

Re: Dependencies and out of sequence scenario.

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Source: <http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/Project/microsoft.public.project/2006-10/msg00857.html>

- *From:* Manis <Manis@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Thu, 19 Oct 2006 10:50:02 -0700
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I'm not trying to do anything with the actual dates. It was just that I expected the actual finish date to be current date, when I mark the task complete (using the % complete field). Apparently, that's not how the actual dates work.

I have a better understanding now. Got some more reading to do I guess :)

Thanks again!
Manis.

"John" wrote:

In article <0DA272BC-2999-437B-B771-21A63BC4370A@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx>, Manis <Manis@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

John,

Sorry. Didn't mean to frustrate you. (By the way, I found the answer, I'm explaining it at the end).

I'll try again.

1. Create 3 simple tasks. You will notice that they all begin on the same day.
2. Make task2 dependent on Task1 and task3 dependent on task2. This will make the tasks fall in sequence. (One after another).
3. If I mark task2 complete, shouldn't task3 start ASAP? Does this not translate as the completion date of task1?

Answer: When you mark the task complete, the actual finish date is set to the "finish" date. i.e if the finish date is in the future and you mark it complete today, the actual finish date will show the future date and not today's date! (I didn't know that.)

Some examples

Task1 - 1 day 10/19 - 10/19

Task2 - 1 day 10/20 - 10/20 - depends on Task1

Task3 - 1 day 10/23 - 10/23 - depends on Task2

If I mark Task2 complete on 10/19. The actual finish is still set to 10/20

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and not 10/19. This ensures that Task3 starts on 10/23 and not 10/20. If I change the actual finish on Task2 to 10/02, The duration is set to 0, Task3 starts on 10/02.

This puts Task3 before Task1! Screwing up the whole plan. I was not sure if this was happening in my plan. It didn't look like it. So, I wanted to know why it was not happening.

Bottom line – the default behaviour of actual finish date is what is desired and marking tasks complete ahead of schedule does not impact the plan. (Not unless you mess around with the actual finish date).

Please let me know if there's more to this.

Thanks guys!
Manis.

Manis,

I thought I mentioned in an earlier response that if task progress is entered via a task's Actual Start and Actual Finish fields, then Project will change the Start and Finish fields to agree with the actual dates. Project is simply adjusting the estimated dates (i.e. the schedule) to agree with reality (i.e. actual dates). However if progress is entered via the % Complete or % Work Complete fields, then Project will make the Actual Start and Actual Finish fields equal to the scheduled dates. Project is simply saying that the plan dates were good and the task was preformed "on schedule". However, maybe it was someone else's post where I explained this.

At any rate, it is a little confusing when you say, "If I mark task 2 compete on 10/19". Is 10/19 the day you entered 100% in the % Complete field or is 10/19 the actual date the task was completed? In the former, the task's actual finish date will indeed be 10/20, while in the latter, the task's actual finish date will of course be 10/19.

Why would you want to set the actual finish date of a task to a date before the task's scheduled start date? Indeed that is "screwing up the whole plan". It is OK to enter an actual finish date without entering a actual start date but that finish date **MUST** be on or after the scheduled start date, otherwise the task duration doesn't make any sense.

Hopefully you now have a better understanding of how the Start, Finish, Actual Start and Actual Finish fields interact.

John
Project MVP

"Manis" wrote:

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This is a problem that I'm having in my project. The project plan was complete and we had all the dependencies set. Many of them were start to finish. Now during the project, I'm finding that many of the successor tasks are actually complete before the predecessor!

I understand that the dependencies were setup wrong. The users say that the dependencies are actually resource dependent instead of task dependencies.

For eg:- if a task is being executed by an experienced resource, he has the required knowledge and does not have to wait for the predecessor to be complete. Valid argument. The problem is that the task has a generic resource against it. So, at the time of planning, I don't know what kind of dependency to set. I elected to use "start to finish". (Don't ask why.)

Question : If a successor is set as complete before the predecessor, what happens to the dates?

if Task1, Task2 & Task3 are to be executed in that sequence and I mark Task2 as complete before Task1, what happens to the plan for Task1 and Task3?