How to start project and how to deliver a Project Plan

You are all new to web project activities, so quick guidance to key steps in web projects will be beneficial to all you.

The first step in every web project after project manager is elected/nominated/self-nominated is delivery of a project plan.

Project plan is a sole responsibility of a project manager(s) and it should be delivered within 24h from the start of a project.

Project plan is usually a word or a PDF document that is attached to a discussion thread. Everyone from a group should review it and give suggestions for improvement if they are any. All of this has to happen swiftly. Remember not to waste precious time, as you need to concentrate on execution of your project within your discussion thread.

What should you include in your project plan?

- **Timetable or a schedule** should be part of every project plan. It is the most important part of your plan as you all get marked for following agreed schedule. Schedule should not be only equally distributed time slots for every question/task. Read about your project first and then try to identify the risks. Maybe some task within your project will

require more time then the other. Carefully read my introduction, as there could be some hints as to what to pay particular attention to. One major mistake in project scheduling is that a PM allows TOO MUCH TIME for writing a report. Please remember that only a project managers should write a report and that should happen in parallel to group's discussion. Good practice is to summarise each task, post it on discussion board for a group to agree or add some changes.

Note: Please screenshot and present your agreed schedule visibly in your discussion so everyone can refer to a timeframe easily. Schedule is there so tasks can be delivered timely, you are all marked on it.

- *Importance of the project*, what is the aim, what is a brief scope.

- *Key tasks and deliverables*

- *Key roles and responsibilities*

- *Resources* – in your case your obvious resources would be the textbook, lecture notes and reliable and reputable web sites. Be careful not to trust all Internet information. The Internet empowers us to educate ourselves and make more informed choices and decisions without leaving our couches. But if we believe everything we find on the Internet, we are likely to wind up making some very poor decisions. And always remember to REFERENCE.

- ***Communication strategy including frequency -*** It is very important to read and understand web project instructions as your marks are mostly influenced by this. Project manager should reiterate that everyone is scored individually, that you should Log into Moodle every day to see what you group has been discussing and to add your comments. Project managers should lead by example and motivate the group by being the first one to provide analyses, especially if group is not active in collaboration. PM should never be the last one to give analyses and especially not after the scheduled date. Project manager has to participate and discuss the topic like all other group members, do not assume that you should only manage your group. Requesting others to do required tasks and managing responses will not get you good marks. Reiterate the rules – if a member does not show up they will be scored with 0 mark. If a member shows up on the last day or so, not following the schedule, he will also get 0 mark. Insist on this behavior the so that everyone gives their maximum.

- ***Record keeping/ document management system -*** A project manager usually manages all documents, but in some cases you will have more then one-project manager. In that instance you may define the roles (e.g. one person in charge of discussion monitoring another person in charge of writing summaries on individual task as a report preparation) but that is not necessary if you wish to jointly perform all managerial duties.

Define deliverables, expectations, rules and everything else that can help you to execute the project well.

Good idea is to extract your project schedule (only a table) within your discussion forum so that everyone can quickly refer to it without going into attachments.

It is good practice to have as little attachments as possible and to present everything visible within your discussion threads (tables, pictures, videos, documents etc.). Project plan and final reports should be the only attachments in a project.

Never use goggle document within discussion. We need to see your individual contribution and Google document collaboration does not allow this. Do not loose important marks because of this simple error.

Within your project communication plan you may specify how you wish to organize your weekend interaction. Most groups do not mind posting during weekends, and this is usually the most fruitful time for your discussion, but your groups may agree differently.

You do not need to be all on-line at the same time to discuss. So there is no need to schedule on-line meetings for real time discussion unless you have a certain problem and you need quick interaction to solve it.

Finally, on your Moodle page there is a sample project plan that can give you ideas how to start. The purpose of this document is only to give you an idea and not to copy

it. Try to make it better. With better planning there is a better chance of executing project well, but be careful not to overplant and not to drag your project because of it. No plan will have enough detail to cover all angles, so to make up for this we COMMUNICATE.

Communication will uncover many flaws in the plan along the way and they get fixed as you go along.

Without communication the errors stuff up even the best of plans.