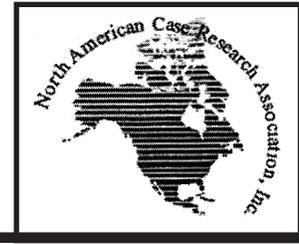


Digital Case Projects: Helping Students Achieve Digital Literacy and Content Mastery



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The ability to understand, synthesize, evaluate, and also create digital media is becoming an increasingly important career-building skill for graduates of higher education programs across all disciplines. In a previous article, “Are You Ready for Digital Cases?” (*Case Research Journal*, Vol. 36, No. 1), we provided a justification for considering digital case studies and guidance in digital case creation for faculty members and case researchers. Engaging students as co-creators of learning content to tell and analyze decision-focused situations via digital media can help students to achieve mastery of program learning outcomes and begin to close the loop (Alexander, 2011). Creating digital cases can sharpen students’ technological skills, decision-making skills, as well as collaborative and leadership skills, each part of a portfolio of essential competencies for job-seekers in today’s business environment (Griffin, 2009; Kawulich, 2011; Watson and Sutton, 2012).

THE DIGITAL CASE PROJECT ASSIGNMENT

During the 2014–2015 AY, the authors of this article, one a professor of business and the other a business librarian, completely redesigned the capstone undergraduate strategic management course in order to: (1) address ways to increase students’ digital literacy, (2) design a new assignment that involved students as co-creators of their own learning content (decision-focused strategic management case studies grounded in field and secondary research), and (3) provide students with access to, guidance for, and hands-on practice with using widely available digital media tools—such as Camtasia, iMovie, and Dipity—to create and edit content.

Senior-year business majors in the capstone class were assigned to teams of three or four to research, capture, edit, and document a multimedia digital strategic management case *and* case analysis of up to 10 minutes in length, involving a local company or non-profit organization. The digital case project comprised 20 percent of the final course grade. To aid us in assigning students to teams, we surveyed them prior to the first class session to assess each individual’s readiness to use digital media software and work collaboratively online via an online questionnaire. The questions for the pre-class online readiness survey are shown in **Appendix A**. Based on the results of the online

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survey, we took pains to ensure that each team would have at least one student who had reported that they had sufficient experience and skills with digital media tools to create a digital media case. Insofar as was possible, teams comprised a variety of business concentration students (i.e., accounting, finance, management, marketing, or wine) and were balanced by gender.

Prior to freeing up class time during the final month to enable students to meet and work exclusively on the digital case project assignment, we assigned seven to eight written case studies with supplemental readings on various topics in strategic management (original articles). We also facilitated class discussions about the cases and articles, from which we evaluated individual students' contributions. Students prepared eight required written case analyses, one group case presentation, and a midterm examination (consisting of an individual written case analysis about a comprehensive strategy implementation case)—all of which comprised the remainder of the course grade.

In the second week of class, the librarian co-instructor conducted an hour-long information literacy session, introducing students to key library resources for conducting industry and company research, such as Mergent, IBIS World, and Statista. During the final month of class, the librarian worked closely with the student teams on a consultative basis to get them up to speed on using audio-visual capture and editing tools, and to help the teams conduct needed background company and industry research. Students were encouraged to conduct background research using these resources to situate the business they selected in the context of the broader industry, as well as to help formulate clear and meaningful questions when contacting the business. The librarian also visited the class mid-semester for a second hour-long session wherein each student team shared a verbal progress report and received feedback on additional library resources to fill-in gaps in their research.

Our university's service area comprises five counties (Marin, Mendocino, Napa, Sonoma, and Lake counties) in the northern San Francisco Bay Area, a region with a population of just over 1 million and 30,500 business establishments. Sonoma County, where most of our students live and work, has a population of 502,000 and 13,370 employer establishments, according to the most recent United States census. We provided students with a list of local companies for possible case projects, compiled by a local newspaper reporter from the *Inc. 5000* list of "Hot Growth Companies" (Digitale, 2014). Students were required to prepare a case client engagement letter that needed to be signed and returned and submitted as part of their case project proposals due in the third week of class. **Appendix B** shows a sample case engagement letter for a local winery client. Students were able to select a case client based on their own preferences and interests, i.e., for-profit companies or not-for-profit organizations, service providers or manufacturers, local or and so forth. Still, we screened the proposals to ensure that there was no duplication of clients during a given semester or repeats from semester to semester.

We asked all student case authors to consider carefully what their fellow students should learn from their cases as well as how to narrow down the wealth of information that they had collected. Two associated learning objectives were explicitly presented on the course syllabus and reviewed with students on the first day of class:

1. Reflect on the efficacy of digital media to tell a story and present/analyze data (presenters).
2. Evaluate the credibility and usefulness of the information gathered and communicated via digital media (audience).

The syllabus provided the rubric that would be used to evaluate projects as well as guidance for students as to how to craft a digital case study. See **Appendix C** for the rubric we developed to evaluate student digital case projects. Appendices A, B, and C were also posted to the course website.

IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

Twenty-four teams in three course sections completed projects during the most recent academic year. Approximately one month after student teams had selected their case clients and received approval (typically one month prior to the due date for the projects), we asked each student to write her/his objectives for the project on the back of a 3 × 5 card, which we then collected and sorted by team. During the final presentation sequence, we asked teams to reflect back on those objectives and the degree to which they had (or had not) been attained.

In our classes, the business librarian performed the role of the “go-to person” for students seeking assistance in: (1) identifying and using appropriate media tools; (2) retrieving, adding, and citing information from published sources; and (3) editing content. Students had widely varying levels of experience in all three areas. In particular, students who had no prior video or audio editing experience needed additional hands-on instruction in how and where to find particular software functionality. Students who did not already have access to media editing software on their personal computers were able to use iMovie or Camtasia on the library’s public computers. However, the large file sizes associated with video editing meant that some students had to store their projects on back-up hard drives during the editing process. Many students reflected that the librarian’s availability and expertise made all the difference for their teams in completing the project.

Undoubtedly, the presence (or absence) of team cohesion and a compliant case client contributed greatly to the quality and comprehensiveness of the final products. One team was especially creative in that it was able to record a long-distance interview with a key company decision-maker via Skype. Another team creatively captured a company’s culture by filming its staff dancing in celebration during the opening of the food manufacturer’s first fast-casual restaurant.

A few teams experienced personality clashes with a “prima donna” who imagined her or himself to be an expert videographer and who “couldn’t possibly allow” her or his material to be edited, or at the other extreme, with “free riders” who made little or no contribution to the project. Teams dominated by students suffering from severe cases of “senioritis” appeared to view the exercise as merely creating a public relations piece that amounted to little more than a home movie with an added music soundtrack, and those teams typically gave short shrift to narration, data, and shaping the material into a decision-focused case. There were also a couple of teams whose case client backed out or became uncommunicative just weeks before the end of the semester—and those teams had to scramble to find a new case client.

Yet every team (at least thus far) managed to complete the project and “present” its digital case to the entire class twice, once in “dress rehearsal” and once as a finished project. The “dress rehearsals” allowed participants (all other students in the class) and observers (university media and technology instructional staff as well as the co-instructors) to ask questions and provide immediate feedback to the student case authors.

ASSESSMENT

After the dress rehearsals, each team was provided with a complete set of ratings using a rubric with space for written and verbal feedback. The aim of sharing feedback was so that each team could at least have an opportunity to make incremental improvements to its project, prior to the final presentation and submission one week later. Teams that had sought out additional research and editing help before the dress rehearsal performed better overall. The student teams spent time with the business librarian discussing goals for the visual layout of the digital case project, which helped them to better define how to search for answers beyond the guidance available in software tutorials and help menus. **Appendix D** shows a compilation of our qualitative feedback for six digital case projects from the 2014–2015 academic year.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Although from the outset we tried to steer teams away from using software like PowerPoint or Prezi as the platform for their digital cases, during the initial (Fall 2014) semester, some teams ignored this advice and created a digital case without much action and requiring live narration to pull all of the images and data together into a coherent story. While there probably could be outstanding cases created using those platforms, we informed students in subsequent classes that we tend to be biased in favor of digital video containing voice-over narration interspersed with interviews, infographics, and background sound or music where appropriate. The students listened—and nearly all of the thirteen spring semester and summer session projects were prepared as digital video cases.

Appendix E shows summary feedback from students captured in reflection papers at the end of the semester, upon completion of the digital case projects. Inasmuch as spring semester 2015 produced an unusual crop of excellent or good student digital case projects, and only one or two that “needed improvement,” we obtained permission from several teams to use their projects as instructional examples for future students. We provided commentary to the linked digital cases such as “Outstanding Digital Case” or “Good Video Interview” or “Fair Video Interview” to provide student case authors with a range of examples.

LESSONS LEARNED

Upon reviewing the entire stream of student-created digital cases over one academic year (plus a shortened summer session), we discovered that teams were typically rated most highly on the storytelling aspect, but rated somewhat lower with respect to reflection about what they learned from using digital media (which improved somewhat after our prompting during the “dress rehearsal” sessions), and rated lowest on the more rigorous case analysis and links-to-theory segments. We believe that there is an opportunity here: there is room for us to improve the instructions and guidance that we provide to students on how to interpret and evaluate *what* they learned as well as *how* that learning occurred in the process of creating a digital media case.

After the first two semesters (Fall 2014 and Spring 2015), we decided that in order to deter procrastination and sustain interest in the digital case projects, it would be a good idea to revise the assignment. In the third iteration, we required each team to

prepare at the beginning of the course a one-page written project proposal containing timelines and assignments for each team member (with deliverable dates), then towards the middle of the course create a storyboard using a PowerPoint template, and then develop a one-minute “teaser” preview of their final project with a written progress report one week prior to the final project deliverable, all comprising an additional 15 percent of the final course grade.

On the case analysis side, we need to improve our coaching of the teams in how to raise and answer questions for discussion and link those answers to theory. **Appendix F** provides a sample list of questions that we have subsequently developed to disseminate to students in the course syllabus and via a separate document file online. We also need to compile and show them more examples of outstanding digital cases, or require a written analysis to accompany their cases. If there were more time available, or for a graduate-level course, we could ask students to provide a written analysis of another team’s digital case.

CONCLUSIONS

The ability to understand, synthesize, evaluate, and also create digital media is truly an important career-building skill for graduates of higher education programs across all disciplines. Several of our graduates reported that adding this project to their job search portfolios gave them “an edge over other candidates” for a position. Several organizations in our service area have requested that they be considered for future case clients; no previous case client has reported dissatisfaction with the projects to date.

Down the road, universities and academic conferences need to provide hands-on sessions for faculty in how to help students create (and use) outstanding digital cases. We still have to figure out how capture, store, and keep this student-created content accessible for future use. Business client organizations also need to allow permission for dissemination of the student-created content, which has generally been granted with one exception to date.

Writing is still a vitally important skill. However, we have arrived firmly in the digital age; it is no longer in the future. The digital medium is already the go-to standard for both personal and professional communications. The research, technical, and storytelling skills developed in digital case study creation prepare students not only for direct analogs in the business world but also a variety of other presentation formats. Communication tools and media formats evolve quickly. The ability to think critically, adapt, and learn to use these new tools is true digital literacy.

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APPENDIX A: DIGITAL MEDIA AND ONLINE READINESS SURVEY

Business Capstone Seminar

Hello, thank you for registering for the senior seminar in management policy and strategy. To help us gauge your proficiency and calibrate expectations for course assignments, below is a brief survey consisting of short questions that should take you 5–10 minutes to answer, in order to determine your online and digital media skills. The aim is to balance the knowledge and skills of individual students to form teams for course assignments. All individual responses will remain confidential.

Please note:

- Students may download Camtasia for free and install it on their personal computers, MAC/PC (of course your computer must meet technical requirements.)
- We may also have a few licenses for Showme (an iPad-only app).
- Also, Zoom (web conferencing) *can be used to record but not edit*. Editing can be done in Camtasia.

1. I have reliable high-speed internet access at the following locations (please check all that apply):

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Home | <input type="checkbox"/> No, only intermittent access |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please state here): |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nearby public place such as a local café, library or school | |

2. I have the necessary permissions /access to install software/apps on my personal computer or other device/s (please check all that apply):

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computer | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile device |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tablet | <input type="checkbox"/> No/I don't know |

3. Which of the following devices do you own (or have access to) that can record audio and video (please check all that apply):

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Smart phone | <input type="checkbox"/> Laptop |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Video camera | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please state here): |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tablet | |

4. Do you have video editing software such as iMovie or Camtasia?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> iMovie | <input type="checkbox"/> No/I don't know |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Camtasia | |

5. If so, how would you rate your comfort level using that video editing software?

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> Low |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medium | |

6. If you have a smart phone/tablet, do you have a video editing app either on your phone/tablet or on your computer?

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No/I don't know |
|------------------------------|--|

7. Which of the following web conferencing tools have you used most frequently? (Please choose as many that apply.)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blackboard Collaborate | <input type="checkbox"/> Skype |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FaceTime | <input type="checkbox"/> Zoom |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Google Hangouts | <input type="checkbox"/> Never used web conferencing tools |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GoToMeeting | |

8. If so, how would you rate your comfort level in using those tools?

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> Low |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medium | |

9. Do you own or have ready access to a Mac or PC?
 Mac Neither
 PC
10. If you have a PC, does it have a video camera?
 Yes No/I don't know
11. Have you ever used Google Drive for file sharing?
 Yes No
12. Which Google business productivity Apps have you used? (Please check all that apply.)
 Analytics Sheets
 Docs Sites
 Drawings Slides
 Hangouts Other (please state here):
13. Of those Google productivity Apps that you checked above, with which App are you most proficient? (Check one.)
 Analytics Sheets
 Docs Sites
 Drawings Slides
 Hangouts Other (please state here):
14. Have you ever uploaded video to YouTube?
 Yes No
15. Are you available for an in-person meeting with library and information tech support personnel?
 Yes No
16. If you answered yes to the previous question, what days are you available to meet? (Please be as specific as possible.)
 Days of the week (please enter best days here, i.e., M, Tu, W, Th, F)
17. If you answered yes to the previous question, what hours are you available to meet? (Please be as specific as possible.)
 Time (please enter best time of day here, a.m. or p.m.)
18. Will you be in a geographical location further than 50 miles from campus at any point during the course?
 Yes No
19. If you have answered "yes" to the previous question, for how many days?
Please enter number of days here:
20. Will you be in a different time zone at any point during the course?
 Yes No
21. What is your business major concentration? (Check all that apply.)
 Accounting Marketing
 Finance Wine
 Management
22. Please enter your name here:

Source: Authors of this article.

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE CLIENT ENGAGEMENT LETTER FOR DIGITAL CASE PROJECTS

January 30, 2015

Mr. John Doe
Doe Family Winery
11111 Sonoma Highway
Glen Ellen, CA 95442

Dear John:

It was good to meet you and your family at Doe Family Winery last week. Thanks for your ongoing support of our fellow student interns who are pursuing degrees in the wine business concentration at Sonoma State.

As promised, we are writing to propose creating a digital case study on diversification efforts to grow Doe Family Winery (DFW) as a family business.

Our team of undergraduate senior business majors will provide critical thinking, marketing planning, and financial forecasting expertise to this project in return for academic credit. The working title of the case study is currently: “Doe Family Winery: Options for Growing a Business.”

Based on our conversation with you, both primary interviews as well as market and competitor research will need to be conducted to flesh out and prioritize the following potential strategic areas for growing your business:

1. Diversification into events planning and management, including an analysis of competitors’ specifications and pricing for events such as weddings and wine/food pairings.
2. Wine club management and membership retention/growth strategies, including an analysis of the wine industry key success factors in distribution and industry best practices in Customer Relations Management.
3. Product brand portfolio extensions into white varietal wines, including a cost/benefit analysis of potential new varietal wines at different price points.
4. Generation and cost-benefit analysis of other alternatives not currently under consideration by you, but which could equally be a logical fit for your family business.

The case and all accompanying materials would be used only for purposes of obtaining academic credit and would be subject to company approval—prior to release in any form to other students or to other professors of business.

Analyses of the above options would be provided to you along with the case as deliverables, on or before the end of May 2015. DFW will be able to use the case for its own promotional or for recruiting purposes.

If DFW agrees to sign off on this project, no interim drafts of the case will be released in print or electronic form without express permission from you in writing.

The eventual sign-off letter (signed, on your letterhead) would read: “DFW authorizes the data, pictures, interviews, and other materials gathered to create this case for classroom use and presentation to other students in our class with understandings of confidentiality.”

There would be absolutely no cost to DFW for this project, except that it would require time for recording on-site interviews with you and other managers, as well as

time on the part of senior management and/ or your legal staff to review the work and suggest changes before any case study document can be released.

Below are some ideas that we have in mind for the learning objectives of this project, depending upon the “decision focus” for the case and any recent financial or marketing data that are made available to us by DFW and/or that have been compiled by us from published sources.

1. Develop a first-hand understanding of how to scale a family business in a cost-effective manner.
2. Provide us with opportunities to review best practices in portfolio extensions, such as setting realistic goals for new product launches, direct sales via wine clubs, and showcase events, as well as the tradeoffs that might be necessary to achieve said goals.
3. Require us to develop alternative approaches to achieving diversification goals and to carefully consider the pros and cons of each approach.
4. Give us practice in defending our chosen action plan and developing feedback systems that enable your organization to monitor and measure the efficacy of any long-term strategies to grow as a business.
5. If approved for dissemination beyond the class, provide us with a sample of digital project work to add to our job search portfolios.

Please let us know if this scope of work will work for you. If so, please initial this letter on each page and sign below, before scanning and returning this proposal to us. If not, please let us know which changes would be necessary to obtain your permission to proceed with this project. Thanks in advance.

Very truly yours,

Your digital case writing team

(signed) John Doe, Doe Vineyards Family Winery Date

Source: Authors of this article.

APPENDIX C: SAMPLE RUBRIC TO EVALUATE STUDENT DIGITAL MEDIA CASE PRESENTATIONS

Case Title: _____

Presentation Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

Notes:

Today's presentation is 20% of the final project evaluation. The other 80% will be our evaluation of the digital media case itself. Course grade weight = 20 points.

Students are instructed to take 10 minutes for their presentations and leave 10 minutes for questions from the audience.

Evaluation is to be based on the exhibition of an understanding of the essentials of case research and effective learning and use of digital media.

Lowest			Highest			
1	2	3	4	5	6	A. Provided a case synopsis (approximately 5 min.)
1	2	3	4	5	6	B. Reflected on the use of digital media for the case.
1	2	3	4	5	6	C. Met learning objectives of the case.
1	2	3	4	5	6	D. Made clear linkages to management theory.
1	2	3	4	5	6	E. Posed and answered questions in the Analysis and provided a rationale for those questions and answers.
_____						Average (= Sum of the above/5)

Please evaluate the *credibility* and *usefulness* of the information gathered and communicated via digital media.

Source: Authors of this article.

**APPENDIX D: SUMMARY EVALUATIONS FROM A SAMPLE OF SIX
STUDENT DIGITAL CASE PROJECTS**

Capstone Strategic Management Seminar, 2014–2015

<p>Group A—Specialty Food Manufacturer Your case vignette was the most improved project from “dress rehearsal” to opening run. Yours was the only group to try and include an infographic, and it was well used. Your reflection on the experience of working on the project was very compelling. Bravo! Get to the decision focus more quickly. Great job in the reflection and Q & A portions, more than satisfactory elsewhere—except for quantitative analysis. We really liked that you tried to tie in customer intimacy and best-cost strategy concepts. What really is at stake here and what metrics would be useful for your case client? Who are its principal suppliers? Can you label the bubbles (or use logos) in the strategic group map? How will this venture increase its market share?</p>	<p>Group D—Winery Your case had a wonderful synopsis and terrific video footage, but apart from that, your organization and execution were weak, because there was no apparent decision focus. Other than a very rudimentary (and incorrect) 5-force analysis, there was no real evidence of mastery of strategic management theory. That the audience asked you about price points, production/operations issues, direct-to-consumer channels, social media strategy, and for actual visual footage of the production facilities meant that those elements were sorely missing. Some of these omissions were no doubt due to your eleventh-hour change in company subject.</p>
<p>Group B—Microbrewery Your case provided the most transparent interview questions and best data of the projects presented this semester. That said, however, your “hook” (why the audience should pay attention) and decision focus were unclear, as you appeared to be heading into three different directions simultaneously (packaging options, vertical integration, geographical expansion). Pick one challenge and focus. It was difficult to tell where your “case” ended and where analysis began. Good presentation of options and comparisons among rivals. Your story was visually “busy” (wordy) and was comparative to the others, fairly static, but it moved along well and kept the audience riveted. It was good to show the questions that you asked the CEO in the interviews, but what questions would you ask of other stakeholders? Are SWOT and PESTEL really the right tools and could you have shown the PESTEL in the digital portion (rather than on a paper handout)?</p>	<p>Group E—Equipment Manufacturer Yours was a superior strategy case vignette, with the clearest linkages to strategic management theory. The audio narration and visuals could be cleaned up and made clearer to the ear and eye. We liked your choice of a leadoff (hook) company commercial. In the interviews, your pan and zoom techniques were distracting. Which regulatory issues might enable or constrain this venture in its quest for market leadership? To make the case even better, consider: (1) creating a 1-minute teaser (synopsis), (2) making the financials easier to see and comprehend, (3) explaining exactly what you mean by a best-cost strategy compared with other direct rivals’ generic (positioning) strategies in this industry/segment, (4) illustrating the latter by moving the comparative cost structure data from the analysis back into the “case,” and (5) enumerating and presenting in sequential order the questions for discussion (and answers) in the analysis.</p>
<p>Group C—Specialty Beverage Manufacturer Your case was provocative. You told a really good story that elicited the most audience participation and feedback of the projects presented this semester, however, exactly what decision do the founder and his (mostly unidentified) team need to make now? It was often difficult to tell where the case ended and the analysis began. Do you believe that you might have provided better links to strategic management course concepts including sustainability and corporate social responsibility theory? Good presentation of options and comparisons among rivals. Your story was audio-visually “busy” (wordy), but it moved along well and kept the audience riveted. You did a great job of presenting only the most important numbers.</p>	<p>Group F—Local Retail Chain The major elements of a strategic management case were here, but your organization and execution were weak because there was no apparent decision focus and no obvious links to strategic management theory. The expansion of this retail business to a new location is already a done deal, so why did you choose to dwell on that issue? The leveraged sale of the business to employees, on the other hand, is not yet a <i>fait accompli</i>, so you might have focused on the pros and cons of that deal as well as the perspectives of stakeholders, i.e., what are the tradeoffs? Editing was needed: you could entirely cut the first half and then get right away to the succession planning or transition to “new” ownership. What does being worker-owned mean for a small local retail chain like this?</p>
<p><i>Source:</i> Authors of this article.</p>	

APPENDIX E: EXCERPTS FROM STUDENT REFLECTION PAPERS ON DIGITAL CASE PROJECTS

Capstone Strategic Management Seminar, Fall and Spring 2015

For my group's project, we thought Prezi was the best tool to use because it was the easiest and we were all familiar with it. For us, embedding the timeline movie, YouTube clip, and voice-overs into Prezi was seamless and easy. Dipity worked well for our history portion because our company has been around for a long time and it was a great way to show the facts in chronological order. However, I wouldn't recommend Dipity as the only tool to use for this project because it's designed to work well with displaying chronological information. I think iMovie and Camtasia are the two good tools to use. One group suggested using a tool called Snag It. I had no idea there was a tool like that.

* * *

[I learned that] there are many different tools I can use to make my presentations really stand out other than your basic Power Point. If I were to do anything differently, I would have not used Prezi and tried to use something that was a lot more interactive. I wanted to add more special effects to our presentation but Prezi was too simplistic. The only reason why we liked Prezi was because we were all able to edit the presentation and at the same time if need be.

* * *

The media was difficult to learn at first but as I said in my project, the bigger the challenge the bigger the reward. I feel we ended up with a good project and I know, for sure, my ability to synthesize new technological tools is something I will highlight on my résumé.

* * *

The biggest takeaway from using these digital media tools that I learned is patience and diligent effort in solving problems. Figuring out how to navigate and properly use the Camtasia and Windows audio editing software took a much larger amount of time than expected. What I learned from using digital media is that these tools are an essential part of professional business today and into the future. Business proposals from me will definitely continue the use of digital media and other technology.

* * *

I am grateful for you pushing us to present some other way than PowerPoint. Every graduating college student should be able to put together a PowerPoint presentation at a minimum so this was a great opportunity to learn something new. It would have been much easier if we had access to Camtasia on our own computers to be able to take more time learning how to use it and for putting our project together. If you assign this project next year I would recommend to all the students that they get organized early and meet twice a week to complete the project. Our team met almost every Tuesday and Thursday and I never felt stressed or that we were behind at all.

* * *

Learning and using digital media for this project was very interesting! I learned how to use different software and programs and use them all together to get an amazing result. I was able to use programs like Skype, Evaer, and Microsoft Live Movie Maker to get an awesome interview to use for our presentation. Although I did not know in the beginning that it would require so many different platforms and editing to get a great final result, I'm glad I gained the experience to do so as an undergraduate student!

* * *

Our team used iMovie to edit our video, which turned out to be one of the easiest parts of including digital media. We also used a website to create a table for our data. One of the biggest problems that we encountered was finding a use for our recorded audio. We had such large files stored on our devices that we could not easily send them to one another, and the files became hard to edit. We would have loved to edit the interviews down to a few minutes, but our questions were too broad to be able to do so. We were presented with very long answers that could not really be cut down in any way. Our team really wanted to present to the class our great audio files, but it did not end up working out. We had a little bit of difficulty posting the video on YouTube and then getting it to embed in the presentation, but ended up getting that to work after we re-uploaded the video. Overall I think digital media helped our presentation become stronger, but if we had a better understanding of the options, how to use them, and how to edit our material, I think we could have been more effective in this area.

* * *

I absolutely loved working with different digital media tools. This project was beneficial to me, not only because I learned new skills, but also because it enabled me to utilize the media tools in a business-oriented environment. It gets extremely boring seeing PowerPoint after PowerPoint; therefore, it was a huge relief to sit through presentations that actually had a little more “pizzazz” to them. It keeps the audience much more interested and results in a lot more Q & A communication. At times, it was challenging and/or frustrating when faced with a technical roadblock, but maybe that is because our generation is so used to knowing everything (or at least what we believe to be everything) about technology. This is one of the reasons I enjoyed using new digital tools. I was forced to go out of my comfort zone. I would recommend to future students that they try avoiding the easy route because this assignment is meant for you to learn about new tools and to potentially enlighten your audience on them.

Source: Authors of this article.

APPENDIX F: SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR DIGITAL STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT CASES WITH STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT CONCEPTS IN [BRACKETS]

What is this business/organization known for? [Distinctive competence(s), generic strategy]

When was the most significant turning point for this organization? What did the protagonist learn from that experience? [Organizational evolution and knowledge, culture]

What would competitors say about this business/organization? [Reputation, competitive advantages & disadvantages, SWOT analysis]

Paint a picture of this company/organization in 5–10 years—what will it look like? What will it become in 20 years? [Goals and objectives, long-termism versus short-termism]

What do you believe it will take to get to that envisioned future? [Strategies and tactics]

Does this business/organization have a written strategic plan? If so, how often is it updated? If not—does it need a formal strategic plan? [Degree of formalization, proactive versus reactive strategies]

How do this organization's current *information technology and/or control systems* help it to improve revenues and/or profits? Improve internal processes? Improve staff productivity? Improve products and services? Improve distribution of products and services? Lead to diversification of products and services?

Follow-on: How could its current *information technology and/or control systems* be improved? [Systems and skills, IT, diversification]

How does *innovation* help this organization to improve revenues and/or profits? Improve internal processes? Improve staff productivity? Improve products and services? Improve distribution of products and services? Lead to diversification of products and services?

Follow-on: How could the pace of *innovation* be improved? [Organizational change, technology strategy, diversification]

How does *corporate social responsibility* help this organization to improve revenues and/or profits? Improve internal processes? Improve staff morale? Improve products and services? Lead to diversification of products and services?

Follow-on: How would you advise this organization to deepen or broaden its commitment to *corporate social responsibility*? [CSR and sustainability]

Which areas of operations are in greatest need of attention? How would you prioritize taking care of these things and what do you use to rank their importance? [Resources and capabilities, VRIN or SWOT analysis]

Which segment or segments of the product or service market could this organization serve better? How could it serve them better? [Positioning strategies, analysis of industry forces and key success factors]

Who else inside (or outside) of your business/organization would have a perspective on these issues or challenges? How would these constituencies be impacted by any change in direction? [Stakeholders and other voices]

What are the strategic alternatives for this organization now? Based on those alternatives, what should this organization be doing? What would you do? What will it do? [Strategic choice, critical thinking]

Source: Authors of this article.