

Howard Finberg  
AME  
The Arizona Republic

Dear Howard Finberg,  
some information on

**Helsingin Sanomat, Finland:**

- the biggest daily morning newspaper in Scandinavia
  - a quality newspaper
  - 490 000 copies weekdays, <sup>580</sup> ~~570~~ 000 copies Sundays, in a country of 5 million people
  - 1.3 million daily readers, magazine 1.5 million readers, the largest single media audience in the country, tv included
  - coverage ca. 80% of the households of the metropolitan area, 25% nationally
  - a subscribed-to & home-delivered paper up to 99%, minimal street-sales
  - page 1 published with advertisements since establishing the paper in 1889
- very much retail advertising, the paper being an everymans's paper in a very homogenic and democratic society, with high standard of schooling
- Jugend (Art Nouveau) -style logo in keeping with the modern, liberal, nationalistic style of the paper around the turn of the century

**Aims of the latest redesign in 1989:**

- a more secure production process in four broadsheet sections, basically. Tabloid sections and magazine added *before*.
- a sharpening of the editorial profile in heavy advertising environment
- a reader-friendlier, better manageable newspaper
- double colour positions, both editorial & advertising
- a new image for the centennial year

**The visual identity of Helsingin Sanomat from 1989 onwards is based upon:**

- the role & history of the paper as a quality newspaper
- the future readers of the newspaper with less time to read
- the identity of the paper as a newspaper (the "newsy" look)
- massive daily production, thin paper, quick offset printing wet-on-wet
- the wish to enhance credibility

by separating editorial & advertising both in content and form

- fixed positions of a whole lot more editorial (and advertising) elements than before
- the introduction of the 2-column element in section starts
- a design system based on the work of ~~the~~ desk journalists and using very few professional designers (5-6), mainly for magazine & sections
- design parameters easily comprehended by word-people & production staff

**The visual image of Helsingin Sanomat is based upon:**

- a light, classical typography as contrast to heavy, black advertising
- one typeface family, Linotype Times

- little use of sans serif (Linotype Frutiger, the first newspaper to digitalize it in the world in 1977) as contrast
- larger body type than before (Linotype Times Roman 9.0/9.5) on 8 or 7 column grid,
- a many-decked headline system allowing quick grasping of the content without reading the actual text
- use of sub-heads but very few leads
- a balanced use of white space
- a restricted use of rules and boxes
- though advertising on page 1, no advertising on section fronts & department starting pages
- traditional dominant use of both B&W and colour photography
- heavy use of information graphics, both colour and B&W
- use of colour only in illustrations and orientation devices
- no colour rules, no text in colour, no text on colour screens

width of paper  
settled by  
national advertising  
standards, which  
is a pity.

**The "front" page (page A3) of February 10, 1993:**

- the showcase of the rest of the paper: 6-7 short stories, both hard and soft, relating to the main stories inside, heavy use of photo, no direct continuations, very seldom the whole story on page A3
- use of a news index for smaller items, (KESKIVIIKKO=Wednesday, TÄNÄÄN=Today)
- though often expressing itself too loud, has to comply with the op-ed page A2 on the left-hand side, a difficult marriage
- long words of the Finnish language make short headlines, narrow columns impossible
- main news Feb 10, '93: national Finnish politics, two political scandals come up, very dully illustrated
- not a good day
- foreign news this day mainly on front page C1 of the foreign section (C), published there every day of the week.

Main news: Holland says yes to Euthanasia and the events in Bosnia

- metro section = section B, a bad day, too
- consumer section = section C, not a good day either

Sincerely,

Helsinki, March 5, 1993

*Carl Henning*

Carl Henning

AME/design

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