



**Onomastics Online**  
**25 October 2023, 1:00 PM (UTC)**

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**Name of the Year awards: Experiences from Finland**

**Abstract:** In Finland, onomasticians have chosen the *Name of the Year* every year since 2017. Name of the Year is an honorary title given for a good proper name that has appeared in media during that year. The winner of the award is chosen among seven pre-selected finalists in a closed vote during the annual Finnish Conference of Onomastics. Consequently, the voting results express the preferences of Finnish naming experts.

This talk analyzes the names that have been successful in the competition. Of the 42 finalists throughout the history of the award, 12 have been place names, 8 product names, 4 company names, 4 names of public institutions, and 3 personal names. The other 11 finalist names belong to a wide range of different types of entities, such as movie theater, supercomputer, exoplanet, and fictitious online search engine. The language distribution of the finalist names is also worth noticing: 29 of them are in Finnish and six in both Finnish and Swedish, whereas only two names have been in English.

The lecture also examines media reactions and public debates related to the award. The objective of the award is to encourage public discussion about the importance of naming in society, and it has served this purpose well. The award winners have been announced via University of Helsinki press releases, and they have been reported by most Finnish nationwide news media. Simultaneously, the award has helped promoting onomastics for the wider public.

Finally, the talk makes some comparisons to the Name of the Year tradition established by the American Name Society. If similar traditions take place also in other countries, experiences of them are warmly welcomed.

Link to the Zoom Meeting:

<https://tuni.zoom.us/j/64925938042?pwd=SHg2K2lpNzBRQjNjcXRINURQb1ltZz09>

Meeting ID: 649 2593 8042

Passcode: 828152