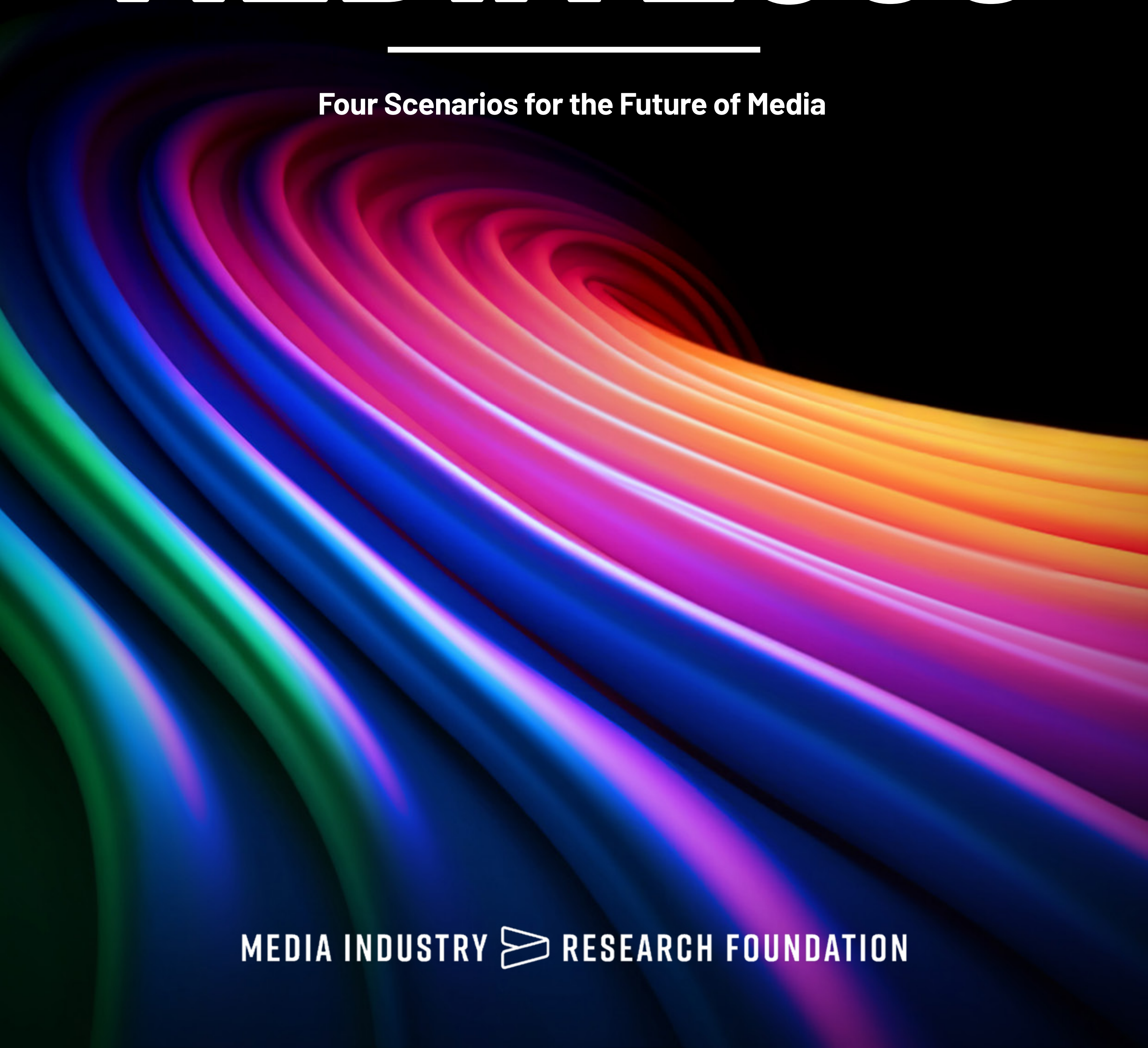
Media Industry Foresight Study

MEDIA 2035

Four Scenarios for the Future of Media



MEDIA INDUSTRY RESEARCH FOUNDATION

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Summary

The media industry is changing at a rapid pace. It is difficult to predict how it will change and evolve in the future because that future seems extremely uncertain and unstable and therefore open to multiple interpretations. That is why it is important for us to identify drivers of future change and to project how they will impact the work of media professionals and media organisations.

The purpose of this Media Industry Foresight Study is to explore what the possible futures of media and media organisations might look like in 2035. It introduces four scenarios for the future of media: "*Media on a Continuum*", "*Battle for Information*", "*Renaissance of Journalism*", and "*Power of Entertainment*". These scenarios are not intended to be read as forecasts for the future of media but rather as narratives that describe possible futures and the forces of change, disruptions and uncertainties at play.

The first scenario "*Media on a Continuum*" describes a future where changes in the media industry are in line with expectations but relatively slow. The industry is continuing to consolidate and to combat international competition; traditional media uses remain strong; and consumers are increasingly using social community media.

The second scenario "*Battle for Information*" defines a future world where free communication is threatened by geopolitical crises and information influencing. At the same time, freedom of expression is under threat from mounting national security pressures.

In the third scenario of "*Renaissance of Journalism*", AI content pollution and polycrisis are creating a confusing and fragmented information environment. This is increasing the need for reliable journalistic information but also pushing people towards alternative truths.

In the world portrayed in the fourth scenario "*Power of Entertainment*", technology-driven content production and the growth of social inequities have caused increasing divergence in people's media uses. The two major media consumption groups are the paywall elite, who can afford to invest in quality and depth of content, and the digital precariat, who are captivated by high octane entertainment and its addictive algorithms.

The aim and purpose of the media scenarios is first and foremost to stimulate new discussion about the futures of media and to equip media professionals and organisations with the tools and capabilities needed to challenge existing assumptions and to anticipate the future. The report offers challenging future perspectives on strategic thinking, the identification of new growth areas and competence development. The strategic foresight roadmap at the end of the report provides a tool to help put the scenarios to practical use in strategy and development work.

Introduction

The future of media is a subject of ever-growing interest. Within the media industry the main concern is with the immediate future. What phenomena are on the rise; which trends are having an impact; which technologies are worth investing in; what is capturing the interest of consumers; and how do people spend their time? The purpose of this media industry foresight study is not, however, to weigh and determine what to do and where to head next. The aim, instead, is to look beyond the horizon and explore in detail the possible future scenarios for the media sector through to 2035.

Our foresight study is intended to stimulate the imagination and creative thinking and to offer media professionals and organisations fresh perspectives on strategy work, renewal and growth. It paints four scenarios that explore potential future trajectories for forces of change, uncertainties and disruptions in the media industry. The aim of these scenarios is to promote a common understanding and informed discussion on the future of media, to strengthen the abilities of media industry players to anticipate the future, and to identify and leverage new opportunities.

MEDIA INDUSTRY NEEDS AN IN-DEPTH UNDERSTANDING OF THE FUTURE

The media industry and its operating environment are changing rapidly and deeply. The changes seem to be marked by great uncertainty and complexity, making them difficult to interpret. It is important to be able to identify future trends and drivers of change and to analyse how they impact the media industry, decision-making in media companies, and the work of media professionals.

The aim of these scenarios is to promote a common understanding and informed discussion on the future of media, to strengthen the abilities of media industry players to anticipate the future, and to identify and leverage new opportunities.

The media industry also needs new knowledge and insight about where it is heading so that it can anticipate and steer future development. Uncertainty and ambiguity about the future also complicates the task of strategic management in media companies, hampering efforts at renewal and business growth.

It is these questions and needs that we address in this report entitled "Media 2035 – Four Scenarios for the Future of Media". Published by the Media Industry Research Foundation of Finland and prepared by experts at Finnish scenario and strategy consulting boutique Capful, the key aims of this foresight study are to:

- research media trends and uncertainties,
- describe alternative, plausible scenarios for the future of media,
- challenge the media industry with new perspectives,
- identify new growth areas for the media industry, and
- create new foresight tools for strategy work and management.

These aims are critical across the media industry, for both media companies and media professionals. Media companies must learn more quickly to identify phenomena that are crucial to their future success. This applies equally to new emerging opportunities and to threats and risks to business. Digitalisation, for example, has had significant impact on media uses, content production, content distribution and business models. The effects of artificial intelligence, data analytics and virtual reality on the media industry and media work, on the other hand, are only just beginning to surface.

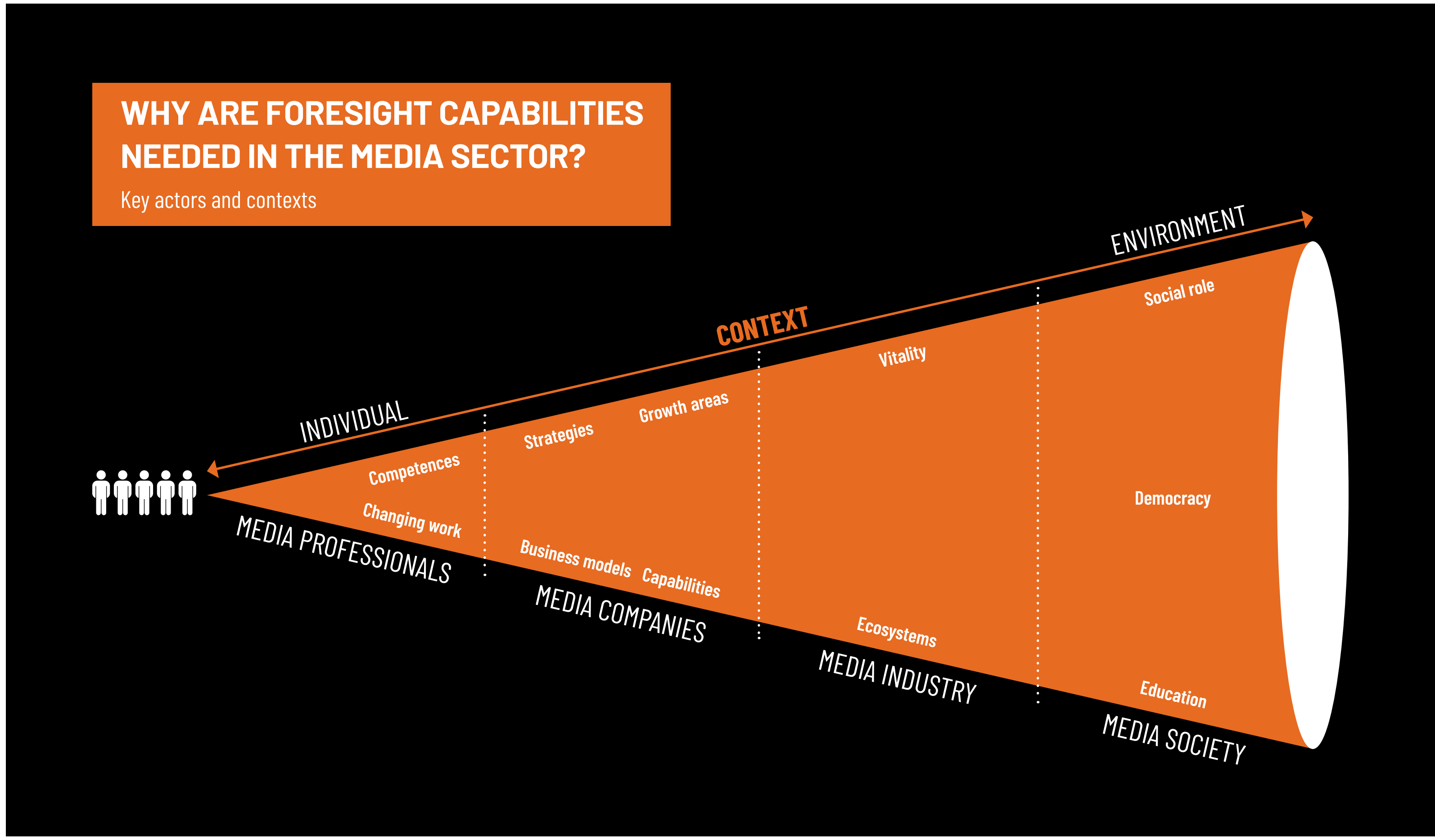
Our report on the future of the media industry is based on scenario work, which allows us to offer a comprehensive analysis of the changes unfolding in the media field and to identify the most important causal relationships. The narratives we provide of alternative futures will help towards a clearer understanding of the uncertainty and complexity of how the industry's operating environment may develop and to plan operations ahead, in a future-oriented manner.

The foresight study has benefited from the contributions of media sector operators and professionals from Finland and around the world. Through the surveys, interviews and scenario workshops carried out in the project, more than 175 media professionals and experts representing a diverse range of companies and other organisations have been involved in identifying drivers of change in the media industry as well as in building the four scenarios.

Our foresight report provides new insight and offers practical tools to support strategy work, decision-making and future growth in media companies. It opens up the following new perspectives on the future of the media industry:

- new and up-to-date understanding of the future of media and the new opportunities emerging for the media industry, media organisations and media professionals;
- strategic understanding of the changes unfolding in the media industry's operating environment and tools for making the best of these changes in future business and development;
- scenarios and future visions to help anticipate and steer development in the media industry;
- understanding and practices to support the development of futures thinking and foresight skills in the media industry and among media professionals.

The effects of artificial intelligence, data analytics and virtual reality on the media industry and media work, on the other hand, are only just beginning to surface.



All the above are crucial for effective management and decision-making in media companies and for the development of media professionals' skills and competences.

WHY DOES THE MEDIA INDUSTRY NEED STRATEGIC FORESIGHT?

We began our exploration into the futures of the media industry with a questionnaire survey among Finnish media professionals. We wanted to find out what experts thought about the key uncertainties and drivers of change within the industry. At the same time, we canvassed professionals' views on the future of Finnish media companies and their capabilities for foresight and change.

The responses conveyed a deep sense of threat. Almost three-quarters or 73% of the more than 100 respondents thought that the Finnish media industry was faced with some threat or other. A particular cause of concern was the future of print media. Likewise, growth prospects in the industry were considered rather subdued. More than half of the respondents expected to see their company's turnover decline in the coming years, while only one in five thought their turnover would grow.

What about the capabilities of Finnish media companies to meet future challenges? Average or mediocre, but not particularly good, the respondents felt. Overall, corporate foresight capabilities in the media sector were rated as reasonable, but only three per cent of media professionals thought their own company had excellent foresight capabilities. As one respondent put it: "There's some capability for foresight, but the resources available are really limited."

The same goes for media organisations' capacity for future change. That was generally considered moderate, but only four per cent of the respondents thought media organisations had an excellent capacity for change. These extraordinarily low percentages go to suggest that there is a high need in the rapidly evolving media industry for futures thinking and debate. Strategic foresight creates a stronger foundation for reform and renewal and for business development. Research has shown that companies that embrace strategic foresight and that invest in futures capabilities are more successful and grow faster than those that do not.

How, then, have futures and foresight been addressed in media industry research? For the purposes of this foresight study, we reviewed a sample of articles published in key scientific journals in the fields of media management, media business and journalism studies. This review clearly highlighted the need for foresight perspectives. In media management and media business research, for instance, strategy work in media companies has received quite extensive interest, and the future of journalism is covered in numerous articles and essays, but there is only scant research on foresight and futures thinking.

There is a surprising scarcity of research that aims to provide a systematic and comprehensive analysis of how the media industry sees its future and how industry perceptions potentially impact upon the operation of media companies. Most typically, the future of the media industry is approached from a short-term and narrow perspective and using limited methods. For example, studies have been limited to the development of a specific media industry sector within a specific geographical area.

One indication of the scarcity of futures research approaches is that the term "scenario" is mainly used to refer in general terms to simple visions of the future rather than foresight methods or approaches. There has been no deliberate effort within the research field to apply or develop systematic foresight-driven approaches as a basis for media companies' strategy work, renewal and growth.

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Media industry reports do provide some comprehensive and insightful analyses of key trends and directions within the industry, but these analyses rarely apply foresight methods to probe deeper into the future. It is, of course, important to recognise current trends and to understand the effects of megatrends. They allow media companies to flexibly respond to changes in the environment, providing practical information on what is happening around the world, on customers' needs and new growth opportunities. They do not, however, provide systematic perspectives on future drivers of change, emerging uncertainties and opportunities, or on how these are interconnected. This is where scenario analysis comes into play.

KEY STRATEGIC FUTURE ISSUES FOR THE MEDIA INDUSTRY

Identifying drivers of change in the operating environment and understanding uncertainties is critical for effective strategic management, business development, and new product and service innovation. This foresight report offers useful ideas and pointers for addressing some of the key strategic questions facing the media industry, including:

- How to anticipate the development of technology, society and the economy and their impacts on the sector?
- How to create new business and profitable growth? How to innovate new business and revenue models?
- What skills and competences will be needed in future media organisations?
- How to develop future models for content production?
- How will content concepts, platforms and ecosystems evolve in the media industry?
- How to understand future customers and their needs?

Futures thinking also supports the renewal of media organisations and the development of media professionals' skills and competences. In an industry of rapid change, it is critical to see and understand how media work is evolving and to develop new ways of thinking, new skills and new tools. Understanding future forces of change and uncertainties supports the creative development of new working methods and practices. The ability to anticipate changes in customer needs, to detect trends and weak signals, and to use future technologies are critical for the renewal of media companies.

The future development of the media industry ties in closely with the future development of society.

The future development of the media industry ties in closely with the future development of society. The knowledge and understanding produced by media companies and media professionals forms the foundation for the way citizens see the world and the reality in which they live, how they become members of communities and cultures, and how they arrive at decisions. Media news and stories spur people into action and influence their choices and actions. The news media, for example, are traditionally viewed as a state power that enables the open flow of information and social interaction that is the foundation of democracy.

All media organisations and operators, therefore, also wield power. They decide what issues are to reach the public agenda and who have the chance to make their voices heard and advance their goals. This is why it is timely to assess the position of free, meaningful and objective media and journalism in future Finland – and more widely. We need to ask and discuss who, in the future, is going to have the power to produce the content that shapes our understanding of the world.

Media organisations and journalism have a critical role to play in developing democracy, informing citizens and cultivating culture. This is why it is important to produce different views and narratives on how the media, the media industry and media companies will change in the future – and in what kind of possible worlds they might operate in future.

How to Read This Report

Research evidence from around the world shows that people's attention span is getting shorter. One study in the United States found that on average, college students today focus on any one task for 65 seconds. For office workers, the corresponding average is three minutes. It is fair to say then that the four scenarios in this report present quite a challenge in that a careful reading of them will take at least one solid hour. So before you start, make sure you have enough quiet time so that you don't have to rush through – if you can pause and ponder the future thoughts raised in the text, so much the better. It will definitely be time well spent.

Another challenge presented by this report is that future scenarios raise more questions and ideas than provide answers and hard evidence. The scenarios presented in this report are not intended to predict the future, but first and foremost to ask: What if? They provide a space for us to think about and contemplate the possible futures that might lie ahead.

The scenarios describe alternative and possible future worlds, i.e. changes in the Finnish media industry's and media companies' operating environment through to 2035.

The report is divided into four parts. The first part describes *Current Media Industry Trends*, i.e. developments that are shaping the future of media here and now and that establish the baseline, the starting point for the scenarios. The second part introduces the *Media 2035 Scenarios* and includes detailed accounts of the four scenarios. For each scenario, we provide a summary and describe key drivers of change, critical issues for the Finnish media industry, a scenario timeline, and broader scenario stories.

The third part, *Strategic Foresight Roadmap for Using the Scenarios*, provides instructions and tools that media companies and professionals can use in applying scenario work to their own development efforts. The fourth and final part of the report offers a description of the methods and processes used in this project under the heading *How the Study Was Conducted*. The authors are introduced in the section *Authors*.

The scenarios describe alternative and possible future worlds, i.e. changes in the Finnish media industry's and media companies' operating environment through to 2035. They also include thoughts and reflections on the impacts and implications of the scenarios for Finnish media professionals, media companies, the media industry and media society.

The scenarios are not forecasts or predictions, and none of them will materialise as such. It is more likely than not that elements from different scenarios will be intermixed in the future of media. The scenarios are also rich and full, and they purposely exaggerate: our aim has been to underline mutually contrasting trends in development so that they can provide a broad and diverse basis for strategy work, development and future planning.

If you are intending to use these scenarios for your own organisational development, you might want to start by reading the *Strategic Foresight Roadmap for Using the Scenarios*. This way you will be able straightaway, while you are still reading, to consider how to put the scenarios to practical use and to identify both new opportunities and emerging threats in the scenario stories. We wish you an interesting read and exploration of media futures!

Current Media Industry Trends

The future of media will be determined by a broad range of different trends and phenomena. Advances in technology, climate change, geopolitical developments and changes in consumer behaviour, for instance, all have the potential to bring about new disruptions that can profoundly and rapidly transform the competitive landscape in the media sector. To create a starting point for our scenarios, we began by reading and studying a wide range of trend reports on phenomena that in the short term seem to be pointing in the same direction and having similar effects.

Trends are indicative of the general direction in which current phenomena around media are headed. Their effects are already upon us, and they are expected to be significant and to continue along similar lines at least in the short term. The trends we describe here are drawn from numerous different trend reports, recent media studies and surveys, and a summary of 2024 trend reports by the Finnish Broadcasting Company YLE's strategy team.

It is useful to note that in the longer term, however, trends break down into uncertainties, which follow different paths of development in different scenarios. A good example is the development of artificial intelligence, which involves significant uncertainties in terms of speed and effects on the media industry. On the other hand, it is clear from the trends themselves that the use of AI applications is already commonplace, growing rapidly and changing the way that media professionals and organisations work.

The following describes the key relevant trends in the media industry that serve as the starting point for our scenarios. It is, of course, possible to identify a virtually endless range of different drivers of change, but for purposes of developing our scenarios we condensed the findings of our initial review into nine broad and significant trends relevant to the media industry.

DEFINITIONS OF THE MEDIA INDUSTRY AND MEDIA COMPANIES ARE CHANGING, EXPANDING AND BECOMING DIGITALISED

The media industry comprises a diverse range of branches and companies engaged in mass communication. Traditionally, the industry is divided into a number of different sectors. The Finnish Media Federation, for example, represents a broad diversity of companies working in the fields of news media, magazine media, book and educational publishing, printing, radio and television, and distribution.

The media and communications sectors have changed profoundly with digitalisation. Seen from the vantage point of media companies, the traditional distinctions between electronic media, the graphic industry, print media and online media are often outdated inasmuch as companies today tend to operate on multiple different channels and platforms. At the same time, it is increasingly difficult – and unnecessary – to try to find precise and clear-cut definitions for a media company. The business of media companies can be considered to comprise a wide range of digital business formats, social media platforms, events management, online stores and gaming industry.

INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION IS INTENSIFYING AND CURTAILING THE SPACE OF DOMESTIC MEDIA PLAYERS

Media industry growth is being driven by online services and new ways of content distribution, leaving many traditional media players struggling to adapt. In the EU area, media operators are faced with stiffening competition from the outside (e.g. international social media platforms, US streamers, Chinese and Japanese gaming companies) and having to compete for advertising revenue. Conditions for business in the Finnish media industry are deteriorating and the trend towards consolidation is continuing. The vitality of Finnish, pluralistic media produced in the domestic languages is faced with mounting challenges. As international competition continues to intensify, there is an ever-greater need for cooperation among Finnish media operators to make sure the Finnish media ecosystem remains vibrant and genuinely pluralistic.

TIGHTENING ECONOMIC OUTLOOK IS MAKING IT HARDER FOR MEDIA COMPANIES TO SECURE FINANCING

Global forces of change have laid bare the vulnerabilities of our current economic system. Mounting crises and rising geopolitical tensions have exposed the fragility of global value chains, triggered protectionist tendencies and prompted governments to seek more local supply chains. The tightening economic outlook will directly impact upon the media industry, and the impacts will be widely dispersed geographically. Economic power is shifting away from Western countries, and at the same time economic inequities within societies are continuing to widen. Willingness to pay differs across market areas and by age group: in one place there are increasing numbers who are prepared to pay for media, in another those numbers are declining.

MEDIA CONSUMPTION IS CHANGING WITH NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES

Most people in Europe still prefer to watch their films or series and to get their news on television. But consumers are also more and more going digital and moving to streaming and gaming platforms. While the news media contracted in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the gaming and audiovisual industries showed the strongest recovery in the EU and they continue to remain on a growth trajectory. There are marked differences between sectors in terms of business development: streaming, console and mobile games, immersive XR content, and digital news are growing while films and the print media are struggling to maintain their market position. In Europe the changes in consumption are being driven first and foremost by the younger generations. In Finland, the total amount of time people spend with media has remained at a high level since the spike caused by the pandemic, averaging around ten hours a day.

SOCIAL MEDIA SERVICES ARE ATTRACTING INCREASING USE AND CONVERGING IN TERMS OF FUNCTIONALITIES

People in Finland are spending increasing amounts of time with social media services. The use of social media community services accounts for 11% of total daily media use and is increasing in almost all age brackets. For young people in the age group 15–29, social media are the single most popular media platform with which they spend more than 1.5 hours a day on average. The use of TikTok in particular has increased rapidly. TikTok is now the most important news channel for those aged 13–18, for example: almost half of the age group get their news through this platform. And almost half of these users say they would not see any news media content if it were not on TikTok.

Social media services are continuing to copy each others' features at an accelerating rate and are therefore beginning to resemble each other more and more. The most successful elements and apps are those with video playback and a feed that provides endless new video content based on personalised recommendations to the user.

RAPID ADVANCES IN AI ARE TRANSFORMING MEDIA WORK AND THE WAY MEDIA ORGANISATIONS OPERATE

Artificial intelligence is rapidly being integrated into the modern workplace. Almost all major tech companies now offer generative AI as part of their software products. More and more organisations have begun to train AI systems based on their own data and end needs because they are more applicable, reliable and cost-effective than generic tools. AI solutions are driving B2B sales of various technology tools and applications at an unprecedented rate.

Crafting instructions or prompts that tell AI what to do is an important skill, but the use of AI tools will get easier as they continue to develop. In some branches AI-induced unemployment may pose a threat in the longer term, but hardly as soon as 2024. On the other hand, emerging technologies and new AI tools are continuing to democratise media production, driving down the costs of making and distributing music, podcasts, videos and photos. New ways of generating content with AI are bound to cause copyright issues and to bring calls for tighter regulation, but at the moment it is difficult to predict the effects of regulation on AI use.

In the media industry, AI is used widely for multiple purposes and its use is rapidly increasing. AI uses in media include ideation, content personalisation, data and information retrieval, content production, article classification, summary preparation, subtitling, text-to-speech automation and the targeting of advertisements.

It is useful to note that in the longer term, however, trends break down into uncertainties, which follow different paths of development in different scenarios.

THE POPULATION IS AGEING, DIVERSIFYING AND INCREASINGLY CONCENTRATED REGIONALLY, IMPACTING DEMAND

In Finland, the population aged over 65 is growing more rapidly than other age groups, and projections for the next 20 years are that the number of people of working age will decrease by 76,000. With current trends, Finland's population will begin to decline in the 2030s, but the world population is expected to grow from eight billion today to over ten billion by the end of the century. Finland's future population growth will be driven by immigration. That growth will be particularly strong in the Helsinki, Tampere and Turku regions, which have increasing populations of foreign-language speakers.

The demographic trends are also intensifying regional differentiation as population growth is highly concentrated and limited to just a few centres. Regional concentration is putting local media under increasing pressures of consolidation due to declining population numbers, and foreign immigration is increasingly putting cultural and language issues on the agenda of media organisations.

A WARMING CLIMATE IS AFFECTING THE ECONOMY, DEMOGRAPHICS AND SECURITY

Fossil fuel use and energy consumption are driving trend-like global warming. The latest IPCC projection is that the critical 1.5 degree threshold set out in the 2015 Paris Agreement may be surpassed as early as 2029. Climate warming has caused a marked increase in extreme climate events, which by 2035 will trigger significant population movements from the most severely affected regions as well as intense regional inequalities and ensuing social conflicts. Efforts to tackle the ecological sustainability crisis have been slow to pick up, so it can be expected that the crises and their impacts will worsen year by year.

Global warming has profound economic, environmental and geopolitical consequences, which are increasingly reflected in the media industry. Consumers are increasingly worse off financially, and the diversity of media users is continuing to increase with the growing number of climate refugees and immigrants. Furthermore, increasing demands for sustainable development and environmental responsibility are changing the way that media companies operate.

MEDIA HAVE A KEY SOCIAL ROLE IN MOMENTOUS YEAR FOR DEMOCRACY AND IN CONDITIONS OF CONTINUED GEOPOLITICAL UNCERTAINTY

The current year 2024 is a momentous year for democracy. While the eyes of the world are very much on the US presidential election, elections are in fact being held in more than 40 countries. Almost two billion people will be going to the ballot box. The future of the media sector and journalism ties in closely with questions of democracy, education, cultural diversity and civic media literacy. The media will have a critical social role during this momentous year for democracy when election results will significantly impact where the whole world will be heading in the coming decade. Intergenerational frictions and inequalities in wealth, culture wars, agenda journalism, election-influencing and information operations can shape both election outcomes and global perceptions of the media and their role in democracies.

While the media enjoy quite widespread public trust in Finland, there are many other countries where the situation is different. There are many states where the media can be described as a mouthpiece for those in power. Indeed, public trust in the media is developing in different directions in different countries. Even in democracies it seems that the free flow of information is under multiple threats that are further compounded by increasing social inequalities and geopolitical escalation. When the principles of objectivity and critical inquiry are under threat, free access to reliable and plural information is also in jeopardy. Western democracy, media independence and the ideals of journalism are challenged both by extreme political confrontation, information operations and the securitisation of societies. In many countries the media sector plays a pivotal role at this critical juncture for the future of democracy.

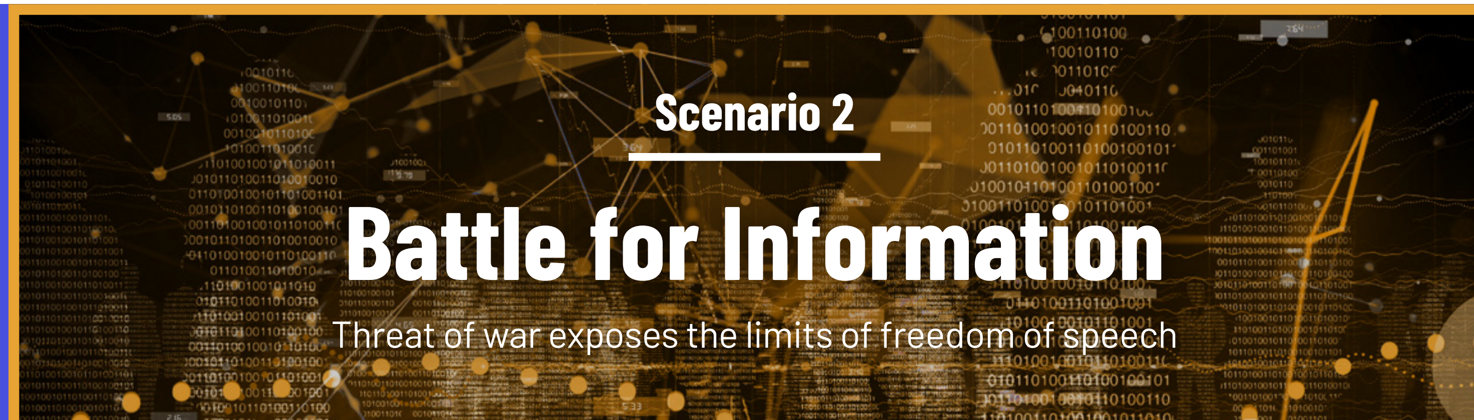
It is imperative, therefore, to closely monitor global developments because they may have significant effects on the domestic media landscape, public debate, freedom of speech, EU media regulation and ultimately on Finnish society as a whole.

Summary of Scenarios

CUSTOM AI'S

GLOCAL CONSUMERS

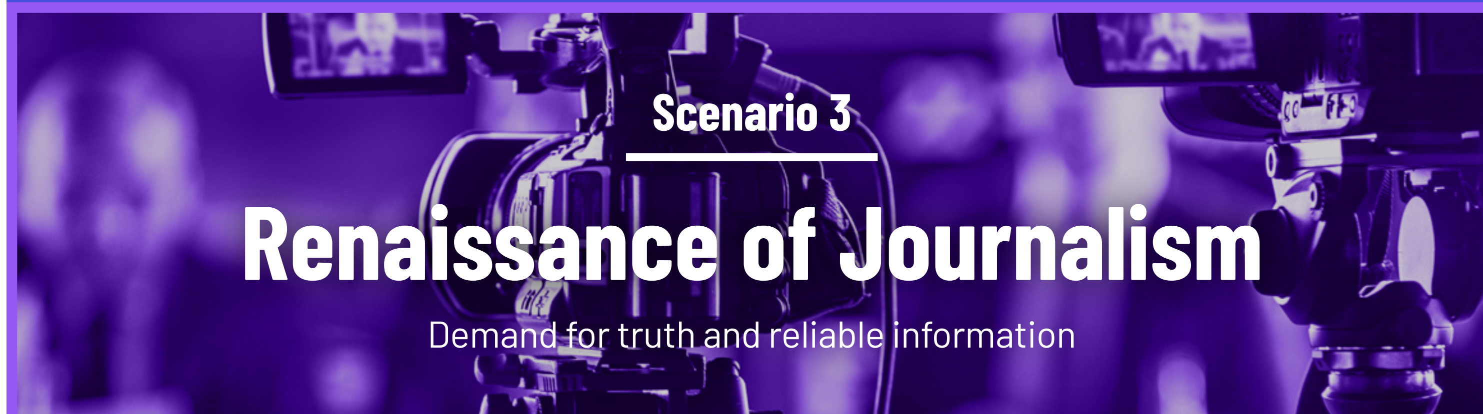
TRADITIONAL MEDIA USES



SECURITISATION

MEDIA WELFARE STATE

ALTERNATIVE COMMUNITIES



CONTENT SURGES

TRUTHSEEKERS

NEWS MEDIA AS FOUNDATIONS

DATA POWER

PAYWALL ELITE

DIGITAL PRECARIAT

Scenario 1

Media on a Continuum

Expected but slow changes

IMAGINE

- Finnish media industry is continuing to consolidate as it combats global competition
- Consumers are increasingly global in their media use, but local media also have value
- Traditional media uses remain strong
- Advances in AI are increasing the efficiency of work in the media industry but also transforming and destroying jobs
- EU technology regulation points the way ahead for others
- News deserts are emerging in Finland
- Finnish economy continues to struggle
- Cooperation and formal agreements in the global economy and politics are on the increase

KEY DRIVERS OF CHANGE

CUSTOM AI'S
Company-specific AIs bring efficiency leaps

GLOCAL CONSUMERS
Use of subject-specific or hyperlocal community media increasing

TRADITIONAL MEDIA USES
Only minor changes in channels and forms of communication

CRITICAL ISSUES FOR FINNISH MEDIA

MEDIA PROFESSIONALS	MEDIA ORGANISATIONS	MEDIA INDUSTRY	MEDIA SOCIETY
• How will the decline of traditional media professions and journalistic jobs and the rise of freelance culture change the way media work is done?	• What kind of companies will survive as industry consolidation gathers momentum? • How well can AI, automation and data be used to increase the efficiency of operations and development? • How to compete for advertising money that is shifting towards social media and influencer media?	• Will the trend towards industry consolidation hamper domestic cooperation, which is necessary to competing with international operators? • How can the appeal of the media industry be increased even if growth prospects are subdued and jobs are decreasing?	• What effects will follow from the decline in media pluralism? Is it possible to prevent news deserts from emerging?

Scenario story

FINNISH ECONOMY CONTINUES TO STRUGGLE IN GLOBAL WORLD

The world is living in an age of global cooperation and formal agreements. Upheavals have led to a change of power in Russia, which has returned to international negotiating tables and overhauled its economic system, although Western countries are still deeply sceptical. A global economy and dynamic supply chains ensure the continued spread of technologies and innovations. When global challenges emerge, there is openness to negotiation. **This does not, however, extend to climate change and environmental challenges.** This has the effect of increasing polarisation in global and local politics, between age groups, and between countries in geographically favourable or unfavourable regions that suffer from changing climate. Different industries are moving towards sustainability and responsibility at a different pace, causing friction both between different industries and between organisations of different sizes. **Organisations are walking a tightrope between following common ground rules and working to maintain their competitiveness.**

Finland is being weighed down by a sluggish economy. The national debt is rising faster than in the other Nordic countries, and efforts to achieve sustainable, significant economic growth are faltering. The fourfold demographic spiral is showing no signs of slowing: fertility remains low, the older population is growing, the number of people of working age is declining, and regionally selective migration is continuing. The prospects of economic recovery are not aided by the structural changes sweeping the forest industry and other industries that traditionally have upheld the Finnish economy. The situation is further exacerbated by shifting and erratic political winds. Prolonged unrest and upheaval in Russia are also hurting Finland's investment appeal.

CUSTOM AI'S BRING EFFICIENCY LEAPS

Custom AIs tailored to specific organisational needs are bringing significant efficiency gains and radically changing ways of working. In many industries AI models created for specific tasks are beginning to outperform human employees. Broader language models are unable to produce high-quality results due to hallucination or invented content and therefore have a declining role. This has prompted the proliferation of specialised AI models tailored to the needs of individual organisations. In practice, it is no longer possible for any organisation to successfully compete in the global marketplace without its own AI models. Even though AI is significantly boosting the efficiency of work processes, AI-driven unemployment is only seen occasionally in individual branches. And even then, people are not out of work for very long.

Even though the development of technologies and innovations is a global process happening in a global marketplace, the EU is seeking to steer this development through regional regulation. The idea of pioneer regulation, or the so-called Brussels effect, continues to enjoy a strong support among EU leadership: the expectation is that, sooner or later, the rest of the world will follow the EU's lead and adopt EU standards. To some extent this is successful as EU standards for data privacy, AI and copyright protection are steering AI development towards custom AIs, limiting the use of major language models and people's private data. On the other hand, given the economic weight of the international companies and platforms operating in Europe, regulatory practices are adjusted to ensure mutually satisfactory compromises.

> **In many industries AI models created for specific tasks are beginning to outperform human employees.**

COLLECTIVE CONSUMERS IN A GLOBAL WORLD

Social community is a major driver of media industry development in what is an increasingly global world. Glocal consumers are turning more and more to either specialised or hyperlocal social community media. In general people tend to be interested in just a few subjects and local events. Any information outside this bubble is met with disinterest, sometimes even with reservation. **Traditional media uses continue to retain their position, even though consumers increasingly favour audio and video content as well as social media platforms for both entertainment and news.**

Media are expected to have expertise in their topic areas and local knowledge, to deliver a high quality service, and to support individuals in the formation of their world views. These needs are met by targeting content to increasingly fragmented groups using more advanced AI-assisted linking and analytics of user data. Relevant content targeted at individual users at the right time is crucial to running a successful media company.

News media are becoming more and more international and increasingly pervaded by entertainment. Competition in the media market is increasingly international. For example, competition among streaming services is intensifying as platforms are fighting over market shares and vying for user attention. This competition is sparking new innovations, especially with advances in content, user experiences and pricing models. At the same time, the competition is effectively in knockout format, meaning that in the end there will only remain a handful of major players in the streaming services field.

Major global media are trying to find new directions for growth by using their AIs in new geographical and linguistic target groups. This is facilitated by the increasing use of large social media platforms, the accessibility of audiences on those same platforms, and the development of automatic translation software. **The market dominance of major technology companies is subject to several antitrust lawsuits, which especially in the**

MEDIA 2035
Scenario 1: Media on a Continuum

MEDIA ON A CONTINUUM: TIMELINE OF KEY DRIVERS OF CHANGE

2027 | **2030** | **2035**

CUSTOM AI'S

Custom AIs tailored to the needs of individual companies are changing ways of working and dramatically increasing efficiency. Smaller AI models tailored for the use of individual organisations are rapidly proliferating. On the other hand, advances in AI are also destroying jobs.

AI development is continuing apace. Organisations are using a wide range of AI applications to perform multiple different tasks.

The EU Data Strategy and Pioneer Regulation are developed by creating a new Technology Master Act (TMA) based on the so-called Big 5 acts (DGA, DMA, DSA, AIA, DA). The new regulative framework imposes restrictions on the use of language models and private data use.

Small and medium-sized operators are disappearing from various branches as they lack the capacity to invest in AI development. A similar trend is seen in the media industry.

Almost all jobs that require professional expertise involve working with AI technologies. In content work, examples include the use of assistive AIs, the supervision of near-autonomous AI applications, and designing and managing AI assistant-aided work.

The new European TMA framework is steering development towards narrower and more customised and tailored AI applications.

The effects of the new EU regulative framework on global data regulation are confirmed in an extensive scientific study. Critics point at the concessions made in TMA to major corporations and at the underlying financial motivation of regulation.

GLOCAL CONSUMERS

In an increasingly global world of international platforms, the development of the media industry is steered by social community. Glocal consumers are increasingly using subject-specific and hyperlocal social media. Information from outside one's own sphere of experience is chiefly met with disinterest, often with reservation.

The development of the media industry is continuing on a steady trend.

Community, locality and subject-specific media are held in high value.

Traditional media uses continue to retain their position.

The use of global media platforms is on the rise.

The media are increasingly pervaded by entertainment.

Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, WhatsApp, TikTok and other major social media platforms continue to retain their positions. Tougher EU regulations that require more rigorous moderation of content is a definite factor in this as it makes it harder for newcomers to enter the field due required significant investments.

Facebook launches a more powerful, group-based AI advertising tool. Corresponding AIs are gaining ground that allow for more timely advertising.

A new social media platform launched by Xing is rapidly attracting users by combining the logics of other digital platforms. Xing innovatively merges short videos with in-depth audio and conversation content.

New AI-based games coupled with VR technologies and haptics are attracting loyal global communities.

Internationally, the amount of time and money people are spending on gaming is steadily increasing.

The eSports Olympics are rocked by a scandal as the French team, winners of EA Sports FIFA 2035, are discovered to have been using reaction-enhancing AI tailored to be undetectable. Questions around AI doping have been raised before, and finally they are being taken seriously.

TRADITIONAL MEDIA USES

Traditional media uses are continuing to go strong. The changes anticipated or even feared in Finnish media consumption have been slower than expected. These changes include the growing role of entertainment in media, increasing consumption of audio and video content, slow growth in social media use and an increase in the amount of time spent on gaming.

Survey data from Kantar shows that consumers still take the most positive attitude towards advertising in the print press.

Live broadcasts and linear television are as popular as ever. People gather on social media platforms to discuss and comment on events. Increasingly, limited numbers of virtual tickets to live events are sold to consumers with appropriate devices.

Influencer media are gaining in significance. The fastest-growing media company in Finland is a new type of influencer marketing platform SPVM, which offers analytics, campaign management and matching services.

Increasingly aware of the adverse effects of social media and an uninterrupted digital life, Gen Z are the largest growing group of newspaper and magazine subscribers.

Comparison of the survey results announced at the *Consumer Media Event 2035* with the results for 2023 shows surprisingly small differences. YouTube and other streaming services have marginally overtaken linear television, and the use of printed magazines has decreased by around one-quarter, at the same time as both the amount of time spent on social media and gaming have increased. Attitudes are still most positive towards advertising in print media and influencer marketing.

EU area are often settled in favour of local media operators. This limits the willingness of technology companies to compete directly with traditional media companies.

CONSOLIDATION OF DOMESTIC MEDIA INDUSTRY CONTINUING

Committed to hold its own against global platforms and international media companies, the domestic media industry is continuing to consolidate. The largest Finnish media groups are buying up smaller local operators, which are also disappearing from the market as it continues to shrink and as subsidies are withdrawn under conditions of economic stringency. **In Finland, the trend of consolidation means there remain only a few operators that are mainly in competition with foreign media companies.**

Companies are having to carefully select the formats and channels on which to focus. The range of formats used by Finnish media is shrinking. At the same time, **Finnish media companies are having to weigh whether there are sufficient growth opportunities in the media industry and their own region,** or whether they need to seek those opportunities beyond the traditional media sector. Many larger media companies in particular are gradually turning into conglomerates with multiple branches.

Regional media pluralism is declining. **In the news deserts that are emerging in sparsely populated areas, consumers access is limited to state, international and major Finnish media content.** These trends are accelerated by economic stringency and rising distribution costs. In many areas, the only remaining providers of regional information are specialised local media and social media communities.

Finland closely follows the global trends in media development. These trends include an emphasis on social community, a thematic and local focus, traditional media uses, the use of global platforms and the proliferation of entertainment.

The changes seen in Finnish media consumption are slower than expected, however. Traditional media are still regarded as higher quality than newer and less formal media operators, although social media platforms and gaming products have a strong presence especially in entertainment content. Media content traditionally packaged according to media brand and subject area continues to retain its position. Book reading is still one of the most popular pastimes in Finland. Books are increasingly read on screen, and audiobook services also have dedicated users. Contrary to expectations, even young people are discovering traditional communication channels such as printed news as they grow up.

Traditional media are still regarded as higher quality than newer and less formal media operators, although social media platforms and gaming products have a strong presence especially in entertainment content.

BUSINESS MODELS LARGELY THE SAME AS BEFORE

Revenue logics in the media industry are largely unchanged; no fundamentally new or revolutionary business models have emerged. Subscription and membership schemes, advertising funding, freemium concepts, content marketing, e-commerce integrations, events production and various licensing solutions are still the principal modes of revenue generation. There is some competition among the different variants, which are used by different operators to different extents. News media, for instance, are still largely subscription-based. **It is increasingly common to bundle media services and products into monthly subscriptions according to customer interests.** This makes it harder for customers to end subscriptions and so serves the purpose of customer retention. At the same time, it is easier to slowly edge up prices without risking the anger of customers. Other, non-media services are bundled into monthly subscriptions, to the point that journalistic products are often only a small part of the package.

As the trend of industry consolidation continues, media companies are seeking to create synergies by streamlining practices and bringing different functions under the same brand and platform. Although the domestic media sector is increasingly concentrated and AI-assisted data use is advancing, Finnish media houses have to make do with far more limited customer and behavioural data than foreign technology companies. With limited resources to invest in their own AI and analytics, SMEs in particular are struggling to keep up with the competition. Local and regional knowledge offers some protection for the smallest operators. Working with freelance networks and small businesses is an integral part of media company operations.

Influencer media is continuing to grow and significantly shaping the media industry as advertising money is increasingly moving away from traditional media. Influencer-produced content is gaining prominence in many media: social media influencers have an important role in creating trends and in shaping audience preferences and consumption habits. Consumers who swear by social community need to see pioneers and trailblazers as influencers. The production of target group-oriented content and the measurement of outcomes are emphasized in AI-assisted influencer marketing.

For reasons of productivity and efficiency, it is important that media companies are able make use of new technologies and AI in particular. Improving profitability is crucial for business growth and success, and therefore expensive human labour is replaced wherever it is not essential. Increasing importance is attached to the use of data and analytics and to their translation into knowledge and understanding.

CUTBACKS IN PUBLIC SUBSIDIES FOR MEDIA INDUSTRY

Funding for the public service broadcaster YLE is being scaled back because of the economic situation, although YLE's role is effectively unchanged. YLE's duties are essentially the same, but cutbacks in public funding mean it is forced to make redundancies. This is mainly impacting the production of local content for small audiences.

Subsidies for small local media are also being reduced, further accelerating the trend towards media concentration. The decline in media pluralism and the emergence of new news deserts are prompting political debate and concern, but these concerns cannot be addressed by public funds given the general economic situation.

Commercial media are also faced with unwanted changes in public financial support as their reduced Value Added Tax rate is abolished and increased back to the standard VAT rate. Similar tax changes are widely introduced across Europe but compared to some international media companies and social media platforms, these trends are denting the competitiveness of Finnish media companies.

SOME ARE MAKING GOOD USE OF AI, OTHERS ARE BEING MADE REDUNDANT

AI is replacing human work and rapidly boosting efficiency in media work. At the same time, the amount of work done by humans is decreasing. The technological revolution is not only causing jobs to disappear in the communications field but also creating a need for new skills and competences, which will significantly change the nature of almost all media jobs. The more limited the job tasks and the easier they are to codify, the more likely it is they will be taken over by AI. Routine jobs are fast disappearing not only in the media industry but across many other sectors, too.

With the ongoing technological advances and media industry concentration, media organisations are significantly smaller than before. Many media professionals are having to retrain in fields where there is still a need for human labour. The best experts in their fields continue to be in demand, but in many sectors AI is taking over the performance of basic production tasks.

Digital skills and competences are increasingly important in the media industry, but media companies have great difficulty recruiting the best AI experts, especially in the international labour market. Working with AI has increased significantly in almost all jobs, whether they involve AI-aided content creation, the supervision of near-autonomous AI systems, or AI-assisted job planning and management.

Freelance culture is continuing to strengthen in the media sector, in line with the general trend towards self-employment. Networking and network management have increasing importance in media companies as a way of making effective use of the best expertise available. Freelancing allows media professionals to specialise in certain topics and to sell their expertise internationally.

Influencer media competences are highly valued and have become mainstream due to the growth of influencer marketing. At the same time, the target group oriented expertise of social media platforms is emphasised with the growing role of influencer media and influencer marketing.

Job losses, subdued growth prospects and cutbacks in public subsidies are undermining the attractiveness of the Finnish media industry. For example, the number of students interested in studying journalism is decreasing, and more and more people are turning from journalism to other communication and marketing jobs.

OLD IDEAS, NEW TOOLS

Audiences are developing into interactive communities around specific subject areas. Companies providing services to increasingly targeted and fragmented communities are thriving. AI use means that communities and their needs can be more accurately identified and anticipated than before.

Networking and network management have increasing importance in media companies as a way of making effective use of the best expertise available.

On the other hand, the bundling of media services into packages according to customer interests is gaining significantly in popularity. People are free to choose what content they want to include in their subscription. Various family-and-friend packages cater to the needs of customers and communities and at the same time make it harder to end subscriptions. Knockout competition in streaming services has forced popular content from years gone by to close down, with some operators specialising in curating old favourites and offering them to consumers.

Microinfluencers and nanoinfluencers have an increasing presence in influencer media and marketing, and commercial cooperation with these influencers can be tailored to increasingly specific target groups using AI. At the same time, a number of new influencer marketing platforms are created that serve as **intermediaries and automators of marketing between influencers and brands.** They become essential tools for influencer-based marketing strategies, providing as they do new types of analytics, campaign planning and matching services.

Virtual reality (VR) glasses and other virtual world user interfaces are continuing to improve and to become increasingly common, especially in gaming worlds but also in events productions. However, smartphones are still the predominant medium of media consumption. Most VR technologies are very expensive, and product development is concentrated among a handful of international companies in the gaming and events industry and start-ups within their ecosystems.

Scenario 2

Battle for Information

Threat of war exposes the limits of freedom of speech

IMAGINE

- Finland is targeted by intensive disinformation and hybrid operations
- Traditional media provide security and people are actively reading news
- Comfort content is embedding people in everyday life
- The media welfare state is promoting the accessibility of information
- Militarisation and securitisation are limiting freedom of expression
- Those disaffected with the mainstream are moving to alternative platforms and communities
- Media companies are serving as a unifying factor for the nation
- Europe and Finland are threatened by a tightening geopolitical environment

KEY DRIVERS OF CHANGE

SECURITISATION
Freedom of expression is curtailed by external threats

MEDIA WELFARE STATE
Accessibility of information is guaranteed together

ALTERNATIVE COMMUNITIES
Mainstream is alienating and pushing towards alternatives

CRITICAL ISSUES FOR FINNISH MEDIA

MEDIA PROFESSIONALS	MEDIA ORGANISATIONS	MEDIA INDUSTRY	MEDIA SOCIETY
• How to prevent self-censorship caused by the securitisation of public debate? • How to guarantee the safety of media industry operators and professionals? • How to ensure access to information for suppliers?	• How crisis-resilient are Finnish media companies? • How to prevent the spread of disinformation and ensure the production of reliable information? • How to reach consumers who have moved to alternative platforms and communities?	• What capacity does the Finnish media industry have to work together to prevent disinformation and external influence? • What attitude do media organisations take towards increasing state control in the industry?	• How will democracy and freedom of expression be protected from external threats? • How to keep citizens reliably informed in the midst of attempts to influence them? • How to maintain pluralism alongside a rising national consciousness?

Scenario story

FINLAND AS FRONTIER FOR A UNITED WEST

The democratic West is at loggerheads with authoritarian regimes in the arena of world politics. The United States is steadfast in its support for a united West, but Finland and other countries remain under threat from Chinese-backed Russian military build-up along the EU's eastern border. Competition for resources, populist politics and nationalism are dividing the world into two camps. There is a growing emphasis on sphere-of-interest thinking, which is hurting world trade and economic cooperation. **Competition is manifested in conflicts, trade wars and hybrid influencing**, where preparedness is constantly being put to the test. NATO has a prominent role in Finland, which is serving as a frontier for the West.

Shrinking supply chains are driving the EU to push for strategic autonomy, and global free markets are a thing of the past. Strategic partnerships are sought not only with Western countries but also with former colonies that have opted out of the old opposing bloc. In Finland, EU investments in the arms industry and strategic sectors are having limited stimulus effects. **At the same time, however, prices are on the up, consumption is slowing and economic growth in Europe is stagnating.**

Extreme weather events are having increased economic and social effects, which are exacerbating regional inequality and increasing the number of climate refugees arriving in Europe. Environmental policy concerns and the green transition are little more than rhetoric in Europe where all the focus is on defence. Cultural confrontation is on the rise as Western countries fail to show enough responsibility.

In response to security-related concerns and pressures from strategic autonomy industries, there is a more balanced regional distribution of migration in Finland. Most of the migration into the growth triangle in the southwest of the country is from overseas (e.g. war and climate refugees), but internal migration is slowing.

TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS LIMITED BY RISKS

Turbulence in the external security environment is causing increased distrust and risk assessments of technology and applications. **Technology and data regulation is being promoted at EU level predominantly from a security perspective.** For example, the EU is creating a standard for AI regulation that is applicable across different industries, and **the definition of critical functions in society is extended to the media industry.** New responsibility, security and ethical requirements are imposed on technology companies within the EU area. Permitted technologies are limited to a list of trusted suppliers. For example, in the case of **critical functions no Chinese technologies, applications and platforms are permitted.** In practice, they are usually replaced by solutions from US suppliers, even though questions remain over their ethics as well.

In the European Union, the development of AI technologies is based strictly on social and ethical premises. **AI applications may have unknown effects on human health and well-being and therefore the final decision must remain with people, including in the media industry.** The learning data and application areas of major international AI platforms are significantly restricted due to fears of lawsuits and concerns related to geopolitical hybrid influencing and espionage. This limits the scope of potential applications. The use of private AI applications involves some limitations, but the government is determined to persist with the development of its own applications in order to maintain security.

New responsibility, security and ethical requirements are imposed on technology companies within the EU area.

In the EU area, AI is taking over jobs at quite a moderate rate, and its job-generating potential is rather limited and specific. Technology developed outside the EU is used widely to improve productivity, to monitor societies and to influence foreign populations.

SECURITY, HOPE AND INERTIA

The media have an increasingly prominent role in safeguarding democracy in the wake of external influencing operations. Democracies are showing strengthened national unity, but tendencies of militarisation in society mean that in national security policy issues political disagreements are frowned upon and often they do not end up in public discussions. Major Western media houses enjoy high public trust, while other news sources are viewed with suspicion. In keeping with the spirit of the times, some traditional national media are showing a strong nationalistic slant. **Information warfare is being waged not in traditional media but on social media platforms where the aim is to create discord and tension between Western social groups.**

An increased sense of uncertainty and insecurity in society is driving a surge of interest in factual media content and local news. At the same time, the consumption of different types of comforting content is increasing. Hope-eliciting spiritual and religious content is also reaching new audiences.

A sense of loss of control is creating an endless thirst for knowledge that people are quenching by constant speculation over news in instant-messaging groups. On the other hand, they are seeking breaks from "doomscrolling" or the excessive consumption of disturbing news

MEDIA 2035
Scenario 2: Battle for Information

BATTLE FOR INFORMATION: TIMELINE OF KEY DRIVERS OF CHANGE

SECURITISATION

Plunged into crisis by external security threats, democratic society is seeking the limits of freedom and responsibility of speech as questions of national security gain increasing prominence, taking up space from the fourth state power.

2027

- China imposes a trade embargo on Taiwan with the support of a massive deepfake campaign. Relations with the United States hit rock bottom.
- China is banned from the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics. Live broadcasts from the games are subjected to deliberate interference.
- Russia retains the territories it has seized in Ukraine and launches cyberattacks against water and power grids in Estonia and Latvia.
- Israel carries out strikes in Lebanon, Yemen, Iraq and Syria.
- *Northern Steel*, a film shot in Finland about NATO soldiers, premieres in November 2027. It features military hardware from the Entertainment Media Office. The mega-production is a joint venture between Finnish, Nordic and American public and commercial operators.

2030

- Media companies are identified as critical entities under the EU CER Directive, with relevant obligations.
- A US military base under the DCA agreement begins operations in Finnish Lapland.
- TikTok is banned in the EU.
- The 2029 Christmas bestseller is a guidebook on survival skills in times of crisis.
- A highly realistic fake video of a fatal accident occurring in conscript training is circulating on social media, accompanied by critical commentary against the conscription system. The Conscript Union's social media account has been hacked and seemingly supports the comments made in the fake video.

2035

- National *Safe Influencing* training programmes and quality labels are introduced in influencer marketing.
- YLE shelves a MOTCast on extensive financial irregularities in the Prime Minister's inner circle.
- A journalist who reported on security policy leaks by Ministry for Foreign Affairs officials is extradited to the United States for sentencing on espionage charges.
- Finland ranks 20th in the RSF Press Freedom Index.

MEDIA WELFARE STATE

The media welfare state, or the model of private-public cooperation in the media sector, is working to foster national unity, culture and education, and pluralism in communication as a way of combatting external influencing efforts. Increased cooperation supports the continued role of smaller media. It also serves the development of new tools and major co-productions.

2027

- There are concerns about the security and vitality of Eastern Finland and access to regional media. Support packages are put together to boost the resilience of border regions.
- Opinion is sharply divided over the campaign to incorporate the *protection of national interest* into journalistic guidelines.

2030

- Hackers hijack the live broadcast of Independence Day celebrations and live AI copies of the presenters proclaim Islamist propaganda. It is shown that the attack was masterminded by Russia, but the blame is nonetheless placed on the Muslim population in Finland.
- The media welfare state formally organises itself under the Ministry of Transport and Communication. The Council for Mass Media in Finland launches an AI solution for real-time quality control of news media.

2035

- The media welfare state is preparing AI-generated digital facsimiles of Finnish celebrities ahead of Finland's 120th anniversary.
- The use of the Council for Mass Media AI tool is extended to entertainment and it begins by calling into question existing accounts of Finland's involvement in the Continuation War.
- Start-up media operating under the umbrella of the media welfare state have established themselves as providers of news, entertainment and learning alongside international platforms.

ALTERNATIVE COMMUNITIES

User groups fed up with crises and traditional media are turning to alternative, less curated platforms to experience a sense of peer group membership and community. The movement is activating citizens but exposing them to external influences.

2027

- TikTok decides to censor all content relating to the China-Taiwan conflict. Meta restricts the publication of content about the Middle East situation.
- Discord is ranked as the most popular social media platform among young people in Finland. Many Finnish media operators open their own Signal channel.
- There are accusations in the EU that a widely used AI partner app is spreading Russian propaganda and collecting user data.

2030

- The #secondratecitizen campaign intensifies the debate on racism that is ongoing on various platforms in Finland.
- Start-up funding is allocated to S2 community media. The start-ups are sponsored by traditional media companies.
- An investigation into the funding of an alternative Telegram channel popular with young people reveals connections with the Kremlin and the accounts are closed.
- The most followed social media account in Finland introduces couples who are moving into an old house that needs renovation and life in a small offgrid community.

2035

- Research shows that more rigorous source critique in the wake of the security situation has contributed to improve media literacy in Finland but undermined faith in democracy.
- Predictive Kontio AI based on register data and social media filtering is introduced for purposes of security clearances and applicant profiling. An applicant who took part in the internal instant-messaging chats of an organisation opposed to mining claims is denied a ministry job. The applicant accuses the police of violating their privacy.

by immersing themselves in the fantasy worlds of familiar games, books, films and reruns. **The avoidance of news and the excessive consumption of entertainment are increasing among young people, at the same time as the age groups who grew up with more traditional media are often dubious about the new channels and their influencers. Older generations, then, spend a great deal of time with news and content from trusted and traditional domestic and Western media.**

AI-driven advances in synthetic media are raising concerns about the acceleration of disinformation. In many countries the public sector has taken upon itself the task of maintaining the nation's knowledge base. Fact-checking and investigative journalism are increasing. Media products and news are subjected not only to quality controls but also censorship. The synthetic AI content produced by autocracies' propaganda machineries is combatted in the media industry by strengthening the distinctive characteristics of the Finnish language and cultural area.

MEDIA WELFARE STATE

Russia's expansionist ambitions have shifted from Ukraine to the Baltic countries and Eastern Europe, causing heightened security policy concerns in Finland. Public trust in domestic media is continuing to strengthen with the growing need for constant updates to the situational picture. The slowdown in internal migration to growth centres and the increased demand for local information have ensured continuity for local media and eased pressures towards media consolidation.

Media content consumption is increasing across class boundaries, but overall spending is declining due to economic stringency and dwindling purchasing power. People are under increasing financial strain and cannot always afford the content of commercial media. Therefore, various types of free content, social media and YLE have increased their share of time spent with news and entertainment.

The domestic media sector is responding to the ongoing changes to maintain the security of information supply and the plurality of information and, on the other hand, to fend off attempts to influence citizens via free foreign content and platforms. **A media welfare state, based in part on publicly funded incentives, is established through private-public cooperation.** Within the media welfare state different media operators share AI and other technology as well as their platforms in order to ensure continued access to domestic content. Geographically representative quota content produced under the publicly funded incentives is compiled into a content stream that is filtered according to citizens' interests through a common application. **Improving accessibility increases the consumption of local media content in particular.**

Fact-checking and investigative journalism are increasing. Media products and news are subjected not only to quality controls but also censorship.

ATTACHMENT AND ALIENATION

Average Finnish consumers spend most of their time and money on traditional domestic media brands that are considered high-quality and reliable. Revenue models based on monthly subscriptions, unit payments and advertising income tend to be most successful in content production. With the decline in consumer wealth, marketing narratives often revolve around patriotic values. The printed word and in-depth articles, live broadcasts and reliable, familiar presenters provide a sense of stability and permanence in life. A favourite radio programme together with its familiar hosts bring a sense of anchoring to a safe everyday life, and domestic films are scoring record viewer ratings. **Events that bring the country together enjoy great popularity, and spectacles that raise national spirits are produced jointly by private and public partners.**

Not all people in Finland are fully engaged in the media welfare state project, mainly for reasons of their reduced payment capacity and lack of interest. **Young people, people from an immigrant background, and lower-income groups, for example, feel increasingly distanced and alienated from the public debate, which has become less pluralistic and in which perspectives have narrowed in the wake of the security crisis, causing these people to turn increasingly to alternative content.** News and entertainment content is consumed and discussed in dispersed circles and small communities, albeit often using the tools of international platforms and social media.

There is room and demand for new media platforms as some existing platforms are banned in Europe for security reasons. TikTok, for example, has been forced to withdraw from the Western market. There are also efforts to replace the heavily regulated US social media platforms with safe European platforms. Domestic media houses are approaching users who have moved from mainstream media to social media platforms, which are also building domestic alternatives.

Platforms and communities are built around micro-influencers who know the users, who are familiar with the operating procedures, the memes and codes, and who take advantage of their position as significant taste judges, opinion leaders and gatekeepers. They are consulted by advertisers, media agencies and media houses on how to reach communities and how to send the right messages.

PUBLIC CONTROL INCREASES RESPONSIBILITIES

With media organisations now classified as critical entities, funding is more readily available but public control and oversight has also increased. The national security perspective is one of the cornerstones of media companies and their continuity. Even though it means more red tape, the Finnish media industry is prepared to accept closer state guidance and oversight. Trust in Finnish public media continues to remain high, and YLE has an increasingly prominent role in technology development within the media welfare state. The delivery obligations of Posti are also expanded and its delivery operations are subsidised by the government in areas where they would otherwise not be sustainable.

Steps are taken to further reinforce the status of the Council for Mass Media in Finland (CMM) as the highest national body tasked with validating information and intervening in disinformation. The supervision of all operators in the media field is tightened.

The media welfare state pools its resources to produce CMM AI that securely combines companies' user and content data and that filters the information environment and distributes content-specific quality and reliability assessments in real time. The AI system catches fake news and quickly and accurately sources the correct information. On the other hand, it also creates unrest in the cultural field by applying preventive censorship in certain art forms.

The regulatory authorities draw special attention to communities operating on poorly moderated social media platforms (e.g. Telegram, Signal, Discord). In many of them foreign agents are using synthetic influencers to foment a culture war against liberal values and to highlight the hypocrisy and decadence of Western countries.

Because of their information influencing and echo chambering, the communities using these platforms are defined as “risk groups” requiring special attention on the part of the media welfare state.

EU incentives are made available for sharing the technologies and practices of commercial media houses, and media cooperation between NATO countries is stepped up with a view to weeding out disinformation. Foreign agents are seeking to discredit the organisations involved in this kind of fact-checking.

DEFENDERS OF FREE COMMUNICATION

Media professionals are expected to uphold rigorous ethical standards, ensuring that the content produced is not only accurate and reliable but also representative of diverse communities and supportive of unity in society. For media companies, this implies a conscious effort to promote diversity.

Media industry employees at all levels of production are exposed to information influencing. The perspective of national security has central prominence in media work. In all branches and at all stages of work much importance is attached to cybersecurity, the identification of hybrid influencing methods and practices of fact-checking and counterfeit detection. Information gathering is often complicated as sources invoke national security and source security is emphasised alongside source protection.

Interaction and communication between private media companies, public media operators and representatives of the security system have prominent importance in joint bodies.

The media industry must be psychologically prepared to receive reactions aggravated by a securitised public debate. People representing “wrong values” are targeted by cancel campaigns, and investigative journalists are persecuted by both foreign agents and domestic extremists who think they are furthering the nation’s best interests.

Interaction and communication between private media companies, public media operators and representatives of the security system have prominent importance in joint bodies. **On the other hand, media operators must be prepared to stand up for source security and freedom of communication even in courtrooms.**

The growing emphasis on security means consumers are increasingly interested in the portraits and personalities of media professionals. Public image management is more and more important and recognised and regular media faces are allowed greater freedom in the choice of topics and perspectives. Self-censorship and fears of publishing the wrong kind of content are increasing concerns for media professionals who have not yet established themselves.

INTERPRETERS OF ALTERNATIVE COMMUNITIES

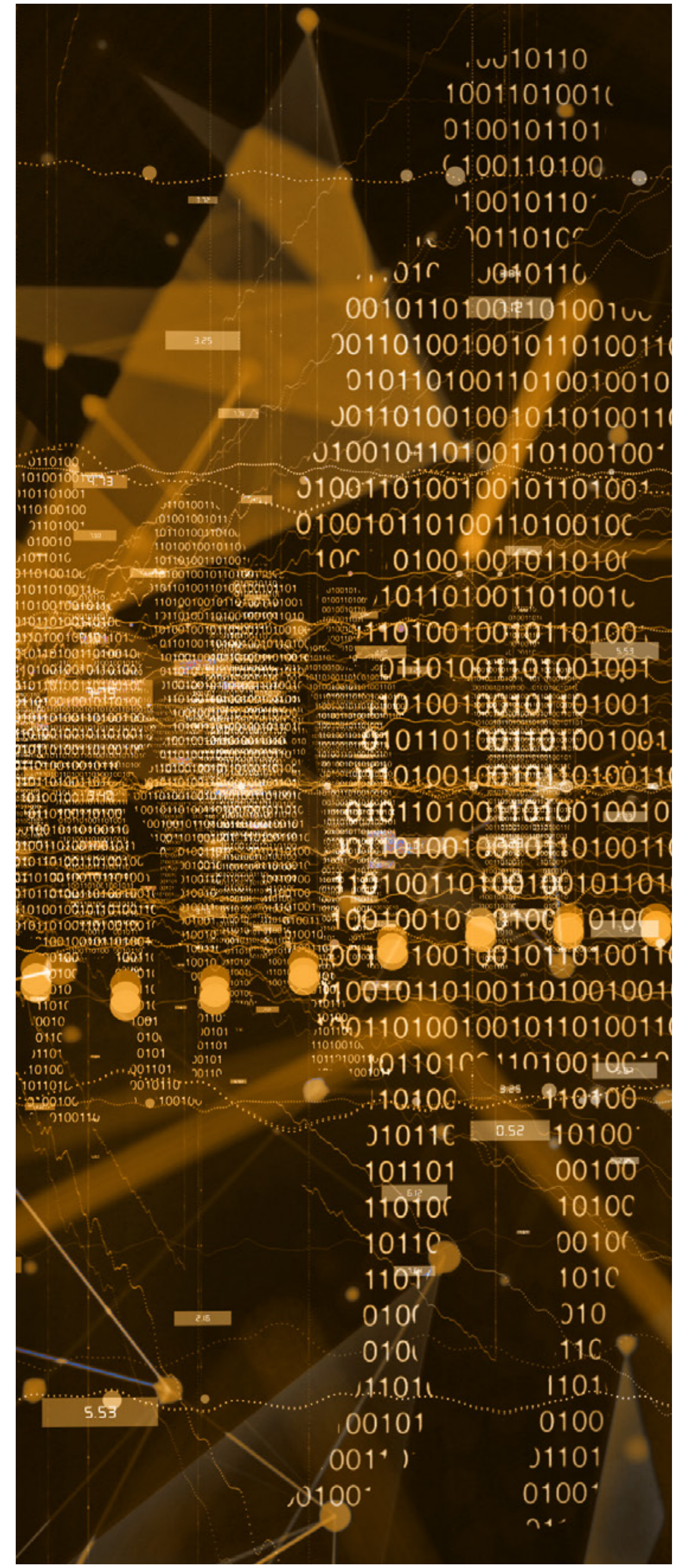
The media welfare state provides new funding opportunities for start-ups that produce content targeted at various small communities. Start-ups make use of social media platforms, gaming environments, podcasts and mobile apps to create content designed to meet special cultural and linguistic needs.

Start-ups work closely with influencers, community leaders and content creators from different backgrounds to incorporate educational and informative content into entertainment. **The platforms aim to advance cultural unity and dialogue by promoting Finnish language learning and, on the other hand, to enrich the domestic media field by introducing the different perspectives of those operating in the communities.**

Lifestyle media focusing on topics such as knitting, home renovation, hunting, fishing, gardening and small-scale farming are building new-generation audiences around social media influencers. More traditional forms of publication continue to retain their popularity in mainstream media. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle, keep-fit activities and sports content receive significant attention. **News monitoring by popular national defence-oriented communities, driven by the threat of war, and the communal development of military and survival skills,** then, tie together factual content and lifestyle media.

There is growing demand for physical “offline media” such as various life skills guides, books and physical recordings. This is mainly driven by planning and preparedness for exceptional circumstances, such as power outages and cyberattacks restricting access to cloud media libraries and the internet.

Another success story is that of popular alternative social media that operate with direct funding and that question mainstream media narratives. They often come under suspicion of serving as instruments of external interference, and their sources of funding are investigated for national security reasons. **Small media and their communities that have wrongly come under fire consider this an indication of a curtailed range of permitted truths.**



Scenario 3

Renaissance of Journalism

Demand for truth and reliable information

IMAGINE

- Era of increasing demand for reliable information and living in alternative truths
- Internet in its current form is flooded with automatically copied, AI-generated content
- Importance of journalistic media is highlighted in confusing and fragmented information environment
- News media ownership and business logic is becoming more value-driven
- A world fragmented by global warming and polycrisis
- Falling living standards are strengthening anti-establishment sentiment, especially among dissidents
- A movement to save Finnish democracy, culture and education

KEY DRIVERS OF CHANGE

CONTENT SURGES
Internet destroyed by AI pollution

TRUTH SEEKERS
People want to find reliable information

NEWS MEDIA AS FOUNDATIONS
Non-profit journalism on the rise

CRITICAL ISSUES FOR FINNISH MEDIA

MEDIA PROFESSIONALS	MEDIA ORGANISATIONS	MEDIA INDUSTRY	MEDIA SOCIETY
• How to survive in an information environment blurred by artificial intelligence? • How to communicate on difficult and complex issues without creating a sense of crisis or unnecessary confrontation? • How are different national and international cooperation networks used to ensure the reliability of information?	• How to ensure and communicate the reliability of information in a more uncertain and complex information environment? • How do media specialisation and fragmentation shape business strategies and development? • How does the conversion of news media into foundations happen in Finland?	• What is the role of the media industry in saving culture and democracy and in improving society's information resilience? • How can the media industry work together to reduce the polarisation of media as a mouthpiece for different groups?	• How do Finnish society and democracy work when more and more people believe in their own truths?

Scenario story

DEMOCRACY AND WELFARE STATE UNDER THREAT IN THE MIDST OF POLYCRISIS

The world has entered an era of polycrisis. Each year warming climate is causing ever more severe weather events, and the resulting economic, environmental and geopolitical crises are driving unpredictable social upheavals. International politics and economy are characterised by the rise of authoritarianism, the pursuit of self-interest, and fragmentation. Internal conflicts and foreign policy failures are diminishing the international gravitas and authority of the United States. US allies are left to their own devices, and NATO's role is dwindling. A divided EU is unable to mount a unified policy response. At the same time, China and Russia are continuing to aggressively expand their spheres of interest, and more and more states are turning away from the principles of democratic governance. In the midst of the unfolding crises, **resolution of the root cause of the problems, i.e. global warming and the wider ecological sustainability crisis, is still subordinated to the economy, security and other political priorities. The global economy is slowing and the rise in material living standards is therefore coming to a halt everywhere.**

Surrounded by crises on all sides, people in Finland develop a determination to defend and preserve democracy and the welfare state, which are both under threat. However, along with the rest of Europe, the Finnish economy is stumbling along from crisis to crisis, which requires constant choice-making. Finland has chosen to try and survive through Nordic cooperation and bilateral relations. Increased immigration means that population growth is heavily concentrated in towns and cities. On the other hand, rural areas also remain inhabited as the international economic situation demands more self-sufficient production

of food, materials and energy. The numbers who would want to move to Finland far exceed the numbers that Finland is prepared to accept.

TRUTH IS BLURRED IN CONTENT SURGES

National legislation and international technology regulation are failing to keep pace with the evolution of new applications. With no effective restraints on development, governments and companies are left with considerable discretion on the use of technology and data. Broad technology regulation aimed at harmonising the EU internal market is just a memory of the 2020s, and because of self-interests and diverging political opinions it is no longer possible to develop a common regulative framework.

AI-generated content surges are breaking down the traditional internet and rendering it useless. As new applications are being deployed without any controls, the internet's information environment is being flooded with generative AI pollution, which through self-learning loops is actually becoming degenerative. Content surges are steadily emerging as a result of new and increasingly powerful AI applications. **The volume of internet content is increasing exponentially but its quality is rapidly declining.**

Surrounded by crises on all sides, people in Finland develop a determination to defend and preserve democracy and the welfare state, which are both under threat. However, along with the rest of Europe, the Finnish economy is stumbling along from crisis to crisis, which requires constant choice-making.

Content surges are changing people's behaviour in different ways. In a confusing and fragmented information environment, people are both disconnecting themselves from smart devices and networks as well as isolating themselves on closed and more controlled private networks and platforms.

This is described by some as an era of truth seekers. Large numbers are determined to seek out higher quality and more curated content that places premium on the reliability and humanity of information. **Others find themselves in various alternative truths that question common institutions and their truths.** Content surges are undermining trust in technology, and the release of personal data is seen as a form of control exercised by the elite.

The profound complexity of polycrisis is stirring up an anti-system sentiment among middle-class native Finns who want to know who is to blame for the inevitable decline in their standards of living and the changes swirling around them. For many it makes no difference whether their truths are true to others, they just believe their own experience of what things appear to be.

THE MEDIA FOLLOW AUDIENCES AS THEY DISPERSE ACROSS DIFFERENT PLATFORMS

Media outlets are having to specialise, and the media industry is becoming increasingly fragmented under the pressures of content surges. AI-generated media based on automatic content production and copying are keen to reach the large masses, but the content is poor quality, and it is copied virtually in real-time. From a business point of view, therefore, specialisation is often the

MEDIA 2035
Scenario 3: Renaissance of Journalism

RENAISSANCE OF JOURNALISM: TIMELINE OF KEY DRIVERS OF CHANGE

2027 | 2030 | 2035

CONTENT SURGES

AI-generated content surges are breaking down the internet in its traditional format. The unbridled spread of generative applications is leading to a situation where the internet's information environment is flooded with self-learning loops of AI-pollution. Internet content has increased exponentially in volume but collapsed in quality.

TRUTH SEEKERS

People are sharply divided into different realities based on their behaviour amidst tidal waves of content. Many of them want to seek out higher quality and more curated content that places premium on the reliability and humanity of information. Others are choosing to turn to different alternative truths where common institutions and their power truths are called into question.

NEWS MEDIA AS FOUNDATIONS

Ownership of news media is increasingly transferred to foundations, which are separated from other media operations as non-profit, value-driven activities. Foundations either operate with their basic capital or, in most cases, they are part-owners of other companies and use the proceeds from those companies to finance value-based news media operations.

Almost all companies have joined the AI bandwagon in pursuit of financial benefits.

Google and Bing are engaged in a battle for Western search engine supremacy and in competition over how much content they can put out. Both allow free AI content to appear in their searches.

It is becoming easier to optimise search engine results using AI-generated content. The pages appearing at the top of the search results change daily, and the quality of the results deteriorates rapidly because of AI-produced content.

Search engines are no longer able to distinguish between AI pollution and authentic information.

Google quickly loses 90% of its users.

Technology regulation and people's understanding of information reliability are fragmented by several major national and international lawsuits concerning the veracity and rights to use AI-copied content. The reaction of companies and governments is to double down on furthering their own interests.

The internet, as it has been known, has become largely unusable.

New curated search databases and digital encyclopedias are rapidly attracting new users and donors.

Internet uses have changed fundamentally due to its chaotic structure and an overabundance of content. Closed discussion forums are enjoying a renaissance.

People protect themselves against poor quality online content by isolating themselves on closed platforms and private networks.

There is a growing inclination to believe in extreme truths, and political polarisation is deepening in democratic states. Family-driven dropout from school is increasing significantly in Finland.

An information attack of unprecedented intensity is launched against the Finnish parliamentary elections in 2027.

However, civil society remains vigilant and media houses are able to counter the disinformation almost in real time. The attack unites the Finnish people and sparks a broad debate on the future of Finnish democracy and culture.

Many people say the elections were as a scam and feel betrayed by democracy.

With the growth of disinformation and new deepfake technologies, understanding and verifying information on the internet is becoming increasingly difficult.

Almost all European countries are seeing significant and aggressive election interference attacks. The success of these attacks and their impact on election outcomes vary, but they do have the universal effect of uniting people and, on the other hand, of driving them into different realities.

The first Finnish-language curated search databases or online encyclopedias are published. They are modelled on Wikipedia and updated manually.

People in Finland switch to using the new online encyclopedias.

Conspiracy theories about their hidden agendas are circulated even before the services are launched.

News media operating as foundations are receiving increasingly significant donations from wealthy citizens who are keen to defend democracy and reliable researched information. This is fuelling suspicions among those living in alternative truths that the news media serve as instruments of elite power, further deepening the confrontation.

Several media companies are making aggressive use of "content farm" AI to replace human labour and journalists in the pursuit of financial gain.

It is thought that knowledge, journalism and democracy are under threat – something needs to be done. In Northern and Central European media circles a movement is emerging that is committed to secure the future of news media through value-based foundations.

Media literacy is introduced a mandatory subject for all comprehensive school children. Teaching is organised jointly by media houses and the Ministry of Education and Culture.

People are becoming increasingly bored and disaffected with AI-generated content. Many small operators and single-topic media are having success with a more humane approach and specialised content.

News media are being converted into foundations on a value basis both in Finland and elsewhere in Europe. Growing emphasis is given to journalistic ethics and the principles of investigative journalism.

A European network of investigative journalism contributes to pushing the Hungarian people over the edge. They rise up in revolt and topple the authoritarian regime. Democratic elections are held in the country.

Many democratic foundation-based news media are banned in authoritarian countries in order to avoid repetition of the events in Hungary. In many countries they continue to operate in the spirit of underground resistance movements.

best option. **In many countries a large number of small and medium-sized operators and closed communities that take advantage of new forms of consumption and specialised content are springing up in the media industry.**

Truth seekers, i.e. audiences who want to find reliable information, are dispersed across several different platforms. In a confusing media environment, consumers often seek entertainment and information from different places, and therefore marketers have to disperse and specialise as well. Micro-operators, freelancers and alternative media platforms have greater agility than larger operators to specialise in specific audiences and target groups and their corresponding content and services.

There is a growing focus and emphasis on audience orientation: media that know how to produce content, services and products appropriately targeted to their audiences are having the the best success. Advertising money is shared between a larger number of operators than before as it is more and more difficult to reach large audiences via a single channel. For media companies, this underscores the importance of having an in-depth knowledge of audiences and customers so that advertising can be effectively targeted.

In a polycrisis environment, journalistic media have an increasingly prominent role as sources of reliable information. The traditional role of news media in compiling, verifying, analysing and disseminating socially important and up-to-date information is strengthening. Investigative journalism serves as a watchdog of information and power, defending these ideals and democracy and seeking and producing information that others are unable or unwilling to present. **These ideals of journalism are constantly challenged by media that convey alternative truths and disinformation.**

CAMPAIGNS IN DEFENCE OF FINNISH DEMOCRACY AND CULTURE

The Finnish media industry is following international trends whereby media companies are specialising and fragmenting into smaller units to serve more targeted audiences. Traditional media uses and channels continue to remain significant, although new types of media are also proliferating. Content surges have prompted increased criticism against Finnish media operators, highlighting the need to ensure reliability in a more uncertain and nuanced information environment. Traditional media content and operators are retaining their position. Consumers are seeking out familiar media products because they know that their content is reliable. **People in Finland expect greater clarity from the media they are consuming: reliable and verified information or pure entertainment and well-made genre content.**

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A campaign to rescue democracy and culture is launched in Finland in the 2020s by virtue of political guidance, an active citizenship and active media organisations. Media and literacy skills are taught extensively in schools and civic participation in democratic decision-making is supported. At the same time, a wide range of citizens are making use of various media services to understand the polycrisis-driven changes in society. **Proponents of alternative truths believe that the rescue campaign is an attempt to strengthen the dominance of the elite. In protest, some have decided to take their children out of the school system. It is estimated that up to one in five people in Finland are falling out of reach of traditional media and moving to alternative media platforms and communities of alternative truths.**

RENEWAL OF NEWS MEDIA

In many Central and Northern European countries, the **ownership of news media is increasingly shifting to foundations and reorganised on a non-profit basis.** This change in ownership structure is explained in part by the increasing appreciation of journalism under conditions of a growing threat to democracy, the blurring of truth, and content surges. Furthermore, there is a growing commitment to produce reliable information as people struggle to come to terms with the unfolding social crises. Both the divergence of entertainment and information and the mismatch between investigative journalism and commercial logic support the transfer to foundations. In the information environment of a broken internet, it makes no sense for news media to apply the same business models as entertainment media that are based on clickbait headlines and advertising revenue funding.

Other print media are also performing reasonably well as people find the printed word more credible and harder to manipulate than online media.

Foundations are financed either through their initial capital or the proceeds from companies in which they are part owners. No fees are charged to the audiences for the value-driven operations of news media. As the content provided is free of charge, readers are unconcerned about the automatic copying and have no reason to switch to other services. Operations are also funded through donations, for example from wealthy individuals. Crowdfunded media projects are also increasingly common.

Both entertainment and alternative media continue to work with the revenue models that are typical of the media industry, such as subscription and membership fees, advertisements, freemium models and e-commerce. They operate both on the platforms of international technology companies and on self-developed platforms, which are becoming increasingly popular as users are expressing growing concerns and reservations about the quality of content on the former.

In the spirit of saving democracy, culture and education, the Finnish-language book industry is thriving and even supported by political decisions. Publicly funded books are handed out free of charge to school pupils, no VAT is charged on books, and cultural benefits for employees are extended to include the purchase of literature. Educational and teaching materials are also supported in public decision-making. Active efforts are made to improve media literacy as part of the curriculum. **Other print media are also performing reasonably well as people find the printed word more credible and harder to manipulate than online media.**

YLE CONTINUES IN ROLE AS CUSTODIAN OF CULTURE

The Finnish Broadcasting Company YLE's role as a news media and custodian of Finnish culture and the domestic languages remains largely

unchanged. However, funding for YLE is cut back in the tough economic climate, forcing it to trim entertainment production in particular. **Foundation ownership is bringing news media closer to YLE's role, but because of the growing demand for journalism there are enough readers and viewers for both.**

People who are looking for alternative truths are particularly sceptical about YLE and its materials, but they are also suspicious of other mainstream news media. News media are a constant subject of conspiracy theories as they work to uncover the truth and to produce information that does not fit the world-views of those living in alternative realities.

PROFESSIONALS OF INFORMATION AND INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS

Tidal waves of content are increasing the need for verifying and identifying sources of information, complicating the journalist's job. **Many job tasks in journalism take up more time than before and the volume of work done by humans is increasing.** Journalistic quality is guaranteed by **networks of cooperation between companies and professionals that ensure the transparency of sources, the reliability of information, and copyrights.**

The growth of cybercrime is increasing the need for technological expertise in the media industry. In a fragmented global policy environment, there are some operators in the media field whose aim it is to blur information and the truth. In particular, investigative journalism is targeted by aggressive cyberattacks and influencing.

Foundation ownership of news media has brought improvements to the work of individual journalists compared to the 2020s. The value-based approach of news media means journalists are guaranteed the opportunity to focus on core journalistic tasks such as searching for and producing high-quality information.

Many journalistic topics are causing difficulty, however. How to cover the multifaceted polycrisis so that audiences get the message and are educated without a sense of being overwhelmed by crisis news? And how to facilitate a return to society for those lost in alternative realities, without loss of face?

SINGLE-TOPIC SPECIALISED MEDIA

In an increasingly fragmented media field, one way to succeed is to specialise in selected subject areas. **New thematic media are attracting loyal audiences.** Live crisis reporting and continuous impact assessments are increasingly common in coverage on the climate crisis, extreme weather events and regional geopolitical tensions, for example. These kinds of "crisis media" often operate on their own platforms so that people can follow the unfolding situation and contribute to the discussion. Many media outlets leverage the collective power of the community to gather news and information in real time, providing a diverse and timely perspective on events.

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This also means an increase in citizen journalism as the general public participates in producing news and media content on the ground. At the same time, it blurs the boundary line between professional journalism and user-generated content. **Micro-operators, freelancers and small cooperation networks of experts are thriving as new types of single-topic media.**

Traditional news media use the same logic, distributing topics of interest to separate platforms to serve audiences interested in a specific topic. They guide their journalists and experts to focus on specific themes on the back of the financial security provided by foundation ownership.

New, curated search databases, i.e. digital and constantly updated encyclopedias are becoming more and more common in everyday use. Almost all of the internet's early search engines and community-based free encyclopedias are flooded with AI pollution. They are replaced by new foundation-based curated digital encyclopedias, "custodians of data".

There are also platforms for those interested in alternative truths, where content is produced professionally using several channels and forms of communication. As a rule these platforms do not attract large audiences, however. Instead, audiences disperse across different platforms based on their views and opinions.

Scenario 4

Power of Entertainment

Ability to pay differentiates world-views

IMAGINE

- Entertainment completely pervades the international media landscape through the combined impact of social media and entertainment and technology companies
- AI-powered content production is taking over the media and advertising market
- The two major media groups in Finland are part of “life-as-a-service” companies
- Inequality driven by slow growth and technological unemployment is reflected in consumption patterns
- People with the ability to pay have the time and interest to consume in-depth content, others mainly use free content
- Domestic media products have dedicated audiences
- Low-regulated, low-growth globalisation prevails

KEY DRIVERS OF CHANGE

DATA POWER
Data, copyrights and technology merge together

PAYWALL ELITE
The wealthy can afford to engage in deep interests

DIGITAL PRECARIAT
Algorithms determine that you take what you get

CRITICAL ISSUES FOR FINNISH MEDIA

MEDIA PROFESSIONALS	MEDIA ORGANISATIONS	MEDIA INDUSTRY	MEDIA SOCIETY
• How to maintain a broad range of new technology and tools skills in a freelance-oriented labour market? • How to build attractive and distinctive, career-promoting personal brands? • How to maintain high quality standards amidst increasing demands for speed?	• How to set oneself apart in a media environment where everyone is equalised by new technologies? • How to make the most effective use of user data for better personalisation and customisation? • What new business models are being developed with the strengthening of the influencer orientation?	• What competitive advantages does the Finnish media industry have over the tech giants that control data and copyrights? • How to continue to produce critical information and insights in a media environment thoroughly permeated by entertainment and automation?	• How to prevent the divergence and differentiation of people’s realities according to their ability to pay? • How to uphold democracy in an algorithmic and gamified culture of interaction? • How to provide guidance to media users so that they continue to remain proactive and critical interpreters of their environments?

Scenario story

DATA AND MONEY ARE POWER

Globalisation has triumphed over growth-deterring geopolitical bloc formation, and money is now what rules in the fierce international competition. Technology and information – both private and public – are controlled by major corporations whose wealth and capabilities exceed those of many nation-states. Power is increasingly concentrated internationally in the hands of multibillionaires and lobbyists advocating their political ambitions.

Following on a decade of war and economic instability, Finland has entered a period of slow but steady growth. The national economy is growing mainly on the back of strong technology exports. The green transition is pushing EU industries towards sustainability and responsibility and also creating new industries and jobs in Finland. **At same time time, however, the shift towards a service economy is continuing to gain momentum and employment in the platform economy is constantly increasing.**

Attitudes towards the ecological sustainability crisis vary widely between population groups, regions, countries and industry branches. Similarly, the impacts of the ecological sustainability crisis are unevenly distributed. Increasing numbers of people are having to leave their homes and move in search of a better life, while in most Western countries talk about a sustainable lifestyle is, for the most part, little more than wishful thinking.

Finland has become significantly more internationalised. Climate refugeeism and labour immigration are driving **population growth, which is mostly concentrated in larger cities and especially in the capital region.** Another reason behind this trend is that immigrants are keen to join international communities and to find work, which are both scarcer in smaller rural areas. Regional centres are also growing.

REGULATION IS CONCENTRATING POWER IN MONOPOLIES

Rapid technology and AI adoption in the 2020s put consumer security and privacy in jeopardy and brought a sharp rise in fake content. Organisations that failed to uphold their corporate social responsibility suffered significant reputational damage, which prompted both Chinese and US companies to improve their quality controls with a view to restoring user trust. **Large content providers are careful to hold on to their copyrights, and they are taking successful steps to curb uncontrolled generative aggregation of copyrighted content.**

AI technologies have for years been incorporated into the services, platforms and devices used by consumers. **These technologies impact upon all areas of life and the economy by tapping into the vast amounts of data that are made available by consumers for AI training and that ultimately facilitate their everyday life.** Given the weight of corporate lobbying and the EU's quest for improved competitiveness, ambitious new data legislation is adjusted to serve market interests, and the most rigorous regulatory packages governing data use and AI training remain unimplemented. **Generative content has increased in volume** following legislative changes that among other things have made possible the copyrighting of AI-assisted art in the United States. **Major international companies have the best resources for developing AI applications,** and smaller operators are not in the position to challenge them because of compliance risks and the scale of operations.

Technological advances are driving up unemployment in many branches. Slow economic growth and persistent social inequalities are causing increasing differentiation among socioeconomic classes as well as in media behaviour according to ability to pay and social and cultural capital. In 2035, media users in Finland are divided into a wealthy paywall elite and a digital precariat, with the latter comprising a large proportion of the Finnish people.

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ENTERTAINMENT IS ALL-PERVASIVE

Entertainment is rapidly pervading the international media environment. Intense competition in the media industry is accelerating the growth of efficiently produced commercial content and the international platforms distributing that content. These trends are further boosted by the use of generative AI. Major content and technology companies have accumulated a significant amount of rights to the most popular media products and the most clicked content that they use to train their AIs. Content formats have become interchangeable as text is instantly processed into video and audio into images. Music consists increasingly of "utility music" that is generated based on behavioural and sensor data to fit in with the situation. **The optimisation and customisation of individual products is increasingly common. Rather than acquiring individual media products, large content companies acquire the rights to AI facsimile versions of world stars, which are then duplicated for advertisement productions.**

Rigorous content moderation for AI learning and advertisers' lowered risk appetite are leading to a convergence of media contents. **This is creating an addictive international media environment that rarely evokes critical thoughts or unpleasant emotions, unless the specific purpose to elicit a backlash reaction in recipients.** Knowledge and recognition of the information provider and their visibility have become mea-

MEDIA 2035
Scenario 4: Power of Entertainment

POWER OF ENTERTAINMENT: TIMELINE OF KEY DRIVERS OF CHANGE

DATA POWER

"Data is money". Market regulation is eased and investment poured into data use and new technological opportunities in a bid to reverse the economic slowdown. AI-assisted content production based on copying is accelerating internationally and eating up large parts of the Finnish media market.

2027

- A deepfake investigation into the US presidential election is completed. Companies are under increasing pressure to commit themselves to improving the quality control of generative AI.
- GenAI-assisted content receives copyright protection in the United States.
- The amount of time spent with domestic media content has dropped to 30% of total media use.
- The EU takes steps to ease the regulation of AI and data use on competitive grounds.

2030

- Finnish AX media content is incorporated as part of the AX conglomerate. Bonus cards are linked to user accounts. A competing media conglomerate BY is formed the same year.
- Disney buys up Viacom.
- The United States elects an independent president with a Silicon Valley background who ran a middle-of-the-road campaign.
- Meta's Quest users can choose to watch Superbowl MMXXXI virtually on the playing field.
- An AI-replicated Taylor Swift performs customised sets of songs simultaneously in all US states before taking a creative break.

2035

- There remain just two major commercial media companies in Finland, which have merged their operations with data-rich companies (e.g. retail stores) and which offer a diverse range of services based on data aggregation.
- Academy Award for best international film goes for the first time ever to a Chinese director.

PAYWALL ELITE

"Time is money". Technological advances are finally allowing people to have more leisure time. A monthly "Life as a Service" subscription includes a digital avatar that attends to all everyday needs and offers distinctive, appealing and high-quality art and information instead of mere content to pass the time. Quality and peer experiences lie at the centre of life services media, while authenticity is a curation issue. Personal data is managed and disclosed in order to obtain better services.

2027

- AX Media and BY Media are buying up smaller media outlets. Most of the content is locked behind paywalls.
- First online retail transaction by a user-authorised AI avatar prototype.
- Both AX Media and and BY Media have their own version of an AI correspondent who generates a weekly news review.
- A heated talk show exchange about the pilot episode of an XY Media series being subjected to piracy sparks dozens of generative copy versions of the episode on social media.

2030

- AX Media and BY Media launch competing Life Services, which are built around smart devices, calendars, cards and home IoT devices. The architectures come from AWS and Alphabet. Both include a carbon footprint calculator.
- There is a light-hearted campaign to gain official acceptance for the word 'chat' as a personal pronoun.
- In the annual UMK contest for new music, first-round voting is between AX Media's and BY Media's artist rosters. Subscriber members have weighted votes.
- The final of the 2030 ice hockey world championships beats the Finnish record for pay-per-view payments. (Finland wins.)

2035

- AX Media gets the Finnish rights to crossover content of Star Wars and Star Trek universes.
  BY Media creates a digital facsimile of Vesa-Matti Loiri.
- A personal avatar takes care of 30% of Elo premium users' everyday errands and transactions.
- The first Life Services tailored funeral is held in Finland.
- An AI avatar of Käärijä has been sold to 10,000 households.
- Finland's first presidential candidate coming from a Youtuber background launches their campaign.

DIGITAL PRECARIAT

"If only I had money". A highly internationalised and AI-driven media environment offers an endless stream of addictive and personalised content. Consumers with a lower capacity to pay are drawn to escapism, creating an arena of less-regulated advertising and influencing. They are pushed to spend as much money and time as possible on their personal media stream and with advertisements. Personal data is disclosed in exchange for free content.

2027

- Advertisements are introduced in the cheapest Spotify and Netflix subscriptions.
- A scandal erupts over the ending of a streaming service movie personalised according to user preferences.
- A nominal service fee is introduced for public library services.

2030

- A gambling reform brings an explosive rise in the number of synthetic online casino influencers on Finnish social media.
- Voter turnout in the 2029 municipal elections is 40%.
- The last printed free newspaper is published.
- The employment rate in Finland drops to 65%. Technological unemployment is thought to be a major cause.

2035

- Literacy has deteriorated significantly in one-quarter of the Finnish population. An interpellation is submitted to the government on the subject.
- AI partners are linked to demographic data as an optional register.
- Concerned parents file an EU class action lawsuit against a microtransaction-based, fully generative multiplatform f2p game by Epic Games.
- NEETs account for 25% of the age group 18–25.

sures of information reliability, reducing the relevance of the journalistic process. The boundaries between commercial and other content have become blurred. Demand for domestic journalism has decreased. Tailored summaries of international news are viewed and listened to live on smart devices or through wearable technology interfaces, with the voiceover provided by favourite celebrities.

Social media giants use AI to fill in the gaps between the discrete data points of Finnish users moving between different services, but they still lack an in-depth understanding of user needs. This is no problem for the vast majority of consumers who spend their time with free content, **and in the end international operators will win the race for people's time.**

FROM MEDIA COMPANIES TO TECHNOLOGY COMPANIES

Internationalisation and the growing volume of addictive free content are causing higher media market concentration around the world as well as in Finland. Many domestic media companies are having to close down. Finland is unable to support the national media landscape in an environment of escalating international competition for consumers' time. Consumers have a weakened relationship with domestic media companies and are shuttling around in the online world of international content. **Many traditional media brands are disappearing and being merged with other brands.**

Following a series of mergers, media industry consolidation has reached a point where there remain just two major commercial media companies in Finland. Their partners include companies that manage data in the retail sector. Media content is part of the offering of aggregators of user data for "Life-as-a-Service" services. The mergers are aimed at developing extensive services based on data collection and utilisation and at avoiding compliance risks related to AI use. This makes it possible to stay in competition with international technology companies and social media operators.

In the new situation, media companies are to an ever-greater extent technology companies as well. Finnish media operators have an important advantage

Consumers are offered easy-to-use tools to help them extract high-quality content from the media stream.

over their international competition in that they have a better understanding of Finnish culture. As partners in technology-driven life services, they are in the position to offer services and content that are tailored to domestic consumers and that allow for shared experiences.

IN THE SERVICE OF THE PAYWALL ELITE

The largest domestic commercial media companies' business models are integrated as part of monthly fee-based memberships of Life Services. A wide range of data is collected, with their consent, on Life Services users, which allows these companies more effectively to personalise and tailor services than is possible even for the social media giants. User data is collected from most areas of life through AI-assisted terminals and wearable technology sensors, and the data is then merged in the service's master application. **The prime selling points of Life Services are AI avatars that are constantly trained using the data collected and that perform errands on behalf of premium customers, freeing up time for the wealthiest of them to explore and discover new experiences.**

Life Services are chiefly interested in recruiting customers who are quality and time conscious. At the same time, they offer protection against a highly intensive international media environment. In connection with communication about the services, guarantees are provided that information production for news media will be managed by real people, while AI will serve as a "personal editor-in-chief", providing suitable content in suitable doses. **Life Services media will serve not only as sources of reliable information and journalism but also as gatekeepers of entertainment. They compete with one another for the rights to the best domestic and international productions and content and also run their own content production machineries.**

Media brands are disappearing and individual influencers emerging as major hubs of interaction. Life Services media are therefore recruiting public figures into their networks because consumers are keen to interact with them directly

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on social media and gaming platforms as well as at live events. The public figures, for their part, serve as brand ambassadors and advertisers for Life Services.

Consumers are offered easy-to-use tools to help them extract high-quality content from the media stream. **The solutions are AI-based personal assistants that are available in different price versions.** In advertising, optimising the free versions of these assistants sometimes replaces search engine optimisation. Domestic content has retained its dedicated audiences, while the value of international content has declined as a result of content saturation. Life Services' own content production is largely concentrated on Finland. **Media companies' earnings from Life Services come not only from content production and their gatekeeper role, but also many other sources supported by the synergy of user data.**

GROWING CONCERNS ABOUT CULTURE AND EDUCATION

The rapid changes in the media environment and the division of the population according to media literacy skills have given rise to concerns about the state of culture and education in society and have increased pressures on basic education and media education. Outside the paywalls, the digital precariat is swimming in an ocean of global media streams teeming with new predatory fish. In addition to psychologically tailored advertising, the emerging phenomenon of generative (gambling) games is presenting a significant risk of addiction, taking up much of the time of some people and the money of many others. The decline of literacy skills, critical thinking and the capacity for concentration in a world of pre-digested and fast-paced entertainment is leading to an avoidance of news and to a gradual decay of culture and education.

Core budget funding for YLE has been cut and the broadcaster's role is limited to providing essential news and media services. YLE is viewed by citizens as a reliable curator of information. **With the consolidation of media ownership and**

residential concentration, YLE's role is increasingly shifting towards the provision of regional information and services for different language groups. Its cultural and educational functions are assessed based on the reach of its content and the level of audience commitment. Incentives have been put in place to support its impact. Political lobbying aimed at reducing public funding for YLE is gathering momentum in various channels, even though there have already been major cutbacks.

CREATORS OF PHENOMENA AND EXPERIENCES

Many of those working in Life Services media production are directly or indirectly engaged with technology, data and analytics. Their job is to conceptualise content with AI assistance or to engage in the life-event-based development of content targeting, for example. The industry is trying to strike a balance between the latest trends towards foresight and retro-inspired content. **It is commonplace to reward creators based on impact and the number of views generated by content. Understanding algorithms and impact is essential in most tasks.**

Major Finnish media houses are running their own content production machineries and competing for users with their top products and celebrity rosters, while at the same time advertising Life Services and serving as channels for user engagement. This requires people who specialise in the production of high-quality content and who can create differentiation from the international giants. Influencers working in the freelance networks of Life Services media have access to their own media structures to produce diverse content.

A high premium is placed on the ability of media professionals to manage their work and to develop their own personal brand. Trainers who can teach strong influencing and conceptualising skills are in high demand as impact-based wages are more and more widely used in the media industry. Creators aim to set themselves apart through their choices of subject and special skills, but increasingly through narrativity and individuality as well. **The most visible journalist influencers build teams around themselves and consult business experts to help them set up small, specialised content production companies.**

Social encounters and community carry increasing weight and importance in domestic Life Services media. Another factor is the increase in leisure time. Stimulation instructors organise experiences and events for different target audiences in the physical environment and on gaming platforms, while at the same time advertising Life Services brands. They bring together communities, organise events and report on their impact to parent companies.

> **Human influencers are competing with generatively produced influencers, using their humanity as a differentiating factor.**

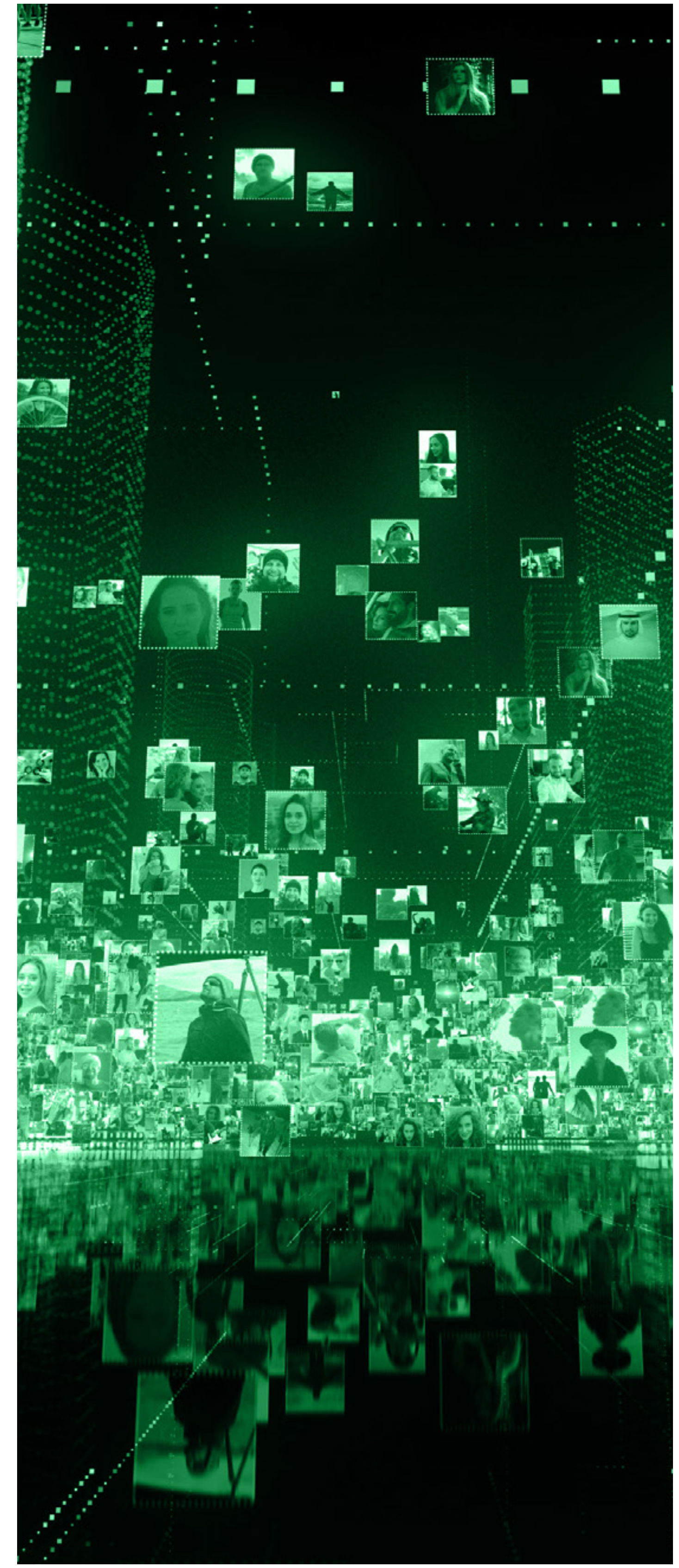
AUTHENTICITY IS APPEALING

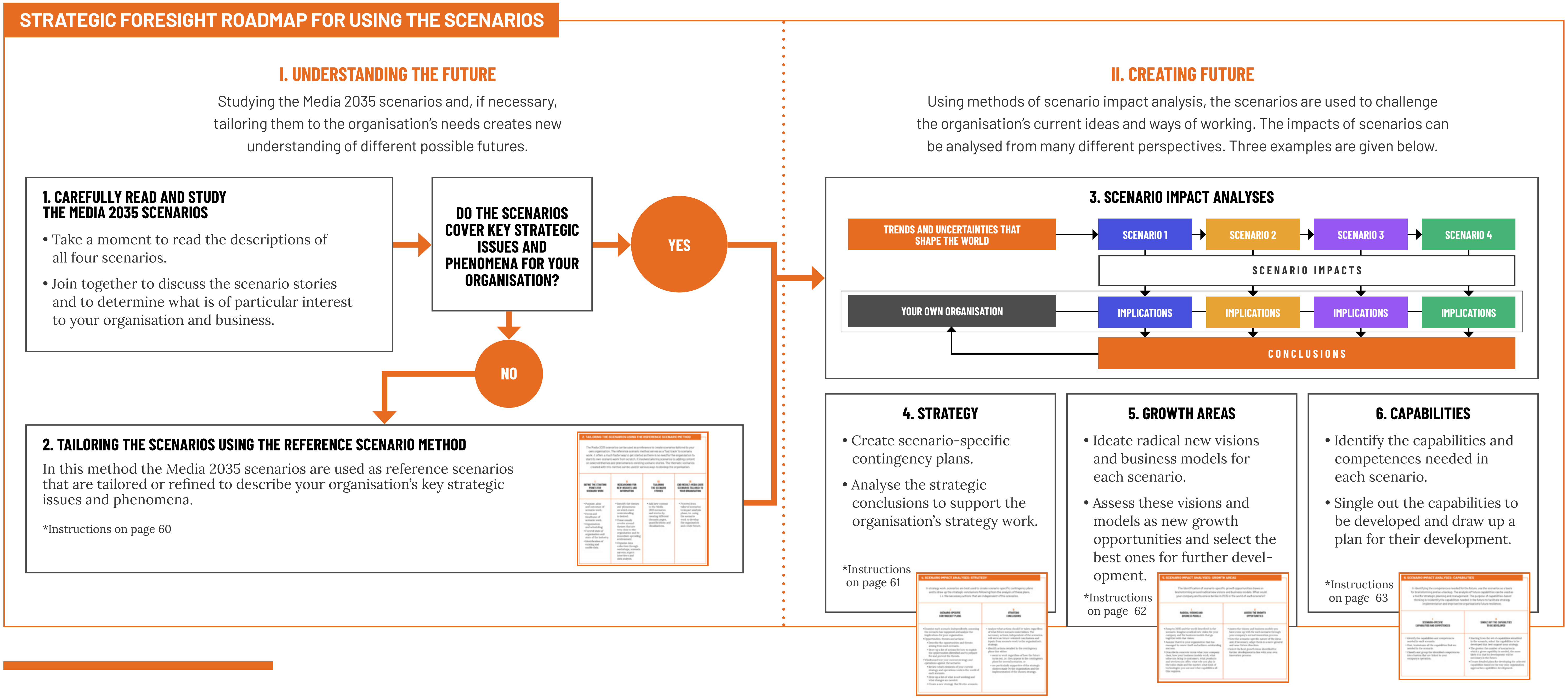
Despite the high degree of media concentration, content producers and media companies operating on limited resources and promoting authenticity continue to make their mark. Phenomena appearing on global platforms that appeal to the digital precariat also shape the content aimed at the paywall elite. **Innovative content creators can continue to thrive by producing specialised and emotive content and art that has not been watered down to serve algorithms.** The value of different types of archival material is continuing to grow with the nostalgic emotions they evoke. **Human influencers are competing with generatively produced influencers, using their humanity as a differentiating factor.**

Despite the seemingly endless opportunities for consuming AI-generated entertainment, there is a widespread longing for genuine human contact and experiences. Experiences of the physical world and human interaction are increasing in popularity. Neo-spiritual and various other traditional ways of life are also on the rise.

Content relating to the hyperlocal environment is continuing to attract interest. Journalists exploring domestic phenomena produce their stories with the help of drones and real-time speech-to-text technology. They use AI for rapid sourcing and make use of materials produced by citizen journalists. Broadcasts of major sports events are still a form entertainment that brings people together, and professional sports are seriously big money. **Various national live events are particularly popular because of their authenticity and the element of surprise and experience.**

As the AI celebrities of international technology and entertainment companies are constantly in the limelight and accessible at any time without restriction, the appeal and value of genuine public figures and influencers is even greater than before. **Finnish operators can differentiate themselves by offering consumers access to real interaction with public figures and influencers – rather than with AI-generated facsimiles.**





Strategic Foresight Roadmap for Using the Scenarios

The Strategic Foresight Roadmap is a tool designed to help media professionals and organisations put the Media 2035 scenarios to practical use in their development work. It helps with identifying different future opportunities, threats, visions, growth prospects, business models, innovations, strategic options as well as future competences and capabilities. It is intended to support scenario work and to enhance the effectiveness of scenario-based development. The roadmap and the media scenarios provide a solid foundation for future-oriented strategic discussion and for better decision-making about the future.

The roadmap for strategic foresight is divided into two parts: the stages of **understanding future** and **creating future.**

2. TAILORING THE SCENARIOS USING THE REFERENCE SCENARIO METHOD

The Media 2035 scenarios can be used as a reference to create scenarios tailored to your own organisation. The reference scenario method serves as a "fast track" to scenario work: it offers a much faster way to get started as there is no need for the organisation to start its own scenario work from scratch. It involves tailoring scenarios by adding content on selected themes and phenomena to existing scenario stories. The thematic scenarios created with this method can be used in various ways to develop the organisation.

I DEFINE THE STARTING POINTS FOR SCENARIO WORK	II RESEARCHING FOR NEW INSIGHTS AND INFORMATION	III TAILORING THE SCENARIO STORIES	IV END RESULT: MEDIA 2035 SCENARIOS TAILORED TO YOUR ORGANISATION
• Purpose, aims and outcomes of scenario work. • Focus and timeframe of scenario work. • Organisation and scheduling. • Current state of organisation and state of the industry. • Identification of existing and usable data.	• Identify the themes and phenomena on which more understanding is desired. • These usually revolve around themes that are very close to the organisation and its immediate operating environment. • Organise data collection through workshops, scenario surveys, expert interviews and data analysis.	• Add new content to the Media 2035 scenarios and stories by creating different thematic pages, quantifications and visualisations.	• Proceed from tailored scenarios to impact analysis phase, i.e. using the scenario work to develop the organisation and create future.

MEDIA 2035
Strategic Foresight Roadmap for Using the Scenarios

4. SCENARIO IMPACT ANALYSES: STRATEGY

In strategy work, scenarios are best used to create scenario-specific contingency plans and to draw up the strategic conclusions following from the analysis of these plans, i.e. the necessary actions that are independent of the scenarios.

I SCENARIO-SPECIFIC CONTINGENCY PLANS	II STRATEGIC CONCLUSIONS

• Examine each scenario independently, assuming the scenario has happened and analyse the implications for your organisation.
• Opportunities, threats and actions:
  • Describe the opportunities and threats arising from each scenario.
  • Draw up a list of actions for how to exploit the opportunities identified and to prepare for and prevent the threats.
• Windtunnel test your current strategy and operations against the scenario:
  • Review which elements of your current strategy and operations work in the world of each scenario.
  • Draw up a list of what is not working and what changes are needed.
  • Create a new strategy that fits the scenario.
	• Analyse what actions should be taken regardless of what future scenario materialises. The necessary actions, independent of the scenarios, will serve as future-oriented conclusions and inputs from scenario work to the organisation's strategy.
	• Identify actions detailed in the contingency plans that either:
	  • seem to work regardless of how the future turns out, i.e. they appear in the contingency plans for several scenarios, or
	  • are particularly supportive of the strategic choices made by the organisation and the implementation of the chosen strategy.

5. SCENARIO IMPACT ANALYSES: GROWTH AREAS

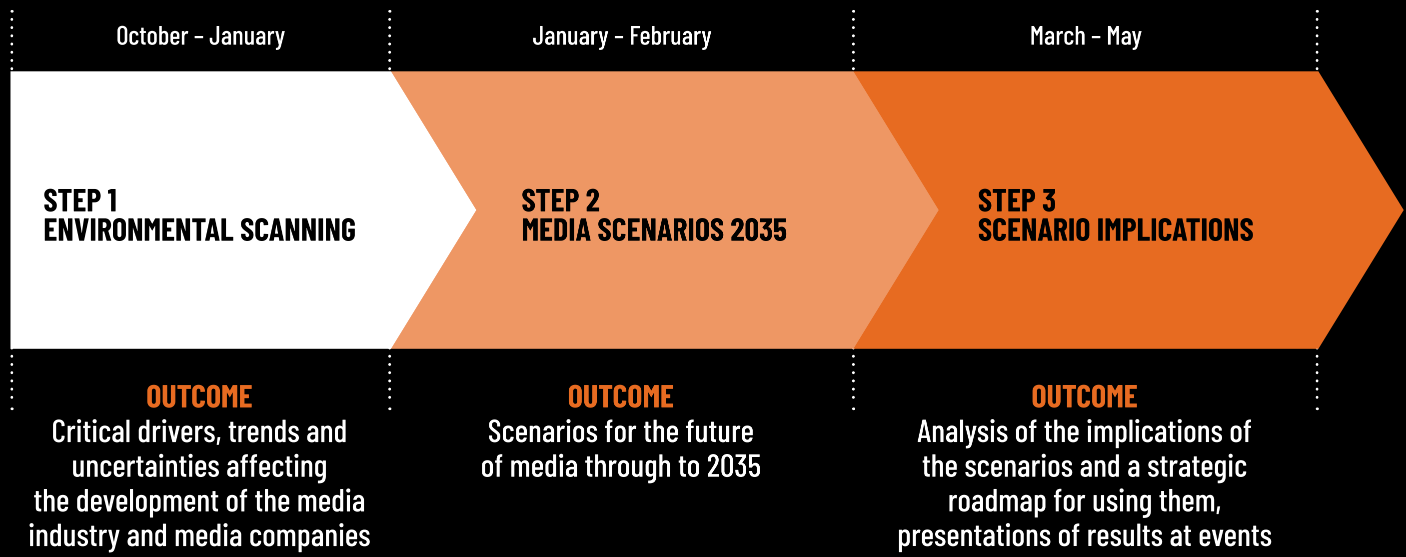
The identification of scenario-specific growth opportunities draws on brainstorming around radical new visions and business models. What could your company and business be like in 2035 in the world of each scenario?

I RADICAL VISIONS AND BUSINESS MODELS	II ASSESS THE GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES
• Jump to 2035 and the world described in the scenario. Imagine a radical new vision for your company and the business models that go together with that vision. • Assume that it is your organisation that has managed to renew itself and achieve outstanding success. • Describe in concrete terms what your company does, how your business models work, what value you bring to customers, what products and services you offer, what role you play in the value chain and the market, what kind of technologies you use and what capabilities all this requires.	• Assess the visions and business models you have come up with for each scenario through your company's normal innovation process. • Note the scenario-specific nature of the ideas and, if necessary, adapt them in a more general and near-future direction. • Select the best growth ideas identified for further development in line with your own innovation process.

6. SCENARIO IMPACT ANALYSES: CAPABILITIES

In identifying the competences needed for the future, use the scenarios as a basis for brainstorming and as a backup. The analysis of future capabilities can be used as a tool for strategic planning and management. The purpose of capabilities-based thinking is to identify the capabilities needed in the future to facilitate strategy implementation and improve the organisation's future resilience.

I SCENARIO-SPECIFIC CAPABILITIES AND COMPETENCES	II SINGLE OUT THE CAPABILITIES TO BE DEVELOPED
• Identify the capabilities and competences needed in each scenario. • First, brainstorm all the capabilities that are needed in the scenario. • Classify and group the identified competences into clusters that are linked to your company's operation.	• Starting from the set of capabilities identified in the scenario, select the capabilities to be developed that best support your strategy. • The greater the number of scenarios in which a given capability is needed, the more likely it is that its development will be necessary in the future. • Create detailed plans for developing the selected capabilities based on the way your organisation approaches capabilities development.



How the Study Was Conducted

The Media Industry Foresight Study was conducted in three stages. The first stage of *Environmental Scanning* involved collecting a broad and comprehensive knowledge base on the future drivers of change in the media industry. In the second stage of *Media Scenarios 2035*, we used the futures table method to construct four scenarios of possible futures for the media. In the third, final stage of *Scenario Impacts*, we identified critical issues raised by the four scenarios for the Finnish media sector; prepared a strategic foresight roadmap for using the scenarios; and presented the final results of our work at various events. This section describes each stage of the work in more detail.

Although the team conducting the actual study was small and compact, the project overall involved a wide range of media operators and professionals from Finland and around the world. The purpose was to generate new knowledge and understanding of the future of media in collaboration with media experts and managers. During the project, participatory scenario methods enabled an open discussion on the different futures, uncertainties, threats and opportunities facing the media industry. This discussion and cooperation was very fruitful and should certainly be continued. One reason why it is important for media operators to engage in wide-ranging discussion about the future is that it allows them to jointly identify future phenomena and needs and to brainstorm and innovate new concepts and services.

More than 175 media professionals and experts contributed to the project through surveys, interviews, scenario workshops and steering group work. We wish to extend a warm thank-you to everyone for their expertise, insights and time!

STEP 1:
ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING

OUTCOME
Critical drivers, trends and uncertainties affecting the development of the media industry and media companies

The first stage of the Media Industry Foresight Study involved creating a broad and diverse knowledge base for the project using a variety of methods.

We began by conducting a systematic literature analysis on foresight in the media industry, comprising 42 research articles, more than 20 other articles and studies and more than 20 media trend reports. At the same time, we conducted a scenario survey in which we received over 100 responses from representatives of the news media, magazine media, graphic design, radio media and publishing. Materials on drivers of change and new ways of creating value were also gathered through expert interviews, a workshop on new media at an innovation conference, an analysis of historical analogies, AI tools to scan media trends, and analysis of company and business model data at a general and company level.

The data collected was used to identify key drivers, trends and uncertainties affecting the evolution of the media industry. The main uncertainties were summarised in a futures table, which served as a scaffold for building the scenarios in the next phase of the work.

STEP 2:
MEDIA SCENARIOS 2035

OUTCOME
Scenarios for the future of media through to 2035

The scenarios were built using an inductive scenario building method based on a futures table. Inductive scenario building is a multivariate method that allows for a systematic and comprehensive analysis of complex operating environments and alternative development paths for those environments. The method is based on a futures table, a commonly used tool in scenario building that is highly versatile yet at once simple and intuitive enough to deal with alternative futures for even the most complex systems. It belongs to the family of formative scenario methods that use qualitative assessment to identify drivers of change in the operating environment and to explore their interdependencies, for example through cross-impact and consistency analysis. A key element of the method is to identify, from a large body of data and information, the uncertainties that are relevant for scenario building and to assess impacts that have a bearing on the future of the industry under study.

The futures table was used to build draft scenarios, which were further developed in an expert workshop and through expert interviews. The scenario building process was designed to involve experts and to make the building process accessible, which is known to increase ownership of the scenarios and to improve their quality. In our work we also made use of a variety of scenario storytelling, illustration and visualisation techniques to develop the existing drafts by deepening the themes that participants found interesting and relevant for the future of the media. Scenario building is primarily an iterative process in which new themes are layered upon the existing structure, gradually deepening the scenario narratives from different perspectives. The scenarios were written up using the key drivers of change method, which was used to create clear differences between the scenarios and the key stories that underpin them.

STEP 3: SCENARIO IMPLICATIONS

OUTCOME

Analysis of the implications of the scenarios and a strategic roadmap for using them, presentations of results at events

The implications of the scenarios were assessed and the critical issues they raise for Finnish media operators were discussed at an expert workshop where the implications of the scenarios for media professionals, media companies, the media industry and Finnish media society were analysed. The vividly illustrated scenarios served as imaginary yet possible and plausible alternative contexts for decision-making in which participants had to immerse themselves in order to assess their various implications for Finnish media.

A strategic foresight roadmap was developed to support the use of the scenarios. This was intended to help media organisations put the scenarios to the best possible use in their strategy work, organisational renewal and business development. The aim of the roadmap is to enhance the impact of the publicly available foresight study among different media operators.

The results of the Media Industry Foresight Study Media have been widely presented at various industry and business events. The aim is to ensure that our work is widely applied and used in the development of the media industry, in the renewal of media companies and in the development of media professionals' capabilities.

Authors

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Capful is a Finnish consulting boutique specialising in scenario and strategy work. It has more than 20 years' experience in applying foresight and scenario methods to strategy and development work in both the private and public sector. Capful's clients include major Finnish and international companies and public organisations.

The project also had the support of a steering group whose members represented a wide range of media organisations. In addition to the authors mentioned above, the steering group included **Noora Alanne** (Media Industry Research Foundation and Finnmedia), **Tom Jungell** (Digita), **Anni Lintula** (A-lehdet), **Niiles Nousuniemi (**Kaleva Media), **Niina Ryynänen** (Sanoma) and **Anu Ubaud** (United Imaginations). Visuals and the graphic design are by **Jutta Sutinen** (Pastry Agency) and the translation from Finnish into English by **David Kivinen** (Transmasters Ky).

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