

RE: how to integrate ms project 2003 with a 3rd party system?

Source: <http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/Project/microsoft.public.project/2007-09/msg00604.html>

- *From:* Jim Aksel <JimAksel@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Wed, 26 Sep 2007 03:44:04 -0700
-

"Out of the box" means MS Project already has this feature.

Suggestion – unless you truly understand what the software does and can schedule some simple projects using the full features of the product, I would suggest you select something else. There is no sense in developing additional software if MS Project already performs the functions desired.

If you wish to do some type of scheduling project, might I suggest that you survey about 100 people who use MS Project and ask them what additional features it might need that would make it more useful, then code that. If you decide to survey users, make sure they are "robust users" ... people that use the product and most of its features... talking to some casual user will be worthless unless they know what project can really do.

—
If this post was helpful, please consider rating it.

Jim

Visit <http://project.mvps.org/> for FAQs and more information about Microsoft Project

"urgent!!" wrote:

what do you mean by "Project does this out of the box" ? so means that what I want my system to do basically MS Project can do?? I'm not fully developing the system, more like a prototype. Moreover I'm not so familiar with using MS Project 2003. I'm doing this project just for my academic purpose. So does that means is not worth developing the system that I want? By the way I'm using MS Project 2003 as the interface though MS Project 2003 has more features.

"Jim Aksel" wrote:

** in line ***

"urgent!!" wrote:

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Thanks for your opinion. Actually I'm a student who is doing this project for my final year degree. I only have basic knowledge on MS Project and I have limited knowledge on technical and development stuff but I'm willing to learn so I hope that you could assist me if I have any question on MS Project.

Anyway regarding my project, I'm incorporating OO concepts in developing the system. What I want my system can do is:
" Allowing project managers to reschedule the engaged resources

** Project does this out of the box **

" Allowing project manager to conduct what if analysis

** Project 2007 does this out of the box **

" Allowing flexibility to the project managers in managing the resources

** too vague

" Allowing project managers to view the past performances projects records

** Open a completed project file. Actually, a database of this information might be helpful. You could have tables for Control Account Managers, and their tasks. You could analyze how they did compared to baseline estimates.
**

" Allow project managers to do prediction of possible crisis

** Project already does this... monitor Schedule Performance Index and Cost Performance Index. Plot BCWS and BCWP. Project 2007 does this out of the box in conjunction with Excel **More detail below

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" Able to notify the project managers for which task that lies on the critical path is affected by the crisis

** Once you calculate (or devine) what tasks are "in crisis" then set a flag such as Flag1="yes" then filter on Critical=yes and Flag1="yes". Typical scenario in my buisiness is SPI or CPI differs from 1.00 by more than +/-0.10 and SV or CV is greater than \$25,000 US. This would be a good one to program, especially if you made the numbers configurable and optional **

" Allow project managers to generate a report of the solution to solve the crisis

** Project does not provide solutions, only evidence **

" Allow project manager in monitoring, controlling and tracking the project with optimal usage of resources.

** Rather vague, but project already does most of this. What might be nice would be to have skills grouped together by skill code (Project does this). Then, you could solve a minimizatin program to find the minimum cost to complete the program and assign the resources accordingly. Trust me (and I teach graduate school computer science) this last one is a tremendous undertaking and should not be attempted alone ***

So I would like to gain opinion from you which suggested way is most suitable for me to choose? Also which way is the easiest to implement due to time and skill constraint?

"Jim Aksel" wrote:

I don't understand what you mean by "The stand alone system I want to develop does not interfere with MS Project but it uses MS Project as a main interface for user input (Gantt chart). "

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If you are using MS Project as the main interface for user input, then you are using MS Project. "Does not interfere" is what baffles me.

Ways to go...

1. Open a project file (Project1.mpp) in MS Project. Using Visual Basic For Applications (it is already inside of MS Project), you can create user forms and routines to do a lot of things. This is using MS Project as the main interface. Your code and created forms would become part of either Project1.mpp or the master template for all Project files on that computer (Global.mpp). There is plenty you can do with VBA, but it is not nearly as full featured as an independent development environment. Anything you do to change the data in Project1.mpp will be reflected in Project1.mpp when you save it.

In this regard, the user would have to open the file in MS Project before they could do anything with the custom forms you created.

There is a good book on this topic called VBA Programming for Microsoft Office Project Versions 98 through 2007, by Rod Gill. ISBN 0-9759828-7-7. It's absolutely outstanding and I recommend it highly.

To access the Visual Basic for Application development environment (called the Visual Basic Editor – VBE), open MS Project and press ALT+F11, or, Tools/Macros/Visual Basic Editor

You can program this to make any type of output you want...export to Excel, Powerpoint, a Text file, a new Project file.... wake up Word. If you are tricky you can even get it to make a PDF.

2. Create a stand alone Windows Application using a tool like Visual Studio. Here, you would have to specify the name of

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the MS Project file you want to manipulate— such as C:\Folder Name\myProjectFile.mpp, it can be done with a standard OpenFileDialog. Or, you could create a new Project1.mpp file programmatically. You can have the new application wake up MS Project in either a visible or invisible mode. If you do it "silently" then no one will see the MS Project application GUI... only your GUI. If you make it visible, then your GUI and MS Project will show.

From within this new stand alone application, with a specific project.mpp file as a target, you can do anything you could do in MS Project: Add tasks, edit task information, create links, take %Complete. You could also do it on the main project file. When your new application closes, you can decide (or ask the user) if they want to save changes made by your program to the myProjectFile.mpp. Your new application can make other calculations that you desire limited only by your imagination. Most of that can be done in VBA as well.

3. You can save files from MS Project out to various formats. Once such format is XML. If you do that, then you can write anything you want to manipulate the data and display it in a browser such as Internet Explorer. Once your XML transform saves the file back, you could re-open the XML file in MS Project and your changes would become visible in the MS Project display.

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Jim

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"urgent!!" wrote:

Thanks for you answer.
Actually I'm still
investigating whether such
approach
can be done or not. I'm
doing this project for my
degree level. The stand
alone system I want to
develop does not interfer
with MS Project but it uses
MS Project as a main
interface for user input
(Gantt chart). So the system
is
able to retrieve the required
data from MS Project and if
there is any
changes made to the data it
will reflect to the original
data. That's why I'm
not sure whether can this be
done or not. If can I would
like to know how.

"Jim Aksel" wrote:

You will
probably
get a more
robust
response by
posting to a
sister news
group
dedicated to
Development
in MS
Project:
microsoft.public.project.developer
The group
is primarily
dedicated to
answering
questions

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about
software
development
from within
the MS
Project
application
-- but there
are plenty
of
other issues
addressed
there as
well.

I am not
sure I fully
understand
your
question,
since you
say you are
already in
development.
Here is
some
general
information.
If you wish
more,
please post
a more
specific
question.

You can
create a
stand alone
Windows
application
using any
desired
development
environment.
I have
personally
done it
using
VB.NET
and Visual
Studio

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2005. C# is also very common and is sometimes even preferred. You can reference the MS Project libraries directly in VS. This allows you to do anything in VB.NET (Visual Studio) or C# that you could do in project, plus a whole lot more. You could even develop MS Project if you wanted to.

If you have VS, open a new Windows application, then add a reference to the MS Project libraries.

Other things are possible using Flash, Adobe Flex, Microsoft Sharepoint and

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the like.

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Microsoft
Project

"urgent!!"
wrote:

I m
developing
a
system
which
is
a
complimentary
tool
for
Microsoft
Project
2003.
This
system
will
be
able
to
assists
project
managers
in
making
accurate
decision

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with
an
optimal
usage
of
resources
such
as
man-day
and
number
of
skilled
people.
Such
resources
will
eventually
be
converted
into
the
cost
of
the
project.
However,
there
are
few
approaches
to
implement
this
system
which
is
still
under
research

The
system
will
integrate
with
Microsoft
Project
2003
in
which

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the
required
data
(task
name,
start
date,
end
date,
man-day,
predecessor
task,
successor
task,
cost,
task
duration
and
etc.)
is
directly
retrieved
from
Microsoft
Project
2003
database.
The
changes
made
to
these
data
will
be
reflected
to
its
original
data
and
the
results
will
be
shown
in
Microsoft
Project
2003.

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