Brian Lystgaard Due

*“Somebody said, 'you should begin to look at blind people for your research.'
So, I got into the world of blindness. And from that, I learnt about how extremely complicated it is to live as a blind person.”*

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Brian has been an Associate Professor since 2018 (Department of Nordic Studies and Linguistics).

His interests center around interactions, using a particular model across different kinds of settings and situations, known as ‘ethnology’ and conversation analysis and video ethnography. Centering around the question of, 'how is interaction accomplished in everyday life settings?'

Since 2015, he has been especially interested in the use of AI technologies and how they are used by people in interactional encounters.

Since a similar time, he has been particularly interested in how blind people use new technology.

Using AI Technology to Assist Blind & Visually Impaired People (BVIP) in Society

Technological and digital developments have led to several new AI products on the market. These have great potential for BVIP regarding their interactions, as BVIP rely more on technological aids than the general population.

It is from this point of departure that Brian Lystgaard Due formed the BlindTech project. He examines blind and visually impaired peoples use of AI in everyday practice such as smartphones with AI-based apps and smart speaker systems such as Google Home Assistant.

Using a particular method that includes video ethnography, he records how people interact in real life settings in different situations.

Stemming from personal curiosity to explore the fundamental questions of life and human interaction, Due is using the area of blindness as a springboard for research. With a strong emphasis on the final user, Due engages with relevant stakeholders to undertake a design-thinking-like approach to conducting research, working in close collaboration with practitioners within the BVIP field such as Instituttet for Blinde og Svagsynede (IBOS)('*Institute for the Blind and Visually Impaired*'). Through funding by the Velux Foundation, BlindTec h became a viable project.

As Due associates the term '*valorisation*' with '*impact*', it is the user-focused approach that has proved to be a key driver for success, of which the societal impact of the business case is clearly articulated.

The intended concrete outcome of the BlindTech project is to deliver specific training material to consultants and practitioners for teaching BVIP about new technologies and how they can be utilised.

KEY TAKEAWAYS & ADVICE

Incorporate the practitioners and **users** of the research at early stages of your research process, not at the end.

Create a business plan: Often, in order to gain the required funding for the project, a clear business plan that articulates the value that is being produced., is required.

Utilize your network: Highlight the strengths and capabilities across your network with an emphasis on multidisciplinarity.

"When starting out a research project and conceptualising the idea, to do it together with practitioners who may have an impact from the research, or at least have an insight into the user. It centres around co-creating the application and idea with the practitioners, instead of adding them at the end. If you have an impact with your research, then you need to include relevant people and practitioners in the process."