MIS 111 Freshman Honors Showcase
Memloom: Engage Through Storytelling

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Fall 2015
Executive Summary

As a team, we were assigned to investigate the product of Memloom, an online scrapbook that serves as a template for one to tell his or her stories. This platform removes the hassle of dealing with and organizing a physical scrapbook susceptible to damage, being lost, and an inconveniently long process to create. In addition, Memloom offers features one couldn’t normally have in a basic scrapbook; an individual has the power to incorporate more than just regular pictures, for example they can add videos, recordings, music, and ambient noises. While the site only offers pre-made templates, one can customize their template to suit their personal preferences. The font, color, and theme all have the ability to be altered to their creators likings, resulting in a unique storyboard with every creation.

Memloom is easy to use and free to all users as of now. As it is a fairly new company, originating in 2014, it hasn’t begun to reap a profit. Although, the company plans to introduce premium features that would allow an individual to surpass the normal limit of fifteen story blocks, have the ability to order a hard copy of one’s Memloom story to be shipped to them, and more. The premium subscription to these exclusive features is not expected to be expensive; rather they are targeting their price towards the value their current users would place on having access to more elements in their story making process. Businesses are utilizing Memloom to promote their products as well as connect with their customers through sharing their stories of how they started, their goals, etc. This method of gaining a personal connection with their customers is helping the businesses gain traction.

When considering where to apply Memloom within the University of Arizona campus, we discovered a honors course offered to freshman taught by Professor Charles Bertsch, Honors Quest: Telling Our Stories, Retelling Ourselves. The objective of the class is to share significant moments, memories, and experiences in one’s life that have ultimately made each student who they are today. As we spoke to Professor Bertsch about our product, we proposed that he use Memloom within his final project for students to compile their stories in a manner they can present that still allows creativity and a mode for students to reflect on their life-stories. Professor Bertsch was exceedingly enthusiastic about our introduction of Memloom to him, finding it not only very applicable to his class but also easily adaptable and beneficial to his classroom motives.

The most valuable aspect concerning integrating Memloom into a classroom environment is its sharing capabilities. While one has the power to share a public link, post their story to Facebook, or embed it within a blog there is also the ability to keep stories as private as one wishes. Professor Bertsch truly appreciated keeping a safe environment for his students to share their stories, only making them available to themselves, classmates and teacher through a private gallery created within Memloom.

Memloom is a simple, self-explanatory, and easily adaptable product. It is useful for people of all ages wanting to preserve their memories and have the ability to share them with whomever they wish. Memloom poses as a valuable product for business and personal use, but through this project it can also been seen as advantageous in the educational field.
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Introduction

Memloom is a virtual platform that allows its users to connect with one another through the tradition of storytelling. The platform grants users the ability to take content from a variety of digital sources including trending forms of social media, such as Facebook, and create a unique storyboard. This product ups the game of traditional storytelling with its varying functions allowing for the incorporation of multiple forms of media including: text, pictures, video, audio, and more. Fortunately, Memloom is free and easily accessible only needing Internet access for its usage, making the product’s adaptation effortless so users can better share their stories and connect with one another in a new way that adds unique dimensions to their storytelling process which will better grasp listeners.

Product Assessment & Overview

The product Memloom has a value proposition that deals with enhancing the story someone can tell through technology and social media. Memloom allows users to express their stories in a more authentic and passionate way by engaging audiences in a novel, unique way. The current market for Memloom contains those who wish to create a scrapbook or tell a story digitally. This market is a broad one that allows anyone to have access and use the product with simply a technological device with Internet access. The current customer that this product targets extends beyond the basic purpose of creating a digital story to share with others. Memloom also targets business as a form of advertising and connecting customers with this business. While
Memloom has a wide range of customers, their overall target is anyone who has a story or information that they want to share in an innovative and creative way. For example, Memloom showcases the story of Carolyn Cassin and her roots as a girl scout, growing to be a community leader (see figure 2). Education is not yet a market that Memloom directly targets, however individuals can use Memloom in education to enhance projects, storytelling, or other information. To use Memloom there is no initial cost. The basic Memloom usage and features can be used by anyone who can reach the website and create an account. While this has no cost, Memloom plans to incorporate costs into the product for premium features.

Memloom currently has a business strategy of trying to advertise their product. Since this is a new company with a new product, their initial strategy is to introduce Memloom to as many people as possible and create a foundation of supportive customers who place value on their product. While their product is free as of present, Memloom considers themselves as “freemium.” This entails that only a small portion of the product can be accessed without a premium subscription. The free version of Memloom restricts the number of stories and the contented that can be stored. Memloom also plans to incorporate a “hard copy” of a story that can be shipped as an option in the future. Memloom is a new company that is just starting up and gaining momentum. This,
in some cases, makes the business appeal to others in terms of being in a position for a buyout. Bigger companies may view the concept behind Memloom as an opportunity to create an addition to their own original product line. Memloom is a private company that currently only has 6 employees. These employees are the driving force of the company, striving to market Memloom to the correct audience in order to expand their product. Memloom’s is based out of Ferndale, Michigan and was founded in January of 2012.

Memloom provides various features of storytelling that can enhance the way the information is presented. These features of creating a more realistic storytelling experience with technology are what we valued in using this product as part of our project. Incorporating Memloom into education could be extremely beneficial in numerous ways. In regards to our project, the visual and audio features that Memloom provides are what make Memloom such a great fit. This product can be incorporated into education specifically involving the experience of telling and sharing a personal story with a class. This product acts as a whole new platform for engaging with one’s audience in the storytelling process. Memloom’s product is delivered through their website. Solely a technological device with Internet access is required in order to use the Memloom’s storytelling device. Personal computers (PC) and Mac’s are both supported forms of access for using Memloom. Once a user has a finished product within Memloom, they are able to utilize forms of social media, including Facebook, to publicly or privately share their story (see figure 3).
**Proposed Instructional Activity**

For our product, the market that would most benefit from using Memloom would be students who are in classes where telling stories is required, people wanting to share their personal stories with others via social media, or people who want to make a scrapbook without the hassle of having to deal with physical elements such as pictures, books, stickers, etc. Both upper and lower division classes could use this product, although it may be difficult to use in group situations because only one person can work on it at a time, in addition to everyone having to use the same username and password. One could, however, share their own project easily with teachers and other students using the social media-sharing feature that Memloom offers. So an online class could use this and the students wouldn't have to actually meet, they could simply share their projects with each other via social media. Any class could use this for a presentation, as long as the assignment entailed telling a story about basically anything.

If a class was based off of telling ones story, the instructor of the class could make his or her own Memloom story and show it to the class as an example. Then the students could make their own stories and share them with the teacher and their peers. That class that we chose, Honors Quest: Telling Our Stories, Retelling Ourselves, we are proposing to have a final project in place of a final that consists of putting together all the stories that make you who you are today. Each slide on Memloom could be a different story and a student could incorporate music, pictures, videos, and recordings to help everyone truly understand their personal story. The grade would basically consist of how well the students are able to tie together their life story and if they were able to use every aspect of Memloom. So the criteria would include using visual effects,
such as pictures and videos, and a certain number of stories. The students could use their artistic license if they wanted to add anything else into the project. Because it is their own personal story, the projects would not be graded too harshly, and if all the criteria were fulfilled, they should receive full credit.

The Honors Quest: Telling Our Stories, Retelling Ourselves course is basically trying to find yourself and figuring out who you are through the use of stories. Freshman year in college can be a confusing time for a lot of people and this class tries to help people find their personal path. Therefore, having this project could tie the entire class together. The students could really find out who they are when they look back on all the stories from their past, picking out the important ones that have dramatically contributed to making them the person they are today. If the instructor adapted the product, the students would be able to share their stories with each other outside of class and keep their projects forever. The whole class is focused on discovering who you are as an independent individual, getting a fuller understanding of yourself. Our proposal of utilizing Memloom through this final project would enhance each student’s process of expressing his or her stories creatively in a novel, yet personally distinct way. The students could piece together the stories and experiences they have expressed throughout the semester, combining the strongest events that have contributed to who they are today as their final presentation. It would give the students a clear understanding of themselves because they will have to spend time on this project, reflecting through all their stories, memories, and events they have spoken about throughout the class.
The students already talk about their stories in class, but the final project that we are proposing is a new activity. Currently the new project is just to sum up your life story however you would like. We are proposing a more organized way of doing this, through using Memloom as their form of expressing their life-story. If all the students used Memloom it would allow Professor Bertsch to focus on the student’s presentation rather than grading, since he will have the ability to later go back to the student’s project on the Memloom sharing gallery in order to grade and look back through their project. The students would also have the ability look at each other’s stories if they were not in class that day or share them with friends and family if they wish to do so. Despite this being a final project, the whole basis of this project is reflecting on one’s life experiences that have made them who they are today; what’s unique about using Memloom is that it’s a source to preserve your memories/stories – therefore, in four years when one graduate’s from college they’ll be able to return to Memloom and see how much they have grown from their freshman year. Memloom helps form an important keepsake if the creator chooses to put forth the effort in creating a story worth revisiting.

Feasibility / Design Assessment

As a storytelling device, we chose to interview Mr. Charles Bertsch who is the professor of Honors Quest: Telling Our Stories, Retelling Ourselves class provided for University of Arizona Honors College students. Overall, Professor Bertsch provided extremely positive feedback towards the application of Memloom to his class and its benefit in rounding out the class’s purpose. He agreed that the utilization of Memloom was highly applicable to his classroom goals, appropriate with the course material, and ultimately would add a more creative aspect for students to share their work.
When presenting our product to Professor Bertsch, the element of Memloom that was invaluable to him and his classroom goals was the fact that he would be able to create a safe space for his students to create and share their stories. He made it known that he wishes to create an open environment for students to reflect as deeply as they please, hence why he feared Memloom would open the student’s stories to public eyes. Although, when we informed Professor Bertsch that through Memloom one is able to create a gallery only shared with specific friends that is not publicly available to anyone not exclusively invited to participate and view in the gallery he was thrilled. This detail of our product is what took Professor Bertsch to seriously consider implementing Memloom into his classroom.

In addition, when proposing the usage of Memloom to Professor Bertsch it was essential that we emphasized how technically accessible this product is for students. All that is necessary would be a technological device (i.e. a desktop computer, laptop, iPad, etc.) with Internet access to work with Memloom. No specific requirements or new software must be installed on a student’s computer in order to use this product, hence why integrating Memloom into the course requirements wouldn’t pose as a challenge for students.

Approaching Memloom is simple when it comes to its operation, design and accessibility. The layout and process of learning how to use this product is for the most part self-explanatory (see figure 4). A student would be able to teach themselves, on their own time, without a
teacher’s help on discovering how to use Memloom and apply it to the class’s objective. It would be beneficial for the teacher to have an in-class tutorial on accessing and utilizing Memloom, although it wouldn’t be necessary for a smooth integration of the product into the class motives.

Economically, Memloom comes with no cost for the students, instructor, or institution for its basic level usage, which is all that is needed for the product’s main services to be provided. Later in time Memloom will provide additional premium features that will be offered to users that are willing to pay a nominal fee. Therefore, the usage of Memloom that we are proposing for this Honors course would not be affected as there is no cost for acquiring the product, using the product at the level which would be required, in addition to no licensing rights or individual costs for other features such as software or hardware that would be necessary.

Taking into consideration the possibility of Memloom going out of business, other options do offer similar services such as Memloom. PowerPoint, Prezi, a hard copy scrapbook, or other virtual scrapbooking products could carry out the needs of putting together a visual storyline as required for the class we are proposing the product for. Unfortunately, if the site is unavailable for a certain period of time one isn’t able to save their story to their own computer. Currently, Memloom doesn’t support export or advance printing support, although with the future nominal fees for users these services are planned to be included.

Memloom, as used in the context for the proposed activity within the Honors Quest: Telling Our Stories, Retelling Ourselves class, holds no legal or regulatory requirements that the university that would need to met in order for the product to be
adopted into the class. Concerning the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Memloom doesn’t release any information considered to be a part of a student’s official “educational record” (Why Accessible?). Any information that is provided through a student’s Memloom project is strictly voluntarily included based off of a student’s desire to share what they choose. Provided that the University of Arizona’s classes must be accessible through the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504/508, the integration on Memloom into this class would create somewhat of a barrier for students suffering from either a hearing or visual disability because of their limited experience in the sharing and making of others and their own story. Therefore, an accommodation might be necessary for those with such disabilities in order for them to fulfill the class activity in a separate way. Lastly, Memloom requires an individual’s first name, last name, and email or it offers the ability to connect through one’s personal Facebook user information when creating an account. Giving this website access to one’s personal information through Facebook is not required and can be avoided, hence why Memloom fails to be in conflict with any student’s expectation of privacy. There are no required postings, email solicitations, or potential loss of intellectual property when creating an account through Memloom.

**Future Work**

After interviewing the University of Arizona faculty member, Professor Charles Bertsch, about the possible implementation of Memloom within his class, the next step that should be taken is to briefly provide information about Memloom to his students within a seminar or link on D2L. This product being free, easy to use, and very accessible, along with its many applicable features, makes it a viable and intriguing
product for students to use within professor Bertsch’s Honor Quest class. We find it important that the student’s value the product as much as the teacher, and find it applicable to the class; hence, it would be beneficial to present the product to the student’s and receive their feedback on the utilization of Memloom within their class.

Taking into consideration the possibility of implementing Memloom across campus in various different areas of the university, the future steps that need to be taken would be researching what fields would especially benefit from the introduction of Memloom and taking our product to these field’s directors, getting their feedback, and putting forth the effort and drive needed to advance Memloom throughout these areas. Since Memloom is still a blooming business on a small scale, we feel information sessions provided to faculty and students as well as grass-roots student adoption would best widen the scope of usage of Memloom across campus.

**Conclusion**

The free and easily accessible digital storyboard, Memloom, is a vibrant way for its users to share their stories. Memloom’s platform incorporates text, pictures, videos, audio, and more to present stories in unique, captivating way for both its creator and viewers. Everyone with a device that has Internet accessibility can create a free account and have access to Memloom’s many features. Conveniently, Memloom stores all of its users creations on each user’s personal online account, making a simple and easy means of sharing one’s final product through Memloom itself, email, or multiple forms of social media. Not only does this pose as valuable to businesses and everyday individuals wanting to express and share their story, it is also an innovative product for students and teachers in an educational environment. This gives students a captivating
way to express a story and allows for teachers to easily group projects together for easy access, just as proposed for the University of Arizona’s Honors Quest: Telling Our Stories, Retelling Ourselves course. Overall, Memloom is a very adaptable product in a home or educational setting, simple in its design, easily accessible, and novel in its form of expressing an individual’s story in their own personal way.
Bibliography


Appendix A

*Faculty Interview*

As a team, we met with Professor Charles Bertsch who teaches the Honors Quest: Telling Our Stories, Retelling Ourselves course provided to Honors freshman students at the University of Arizona. When pitching our product, Memloom, we emphasized its simplistic design, the ability to share one’s final product, and how easily accessible it is for students. We gained a prior idea of what Professor Bertsch’s class entailed from a student in his class, therefore we were able to angle our ideas and concept of Memloom’s integration more specifically towards his class motives. Overall, Professor Bertsch was extremely pleased and excited about being introduced to a new idea and product that has the capability of engaging his students. No negative feedback was received, his biggest concern regarded Memloom being online and the possibility of the public gaining access to his student’s work. Although, we reassured him that through Memloom, users have the power to limit who is able to access their stories and he has the power to create a gallery of stories from his students that only himself and his students have access to. This detail is what truly enthused Professor Bertsch to the point in which he is truly considering integrating Memloom into his classroom, even as a final project as we had suggested.