

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

Finland

[Finland](#) | [Freedom of the Press 2012](#) |

Finland continued to be among the most free media environments in the world in 2011. Freedom of expression and access to information is guaranteed under Article 12 of the constitution. Although journalists and media outlets are generally allowed to operate freely, defamation is considered a crime, and the government actively pursues incidents of defamation of religion or ethnicity. In 2011, the Helsinki District Court dismissed charges of libel related to the contents of an authorized book about the Finnish band Nightwish. The court ruled that the book did not detrimentally affect the work or reputation of the band. Finnish law gives every citizen the right of reply and the right to have falsely published information corrected, in both internet-based and traditional publications alike. Physical harassment of or threats made against journalists are extremely rare.

Finland maintains a high newspaper readership. In 2010, the country was ranked third in the world for newspaper consumption, with 483 copies per 1,000 inhabitants. Media ownership is concentrated, with Alma Media and Sanoma controlling most newspaper distribution. Public broadcaster Yleisradio OY (YLE) and commercial channel MTV dominate the broadcasting sector, with another commercial channel, Nelonen, an outsider. Radio is dominated by four public service channels and the commercial channel Radio Nova, as well as a large number of seminational and local stations. Public radio also broadcasts in the minority languages Swedish and Sami (Lapp).

The internet is open and unrestricted, and around 89.4 percent of citizens had regular access in 2011. There have been concerns about the Finnish child pornography filter, which a blogger exposed as blocking many legal sites. Internet publications must name a responsible editor in chief and archive published materials for at least 21 days. In July 2010 it became a legal right for every Finn to have a 1MB broadband internet connection. In September 2010, a threat made against Minister of Migration and European Affairs Astrid Thors became the first prosecution of a threat made on Facebook. The man who made the threat was convicted in December and fined 640 euros (\$860). There were no prosecuted threats in 2011.

2012 SCORES

PRESS STATUS

Free

PRESS FREEDOM SCORE

10

LEGAL ENVIRONMENT

3

POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

3

ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

4

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