

COMPARISON AND ANALYSIS OF DESIGN SOFTWARE FOR MEDIA COMPANY

ENG W231: SECOND PLACE

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Abstract

Graphic Design is a field that has widely incorporated digital technology into its daily function, but this means that there are a lot of programs that seek to fill the need for a reliable design software for many companies. Not every project is the same, but based on a few categories, we can judge which may be the most widely applicable. It's important that the software chosen is both cost-effective and has good functionality. Taking this into consideration, we can narrow down the field to just three programs that people find the most reliable and go from there. This paper takes a closer look at Adobe Illustrator, Canva, and Microsoft Publisher as some of the most popular design software to see if they match up to the criteria presented.

Introduction

For many years now, the fields of graphic design and advertising have relied on computers to create more professionally and efficiently. Design is meant to communicate ideas, and computers are great tools to standardize the visual experience. From easy-to-read fonts to clear lines and colors in art, they allow us to more clearly translate the message we want to convey. Be it to customers or colleagues, clear communication is the most important value to the field of design. This means that not only does the hardware need to be effective, but the software needs to be the best choice. It's not

difficult to find a computer that serves your needs, but finding a piece of software that is as versatile, easy to use, and cost-effective as a business needs can be challenging.

In business, profit is important. Companies strive to put out good work and products, but that is often only possible if the business model makes money. You need to consider every expense, and if what you get is worth the money you invest in it. It can come down to balancing the effectiveness of the product, in our case software, against the cost. Especially with software, extra abilities are not always needed, and it is often a monthly or yearly cost to have access to what you might not need. This is why it's important to take a deeper look at what is actually useful about a piece of software.

The other side to that balance is, of course, versatility. Design is a wide-ranging discipline that requires the ability to create in several different fields. Creating art pieces, editing photos, and the layouts of documents are all important aspects of design and effective communication. An application will likely need to be able to do several of these things, not just specialize in one area, to be truly useful. Most programs made for graphic design are meant to be able to cover all these areas because it is far easier to keep track of your work if it is all in the same system. Time is money, after all, and the useability of your software can have a great impact on the productivity and efficiency of your company.

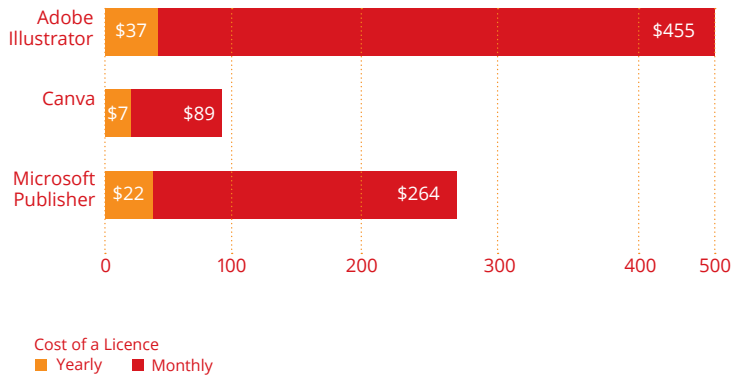
That then brings us to my third criterion for the best software, ease of use. A confusing design to an application isn't something that can't be worked around, but in order to satisfy clients--and to create a better working environment for employees--you should avoid creating a consistent issue that you just have to work around. Difficult and confusing software can be a large obstacle to completing projects in an efficient manner and often leads to a dip in the quality of the products put out. To ensure that you create a professional and effective environment, focus on finding useful, polished, and professional

software.

To keep the information as clear as possible, I will be comparing three applications that are often option I will look at is Microsoft Publisher, which works for a variety of projects and communicates well with other tools.

Adobe Illustrator

Adobe Illustrator is one of the most popular design applications that exists on the market. Most graphic designers have some experience with it, and there are courses that can teach you the basics of creating with this software. On top of the brand recognition that comes with it being an Adobe product, it is generally considered to be a professional-grade tool for making precise illustrations and layouts. Because it has such a reputation preceding it and is highly regarded, it is easily the most expensive on the list. Something I think is important to analyze here is how much you are paying just for the brand. The product is solid, but you could purchase subscriptions to both Microsoft Publisher and Canva for less than Adobe Illustrator. A good program is worth several inadequate ones, but is Illustrator worth it?



(Adobe, 2023) (Canva, 2023) (Microsoft, 2023)

The above graph demonstrates the comparison of the cost of each option both monthly and yearly per license as stated by each official website. As is shown, Illustrator is nearly twice as much as the competition yearly. It has some great features, but it is primarily aimed at design which is a lot more involved than the work we do. I have used Illustrator before in the past, and it is well worth the money if you need everything it offers. As its name suggests, it is great for illustrating and has its uses in advertising for making more involved things, such as billboards. But neither of those is useful to our work. When making advertising layouts, it isn't necessary to do much illustration, or an at all, and billboards are far removed from what we need to make.

Overall, Adobe is the obvious choice in most categories. It is a well-made, easy-to-use platform that has many useful features. Adobe is a respected brand, and for the products you can make with it, it is worth the money. But what we need to consider is the efficacy of our company. Our use of a program like this is unlikely to be worth the drain on resources that could be better allocated elsewhere. While each criterion should be evaluated and compared, the price of the software is huge when considering if it is the best option for our company or not. I don't think that Illustrator is worth the price for our work. While we want to take pride in what we do for the businesses supporting us, there is only so much we can use a program to that end. Ultimately Adobe's features would be superfluous and thus not worth the comparatively exorbitant price.

Canva

Canva is an easy-to-use program, and it was designed with user experience in mind. The marketing for this piece of software is built entirely around this premise, and it delivers their application. For our use, we would likely need to purchase the professional version that offers more control and allows you to create more, and to more specification. Where Canva might fall short, however, is

versatility. Because it is meant to be used by anyone, it relies heavily on templates. This isn't a bad thing. Having a basis from which to work speeds up the process significantly, but if your job is to create effective ad layouts, the uniformity of the template can be very detrimental. Ads are meant to get the readers' attention, and the best way to do that is to create something unique. Effective advertising and uniformity do not mix well.



(Canva, 2023)

Above are two templates from the official Canva site. They are both well-designed and useful for making a wide variety of

documents easily. If you compare the two, they are as different as possible in mood and tone, one being warm and bright, and the other being somber and dramatic. This makes them great examples of my point. Despite their different tones and colors, they have very similar layouts. When paired together the eye of the viewer might drift over both of them, making neither very successful. This is the exact kind of environment most of our work will be in. Making a layout of so many disparate ideas means that each needs its own look in order to be noticed and in order to satisfy our clients.

This kind of software is great for inexperienced users who need to create a presentation and don't know where to start or those who need something quick and professional, but it would not work for our needs at all. I've used this software, and to someone who knows what they want, the templates can be very stifling. On top of that, using Canva to create our advertising layouts would leave us with a generic and boring product that would not sell our clients' products. Though Canva has some great qualities, such as its efficiency and low cost, the decrease in the quality of work would not be worth it.

Microsoft Publisher

The last competitor is Microsoft Publisher. Again, this software has a big name attached to it, but while Adobe is known for its graphic software, Publisher is not a well-known aspect of Microsoft products. One of the things that has become obvious is that it is a versatile product that provides the tools to make stand-out ads for our customers. It has a focus on the layout of print, what our job primarily requires, and allows for unique and creative use of elements. It also comes from a well-known brand, but doesn't cost nearly as much as Illustrator. It looks polished and is easy to use; on top of that, it communicates well with other software, making it ideal for a group workplace setting where ideas need to be shared effectively.

Though on the surface, it might seem like a middling option,

Publisher has its strengths and weaknesses. In this case, the fact that it is in the middle is a great strength of this program. It has neither the excess of Adobe nor the restrictiveness of Canva. Both are good options in their own realm, but when looking at the best fit for our company, they fall short.

Microsoft Publisher markets itself based on its ability to create effective layouts, but that isn't the only area that it excels in. Just like Canva, it has templates to use, but it also has the flexibility to create something new. The price is also in between. It is very reasonable for the product offered, and doesn't exceed the budget by including things that aren't necessary to the job. Furthermore, because we work in a team, the ability to communicate cross platform is useful as well.



(StockLayouts, 2023)

Here is an example of what can be done with Microsoft Publisher. I think looking at this shows a lot about the potential use of this piece of software. It can clearly be used for organizing text and visuals to create a coherent theme. You can manipulate the shape and outline of the page in a way that is very useful in our line of work.

It covers all the bases without being overkill. It is versatile enough to create unique images that can catch the eye of the viewer, and yet offers the ability to use a template when applicable, which helps the useability of the program. It has a professional interface and would allow the team to produce the kind of work we can be proud of while avoiding discomfort to the staff.

Conclusion

Though it is widely accepted, Adobe Illustrator, for our purposes, may be a waste of resources. It is meant for design work pertaining to illustration which, while a large part of the field, is not something our company regularly encounters. Canva, similarly, just isn't optimal for the type of work we need to do. Though it might work in a pinch or for an amateur, much of our income is made through advertising, and making sure our clients have something they are satisfied with is of the utmost importance. Ultimately, I think that Microsoft Publisher is the most effective product for this company's purposes. It may not have all the capabilities of Illustrator, but the best fit isn't always just the product that can do the most. In this case, Publisher is very effective for creating the type of layouts integral to our work and is more effective for the company as a whole. It costs less and works nicely with our working style to facilitate the creative flow of ideas.

Though there are many factors to consider while looking for what you want your company to use, it is important to take into consideration what you can. This is an important topic that can have a big impact on the way we use resources, the reputation we have, the quality of work we produce, and the comfort of the staff. Resources and reputation have a big impact on the future of the company. For this reason, I hope that the compilation and analysis of this data is useful to you as you continue to make the decision you feel is best for the company. ■

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