

An Analysis of Trello as a Project Management Software

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### **Overview:**

Trello is a lightweight project management software that was first created by Fog Creek Software in 2011, and was acquired by Atlassian in 2017 (Trello, n.d.). It was originally developed as a visual board for the kanban methodology of software development, which aims to prevent workflow congestion by illustrating the project process from start to finish (Atlassian, n.d.). However, its deceptively simple design lends itself to a myriad of uses, and as of today over 50 million users utilize Trello for a wide variety of projects and workflows (Trello, n.d.).

### **How it works:**

Trello has three layers of organization: boards, lists, and cards. Each account can have multiple boards, and each board can represent a project, workflow, or subject. Each board contains a series of lists and then each list can contain cards. Independent of its contents, each board also has a list of team members, current enhancements (known as “powerups”), and an activity feed.

Although the format of each organizational level is set, the contents are solely determined by the user, and can be changed at any time. The list level exists to provide structure to the board, and each card acts as an individual object that can be edited or moved around the board freely.

### **Functionality/Ease of use:**

Trello is a program that is designed to be easily learned and implemented by the average user. It accomplishes this task well through its intuitive “corkboard” style interface. In addition, Trello has a library of tutorials and other learning resources, as well as templates for those who don’t want to build a board from scratch (Trello, n.d.). Both lists and cards have elements to

assist in organization. Each list can sort cards by a variety of criteria. And one can perform a variety of actions within cards, such as create due dates, assign labels, and attach files.

Teamwork is well supported within the program, as cards can be assigned to multiple team members, and the activity feed of the board makes progress easy to track. As Trello also has apps functioning on most PC and mobile devices, the program is also highly portable. “Powerups” are another method for customizing Trello’s functionality. These enhancements are applied to an individual board, and consist of app integrations or other additional features. To this end, Trello appears to be widely compatible with other software as their repertoire of enhancements is quite extensive (Trello, n.d.).

However, there are limits to Trello’s functionality. Firstly, there is a distinct lack of accessibility options for those who are hearing or visually impaired. Although staff appear to be working on this issue, no dates have been given on when these improvements will be implemented (Trello, n.d.). The limited search engine also means that the program’s effectiveness brakes down when faced with exceptionally large projects, as the number of cards needed can overwhelm the system.

**Pricing:**

Trello operates with a tiered pricing model. As is standard for tiered pricing, some features are restricted to higher priced tiers such as the number of boards or powerups available to the user. On their website, three pricing options are given: Free, Business Class, and Enterprise (Trello, n.d.). It should also be noted that a fourth tier is also available, but unadvertised: Gold, which acts as an upgraded version of Free.

Free	Trello Gold	Business Class	Enterprise
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\$0.00	\$3.75	\$9.99	\$20.83
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\* Pricing is per user, per month, billed annually.

\*\* The per user rate of the Enterprise class lowers the more users are added to the plan. The rate displayed is for the minimum of 20 users.

Outside of the base Trello pricing, some powerups and app integrations have independent charges for their use, such as the Slack powerup (Slack, n.d.). As such, depending on what powerups are used, a user may be charged twice- once for the service itself, and another for the privilege of integrating that service into Trello. On the other hand, the ability to freely choose between powerups also means one is less likely to pay for features they are unlikely to use.

**Conclusion:**

Would I use Trello for project management? Yes. As a matter of fact, I already do. I currently use Trello to manage projects, to plan and execute school assignments, and as a general household and idea tracker. The cost and ease of use means that it has a low barrier to entry, and although it may break down when faced with very large projects, its flexibility means that it can be used for many different kinds of projects, workflows, and management styles.

### **Reference**

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