Food Watch: Helping People to Live a Healthy Life

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Food Watch:
Helping People to Live a Healthy Life

Jiaqi Yang

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Fine Arts in Visual Communication Design

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Food Watch:
Helping People to Live a Healthy Life

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Abstract

Food is one of the great pleasures of life. However, due to cultural backgrounds and physical conditions, the same food is not suitable for all consumers. Peanuts, dairy products, and wheat can be deadly for people with food allergies. These consumers must carefully check the ingredients of all of their food.

This article outlines a system that combines product labeling and mobile technology to help those with food allergies and food intolerances easily manage their diet and protect their health.

With this new system, a user with dietary restrictions only needs to scan a label barcode with a mobile phone app to quickly assess a food product’s appropriateness for their needs.

This system not only provides users with a functional, time-saving solution, it will also provide peace of mind to improve their quality of life.

Key Words

Health  Food Ingredients
Food Allergy  Food Nutrition
Food Intolerance  Nutrition Label
Personal Preference  Information Feedback
Scan Tool
Thesis Statement

Food guarantees our existence as humans, by providing support to the normal operation of our bodies. As we learn more about the impact of diet on the growth, development, and maintenance of our bodies and minds, the modern culture has become increasingly focused on healthy eating.

Likewise, as modern life has become busier, more people are turning to “prepared” or “semi-prepared” foods instead of cooking from scratch. So, whether is it counting calories, monitoring sugar or avoiding specific ingredients prohibited by a religious or cultural belief, the need to understand ingredients and nutritional information has never been greater.

The rise of food allergies in the U.S., also contributes to the need for better understanding of food ingredients. “The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention reports that between 1997 and 2011, the prevalence of food allergy in children increased by 50 percent.”

Peanuts, dairy products, and some grains, like wheat, are common ingredients in many foods. Yet, people with food allergies or food intolerant could be at risk of life-threatening allergic reaction if they unknowingly consume these foods.

“The U.S. Nutrition Labeling and Education Act (NLEA) requires food labels that bare nutrient content claims and certain health messages.” The quick Guidance Document for this labeling is nearly 150 pages long and includes hundreds of individual pieces of guidance and, for some products, dozens of individual label elements. So, when the consumers face so much information on the food packaging, how can they quickly find the information they need?

A typical grocery store, like Wegmans, carries more than 100,000 individual products, making it impossible for the average employee to learn or even access more details information on each product.
Mobile technology and the depth of product information that can be instantly accessed online, can provide a solution to this very modern problem.

**Design Inquiry**

Is there a way to quickly organize nutritional information and help people who have special need for the food ingredient information?

**Goal**

This thesis will explore designing a system including labels and a corresponding mobile application so that food ingredient information will be more directly accessible to the user.

Information will be available on a tag or label system so that consumers can obtain more information. By using a cell phone, users can scan the card as a trigger that will provide the detailed information they need.
Review of Literature


The book comprehensively demonstrates the source of allergens in food and provides nine significant allergens. It also provides ample evidence of food allergies to support the project.


This book introduces the complexity of creating brand image recognition. It directs the designer to combine creative design ability and our understanding of consumer behavior. This article explores how to build a successful brand identity, defined audience, and analyze competitors. It gives readers a comprehensive introduction to the process of creating brand identity.


The book covers everything in brand from brand positioning to brand protection, visual and verbal identity. It analyzes the development trend of the brand, and discusses how to establish and maintain a successful brand.

The article focuses on people who are overly dependent on ingredient labels to avoid allergens, but some of the information is blurred. It didn’t help consumers in the end. The research in this article shows the impact of the update of the label on consumers. These data can be used as an argument for the project.


This article investigates the impact of the updating of the food ingredient label on consumer buying habits. A survey of consumers’ purchasing habits in North America and Canada shows that people with allergies tend to be more aware of label information. The verified label information is more convincing than the common one. It can be seen that a comprehensive label is indispensable for food allergy consumer.


The article explores a cellphone platform for allergen testing, it runs on a cell phone, imaging and automatically analyzing the colorimetric assay in a test tube to sensitize and detect specific allergens in food.
The authors use her own branding examples and give some examples of popular brands such as McDonald's and Starbucks to make illustrate brand identity.


The author use three categories to define the logo, identity and brand.


This website introduce the eight foods that cause the majority of allergic reactions.
Process

Brainstorm
Name
Logo
Label
Visual Language
Interface
Design Ideation

Design ideation is an essential part of the early project, brainstorming, flowchart, wireframe, prototype, which embodies a creative process from the production to the initial implementation. These steps set a good foundation for the final execution of the application.
1.0 Brainstorm

Figure 1: Concept Flow

People

Food

Have special dietary requirement

Food Allergy  Food Intolerance  Personal Preference  Cultural Background

Carefully check the ingredients of their food

Problems

Prepackaged

- Too much text
- Lose patience
- No enough time

Self-packaging

- Less information
- No one can ask

How to solve

Information feedback

For customer

Direct  Fast

Result
2.0 Name

2.0.0 Name Idea

Food:
- InFood
- Food to Be_
- Food Root
- Foody Rooty
- FoodinRoot
- Food Feed
- Food Find
- Food Check
- Food Mana (Food + Management)
- Food Alert
- Eat Alert
- Food Safe
- Food Guard
- Eat Guard
- foodwatch
- Food Detect
- Food-Detect
- Foodietect

Healthy:
- Healthy Helpy
- Healci (Healthy + Cibus)
- Healsee/ Healthee (Health + See)
- Healthy Atty
- Healthy Atti (Healthy + Attitude)
- Healthy Habi / Healthy Haby (Healthy + Habit)

Feed:
- Feed Seed

Green:
- Greentitude/ Gretitude (Green + Attitude)
2.0.1 Name Choose

Food Watch

After investigation in the user and discussions with professors, Food Watch was eventually decided as the name of the project.

Food Watch will help special users understand whether or not a food includes ingredients they can consume.
3.0 Logo

3.0.0 Logo Design

Figure 2: Logo in grid
Figure 3: Logo in color
4.0 Label

4.0.0 Label Design

The label plays a supporting role in the project. Together with the APP, the label completes the system. The merchant can enter relevant product information in the label and form a barcode for the user to scan.

The design of the label will be divided into three categories:
- Fresh unpacked goods (displayed near the product)
- Prepackaged goods

Figure 4: Label for in store display
Figure 5: Label for prepackaged

Figure 6: Label for customers self-serve packages
4.0.1 Label Update

In the improved process, the final label uses a solid background instead of a textured background, for better printing effect. Product images have also been removed to better highlight the logo and bar code.

Figure 7: Final Label Display

1. Simplify label

   - **Simplify label**
   - 1. Walnut Muffin
     - $2.75 ea
     - For in-store display
   - 2. Sliced bread
     - For pre-packaged store goods
   - 3. Bakery
     - For customers self-serve packages
5.0 Visual Language

Visual Language can reflect the design style. It is also like a tool for communication between design and users. Reasonable use of Visual Language will have a positive impact on the whole design, allowing users to understand the concepts that designers want to express.

5.0.0 Color Selection

Inspiration comes from traffic lights, green is possible, yellow stands for attention, red means stop. These three colors also correspond to the feedback that users get in this project. Green means "Eat It," the food will not cause allergies and other reactions. Yellow to remind users that the scanned foods are high in sugar or high in calories. The red color is "Don’t eat."

For the primary color:
This project can also be used as a tool for users to get feedback on information. Blue is associated with the transmission of information.

- **Primary Color**
  - PMS: 659 C
  - CMYK: 58/38/0/0
  - RGB: 121/151/226
  - HEX #: 7997E2

- **Eat It**
  - PMS: 7479 C
  - CMYK: 68/0/74/0
  - RGB: 33/207/107
  - HEX #: 21CE6B
5.0.1 Font Selection

In the choice of fonts, this project hopes to give users a rigorous and fashionable feeling. The CenturyGothic is best suited to these conditions after investigation and comparison. It’s a classic medieval font that blends modern feeling, and the smooth sans serif style makes it looks more stylish.

CenturyGothic
6.0 Interface

6.0.0 Work Flow

Figure 8: Flowchart

Main Page

- log in
- Sign Up
- Input account info
- Input personal info
- Remember me
- Set profile

- Allergy
- Food intolerance
- Vegetarian
- Preferences

Start scan

- See My Scan
- Product information

- By Date
- By Name
- Favorite
- Nutrition
- Ingredients
6.0.1 Flow Introduction

Following the goal of making the information easy to use retrieve, the project flow is divided into three simple steps: Set Profile, Start Scan and See Product Information.

New users click on the options according to their circumstances or enter information. After saving the data, it will jump to the scanning page. Users just need to hold the phone and scan the label. Then they will get the relevant information.
6.0.2 Sketches

Figure 10: The original sketches
Figure 11: Sketches after update
6.0.3 Wireframes

Figure 12: Original version of wireframes

First Page

Sign Up

Log In

Profile Setting

Profile Setting

Scan Page
After drawing workflow, the first version of the wireframe can help with information integration. Using a wireframe can help determine the structure of the page or screen, the layout of the content, the available features, text blocks, user interface elements, etc.

The use of wireframes makes it possible to visualize the usability of the project. By demonstrating the core layout, these can help designers to conceptualize and help iterate the design process. Wireframes also make it easier for users to provide feedback in the early stages, saving time and reducing change during the development phase.

In Figure 12, some rough ideas shown on the homepage, login page, and scan page.
Figure 13: Second version of wireframes

Profile Setting

- Allergies
  - Peanut
  - Dairy
  - Egg
  - Wheat
  - Seafood
  - Others
- Food Intolerance
- Vegetarian
- Others

Profile Setting

- Allergies
- Food Intolerance
- Vegetarian
- Preferences
- Beef

Scan Page

- Place TAG into center of box

Set Menu

- Personal Info
  - E-mail: jy107@princeton.edu
  - Password: **********
- Allergies
  - Peanut

Product Info

- Don’t Eat
  - Peanut Cookie
- Low Fat
- Low Salt

Nutrition

- Calories: 155
- Total Fat: 7 g
- Saturated Fat: 1.5 g
- Trans Fat: 0 g
- Cholesterol: 0 mg
- Vitamin A: 1%
- Vitamin C: 0%
- Vitamin B6: 0%

Ingredients

- 1 oz (28.4 g)

Product Info

- Don’t Eat
  - Academia Bread
- Low Fat
- Low Salt

Nutrition

- Calories: 171
- Total Fat: 7 g
- Saturated Fat: 3 g
- Trans Fat: 0 g
- Cholesterol: 0 mg
- Vitamin A: 1%
- Vitamin C: 0%
- Vitamin B6: 0%

Ingredients

- 3 container (16 slice ea.)
Figure 14: Third version: Hi-fi wireframes
Development

User Test

Further Refinement
User Test

The primary goal of user testing is to review the design process from the perspective of the user. Target users find problems and ask questions during the testing. This is an excellent process to help with project updates. Designers can also look at their projects objectively from the results of user testing.

In the process of talking with users, the designer will learn more about the user’s needs, then find out the deficiencies of the project and can quickly iterate improvements.

The user testing questions can cover the visual design (color selection, font selection), readability, and hierarchical structure. The questions also address simple issues, such as, whether the tool is easy to use. Users can also leave their thoughts and suggestions at the end.
Analysis of User Test

Figure 16: Usability testing result

- **Color**: Good 90%, General 10%, Bad 0%
- **Typeface**: Good 100%, General 0%, Bad 0%
- **Readability**: Good 90%, General 10%, Bad 0%
- **Hierarchy**: Good 80%, General 20%, Bad 0%
- **It was simple to use this system.**: Good 90%, General 10%, Bad 0%
- **It was simple to find the information I needed.**: Good 80%, General 10%, Bad 10%
- **The design was consistent throughout the APP.**: Good 90%, General 10%, Bad 0%

Note: Ten people took part in the test.
Further Refinement

After user testing, some updates applied to the project according to the user’s valuable opinions, including changes to icon and button, and the addition of guide pages.

Figure 17: Interface Update 1

1. Much more grey in the interface

Before                      After
Use related pictures instead of the “set photo”
Add color to other buttons.
2. Add more details

Also add one more page after you click the picture, it may show more details.

3. Shape of word holders (caution / Eat it, etc) look like buttons.

Before ——— After

Use icon, and also keep interface consistency.
3. Need to show a chart of some visual graphic explaining the Food Watch System

Add welcome pages, let the new users know how the app works before they sign up.
Final Design

User Scenario 1–New User
User Scenario 2–Repeat User
User Scenario 1–New User

The final design is presented through two user scenarios, one for the new user and the other for the returning user.

When new users enter the app for the first time, they can choose sign up, sign in, or continue as a guest. Users who select sign up or continue as a guest, will see the guide page, which introduces new users to the core features of the App. Users who choose to sign up, just need enter their email address and password. They also have the option of logging in by using their social media accounts. Users who choose to continue as guest will skip this step, but nothing will save when they exit the app.

After logging in, new users can select options based on their situation. Allergies, Food Intolerance, Vegetarian are the main three categories. User can also choose "other" to enter a preference, if their situation isn’t covered in the top three categories. Users can choose to input their situation in each category and other.

After completing the profile, the user will be redirected to the scan page. The user only needs to scan the label on the box to get an assessment as to whether or not they can consume the product. They can also see the related food ingredients and nutritional information.

In the end, the user can choose to save the info to "my scan" or start a "new scan."
Figure 21: Final interface 1-6
Figure 22: Final interface 7-12
Figure 23: Final interface 13-15
User Scenario 2–Repeat User

The returning user can log in with the password of the existing account. To facilitate the next quick log in users can also click "Remember me" to save their login information. Once successfully authenticated, the user will be directed to the scan page, where they can directly scan the label and get feedback.

The user’s scanning history will be saved in “My Scans.” If users want to see the previous food information, they can click on the "My Scans" button on the scan page or call up Hamburg menu to find "My Scans."

By default, the scan records are arranged in reverse chronological order and show the product’s thumbnail image.

The product thumbnails also indicate the top category (Eat it, Caution, Don’t eat) of the product. The design uses the background color of the card to indicate the color of the category (green, yellow and red). This allows users to easily scan the list for acceptable or unacceptable products. This list of scans can also be sorted by Favorite or by Name.
Figure 24: Final interface 16-21
Figure 25: Final interface 23-25
Conclusion

Current Impact
Future Implications
Current Impact

Designers have always been able to use their creativity to solve consumer problems. But in the digital world, where large amounts of information can be shared instantly, designers can make a major impact on speed and ease of accessing that information to improve a consumer’s life. Designers must be good at observing and discovering consumer needs. They must study these needs through research, testing and competitive analysis, then use their use their own experience and imagination to envision a solution. But in the process of designing a solution there will be many difficulties. After working through all of these difficulties and a dedication to improving the consumer’s life, there will be some pleasing results.

This project was dedicated to solving a growing problem for many consumers -- helping people who have special needs for food detect the ingredients in their food quickly. The establishment of the topic and the exploration of the solution were revised many times. The composition of food and the needs of the users are both varied.

The project sought to avoid a long form to list all the food and the requirements for everyone. So, the main challenge was striking the right balance between the amount of information necessary to server all potential audiences and the need to access information quickly and simply. This project tried to avoid the traditional way of letting users face too much text or too little information by talking with target users, understanding their situation and testing that balance.

Finally, a system set including labels and a corresponding mobile application was found to solve the problem.

Other key findings include:
• When there are multiple combinations of dietary needs, it is better to show the results first.
• Allow the merchant to input the product information into the label and form a corresponding two-dimensional code.
• Have the consumer enter their profile first (and once), allowing them to focus on scanning for feedback on products.
Future Implications

Every tool should evolve to respond to the needs of the time. While the process of designing this system has been educational and the solution achieves the initial objective of the project, there are many ways this solution can be extended in the future.

This project focused on the baked goods. More product categories could be added in future -- including dairy products and seafood. There are also some improvements that can further customize the tool to meet each user’s individual dietary goals, including the addition of healthy eating measures and the ability to help people get fit and lose weight.

Designers improve themselves in every solution and make better plans for future challenges.
Appendix

Copy of Proposal
Thesis Proposal

Food Ingredient Explorer:
Helping people to live a healthy life

Jiaqi Yang
2016

Rochester Institute of Technology
College of Imaging Arts and Sciences
School of Design
MFA Visual Communication Design
Food Ingredient Explorer: 
Helping people to live a healthy life

Rochester Institute of Technology 
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Jiaqi Yang 
2016

Thesis Committee Approval

Chief Thesis Adviser: Prof. Nancy Ciolek, School of Design

Associate Thesis Adviser: Prof. Chris Jackson, School of Design

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MFA Thesis Candidate: Jiaqi Yang
Abstract

Special dietary requirements impact a lot people. For many, food is one of the pleasures of life. However, some people have special requests for food, some are allergic to certain food, or others want to lose weight. They need to carefully check the ingredients of their food; they must make sure the food contains no ingredients that could negatively impact their health.

This thesis aims to create a digital product in the form of a mobile application and a tag system for consumers. After downloading the App, users can scan a food tag on packaging to obtain appropriate dietary information. The mobile application will integrate augmented reality (AR) to visually display the information.

By applying augmented reality and using it as a method for information integration in real time, it provides an enriched user experience. This can break people’s inherent impression of the same space plane, and also display the information for the consumers in a quick and direct way.
Problem Statement & Situation Analysis

Food guarantees our existence as humans, by providing support to the normal operation of our bodies. With the development of society, the role of food for people is not only to fill their stomachs. People also want to get proper nutrition and health from food. Today, people are in pursuit of a healthy food culture. However, each person’s physical condition is different, so they have different demands and limitations for foods.

Not everyone can eat commonly found foods, such as peanuts and dairy products due to food allergies. If they eat these kinds of food by accident there could be a risk of life-treating allergic reaction. Some people may want to stay in shape, so they will pay special attention to their diets, such as calculation of food calories and sugar content. So for these people they will primary focus on the food's ingredients and nutrition information.

But when the consumers face so much information on the food packaging, how can they quickly find the information they want? Consumers often lose interest or have no patience to read all the text on food packaging. In addition, in some bakeries, there are mostly fresh baked products, they rarely have complete packages. There are just some simple texts around the labels.

When consumers see products and want to know more information about them, what should they do then? If the consumer is asking a salesperson on-site, the person may not know the detailed information, or they are busy and might not have time to answer the question. Is there a way to quickly organize the information and also help people who have special requests for the food ingredient information?
This thesis will explore designing a digital product in the form of a mobile application and integrate the technology of augmented reality so that food product information will be more directly accessible to the user. Information will be available through a tag or label system so that consumers can obtain more information. By using a cell phone, users can scan the card as a trigger that will provide the detailed information they need.
Survey of Literature

Books


This book provides a clear flow from an interactive website to business card, and points out that a brand must be identifiable, and need to help build customer loyalty. This book also introduces the basic of brand recognition and a comprehensive process, how to help the brand to succeed.


This book introduces the creating brand image recognition is a complex challenge for designers, it requires the designer with creative design ability, and our understanding of consumer behavior. This article explorer how to build a successful brand identity, defined audience, analysis of competitors, clearly brand comprehensive. Give readers a comprehensive introduction to the process of building brand identity.


This book explores how augmented reality technology according to its own strong ability stand out in the market. The author in the book gave a comprehensive understanding of augmented reality, what it can do and what's the benefit in our lifes by using augmented reality technology.

The book covers everything in brand from brand positioning to brand protection, visual and verbal identity. Analysis the development trend of the brand, and how to establish and maintain a successful brand.


The article explores a cellphone platform for allergen testing, it runs on a cell phone, imaging and automatically analyzing the colorimetric assay in a test tube to sensitize and detect specific allergens in food.


The authors use her own branding examples and give some examples of popular brands such as McDonald's and Starbucks. To make the readers more clear understand about brand and brand identity.


The author use three categories to define the logo, identity and brand.


This website introduce the eight foods that cause the majority of allergic reactions.
Design Ideation

Brainstorm
Mind Map
Logo Design

Sketch
Logo Design
Flowchart

Start

Sign In
- Scan a logo/tag
- Information with AR
- Details

Sign Up
- E-mail
- Password
- Auto Sign In
- Setup profile
- Food Allergies
  - List
  - peanut, Milk, Egg, Wheat, Others
  - Low Fat, Low Carbs, Low Sugar, High Protein, Others

lose weight
- List

Choose From list
Wireframe
User Persona

Name: Zihan Chen
Age: 20 years old
Occupation: Student, B.A.
Location: Rochester, NY
“ I’m allergic to peanuts, every time when I buy food I will pay special attention to food ingredients. But sometimes when I go to the bakery and found there's no food ingredients description for the bread, I don't know what to do.”

Name: Joe
Age: 40 years old
Occupation: Product designer
Location: Savannah, GA
“ Long time’s work let me become overweight, I think it is bad for health, so I plan to lose weight. In the free time I will do more exercise and I also need to pay attention to diet. I’ll be careful not to buy the food with high calories or fat.”

Name: Bruce Chen
Age: 32 years old
Occupation: Animation Cartoonist
Location: Savannah, GA
“ I am very pay attention to my health, especially want to a healthy diet. But whenever I see a lot of words on the bag I feel it’s hard to find a keypoint. Especially to some bakery, there's no detail information beside the bread.”
Methodological Design

This thesis explores identity design, graphic design and mobile app design that uses AR interactive technology. The goal of the thesis is to create a mobile application which can achieve quickly information collation and provide a better experience for the user.

Target Audience

Ages 18 to 40 people that need to pay attention to the food ingredients. Such as the people who has food allergies, or want to lose weight.

Anticipated Project & Components

The final product will includes designing a mobile application and a tag that acts as a trigger to show the various features of the prototype interaction.

Anticipated Software:

Adobe After Effects
Adobe Illustrator
Adobe Photoshop
Aurasma
Invision
Deliverables

The final product for this thesis project is a mobile application that integrates augmented reality technology. In the product, the augmented technology will be applied to the 2D design. Users can see some graphic design, they can also use their phone to scan the brand logo (or a tag) and get more information. This will be a very interesting experience for the consumers. 2D graphic design will be used in the user interface design and branding identity design, along with Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator software. Invision will be used to display the final user interface. Aurasma will be used in the augmented reality portion for displaying information about the product. If the project needs a motion, the motion graphics will be explored for interactive feedback using Adobe After Effects.
Implementation Strategies

A mobile application with a trigger tag is the final product of the thesis project. Which focuses on combining the AR technology with the user interface design and branding identity design. In order to do an Information collation in a short of time. The survey covered the branding technology and the AR technology. Besides, what kind of information is the user most concerned about will also be an important part of the survey. The survey of target audiences will help to make sure what type of information will be displayed in the final project.

The major part of user interface design will be achieved by Photoshop and Illustrator. If there need some motion to improve the project, for some motion effect, After Effects will be introduced to do the animation. The combination of several 2D and 3D software gives the most flexibility to the working process. Most of these software mentioned above have been learned and used in the past.

In the final phase of the implementation project, a lot much can be done if the time management is reasonable. Meeting weekly with the chief and committee members will ensure that the project is on track. The scope of this project, including ideas, the final realization of these are beyond the typical curriculum tasks.
Dissemination

The final deliverables for this thesis will be entered into the following competitions:

On Campus
- Imagine RIT - May 2017
- Thesis Show - May 2017

Off-Campus
- AIGA Design Educator Roundtable - October 2017
- AIGA Design Educators Workshop - October 2017
- Red Dot Award

Personal
- Portfolio site
- Blog
Evaluation Plan

1. Feedback from chief and committee members

Regularly meeting with the chief and committee members will improve the paper accordingly.

2. Feedback from classmates

The project’s process will be shown to the classmates during the group meeting, they will offer a lot of good advice to adjust the paper according to the situation.

3. Feedback from target audiences

The project’s process will be also shown to the target audiences. And see if they can understand the flow, the icon or some functions.

4. Feedback from Imagine RIT

During the Imagine RIT, there will come a big group of people, this is a good chance to show the project. There are a lot of people outside the design field who can provide abundant opinions.
Pragmatic Consideration

1. Travel expenses:

Travel to meet some bakers, target audiences.
Bus ticket, gas fee
About $ 50

2. Software fee

For the survey, I need to download some competitive products, and some of them are not free.
About $50

3. User testing

For more user feedback I will visit some online user testing website, most of them are not free.
About $ 20

4. Tool fee

For the tool I use to do the work like some adobe software, most of them need monthly fee.
About $ 20/ month
Timeline

2016 Fall
Timeline

2017 Spring
Citation


Bibliography
Bibliography


