Eller College of Management
The University of Arizona

*MIS 111 Freshman Honors Showcase*

*WorkFlowy*

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Executive Summary

Our application, WorkFlowy, is the new innovative organizational tool that gives users the ability to take effective notes. Designed for simple formatting, WorkFlowy features collapsible tabs, which allow users to easily organize their information. Its interconnectivity ability to collaborate between various devices allows accessibility virtually anywhere. It can also be connected via the Internet for users to share information and collaborate ideas simultaneously. Although WorkFlowy does not have as many customizable tools as its competitors, its basic design allows for ideal user-friendly compatibility. When implemented into an educational environment, WorkFlowy can serve a multitude of student needs. This application aids note taking, exam preparation, and coordinates student engagement.

WorkFlowy is recommended to classroom environments that utilize note-taking tools. Through its connective ability students have the ability to share their notes with each other to help understand course information as a unit instead of individually. Instructors are also encouraged to share their WorkFlowy pages with their students in order to create a student instructor relationship that encourages communication and collaboration. Through its basic design and compatibility with other devices anyone can have the ability to take effective notes. Having this ability can increase student productivity and engagement in any note-taking environment.

It is recommended that WorkFlowy be implemented into classroom environments where students can work together. An ideal course would be Dr. Fountain’s, Linguistics class (LING150). This class is intimate and can utilize WorkFlowy by allowing students to take efficient notes and collaborate with each other. Dr. Fountain is also encouraged to share with her students and view how her students are taking notes and work with her students.

Overall, WorkFlowy is the ideal application for shareable, user-friendly note taking in any setting. Its basic formatting and design allow for unprecedented note taking in an efficient and timely manner. WorkFlowy is the innovation of organizational tools that virtually anyone can learn and utilize.
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Introduction

Our application, WorkFlowy, is the new, innovative organizational tool that gives users the ability to take effective notes. Adapting WorkFlowy into a classroom setting would greatly utilize WorkFlowy’s abilities. Students and instructors can greatly benefit from the use of its simplistic formatting and connective abilities. By recommending WorkFlowy into the classroom, we are hoping to enable students to take more effective notes and increase student understanding of course material. With the introduction of WorkFlowy into student’s lives, it can be utilized in various different ways according to the user.

Market Assessment

I would characterize WorkFlowy’s value proposition as being a note-taking application that provides a simple, direct, and easily manageable solution. Rather than using an application that can provide many different aspects and confuse the user with all the various components, WorkFlowy provides a simple interface that is easily accessible and direct. The ways one can take notes within it, minimizing sections into headers and bullets, and the general lack of visual clutter is a perfect note-taking atmosphere. This provides a screen that allows those using it to be focused and in control of their notes without needing to worry about other options. WorkFlowy’s value proposition is also its sharing aspect. Notes can be shared to others using the application with a few quick actions on-screen. This allows collaboration between groups and makes it easy to provide notes to others. This ability to share is not limited to others using the app, but also allows one to share between devices, a key
component of modern technological applications. Thus, one may have the same notes on their computer, phone, and tablet. This allows one to work on the go, at any time, provided they have a charged device on-hand, which is not difficult in this modern era and is quite often the social norm. Thus, WorkFlowy plays into a modern niche of cross-device compatibility, cross-user compatibility, and simplicity throughout. Rather than a complex app that combines many different aspects into one, making learning and user-friendliness difficult, WorkFlowy plays its strength of being a singularly focused application. This caters to audiences who want only to take notes and create lists on a whim, with little effort involved.

The existing markets for this product are easily identifiable as all areas of education, businesses in general, and any group or individual who is looking to create a list or outline of notes. Schools are a perfect market for this application, as group work is often promoted, especially in universities, and taking notes is an essential part of being successful in classes. Students can easily share notes they take, and create outlines for projects using WorkFlowy, making them an outstanding customer for the application. Not only are students a prime customer in the education field, but instructors are as well. They are able to create a living document, capable of being updated and changed as they wish. This would be a great way to create a class syllabus, which an instructor sharing the document with the entire class. This way, updating assignments, due dates, and class days would be extremely easy, and the teacher would be able to inform the class of changes immediately. For business, groups could collaborate and create outlines for their plan of engagement for the quarter, month, week, etc. This way, a general outline could be composed of the likely
PowerPoint or PDF that businesses normally will present to employees to begin the quarter or fiscal year. Lastly, individuals who are simply seeking a more powerful, alternative application to Notes, Reminders, or the Android equivalent, could use this application to create their lists. Individuals or groups looking to create a shareable list, such as a family for Christmas or an engaged couple, could utilize WorkFlowy's technology as well.

The pricing structure for the product is "freemium". This entails that it is free to use up to a certain point, but further use, or full, holistic use comes from In-App Purchase. This purchase is in the form of a monthly subscription, and provides unlimited creation of lists and items, up from the free "500 items per month", with an item being a single point in a list. The subscription also comes with the ability to change fonts and customize backgrounds, as well as encrypt worksheets with passwords and back up all data permanently to Dropbox. This pricing structure is very typical of modern applications, and mimics the success of popular video games, web-based creation apps, and expensive programs like PhotoShop or coding applications and engines. The subscription costs $4.99 per month, or $49.00 yearly.

**Company Assessment**

WorkFlowy's business strategy so far seems to be subscription based, and word of mouth based. The only way that WorkFlowy makes money so far is through their subscribers. As they do not currently have advertisements, their plan seems to be expanding through word of mouth. They also do not have ads within their application, which is normally how many apps make more money. This means that the
bulk of their revenue has come from a single investment, undisclosed in amount, and from the subscribers they have.

The company’s headquarters are in San Francisco, California. This area is a very well-established tech center, and "Silicon Valley" is basically the technological capital of the world, housing giants such as Facebook and Google, as well as new startups like WorkFlowy. It is a very small company, with an estimated 5-10 employees. The company is currently private, and is not looking to go public any time soon.

**Product Characteristics**

WorkFlowy's important product features are the very aspects of the application that make it what it is. In other words, list-making and outlining are the essential aspects of the application, and also the only aspects of the application. These lists are important, especially to the project at hand, because teachers and students can easily use WorkFlowy to replace their current applications used to create lists and outlines. Because instructors and students create lists very often, WorkFlowy is a perfect tool for them to use, and a school like the University of Arizona is an outstanding target audience to market WorkFlowy to. The lists could help students keep organized, assist teachers in creating assignment instructions and syllabi, and allow close collaboration between groups of students and teachers. To get WorkFlowy's full experience, a Pro account is recommended. With the application's group-paying options, students can afford WorkFlowy more easily, and the University could pay for teacher subscriptions if sold on the idea.
The application is supported by a website run by the vendor which is accessible from a computer. A free mobile application run by the vendor is also available, accessible from a device like a smartphone or a tablet. The vendor has come out with an offline, free version of WorkFlowy, which allows consumers to use WorkFlowy no matter where they are or whether or not they have access to the internet. One must have Google Chrome installed to use this offline version, but that is the only prerequisite. Premium membership is not required to use the offline application, but of course, it is not shareable due to its offline status. Thus, the best way to utilize WorkFlowy's full capacity is online with a membership, or on a mobile device. This ensures that the consumer is able to share their lists through WiFi connection or Internet connection such as LTE on mobile. The lists would not only be shared to other customers of the service but across platforms, allowing one's lists to appear on all devices. Thus, while the app can be locally hosted on one's computer, the best way to use the app's characteristics is to use the online version of it.

As previously mentioned, WorkFlowy is a cross-platform application, and can be used on desktops, laptops, tablets, and phones. It is not brand-exclusive, or operating system exclusive, and can be used on iPhones, iPads, Macs, Androids, and PCs. This allows universality, and really pushes sharing between any devices and any individuals or groups who need to share their lists. By removing any barriers between technological platforms, WorkFlowy is promoting its promise of consistent sharing and collaboration.
Proposed Instructional Activity

The target market for WorkFlowy, the innovative note taking application is towards students of all ages at the University of Arizona. WorkFlowy can be utilized in virtually any classroom where notes are needed. In the University of Arizona, this could be implemented into a multitude of classes, such as various general education classes, English classes, and other language courses. With this adaptable application, there are hundreds of opportunities for WorkFlowy to be used at the University of Arizona alone.

Its simple and user-friendly design allows students to quickly take efficient notes. The bulleted format of WorkFlowy is convenient for students in lectures especially. In lectures, professors often teach information at rapid paces, leaving it difficult for students to keep up with note taking. Bulleting information in WorkFlowy can aid students to write down only the most important information rather than trying to mark down every detail of the lecture. Furthermore, the bullets can be expanded and collapsed, making it easy for students to test themselves on the information as a studying tool. Taking advantage of its easy connectivity, WorkFlowy can also be used for collaboration between students as well. With Wi-Fi or a smartphone, WorkFlowy documents can be connected on various devices. This opens a whole new opportunity for students to share documents and work together on projects through WorkFlowy. For example, if one student misses a lecture, a fellow classmate could easily send his notes on WorkFlowy to the other student.

To evaluate students’ use of WorkFlowy, professors could make it a requirement for students to take notes. With the shareable feature, students could easily send their
notes from lectures to the professor, ensuring that they pay attention and are understanding the material. To make the notes assessment reasonable, it could be a completion grade for intervals of time, such as requiring a notes check once a week. The benefits of WorkFlowy can vary from personal gain to helping an entire classroom better understand concepts. For personal gain, WorkFlowy serves as an individual note-taking tool. Simplicity and bulleting are the advantages of WorkFlowy as opposed to other note-taking sources. For a classroom setting, WorkFlowy can be used for collaborative purposes, allowing students to easily share information. WorkFlowy holds a variety of benefits to any educational setting.

The class that we proposed to adopt this application was called Linguistics 150, a general education course taught by Dr. Amy Fountain. In this course, students are taught “linguistic concepts which includes communication among animals, human speech, phonetics, syntax, language and the brain” (“Tier 1: General Education”). With a lecture and discussion, many notes are necessary for this class. WorkFlowy can assist students to take better, more comprehensible and organized notes. With cleaner notes, students can retain information better, resulting in better comprehension of concepts.

WorkFlowy would be fairly simple to implement into the classroom setting. Since students are already taking notes, professors must simply redirect their notes to a simpler application. This can be used on either smartphone or laptops, and can be used with the campus wide Wi-Fi. WorkFlowy can unify students by requiring each student to use the same application. The only requirement is that students create a free account connected to their email.
WorkFlowy will change note-taking for students through simple formatting and easy organization. By improving the way students take notes, WorkFlowy can help students grasp concepts better and improve student learning.

**Feasibility/ Design Assessment**

**Instructional Assessment**

We interviewed with Dr. Amy Fountain of the University of Arizona Linguistics department. Based on the Interview with our instructor, we received positive feedback on our proposal and application. The feedback received focused on finite details relating to the intellectual property rights concerning the notes being taken and its feasibility for students with disabilities. The instructor’s feedback did change the overall understanding of how the application could be utilized in an educational environment. The feedback also gave us insight on how we might pitch our product to include and address the concerns and complications that we failed to mention in our first pitch.

**Technical Assessment**

Our application Workflowy can be interconnected and synced to multiple devices through internet connection. As a student, completing the requirements to utilize the application would not be difficult as long as there is internet access for your computer to pull up the website. However, if there is no internet connection available, a student has the option to take notes on the Workflowy smartphone app which must be pre-downloaded. Taking notes on the smartphone application while it is not connected to the internet also saves your work automatically and later uploads all your information to all connected devices once it has internet connection. There are software updates that
are offered to run Workflowy at full capacity, and as stated earlier, internet is required for computers but not for the smartphone application. There are no specific software requirements, but it will add to computer capacity which must be taken into consideration.

**Operational Assessment**

Users of Workflowy are able to learn all the features and in and outs of the application through an online tutorial that is provided once you start using it. The tutorial that Workflowy provides includes videos for visual learning of the application along with written instructional information on how to best utilize its features. There are also instructional forums and articles on multiple tech blogs that give information on how to utilize Workflowy.

**Economic Assessment**

Workflowy is free to download and can be used on a cost free basis, however there is a membership that can be bought if users want the ability to add more characters and customizable features. Some more individual costs that also need to be taken into consideration is the cost for wireless internet and data for a user’s computer or smartphone. The individual costs of Workflowy’s memberships are renewed on a monthly or yearly basis with differing plans and costs to add on more compared to the free version. The monthly membership is renewed at five dollars a month while the yearly membership can be purchased for fifty dollars. The membership includes the use of more characters per month and increased customizable features like font styles and coloring.
**Risk Management**

If Workflowy were to discontinue its application, there is nothing stated that user content would be saved. However, being an online application lowers the risk of that happening due to it being a virtual company with less attention needed to run it, compared to that of a physical company with a tangible product. If the application were to be unavailable for an extended period of time the most plausible approach for a user who needs to take down information quickly would be to use one of its competitors like google docs. Since Workflowy’s application is an organizational tool, there are no instructional activities that could be used if it were unavailable.

**Legal/ Regulatory Assessment**

Workflowy’s legal and regulatory assessments are covered in the Workflowy Inc. Privacy Policy. Workflowy requires that all users must give an email and password to register in order to use Workflowy’s full features, although it is mentioned that anyone can use the application without giving any personal information. Being a registered user gives Workflowy information like your name, email address, contact information, and demographic information such as an IP address (“Privacy Policy”). This information gives Workflowy the ability to use the collected information for internal business purposes. Workflowy does not claim any intellectual property from the information that users put into its application. It also does not share, sell, or distribute any information entered into the Workflowy servers, but has the ability to share information under certain circumstances such as taking action regarding illegal activities. The data put into Workflowy is owned by the registered user and is protected by Workflowy’s SSL
encryption, however there is no guarantee that it can be fully protected. Certain portions of information are open to any online viewer; such as lists designated as "public" by the user. Workflowy enables the user to determine whether or not to post personal or sensitive information to these public accessible areas and are not responsible for any personal information in these locations. Workflowy does not have any compliance with ADA for users with disabilities but its simple formatting and design make it extremely user friendly for virtually anyone. Workflowy can offer a variety of benefits to the students at the University of Arizona. Workflowy also has no issues with the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and will not disclose personally identifiable information derived from educational records.

Next Steps/Future Work

After our meeting with Dr. Fountain our team has a devised several steps to continue implementing Workflowy into the educational environment. In order to effectively implement Workflowy into the classroom it is recommended that teachers explain the concept of Workflowy to their students. Understanding the purpose of Workflowy will help students better understand the ways in which they can use it. Instructors should give examples of its use such as, taking notes in class. Since Workflowy is a simple application it is recommended that students experiment with its ability. There is an informational video that is found when you make a new account on Workflowy and it is highly recommended that students watch the video to learn about how to use the application. If planning on using the application to review student notes, the instructor should create an account, which can allow students to share their work. By sharing the documents instructors will be able to review student notes and gather an
understanding of what their students are learning in class. The instructor can then review important aspects of the curriculum that were not included heavily in student notes. This technique will allow instructors to effectively teach and guarantee that students are capturing and understanding important material.

Following our faculty interview, our group decided, based on the feedback, an important next step is to implement WorkFlowy into a smaller class setting. A class setting that is intimate and small can allow for students to better utilize the connective aspects of WorkFlowy. In smaller class students can better share their information and work together. An ideal example would be in a class such as linguistics in which Dr. Fountian teaches. This class could utilize WorkFlowy greatly by having students share their notes with each other. Students would benefit greatly by sharing lists or notes and helping their fellow classmates understand the material. As a professor Dr. Fountian could also connect to her students notes and help collaborate. This application is a perfect resource for students to connect with not only their fellow classmates but also with their instructor. Connecting within all aspects of the class, courses can become more effective by including student instructor thoughts together. By connecting with her students Dr. Fountain can have the ability to break the barriers and connect with her students. This would bring about a better relationship between instructor and their students and allow a form of communication that can be accessed any time and any place with the use of a personal device.
Conclusion

WorkFlow is a zoom-able document that provides unprecedented flexibility in organizing ideas. It has a simple format for organizing information through bullets and is sharable across multiple devices as well as users. Workflowy is the ideal new application for students to take notes. Its simple format and connective ability changes the way notes can be taken. Without the distraction of complex formatting and easily learned by users, Workflowy keeps information efficient and effective. It can enhance student learning by keeping notes organized and highlighting main ideas. Workflowy can change the way students take notes, ultimately resulting in improvement in student learning.
Bibliography


Appendix

Summary of Interview with Dr. Fountain

In our interview with Dr. Fountain, we began by introducing WorkFlowy and discussing its uses. We demonstrated the features of WorkFlowy by creating a sample document and using it through multiple devices. Then we discussed the potential benefits WorkFlowy could pose if implemented into Linguistics 150. WorkFlowy could be utilized in the class as a note taking tool and organizational mechanism to help students further grasp the class concepts.

Dr. Fountain asked various questions and reviewed her concerns before implementing a new technology to her classes. One concern that Dr. Fountain had was if WorkFlowy is ADA accessible. The ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) protects citizens with various disabilities from discrimination in education, providing them equal opportunities. Dr. Fountain asked if students with various disabilities, such as blindness, deafness, or color-blindness, would be able to utilize the application. This poses obstacles in the implementation of WorkFlowy as it may not provide equal opportunities to those with disabilities.

The intellectual property of WorkFlowy and its contents was another concern of Dr. Fountain. Since WorkFlowy is an online database, she asked if the contents of an individual’s document is owned by the individual or WorkFlowy. For example, if an individual typed their ideas, it was a concern if WorkFlowy has the right to use their ideas, since it is typed onto their database. The Privacy Policy in WorkFlowy further discloses the details of one’s rights when using WorkFlowy.
In conclusion, the interview with faculty member Dr. Fountain was interactive and brought up many questions before implementing WorkFlowy in the class. We discussed the potential benefits as well as the legal disadvantages to applying this technology.