looking Forward

The release of Claude Opus 4 signals a new phase in AI development, where artificial intelligence systems can serve as genuine collaborators on complex, time-intensive projects. Whether you're writing the next great American novel, developing software applications, or analyzing complex datasets, Opus 4 offers capabilities that were unimaginable just a few years ago. As AI continues to evolve at this rapid pace, Claude Opus 4 sets a new standard for what we can expect from artificial intelligence partners in our professional and creative endeavors. The age of AI as a mere answering machine appears to be giving way to something far more sophisticated: true digital collaboration.

CLIMATE CHANGE

CLIMATE CHANGE

Spring 2025 Climate Report



The latest climate bulletin from the Copernicus Climate Change Service reveals a story of dramatic contrasts and concerning trends across Europe and globally during spring 2025.

While May marked the second-warmest globally on record, parts of northwestern Europe experienced their driest spring conditions since monitoring began.

Global Temperature Milestones

May 2025 achieved the distinction of being the second-warmest May ever recorded globally, with an average surface air temperature of 15.79°C—0.53°C above the 1991-2020 baseline. This places it just 0.12°C cooler than the record-breaking May 2024. More significantly, May's global temperature sat 1.40°C above pre-industrial levels (1850-1900), momentarily interrupting an unprecedented streak of 21 out of 22 months where global temperatures exceeded the critical 1.5°C threshold above pre-industrial baselines.

According to Carlo Buontempo, director of the Copernicus Climate Change Service, this brief dip below 1.5°C offers only temporary

respite. "We do expect the 1.5°C threshold to be exceeded again in the near future due to the continued warming of the climate system," he warned. The 12-month period from June 2024 to May 2025 averaged 1.57°C above pre-industrial levels, underscoring the persistent warming trend.

Spring 2025 as a whole (March through May) ranked as the second-warmest on record globally, trailing only spring 2024. The most pronounced warming occurred across west central Asia, northeastern Russia, Greenland, and western Antarctica, while cooler-than-average conditions affected Hudson Bay, southern and northeast Africa, India, northern Australia, and eastern Antarctica.

Europe's Tale of Two Climates

Europe presented a stark geographical divide during spring 2025. While the continent's average May temperature of 12.98°C fell 0.29°C below the recent baseline, this masked dramatic regional variations. Eastern Europe, stretching from eastern Italy and the Balkans to Finland, experienced below-average temperatures, while western Europe saw warmer-than-normal conditions.

The most alarming story emerged from northwestern Europe's hydrological crisis. Parts of this region

recorded their lowest precipitation and soil moisture levels since records began in 1979, creating what Copernicus describes as "exceptionally dry" conditions. The drought's severity extended beyond surface conditions—river flows across Europe dropped to their lowest spring levels since monitoring started in 1992, indicating the depth and persistence of the dry spell.

Ocean and Sea Ice Dynamics

The world's oceans continued their warming trend, with May 2025 sea surface temperatures averaging 20.79°C across the 60°S–60°N range—the second-highest May reading on record, falling just 0.14°C short of May 2024's peak. The northeastern North Atlantic experienced a notable marine heatwave, with some areas recording their highest May sea surface temperatures ever documented.

Arctic sea ice extent in May sat 2% below average, marking the ninth-lowest May extent in 47 years of satellite monitoring. Most concerning ice loss occurred along northern Eurasia's coast, particularly in the Barents and Laptev Seas.

Global Precipitation Patterns

Beyond Europe's drought, the global precipitation story revealed widespread dry conditions affecting multiple continents. Western North

America, the Horn of Africa, central Asia, China, and southern Australia all experienced drier-than-average spring conditions. Conversely, eastern North America, Alaska, Russia, southern Africa, and northern Australia saw increased precipitation.

These patterns reflect the complex interplay of global climate systems, with some regions experiencing intensified wet conditions while others face severe drought—a hallmark of climate change impacts on the global water cycle.

The Copernicus data, compiled from billions of measurements from satellites, ships, aircraft, and weather stations worldwide, provides crucial insights into our changing climate. While May 2025's brief drop below the 1.5°C warming threshold might seem encouraging, climate scientists emphasize this represents a temporary fluctuation rather than a reversal of long-term warming trends.

The combination of record-breaking global temperatures, extreme regional droughts, and continued ocean warming underscores the urgent need for comprehensive climate action. As northwestern Europe grapples with its driest spring in decades and global temperatures continue their relentless climb, the data serves as both a warning and a call to action for policymakers and citizens alike.

WASA DAILY
Nr 23 Sunday, June 8, 2025
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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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E-CIGARETTES

NICOTINE

THL: E-cigarette and Nicotine Pouch Use Has Tripled in Finland

A insidious threat is spreading among Finnish youth. New figures from THL reveal a grim reality: the use of e-cigarettes and nicotine pouches has exploded.

Particularly among girls, even those who have never smoked tobacco, the willingness to experiment has increased alarmingly. Is this new wave of nicotine threatening to undo decades of work in preventing youth smoking?

Finnish ninth-graders have fallen victim to a new, invisible enemy. In 2024, e-cigarettes and nicotine pouches became the most commonly used tobacco and nicotine products. The use of e-cigarettes has tripled in just five years: from seven percent in 2019 to a staggering 21 percent last year. The situation is critical, and its consequences could be devastating.

Alarming Rise Among Girls – Have Boys Taken a Step Back?

The darkest twist lies in the fact that experimenting with e-cigarettes has increased particularly among girls who have never touched tobacco. In 2024, a startling 18 percent of non-smoking girls had tried e-cigarettes – a 13 percentage point increase since 2019. This is a direct blow to decades of preventive work. What is driving young girls to these dangerous products?

Ironically, at the same time, experimenting with e-cigarettes among non-smoking boys has decreased from 21 percent to 14 percent. Have the roles shifted? And what is the invisible force

that draws young girls into a new, nicotine-addictive darkness? Nearly half of the young people who tried e-cigarettes had never smoked tobacco. This is proof that new nicotine products are creating an entirely new generation of addicts.

Nicotine pouches have also found their way into young people's daily lives. In the past 30 days, they had been used by 20 percent of boys and 10 percent of girls. The numbers are cold, but behind them lie thousands of young lives at risk.

"Nicotine Product Use Is Always Harmful to Young People"

THL's special expert Hanna Ollila warns: "The results show that new nicotine products also attract young people who do not smoke. Nicotine product use is always harmful to young people because lung and brain development is still ongoing." This is not just a warning; it is a cry for help. Nicotine affects young brains differently than adult brains, leaving behind permanent damage.

The situation is further complicated by the fact that simultaneous use of different tobacco and nicotine products is common, especially among boys. Over half of boys who used nicotine products resorted to two or three different products. A shocking 21 percent used all four – cigarettes, snus, e-cigarettes, and nicotine pouches. Among girls, the use of one (45%) or two (31%) products was most common. This creates a dark web of dependencies from which it is increasingly difficult to escape.



Cannabis and Raising the Age Limit – The Future at Stake

And the dark side of e-cigarettes? They can practically contain any liquid substance. Shockingly, one in ten boys who used e-cigarettes had used cannabis concentrate in them. This is a new, dangerous dimension that demands immediate action.

THL's special expert Otto Ruokolainen calls for further measures: "The entry of new nicotine products into the market challenges the good progress in preventing smoking among young people. Raising the age limit to 20 for all tobacco and nicotine products

should be implemented as soon as possible, as it also reduces the social availability of the products when intermediaries must also be older." Is this the only way to stop this dangerous development?

Smoking among Finnish youth has decreased more than the European average, but this positive trend is now seriously threatened. In 2024, 18 percent of European youth aged 15–16 had smoked in the past 30 days, while the corresponding proportion among Finnish youth was 12 percent. But can we maintain this lead when new, enticing nicotine products creep into young people's lives like thieves in the night?

AI

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

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



**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 re-defining 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.



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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Email: wasadagblad@gmail.com

HOROSCOPE FOR JULY 2025

July Horoscope – The Stars Are Mumblin' (And Maybe Making Some Sense)

July Horoscope – As
Unreliable as Your Sum-
mer Weather App

Aries (Mar 21–Apr 19)
You're full of energy
this July – unfortunately
so is your mosquito
population. Try to avoid
starting arguments at
BBQs. Not everyone
wants to debate the
correct way to grill hal-
louni.

Taurus (Apr 20–May 20)
You seek comfort, and
the stars say you'll
find it – in a hammock
you bought online that
collapses immediately.
Romance is in the air,
but so is pollen. Take
antihistamines.

Gemini (May 21–Jun 20)
This month you'll
finally finish a project!
Just kidding. You'll start
three new ones instead
and forget what the first
one was. Embrace your
chaos – it's charming (to
some people).

Cancer (Jun 21–Jul 22)
It's your season, and
your emotions are
hotter than your sun-
burn. You might cry at
sunsets, stray cats, or
sandwich ads. Go with
it. Everyone loves a soft
crab.

Leo (Jul 23–Aug 22)
You radiate sunshi-
ne – sometimes a bit
too much. Tone it down
before someone mista-
kes you for a solar flare.
Great month to shine,
but wear SPF 50.

Virgo (Aug 23–Sep 22)
You made a spreadsheet
for your holiday, and
somehow still lost your
passport and dignity.
Let go. Sometimes mes-
sy beach hair is the plan.

Libra (Sep 23–Oct 22)
Decisions are hard, es-
pecially when it comes
to choosing an ice cream
flavor. Spoiler: it melts
while you're still deci-
ding. Love is confusing
but sweet – like mango
sorbet.

Scorpio (Oct 23–Nov 21)
Your magnetism is un-
deniable this month –
though mostly to sand,
drama, and old exes.
Dive deep, but not into
shallow beach gossip.

Or do, it's summer.

Sagittarius (Nov 22–
Dec 21)
You want to travel,
explore, and find mean-
ing. You'll mostly find
traffic jams, questiona-
ble Airbnb decor, and
seagulls judging your
snacks. Adventure
awaits, sort of!

Capricorn (Dec 22–Jan
19)
You're working hard
while everyone else
is sipping rosé. Why?
July is literally telling
you to take a break.
Try napping. It builds
character.

Aquarius (Jan 20–Feb
18)
You'll come up with a
brilliant idea at 3 AM.
It involves flip-flops,
NFTs, and a beachside
utopia. Write it down.
Or don't. We'll pretend
we didn't see it.

Pisces (Feb 19–Mar 20)
Dreamy as ever, you
forget where you put
your sunglasses, your
towel, and possibly
your existential dread.
Float along. You're the
inflatable flamingo of
the zodiac.



HUMOUR ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

DRINKING

— Why do you close your eyes while drinking? — The doctor has forbidden me to look too deeply into the glass.

IN THE CHURCH

Healthy advice. The priest notices that most of the audience is sleeping and that one of them has started snoring heavily, which is why he raises his voice and says: — Wouldn't someone be so good as to wake up that snoring brother of ours so that the others could sleep in peace.

MAD LOVE

Love. Young man: — I love you madly! Miss: — Then it is best that you turn to my father. He is a doctor for the mentally ill.

CARAMEL

Lill-Jan has received one large caramel, which he immediately puts in his mouth. Immediately afterwards, he cancels his best scream, because his mouth is closed, the caramel is gone. "What's wrong with Lill-Jan," asks mother. — Kajamel-len, boohää, hää hää! . . . — Have you lost the caramel? — Yes. — And mother and all the aunts start looking for it. — Where did you drop it then... — Buhää, hää — in the stomach.

MARRIED 6 DAYS

— Now we've been married for 6 days, and you don't love me anymore. — But dear Cecilia, of course I love you, but God the Father also rested on the seventh day.

FREE TELEGRAM

Mac Carty from Aberdeen is visiting the U.S.A. One day he

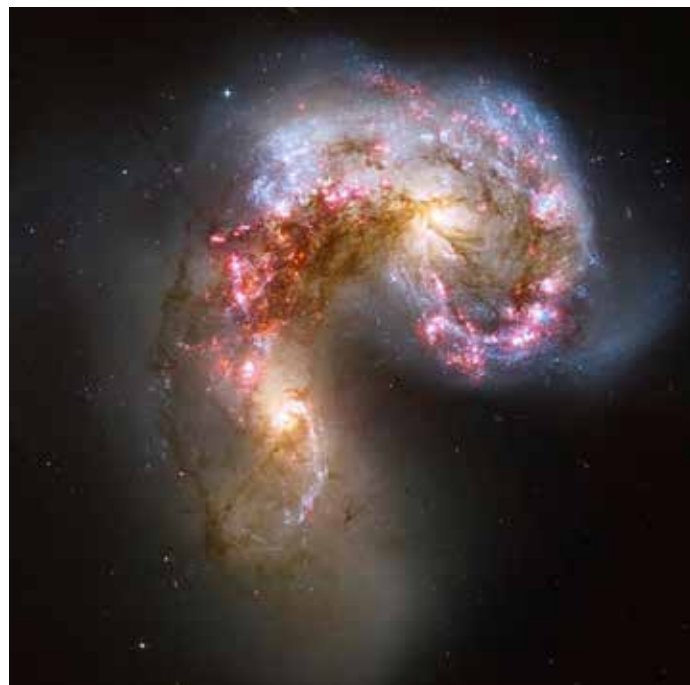
has to send a telegram to a relative. When he asks about the price at the telegraph office, he is told that the sender's name costs nothing.

— Magnificent, says the scout. I am descended from an Indian chief and my name is Iwillarri-vetomorrow.

SLOW AS THE EVENING SKY.

— Yes, feel free to kiss you, Cissi.
— Hmm.
— Are you going to be terribly angry with me if I give you a kiss, Cissi?
— Mnah
— Can I give you a kiss, Cissi?
— I say int
— Do they mean yes or no?
— They say yes, Affe!
— Why don't you want to say them then? Can I kiss you or not?
— Think about it then!
— Yes, I can't give you a kiss!
— Well, now think about it
— Well, yes, kiss you, Cissi?
— Well, think smart, Affe!

Astronomic picture of the week:



Antennae galaxies

This NASA Hubble Space Telescope image of the Antennae galaxies (NGC 4038 & 4039) is the sharpest yet of this merging pair of galaxies. During the course of the collision, billions of stars will be formed. The brightest and most compact of these star birth regions are called super star clusters. The two spiral galaxies started to interact a few hundred million years ago.

Credit;

NASA, ESA, and the Hubble Heritage Team (STScI/AURA)-ESA/Hubble Collaboration
Public domain

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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