

Valentin, when did you have the idea to create the channel and why?

I created my YouTube channel back in September 2008, after I had experimented with filming elevators on my mobile phone and cameras, shortly before that. I also got some inspiration from a now run-down Finnish (also in English) elevator forum for elevator enthusiasts (which elevator enthusiasts from other neighboring countries also had used), on which there was a possibility to upload pictures of elevators and pages of elevators in different buildings around the world. On that site, I came across an elevator enthusiast from Sweden (Elevators from Sweden on YouTube), who had started to use YouTube as early as 2006, and he in turn, had come across the "legend", or one of the most well-known elevator enthusiasts, also known as DieselDucy, on YouTube. So I got inspiration from those and I thought I could share my interest and elevators in my home country, and I decided to buy a better camera (I've changed my cameras several times since then) to film elevators, and created my own YouTube channel where I frequently upload and share videos of elevators from cities and towns in my home country, and also from abroad, when I get to travel outside of Finland.

When did you first notice, that your channel is gaining a lot of attention?

In the first few years, there was not that much attention, partly because my YouTube channel was still in early stages, and there were less elevator enthusiasts than there are today. But in the last few years, as the numbers were rising, and I had started to get some income from my videos (via YouTube monetization), I noticed that my channel had started to get more subscribers, and today, I've reached almost 7200 subscribers on my channel as well as more than 16 million views on my videos (From about 2000 subscribers and 8 million views a year ago!). I've got more than 5000 videos on my channel, and I am by far perhaps the biggest elevator youtuber from Finland. The numbers have grown very quickly recently, as I am starting to get close to 100 new subscribers each day. It seems I've been promoted fairly well, or so I believe, and I hope people from around the world find my YouTube channel appealing and interesting.

Who are your followers? Do you know any of them personally?

I've got different kinds of followers from all over the world, and most of them are elevator enthusiasts (both active and inactive elevator filmers), some are interested in public transportation (as I also like public transportation, especially on rail, and

airplanes, as well as cruiseferries and cruise ships, so my channel includes some videos of those as well), and some are my friends and acquaintances. I don't know that many of my followers personally though, and I am keeping in touch with just a few of the elevator enthusiasts, like some other ones from Finland (especially Fintranz), other Nordic countries, as well as other countries in Europe, and Dieselducy from the USA after his visit to Finland in June this year.

There are a lot of YouTuber out there who film there elevator rides. Can you explain why this is such a phenomenon?

Over the years, more and more people with similar interests have found their way to Youtube and other social media where the elevator community can be found, and they in turn find out that other elevator filmers have done this before and might get some inspiration from that, and just like Dieselducy, who in my opinion is a great role model for our elevator community, there are several very good and interesting channels out there and hard-working people behind them. Most have some kind of disorder, like Autism or Asperger's syndrome, but I believe most of them lead a fairly normal life aside from the special hobby. People have different interests and passions and some of them are more rare, others are more common. I think it's a good idea to find other people with similar interests and to connect and interact with them, and also to support each other.

What, in your eyes, makes an elevator clip a good or interesting one?

I think a good elevator video or video clip is one that is informative and shows the most important features and characteristics of the elevator. Also, the video shouldn't be too long, filmed steadily and not too shaky. People have different styles and techniques, some might prioritize things that others don't, like editing videos, or talking in videos. I seldom have time to edit my videos properly, and I usually speak English in my videos (before 2011, I used to speak Swedish, but as my channel started to grow, I decided to keep it in English, so that anyone around the world can understand, as it is a global language). In addition, a good title is a plus, and some description in the video, preferably some information about the elevator itself and maybe the building that it is located in and other elevators, if there are more.

How do you find interesting elevators?

I find old and historic elevators interesting, and it depends on how much has been

altered, or modernized. But also, well-made modern elevators can be worth documenting, as well as elevators that offer a scenic view, basically, any kind of special features. I usually check all sorts of buildings (Like residential, office, hotels, hospitals, department stores etc) randomly when I am out and exploring different areas, to see if I can find any special or historic elevators. Depending on the areas and countries and directives as well as regulations in different countries, it is quite varied. In my home country, it is usually fairly easy to find old and historic elevators, also without inner doors, while in some other countries, it can be a little more difficult, but it all depends.

How do you get access to them?

It usually depends on what kind of building the elevator is located in – some have more strict security, while many others are fairly easily reachable from outside. In my home country, most buildings are accessible, especially in the weekdays. Some residential or office buildings have intercom systems, and to get inside them, I am trying to call the tenants, with another elevator enthusiast (like Heritage Elevators) to see if anybody answers them and to ask about the elevator. Another option is to just wait until somebody goes in or goes out. This is the case with buildings that need a code to access them (and you don't know the code), and it can be time-consuming as well. Sometimes, we look for the caretaker's number, so that we can call him up, like when we are outside the building or if we see a freight elevator that looks interesting.

When entering the buildings, it's important to just stay cool and not to act absent-minded, to be prepared to be confronted by questions if anybody notices, and we've had mixed experience, but most people are kind and have let us take a look at the elevators and document them.

Which of your clips do you like the most and why?

It is not easy to choose the favorites, as I have come across so many elevators with different characters and styles, in several countries, but if I stick to my home country, these are some of my favorite elevator videos on my channel at the moment:

- A video where me and Heritage Elevators got to surf on an old KONE elevator from 1978, and we also visited the machine room; the freight elevator was interesting too

- A historic 1915 Luth & Rosen elevator on Bulevardi/Bulevarden (Boulevard) street in Helsinki
- In my opinion the most beautiful atrium and scenic elevators in Helsinki, at the Hilton Hotel Helsinki Strand, dating back to 1988

The work of which other YouTuber can you recommend?

Some of my favorites from other youtubers are Heritage elevators, who has filmed [a great elevator in Hong Kong](#) and Fintrans who has documented some of the most beautiful and rare historic elevators that have ever been found in Finland like this one in Turku. And of course Dieselducy who is a real YouTube and makes very entertaining and interesting videos and is also a cheerful and humorous person. I like the funny elevator ride at a shopping center in Helsinki, filmed by Dieselducy on his visit to Finland.

Are there any elevators you haven't portrayed yet but would love to?

There are certainly a lot of places to document and visit, and basically, you never run out of them. In Helsinki city center, some of the musts would still be the Sanomatalo (Newspaper House) office building, the supposedly original 1930 paternoster staff elevator (behind the scenes) at the biggest department store in Helsinki, Stockmann, as well as the 1930 elevators at the Parliament building. Countries I'd like to visit where I've never been before include Switzerland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Belgium, Hong Kong, Iceland, and countries to revisit include Austria, Portugal, Poland, Italy and Germany as well as the other Nordic countries.