Eller College of Management
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MIS 111 Freshman Honors Showcase

ClearSlide

Group 40
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Executive Summary

Working with a group of four, we were assigned a new technology oriented application called ClearSlide. ClearSlide is fundamentally a business marketing application geared for pitching ideas through presentations across the globe with the ease of face-to-face interaction, screen sharing, and conference calling abilities. Its key feature is the tracking tool that allows the presentation to be analyzed by a computer that tells the creator how much time was spent on each slide to aide in the process of enhancing the presentation. The requirement of the project was to figure out a way to apply the application to the classroom in a way that would either enhance learning, increase efficiency, or cut costs. Our use of the application would target the Entrepreneurship department, specifically an MBA program, in which costs were not really an issue but rather efficient online communication from around the world was a key quality. Speaking with the professor, he showed an interest in finding out more information and possibly applying the application to his program.

From this project, we managed to apply business concepts, pitching techniques, and communication skills to pitch an idea much like we will be doing in the future business world. Learning much more than about the application, we were able to develop our skills in all areas of the project that challenged us.
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Introduction

The main reason we carried out this experiment was to see our application, Clear Slide, used in an educational setting. If we are fortunate enough to get our professor to adopt Clear Slide as the main purpose for learning, then we have succeeded as a group in accomplishing our goal. By introducing Clear Slide one classroom at a time, we can transition students to a knew technology that could possibly one day be used in all classrooms. ClearSlide is an all comprehensive presentation application that allow users to pitch their ideas. These ideas can be pitched in many different ways with different media. If students can learn to efficiently use this app, it can help our professors make the teaching material and classroom more engaging and useful for each individual.

Product Assessment / Overview

When examining ClearSlide a viewer may think that this is just another presentation application and why choose this one over any other? Why is ClearSlide better the Microsoft PowerPoint or Prezi or any other presentation product. The reason is because ClearSlide is not just a simplistic presentation application. ClearSlide is an all comprehensive presentation application that provides its users with a multitude of unique features, uncharacteristic of a normal presentation application that allows the user to not just create a presentation, but create success.

There are a multitude of features that make ClearSlide has, but the ones that characterize its value proposition and the ones that make it unique are its cohesiveness, accessibility, and its tracking capabilities. ClearSlide can be categorized as a
combination of three major applications all into one. These three applications include Microsoft PowerPoint, Panopto, and Skype. One can make a presentation with all of the features and more that PowerPoint has, and can also present this creation through ClearSlide’s video conference to anywhere in the world, just like Skype. If the user does not want to have a video chat with a client, he or she can record a presentation that they would give as if they were in person or on a video chat and send that recording along with their presentation they created, just like the program Panopto. All these highly successfully innovations are what allow ClearSlide to be so accessible and present information in a multitude of different ways.

In addition to being cohesive and accessible, one of the most impressive and attractive attributes of ClearSlide is that it contains the ability to track your presentation wherever it travels. ClearSlide has a unique feature that will sends you alerts when the presentation that you have sent someone has been forwarded, providing visibility into how the content is diffusing throughout the possible organization a user of ClearSlide may pitch their idea to. In addition, ClearSlide also tracks how long each viewer of your presentation spends on each individual slide.

Another aspect that makes ClearSlide unique is that is has the capability to create accountability and security for a user’s presentations. When creating a presentation one can create a password so that only people that they desire to see their presentation can. ClearSlide also gives its users the ability to see when people check in to watch a live presentation. ClearSlide will send the owner of the presentation an alert when someone has joined so that they know they are in attendance for the presentation.
Now, switching gears and examining where ClearSlide could be implemented is a little simpler. After viewing the abilities and benefits of ClearSlide, our group determined that the most effective implantation of this application would be to education, and specifically entrepreneurship courses. The reason that entrepreneurship courses would be benefited by ClearSlide is because it contains everything an Entrepreneurship could want to create a presentation, they can track where it goes and also what is viewed in their presentation and for how long, and lastly, with ClearSlide effective capability to present from remote locations, college entrepreneurship students do not have to spend any money traveling to pitch their idea.

Students save thousands of dollars on plane flights and hotels that they would have been purchasing if they had to pitch their idea in person. ClearSlide allows them to pitch it remotely, even from their own house if they please, for no cost of travel. ClearSlide though, has a much smaller fee then the cost of a plane. ClearSlide is available for a cost of $69 a month, which could possibly be covered by the university or a course fee which will be discussed later.

Next, taking a step back from ClearSlide the product, Clear Slide the company will be examined and information about the actual company ClearSlide and its employees will be provided. To begin, ClearSlide is a private company, not a public company, so it does not have stock. The company was first founded in 2009 and in San Francisco, California and since they have expanded their offices to New York City and Seattle (NCA2010 Accreditation | Office of the Executive Vice President & Provost). They employee roughly three hundred people and the Co-Founders/Chief Business Officers and Directors are Al Lieb and Jim Benton (Al Lieb). Their company ClearSlide
ClearSlide - The all comprehensive business presentation program

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has received millions of dollars in funding and they plan to make their profit through
costumers’ subscriptions to ClearSlide.

These consumers receive their subscription by going on to the ClearSlide
website and creating an account, and just to try it out there is a free trial available for all
users. Once creating an account, the user can log in and start creating their
presentation. He or she does not have to download any software, it is created all on the
ClearSlide website. Since this is all over the internet, ClearSlide is compatible with both
PC’s, Macs, IPhones, Androids, and more.
Proposed instructional Activity

ClearSlide’s presentation techniques allow for people to connect all over the world. Applying its convenient face to face contact and advanced tracking of where people are in the slideshow or presentation allow for the instructor in the case of the Entrepreneurship MBA program and customer to be guided through the slideshow while all of their questions or concerns are answered. This product will be two sided in the sense that it can be used in the classroom for the instructor to be able to develop the students as entrepreneurs as well as future professionals who will be using the application to market their own products or their company’s products. Using the application in the classroom will benefit the Instructor’s ability to strengthen the areas of his presentation that the students spent the most time on as well as to familiarize the students with the programs effective tools integrated into all of Clearslide’s utilities.

As an instructional tool, Clearslide is available as an emailed document as well as a web hosted live video that can be accessed from anywhere around the world with the help of an internet source. Students who may not be able to attend a classroom setting would benefit from the live services that don’t require attendance to view the presentation. Students could be enrolled in this program around the world and be able to interact with the professor on a face to face basis or even just view the instructional content through the web hosted services that ClearSlide has to offer. In addition to the accessibility of the content, if students would like personal time or one on one time with the instructor, it can be facilitated through ClearSlide. Another great tool that the application combines with its video chatting, is its ability to add audio and video notes to slides of the presentation to emphasize details or any other effects that the instructor
would like to make a personal note of for the benefit of the students. Conference calls between the instructor and other students are another advantage of ClearSlide. Being able to discuss details about projects, assignments, etc. are a huge value to students who do not necessarily have a classroom setting in which they would normally be able to ask questions. Overall, ClearSlide is a valuable opportunity for students to be in an online course but still maintain all of the benefits, opportunities, and advantages of an in-class environment while being on the go, or studying around the world.

Beginning with a trial period of a month, ClearSlide would be used intermittently to compare results with the traditional online class presentation of lectures, content, etc. with the results of using in my opinion the more effective program, ClearSlide. Adding this product to the Entrepreneurship MBA program will add accessibility to anyone around the world who would wish to enroll in this course. The instructor of the course would be able to track every students’ progress on the presentations as well as where they spent the most time. Because of this, the instructor would be able to exploit the weak points of each slideshow presentation and spend more time with students who have “weak” or poor scores on certain sections of the presentation. Assessments will still have to be done using D2L or another source, but in general, ClearSlide will serve as the part of the class where content and everything else is shared between students. Although students would not be more likely to retain the material, their test scores would almost certainly improve because of the instructor’s ability to go over the parts of the presentation that students find themselves having trouble.

ClearSlide will serve as a modified online class option that will integrate all parts of an in-class environment into an online class available to students around the world.
Feasibility / Design assessment

ClearSlide is the ultimate business tool if it utilized properly and in the correct setting; not all businesses or groups are able to take advantage of all that ClearSlide has to offer. To test if this application would be applicable in an academic setting our group proposed the likelihood of ClearSlide being incorporated to Professor Carlos J. Alsua’s entrepreneurship class. Professor Alsua has a Ph.D. in Business Administration (Management), and teaches *Entrepreneurship 485 Innovating: Creating the future*. His expertise includes global entrepreneurship and innovation, cross cultural management, global leadership, global ethics, positive psychology, motivation in an international context, and implementation of managerial practices in developing economies. After reviewing his profile and getting some background knowledge on his class it was decided that one could effectively use all aspects of ClearSlide in his class.

After presenting our elevator pitch to Professor Alsua, he was definitely interested in integrating this type of application into his class. Due to the application being able to incorporate all types of presentation platforms (Word, PowerPoint, Live-Pitch, pre-recorded pitch, etc.), in addition to being targeted towards business marketing, he believes it would be very useful in his class. He noted that since he targets a global entrepreneurship setting, the ability to live-pitch and share screens would create a very cost and time-efficient aspect to his class. Since the students are mainly seniors in Eller, they are held to a higher standard for their projects which can involve them to travel and perform real or mock meetings. Luckily, the ability to meet via-video chat helps students focus more on how to present themselves and create a solid pitch rather than finding time meet to up with who they are conferencing with and
organizing travel accommodations. Professor Alsua was also drawn into the fact that the students would be able to monitor everything about their presentations. For example, they can see how much time was spent on a slide or who else the presentation was sent to. The students would have full control and could use all the data that ClearSlide collects for them to improve their marketing skills.

ClearSlide is an easily accessible application, as long as there is an internet connection available. Although this can be seen as a drawback, this network-based application allows presentations to be accessed all over the world. ClearSlide is mainly based on their website, https://www.clearslide.com/, but there are also applications available for all iOS and Android devices. In addition, the ClearSlide Presenter app for iOS devices allows for presentations to be downloaded for use during offline meetings. This application would prove to be a step ahead in the case that no Wi-Fi is available. ClearSlide will run with any properly with any computer, however, one with a webcam is preferred to utilize the live-pitch feature. In order for a student to get the most out of ClearSlide, they should be aware of everything that it has to offer.

If one was thrown in blind into the world of ClearSlide, it can be very confusing and they probably would not know what to do. However, there are many different routes students can use to learn about all that ClearSlide has to offer. For starters, college students are some of the best problem solvers, so a little messing around here and there and they can basically figure out how to use the application on their own. This is not the case for everyone though, and they could be be missing out on some features that they have not discovered on their own. Another option available to students is the 24/7 support offered from ClearSlide. Their support team is really helpful and they
respond promptly. They have demo videos available that highlights some of their key features. There are also many online presentations that can be referenced for help. For a decent sized lecture held by Professor Alsua, it most likely would be beneficial to hold in-class trainings or even an online tutorial. This could even be done using ClearSlide and Professor Alsua could monitor which features students are having trouble grasping. It is true that ClearSlide can be confusing at first, but after some practice one will realize how intuitive the application really is.

The biggest obstacle that can be seen with getting ClearSlide involved in a classroom setting would be the price. The price listed for their services is about $70/month. After a couple months this can be seen as quite a financial burden to a student but it is possible that the pros outweigh the cons. After discussing this issue with Professor Alsua, he noted that in some of these upper-level classes you can expect to see additional charges tacked onto a course in order to utilize certain services. It is possible for the University to place this fee on top of the course and students could choose to take the course if they would like. To get around this fee, students on financial aid could apply for a fee-waiver so their options for classes won’t be limited simply because they cannot afford to take the class. In addition, there is potential for the University to strike a deal with ClearSlide that could lower the monthly prices if a certain amount of students apply for accounts. Due to ClearSlide assigning an account to entire businesses and separate accounts are based off that main group, the actual cost per person can vary depending on how the business/university decides to handle this financial situation.
In the event that ClearSlide decides to put a stop to their services and shut down the company, not all would be lost. In essence, ClearSlide makes business marketing a way easier job and cuts planning time down significantly by combining all of the already-available presentation platforms. If it ever comes to that point that ClearSlide is no longer a thing, one will just have to redirect to another application that has similar traits to that of ClearSlide, or they will have to go old fashioned and present their pitches on a singular program. It would not be a total loss, however, it would heavily set back a company that relied on ClearSlide to combine all of the different programs and provide analytical data of the different pieces of information that was viewed.

ClearSlide has a pretty strict privacy policy, seeing as thought it collects so much data. In their Privacy section of their website they disclose that they encrypt all of the information using secure socket layer technology. They do not share your information at all and will definitely not sell it to anyone. The information is kept strictly within the companies secured servers, but on the occasion that it needs to share your information with a third-party ClearSlide service to assist in customer service, it will, with the customer’s consent. They claim to collect information only to help advance their Customer Service and make it the best they can. By request, customers are allowed to view all of the information collected by ClearSlide and they can also ask for their information to be removed from ClearSlide’s servers. ClearSlide should pass FERPA protocol and basic Privacy/Intellectual property standards. Unfortunately, ClearSlide makes no claims to support ADA standards and there seems to not be any accommodations for any with visual, hearing, motor or cognitive learning disabilities.
Next Steps / Future work

One barrier that stands in the way of implementing our project is the price of Clear Slide. Clear slide charges a monthly fee for each account, which may be difficult for some students to pay. So we believe the first action in the order of business is either try and find a way to make a deal with Clear Slide, or just add the price of the application into the cost of the class. Since there are many aspects of Clear Slide, for it to serve its’ purpose students must know how to work it. That is why we think there should be a seminar or something similar to make sure the users of the app know how to use all parts and features. Along with students being encouraged to go, the professors must be experts on this app to reach its’ full potential.

Conclusion

Clear Slide is a multi-purpose presentation application that can be used for many different objectives. It provides many different services including screen sharing, recording viewer observation time, instant slideshow viewing, along with many other characteristics. Professor’s can also see how much time each individual students looks at the different parts of a slideshow. This can help determine which area of the learning material is giving the class the most trouble. Clear Slide is the combination of many of the biggest apps including Skype and Google Docs. Whether it is an online class or the professor has to leave town, Clear Slide can provide immediate connection between the students and the professor. In addition, ClearSlide can be specifically implemented into a classroom setting by having the professor use the tracking ability to see how long students spend on presentations. This ability would allow the professor to see if students are actually looking at the presentation or just skipping through.
The tracking feature would also show the professor what aspects of the presentation were potentially difficult if a large amount of time was spent on a slide. The application can help serve as the main service for learning in an online class, or to provide study guides for large lectures. Regardless of the purpose Clear Slide is being put to, it can help connect and provide learning material to many students.
Bibliography


Appendix

After consulting Professor Alsua about incorporating ClearSlide into his Entrepreneurship 485 class, we received nothing but positive feedback from him. He was amazed by how advanced ClearSlide easy and how easily accessible the application is. Seeing as though anyone would be able to access his presentations from any device with an internet connection, and the capability of the offline mode, he saw no problem with it. We had also discussed the potential price barrier with ClearSlide and he said that $70/month is not a very high cost for some of these upper division classes, especially for an application that they would use on a daily basis. Not only would Professor Alsua be able to monitor and track his students, but his students would be able to create amazing pitches and present them from the comfort of anywhere that they please. Students would not have to worry about scheduling a meeting and planning out travel accommodations to pitch ideas to a business when they could be just as effective in their own office. Overall Professor Alsua said that ClearSlide saves time and money, it’s efficient, easy to use, and would be the ultimate addition to his classroom.