Eller College of Management
The University of Arizona

MIS 111 Freshman Honors Showcase

Conceptboard.com

<Insert Your Team Members Here>

Fall 2015
Executive Summary

Conceptboard is where ideas are shared. Its main feature is the virtual whiteboard which grows as content is added. Anything can be applied to this platform. Word documents and pictures from the internet can easily be inserted. Sticky notes can be added. These can be added onto any part of the whiteboard, bringing attention to what is necessary. In addition, the Text Box can be added to share one’s thoughts anywhere on the document. The Headline allows for the presentation to be clearly divided into different titled parts. These are only a few of the ways in which Conceptboard makes sharing the thoughts from one’s head to an online platform easy, visual, and understandable.

One can draw any shape onto Conceptboard using the scribble feature. There is a tool that acts as a marker, allowing users to draw whatever they need to without the smudging that comes from your typical white board markers. Then there is the Highlighting feature, which draws attention to the key points in one’s text. The Line feature can connect one point to another, easily drawing a straight point to point visual. Perfectionists no longer need to worry if their lines are truly straight with Conceptboard’s line tool. One can use an arrow to point out what in a work needs to be fixed. The Rectangle and Ellipse features can be used to add fun visuals to a presentation. The Scribble, Highlight, Line, Arrow, Rectangle, and Ellipse features all provide a cleaner, more simple way of interacting with others via virtual whiteboard.

These aren’t the only features on Conceptboard. The mouse has several different functions. It can be used to select various parts on the board, slice images, or erase concepts altogether. Turning one’s mouse into a symbol resembling a hand allows users to drag from one part of the screen to the next. The most useful tool for viewing the board can be found at the bottom left of the screen by clicking on a symbol resembling a compass. This brings up a small box that shows the project as a whole. In this box there is a smaller and colored box that shows which part of the project users are currently viewing on their screen. One can also see a list of tasks on the left hand side, as well as pull up a list of the various sections included in one project. By clicking on the different sections, users can go from one concept to the next with ease.

Conceptboard facilitates real-time communication. Users can pull up the chat box by clicking on the chat icon. This allows them to share their ideas about the board with the board still in view, allowing for seamless communication. If users wish to take their communication a step further, a video chat option is also available. Live moderation is another asset to this application. It allows for users to follow the arrows of other users with names and colors included to tell who is who.

Projects on Conceptboard can be shared with anyone who has a Conceptboard account. It is available on any device that can connect to Wi-Fi. It can be shared with users in read-only mode, or made available for edits. On users’ main Conceptboard page, they can see all of the projects they are a part of clearly organized. Additionally, this application sends out email notifications to user so they can be notified of any important information regarding their board. This online platform is useful for collaborating and sharing information in a quick, easy and colorful way.
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Table 1:

![Conceptboard Response Time Graph]

Table 2:

![Percentage of Schools with Interactive Whiteboards in the UK Pie Chart]
1) Introduction

In this project, my team strived to create a proposition for a new technology that would make it desirable for a wide margin of classes. Our product is Conceptboard, a multi-faceted education platform that allows for advanced teaching, group work, and learning. It can revolutionize how high level classes are taught by presenting information in a visual and interactive manner, while allowing students to work with new concepts hands-on. We targeted our campaign at smaller, higher level classes because it would have the most positive impact there. By presenting Conceptboard to teachers that could utilize it to its full capacity and using practical business strategies, we hoped to create a value proposition and elevator pitch that would sell our product and advance teaching at the University of Arizona.

2) Product assessment / overview

a. Market assessment - Conceptboard is an innovative website that hosts a virtual whiteboard that allows users to upload documents and images to an expansive white screen and arrange files in a visually appealing way. This format also provides teachers and students with the opportunity to engage in interactive presentations, video conferencing, online quizzes and other assignments. These features can help facilitate a hands-on learning environment that would ideally benefit upper level students in smaller classes.

The existing key markets for this application would be small, local businesses and small educational courses (see table 2). This is because the interactive platform would be too cluttered for larger classes, but for groups of 5-20 can comment and give good feedback to each other. Businesses are also a market of Conceptboard because
they can review design projects from their desks without needing to take time away from
the busy work schedule to hold a meeting.

Anyone can start a 30-day free trial, but groups can purchase plans ranging from
$590+ a month for 10+ users to $1700+ a month for 100+ users. There is also a one-
time fee of $1,990 and contracts are annual. There is educational licensing with fees
starting at $299 per year with 20 teachers and 200 students.

b. Company assessment- Conceptboard follows a focus strategy, where they try to
fill a niche market with their product. This is effective because there are similar file-
sharing and collaborating websites, however this website allows users to access many
different file formats in one centralized location and organize them in a visual context.
Product revenues come from companies, individuals, or educational groups that
purchase access to the technology. Business partners such as Salesforce and Google
could potentially buyout Conceptboard, however the website portrays to possible clients
that they are looking to continue as small-run business. Their advertising strategy
appears to be limited. They have a few social media accounts, but lack ads that could
introduce prospective users to the application. They do not have advertising income and
this is a good strategy because users are already paying for the service, but
advertisements are an annoyance and would likely deter users from continuing to work
on Conceptboard.

This company is private and still in its developmental stage (see table 1).
Conceptboard is a small team in respect to its number of employees and their office is
located in Stuttgart, Germany.
c. Product characteristics- Conceptboard’s signature whiteboard platform encourages collaboration on projects while users can sit comfortably at their desks whether it be in different cubicles, dorm rooms, or even in different countries. People can add comments to attached files or interact with each other in real-time. Live Pointers allows users to see where other collaborators are looking on the screen, or they can communicate face-to-face with board video conferencing. In a classroom project setting, students can work on an assignment anywhere on campus or in their separate apartments without having to worry about planning a time to meet that works with everyone.

The product is accessible through the Conceptboard servers. Users go on the website Conceptboard.com and can use the application on there. There is no download required and users do not use storage on their personal devices. Bigger companies and organizations can host the data on their own servers if they plan on having many employees or students using Conceptboard technology.

The website is available on many different browsers such as Safari, Google Chrome, Firefox, and Internet Explorer. This means both PC and Mac platforms can use the application. Unfortunately, Conceptboard.com is not accessible on mobile devices, but some tablets can be used. It would be a good next step to form an application for mobile devices in hopes of gaining a larger market value.

3) Proposed instructional activity
What is the market you have identified as being suitable for this product? The market that my group selected as being ideal for the inclusion on Conceptboard is upper division classes in practically any discipline, due to the versatility of the site’s many features. These upper level classes tend to have smaller student occupancies, which
would be perfect for the highly interactive nature of Conceptboard, because it could be overwhelming to both site and the users of the site to have too many accounts signed in and working on the same board. Also, Conceptboard would be extremely applicable to the teaching style of any instructor of any course that is considering the implementation of Conceptboard that is willing to learn and use a newer technology with his or her pupils, in order to further their student’s ability to absorb the class’s educational content.

b. Describe the instructional activity that you are proposing for your product. My team’s product could be utilized within a class in many different ways. For instance, Conceptboard could aid students in the execution of group projects, because it allows its users to visually display any ideas that they have, which could be really helpful in the layout and organization of any required group tasks. Conceptboard makes it easy for classmates to chat with each other and one another regarding certain parts of the whiteboard, thus all members of a group can be fully aware and able to complete any of their assigned portions of the project at hand. Also, the site could be used to assist in the actual instruction of certain courses, because it permits professors and students alike to conduct video conference with one another and publish comments on any information, within the class’s board, that anyone feels unclear about or wants to emphasize.

c. What assessment criteria would you use to evaluate student’s use of your product? How would a graded assessment incorporate your product? Conceptboard isn’t really a website that would be used to evaluate students, rather it would predominately be utilized to be helpful in the completion of graded assignments. As mentioned earlier, this site would be crucial in the formation and organization of ideas
regarding group projects. However, a professor could potentially look at a group’s whiteboard to assess that adequate planning has taken place, prior to the formation of the final version of the assignment. Also, the professor could get an idea of how well a group worked together on a project by examining how many comments were posted to the whiteboard and how much communication was occurring within the chat feature of Conceptboard by all members of a group. The many benefits that Conceptboard offers to educational spaces definitely don’t predominantly revolve around evaluating students, but if a professor really wants to assess the planning stages of a group project, then Conceptboard could definitely help with that.

d. What is the instructional outcome of adding this product to a class? If an instructor adopted Conceptboard into his or her classroom the class would undeniably be improved. Conceptboard breaks down the typical student-teacher barrier where students could feel like it is difficult to discuss their concerns about certain material or find it quite arduous to get feedback on certain assignments. Therefore, the ease of communication and idea-sharing that Conceptboard allows would help students because things could be clarified very quickly. Also, our product enables it users, both students and professors, to publish and organize educational content to a specific class’s virtual whiteboard in a visually appealing way. Since a lot of students learn better when there is a visual representation of certain information, rather than just having a list of documents and figures to study and examine for a particular assignment, Conceptboard really appeals to visual learners and could boost these students’ potential to retain a course’s material, consequently improving their academic success.
e. Describe why the specific college and class that you identified for your product an appropriate candidate for adopting this technology. The specific class that we identified as a worthy candidate for incorporating the technology of Conceptboard is Sports Marketing Management, which is taught by Dr. Victor Piscitello. This class tends to only contain about fifty or so students, which is quite small in comparison to a lot of other courses held here at the U of A, and relies heavily on the use of group projects to assist in students’ learning. Also, this course is an upper-division class within the Eller College of Management. Thus, Sports Marketing Management would be a perfect place to implement Conceptboard, because the students within this course would be able to effectively share one online educational space and work collaboratively to assist in one another's learning. Additionally, students who are close to graduating with business degrees should be able and willing to experiment with and become experts in a variety of online platforms, because as technology progresses the business field will continue to integrate a plethora of online platforms, like Conceptboard, into their everyday activities for many purposes.

f. Is your proposed class activity a new activity, a modification/process improvement of an existing activity, or a replacement of an existing activity? This major class improvement would most likely be classified as a modification to the typical online educated-focused idea sharing platform. Google Docs would most likely be the biggest opponent to Conceptboard in the current market because it also allows its users to upload and create documents that can easily be shared with and worked on by several other people. However, my group’s chosen application appeals to supporters of Google Docs plus many other online resources including FaceTime and Coggle, which enables
students to be able to create idea sorting webs. Compared to Google Docs, Conceptboard more effectively appeals to the creative mind of many interested students in classes that are dependent upon the latest, most up-to-date technologies on the market compiled into one simple to navigate virtual whiteboard.

4) Feasibility / Design Assessment

a. Instructional assessment – We interviewed Dr. Victor Piscitello, an Eller professor who teaches Sports Marketing Management. We chose this class because it had less than 60 students per section and is a 300 level course, therefore it is more advanced. The combination of medium-small classroom and high-level information made his class the ideal type to present Conceptboard. Based on the interview, the main concerns Piscitello had with adding this new technology were that it may not be able to handle the volume of a larger class and that most students were already accustomed to other medias. My teammates and I address this by saying that the classes that this product would be used in are supposed to be smaller classes for upper-level students, not large general education courses. Conceptboard is targeted at making smaller classes better and more interactive, therefore we would only focus on instilling this project in those classes. As for the concern that students are already accustomed to other medias, we say that Conceptboard is a completely different platform with different uses than Google Docs, Prezi, and D2L. After Dr. Piscitello explained his concerns, he commented on the positives, which include the technology’s ability to create a more intimate classroom and help advanced students grasp harder concepts. He encouraged us to make a case for high level math and science majors that need visuals to help understand ideas. The positive and negative feedback that Dr.
Piscitello gave my team helped us decide what information to stress in our value proposition and how to target our product to its full capability.

b. Technical assessment – Applying Conceptboard to a classroom will be simple and quick for students. They will need basic Wi-Fi outside of class, which is free all around campus and in most apartment complexes. In class, the only person that should need internet connection is the person presenting, most likely the teacher. Therefore, the bandwidth and Wi-Fi requirements for using Conceptboard are no more than the average platform used in classes now. No external application or software must be downloaded either: Conceptboard is used online. This means that the students can quickly and easily access this product without downloading anything, they simply must access the internet.

c. Operational assessment – One exciting characteristic of Conceptboard is its user-friendly, easy setup that can be used by anyone, and because of this, it can be introduced to students and teachers in many ways. Having in-class training with the technology for teachers that wish to adopt it would be the most beneficial because it would allow in-depth understanding of the platform that they could pass to their students. The Conceptboard website has several tutorials for new members along with an FAQ area to help clarify any lingering questions. All these resources can help the user utilize the technology to its full capacity, and because it is simply a website and not an app, it can be used virtually anywhere by anyone.

d. Economic assessment- The ideal use of Conceptboard would be to have it centered “on premise,” meaning that the university controls what classes using the product and to whom it is licensed. This package runs from $6,900, which is a one-time
licensing fee, and has a 14% annual service and updating fee. The only real cost that Conceptboard has is this first value, however, meaning that it does not require a data plan other than the internet already offered by the university or an application service team.

e. Risk management – Conceptboard offers the ability for a client to pay on an annual basis, meaning that instead of a one-time fee, they can decide to repurchase the program every year. This feature significantly brings down the economic risk of the company going out of business because it means that if they shut down, there will be no loss of money from an investment. If the U of A did decide to choose the one time purchase instead of the annual fee they would be losing the product they invested in, however, the one-time fee is equal to the annual one after five years of purchasing Conceptboard. This means that within five years, the one-time purchase will be equal to all the years of repurchasing, so there would be very little loss. Other than monetary risk, and information or projects on Conceptboard can be easily downloaded and saved from the website, ensuring there is no loss of intellectual property. If the U of A decided to host Conceptboard through its own server, the website would be dependent on the U of A and its bandwidth. This means that any risk of the Wi-Fi or website not working would be directly linked to the U of A’s capable to keep it working. If Conceptboard as a whole was down, then there would be a small time when teachers and students cannot access the website, but the probability of this happening is very slim. If this did happen, however, teachers would not be able to use a whiteboard they created on the website and students may have to postpone working on a project.
f. **Legal / Regulatory assessment** – Using Conceptboard would have very few legal or regulatory infringements. The only information a student needs to sign up is an email and their full name, neither of which disclose information that is protected by FERPA, like their educational record. As for making the website accessible to anyone with a visual, hearing, motor or cognitive learning disability, easy steps can be taken once examining the website to ensure that it is usable for everyone. Overall, this product does not threaten intellectual or private property, and can be used by anyone, meaning that it does not interfere with any legal regulations.

5) **Next Steps / Future work**

Dr. Piscitello seemed receptive to the implementation of this product into smaller, upper division courses. We agree with him because, as mentioned previously, the collaboration features are what make this website stand out. The next steps to introducing Conceptboard to the University of Arizona could be asking our peers if they have classes where this technology could be beneficial. Then, we could approach those professors directly and explain the application to them. Another option would be to hold information sessions for faculty where we would present Conceptboard and its features. Student-lead adoption of the product would not be successful due to the cost to use the product. There should not be a need to hold training sessions because the interface is easy to learn and has introductory video tutorials. It would be smart to have more than one teacher use Conceptboard, since pricing policies allow 20 teachers to be on the same educational license.
6) **Conclusions**

Conceptboard is an online platform that inspires users to get interactive with what they are learning. Projects can be shared with anyone with an account. Users can add documents, or make their own visual representations of unique concepts. Comments can be added, and attention can be drawn to specific parts of the project using the arrows or highlighting features. In addition, live chats or video chatting can take place to take this interactive platform to a whole new level. Students and teachers alike will benefit from this hands-on learning experience, realizing that collaboration plus creativity equals the ultimate Conceptboard.
Bibliography


<http://status.conceptboard.com/149860/history>.


Appendix A: Summary of Faculty Interview

On November 11th, Dr. Victor Piscitello was given our teams elevator pitch. We chose him because he teaches a medium-small class that is very specific and high-level, and because he is in Eller and therefore has a good understanding of business and what feedback would be beneficial to us. Our goal was to present our topic in a way that would intrigue him enough to consider buying the technology for his classroom, or to learn ways to make our presentation more effective. Our elevator pitch included information on the exciting aspects of Conceptboard to captivate his interest, and then an analysis of how these applications could be used in his classroom.

Dr. Piscitello’s feedback was mostly positive, with a few concerns that would make our pitch more effective. First, he made the point that other platforms are being used right now and we would have to find a way to convince him that Conceptboard could handle large capacities and would be practical to develop in a classroom. He liked the idea of integrating a newer, more useful technology into his classroom and getting rid of some of the more archaic methods, but needed to be sure that it would be worth switching to. He also encouraged us to target higher level classes in more intense majors, such as some science majors. Overall, he advised us to be more specific in the classes we target, and to appeal to the teachers want to have a more advanced, hands-on class.