



Agora

Five Year Anniversary

The Agora Center, a prominent fixture on the shores of lake Jyväsjärvi for five years now, continues to progress toward its goal of becoming an internationally recognized institution of human-centered science and research.

– I believe we need arenas where people can meet and contemplate together, who we are, where do we come from, and where we are going. This is exactly what Agora is, says Director of Regional Development for the City of Jyväskylä, Jouni Juutilainen.

Developing Together

Agora, as an independent research forum for human technology at the University of Jyväskylä, combines various scientific disciplines, focusing at the moment particularly on the intersections of psychology, education and information technology.

Various research groups in the Psykocenter network conduct research on human growth, learning and development through the lifespan. This research has been instrumental, e.g., in developing a variety of technologies that integrate the family and school. The Faculty of Information Technology, as well as several local businesses, serves as a key component in this creative collaboration between psychology and high technology.

– It is not possible to become a

forerunner by only investing in technological development. New innovations require cooperation in different fields, especially where society and technology intersect, said **Päivi Fadjukoff**, Head of Planning & Development at Agora.

Looking Ahead

In order to maintain its leadership position, the city of Jyväskylä, the University and local area businesses continue to invest in knowledge and expertise in human technology, and has recently become active in the nanoscience field.

Viveca, an expertise center of wellbeing and a meeting place for researchers and entrepreneurs in the wellness business, was established in August 2003. In October 2004 the Nanoscience Center opened its doors for researchers, teachers and businesspeople in physics, chemistry and biology to gather and develop their ideas together.

With the addition of Viveca and the Nanoscience Center, Agora continues its leadership role in partnering business and the sciences. By facilitating the transference of new technologies to society, Agora will continue to serve as a primary agent for social innovation.



Agora watching over lake Jyväsjärvi.

TUURIN ILMAKUVAPALVELU

Agora ICT-Forum

The Agora Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Forum, started in January 2004.

The Agora Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Forum, started in January 2004, provides researchers and business people in central Finland with a forum where they can meet and exchange ideas regarding the

development of human-centered technologies.

The ICT-Forum began featuring top-level speakers in spring 2004, and in 2005 will continue to offer monthly forums.



What Is New?

Degree-clinic

Professor **Pekka Neittaanmäki** directs this new approach, which helps many information technology students to graduate targeting to those who rushed into working life during the late 90s without completing their studies.

– The best thing about the clinic is that it is not bound to time or place, Neittaanmäki says.

Social Innovations

The Social Innovations Forum at the Agora Center began in fall 2003. Social innovations, such as paternity leave, have been around for a long time already. But society is ever changing, and there is always the need for innovation.

At the national “From Idea to Social Innovation” competition held in fall 2004, the winners included **Johanna Moilanen**, for mentoring system between generations; **Petteri Niemi**, for evaluation criteria and ethical code of social work; both from Jyväskylä, and **Soili Vento** from Lahela, for applying the franchising model to social services.

New People

Dr. **Pertti Saariluoma** was nominated to the post of Professor of Cognitive Science in March 2004. Saariluoma has a doctorate in Psychology and he is one of the most recognized experts in the field of cognitive science in Europe.

Trouble with Numbers?

The Numeracy and Brain Development (NUMBRA) project started in late 2004. Professor of Psychology **Heikki Lyytinen** leads the Finnish share of this European Union funded project, which explores factors influencing the development of mathematical thinking.

Update Your Methods

In the fall of 2002, the Psykocenter began to offer training in applying advanced statistical methods, specifically focusing on the latest methods used in academic research. The idea is to help the research groups to stay updated with the continuously advancing research

methodology. This training targets researchers in different fields of study as well as graduate students and students working on their final thesis.

Transportation Knowledge

The University of Jyväskylä, Jyväskylä Regional Development Company (Jykes), the Jyväskylä Polytechnics, and the Jyväskylä Vocational Institute are building a strong expertise network for developing the field of transportation. Related to this Innoroad-network, the University of Jyväskylä established the Innoroad Laboratory in August 2004 at Agora. The director of the Laboratory is Dr. **Olli Bräysy**.

Working Life in Junior High

Virtual TET-market has been constructed in Agora for Junior High students to find suitable placements for their week of getting to know working life. Every organization will have their own web page to describe their open training posts, and the duties that go along with them.

Interdisciplinary Science

Comes to Life at the University of Jyväskylä

The Faculty of Information Technology at the University of Jyväskylä is the oldest and most versatile of its kind in Finland.

Known for its interdisciplinary focus, the Faculty combines natural sciences, with computer science and economics. The latest addition is cognitive science, which combines various disciplines into the human technology field.

The phrase “interdisciplinary science” is perhaps unknown to most new students, but most are eager to pursue interdisciplinary opportunities as students of information technology.

Second-year student **Meeri Mäntylä**, 20, majors in information technology. She has also been studying design, cell biology and English. As minors she selected economics and cognitive science. She is also contemplating an additional minor in organizational communication. Interdisciplinary science is everyday life.

– It is about linking the things you have been studying to almost every aspect of business in today’s society, says third-year student **Pekka Moisio**.

IT’s About Teamwork

Competence is one factor, but another is cooperation. The Dean of the Faculty of

Information Technology, **Jukka Heikkilä** stresses the importance of teamwork.

– You need expertise, but you also have to be able to understand other people’s opinions. It is important to work together, and to learn to look at things from different viewpoints. That is why we feel the core of the Faculty of Information Technology is interdisciplinary science, Heikkilä says.

English Summary:
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