



## Transcription of UX Soup Episode 2: The Pandemic Part 1

[music]

00:14 Lisa Cooper: Welcome to UX Soup, a short form podcast where we go beyond the buzz words and talk about the latest use of research, technology innovation and all things impacting user experience with personal devices and services, whether it be at home or on the go. So my name's Lisa Cooper, and here I am with my co-host, Chris Schreiner.

00:36 Chris Schreiner: Hello.

00:36 LC: And Derek Vita.

00:36 Derek Vita: Hello.

00:38 LC: Hello. Hello. So as always, UX Soup is sponsored by Strategy Analytics, a global research and consulting firm, providing our clients all over the world with insights, analysis and expertise. So today's episode, we're going to talk about COVID-19 and impacts on user experience. And so I'll start, I'll talk about some research that I just completed where we look at older adults and how this whole thing has affected them and their experiences, because obviously older adults are having to use Zoom and things like that to do telemedicine. They've been using technologies in ways that they never have before.

01:19 LC: So in the focus groups, I ran one in the UK and one in the US, we've been talking about their exposure to technology and how they felt about it. And one surprising thing that came up actually is the role of churches and how well actually they're leading the way. They're accommodating all exposure to technology, they're running podcasts, Zoom calls, they are doing phone calls, they're doing WhatsApp groups. They've really been blending all technologies to try and include everybody into the church experience and make sure that people aren't isolated and alone at home.

02:00 LC: So I have here a quote from one of the people that I was talking to. He said, "We've realized that social media and podcasts or Zoom are a tool, which will enable us to function better as a church long-term." So it looks like they'll be keeping this kind of technology in the future too. He said, "Lockdown has changed things for us permanently and for the better." So that's wonderful. But one of the things that was unexpected is funerals actually have been taking part over Zoom, according to one lady there have been, she's attended two services, one was on Zoom, and the daughter used her phone and asked if anyone on the Zoom call wanted to say anything. The second service was live-streamed from a church in Minneapolis. It's heavy, isn't it? That you can do... I'm sure they did not expect to be doing funerals by Zoom. And what will this mean for the future? Clearly, they're doing a really, really good job with including everybody, but part of the church service worship is funerals and weddings.

03:11 CS: That's something that I could see lasting a bit beyond, so not everybody can travel to a funeral, not everybody can make it for whatever reason. So to be able to take part, whether it's via Zoom or whether it's through some other virtual presence application, I think that's something that... It's definitely a use case that I think would stick. Funerals, weddings, any kind of celebration like that, it would be nice to be able to access that from anywhere in the world.

03:44 DV: So are there any aspects of that sort of life event that can't be replicated on Zoom? Or is it just about the ceremony, so for example, what do people really get from a ceremony versus a wake afterwards or versus having everybody in the same room together, things like that.

04:07 LC: I think it's hugs. Literally, it just comes down to hugs, touch, holding someone, and that's, they talk a lot about, that's what they miss too, and obviously in that demographic, they're going to experience more funerals and



memorials and things like that. But it's wonderful that the church has been able to... And many people had said this, they've just been included in all kinds of ways moving forward and have adapted very well to these ways of doing things. So the podcast works really, really well for them. Some have adopted Zoom very well, it just depends on their attitudes towards technology because some... Depending on how long they've been in retirement or how exposed they've been to technology, either through their work or currently, or if they have people around them supporting them, it's very difficult to think about setting up something like Zoom. It's hardly easy to set up Zoom. There's lots of set-up steps in the beginning at least, and if you're not used to that, a lot of businesses assume that everybody has some level of technology expertise or just basic. And often they don't.

05:16 CS: It is interesting that people have been trying to have older consumers become more accustomed to technology and adopt technology, and that it's churches that's gonna be the driving force to them adopting different products and services.

05:33 LC: Yes and him saying, lockdown has changed things for us permanently and for the better. And there were several... There were actually, just by coincidence, there were a couple of pastors that were doing this, there were a couple of ministers that were implementing these.

05:50 CS: And you would think for part of that community, as people age, become less mobile and won't necessarily be able to go to church every week. In the past there'd be people that would come to their house and maybe have... In the Catholic church, they might come and present the Eucharist to them at their home. But for all churches now, over the past several months to be able to have this actually opens the door for people that didn't have mobility to be able to get to church, to take part more than they've ever been able to.

06:28 LC: You have to remember that's where they get their social interaction is often at church as well as other things, but that's very important to them, so. Okay, so we're a... Derek, you have some research that you're working on right now.

06:43 DV: We've already connected some fascinating research on COVID-19's impact on the automotive and mobility industry, so I'll just hit the high points here. One of the things that's been fascinating in all verticals, but especially in the transport and human movement, is what an ideal concept of cleanliness and safety look like, and how those things can be non-verbally communicated, whether that's in an owned car versus a shared car, things like that. So essentially, what we found is in shared cars, whether it's a taxi or a bus, things like that, there's certain levels that convey different "levels" of cleanliness and safety, and things like that. There's barriers between drivers and passengers and the in-between individual passengers as well, that's certainly one level. Ensuring that all riders and drivers are wearing masks, that's certainly another level.

07:40 DV: It makes some people feel more safe. Testing drivers and ensuring that their current test status is communicated to potential riders is another level. And then there's just various things like providing sanitizer, providing wipes, things like that, antimicrobial services, cleaning procedures, and making sure that's communicated to riders is on another level. But more concerning than all that is the fact that across most segments, interest in any mobility service, with perhaps some exception for public transit in certain segments, is about to fall off a cliff. Right, so we've done quite a bit of research, going back at least five years, on how people choose their transport mode, the relationship between whatever mobility service they use and their intention to buy another car or a new car.

08:29 DV: And found that, very long story short, the owned car isn't going anywhere, right? And this was before COVID-19 even hit. So for the vast majority of travelers, it's just the most convenient for the widest variety of journey types, especially in North America, especially in China. And now you have this global pandemic, and suddenly consumers are saying that their owned and leased cars are not only more convenient, they're also cleaner and safer. So there is a path forward for mobility services, so ensuring safety and cleanliness and communicating that to riders, but it's a pretty narrow path given the changing attitudes right now about ownership of cars.



09:08 CS: I think we saw in China, as they started to come out of the pandemic, that road traffic went up to normal levels, but public transport and ride hailing were falling off a cliff still. [chuckle] They were much, much, much slower to rebound 'cause everybody went and said, "You know what? My personal car is going to be safer for me than anything like that." That kinda leads into what I wanted to talk about, which had to do with HMI and different ways of interacting with technology that are coming about because of the pandemic.

09:44 CS: Of course, we have touch screens everywhere. I've avoided an ATM machine as much as possible. Going to the shop to buy groceries, I'm trying not to touch the... Use contactless payments as much as possible. These issues of public touch screens and needing to find some other way to interact. Now, depending on the path of this pandemic, and it's gonna be different from region to region. Some countries have been able to handle this better than other countries, so consumer perceptions of these types of public spaces might be different, very different regionally, but there... Certainly in those that haven't handled it well, the concept of touching a screen where you see the smudges, you see the fingerprints of everyone that's used it in front of you isn't...

10:36 LC: Ew. [laughter]

10:37 CS: Is never... Really never should be terribly feeling, but even more so now. But what is the alternative to this? I mean, certainly we have contactless payments, but not everything is set up for that. You can't go up to an ATM and interact with it in a contactless manner, but other HMI voice gestures are not there yet and they're not appropriate for a lot of these public-facing settings, so it's kind of in a bit of a difficult spot. We have seen some companies trying to work more on haptics. So to have a touch screen but not have to touch it, have a display that you could interact with and use air pressure to provide a sensation to your fingers as you get close to the screen. Those are very expensive to implement that I couldn't see it being implemented on a broad range, but there are some public-facing touchscreens where that might help.

11:38 CS: And the other element with HMI is there's been a lot of work and we've published reports on facial recognition, and how that is being used for personalization and personal identification to unlock your smartphone. It could be used in a car with cameras for when you sit in the driver's seat and the car is personalized for whoever's driving at that time or in your smart home for identification and personalization there. But now if we're in a public place and we're wearing masks for the foreseeable future, facial recognition is certainly going to get hurt by that. It's also getting hurt by other world events that are going on where facial recognition is taking a front and center stage in terms of protests and identifying protesters through facial recognition. So there are some steep challenges ahead for implementation of that kind of technology.

12:39 DV: Worthy of a whole other episode, for sure.

12:41 CS: That is a whole other episode, I'm sure.

12:43 LC: Yeah, okay, so I think we're moving on to our regular segment that we do on each episode called Condensed Soup.

12:53 DV: Condensed Soup.

12:54 LC: [12:54] \_\_\_\_\_. Well, we'll have a theme of the best and worst of pandemic user experience. Who wants to go first?

13:05 CS: I'll start and I'll have a positive... Best, best experience has really been across a lot of different areas where typically in user experience you have this concept of how much a user will put up with, errors that they might put up with before they start to abandon or become dissatisfied. And what I've seen, whether it's at restaurants trying to deal with pick-up or take-out, or apps trying to deal with overload... Instacart not being able to find a pick-up time, I've just seen people be more lenient and more forgiving of poor UX than we would have seen before and that's been a very positive element of trying to get through this time.



13:52 LC: Very good. Derek?

13:55 DV: So it's been fascinating to see how six-foot or two-meter distances and queue patterns, things like that, are communicated non-verbally. So from a psychological perspective humans are extraordinarily bad at estimating where they are relative to other objects in a very big personal space, let alone distances between multiple points including themselves and someone else. So because of this, what I found, absent some peer pressure of everybody doing the same thing, you really need to be explicit in your instructions to ensure safety, because people aren't going to do it necessarily on their own, so signage for example, saying, "Wait here in this spot," is very different than just a few lines of red masking tape on the floor, so I've seen quite a bit of that.

14:45 LC: They should provide everyone with a stick, a six-foot stick and then poke people away.

14:51 DV: Seen the gentleman with the helmet with four pool noodles going in various directions, I thought that was ingenious.

15:02 CS: Genius.

15:05 LC: But mine, mine is a positive one too, which was all this curbside service. I love it, I love it, being able to just order and then go pick up something curbside. I'm not so sure it's been as good recently, but the most part to be able to go to a retail store and just have someone walk up to the car with your... The clothes that you just bought or you turn up at a specified time and just pick up your coffee, that's great, I love that. That's been a great experience, I've really enjoyed it.

15:46 DV: Pulling up to your favorite brewery, popping the trunk and having several pallets be thrown in there for you, two thumbs up.

15:56 CS: Absolutely.

15:56 LC: Yeah, okay, so that's all for now. Thanks for listening, check out our latest user-focused insights on [strategyanalytics.com](https://strategyanalytics.com). Feel free to follow us on LinkedIn or Twitter by visiting our show page at [@UX-soup](https://twitter.com/UX-soup) and please remember to subscribe to UX Soup on your favorite platform where you can rate and review our show. So from all of us here, bye for now.

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