

InfoVeg - Bug #3787

Decide on better project management software/approach

01/29/2009 11:17 AM - Michael Lee

Status:	Resolved	Start date:	01/29/2009
Priority:	Normal	Due date:	
Assignee:	Michael Lee	% Done:	0%
Category:	misc	Estimated time:	0.00 hour
Target version:	2009-Jan	Spent time:	0.00 hour
Bugzilla-Id:	3787		
Description			
Currently we use bugzilla and a seldom- (but erratically-) updated Excel file.			
Michael will email Mark S. about the various programs listed in wikipedia and in general seek advice.			
Related issues:			
Blocked by InfoVeg - Bug #3800: 1/28/2009 CONTAINER bug		New	01/29/2009

History

#1 - 01/29/2009 02:03 PM - Michael Lee

Mark has been emailed. We will see what he says.

#2 - 02/13/2009 08:54 AM - Michael Lee

MJ has been emailed about this too.

#3 - 02/26/2009 07:58 AM - Michael Lee

NCEAS has been using Trac lately. Trac was also suggested by a friend who used to work at Yahoo.

A friend from NatureServe had a lot to say about this:

What are your specific PM challenges? How granular do you need the tool to be?

Some challenges that might make one tool better than another:

- 1) Ability to see the critical path
- 2) Have people track time/effort in the tool to reflect %complete.
- 3) Managing distributed staff efforts
- 4) Planning ahead
- 5) Ability to add out of scope and unexpected tasks (In software, we call these "bugs and feature requests")

Sometimes all you really need is better process rather than a tool. When I left natureserve, we were using Sharepoint's built in widgets to do a lot of progress reporting (most of our PM work tended to be related to reporting up rather than managing down). However, the reporting mechanism proved to be an excellent cross team communication tool. Then you just need a whip who will nag folks to submit their updates.

The easy ones to quickly review:

BaseCamp (hosted solution, free for one user, one project, for fooling around). Lots of people use it. Good user interface and general communication tool. A bit high-level and lacking in granularity.

Jira (atlassian) - highly configurable. Free for educational institutes. Atlassian also makes Confluence, a pretty good wiki--Oregon State uses it. Infinitely configurable, it can handle both high level as well as highly granular detail. It is a bit high-maintenance at the beginning since you pretty much have to configure it all, but it is the nicest since you can do the most with it. Readily imports data from other sources. I am not positive, but i think the free versions are hosted, and may have "canned" features, which would reduce the configuration/maintenance headaches.

Rally - hosted PM solution. I thought this would be great for software development, but it was too costly for us. They may or may not have a discount for edu.

What I've used:

- 1) MS Project -- I think this is a decent planning tool, but I didn't much like it for actually managing a project. Getting granular is like inviting a scorpion into your bed.
- 2) ExtrmePlanner -- a fairly light-weight task manager. Requires staff to track time/effort, but is great for keeping an eye on the completeness of work. Not free, and not hosted, last I heard.

3) Sharepoint. If you actually HAVE sharepoint, you can make "project sites" with "sub pages" to manage specific teams. You can grant permissions to specific people to update specific sections. Integrates with MS Project, although I have personally NEVER benefited from this feature. It is good if communication is your priority, and not keeping track of time/money/effort.

All the tools require 100% participation from your team, so it is best if you vet them with your team members and get a CONSENSUS because it only takes one dissenter to make your life difficult as a PM trying to use a specific tool.

#4 - 03/03/2009 10:42 AM - Michael Lee

More comments coming back from folks:

Atlassian Jira (<http://www.atlassian.com/>) is a cool product that I think has a free version. It's similar to Bugzilla but much more user-friendly.

Someone also briefly mentioned Mantis as useful for task-tracking.

also:

Basecamp (<http://www.basecamp.com/?source=37s+home>) is quickly becoming an industry standard for Project Management. ... that would be my rec.

#5 - 04/06/2009 12:28 PM - Michael Lee

MS phoned today, left a message.

#6 - 04/29/2011 08:24 AM - Forbes Boyle

we'll try bugzilla for a while.

#7 - 03/27/2013 02:24 PM - Redmine Admin

Original Bugzilla ID was 3787