

# Filip Bircanin

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**Summary** — I am an HCI researcher–designer who unifies inclusive, accessible, and service design for public-good digital projects. I specialise in co- and participatory design with disadvantaged groups, translating lived experience into actionable frameworks, patterns, and service blueprints. I link discovery and co-creation to prototyping, service integration, and adoption playbooks - so teams can implement and sustain impact.

## EDUCATION

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**Ph.D.** in Human-Computer Interaction Brisbane, Australia  
Queensland University of Technology, Advisor: Prof [Margot Brereton](#) 2017–2022  
– Project Title: [Co-designing with Adults with Moderate to Severe Intellectual Disabilities to Enable Active Communication Technology Use](#)

\* This four-year PhD project focused on designing new Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) devices with and for people with learning disabilities. I spent hundreds of hours embedded in Learning Life Centres, observing what worked, what didn't, and co-creating better tools. It was a period of deep experimentation across software and hardware, with several prototypes moving from lab to life - adopted by a major disability service provider and used in workshops across two Day Centres.

**Master** in Cognitive Science Vienna, Austria  
University of Vienna 2014–2017  
– Thesis Project: [EDA-based Detection of Empathic Accuracy](#)

\* an intensive, cross-disciplinary programme spanning AI, advanced statistics, probabilistic reasoning, philosophy of mind, neuroscience, HCI, and cognitive biology. Under close mentorship I pushed into deeply experimental, quantitative work - designing studies end-to-end and applying rigorous analysis. I defended a thesis on empathic accuracy using electrodermal activity (EDA), examining how physiological arousal can index moment-to-moment empathic judgments.

## WORK EXPERIENCE

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**King's College London** UK  
**Principal Investigator** 2025–Current  
– [Include +](#) (An Aphasia-Led Toolkit for Navigating Public Services)  
– Lead designer for a charity-embedded, early-stage innovation exploring accessible UK disability-benefit pathways for people with aphasia. Framed opportunity from ambiguous brief; mapped current→future journeys; prototyping and piloting an aphasia-friendly digital smartphone toolkit (visual pathways + guided assistance), shaping operating and adoption models with partners.

## Principal Researcher

- Ca11y - Audiovisual Content Accessibility ([New Investigator Award](#))
- Principal Researcher at the intersection of HCI and media accessibility; co-leading with aphasia charities and BBC R&D to frame ambiguous opportunities and shape future-forward audio/audiovisual service concepts.
- Rapidly prototype and test adaptive listening features (multi-level summaries, transcript-led navigation, pace control, visual cueing, word-meaning popovers, live recap); use Wizard-of-Oz and in-the-wild pilots to prove desirability/feasibility/viability.
- Run mixed-methods evaluations.

## Career Break

## Family reasons

2023–2024

[Centre of Excellence for the Digital Child](#)

Brisbane, QUT

Jul 2022 – Apr 2023

## Research Fellow

- Led a short, cross-disciplinary programme exploring two threads: (1) digital access for children with intellectual disabilities (ID) and families; (2) nature-connected digital experiences that support play, wellbeing, and learning.
- Secured additional funding to run technology probes; designed and deployed probe kits in homes/schools to surface needs, constraints, and adoption barriers.
- Co-created a remote physiotherapeutic support concept with a private therapy agency—home-rehab flows, caregiver prompts, and lightweight progress tracking—tested for desirability, feasibility, and viability

[Queensland University of Technology](#)

Brisbane

2020–2022

## Sessional Academic

- [UX Fundamentals](#); [Interaction and Experience Design](#); [Interaction Design for Human-Centred AI](#)
- Teaching tasks: syllabus design; studio facilitation; service blueprints/journey maps; low→high-fi prototyping & WoZ; usability testing; ethics & evaluation; qualitative research methods; assessment design; supervision; marking; pastoral support

[Inclusive Design Lab](#)

Brisbane, QUT

2021

## Research Assistant on ARC Fellowship

- Set up in-the-wild pilots (Learning & Lifestyle Centre for people with learning disabilities)
- Defined success metrics (message accuracy, time-to-compose/find, error rates, comprehension, participation/engagement) and a lightweight data pipeline (usage logs, privacy/anonymisation, governance)

[IMG Norway and Institute for Social Protection](#)

Belgrade, Serbia

2012–2014

## Lead Consultant

- Juvenile Justice, Mental Health and Substance Use — led a multi-agency needs assessment: defined target groups/issues, convened the expert team, ran literature/information reviews, set the initial plan, and analysed/managed data — delivering a formal Needs Assessment Report and activity plan
- Set programme goals & objectives; defined strategy and plan for realisation; facilitated expert-team sessions and maintained cadence/decisions
- Organised requirements & workplan; scoped duties across all institutions involved
- Prepared training schedules and capability-building for juvenile-justice staff
- Produced interim/progress reports and authored the final report with lessons learned and recommendations

- Leadership: Assistant Coordinator (Drop-in Centre) and Programme Coordinator (Outreach); supervised and mentored multidisciplinary staff; initiated annual service-improvement cycles using user studies and needs assessments.
- New services: designed and launched two new drop-in centres (co-founder); launched national first *Big Issue*-style street paper
- Mental-health pathways: referral routes with municipal clinics; in-house supports (art-therapy; DBT groups)
- Undocumented children: intake standards and advocacy protocols for access to social/health care
- Outreach model: designed/piloted social street-worker role; authored national standards for outreach
- Systems mapping: current→future journeys across social work, health, education, justice; service blueprints
- Prototyping & pilots: tested touchpoints (forms, scripts, evidence flows) and scaled feasible/viable ones.
- Partnerships: coordinated with municipal services, NGOs, and Social Welfare Gov Services; referral pathways & follow-up routines

Check my [website](#) for more projects.

## SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

### User Research Methods

- **Discovery & framing**: contextual/ethnographic interviews (structured/semistructured/unstructured), participant observation, diary studies, cultural probes, desk research, Double Diamond (Discover→Define), **Field-theory framing**.
- **Generative & co-design**: co-design workshops, speculative design/design fiction, storyboards, empathy mapping, personas.
- **Mapping & synthesis**: journey mapping, service blueprints, card sorting & tree testing, affinity clustering, thematic analysis, segmentation.
- **Prototyping**: low→high-fidelity (paper, wireframes, clickable, coded), Wizard-of-Oz(WoZ) simulations, Research through Design (RtD) artefacts; in-the-wild deployments.
- **Evaluation**: think-aloud, task-based usability (moderated/unmoderated), heuristic reviews, first-click/success rates, SUS, NASA-TLX.
- **Quant & analytics**: survey/instrument design, descriptive & inferential stats, log/app analytics, field pilots (A/B-style), use-metrics.
- **Inclusive methods**: CCN-friendly protocols (aphasia); plain-language, pictorial & audio alternatives; supported conversation; pacing/breaks; ethics & safeguarding.

Recent examples:

#### AudioVisual Media Accessibility

2 home trials - working prototype, diary/photo elicitation study, triangulation, use analytics: log, metrics, visual traces, Vignettes and LikertScale Questionnaires

#### Accessible Public Services

Co-Design; Focus groups; Thematic Analysis; Card Sorting - A deck designed from scratch (cluster analysis); Design Fictions (Audio Prompts); pathway (journey) mapping; Web Progressive prototype development

## Inclusive Research & Ethics

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- Participatory design with CCN and intellectual disabilities: co-design in care settings; AAC prototyping.
- Digital Child Ethics Toolkit development (templates, checklists, guidance); authored [guidance](#) on granular participation reporting and enabling children's agency earlier in design.
- Led sensitive, in-home disability research: robust consent, safeguarding, and accessible friendly materials.

## Analysis & Synthesis

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- Qualitative depth: reflexive thematic; narrative; conversation/EM interaction; multimodal interaction; affinity mapping; extensive NVivo use across 500+ hours.
- Quant methods: EDA analytics—tonic/phasic split, SCR detection & counts (IIR high-pass, thresholded peaks), EDAAffect Dial synchrony (Pearson r); assumption checks (Q-Q/normality) & independent t-tests; survey statistics — developing stakeholder questionnaires (social care, police, NGOs; n=182), Likert-scale summaries & descriptive stats; plus use-metrics in field deployments.

## Service Design

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- End-to-end: discovery → delivery; journey mapping, pain points, eligibility gates, handoffs.
- Blueprinting: front/backstage roles, SLAs, data flows, escalation paths.
- Evidence & triage: intake criteria, risk/needs assessment, prioritisation; consent & safeguarding patterns.
- Co-design & testing: workshops; service prototypes; scripts/forms/comms templates; rapid pilots.
- Implementation: SOPs, training & onboarding, change management; partner alignment.
- M&E: KPIs, dashboards, learning reviews; outcome evaluation and continuous improvement.

## Agile Research Practice & Delivery

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- Translating findings into backlog items with acceptance criteria; rapid iteration to inform go/no-go in time-boxed programmes (e.g., [Advokit](#) – 5-month study delivering a paper + working prototype).
- Produced service maps and working prototype using RtD + Agile; shipped testable [UI multimodal patterns](#)(read-along highlighting, tiered summaries, speed control, context look-ups ) that reduce cognitive load and improve comprehension post-stroke.

## Research Management & Leadership

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- PI of a national public-service accessibility project (£50k; 6-person team; 20+ end-users): ethics, recruitment, delivery, publication pathway.
- Principal Researcher on a 2-year media-accessibility programme: study design, recruitment, methods, data collection/analysis, team leadership, dissemination; 5 peer-reviewed papers (2025).
- Early-career leadership: coordinated cross-national research with ombudsman offices, councils, NGOs, institutions; authored a 90-page report with 12 guidelines (policy changes) adopted in national guidance.

## Stakeholder Management / Interdisciplinarity

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- Worked with government departments (ie., Institute for Social Welfare and protection), ombudsman offices (Children’s Ombudsman), broadcasters (ie., BBC R/D), NGOs (ie., Endeavour Foundation), charities (Aphasia Re-Connect, Save the children UK) and different ; align user evidence with policy/operational/technical constraints to secure decisions.
- Board-level contribution (Aphasia Re-Connect charity trustee, ongoing); regular engagement with senior stakeholders to set direction while keeping end-user needs central.

## Teaching, Mentoring & Community

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- 300+ hours HE teaching across 3–4 HCI/UX modules (lectures, tutorials, assessment) with cohorts of 35+; content: prototyping, usability testing, cultural probes, journey/empathy mapping, qualitative methods.
- Co-supervision of two PhD candidates; ongoing mentoring on methods, ethics, and analysis.

## Evidence of Impact

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- AAC system adopted by a large NGO across three learning & lifestyle centres (intellectual disabilities).
- Media-accessibility patterns informing broadcaster accessibility roadmaps (collaboration with a major media organisation BBC R/D and iTV Accessibility Team).
- Social-policy research delivered 12 actionable reforms, launched via press conference.
- 9 mid-fidelity systems designed, trialled, and evaluated (open-sourced software & hardware; non-commercial).

## Tools & Techniques

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- NVivo; Miro; qualitative video/interaction analysis; questionnaire design & basic stats; prototyping (Figma, Progressive Web Apps); instrumentation & evidence planning for app-use data.
- Laser-cutting & 3D-printing fundamentals.
- Python (Jupyter for descriptive/inferential stats); HTML/CSS/JS basics.
- Adobe Suite (Illustrator, Premiere Pro) for prototyping & visualisation.
- Previously used: Taguette, SPSS, R.
- Experienced LLM practitioner (across all cycles) – research, analysis, writing, prototyping, teaching
- Experienced Latex User

## ★ FUNDING AND AWARDS

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|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| – EPSRC (£50,000) - AdvoKit: An Aphasia-Led Toolkit for Navigating Public Services       | 2025      |
| – CDC (\$19,000) - Developing Inclusive Cultural Probes for Creative Qualitative Inquiry | 2023      |
| – King’s Seed Sanctuary Award                                                            | 2024      |
| – Honorary Lecturer status - Queensland University of Technology                         | 2022–2025 |
| – Honourable Mention Award at CHI’21                                                     | 2021      |
| – QUTPRA Scholarship Award                                                               | 2017      |
| – Erasmus Scholarship Award                                                              | 2015–2015 |
| – Save the Children UK Overseas Award                                                    | 2010–2010 |



## PUBLIC GOOD INITIATIVES

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- Street Protest “Illuminated” 2010  
*Organiser*
- Street Children Network Europe 2009  
*Co-founder*
- “Big Issue” Serbia 2010  
*Field Coordinator*
- Outdoor Collective 2012  
*Co-Founder*



## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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- Aphasia Re-Connect 2024–Current  
*Board Trustee*
- HCClub Chair 2024–Current  
*Dedicated club for professional development of KCL’s PhD and Postdoctoral researchers*
- Associate Chair 2022–Current  
*I regularly volunteer as an Associate Chair for CHI’23, CHI’24, DIS’23, DIS’24*
- Digital Wellbeing Lab 2023–2025  
*Affiliated Researcher*
- The Albert Ellis Institute 2023–2025  
*REBT certified Therapist*
- AI Institute, Slovenia 2016/2017  
*Dedicated club for professional development of KCL’s PhD and Postdoctoral researchers*
- Justice Academy 2012  
*TOT Training of Trainers*
- TA 101 2009  
*Transactional Analysis Foundations*
- National Child Line 2011  
*Councillor*



## PUBLICATIONS

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1. Curtis H, Bircanin F., Neate T., **2025**, July. “An Old Bastard in Bright Orange Satin!”: Zuzenna’s Aphasia Diary : And Lessons Learned from DIY Augmentative and Alternative Communication. In The 27th International ACM SIGACCESS Conference on Computers and Accessibility (ASSETS ’25)
2. Bircanin, F., Sitbon, L., Hoogstrate, M., Abbas, A.K., Hajizadeh Saffar, A. and Brereton, M., **2025**, April. Beyond the Buckets of Support: Designing for Agency and Interaction in Personalised Disability Systems. In Proceedings of the 2025 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (pp. 1-19).
3. Bircanin, F., Nevsky, A., Perera, H., Agarwal, V., Song, E., Cruice, M. and Neate, T., **2025**, April. Sounds Accessible: Envisioning Accessible Audio-Media Futures with People with Aphasia. In Proceedings of the 2025 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (pp. 1-22).
4. Bircanin, F., Brereton, M., Sitbon, L., Ploderer, B. and Esteban, M., **2025**. Co-designing in the middle: supporting adults with intellectual disabilities to meaningfully participate in design. *CoDesign*, pp.1-21.
5. Nevsky, A., Bircanin, F., Cruice, M., Simperl, E., and Neate, T., **2025**, April. To Each Their Own: Exploring Highly Personalised Audiovisual Media Accessibility Interventions with People with Aphasia. In Proceedings of the 2025 DIS Designing Interactive Systems Conference

CLICK [HERE](#) FOR MORE



## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

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- Conference Presentations (ie., CHI'25 5000 delegates) 2018–2025  
*Lead Author*
- National Press Conference - Ombudsman's Office and CYI 2011  
*Main Speaker*
- Congress of Serbian Psychotherapists - Presentation/Workshop 2013  
*Project lead and presenter*
- TV and Radio appearances as CYI representative 2006–2011  
*Programme Coordinator*



## REPORTS/NATIONAL STANDARDS

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1. National Report - Prevention of Exploitation of Children in South East Europe (2011)–available upon request
2. We know best - Practice Guide (2010)–available upon request
3. Non-implementation of the Child Rights in Serbia (2008)–available upon request
4. National minimum Outreach Standards - only available in Serbian (2010)–available upon request