**Project management case tools**

In this report I will be comparing and evaluating two different project management case tools. For each case tool I will be discussing the; limitations, software functionality, and how virtual collaborations are enabled. The aim of this report is to clearly show which of the two project management case tools are best suited to be used for my course based projects.

I will be investigating two project management case tools:

Microsoft project

Basecamp

**Project Management CASE tools**

CASE tools (Computer Aided Software Engineering) are tools which are available which help you to design software systems. CASE tools can help with a wide range of different aspects when trying to design a software system, for example some CASE tools can help design flowcharts and diagrams of your system, improve a systems quality, build systems faster, while other CASE tools can help generate complex code.

**Microsoft Project**

One of the most commonly used project management CASE tools around today is Microsoft Project. Microsoft Project is a project management software program created by Microsoft. Microsoft Project is designed to help a project manager when trying to make a plan, track progress of a project, help with the budgeting, and the overall running of the project.

Microsoft project is used for a number of reasons by different project managers. Microsoft Project has an excellent feature which allows budgets for projects to be created. Budgets based on assignment work and resource rates. As resources are assigned to tasks and assignment work estimated, Microsoft Project will then calculate the cost and equal it to the work times the rate, to produce the task level and then to any summary tasks and finally to the project level.

“Microsoft Project can recognize different classes of users. These different classes of users can have differing access levels to projects, views, and other data. Custom objects such as calendars, views, tables, filters, and fields are stored in an enterprise global which is shared by all users.”

Microsoft Project is available in two editions; the first edition is the Standard, and the second being the Professional edition. The standard and professional editions are both available as 32 or 64bit options., but The Professional edition differs slightly as it includes all the features of the Standard version, while at the time, additionally includes the features identified separately below.

**Examples of Project Management**

This is how we used Microsoft project to plan out the week 5 projects. For week 5 we needed to make 4 different types of program for the Raspberry Pi. Each of the programs needed to be functional on the Pi but could be made in Code::blocks in Windows. Due to this we needed to assign a period at the end of the week to flash the CPP over to the Pi.
Here are some of the things we noticed when using Microsoft Project:

- Cluttered interface
- Quite easy to grasp how to set tasks
- Sleek display for the Gantt chart
- Flexibility and advance options when it comes to organising the plan
- Allows Resource names (such as Raspberry PI) to be set with ease, along with preceding processes.

Overall Microsoft Project is a sleek and professional project plan creation tool.

**Advantages and disadvantages**

When using Microsoft Project it is clear that there were some disadvantages and advantages to the software, including limitations. We will now discuss these:

**Advantages:**

- **Huge Array of tools:** Due to the program being made by Microsoft, it is a professional high quality tool with all of the inbuilt functions you need to effectively manage a project.
- **Import Functions:** Word documents, emails and even spread sheets can be imported into project.
- **Offline:** The program is offline so that it can be used on any pc, even without an internet connection.
- **Microsoft offers a 60 day free trial, which allows users to get a true feel for the program and get to grips with it.**

**Disadvantages:**

- **Confusing Layout and Steep Learning Curve:** When first looking at the software it is very confusing to get to grips with and it takes some messing around with to understand fully how to operate.
- **Compatibility:** As with any other tool the documents that are produced cannot be opened in any other software package, meaning some members found the document hard to edit.
- **Cost of the full product:** As the product is made by Microsoft, it is standard that to completely utilise the program a license must be purchased. This means that it is a high cost product that could only be viable for large companies.

Overall Microsoft project is a very advance program that allowed us to plan our project out effectively, the only problem with it is that it is so complex and difficult to use some of the functions were at first very hard to find and implement. Once some experimentation with the program had been completed, it was relatively simple and easy to use, but the initial climb was still there.

**Basecamp**

The second project management CASE tool I will be discussing is a program called Basecamp. Basecamp is arguably the most popular project management CASE tool, next to Microsoft Project.

"the world’s most popular cloud based project management software solution. With 8 million+ projects managed since 2004” -
http://www.jobstock.com/blog/5-top-project-management-software-solutions/
Basecamp is known for its fast and easy use, along with its highly visual user interface, this makes it top choice for most project managers, especially because Basecamp is top class when trying to create complex projects which need a lot of communication between stakeholders involved in the project.

Basecamp’s strong feature set includes:

- Real-time collaboration
- Exceptional web-based calendaring
- Full permissions controls
- Instant notifications
- Drag and drop file functionality
- Strong invite and people/company grouping capabilities, and
- …the ability to mistake proofs your projects by recovering deleted content just to name a few.¹
As you can see, Basecamp allows you to see tasks which are yet to be completed, as well as showing you which tasks have already been completed. This feature comes in handy because it can help you keep on track of your progress, while also allowing you to allocate time to different tasks which need completing or allocate tasks to stakeholders.

**Advantages and Disadvantages**

**Advantages**
- No software Install required as it’s an online web application
  - Accessible from any computer with no install.
  - Has a mobile site and app so can manage your projects while on the go or at work.
- Good array of features
  - Document uploads and native editing.
  - Currents progress.
  - Task Assignment with due dates.
  - Discussions, multi-projects, calendars, admin rights for setting projects
- Very simple design and easy to navigate. Can learn to use it within 15 minutes.

Overall base camp has a number of key features that makes it comparable with other big name software packages such as Microsoft Project. In addition to this with it being a web application it means it can be accessed from any computer rather than just ones with Microsoft Project installed.

**Disadvantages:**
- Has a monthly fee of $20 after the 2 month trial.
  - This still is not as bad as the extortionate prices of Microsoft Project
- Only useful for small projects and project teams.
- Need an internet connection to use the software.
  - Microsoft project can be used offline and this is a huge drawback. If an internet connection is not present but the file needs to be accessed this could cause huge problems.
- Features may not be as extensive as others.
Conclusion

Both Microsoft Project and Basecamp are extremely good project management CASE tools, as they both have numerous advantages, for example; They both offer free trials, which really attracts customers who have never used a CASE tool before and just want to try them out. Both CASE tools also have a large variety of features that can really help out a project manager; like the ability to create budgets for a project, or allowing the project manager to keep track of progress of the project and see what tasks have been completed and which ones still need to be completed.

They both are really good, but in my opinion; I believe that Basecamp is the best project management CASE tool out of the two. I have come to this conclusion due to the main issue of accessibility. When using Microsoft Project, I could only access it from a computer which Microsoft Project had already been installed on, this meant me having to either go home to access it or carry my laptop around with me. As a young adult im constantly using my phone or tablet and constantly on the internet, so the fact the Basecamp could easily be access online or from a mobile phone app made everything a million times more practical and easy. I was able to track my progress and current tasks from my phone from where ever I was, so I could just use my class computer, or any available computer around, to do my tasks which are set out on my phone rather than having to carry my laptop everywhere.

Another reason why I believe Basecamp is better than Microsoft Project is because Basecamp is cheaper. After the free trial, Basecamp is only $20 a month which would add up to £240 for the year, which a manageable price, where as Microsoft project is £550 a year, and not everyone will be able to afford that.
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