



HELSINKI

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Helsinki: A hotspot of games

The Game Room at the Happi youth activity centre of the City of Helsinki

The Finnish capital excels in the nation's robust game industry

Clans created by Supercell have rapidly clashed themselves into global awareness as the most successful game of the Helsinki start-up that creates mobile games for tablet computers. Supercell's Clash of Clans was the top-grossing game for the iPad in 122 countries in mid-October when the Japanese telecom giant SoftBank bought a 51-percent stake of Supercell for a whopping €1.1 billion. Supercell's Hay Day farming game is also among the most popular and profitable online games in the world. Clash of Clans and Hay Day have 10 million users daily.

Before Supercell's meteoric rise in popularity, Angry Birds of the Helsinki-area based Rovio started ensnaring rapidly swelling crowds of smart-phone gamers in 2010. The hit game, in which revengeful birds are catapulted at fortresses built by evil pigs, grosses nearly two billion downloads across all platforms. Angry Birds has been hailed as the biggest mobile app success story in the world.

Supercell and Rovio are just the tip of the iceberg. SoftBank's chief executive, **Masayoshi Son**, said in a statement when the SoftBank-Supercell deal was announced (as reported by The New

York Times), "Right now some of the most exciting companies and innovations are coming out of Finland."

The game industry has seen explosive growth in Finland. The combined revenue of the Finnish game companies grew nearly ten-fold in five years, tripling in the past year alone to €800 million euros before the Supercell deal, after which the industry's total worth climbed to €2 billion.

Finland's game industry is the largest in the Nordic countries. With a population of 5.4 million, Finland has more than 180 companies focusing on games, about 40 percent of them less than two years old. Finland's game industry has grown significantly faster than the global game market.

Most of the established game companies and one-third of all game companies in Finland are located in the Helsinki area. Helsinki game companies represent 90 percent of the total revenue and 80 percent of the employees of the Finnish game industry. Helsinki is home to 4 of the 10 top grossing iOS App Store games.

Games are today the most important sector of Finland's cultural export. The Finnish game companies produce 99 percent of their combined revenue from outside Finland, while 95 percent of the companies' combined staff is in Finland.

Helsinki is the centre of gravity for the future of games.

Supercell CEO Ilkka Paananen at PocketGamer.biz (according to Tekes)

The gaming world turns eyes to Helsinki

The polar ice caps have melted, and the Supernauts have to build new worlds orbiting the globe while rescuing people stuck on earth.

The Supernauts is a new game from the Helsinki start-up Grand Cru about to roll out to the market. Without a single launched game to its name, Grand Cru raised €8.5 million last September from investors assured that the start-up would join the ranks of successful Finnish game companies.

The march of Finnish game companies towards international awareness began with Habbo Hotel by Sulake of Helsinki. Launched in 2000, Habbo is the world's largest social game and online community for teenagers. Localized Habbo communities all around the world are visited by millions of teenagers every week.

Before the spiralling popularity of mobile games, Finland was known for the Max Payne console games from Remedy Entertainment, which later also produced the Alan Wake series. RedLynx (today a Ubisoft® studio) is a multi-platform game developer particularly known for its Trials series. Grey Area's Shadow Cities inspired critics to hail it as the future of mobile gaming.

Why Finland and Helsinki?

"Finland is probably the best location in the world for gaming companies," says Grand Cru CMO **Thorbjörn Warin** (as reported by Finnfacts). The reasons include the strong Nokia legacy of mobile gaming know-how, high engineering skills, world-class game education, and a strong gaming culture that produces phenomena like the major annual Assembly demoscene and gaming event in Helsinki. Angry Birds got started from Assembly.

In addition, the Finnish game industry enjoys government support. Tekes, the Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and Innovation, systematically funds Finnish game companies.



Habbo

Sulake



Angry Birds

"Helsinki is becoming quite attractive and it's getting easier and easier to hire employees from the international job market," Warin adds.

Others cite the "lab nature" of Helsinki: the city is just the right size to allow tight networks, good collaboration and fluent communication among actors in the field.

The main international game publishers including Disney, EA Maxis, Ubisoft and Playground Publishing as well as the game development tool provider Unity have established themselves in Helsinki over recent years.

Local government support for entrepreneurs

The City of Helsinki brings its resources to advance the game sector among other industries. EnterpriseHelsinki is a City agency that annually assists nearly 4,000 potential entrepreneurs to start a business and kick-starts 1,000 businesses. The agency assists existing enterprises to grow including start-ups with international growth potential.

Games find a good fit in the Helsinki economy

Supercell makes its headquarters in the Ruoholahti business district of Helsinki. Ironically, the offices are located in a building vacated by the Nokia Research Centre as Nokia downsized. Supercell's Hay Day game almost echoes the heyday of the mobile communication giant.

The game sector is no match to Nokia in its prime as a boost to the local economy, but Helsinki offers a good environment for the sector to grow into an economic powerhouse.

Helsinki's economic structure is heavily dominated by the service sector, which represents 88 percent of all jobs, while tradi-

tional manufacturing industries represent less than 5 percent of jobs. One of the four strongest sectors in Helsinki is information and communication (10 percent of jobs).

Typical of Helsinki is a strong focus on highly specialized fields in the information and communication sector, including film, television, publishing and ICT. This strong focus forms fertile ground for the game industry.

"Helsinki is the hub of Finland's creative economy and the place where amateurs, professionals and students in creative fields network," says Helsinki Mayor **Jussi Pajunen**.

The City cultivates a new generation of game developers



The Game Room is located at the Happi youth activity centre.

A club that regularly attracts some of the leading game development experts from Helsinki game companies is not a trendy downtown establishment but the GameDev Club at the Helsinki Youth Department's Happi activity centre for teenagers and young adults. The experts come from Supercell, Rovio, Remedy Entertainment, Bugbear Entertainment and Frozenbyte, volunteering to educate 13- to 25-year-old future game developers at Happi's Game Room.

With guidance from the experts, the GameDev Club members learn about coding, script writing, graphics and music for games. Some of the results have been demonstrated in game development contests with success.

The Game Room's producer **Hannes Pasanen** says, "This is not a business activity, but we have built business training into the

operations. The GameDev Club gives its members skills for possible employment and prepares them for possible formal studies in the field." The club awaits to launch major careers in game development.

Games as a youth-work laboratory

"Surveys show that 95 percent of the Finnish youth play digital games weekly and 50 percent daily," Pasanen says. "Helsinki's youth work goes where the young people are, so gaming is a natural and expected part of our activities. Games are a lab for us to develop new channels to reach young people."

The Game Room is equipped with up-to-date consoles and PC's that can be freely used by young gamers on Friday and Saturday evenings to 11 PM. The game selection is updated regularly and on request by the users.

"Gaming is a social activity here," Pasanen explains, "and our young gamers organize many types of events and tournaments." For example, the Game Room users regularly join the annual Assembly demoscene and gaming event. The role of the staff is to assist the Game Room users and to enable their activities.

The Game Room also uses gaming as a tool to approach and socialize socially restricted boys in the Boys' Group.

Games in schoolwork

One Helsinki comprehensive school – the Torpparinmäki school – offers an optional class in game development, which is used as a tool to teach other subjects, to increase student participation and to strengthen communal values. Other schools organize gaming clubs.



Finnish adults are second in the world in literacy and numerical skills

A new survey by OECD ranks the Finnish 16- to 65-year-olds second best in the world in literacy and numerical skills as well as in the ability to solve problems in technology-rich environments. The world leaders in literacy and numerical skills are the Japanese adults, while the Swedes top the world in problem solving. The survey was conducted as part of the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC). It measures the key skills needed for individuals to participate in society and for economies to prosper.

The Finnish 15-year-olds have regularly ranked at the top or close to the top in the world in the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which assesses student competencies in reading, mathematics and science.

Finnish workers are second best

The World Economic Forum ranks the Finnish workers second best in the world after the Swiss in its Human Capital Report ranking 122 nations worldwide on their workers' potential.

Finland tops the rankings in two of the four pillars of the Human Capital Index: (1) the Education pillar, which assesses how well the current and future workers are educated, and (2) the Enabling Environment pillar, which captures the legal framework, infrastructure and other factors that enable returns on human capital.

Finland has the second narrowest gender gap

The World Economic Forum places Finland in second place in its Global Gender Gap Report 2013. The report ranks 136 countries on their ability to close the gender gap in a number of key areas: economic participation and opportunity, political empowerment, health and survival, educational attainment, political participation and economic equality. Iceland tops the list, and Finland is followed by Norway and Sweden.

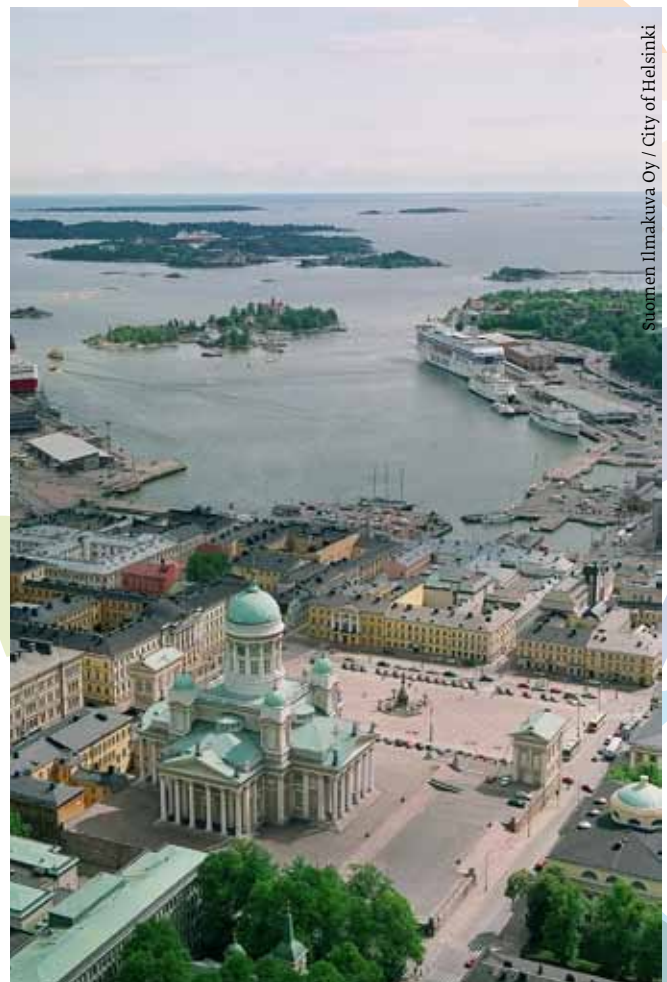
Helsinki enjoys Europe's highest satisfaction in public transport

The European BEST survey puts the public transport services in the Helsinki region in first place in Europe for the fourth consecutive year based on public satisfaction. In the Helsinki region, 77 percent of riders are satisfied with the services; the average for the other European regions surveyed is 54 percent.

Satisfaction with public transport services has been on the increase in Helsinki over recent years. Most public transport riders in the region also feel that they receive value for their money and consider ticket prices to be reasonable.

New proposal for Guggenheim Helsinki

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation has revised its proposal for the City of Helsinki to build a Guggenheim museum in Helsinki. The foundation's first proposal was voted down by the Helsinki City Board. According to the new proposal, Guggenheim Helsinki would be housed in a new building to be constructed in the busy Helsinki South Harbour, steps from the Helsinki Market Square and the Neoclassical Old Town. The total gallery space would be equal to that of the Guggenheim Museum in New York. If the City of Helsinki assigns the proposed site to the museum, the next step is an open international architectural competition to be completed by the end of 2014.



Suomen Ilmakuva Oy / City of Helsinki

The proposed Guggenheim museum would be built on the southwestern waterfront of Helsinki's South Harbour (to the right of the harbour basin in the picture).

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