

Bye-Bye Spreadsheets. Hello Microsoft Project!

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Part 1

1. Difference between spreadsheets and MS Project.

Spreadsheets:

- Add dates manually to schedule.
- Cannot link tasks.
- Unable to get a clear (professional) picture of the project, immediately.

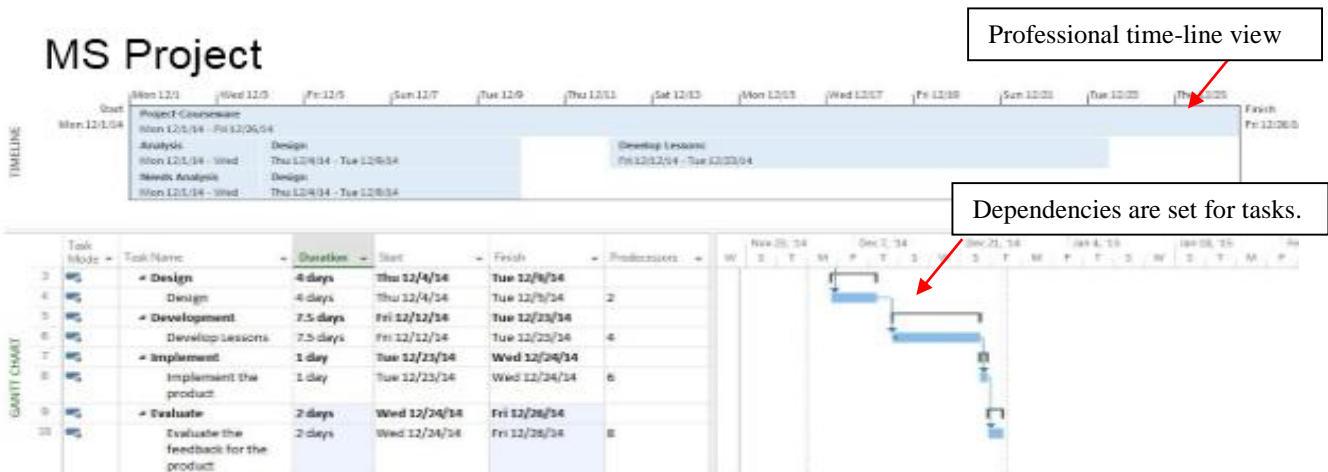
Spreadsheet



MS Project:

- Automatically updates the dates with respect to the new schedule.
- Can link tasks to update automatically in sync with change in dates.
- Has a professional timeline view.

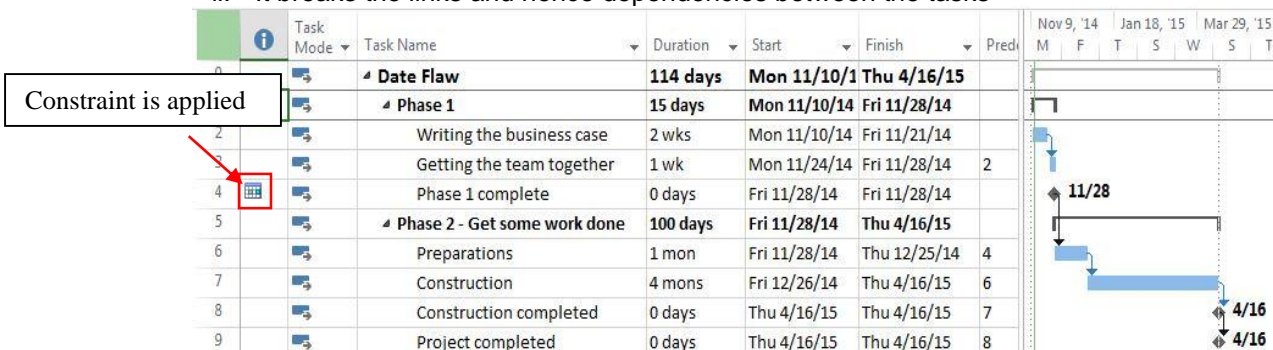
MS Project



2. Avoid entering the dates manually.

a. If we enter dates manually:

- It applies a constraint to the schedule
- It breaks the links and hence dependencies between the tasks



3. Do not include resources in the Task field
 - By including resource names directly in the task field, we miss:
 - o The resource sheet
 - o The standard hourly rate, calendar etc., for the resource
 - o The number of hours worked on a specific task for a resource.

Adding resource names directly in the task field

Task Mode	Task Name	Duration	Start	Finish
1	Writing a Business Plan	9 days		
2	Suresh	2 days		
3	Ramesh	3 days		
4	Prakash	4 days		

4. Avoid assigning resource names by typing their names in the resource column.
 - By typing resource names in the resource column, we create the following errors:
 - o Create a new resource even if there is a typo.
 - o Create conflicting calendars when assigning incorrect resources.

Typos create new resources

Task Mode	Task Name	Duration	Start	Finish	Resource Names
1	Task 1	3 days?	Thu 11/13/14	Mon 11/17/14	
2	Sub 1	1 day?	Thu 11/13/14	Thu 11/13/14	
3	Sub 2	1 day?	Fri 11/14/14	Fri 11/14/14	Suresh N
4	Sub 3	1 day?	Mon 11/17/14	Mon 11/17/14	rakash
5	Task 2	3 days?	Tue 11/18/14	Thu 11/20/14	
6	Sub 1	1 day?	Tue 11/18/14	Tue 11/18/14	
7	Sub 2	1 day?	Wed 11/19/14	Wed 11/19/14	
8	Sub 3	1 day?	Thu 11/20/14	Thu 11/20/14	

Tip: To avoid this, you may disable the option of adding new resources and tasks automatically by disabling the option "Automatically add new resources and tasks." This displays an error when a new resource is added automatically.

5. Avoid linking summary tasks. Its effects are:
 - a. Some tasks become abandoned.
 - b. The task dependencies become complex.
 - c. The duration of the project might get extended.
 - d. Parallel sub-tasks of summary tasks are ignored.
 - e. Circular task relationship with other tasks occurs.

Before linking summary tasks

Task Mode	Task Name	Duration	Start	Finish	Predec
0	Project-Linking Summary Tasks	13 days	Mon 12/1/14	Wed 12/17/14	
1	Summary Task1	9 days	Mon 12/1/14	Thu 12/11/14	
2	Task 1	2 days	Mon 12/1/14	Tue 12/2/14	
3	Task 2	7 days	Wed 12/3/14	Thu 12/11/14	2
4	Summary Task2	11 days	Wed 12/3/14	Wed 12/17/14	
5	Task 3	7 days	Wed 12/3/14	Thu 12/11/14	2
6	Task 4	4 days	Fri 12/12/14	Wed 12/17/14	5

After linking summary tasks

Task Mode	Task Name	Duration	Start	Finish	Preced
0	Project-Linking Summary Tasks	13 days	Mon 12/1/14	Wed 12/17/14	
1	Summary Task1	9 days	Mon 12/1/14	Thu 12/11/14	
2	Task 1	2 days	Mon 12/1/14	Tue 12/2/14	
3	Task 2	7 days	Wed 12/3/14	Thu 12/11/14	2
4	Summary Task2	11 days	Wed 12/3/14	Wed 12/17/14	
5	Task 3	7 days	Wed 12/3/14	Thu 12/11/14	2
6	Task 4	4 days	Fri 12/12/14	Wed 12/17/14	5

6. Try to avoid linking resources to summary tasks. It may lead to:

- Over-allocation of resources
- Duplication of work
- Miscalculation of work hours

Resource is over allocated

Task Mode	Task Name	Duration	Start	Finish	Resource Names
0	Task 1	7 days	Thu 11/13/14	Fri 11/25/14	Prakash
1	Sub 1	2 days	Thu 11/13/14	Fri 11/14/14	Prakash
2	Sub 2	3 days	Mon 11/17/14	Wed 11/19/14	
3	Sub 3	2 days	Thu 11/20/14	Fri 11/25/14	
4	Task 2	6 days	Mon 11/24/14	Mon 12/1/14	
5	Sub 2	1 day	Mon 11/24/14	Mon 11/24/14	
6	Sub 2	2 days	Tue 11/25/14	Wed 11/26/14	
7	Sub 3	3 days	Thu 11/27/14	Mon 12/1/14	

7. What happens when you ignore an incomplete task that was scheduled in the past?

- Partially completed/on-hold tasks will lead to an incorrect forecast:
 - Considers the time gap between the date the task was put on-hold and the current date.
 - Ignores the idle time in between
- Leads to an incomplete/inaccurate data

Project ignores the idle time

Task Mode	Task Name	Duration	Start	Finish	Preced
0	Project-Linking Summary Tasks	34.75 days	Mon 12/1/14	Fri 1/16/15	
1	Summary Task1	23.75 days	Mon 12/1/14	Thu 1/1/15	
2	Compose	2 days	Mon 12/1/14	Tue 12/2/14	
3	Edit	10 days	Wed 12/3/14	Thu 1/1/15	2
4	Summary Task2	11 days	Thu 1/1/15	Fri 1/16/15	
5	Review	7 days	Thu 1/1/15	Mon 1/12/15	3
6	Publish	4 days	Mon 1/12/15	Fri 1/16/15	5

- To exclude the idle time of the ignored tasks, use “Update Project” option to include the ignored tasks, but exclude the idle time.

Update Project

Update work as complete through: Mon 12/15/14

Set 0% - 100% complete

Set 0% or 100% complete only

Reschedule uncompleted work to start after: Mon 12/15/14

For: Entire project Selected tasks

Buttons: Help, OK, Cancel