

Use of Applications Portfolio

by James William West

FILE	28110_JAMES_WILLIAM_WEST_USE_OF_APPLICATIONS_PORTFOLIO_344336_648497969.DOCX (1.41M)		
TIME SUBMITTED	22-APR-2021 11:31PM (UTC+0100)	WORD COUNT	2475
SUBMISSION ID	150185835	CHARACTER COUNT	13073

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1 Introduction

Applications are software programs that are run using a computers operating system. Word processors, spreadsheets, databases, and presentation software are just a few applications that are used in our everyday life. This report will cover the use of applications and how they can be implemented into a working environment, this will also cover how each application can benefit an organisation, not only in terms of increased productivity but also to present a wider range of knowledge of Health and Safety to its employers. As of today's current working environment there has been an increase on the use of applications worldwide due to the measures put in place to prevent the spread of Covid-19, it will be reported how applications such as Microsoft teams, Zoom and other alternatives are used to benefit our daily lives.

1.1 Organisational Background

The organisation that will be covered in this report will be Amazon. Amazon is a company that was founded in Bellevue, Washington by Jeff Bezos on the 5th of July 1994. Amazon over the years has gone from strength to strength, they have gone from selling books in Jeff Bezos' garage to becoming the multi-million-pound company they are today. As Amazon began to grow Jeff Bezos decided to move to Seattle, Washington in May 1997, he chose Seattle as Microsoft is located there, this provided Amazon with improved technical talent to move forward as a company. [1] Amazon's requirements entail shipping customer orders from one Fulfilment Centre (FC) to another to achieve the required customer demand. Once the shipment arrives at its required FC it is then processed through the Inbound Dock then received into totes, these are then sent to the Pick Tower to be stowed onto shelves. Once the items are stowed, they then become 'live' on Amazon's website ready to be ordered by the customer as soon as an order is placed the item will then be picked and sent out to pack. After an order is packed it is then ready to be shipped out through the Outbound Dock ready to be delivered to the customer. During the whole process it is everyone's responsibility to make sure that the products are fit for customer satisfaction, this entails quality checks, damage checks and colour and size checks. To ensure customer satisfaction amazon uses several different applications to make sure the requirements put in place are met as safe and efficiently as possible.

2 Investigation

The investigation on this report will be mainly focused on the use of the applications that come with Office 365 and other alternative designs. This will involve looking into the pros and cons of each application and how they benefit Amazon to reach their required goals, possible suggestions will also be made to increase productivity.

2.1 Research

The internet is the perfect tool for information gathering as it is a global wide area network that connects all computers throughout the world. Having this can provided any person or organisation with whatever information required at the click of a button. There are several web browsers that can be used to access the internet that all have their own unique tools, it normally comes down to a person's preference on which browser they will use. When it comes down to research, search engines such as Google and Yahoo are extremely helpful as they take the users search query and all the pages that are relevant to the search come up in relevant order.

2.2 Documentation

The technology in place to create a digital documentation would be Word-processing or Desktop Publishing. These applications are quite simple in terms of their functions, they process words, paragraphs, and whole papers. [2] Once a document is completed it can then be either printed, sent by email, or converted into PDF format.

Microsoft Word: Included in the Office 365 Suite is Microsoft Word, also known as WinWord or just Word. Microsoft Word allows you to create documents, letters, and reports at the highest quality. [3] One of Word's most popular tools is the Spell and Grammar Check features, after making a spelling or grammar error Word will quickly highlight the mistake with suggested corrections. Word also uses formatting for text and font, HTML support, advanced page layout and image support giving the user a variety of options to work with. [3] Amazon's use of Microsoft Word includes the creating of employer policies and Health and Safety policies, being able to print out these documents and delivering to all employers increases the awareness of what is required of all staff members. To speed up to process for Amazon, Word also offers a Mail Merge tool that interlinks with data from Excel, by doing this the software will automatically input all staff details to the desired document of your choice.

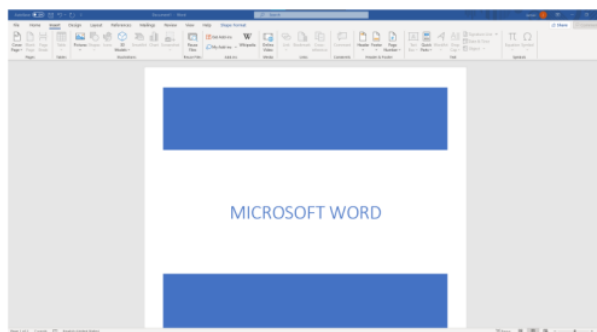


Figure 1: Microsoft Word Example

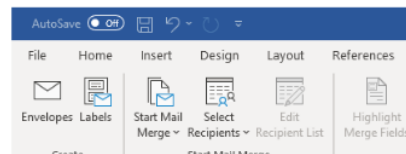


Figure 2: Mail Merge Tool

Microsoft Publisher: Another alternative to Word, Publisher offers a list of built-in templates to help create newsletters, flyers, greeting cards etc. Once the desired template is chosen you can then add text and images before saving and printing your document. [4] The limited control of the file size using Publisher can cause problems from time to time as it can be too large to upload to certain programs.

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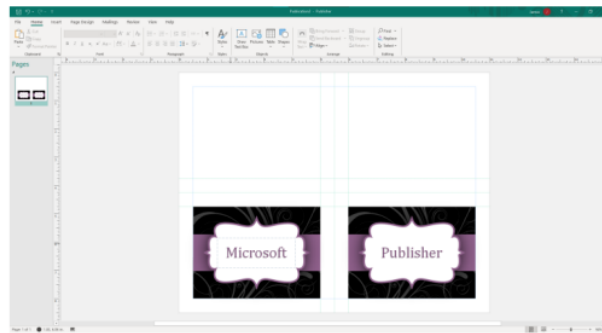


Figure 3: Microsoft Publisher Example

2.3 Storage and Analysis of Data

Spreadsheets and databases are a great way of storing and analysing data as they complement each very nicely, information can easily be transferred from a database (which can sometimes look like a lot to take in) to a spreadsheet, making the data look a lot cleaner as it can be presented in charts and graphs.

Microsoft Excel: Being the most used spreadsheet application worldwide, Excel uses a grid of cells where the rows are recognised by numbers and the columns are recognised by letters, these help identify each individual cell on your spreadsheet. A wide variety of tools are implemented into excel to help make to application as efficient as possible, these include graphing tools, calculations, pivot tables and a macro programming language. [5] As Amazon receives daily Transhipments from other FC's Excel is the perfect tool to record the data needed to make sure it is arrived and stowed on time. Amazon also uses Excel as a tool to find unstowed customer orders as shown in the image below, the macro implemented into excel pulls data from Amazon's database showing information where the order was last seen in the FC.

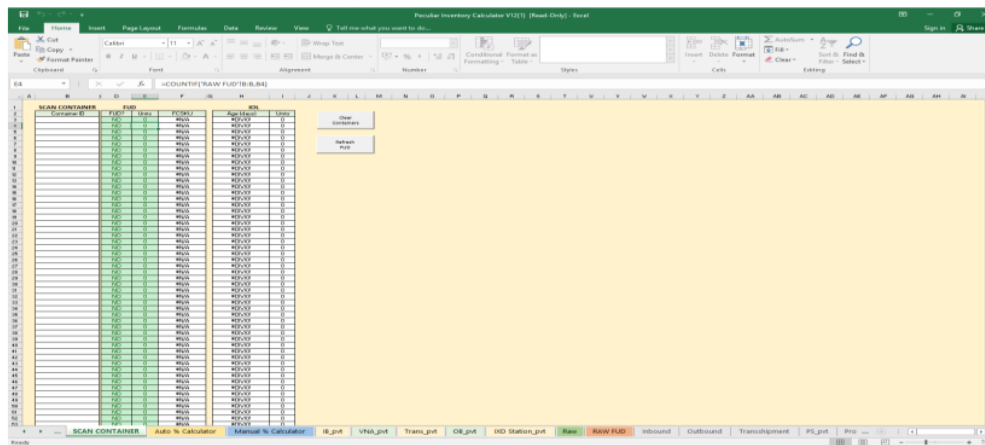


Figure 4: Amazon Customer Order Tool 1



The use of technology used for communication and collaboration has become more essential than ever in the past year, this is down to the restriction set in place by our government to try and prevent the spread of Covid-19. Application like Microsoft Teams, Zoom and Outlook are used to adhere to the rules of social distancing.

A screenshot of a Slack application window. The top bar shows the 'Chat' tab and a search icon. Below the top bar, there's a 'Recent' section with a 'New chat' button. The main chat area is dark and mostly empty, with a small input field at the bottom right containing the text 'Send a new message'. The left sidebar shows navigation icons for Home, Search, and a list of channels.

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Zoom: Being a cloud-based video platform Zoom is an easy and reliable way to communicate and collaborate in today's world. [8] Whilst being free to use, Zoom includes features such as HD video and audio calls, screen sharing and easy access to the application through any device. As shown in the image below Zoom offers users a simple way to create recurring meetings making it favourable for many users. One of the downfalls with Zoom is that it only offers 40-minute conference calls with up to 100 people, [9] making it unideal for an organisation like Amazon due to their business requirements.

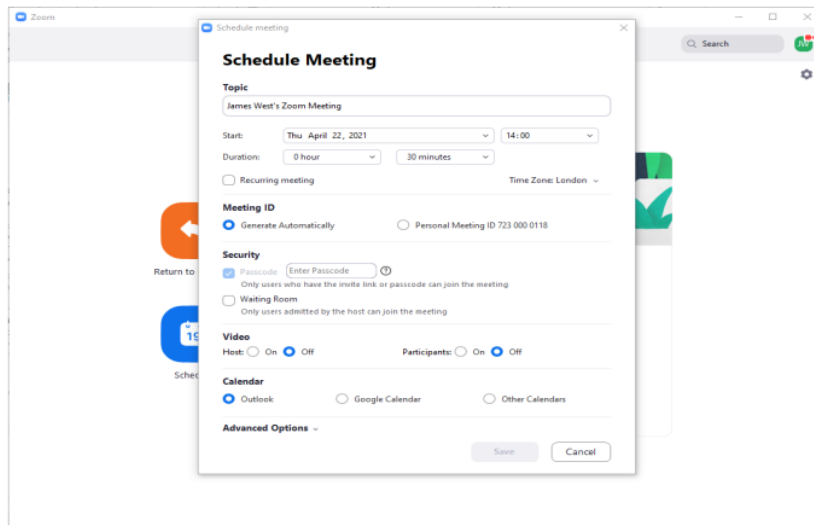


Figure 7: Zoom Schedule Meeting

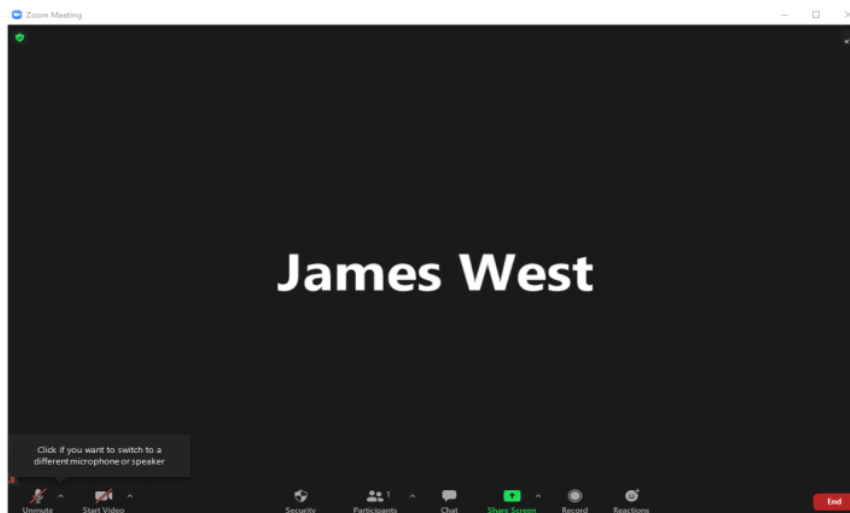


Figure 8: Zoom Example.

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Outlook: Outlook is an email-software that is part of the Office 365 package and is free to use, it allows users to send and receive emails, create contacts, and allows access to a calendar to create meetings or set daily reminders. Tasks can also be set by Outlook which can be very useful working in Amazon as there is always a lot going on. Outlook is the most valuable application in Amazon when it comes to Communication, it is used daily to share such things as end of shift reports, Transshipment ID tracking and Aging reports. With the tools Outlook has to offer, Amazon benefit greatly in terms of productivity as it is a fast and efficient way to transfer data from one employer to another.

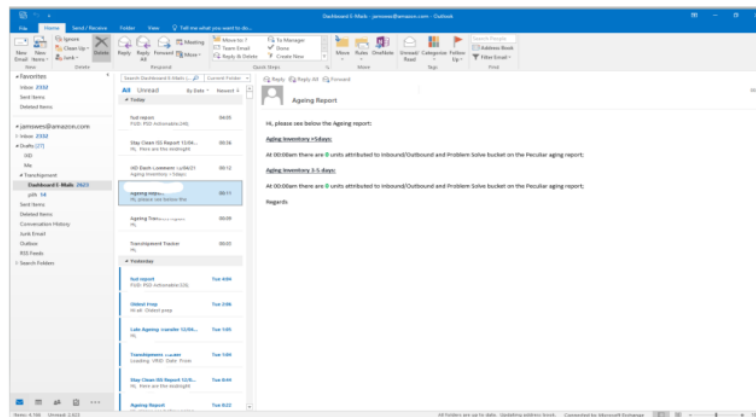


Figure 9: Amazon Outlook Example

Amazon Chime: Although this application can be used externally Amazon find it fitting to use Amazon Chime as the in-house alternative to Microsoft Teams. Chime offers a lot of similar options as Teams such as creating meetings and chat rooms, Amazon benefits from using Chime as it is a fast and efficient way to communicate with other employers. This application still feels behind in quality compared to Microsoft Teams as Teams is easier on the eye with a lot more tools in place that can benefit the user.

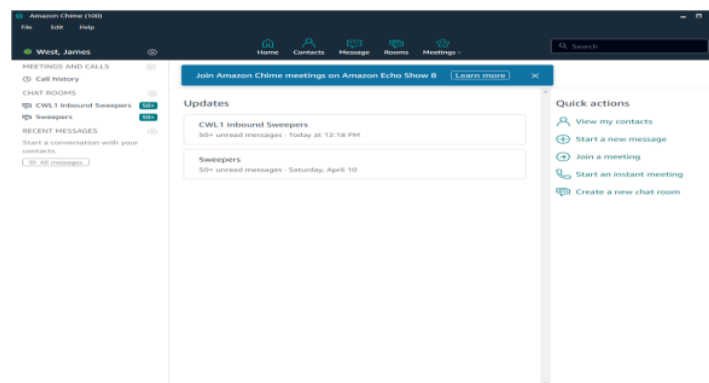


Figure 10: Amazon Chime Example 1

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Figure 11: Amazon Chime Example 2

2.5 Presenting information to an audience

To present information to an audience, it is beneficial to use Presentation Software as this can be a great tool for publishing data. Presentation Software can be a lot easier of the eye to an audience if used correctly making it beneficial to the reader to see what you are explaining. Another benefit for Presentation Software would be its ability to integrate more than one element onto a slide, whether it be photos, text, hyperlinks or even videos. [10] Below will be listed just some of the many Presentation Software's available to us today.

Microsoft PowerPoint: This is currently the most popular Presentation Software used today as it is the most accessible and user-friendly option available. Microsoft PowerPoint has many benefits that are used the catch the eye of the audience, these include custom animation, effects, and transitional slides to make each PowerPoint presentation unique. PowerPoint uses a Ribbon across the top of the screen containing a variety of tabs that help implement a range of tools that are necessary to create your desired presentation. Although Microsoft PowerPoint has many advantages if used correctly but if used incorrectly can become overwhelming for the reader, for example this can happen if there is too much text on one single slide or if a slide is cluttered with images. Another disadvantage would be the ongoing cost to use the Software, Microsoft currently charges a monthly fee of £9.40 for the Microsoft 365 Business Standard package, this can be a lot for some especially in today's current working environment. As seen in the image below Amazon's use of Microsoft PowerPoint is a very important application used the present a variety of training and information to its employers. All new hires for Amazon will be presented with several Slideshows ranging from Health and Safety to training for their designated job in the FC. Current Amazon employers also have an annual Health and Safety refreshers presentation and quarterly updates will be show regarding any changes in the FC and how Amazon are performing as a Business.

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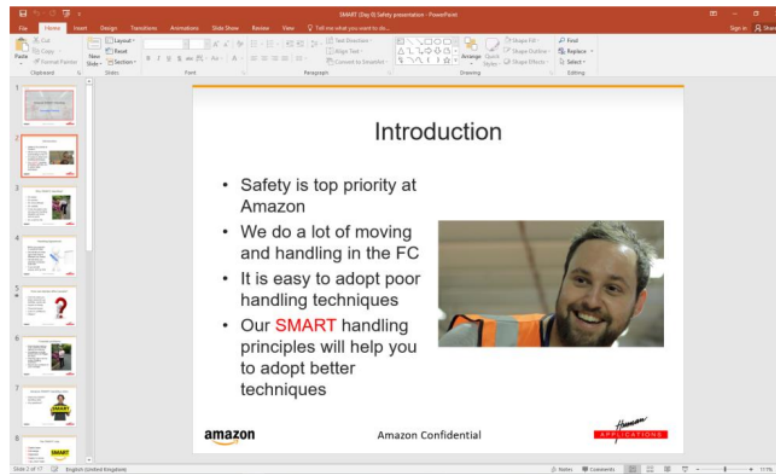


Figure 12: Amazon Health and Safety PowerPoint

Google Slides: As another alternative to Microsoft PowerPoint, Google Slides offers a different range of benefits to its competitors. One of the main advantages over PowerPoint is that Google Slides allows Real-Time Collaboration meaning that more than one person can work on the same presentation at the same time, this could be beneficial for Amazon moving forward as it could decrease the time spent to create a Slideshow. Google Slides is also a web-based tool which is free to use which means that unlike PowerPoint no Software needs downloading, this also has the advantage of the user saving the monthly charge compared to PowerPoint. There are similarities between PowerPoint and Google Slides regarding the ribbon placed at the top of the screen, there is a limited option of tools and a lack of available themes whilst using Google Slides compared to PowerPoint. Another disadvantage Google Slides has is that due to most people having used PowerPoint over the years it feels there is a lot to learn to become comfortable with new Software.

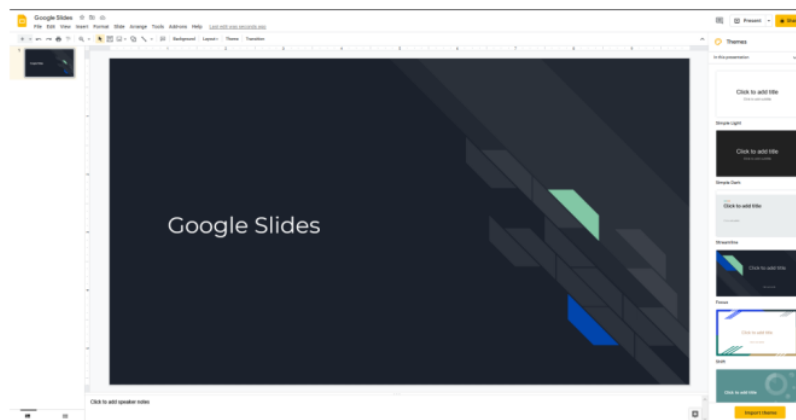


Figure 13: Google Slides Example

3 Conclusion

Over the past 17 years the use of applications has had an enormous impact on the growth of Amazon, as of today Amazon has more than 175 Fulfilment Centres worldwide covering more than 150 million square feet of space. [11] As reported Amazon's use of applications (especially software embedded in the Office 365 suite) has played a massive part in Amazon's success over the years, not only by increasing the productivity of all employers or keeping them up to date with any latest news, but also making sure all employers have annual Health and Safety refreshers to prevent injury at work. Communication Software such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom have also made an incredible impact over the past year preventing the infection rate of Covid-19, with the government guidelines put in place regarding social distancing these applications have managed to bring some normality back into people's lives.

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GENERAL COMMENTS

Instructor

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