

## Shift Society

# Exclusive Inclusion?

Why is the internet still full of barriers for people with disabilities? Or isn't it? NGO founder Tiffany Brar, video influencer Daniel Jones, app developer Javier Montaner and researcher Shai Fuxman discuss the tensions between digital possibilities and their actual realisation – and what everyone in society can do.

*By Elisa Jochum*

## At the round-table discussion

*This article centres on your individual experiences and voices on the subject of digital inclusion and accessibility for people with disabilities. How do you relate to this topic?*

### **Javier Montaner:**

At our social enterprise Mouse4all, based in Spain, we work on accessibility for people with disabilities – people with physical disabilities in particular. We approach the world of inclusion from the technical side. We started four or five years ago when we realized how many people were excluded from digital life. Seemingly, everyone and everything has shifted to mobile interfaces – to smartphones and tablets; we all draw on WhatsApp or Facebook. But some people have been left out. We try to help people with disabilities to access all digital technologies that are currently available.

### **Daniel Jones:**

I have a diagnosis of Asperger's syndrome, ADHD, OCD and dyslexia. I run an award-winning YouTube channel with 130,000 subscribers and a larger social media outlet in the UK. Any platform that is available, we are on it. We run the website theaspieworld.com, but everything goes on social media. We distribute content for educational purposes, specifically for spectrum disorders. The Aspie World is a digital brand. I create content, speaking from my background, to help people or their children to develop tools, techniques and hacks for living life on the spectrum. We put out a ton of content – about twenty pieces of content a day.

**Shai Fuxman:**

I'm a researcher in education, emphasizing positive youth development. Based in the US, I work for the global non-profit company Education Development Center. I also connect to this work on a personal level. My daughter is on the autism spectrum. She also has epilepsy. As a parent, I became especially interested in the experiences of children and youth with disabilities. As a researcher, I've studied their experiences on social media. I have also teamed up with two colleagues who have a child and a brother with autism respectively. We are developing an app called Caregiver Navigator. It is designed to help caregivers – parents and other caregivers of children with disabilities – navigate through education and healthcare systems, which are very complicated, at least here in the US. By merely trying to figure out how to secure the right services for your child, you have a full-time job on your hands. It also takes a toll on you as a parent – the stress and the anxiety. Our app will be out shortly. I am excited to see how it can contribute.

**Tiffany Brar:**

I am from India, Kerala, and I am totally blind. I run a non-profit organization where we train blind people in interpersonal skills and to access technology. We also work with the government to foster accessibility and inclusion in India. India is a developing country and we struggle a lot with accessibility.

**What are you talking about?**

*What do digital inclusion and accessibility mean to you in the context of disabilities?*

**Daniel Jones:**

*[The following passage constitutes the captions for Daniel Jones's video statement:]*

I will start with digital inclusion. For me and my community – as an autistic advocate, an autistic person being part of the autistic community – most of our active engagement comes from our private groups on Facebook. We have a group on Facebook for community support. So we support each other with tips and tricks and parenting hacks and stuff. That kind of runs itself. There are 4,000 people in there and they talk. The second thing we have from a community standpoint is the Discord groups. We have a Discord server where we have a community and they do a voice chat. This is particularly useful because autistic people and disabled people in general can feel secluded from social situations. Especially on the autism spectrum, you can feel secluded and isolated. But being part of a community like this – like we've built on our platforms – allows you to feel comradery with people. You have a sense of belonging. It also builds confidence, and that confidence can then shine on all kinds of things. We have had people who are not confident and then, all of a sudden, they are able to start a job or whatever because of having comments from other people saying: "Hey, you can do this and I can help you." That is really important.

In terms of accessibility: I do a few videos on accessibility and autism, especially with regard to digital technology. One of the main things I found is, using things like iPads and iPhones, the fact that we have text dictation. You can just speak to your phone and it can type out those words. Myself being dyslexic and other people on the spectrum who have difficulty with typing or fine motor skills – the accessibility of digital media like texting and digital chat engagement like with WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger –, we are able to talk-dictate to them. Even if you didn't want to have actual written words, you could also send a voice clip to the person. This is super powerful. We have two chat rooms on Instagram as well and they are both maxed out. There is a huge waiting list.

iPads, specifically, the power of them for accessibility, the accessibility functions on there are just incredible. You can even have the accessibility setting set, so when you touch on a part of the screen or an app, it'll speak to you and tell you exactly what it is. I was introduced to this by a friend of mine, James Rath, who is a blind filmmaker, a legally blind filmmaker. So he can see very, very little, but he uses this as a way to read his text messages, going through his phone. This is very, very good and also very handy for people on the autism spectrum who may not be able to read text on an app, because you can't highlight a text and let it speak, but you can tell an accessibility app to do that. So, yes, it's very interesting. *[The video statement ends here.]*

**Tiffany Brar:**

The three most important components of digital accessibility are content, navigation and design. We must be able to navigate all websites by using our screen readers. Videos should have closed captioning and audio descriptions. Furthermore, descriptive links are crucial and there should be large font sizes and compulsory alternative text for images. Especially here in India, a lot of services do not comply with the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0](#) or [2.1](#). Take Aarogya Setu, an app which the Indian government has developed during the Covid-19 crisis. When we try to use it with our screen readers, they go off. People with disabilities don't really understand when you say "read more", "click here" or when the screen reader suddenly crashes in the middle of the page.

When I speak of digital inclusion, I mean that people with disabilities should be included from the very beginning in the processes of designing applications and websites. Once the design is in place, you say "Oh, it's not accessible." Then, it becomes very difficult for developers and designers to go back and refashion the core of a product. You would still be looking in vain for this inclusion in the majority of developing countries.

**Shai Fuxman:**

I can add the social aspect of both accessibility and inclusion. My focus, again, is on youth. During that stage of development, relationships with your peers are highly important. As Javier said, especially for young people, such a large part of life takes place on mobile phones now, whether it's Snapchat, TikTok or the latest app. For me, digital inclusion and accessibility are about making sure that children with disabilities are not only able to use these apps, but that they are part of the conversation – and that we teach children to accept people with differences; that we use social media in a way that is inclusive of everyone.

**Javier Montaner:**

*[The following statement by Javier Montaner is published as a Facebook post on the account of the Goethe-Institut:]*

Digital inclusion means leaving no one out. It means that all of us have access to mainstream tools and apps. We don't need a different Facebook or WhatsApp. The digital sphere is inclusive when everybody can use the same applications – no matter if they have a disability or not. Digital accessibility is synonymous with removing barriers whether they are physical or cognitive.

**Out with the old, in with the new? From analogue to digital barriers**

*The disability community, activists and researchers with and without disabilities discuss a series of approaches. In different terminologies and with varying emphases, several of these approaches highlight that existing barriers to equality and inclusion are not inherent in people with disabilities. Instead, society is organized in such a way that it creates those barriers. In the context of our discussion, this raises two fundamental questions: that of new opportunities and that of new risks in the digital sphere. How is the digital, on the one hand, helping to take down barriers established in the analogue world? What possibilities do digital devices and the internet create that did not previously exist? On the other hand, how might the digital produce a new set of challenges at the same time as it reduces others?*

**Tiffany Brar:**

For me, as a person with visual impairment, some new features online have begun to dismantle barriers. When you come across a photo on Facebook, it says, for instance: "Image may contain four people standing, nature and sky." You thus get a picture of what kind of image it is. But Facebook is only accessible via the mobile version, m.Facebook.com, not the desktop mode. Instagram is not accessible at all. On WhatsApp, we cannot reply to status notifications, we cannot hear certain things. Social media still abound in barriers.

**Javier Montaner:**

The digital is opening up new opportunities. The people with physical disabilities, with whom we work, have always had to rely on someone else to perform certain activities for them. But if they can access the digital world, they become independent. They can have the privacy they never had, such as writing and reading their own WhatsApp messages. Some users cannot read or write, but, drawing on stickers and emoticons, they communicate via Facebook. That's a possibility technology has forged.

**Daniel Jones:**

I can provide several examples of how the digital sphere is encroaching on the analogue sphere and helping people with disabilities. The first is from friends of mine who are wheelchair users and employ wheelchair access maps on their phones. Such a map tells them, for instance, what stores have wheelchair access, so they don't get stuck in a place where they can't get anywhere. It gives them independence because they don't have to rely on anyone else to assist them. They can figure out the routes themselves.

Another example is the Apple Wallet, which digitally pays for transport tickets and the like, straight from your phone. The same is the case for Uber. People on the autism spectrum have difficulties socializing. So picking up a phone and ordering a taxi can be hard for them, as well as dealing with money. My girlfriend does my finances because it's difficult for me to figure out the organization of money. If you have to deal ad hoc with what money you can or cannot give a taxi driver, this can be very stressful. With apps like Uber, you're literally just typing, telling someone where you are – you can see exactly where on the map that is – you don't speak to the driver, you get in the back of the car, you get back out and PayPal takes care of the money exchange. Here, a model of digital tech has integrated itself in the analogue world.

**Tiffany Brar:**

There are barriers, but it's up to us if we want to eliminate them. Two days ago, I took an accessible UNICEF online course on inclusion. But, when I tried to participate in another UNICEF course on child rights this morning, they only provided PDFs, the screen reader could not navigate the text and the files featured so many pictures. The UN, which is behind UNICEF, has ratified the [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#), the CRPD. Their own guidelines proclaim: everything should be accessible. Why does their platform offer one course that is accessible and one course that is not? If some of us write to them, however, pointing out that not everyone can access this course and that they are bound to change this according to the CRPD, Article 9, they will start thinking about it. People with disabilities find barriers and take action to lift them.

**Daniel Jones:**

Current data shows that fifty percent of all searches online are voice-first searches, that is, people use Amazon Alexa, the Google Home Hub or Siri. I optimize all my videos for long-tail keywords, for voice-first technology. Not only that. I publish content as a YouTube video and a Facebook video. All have closed captions. I also make a one-minute version of that same video for Instagram for people with ADD who can't stand watching a ten-minute clip. They want to take the same information from a shorter video. Then, I produce a long-form blog post for someone who could be deaf or hard of hearing, so that they can read it, if that's their preferred format. I also create a podcast for those who might be blind or legally blind. Additionally, we have an Alexa Skills Kit and, thus, you can get a small sound bite. By publishing content in every form, you cover all those issues – and that's real accessibility.

**Javier Montaner:**

Accessibility doesn't mean that all content needs to be accessible to everybody the same way. Sometimes it's technically impossible, sometimes it's too expensive or too time-consuming. Maybe I have a cognitive disability and I don't need to read the entire book the same way as the author wrote it. I need to read it in a different way. Accessibility, to me, is when they have made a version of the book that I can read according to my cognitive situation. Artificial intelligence is progressing very fast in this respect, for example, automatic captions or the voice interfaces we mentioned. It's incredible how they have improved in recent years – how Siri understands what I say even if I speak poor English and with a low voice.

**Shai Fuxman:**

*[The following passage constitutes the captions for Shai Fuxman's video statement:]*

To add to the issue of accessibility, there's the whole aspect of giving people who are non-verbal a voice. For example, many children on the autism spectrum are non-verbal. So we have augmentative communication devices – where kids can touch on buttons and have their words read out by an electronic voice, or they can write what they want to say and have that read out loud. So, in many ways, the digital world has allowed people who were voiceless before, who were not part of a conversation, to join that conversation – and also to find each other. One of the things that we saw in our research was that youth with disabilities really appreciate the ability to find other people who share their disabilities, who face the same struggles, who have the same strengths as they do. That can be very empowering. That can really help increase their self-esteem. When you can see someone else, who has the same disability label as you do, be very successful, you can say to yourself: "I can do that, too." For example, watching someone like Daniel be very successful on social media: for a young person, who's on the autism spectrum, that can be very inspiring, and build their resilience and the coping skills that can allow them to be very successful. Now, of course, there is also the negative side – especially around social media that can really amplify the

negative aspects of people with disabilities, especially around this issue of cyberbullying. When someone makes fun of you in person and only a few people hear it, it's hard, but you can cope with that. But when someone posts something awful about you on social media, and so many more people can see it, and hear about it, and participate, that can be so much harder. There is definitely that aspect of social media that we have to be paying attention to. So, as you said, while there are barriers that have been lifted by the digital world, there are also the dangers that we need to be paying attention to, those unintended consequences.

*[The video statement ends here.]*

## **Insults, TikTok and New Levels of Bullying**

*Shai, you mentioned cyberbullying above, which involves people's experiences of abuse and isolation online. In [2019](#) and [2020](#), the video platform TikTok referred to the dangers of cyberbullying to try and justify its own discrimination against – and systematic exclusion of – people with disabilities, members of the LGBTQIA+ community and others. Might some of you want to elaborate on your perspectives on online harassment and how it affects the inclusion of people with disabilities?*

### **Shai Fuxman:**

Social media are a double-edged sword for youth with disabilities. On the one hand, they find support online. They come into contact with children that are similar to them and are able to connect with them in a way they couldn't in person. On the other hand, our research demonstrates that children with disabilities are more likely to experience cyberbullying than those without disabilities – and that also leads to isolation, depression and suicidality. If you post insults on social media, hundreds of people can see them. Cyberbullying can thus have a stronger impact than bullying in the analogue world. Also, the digital world acts as an intermediate: because we are not face-to-face, it becomes easier to be hurtful. People don't see the person they are ridiculing and, hence, forget how the abuse affects them.

### **Shai Fuxman:**

*[The following statement by Shai Fuxman is published as a Tweet on the account of the Goethe-Institut:]*

Youth with disabilities are two times more likely to report cyberbullying than those without disabilities. The question is: how do we educate everyone to be responsible citizens, not only in person but also online? That includes being kind to people who are different from you.

### **Tiffany Brar:**

If someone takes my photograph without my knowledge and permission, they are cyberbullies, too.

That is a crime in itself. Some people even edit the images we post on Facebook. But other vulnerable people are also exploited this way.

**Daniel Jones:**

Management and admin staff of online services need to adopt a more active approach. YouTube does a great job of filtering out hurtful comments. TikTok is an interesting example. It's funny that they should say they were limiting the reach of content to protect people with disabilities, when, actually, TikTok was allowing the so-called autism challenge to be broadcast. People tagged #AutismChallenge to videos in which they were dancing, while trying to make themselves look disabled even though they were not. TikTok permitted this horrendous form of ridicule to run rampant on their site.

I ran a campaign – I produced two videos and mobilized a lot of people to sign a petition to stop this hashtag. TikTok eventually took action. They banned the tag and people's videos. But, along with that, they capped the general reach of the terms Asperger's and autism, and thus of the community on this app – of people like me whose TikTok content is all about helping others. TikTok was basically saying: if you can't take the bullying, you can't take the platform. It is such a large and new platform. They need to reassess how they approach disability, ethnicity, race and gender. Otherwise they are going to have a really big issue on their hands.

**Shai Fuxman:**

I agree with Daniel regarding his point about TikTok. In our report about cyberbullying, we made several recommendations on how to end cyberbullying against youth with disabilities. One of those recommendations was for the social media platforms to take a more active role in monitoring the content and for them to use innovative technology to identify hurtful language. We know that this technology is already here – algorithms that can easily identify hurtful language. So the social media platforms, including TikTok, need to take a clear position on this issue and demonstrate this position by how they manage their sites.

**Javier Montaner:**

Technology in itself is not good or bad. The way we use it makes it good or bad. Social networks have got the power to promote inclusion through their terms of use and content curation. We, as responsible users, also have the power and the duty to opt out of platforms that ignore inclusion.

**“Nothing about us without us”**

*Some of what you said above on opportunities, old and new risks correlates with a still common narrative that postulates: people with disabilities need to be helped – end of story. In this narrative*

*of absolute passivity, there is no room for people with disabilities to be active forces. Technology prevents even the slightest participation, when, for instance, the contact forms of websites are incompatible with access tools. These sites preclude people from reporting and improving an inaccessible feature because the major means of communication itself is inaccessible. How to establish sustainable possibilities for the contributions of people with disabilities – to accessibility and far beyond (just as the British [National Autistic Society](#) is raising awareness on the job market)? In other words, would you like to expand on how people with disabilities can help define and develop the digital world? What are or could be strategies of empowerment?*

**Tiffany Brar:**

There are a lot of people with disabilities who are working as accessibility trainers. They are testing websites and digital applications.

**Tiffany Brar:**

*[The following passage constitutes the captions for Tiffany Brar's video statement:]*

Also, there are three models in the disability sector: the medical model, the human rights model and the charity model. Now, people in developing countries consider disabled people as just a charity product. They don't ask people with disabilities, when they are developing their applications or their websites. So that's why, as you say, the narrative is that people with disabilities always need help.

If I was to attend the interview here in India, some of the organizations, not everyone, only some of the organizations would not ask: "Okay, do you need assistance?" They will assume that I have someone there to assist me. They will just take for granted that "she always has someone with her all the time". But it's not always the case. We don't have people with us all the time. We have certain accessibility needs. When we go to a college or a school, we are told: "Ask your mother to go and read the text to you, or ask your father to describe the images to you. We can't do it." But it's the job of the school and the college or the work place to help us. They have to give us help or assistance. Even in the shop, people don't give us any assistance, because they assume, that we are people who always need help. We do need help, but we only need help in certain places. So I think the narrative should change and people with disabilities should be included at the very beginning of developing accessible apps or accessible websites or technology. *[The video statement ends here.]*

**Javier Montaner:**

I fully agree. Yet, I would say, this does not only pertain to India but also to Spain and many other countries all over the world. Developers are often not intending to do the wrong thing. There is simply a lack of knowledge. They need to become more aware. Sometimes we engineers think

about crazy features that are very nice in a technical sense, but we forget about users – not only those with disabilities but in general. Lately, this has been changing. Entrepreneur Eric Ries has proposed the “lean startup” approach. Lean means that you develop new products very fast, but you are driven by the customer who is involved from day one of the project.

Tiffany, I get the feeling that you perceive the situation in India to be worse than in some other countries. What gives you the impression? Personally, I don't have a disability and mine is an outside perspective, but my sense is that, here in Spain, things are also not as good as they should be.

**Tiffany Brar:**

India is a good country and I'm a hard-core nationalist, but there are a lot of ups and downs. India has one of the largest economies in Asia, yet people are simply not aware of the conditions for people with disabilities, even though India signed the UN CDRP in 2006. It has not been willing to spend the money needed for equal accessibility. I know blind people from the US, England or Germany. They don't flag a lack of inclusion as much, whereas India is still following the charity model.

Web developers everywhere need to stand in our shoes – to think from the perspective of a person with disability, not in a sympathizing manner, but in an empathizing manner. Treat people the way you want to be treated.

**Shai Fuxman:**

An important and much-talked-about aspect in the disability community is the notion of “nothing about us without us”. Don't do things for them but with them instead.

Moreover, when I talk about my daughter, I usually talk about how adorable she is, how she has a great sense of humour and she also has autism. As opposed to: she's autistic, that's who she is. In other words, changing the narrative requires that society no longer defines people with disabilities by their disabilities. If we transform the conversation so that we begin by talking about people's strengths, we can appreciate much more the contribution they can make to society. That will help us realize that an accessible digital world is not only beneficial to people with disabilities but to society – because it allows them to bring their skills to all of us.

**Tiffany Brar:**

I would not recommend inaccessible websites to any of my friends with disabilities. Even my friends without disabilities, who are activists or inclusivity evangelists, would not visit those sites. Web developers should also realize that accessibility will win them more users and buyers.

**Tiffany Brar:**

*[The following statement by Tiffany Brar is published as a Facebook post on the account of the Goethe-Institut:]*

Web services wrongly assume that people with disabilities will not have money to be buying customers on their beauty, shopping or travel sites. Even dating platforms, which are an important part of social inclusion, are not accessible. Many people without disabilities think: “Oh, but she’s disabled, who is she going to date?” Or: “How is he going to be fashionable?” These false notions should be deconstructed.

The same applies to erotic sites and pornography. People with disabilities have the right to view this content if they wish – just like people without disabilities. No matter what the content is, equality needs to be the maxim, not discrimination.

**Daniel Jones:**

*[The following passage constitutes the captions for Daniel Jones’s second video statement:]*

I think, users, especially on the autism spectrum, what they’ll do, if a website is not accessible to them in a certain way, is not use that website again. And they almost feel left out, because they just think: “Well, it’s not accessible for me, it is not for me.” It definitely could be for them. How this can be improved though, and the thing I really can add here, is to create focus groups with people. Tiffany was saying this at the beginning. When you are creating the site or creating the content or whatever it is you are trying to make accessible, have a consultancy focus group with people of various disabilities to give you that feedback.

A good example of an accessible site that has consulted people on the spectrum is the National Autistic Society’s website here in the UK which is just [autism.org.uk](http://autism.org.uk). If you go there, you’ll see: you can change background colours, you can change the text size. You can do all kinds of stuff, which makes it way more autism-friendly. *[The video statement ends here.]*

**Javier Montaner:**

I want to stress once more that an accessible product or service is not only good for a person with disability but for everybody. If you caption your video, it’s valuable for a person who is blind and a person who is hard of hearing and it’s also valuable when you are on the bus and you cannot use sound. If you provide accessibility, you are not eliminating features; you are adding features. It is not about persons having disabilities, it’s the world having disabilities. If somebody cannot access a service in the physical or in the digital world, the issue does not lie with the person. The service is the issue.

## Touch and screens

*The internet is in a number of ways associated with spatial independence. It has been allowing some people to do their shopping from home and to work from anywhere, granting them greater mobility and access. At the same time, the devices for using the internet are material, as Herman, Hadlaw and Swiss remind us at the beginning of the tellingly titled “Theories of the Mobile Internet: Materialities and Imaginaries”. And, in “Disability and Haptic Mobile Media,” Goggin has asked: “[W]hat of many of us who wish to touch computer technologies with other parts of the body [than our hands]?”*

*Those physical devices for accessing the web need to be accessible themselves. Javier, how does your app Mouse4all take this material side of the internet into account?*

### **Javier Montaner:**

*[The following passage constitutes the captions for Javier Montaner’s video statement:]*

The internet and digital technologies have opened a new and instructive window to the world. However, we still need a physical interface to interact with this digital world. That’s why we have created Mouse4all. It’s an assistive technology designed for persons with physical disabilities. It works on android tablets and smartphones. Our users cannot use their hands to type, to touch the screen, to use a keyboard, a mouse or a joystick. However, they can use and click on a simple switch or button like this one. They can do it with their hand but also with their chin, with the back of their head, in fact, with any part of their body. Mouse4all captures these simple clicks, and uses them to control a mouse pointer on the user’s screen. Thanks to Mouse4all, our users can perform actions like touching, dragging or swiping. What for? To send a WhatsApp message, to watch a YouTube video or listen to music on Spotify, to browse the internet, to play a game. In fact, to use any app installed on their device. To sum up, Mouse4all is a physical access tool that enables users with physical disabilities to access the digital world. *[The video statement ends here.]*

## Speed; and money

*The internet runs at a high velocity. For instance, the second that users visit a webpage, pop-up windows might surface. Within seconds, videos, sounds and adverts might start playing without asking (which can be particularly [hazardous for people with photosensitive epilepsy](#)).*

*In your view, does digital velocity generally constitute a barrier? Or can it also be conducive to accessibility? Has the question of temporality acquired a new dimension online or does the internet mirror the pace of the analogue world?*

**Daniel Jones:**

People's attention span is three seconds long, so they demand for constant updates. Everything has to be instant, regardless of whether we talk about the digital or analogue sphere. Users can, however, slow down their refresh rates on some digital applications, for example, on YouTube. Sometimes I speed videos up to twice or triple their regular rate and I can still digest the information as my brain is working very fast. Adding an accessibility factor to videos to vary their pace is thus really helpful.

**Tiffany Brar:**

Online features must ensure accessibility as they are going faster and faster. Also, when customers make a payment on Amazon, they currently have to work through different windows until they reach the payment section. People with disabilities don't want to use certain websites because it takes too long.

**Daniel Jones:**

On my website, we sell items and we just upgraded it to take customers directly through to payment rather than putting them through a sixteen-step process. The reason why others implement such a process is add-on selling. When you already have your credit card in hand and are making a purchase anyway, you might just as well be willing to add more. It's comparable to the cash register of any supermarket. They display numerous quick-sell bars tempting customers to think: "Oh yes, I need this snickers, too."

**Tiffany Brar:**

A person like me would be very sick and tired of this, especially as these ads often appear as pop-ups in between. It's very frustrating for a person with limited mobility or visual impairment or someone with a cognitive disability who cannot process too much content.

**Shai Fuxman:**

I would also like to point to the intersection between disabilities and socio-economic status, or financial resources. In the US, a lot of the technology that has been developed for people with disabilities is expensive. Within the disability community, the cost is creating a barrier for people with low income. To close the economic divide, technology in the US and around the world needs to be both accessible and financially available.

**Javier Montaner:**

We call this "financial accessibility". We are a social enterprise but still an enterprise that needs to sell to survive. We have tried from the beginning to offer a low-cost product. Yet the market is not ready. Although fifteen percent of the world's population have a disability, we are still facing a niche

market. The interaction of supply and demand currently results in expensive products. Users, NGOs, the public sector and private companies – we all need to work together to make assistive technology available and affordable to any person that needs it.

**Tiffany Brar:**

Many people don't understand the pinching point until they experience it. I know experts in the technical field who are indifferent. But when their mother or sister faces a limitation, they suddenly go: "Okay, okay, okay, my mother needs access". Society needs to change and care beyond these moments.

Special thanks go to Thomas Heymel of the foundation [Pfennigparade](#) for his input.

Experts: Tiffany Brar (NGO founder), Daniel Jones (video influencer), Javier Montaner (entrepreneur), Shai Fuxman (behavioural health researcher)

Author: The interview was conducted by Elisa Jochum.

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