



Inspiration Software, Inc. Corporate Backgrounder

Leader in Visual Thinking and Learning

Recognized as the leader in visual thinking and learning, Inspiration® Software, Inc.'s award-winning technology tools are based on proven visual learning methodologies that help students, educators and 21st century business leaders think, learn, brainstorm, analyze and write. The company's visual learning tools are used by more than 25 million people worldwide and are revolutionizing visual thinking and learning in education. Webspiration Classroom™, Inspiration®, Kidspiration® and InspireData® inspire students and creative thinkers to develop strong thinking and organizational skills, improve their academic performance, and tap the power of visual thinking.

Company History

For more than a quarter century, Inspiration Software's focus has been developing innovative technology to support visual thinking and learning. Founded in 1982 by Donald Helfgott and Mona Westhaver, the company developed its first product for the CP/M operating system to help systems analysts build products to meet business needs. Next, Inspiration Software created a line of products for the Tandy Model 100, the original notebook computer, used primarily by outside sales staff, writers and editors.

In 1987, the company's focus turned to brainstorming, thinking and organizing tools. The first version of Inspiration was released for the Apple® Macintosh® in 1988. Subsequent releases included a Windows version, major upgrades and a native Japanese version on both platforms.

By the early 1990s, Inspiration made its way into the classroom as teachers started using it to help their students plan, organize and write. 1996 brought an exciting change – a new focus on developing visual learning software to meet the needs of educators and students. Inspiration 5.0 Education Edition was released in 1997. In early 2010, the company unveiled Inspiration 9, the ultimate thinking and learning tool to help students grade 6 to adult to comprehend, create, communicate and achieve more.

To extend the power of visual learning to younger students, Kidspiration was launched in January 2001. Early 2008 marked the debut of the most recent version of Kidspiration, which uses the proven principles of visual learning to help K-5 learners strengthen reading and writing skills, build conceptual understanding in math, and develop thinking skills across the curriculum.

In July 2006, Inspiration Software's flagship products were joined by InspireData, the visual way to explore and understand data. Students in grades 4-12 use InspireData to build data literacy skills in science, mathematics and social studies. In September 2007, InspireData 1.5 was released with new and enhanced features to increase data literacy, including more than 100 content-rich databases, the e-Survey tool and database templates to jumpstart data collection.

In 2011, Inspiration Software took visual thinking to the cloud with the launch of Webspiration Classroom, the online writing, visual thinking and collaboration tool for students and teachers. Developed based on the company's decades of experience as the leader in visual thinking and learning, Webspiration Classroom combines the power of visual thinking with innovative collaboration tools and 24/7 access, offering students a safe and reliable online environment where they can work independently, with their peers, in groups and with their teachers to develop and strengthen their writing and thinking skills.

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Momentum for the use of visual learning software in the classroom continues to grow not only in the United States, but also worldwide. Inspiration Software developed International English editions of Inspiration and Kidspiration for Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia and other English-speaking countries around the globe. A French version was released in Canada and France, and in response to requests from countries such as Mexico and Puerto Rico, a Spanish-language version was launched as well. Inspiration was also localized in Portuguese to serve the growing Brazilian education market.

As Inspiration Software writes the next exciting chapter in its history, the company will continue to develop innovative visual learning tools that help all learners build the thinking skills necessary to achieve at the highest levels and become successful, contributing members of 21st century society.

Inspired Products

Educators agree that visual learning is one of the best methods for teaching thinking skills. Using visual learning techniques – associating ideas, concepts, data and other information with images and graphic representations – students are better able to focus on meaning, reorganize and group similar ideas, identify misconceptions, analyze information and use their visual memory. Mind maps, webs, concept maps, plots and Venn diagrams are some of the techniques used in visual learning to enhance thinking and learning skills.

- **Webspiration Classroom:** The newest member of the Inspiration Software family of visual learning tools, Webspiration Classroom offers students and teachers anytime, anywhere access to a powerful online writing, visual thinking and collaboration tool. With Webspiration Classroom, students grades 5-12 use visual thinking and outlining techniques to build writing skills and analyze, synthesize and comprehend information anytime, anywhere. 24/7 online access facilitates peer review, collaboration and student-teacher interaction – engaging students, extending their learning time and increasing achievement in language arts and across the curriculum.
- **Inspiration:** Inspiration is the ultimate thinking and learning tool to comprehend, create, communicate and achieve more. The visual learning software for grade 6 to adult provides an essential framework for thinking and helping students to visualize and develop ideas, understand and retain concepts, plan and organize written work, demonstrate understanding and present knowledge.
- **Kidspiration:** Created for K-5 learners, Kidspiration develops thinking, literacy and numeracy skills, using the proven principles of visual learning. Kidspiration supports students as they think creatively and organize ideas to write, comprehend and communicate successfully.
- **InspireData:** Students in grades 4-12 use InspireData, the visual way to explore and understand data, to build critical data analysis skills. They actively explore and analyze data in science, mathematics and social studies, using dynamic Venn, bar, stack, pie and axis plots to interpret information and draw conclusions.

Connect with Inspiration Software:

Inspiration Software connects with teachers and learners around the world through its blog, **Thinkspiration**[™], well as a Facebook page and Twitter feed. Written by company co-founder and president Mona Westhaver, Thinkspiration is a forum for educators and educational experts at all levels of experience and focus to exchange ideas – sharing research, news, trends and lessons to help students achieve to their highest potential. In addition to weekly posts from Westhaver, Thinkspiration features the “Inspired Calendar,” which provides lesson plans and activities for using Webspiration Classroom, Inspiration, Kidspiration and InspireData with students.

Educator Resources

Inspiration Software offers educators tools and resources for integrating visual learning into all areas of the curriculum.

- Inspiration Software offers teachers at the hundreds of schools and districts across the country that have purchased volume and site licenses of **Inspiration 9** access to a comprehensive set of resources and training materials, including more than 70 videos developed in collaboration with Atomic Learning. The library of online videos developed specifically for Inspiration 9 provides teachers with training tools for learning how to use all of the visual learning software's powerful capabilities at their own pace. Beginning with a series of overview videos that introduce both visual learning in the classroom and the tools in Inspiration, these short – some less than a minute – online tutorials provide step-by-step instructions for using the software, including Inspiration 9's new Presentation Manager and visual view, Map View. Other resources include sample lesson plans and examples for using Inspiration 9 in the classroom, as well as training and presentation scripts.
- Teachers will find great resources for using visual learning with young learners with three lesson plan books from Inspiration Software: "**Kidspiration** in the Classroom: Reading Essentials" includes lessons for grades K-5 emphasizing the development of early literacy skills and the essential components of effective reading instruction, including phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary and comprehension, as well as for helping learners build vocabulary and reading comprehension and content literacy skills. "Kidspiration in the Classroom: Math Made Visual" offers 30 lesson plans aligned to National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) standards and designed to support K-5 math instruction. Lessons focus on core content strands, including number and operations, algebra, measurement and geometry in ways that promote the development of problem-solving, reasoning and communication skills. "Kidspiration in the Classroom: Writing Essentials" is designed to teach students the complete writing process and includes standards-aligned chapters and lessons on prewriting, drafting and revising, editing and publishing, in addition to forms of writing. Training resources are also available for volume and site license purchases, including how-to-use and curriculum application training videos.
- To support teachers as they use **InspireData** to help students build data analysis skills and strengthen their critical-thinking skills while learning about topics in science and social studies, Inspiration Software created "InspireData and Science: Question, Analyze and Predict" and "InspireData and Social Studies: Explore, Analyze and Understand." Each book includes 20 easy-to-use lessons for grades 4-12, aligned to national academic standards. "Developing Data Literacy with InspireData" offers 27 content-rich standards-aligned lessons to help teachers incorporate InspireData into their science, mathematics and social studies curriculum.
- Inspiration Software hosts the **Inspired Learning Community**, a free online community for educators who want to inspire their students to excel with visual thinking and learning. This site at www.inspiration.com/community offers educators a place to discover and share ideas and resources for effectively using Inspiration Software's visual learning products to develop students' critical-thinking skills across the curriculum.

Recognized Commitment to Excellence

From inspiring students to study and learn successfully to helping adults and project teams work more productively, Inspiration Software is dedicated to improving academic and professional performance. In addition to creating technology and resource materials that build critical-thinking skills for users of all ages, the company offers professional development scholarships for educators. Company leaders demonstrate their commitment to encouraging the use of technology to improve education by serving on industry boards and committees such as the Software & Information Industry Association's (SIIA) Education Division Board. In its hometown of Beaverton, Ore., Inspiration Software gives back to the community through support of local schools and education initiatives.

In its first year, the newest version of the company's flagship visual learning software, Inspiration 9, has garnered 15 awards from the education, technology and parenting communities, including a prestigious SIIA CODiE Award, an Award of Excellence from "Tech & Learning" magazine, the National Parenting Center Seal of Approval and two Distinguished Achievement Awards from the Association of Educational Publishers (AEP).

Since its launch in early 2008, Kidspiration 3 has earned more than 25 awards across the education, parenting and technology communities, including a 2009 SIIA CODiE Award. Kidspiration also boasts two AEP Distinguished Achievement Awards.

InspireData has earned many accolades as well. InspireData won a 2007 Award of Excellence from "Tech & Learning" magazine and was recognized in the 12th annual Education Software Review (EDDIES) program. The software also won three consecutive BESSIE Awards and was picked as one of the Top 100 products of 2007 by "District Administration" readers.

As a company, Inspiration Software has been honored for its accomplishments, receiving the 2007 EdNET IMPACT award as well as prior HERO and Pioneer awards for making significant contributions to education technology and the education market. In 2002, the company ranked 310th in its first appearance on the Inc. 500, "Inc." magazine's list of the 500 fastest growing U.S. private companies. Inspiration Software takes pride in being an innovative place to work and making a positive difference in people's lives.

For more information, press only:

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