RADIO PROGRAMMES ABOUT COMPUTING AT THE FINNISH BROADCASTING COMPANY

In the early 1980s and before the PC tidal wave the FBC produced and broadcast a course on computing. During the course, even computer code was experimentally transmitted. The name of programme was "Kansan mikrokerho", which could be freely translated into "Everybody's micro club". The producer of the series was Dr. Maija Typpi.

Next, the School Radio of the FBC experimented on August the 21st 1985 with a short BASIC _programme that was broadcast as a part of the weekly "Radio Rex"_magazine. The programme calculates how many years, months and days have elapsed between any two dates that are fed into the computer. Listeners were asked to tape the programme and to try it in their home computers. The programme took 33 seconds to transmit. According to the received feedback the programme had worked in all parts of the country with no problems. This encouraged the School Radio to go on. The listeners were asked to develop the programme further so that it would not accept erroneus input as for instance a February with 30 days or a year with, say, 15 months. The listeners were asked to send a programme listing plus a cassette with the programme to the School Radio, which continued by broadcasting solutions which felt interesting and which were made with different computer models.

Below is the listing of this first experimental "buzzing" of the School Radio.

I have here translated only the REMs and INPUTs, so here some Finnish vocabulary to help to explain the actual programme lines: VUOSI=year, KK=shortening for month, PV=shortening for day. Aikaisempi=earlier, Myöhäisempi=later, TUlos=result. Of course, variables like TV or MK would have sufficed instead of TUV or MKK respectively, but the third (unnecessary) character has been added for the sake of readability.

```
"HOW MUCH TIME HAS ELAPSED BETWEEN TWO GIVEN DATES". RADIO REX 21.08.1985 .
10 REM "HOW MUCH TIME HAS ELAPSED", BY KRL 1.5.1985
20 REM IN THE DATES A=EARLIER (YEAR, MONTH, DAY), M=LATER
30 CLR
40 PRINT "HOW MUCH TIME HAS ELAPSED?"
50 PRINT
60 PRINT
70 REM THE LATER DATE
80 INPUT "WRITE THE LATER YEAR          ";MVUOSI
90 INPUT "WRITE THE LATER MONTH         ";MKK
100 INPUT "WRITE THE LATER DAY          ";MPV
110 REM THE EARLIER DATE
120 PRINT
130 INPUT "WRITE THE EARLIER YEAR       ";AVUOSI

140 INPUT "WRITE THE EARLIER MONTH      ";AKK
150 INPUT "WRITE THE EARLIER DAY        ";APV
```

```
160 FOR DL=1 TO 500:NEXT DL
170 PRINT
180 PRINT
190 PRINT MVUOSI" _ "MKK" _ "MPV
200 PRINT AVUOSI" _ "AKK" _ "APV
210 PRINT
220 REM DATES ARE COMPARED AND CALCULATIONS MADE: DAYS, MONTHS, YEARS
230 FOR DL=1 TO 500: NEXT DL
240 IF MPV>APV THEN TPV=MPV_APV
250 IF MPV>APV THEN TKK=MKK_AKK
260 IF MPV<APV THEN TPV=(MPV+30)_APV
270 IF MPV<APV THEN MKK=MKK_1
280 IF MKK=>AKK THEN TKK=MKK_AKK
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300 IF MKK>=AKK THEN TUV=MVUOSI_AVUOSI
310 IF MKK<AKK THEN TUV=(MVUOSI_1)_AVUOSI
320 REM THE RESULT IS DISPLAYED
330 PRINT
340 PRINT "THE RESULT OF THE CALCULATION IS: "
350 PRINT TUV" _ "TKK" _ "TPV
360 END
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Afterwards, in the autumn 1985 parts of some Radio Rex magazines contained items about computing. In the spring 1986 these computing "bits" came a ten minute programme of their own, broadcast every fortnight. They carried the name "Silikoni". The name is a Finnish pun that does not translate. The base is, of course silicone, the raw material of the computer chips. But spelled with a "k" instead of a "c" it becomes a Finnish word that can be understood to mean a silicone horse. You see, in the Ancient times, a poet rode the winged horse Pegasus and wrote with a feather taken from its wing. Now a poet would naturally use a computer and a word processor, thus riding a silicone horse...

These short programmes handled among other things a project for young programmers, organised by the Finnish Data Technology Association. Ideas for Finnish educational computer programmes were gathered from students and teachers. Then some 30 young programmers were given a summer job at various computer/software companies where they developed the code to make the best od the ideas to come Public Domain programmes. The Silikoni closely reported of how the project was going on. Some of the other items in the spring 1986 Silikoni-programmes were how to order micro accessories and software from abroad, how to make music with computers. Even the BASICODE was introduced to the listeners.

As the ratings showed about 110 000 listeners itse seemed to be only natural to develop the idea further and to expand it even administratively. So, from autumn 1986 a special production group of three was formed experimentally for two years and detached from the School Radio. The target group is now "everybody at computer age". The programme handles the field of home and PC-level computing.

The programme format is a magazine with very fast tempo studio bits mixed with interviews with outside experts, reports from various interesting locations and a talkin computer as a regular member of the studio team.

Transmission times are Thursdays at 18.30-19.00 o'clock with a repeat on Mondays at 08.30-09.00 o'clock. Silikoni has a page of its own in the Text-Television of the FBC. The page contains advance information of the contents of the programme of next Thursday and is updated every Tuesday, when the programme has been recorded. The same information is also available by modem through a "box" in Helsinki.

Small programmes transmitted as "buzzing" are a constant part of the activity and have become very popular. It can be said according to the feedback that the transmitted code has been received in working order in about 98% of all the cases, even as far as in Muonio, some 650 km from Helsinki. Usually a programme idea with a small "engine" or "core" module is given and the listeners are encouraged to develop the idea further and send their programmes to the "Silikoni" unit. Small prices are usually handed out, but it is really not a competition. The prices are drawn among all who take part. The prices are T-shirts or bags with the Silikoni-logos, stickers, books and small computer-made posters saying "Please do not disturb! I am just listening to the Silikoni".

As the list of the items handled in the broadcast shows, there is almost always "correspondence with the listeners". We encourage them in many ways to write to us and we read bits of the letters, too. This has given the programme a touch of "two-way" information flow which the listeners seem to like.

As the coming of the clones has greatly expanded the PC-stock in the country we have been experimenting with a small gadget that makes the bit flow through the serial port of a PC to and from an ordinary C-cassette recorder. If a gadget like this could be made easily available, it would give quite new possibilities to code delivery. If the code is transmitted over radio there will be no costs involved like in every other distribution method.

The latest statistics (November 1986) show 106 000 listeners of the "Silikoni" at its best and 78 000 at its lowest. The experiment will continue untill June 1988, when it will be decided whether to go on with it or not.

The Silikoni production group is very interested to hear of the experiences and activities of colleagues abroad. Our address is Oy Yleisradio Ab, JA 53 / Silikoni, SF-00240 Helsinki, Finland.

Kai R. Lehtonen
Head of the Silikoni
Production Group

Oy. Yleisradio Ab.
Helsinki Finland

RADIO PROGRAMMES ABOUT COMPUTING AT THE FINNISH BROADCASTING COMPANY

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As the ratings showed about 110 000 listeners itse seemed to be only natural to develop the idea further and to expand it even administratively. So, from autumn 1986 a special production group of three was formed experimentally for two years and detached from the School Radio. The target group is now "everybody at computer age". The programme handles the field of home and PC-level computing. In November 1986 it had 106 000 listeners and in February 1987 already 126 000 listeners. In May 1987 the programme was awarded with the Finnish Broadcasting Company's Journalist Price.

The programme format is a magazine with very fast tempo studio

bits mixed with interviews with outside experts, reports from various interesting locations and a talking computer as a regular member of the studio team.

Transmission times are Thursdays at 18.30-19.00 o'clock with a repeat on Mondays at 08.30-09.00 o'clock. Silikoni has a page of its own in the Text-Television of the FBC. The page contains advance information of the contents of the programme of next Thursday and is updated every Tuesday, when the programme has been recorded. The same information is also available by modem through a "box" in Helsinki.

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In order to meet continuous requests of second transmissions of "old" Silikoni buzz-programmes, 21 of these were collected in one single broadcast on the 28th May 1987. Though the buzzing took over 20 minutes of the half-an-hour programme only two listeners called wondering what it was all about. This seems to prove that the buzzing has become known and also approved among the public.

As the list of the items handled in the broadcast shows, there is almost always "correspondence with the listeners". We encourage them in many ways to write to us and we read bits of the letters, too. This has given the programme a touch of "two-way" information flow which the listeners seem to like.

As the coming of the clones has greatly expanded the PC-stock in the country we have been experimenting with a modem as a means of saving/loading PC-programmes to and from a C-casette recorder. This seems to mean quite new possibilities in the field of programme distribution over radio. If the code is transmitted over radio there will be no costs involved like in every other distribution method.

The statistics showed in November 1986 around 106 000 listeners of the Silikoni but in February 1987 the figure was already 126 000. The experiment will continue untill June 1988, when it will be decided whether to go on with it or not.

The production group is equipped with an IBM PC1, ZENITH Z181, Commodore C-64, Canon MSX, Spectrum ZX+, a Finnish-made PS64 Speech Syntheteizer and Nokia V23-modem.

The Silikoni production group is very interested to hear of the experiences and activities of colleagues abroad. Our address is Oy Yleisradio Ab, JA 53 / Silikoni, SF-00240 Helsinki, Finland.

APPENDIX

Below is the listing of this first experimental "buzzing" of the School Radio.

Only the REMs and INPUTs have been translated, so here some Finnish vocabulary to help to explain the actual programme lines: VUOSI=year, KK=shortening for month, PV=shortening for day. Aikaisempi=earlier, Myöhäisempi=later, TUlos=result. Of course, variables like TV or MK would have sufficed instead of TUV or MKK respectively, but the third (unnecessary) character has been added for the sake of readability.

"HOW MUCH TIME HAS ELAPSED BETWEEN TWO GIVEN DATES". RADIO REX 21.08.1985 .

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20 REM IN THE DATES A=EARLIER (YEAR, MONTH, DAY), M=LATER
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40 PRINT "HOW MUCH TIME HAS ELAPSED?"
50 PRINT
60 PRINT
70 REM THE LATER DATE
80 INPUT "WRITE THE LATER YEAR          ";MVUOSI
90 INPUT "WRITE THE LATER MONTH         ";MKK
100 INPUT "WRITE THE LATER DAY          ";MPV
110 REM THE EARLIER DATE
120 PRINT
130 INPUT "WRITE THE EARLIER YEAR       ";AVUOSI
140 INPUT "WRITE THE EARLIER MONTH      ";AKK
150 INPUT "WRITE THE EARLIER DAY        ";APV
160 FOR DL=1 TO 500:NEXT DL
170 PRINT
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220 REM DATES ARE COMPARED AND CALCULATIONS MADE: DAYS, MONTHS, YEARS
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Oy. Yleisradio Ab.
Helsinki Finland

Documentary Programmes Kai R. Lehtonen/krl 27.9.1988 Version 2.0

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Afterwards, in the autumn 1985 parts of some Radio Rex magazines contained items about computing. In the spring 1986 these computing "bits" came a ten minute programme of their own, broadcast every fortnight. They carried the name "Silikoni". The name is a Finnish pun that does not translate. The base is, of course silicone, the raw material of the computer chips. But spelled with a "k" instead of a "c" it becomes a Finnish word that can be understood to mean a silicone horse. You see, in the Ancient times, a poet rode the winged horse Pegasus and wrote with a feather taken from its wing. Now a poet would naturally use a computer and a word processor, thus riding a silicone horse...

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and due to an apparent lack of interest among the listeners, the BASICODE has not been taken into regular use.

As the ratings showed about 110 000 listeners its seemed only natural to develop the idea further and to expand it even administratively. So, from autumn 1986 a special production group of three was formed experimentally for two years and detached from the School Radio. The definition is "an everyday radio programme about computing for an everyday computer user".

The programme handles the field of home and PC-level computing. In November 1986 it had 106 000 listeners and in February 1987 already 126 000 listeners. In May 1987 the programme was awarded with the Finnish Broadcasting Company's Journalist Price.

The programme format is a magazine with very fast tempo studio bits mixed with interviews with outside experts, reports from various interesting locations and a talking computer as an occasional member of the studio team.

Transmission times are Wednesdays at 18.30-19.00 o'clock with a repeat on Thursdays at 23.00-23.30 o'clock. Silikoni has a page of its own in the Text-Television of the FBC. The page contains advance information of the contents of the programme of next Thursday and is updated every Tuesday, when the programme has been recorded. The same information is also available by modem through a "box" in Helsinki.

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In order to meet continuous requests of second transmissions of "old" Silikoni buzz-programmes, 21 of these were collected in one single broadcast on the 28th May 1987 and another "annual" set of 17 programmes again on the 26th of May 1988. There has been only a couple of occasional listener complaints of the buzzing. This seems to prove that the buzzing has become known and also approved among the public.

As the list of the items handled in the broadcast shows, there is almost always "correspondence with the listeners". We encourage them in many ways to write to us and we read bits of the letters, too. This has given the programme a touch of "two-way" information flow which the listeners seem to like.

The statistics showed in November 1986 around 106 000 listeners of the Silikoni but in February 1987 the figure was already 126 000. Because of the favourable listener response it was decided to continue the programme for one more year, 1988-1989. As the experience proved that special organizational arrangements were not necassarily needed for administering this sort of programme, the group has again become a part of the School Radio.

The production group is equipped with an IBM PC1 with a Hard Card+ and two 360 KB diskette drives, ZENITH Z181, Commodore C-64, Canon MSX, Spectrum ZX+, a Finnish-made PS64 Speech Syntheteizer and Nokia V23-modem. The programmes in office use are IRMA and WordPerfect.

The School Radio is very interested to hear of the experiences and activities in the field of radio programmes about microcomputing. Our

address is Oy Yleisradio Ab, JA 53, SF-00240 Helsinki, Finland.

APPENDIX

Below is the listing of this first experimental "buzzing" of the School Radio.

Only the REMs and INPUTs have been translated, so here some Finnish vocabulary to help to explain the actual programme lines: VUOSI=year, KK=shortening for month, PV=shortening for day. Aikaisempi=earlier, Myöhäisempi=later, TUlos=result. Of course, variables like TV or MK would have sufficed instead of TUV or MKK respectively, but the third (unnecessary) character has been added for the sake of readability.

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