



American Archivist Reviews

Date posted: September 14, 2020

<http://reviews.americanarchivist.org>

Canva

<https://www.canva.com/>

Reviewed by Colleen Hoelsher, Trinity University

Canva is a web-based application that provides tools and templates for non-designers to create attractive graphics. The company was founded in 2012 in Australia, and today has more than 30 million registered users.¹ In addition to the browser interface, Canva offers Android, iOS, and Windows desktop apps.

Free accounts include one gigabyte of cloud storage and access to more than 8,000 templates. Canva Pro accounts start at \$9.95/month and include 100 gigabytes of cloud storage, access to additional templates and graphics, the ability to share and collaborate within one's team, and the ability to save fonts and color palettes as part of a brand. A particularly nifty feature available for users with Canva Pro accounts is "one-click design resize," where a design can be resized for multiple social media platforms automatically. Pro accounts are available for free for nonprofit organizations.

Canva templates are grouped by design type—poster, flyer, business card, Twitter post, Facebook header, etc. Users can also keyword search the entire template library, or create a design with custom dimensions. Once a template has been selected, the user can replace the text and images with their own content. Templates are also easily customizable to change colors and fonts to match your institution's branding. Editing a design is as easy as pointing and clicking with your mouse or stylus. Designs can be downloaded as PNG, JPG, or PDF files, or be published directly to third-party apps like Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest.

Canva is easy to use, and accessible to anyone with a computer or smartphone. At a cursory glance, it seems to have templates and graphics for any possible need. In fact, this abundance of resources is the greatest challenge with using Canva: keyword searches often return too many choices, and there are no options for filtering or faceted browsing of search results. It is easy, however, for users with free or paid accounts to upload their own images and graphics to use in designs.

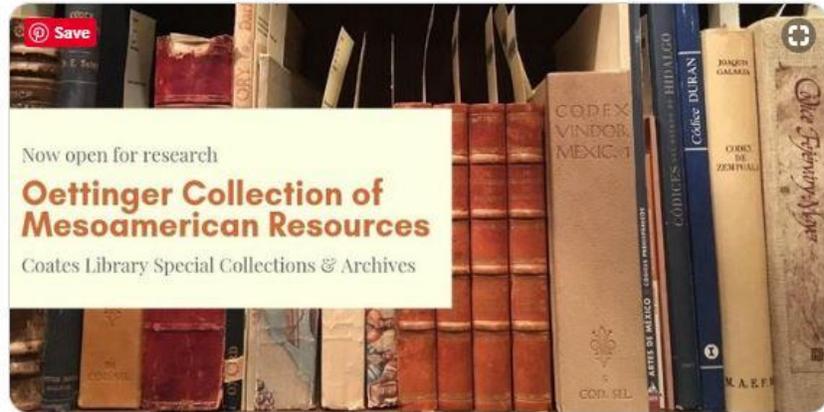
¹ Crystal Tse, Katie Roof, Gillian Tan, and Yoolim Lee, "Australia's Canva Startup Almost Doubles Valuation to \$6 Billion," *Bloomberg*, June 22, 2020, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-06-22/australia-s-canva-raises-60-million-at-6-billion-value>.



Coates Library
@coateslibrary



Interested in Mesoamerican manuscripts? The Oettinger Collection of Mesoamerican Facsimiles and Resources is now available for use in Special Collections.



1:53 PM · Aug 6, 2019 · [Twitter Web App](#)

A graphic created for social media using Canva. The author uploaded her own photograph to use with a Canva template for Twitter posts.

Archivists will find myriad uses for Canva. Of course, it can be used to create attractive graphics for social media, customized to the correct dimensions to display best on any given platform. Beyond that, it can be used to create designs for website banners, email newsletters, and direct mailings. It can also be used to create cohesive visual designs wherever things are printed in the archives: didactic captions in exhibits, finding aid cover sheets, box labels, reading room signage, etc.

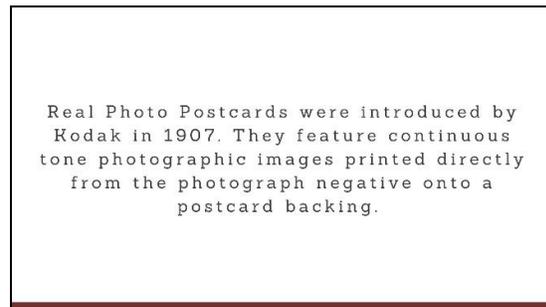
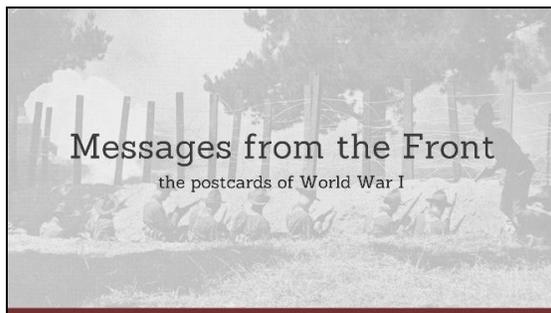
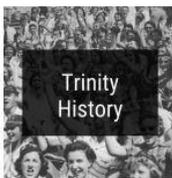


Exhibit labels made using Canva. This project used the branding tools available in Canva Pro to incorporate the colors and fonts from the parent institution's branding guidelines.

Coates Library Digital Collections

Welcome to the digital collections of Trinity University, [Coates Library](#). This site provides digital accessibility to selected resources from the Special Collections and University Archives. These materials reflect the broad range of subjects in our physical holdings, ranging from medieval manuscripts to modern day San Antonio social movements. Collections are presented in a variety of formats, including photographs, art, text, video, and audio.

Collections 1-10 of 14



Trinity University History

Photographs documenting Trinity University's history from 1869 to the present.



Trinity University Publications

Digital versions of the Trinitonian newspaper, Mirage yearbook, and the Course of Study Bulletins.



Early Books & Manuscripts

Coates Library Special Collections is home to a variety of early books and manuscripts, dating from the...



Spanish-American War Photographs

A collection of photographs taken during the Spanish-American War and the ensuing occupation of...

Here, the library used Canva to create custom banners and thumbnails for their CONTENTdm instance, resulting in a cohesive aesthetic and professional-looking site.²

For lone arrangers or archivists working in small institutions without a graphic designer, Canva enables the archivist to create a cohesive brand for all visual materials, conveying professionalism to patrons. Most users will find that a free account has all of the functionality for their graphic design needs, though users at larger repositories or institutions with a heavy emphasis on consistent branding may find that a Canva Pro account is worthwhile.

² "Coates Library Digital Collections," Trinity University, accessed September 7, 2020, <https://trinity.contentdm.oclc.org/>.