Eller College of Management
The University of Arizona

MIS111 Freshman Honors Showcase

Piktochart: An Engaging Tool for Success
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Executive Summary

Piktochart is a fantastic tool for any classroom that values learning by creating. It’s easy to use, simple, yet innovative and a great way to get students engaged with the material, while allowing their individual creativity to be exposed. Piktochart’s various templates for posters, presentations, reports, and infographics can be used as a starting point, or a student may decide to start with a blank slate. Either way, it can be assured that the finished product will be clean and engaging.

As a whole, Piktochart is useful for a variety of fields or projects. One can make a creative resume, eye catching poster, or inspirational presentation however they wish for a variety of reasons. In terms of University of Arizona classes, environmental science courses seemed to be the best bet. Not only because there are statistics involved that can utilize the unique formats of Piktocharts graphics, but also because the icons and images for such a broad science can be easily found so the information can be made to be more easily understood. An infographic detailing the white tiger or the effect of climate change on a particular region can be done and students develop a deeper correlation between the topic they are researching and what they are learning in class through the imagery essential to the project.

Since Piktochart is an online application, it can be accessed by all students at the University of Arizona due to their access to computer technology. While issues may arise in color blind students or students with a severe motor disability, it is highly adaptive and can be used by nearly everyone. The controls are in colors that all people can see and those that cannot see some of the colors of the graphics Piktochart has premade can select other options in case they do not want to risk clashing. Most applications as it is do not serve those with motor disabilities, but making this a group project would be a great way to ensure that they are not excluded from such a project. For the most part, Piktochart is free, but a majority of the templates do require higher memberships. However, the students being able to create a template of their own makes the project seem more like theirs and not someone else’s that they just put their information into.

When building the structure to the infographic, poster, or whatever else one is trying to make in Piktochart, so much is left to the imagination. If it is a little more difficult for a student to get started on such a project and none of the inline templates appeal to them, they can go online and get ideas from others about how to lay it out and even where to start. They can customize it in their own ways, make it truly theirs, while being able to have fun with a project instead of writing x-amount of words to describe why environmental awareness is important. Implementing this into the classroom can even be effective in relaying information in teacher presentations, test reports, and rubrics so that students can visualize and have a mental image of what needs to be put into their paper or the key concepts that they must understand for the upcoming test. Creating this mental image results not just in better memory but in this case, better performance from their students because they have a better understanding of what is expected of them.

For teachers wanting to engage students with more creative outlets, Piktochart is a great application. It has various options for any project and has creative tools for students to expand their ways of thinking about a particular subject, as well as immerse them into different ways of thinking. All in all, Piktochart is a unique way to fester a greater interest in learning and gain a more in depth knowledge of the class.
Table of Contents

Introduction .......... 1

Market Assessment .......... 2

Company Assessment .......... 5

Product Characteristics .......... 6

Proposed Instructional Activity .......... 7

Design Assessment .......... 8

Legal Assessment .......... 9

Next Steps .......... 10

Conclusion .......... 11

Bibliography .......... 13

Appendix .......... 12
Table of Figures

Piktochart Advertisement .......... 1

Piktochart Logo .......... 10
Introduction

If Piktochart is adopted into an environmental science classroom, a tremendous impact can be had on the students’ learning capabilities. A creative outlet can be used to allow the students’ growth and make any project more enjoyable for the students to do, and the teacher to grade. By using this application, a teacher can improve the retention of course material while getting a class to be closer together if they were to make it into a group assignment. However, even individually a better understanding of and interest in the course material can be the difference in a letter grade. Engaging the students is the best way to familiarize them to what is really important and the knowledge they should take out of their class beyond the basic knowledge presented. The critical thinking skills and individuality gained from college is what future employers are looking for, and such assignments are what make college classes so different from those in high school, and what makes them so valuable.
Market Assessment

Rivalry Among Existing Competitors:

Piktochart is just one of many online infographic applications available to today’s students and professionals. Three of Piktochart’s most comparable competitors are Visually, Vengage, and Easelly.

Visually is a professional grade infographic generator employed by many well-known companies such as Visa and Twitter (“Visually”). Arguably the most attractive feature of Visually is the fact that almost every aspect of its product is supported by human experts. Every part of a prospective design project is handled by a professional and submitted to the customer for review. This means that those with no graphic design experience can rely on a truly professional product. The quality provided by Visually comes at a price, however, as infographics start at $2,500 (“Visually”). This means that Piktochart has an advantage over Visually in terms of price (even Piktochart’s Pro accounts cost only $29 a month), but that Visually has an advantage over Piktochart in terms of price as Visually provides access to trained professionals (“Piktochart Infographics”).

Venngage is built on a model very similar to Piktochart in that users have the option to create a free account for the creation of infographics right in their web browser. The major drawback to Venngage is that users are unable to download their creations without having a Premium account. This gives Piktochart an advantage over Venngage as users have the ability to distribute their infographics as printouts and PDFs at no extra cost (Cleary, Ian).

Easelly differs from the previously discussed infographic generators in that it does not require user to create an account in order to produce infographics online. However, Easelly only
provides 15 templates or the ability to work from a blank page and only allows infographics to be exported as .JPG images. Easelly has an advantage over Piktochart as the lack of a need for an account caters to users with privacy concerns, while Piktochart has an advantage over Easelly in that it provides significantly more templates and file export options.

Threat of Substitutes:

Substitutes to online infographic generators include Adobe Photoshop and other graphic design software. This sort of software generally requires some level of design expertise and is therefore not a serious competitive threat in an educational setting outside of studies in art or design. Specifically, this type of software would not be a fitting substitute for the creation of infographics in an environmental science course as both the instructor and students wish to simply communicate and share information and the time required to become proficient with professional software would greatly take away from time that could be spent on course material.

Bargaining Power of Customers:

Because most of the infographic generators in this market are provided to customers for free (this is especially true for educational institutions as both Piktochart and Venngage provide special educational packages), customers have a very large incentive to simply choose the generator that provides the most features. This means that each company possesses advantages and disadvantages when compared to the others for the same reasons that each company has advantages and disadvantages in terms of internal completion.

Threat of new entry:
The threat of new entry into this market is relatively low as several barriers to entry exist for a potentially competitive firm. For example, the overhead to start such a firm would be considerable as developers and development platforms would need to be paid for to generate the software and a large amount of servers would need to store and proliferate the software.

Bargaining power of suppliers:

The bargaining power of suppliers in this market is moderately high. This is because of the fact that an online infographic company must hire both software developers and graphic designers. Both of these types of employee possess a relatively specialized skill and therefore the power to negotiate their wages to a certain degree. Aside from these employees, however, the suppliers in this market have a rather small amount of bargaining power as the office buildings and computer hardware also necessary for such a company are relatively generic products in today’s world.

Overall Piktochart has a very good value proposition for education as it provides individuals free access to all of the tools necessary for the creation of an impactful infographic (and even offers pro accounts to students for only $39.99 a year) (“Piktochart Infographics“).
Company Assessment

Piktochart is a private company based in Penang, Malaysia with approximately 43 employees (“Piktochart Infographics”) (Data Fox). The company was conceived in 2011 and was officially launched in September 2012 with funding from private investors (“Piktochart Infographics”) (Datafox). Since then, Piktochart has increased its user base from a mere couple thousand to 2 million in just a few months.

Piktochart generates revenue through a tiered subscription service in which users have access to limited templates and features for free, access to all templates and increased upload speeds for $15 a month, and access to all templates with even faster upload speeds and a plethora of other features for $29 a month. Reduced packages are also available for non-profit organizations and educational institutions (“Piktochart Infographics”). There are no ads on their website, which is extremely appealing to users, especially those visiting for free. The strategy there is to bring in as many users as possible and get them to stay, perhaps later buying their packages.
Product Characteristics

With respect to implementation for educational purposes the important product feature of Piktochart is the ability to create professional grade, eye-catching infographics for free. This lends itself to the creation of quick study guides reinforcing key points by instructors as well as compelling presentations by students. Since there is an 80% increase in desire to learn among students if pictures accompany their text, and 90% of students understand the material if it is accompanied by pictures whereas only 70% understand the text alone. Thus, engagement and interest in the subject spark students’ memory and lend to better scores on assessments and an overall better performance in the subject.

Piktochart is delivered through any web browser on an internet enabled computer and finished products can even be downloaded as PDFs (“Piktochart Infographics”). This means that there is no single “recommended platform” and that Piktochart can be used by virtually any student. It is free and easily accessible, so students and teachers alike can utilize Piktochart’s features to make learning more interesting.
Proposed Instructional Activity

Piktochart can be useful in almost any subject of study, but preferably classes like those related to science or business, and can be used in class by teachers or students for assignments, presentations, and even projects. It can be useful in all levels of study as well, as there can be more complex or less complex projects made from Piktochart. Usually the more interactive classes will have more success with this product.

Piktochart creates a simple and understanding way to present even the most complex of information. If adopted open mindedly, the entire class could benefit, even the teacher. With Piktochart, the person creating it will need to truly understand the information, enough to present it in a personal and creative way, which would likely improve test scores, as opposed to students just memorizing information before a test only to forget later on without really understanding what it means. The specific class we chose to bring our product to, environmental science, was chosen because of the wide range of graphical and oral information that is so useful in understanding the vast amount of environmental science topics.
Design Assessment

Piktochart is a browser based application, which means anybody with access to a computer can use it. A computer is practically required to be a college student and if a student doesn’t have one, one can be checked out if necessary. This also means that there are no requirements to use this besides the computer and access to internet.

Piktochart is a very simple application and can be mastered very easily. While it isn’t necessary, the instructor could do a quick tutorial and it wouldn’t be a problem for the students to pick it up.

Piktochart is a free application to an extent. It is free to use and there are free templates that a user could choose from or start completely from scratch. Alternatively, there are paid templates that a user could designate to use.

If the application were discontinued or the internet was down, an alternative would need to be used. An example could be a Microsoft program such as Word or PowerPoint.

The application does not disclose names or anything like that, an instructor could assign an assignment using Piktochart, it would not violate any federal laws such as FERPA or ADA.
Next Steps

Based on the assessment and interview with the faculty member, the next steps that should be taken to implement our product in one or more instructional activities at the University of Arizona would primarily be through generally making Piktochart of more common use throughout campus. There are many ways to do this; it can be done by teachers or even students like ourselves, by using the product whenever an opportunity presents itself where the product is useful. If this is done in a few classes of moderate size, then already hundreds of people are potentially introduced to the product.

The product can be made better known through classic advertisement such as posters or links online. If an informational stand was set up in the University of Arizona mall on a regular school day, information about Piktochart could be presented to countless students. In addition to information sessions, using it in more classrooms and telling more teachers about its effectiveness would be helpful in integrating this application further.
Conclusion

All in all, Piktochart is an extremely effective way to improve the understanding of any subject at the University of Arizona. It is an efficient tool for creating engaging infographics, posters, and other methods for learning while doing. Learning to think outside of the box and develop one’s own way of presenting information is vital to the effectiveness of a course as well as the success in future careers, no matter the industry. While it was found to be especially beneficial in an environmental science classroom, Piktochart could be used anywhere on campus with the same result: a heightened interest in course material, a more thorough understanding of what is being taught, and why what is being taught is so important to your career. Creativity and critical thinking are the pathways to future success, so being familiar with different ways of presenting and recognizing important information is vital in continuing to progress forward. This application is a great tool to expand students’ minds and demonstrate to them all of the possibilities.
Bibliography


Appendix

Interview Questions and Answers Recorded:

Q: What would most likely be your use of this tool if you were to use it in the future?

A: To summarize group projects for a large class particularly the Zero Waste project that we are working on in my ENVS 210 class would benefit from a tool like this.

Q: Would you legitimately implement it? Why or why not?

A: I might, haven’t had enough time to interact with it however. Not sure what the learning curve is.

Q: What cons to you see related to the use of this tool?

A: Not sure, didn’t see any cons so far.

Q: What do you think about the application in general?

A: It looked interesting, I am hoping to take a closer look at it and also to make a note to check it out when I have a bit more time.