



View from the Top

Project Assistants celebrates its 17-year anniversary this week, and over the course of these many years as an executive in this business, I've come to notice two consistent, problematic themes in the way organizations manage projects:

1. There's a general belief that technology solutions manage projects, and it's the project manager's job to just know which buttons to push, and
2. Monolithic processes used throughout organizations are too sluggish to adapt to ever-changing business conditions and are too generalized to be effectively applied to all projects.

So to kick off Project Assistants' 18th year in the business, we're excited to announce the release of two new products that address these prevalent project management shortcomings:

Project Management Using Microsoft Project 2013

Project Assistants President and CEO, Gus Cicala, has been delivering training on Microsoft Project since Microsoft Project version 3, and now he has condensed those twenty-years of honed training content into a single, comprehensive training guide. *Project Management Using Microsoft Project 2013* provides theory, reference material, and hands-on exercises for Microsoft Project Standard, Professional, Server, Web App and Project Online, and it will be released to the public this month.

Many training guides on technology are simply manuals on software features and functions, which teaches its readers merely how to be rote technicians—knowing which buttons to push to make the software say what they want it to. But, as they say, "A fool with a tool is a faster fool."

Project Management Using Microsoft Project 2013 weaves theory into the technology how-to so that the focus is primarily on the overall framework of project

management best practices, showing how you can use Microsoft Project as an helper tool within that framework. The text, then, is as much about the *why* behind the features and functions, demonstrating how they can be used to drive project success.

The book will be available by the end of August and can be ordered on CreateSpace.com as well as Amazon.

Methods Automation and Distribution Tool

Project Assistants is also pleased to announce the availability of our Methods Automation and Distribution Tool, which applies an "Assemble to Order" approach to building workflows to address an age-old problem with Methodology distribution and maintenance.

Whereas one methodology often needs to be rendered in numerous+ semi-redundant variations to address unique needs of different customers and unique projects, the Methods Automation Tool produces outputs tailored for each methodology variation by combining the unique components you select.

Static methodologies conform to a snapshot of business conditions at the time the methodology was developed, and they decay over time as those conditions change. The custom workflow of Project Assistants' tool resolves this, since the variations are generated based on project-specific attributes that are entered *at the time of the project*.

The Methods Automation and Distribution Tool is a web-based solution that allows you to easily access different views for the methods to be used in a given project; for example, you can view deliverables by role. The tool provides a "standard" delivery of methodology variations, such as infrastructure, package selection and implementation, and custom application development (e.g.: Agile, Waterfall).

Finally, the product can include customization, implementation, and adoption services, to both ensure a smooth transition and to provide the valuable support and maintenance that methodologies rarely receive.

The tool is currently available and can be licensed for your organization's use. Contact info@projectassistants.com for any questions about Project Assistants' Methods Automation and Distribution Tool or its corresponding services.

Webinar

Topic: *Leveraging the Value of Microsoft Project 2013*

Date: September 24th, 2013

Time: 3:00pm

[Click here to view webinar](#)

With the release of Microsoft Project Server 2013, Microsoft has provided the option to host the Microsoft Project Server environment off-premises in the Microsoft cloud. The potential cost savings and convenience of working in the cloud has many companies eager to upgrade, but organizations naturally fear the growing pains that come with change.

The third installment of the 2013 Webinar Series seeks to alleviate these concerns in *Leveraging the Value of Microsoft Project Server 2013*. On September 24th at 3pm, Project Assistants president and CEO Gus Cicala and Practice Director of Portfolio and Project Management Jim Colton will explore the new features available to host Microsoft Project Professional and Project Web Application in the Microsoft Cloud environment, including the following topics:

- New hosting features to set up and administer users and licenses in the Microsoft Cloud portal for Microsoft Project 2013,
- New features of Microsoft Project Professional 2013 and Microsoft Project Web Application 2013 that allow project managers, end

Project 2013 Feature of the Month

Reporting in Microsoft Project 2013

The primary reporting features of Microsoft Project had remained relatively unchanged for the last 20 years, but with Project 2013, Microsoft has overhauled reporting and communication. It shouldn't be a big surprise that the functions pertaining to project communication would see some of the biggest changes, given the buzz around Microsoft's move to the cloud with their 2013 suite.

The changes are apparent right from the launch screen. The Microsoft Project welcome screen gives you the option to use an out-of-the-box template, a custom template, use a previously saved project, or start from scratch.

The reports themselves have seen significant changes as well. Microsoft has moved from the black-and-white "wall of text" to more graphic, interactive displays of Key Performance Indicators. The images below illustrate the impact on the look and readability of these changes, and there has been an infusion of interactivity, both in terms of the customizability on the input end and the dynamic information set on the output end. Another large improvement is the inclusion of Burndown Reports to support Agile Development.

users, and stakeholders to leverage the power of Project in the cloud,

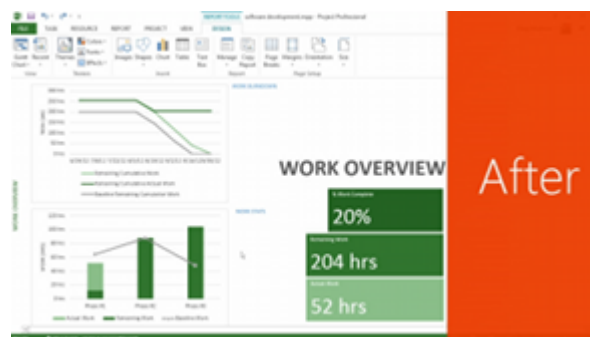
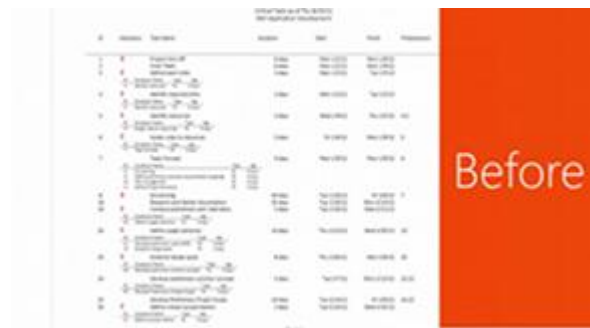
- Project Administration and how it all works together in the Microsoft Cloud.

This webinar will include a live demonstration of the Microsoft Project hosted environment in the Microsoft cloud, and will leave plenty of time for questions and answers to address the specific concerns of the audience members.

[Click here to watch a recording of this webinar](#), which is offered free of cost. You can view any of our previous webinars on our [video page at projectassistants.com](#) or on our [YouTube channel](#). For any questions or recommendations regarding our webinar series, email us at info@projectassistants.com.

The communication features are the most improved, though. Reports are synced in the cloud on-demand without the use of costly and inconsistent server space. Managers can also easily communicate one-on-one with team members. By hovering over a name in Microsoft Project, you are given the options to instant message, video chat, call, or e-mail that team member without leaving Project.

The transformations to the reporting functions are so extensive that the reporting chapter in Project Assistants new textbook on Microsoft Project 2013 is far-and-away the largest chapter. For a more detailed post on the reporting features in Microsoft Project 2013, [read our blog post on the subject](#).



News

Project Assistants and NOAA Sign Multi-Year Support Agreement

One of Project Assistants' most notable successes of the past year was improving the product development process within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), a government environmental research agency. And now, we have signed a multi-year agreement to provide ongoing support for their implementation.

This agreement allows the focus to expand beyond project execution to provide big-picture improvements to how the portfolio is identified, analyzed, and performing.

Project Assistants' initial success has come in helping NOAA do projects *right* through leveraging resource management capabilities (especially resource tracking), and now this support agreement allows us to zoom-in on doing the *right projects* in the first place and realizing the forecasted benefits of those projects.

We look forward to writing the next chapter of what has already been a success story.

Project Assistants integrates your People, Processes, Technology and Governance to more optimally reach your organizational goals by delivering better, faster and cheaper project-based results.

Founded in 1996, Project Assistants is headquartered in Wilmington, Delaware with international delivery capability. A long-time member of Microsoft's Partner Network and Microsoft Office Project Premier Partner, Project Assistants was recognized in Inc 500 as one of "America's Fastest Growing Private Companies." On average, each member of our consulting team has over 20 years of

Announcements

Gus Cicala Continues His Speaking Tour on Project Leadership

Project Assistants president and CEO, Gus Cicala, recently contributed a chapter on taking leadership on a project, in Dave Barrett's new book *The Keys to Our Success*, and now he is taking the topic on tour. As we mentioned in [our last newsletter](#), he has already given rousing presentations at several speaking events across the Northeast, and he's not done yet. Following is the schedule for some of Gus' upcoming dates for presenting *Leadership Is Taken, Not Given: Defining Moments for Establishing, Maintaining, and Regaining Control of Projects*:

- August 15th – PMI-DVC Monthly Dinner Meeting
- September 13th – PMI-WDC's 2013 Project Management Symposium
- September (specific date TBA) – PMI Pharma (Pharma CoP) Webinar
- October 21st-24th – Project Summit's Business Analyst World in Boston
- November 1st – PMINYC 2013 Symposium

Please contact us at info@projectassistants.com for more information on this topic, or to arrange a presentation in your area.

also includes a significant number of published authors of the best-selling Microsoft Project publications and other leading Project Management publications. For more information about Project Assistants, Inc., please go to www.projectassistants.com or call us at [1-800-642-9259](tel:1-800-642-9259).

