# Creative Approaches to User Experience in Entrepreneurial Startups: Emerging Impact from Screencast Videography

**Abstract**

Academic research and industry reports unanimously agree on the importance of understanding and improving user experience and customer journeys. However, for small businesses, particularly entrepreneurs and startups, resources are limited and are usually deployed for the operational aspect of the business. Testing methods and solutions can often be complex, time-consuming or outwith the reach of startups. In this paper, we showcase how using the innovative, visual research method of Screencast Videography to assist entrepreneurial startups can offer easy and accessible solutions that can transform the way businesses approach UX and customer journey testing. The paper focuses on the emerging impact and tangible results of employing a screencast videography approach to testing and improving the digital interface of a startup business.

## Overview

Improving customer experience and journeys can increase customer satisfaction by 20% and lift revenue by up to 15% while lowering the cost of serving customers by as much as 20% (Pulido, Stone and Strevel, 2014). A wealth of literature highlights the importance of understanding and improving digital customer experience and customer journeys (Bilgihan, Kandampully & Zhang, 2016; Kawaf, 2017; Klaus & Maklan, 2013; Mclean & Wilson, 2016; Rose, Clark, Samouel & Hair, 2012). However, for small businesses, particularly entrepreneur startups with limited resources and expertise, understanding and investing in user experience and customer journeys can be daunting and well beyond the scope and budget of most small businesses. Traditional UX and UI research settings require resource-intensive processes, often posing constraints for startups already needing a greater focus on the business and its operation. Nevertheless, for startups in the digital space, user experience is one of the fundamentals of success, and not investing in it is not an option.

This paper highlights a case of an innovative startup, Instant Pickup. Inspired by the decline of air quality in London from air pollution, CEO Bejoseholo Aikhomun started Instant Pickup as an environmentally friendly and sustainable entrepreneur offering same-day logistics and delivery solutions using electric vans for most of its operation. Instant Pickup partnered with the author over a 12-month period on an EU Regional Development Funded project of Knowledge Exchange and Embed Partnership (KEEP+). One of the key outcomes of this project was developing a smart interface offering real-time tracking and full automation of service orders and fulfilment. Accordingly, this paper discusses specifically how using the innovative research method of Screencast Videography (Kawaf, 2019) enabled the business startup to achieve a high turnaround at the various stages of app development as the method allowed highly efficient and effective capturing of issues relating to usability, functionality and persuasiveness and thus enabling 'fixes' quickly and efficiently.

## Method

This paper reveals preliminary insights on Screencast Videography (Kawaf, 2019) as a possible approach for assessing the digital customer experience and journey mapping for such businesses with relatively simple-to-use tools and limited resources. We present a case study on Pic Tree, a creative multimedia agency providing services in the B2B market and show how simple screencasting of user journeys can create meaningful insights that are easy to comprehend and apply with limited resources.

The research employs the method of Screencast Videography to evaluate the user interface and assess the user experience of the Instant Pickup app. Kawaf (2019, p170) defines Screencast Videography as "*a research method that adopts a dynamic visual form of inquiry. It is philosophically underpinned by the ontology of the moving image. The method uses screencasts – videos of screen activities or outputs – as its main mode of data collection. The screencast videos capture dynamic on-screen interactions and experiences as they occur. This helps offer detailed records of online experiences (e.g. online shopping, information search, dating, video gaming, gambling, etc.) that are not usually observable using conventional methods*". In a practical sense, screencasting or recording screen activities is an accessible, easy way of capturing user journeys, thus highlighting any issues or problems and fixing them quickly. It is also possible to apply a retrospective take on the journey by questioning the user on the 'whys' of certain decisions made throughout.

Data collected using screencast videography included two types: (1) researcher-generated screen recordings of their own assessment of the interface, this happened regularly, sometimes several times a week by simply sharing short 2-minute screencasting videos back and forth showing how the app behaves in different settings, and (2) customer generated screen recordings of customers using the app in real life scenarios (e.g. existing customers ordering via the app), this data was collected over two week period from a sample of existing customers. The data collection consisted of over 25 screencasting videos using different versions of the app and allowing further improvements and fine-tuning as we progressed with the project. The participants were also asked to answer a short Google Form open-ended questionnaire after completing the screencasting, this included questions on their overall experience using the app, naming positive and negative aspects of the app and understanding their feelings toward it.

The primary analytical framework in the screencast videography study followed Critical Incident Analysis (Edvardsson and Roos, 2001), identifying and highlighting critical incidents within the experience and exploring them in greater depth. The analysis also used the guiding principles of Allison et al.'s (2019) web evaluation framework focusing on appearance, content, functionality, usability, design, interactivity, satisfaction and loyalty.

**Results**

Based on the insights from the screencasts, actionable steps were identified and implemented relatively quickly. While it is challenging to list every exact improvement made as a result of this research, the following shows the key areas of identified issues and improvements:

1. Barrier-free experience: the screencast videos showed several barriers to a smooth experience, including a complex signing-in process using (OTP code) which often delayed or interrupted the experience. Because several screencasts showed this issue, the solution was to redesign the app so that a customer is able to input an order fully and get an instant quotation before they are asked to sign-up or sign in. Other barriers included choosing a language as the first page, which was unnecessary. A glitch on this page often resulted in customers being unable to progress further to use the app. The solution to this issue included removing the language page and keeping English as the primary language with the option to set up a small button for language changes if necessary.

2. Automated journey: several initial screencasts highlighted a need for the customer to call Instant Pickup after an online booking to confirm the size of the van required, the type of items being moved, etc. As a result, over several months, the project continued to suggest changes that include identifying all items to be removed on the app (e.g. for home removals, these are sorted in room type, property size, etc.). Based on inputted details, the correct van option is selected automatically, and the booking can be confirmed without the need for a phone call.

3. Sustainable, eco-friendly service: screencasting allowed us to see how users interact with eco-friendly options. E.g. if a user is likely to choose to offset their carbon footprint if their

order cannot be fulfilled using an electric van. Part of the challenge here is the limited capabilities of electric vans, which cannot meet the demand for long-distance trips. Several videos showed a need to highlight "greener" options, so the app improvements included an automatic selection of electric vans as the primary option. We also were able to place messages around carbon offsetting and carbon emission savings for each booking. These details also underwent edits and improvements based on issues highlighted by screencasting.

**Discussion**

This developmental paper aims to highlight the emerging impact of using screencast videography beyond the scope of academic research. Screencast Videography is a promising method that has attracted the attention of leading scholars due to its potential for uncovering detailed and nuanced insights of digital customer experience (Banerjee & Pal, 2022; Kozinets, 2023; Ma & Sun, 2020; Trischler & Westman Trischler, 2022). However, this paper is the first attempt at showcasing the usefulness of the method in helping entrepreneurs and SMEs to effectively and efficiently assess the quality of their digital platforms from a user perspective using an easy to implement method that requires little technical expertise. Moreover, compared to the tradition UX sprint setting, the practical approach of screencasting enable an unprecedented speed to identifying and resolving critical issues via back and forth exchanges of very short screencast videos instead of a traditional focus group or interview setting that requires more planning, time and resources. The CEO of Instant Pickup comments: "*We have found screencasting very useful as it allows us to learn more about our user experience when using our software. As we are able to see every step taken by our users in great detail and analyse how we can optimise our customer journey, so that we can improve our conversation rate*". (Bejoseholo Aikhomun, CEO)

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