



INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM RECOGNITION

Co-founder Melanie Perkins was a private graphic design tutor who taught at the University of Western Australia. Melanie noticed that her students struggled to learn traditional design software like Adobe Photoshop, often taking up to a semester to grasp the basic features of these complex programs. This observation led to the idea of creating a design platform¹ that required no technical expertise.

VALIDATION OF IDEA:

Melanie observed how much time it took to design a yearbook and believed that this significant consumer friction presented an opportunity for a better solution hence she started her first venture with Cliff Obrecht: *Fusion Books*. This platform allowed students to design their own school yearbooks using a simple drag-and-drop tool equipped with a library of design templates featuring photos, illustrations, and fonts.

Time Frame: The initial stage or post-launch stage of Canva: **Initial Launch and Market Fit Expansion (2013- 2017).**

USER PROBLEM

Novice users struggle to create graphics for social media, presentations, and marketing materials because they must use multiple complicated design tools. This process is **confusing**, has a **steep learning curve**, is **expensive** and **time-consuming**.

OPPORTUNITY: There is a need for a single, easy-to-use platform that brings all the tools and templates together to make design simple and quick

¹ <https://medium.com/canva/21-questions-from-aussie-startups-highs-lows-lessons-learned-during-canvas-journey-so-far-da07723ff545>

CONSIDERATION:

- *CONFUSION or FRICTION*: Novice users often do not have experience with design software, so they must be struggling to understand complex features, and without clear tutorials or guidance, they easily feel overwhelmed and need to continuously switch to different apps based on if it is a document, a presentation, or a poster collage. This disrupts a smooth user experience.
- *STEEP LEARNING CURVE*: Users need to spend considerable time learning the functions and features of these tools before they can effectively create designs. Lack of Collaboration Tools causes users to learn multiple methods to import/export files from one app to another maintaining quality.
- *TIME CONSUMING*: Users without design experience may need to look up tutorials and guides frequently, adding to the time taken to complete tasks. Also, the constant back and forth from switching tools and adjusting their formats and style like PowerPoint, excel, MS word, etc. consumes the user's time and energy since everything is not streamlined on one platform or app.
- *BUDGET LIMITATIONS*: Hiring a professional designer or subscribing to advanced software can be costly, especially for users with limited budgets.

TARGET USER

Primary Target Users: The targets users were individuals or novices who want to build a good aesthetic and professional presentation, document, poster, etc. but were limited by the various editing tools, each with their unique format, and applications along with time and financial constraints. Think of:

1. **Employees, Small Business Owners, and Entrepreneurs:** Individuals who need professional visuals for branding, social media, or advertising but lack the budget or skills for traditional design software.eg.

User Persona 1: Priya, an HR manager at Deloitte, plans to present a PPT on updates to the hiring process using AI tools and needs a clear, concise graphic to convey these changes effectively in a meeting. The goal is to avoid lengthy text and present a streamlined visual roadmap, as she is not an expert in creative design or visual storytelling but PowerPoint and online tools present formatting and functional limits.

2. **Content Creators and Influencers:** Users who require visually appealing content for social media platforms, often needing to produce large volumes of content quickly and efficiently.

User Persona 2: Emily, a budding content creator for giving critique on famous comics and comic-based movies like marvel, often needs visually appealing graphics for her social media posts. She is looking for quick, user-friendly tools to produce professional-quality content without diving into complex software, enabling her to keep up with the high volume required by her followers.

3. **Students and Educators:** Users in academic settings who need simple, accessible tools for presentations, projects, and classroom materials.

User Persona 3: *Rohan, a university M.S. thermal engineering student*, frequently creates presentations and project visuals for his coursework and as part of his internship. He values simplicity and

accessibility in design tools, allowing him to make polished materials quickly without spending excessive time or money on advanced editing software to quickly document complex engineering concepts and then later integrate it into a Project proposal presentation format.

4. **Nonprofits and Community Organizations:** Users with limited budgets who need effective, visually engaging content for outreach, fundraising, and awareness campaigns.

User Persona 4: *Sarah, a program coordinator at a local nonprofit*, manages outreach campaigns with a limited budget. She needs photoshopping or picture editing tools that are affordable yet can provide visually impactful graphics, icons and formatting functions, allowing her to create engaging content i.e., poster advertisements and pamphlets for fundraising and awareness without requiring extensive design expertise.

ASSUMPTION:

- Users have access to internet-enabled devices and value **mobile and desktop accessibility**.
- The majority of Canva's target users are not trained designers but individuals who prioritize ease of use and affordability.
- Canva has a large user market that adheres to both professional editors who can create templates and amateur users who will be using those templates. Here, Canva's primary audience were **amateur users**. This included small business owners, freelancers, and upcoming influencers to cater to a wide audience.
- Assuming there is difficulty and frustration in the learning process alongside streamlining docs and ppts format and content. There was a lack of online editing tools that would allow users to create templates and designs using **drag and drop** thus making the user experience easy and making it easy for non-designers to create visually appealing content quickly and easily.
- They assumed that there would be an **increase in work from home** and a **remote work** future and thus have collaboration tool from the start that would allow teams and users to collaborate and allow multiple people to work together
- **Context:** Canva is popular in the age of digital and social media, where visual content is key. Users want quality designs without investing extensively in training. Its freemium model along with competitive pricing thus lowering the entry point. This makes it more appealing for corporations.

For Canva, the following assumptions and context help clarify user needs, product use, and market fit:

1. **Demand for Accessible Design Tools:** Canva assumes there was a significant unmet need for easy-to-use graphic design tools among non-designers. They believed that millions of people wanted to create professional-looking visuals but were hindered by the complexity and cost of existing software like Adobe Photoshop and InDesign.
2. **Importance of Templates and Pre-Made Elements:** Canva assumes that providing a wide variety of customizable templates, graphics, fonts, and images would benefit non-designers thus helping them quickly create high-quality designs. By offering an extensive library of pre-made assets, they could dramatically simplify the design process.
3. **Value of a Web-Based Platform:** Developing Canva as a web-based tool rather than downloadable software assumed that users increasingly preferred the accessibility and convenience of browser-based applications. A web app would make Canva instantly accessible on any device without cumbersome installation.
4. **Freemium Business Model:** Canva assumed that a freemium model, offering a robust free tier alongside paid subscriptions, would facilitate rapid user acquisition. They believed a generous free plan would attract users and provide many opportunities to later convert them to paying customers as their needs evolved.
5. **Virality of Visual Content:** Canva operated under the assumption that users would eagerly share their Canva-made designs on social media and with colleagues. By making it easy to share and collaborate on designs, they assumed Canva would benefit from organic word-of-mouth growth as more people were exposed to the platform.
6. **Extensibility and Integrations:** Canva assumed that seamlessly integrating with other tools and platforms would be important to user adoption and retention. By offering integrations with tools like Google Drive, Dropbox, social media sites, etc., they could fit into users' existing workflows and become indispensable.
7. **Global Demand:** As a web-based tool, Canva assumed there would be worldwide demand for their platform, not just in their native country (Australia). They invested early in localizing Canva into over 100 languages, assuming a universal need for accessible design tools that transcended geographic boundaries.