



HELSINKI

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Photo Johnny Korkman



CITY AS A LIVING LAB

Ceramic artist Kirsi Kivivirta's work in Arabianranta: stories on bicycling printed on tiles

Helsinki boosts innovation through “Living Labs”, real-life test laboratories

Haaga Hotel in Helsinki investigates the future needs and wishes of hotel guests in experimental hotel rooms. One room is equipped with personalised guest technology: The guest can adjust the room to his/her liking on a control panel and, based on RFID technology, the room recognises the guest on re-entry and customises the room accordingly. The guest bed is equipped with sensors that measure the guest's sleep, and in the morning the bed prints out a report (revealing how the guest sleeps). At night when the room is dark, as soon as the guest steps from the bed onto the floor, led lights go on and lead him/her to the bathroom. Instead of a traditional alarm clock, the guest can select to be woken up by “sunset and bird song” – by wake-up lights which brighten up gradually like the rising sun, accompanied by the onset of recordings of birds at a pre-selected point of time. The bathroom is equipped with an infrared sauna, which does not heat the guest room air like a normal sauna. The guest can order international newspapers and electronic books to a purpose-designed reading monitor.

Another experimental room at Haaga Hotel displays a series of innovations under an ecological theme.

The hotel experiment, called “Finnish Hotel of Tomorrow” www.fhot.fi and run by the Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, is an example of a “Living Lab”, a real-life test environment for new products and services. The Greater Helsinki Region has formalised the concept under the umbrella of “Helsinki Living Labs” www.helsinkilivinglab.fi, a network of currently 8 Labs focusing on innovation in the areas of everyday life where information technology can be used to effect tangible improvement in the quality of life. Some of these Labs are also members of the European Network of Living Labs (an EU-run initiative, www.openlivinglabs.eu) consisting of 51 Labs and aimed at creating a new innovation system within the EU.

Janne Orava, Helsinki Living Lab Process Manager, characterises Helsinki Living Labs, as well as other Labs in Finland, in comparison with other European ones by saying, “Our Labs are well advanced in operating as true

Photo courtesy Helsinki Living Lab



Living Labs. We are in the vanguard in that we are already doing concrete projects.”

Living Labs take Research & Development & Innovation (R&D&I) to a new level. Living Labs are real-life development platforms for products and services where these can be tested with real everyday users. They aim at products and services which are more immediately acceptable for users than those produced by traditional R&D processes and so allow a better success rate. Living Labs are characterised by four key concepts: (1) They are user driven, that

is, the users of products and services under development are an integral part of the R&D&I process, being equal to other players rather than being objects of product development. (2) R&D&I happens in real-life situations where the users live, work and play. (3) A Living Lab is an ecosystem in that the network of all participants can evolve through the process and consist of hundreds of actors. (4) Living Labs are characterised by open innovation – they utilise innovations from other organisations and areas for the best possible outcome.

The immediate goal of Helsinki Living Labs is to create a series of concrete R&D&I projects. Orava says, looking at their course ahead towards the goal, “We have a marathon run ahead of us, and we have only covered the first 195 metres.” (The marathon is 42,195 metres.) One of the first cases completed is for the Finnish retail chain Kesko. This has involved focus groups from various consumer categories, from single people to families and retirees, exploring their purchasing habits and experiences – what they have found annoying, what pleasing – to investigate possibilities for improvement with the help of new electronic services.

Orava comments on Helsinki’s strength in Living Labs: “We’re an ideal lab as a city on the whole because of our physical size.” ■

Helsinki Living Lab: Arabianranta

Helsinki’s Arabianranta suburb www.arabianranta.fi has served as the Living Lab for the Saunalahti Internet company to improve services through the Helsinki Living Lab concept. The area’s residents, students and workers have been contacted for comment and feedback using the area’s exceptional information network – every home and office is served by a fibre optic network. Nearly 20 other development projects besides the Saunalahti case have been carried out in the area.

The Arabianranta suburb is home to the first Living Lab in Helsinki, developed over the last ten years well before



Photo Päivi Kiuru

A ceramic art work by Päivi Kiuru, Maarit Mäkelä and Johanna Rytkölä in Arabianranta

the concept was formalised. It is the most important hub of creative industries and creative people in the Nordic countries. The suburb houses 300 businesses, two-thirds of them in the creative industries and most of them originating from two site incubators. The heart of the area is the University of Art and Design Helsinki UIAH, and the area has 6 other higher education institutions. Still under development, by 2010 Arabianranta will be home to 13,000 students, 10,000 residents and 8,000 employees. It will be a place to study and work in the creative industries, as well as to live in a creative environment, further underscoring the area’s role as a test bed for new innovations. ■

Photo Johnny Korkman



All new Arabianranta construction projects allocate 1-2 per cent of the total budget to art. Above is a work by Kirsi Kivivirta.

Helsinki Living Lab: Forum Virium Helsinki

ConnectedDay brings the everyday life at day care centres to children's parents: this Finnish company provides a service whereby photos and short video clips taken by day care staff with mobile phones are automatically uploaded to a Web-based image journal. Parents can view the journal on personal computers or mobile phones and download material. The service allows parents an opportunity to gain knowledge of their children's stay at day care and participate in their experience.

The service started as an experiment developed at Forum Virium Helsinki in 2005 and tested at selected Helsinki day care centres. Today ConnectedDay provides the service to approximately 250 customers in Finland, the USA, the UK and Singapore.

Forum Virium Helsinki www.forumvirium.fi is a platform where companies, R&D organisations and the public sector partner to create new market-driven digital services for everyday life. It acts as a matchmaker between the



Photo courtesy ConnectedDay

partners to spur innovation. Areas for innovation range from traffic to learning, health care and the home. ■

Helsinki Living Lab: Well Life Center

Well Life Center is home to CaringTV, an interactive audio-visual service that helps the elderly cope alone at home: a studio in Well Life Center's headquarters in the Otaniemi science park in the Greater Helsinki Region sends regular live TV programmes on everyday situations via a broadband connection to elderly people's homes, such as cooking instructions or exercises that can be done at the TV set at home. The audience – at this stage a selected group of elderly people in the region acting as a test group – can speak back to and been seen by the studio staff and other members of the audience. In this way CaringTV creates a virtual community for the participants. The results gained so far prove that CaringTV increases elderly people's sense of security, activity levels, and opportunities for social interaction.

Well Life Center www.wlc.fi, run by the Laurea University of Applied Sciences, gathers together both public- and private-sector partners including service providers and technology organisations to develop new concepts for well-being. These concepts are meant to provide answers to increasing demands for welfare services, in the face of increasing numbers of care receivers and decreasing numbers of care givers. The Center houses a number of laboratories for knowledge creation and product development. They produce sustainable solutions for living and working at home. One is an Activity Lab, which is used to measure people's physical capacities. The Habitat Lab studies what the home should be like for people with reduced capacities. The One-to-One Lab studies how to build for the future. ■

New city gallery to learn about Helsinki's future

Helsinki is in a process of major and fast change, with vast new downtown areas and suburbs under planning and development. Helsinki's City Planning Department makes it easy to understand the process and its outcomes with the help of a new information centre and exhibition space named Laituri, opened in June 2008 in a former bus terminal building adjacent to the Kamppi Center in the heart of the city. Laituri is also a place for interaction: visitors have an opportunity to give feedback to the City on new plans and participate in the discussion on development. A permanent exhibit at Laituri shows the future Helsinki – what the new areas will look like. Other displays present Helsinki's architecture as well as city and traffic planning. See laituri.hel.fi ■



Photo Corem

The Laituri exhibition and meeting place downtown Helsinki, run by Helsinki City Planning department





Helsinki builds new tram lines

Trams are a distinctive Helsinki trademark. The city centre is served by a dense network of tram lines, and acquiring more. A new line, Line 9, started operations in early August 2008, taking the total number of lines to 12. Further extension of the network will go into operation at the turn of the year.

Trams are a low-cost and environmentally friendly form of transportation. One passenger kilometre on a tram produces 68 grammes of carbon dioxide on average, while the amount is 250 grammes in a car carrying only one passenger. ■



Vuosaari harbour

Vuosaari greenfield commercial harbour nearing completion

Helsinki's vast transformation is made possible by a new greenfield commercial harbour for the Port of Helsinki in the eastern suburb of Vuosaari. This harbour will be opened for traffic in late November 2008, vacating two commercial harbours downtown Helsinki for re-development. The Vuosaari harbour will be ultra-modern and as such enhance Helsinki's role as Finland's leading port for foreign trade. ■

Helsinki's Website ranked 3rd best in the world, 1st in Europe

Helsinki's Website www.hel.fi has been ranked 3rd best in the world, and the best in Europe, by the biannual study "Digital Governance in Municipalities Worldwide 2007". Helsinki was placed behind the South Korean capital Seoul in 1st place and Hong Kong in 2nd place. The study assessed the practice of digital governance in large municipalities worldwide. Helsinki placed well in all 5 categories of the study: Privacy and Security (2nd place), Citizen Participation (3rd), Usability (4th), Services (6th) and Content (6th). The study was conducted by Rutgers University in the USA and Sungkyunkwan University in South Korea. It was co-sponsored by the United Nations and The American Society for Public Administration. ■



Market Square, Helsinki

Strong growth in travel and tourism

Helsinki is an increasingly popular destination. Over-nights increased by almost 9 per cent in 2007, while the average increase in European cities was 4 per cent. In January-April 2008, the increase in Helsinki was 13 per cent. Helsinki also expects a record cruising season 2008: 275 ships bringing some 300,000 visitors to the city, 40,000 more than in 2007. ■

HELSINKI HIGHLIGHTS

With population of 1.3 million, Greater Helsinki consists of 14 municipalities. It is one of the most dynamic and fastest growing metropolitan areas in the European Union.

Languages: Finnish 87%, Swedish 6%, other 7%

Share of 15-year-olds and older with bachelor's level degree: 22%. With master's level degree: 13%

Unemployment rate: Helsinki 5.3%, Finland: 6.9%

Jobs in the service sector: 81%, those in the information sector 16%

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