The demented rambles of a project Manager,

By David O Neill

Introspectively analyzing myself and that of the team dynamics with varying contrasts and backgrounds, it’s hard to see the value of the outcome of the project set forth. Without real life input into such a project plan only a hypothetical result could ever some from this.

However as many people would probably see this as a deterrent, striking off such an undertaking of such a hypothetical exercise, I believe what is really the learning outcome of the project is the process.

Given this strong opening statement it was clear to see straight off the problems our team would be faced with. Right at number one of organization of schedules and times. With varying backgrounds and academic differences bringing a team together was a difficult process, with three weeks going by before we actually met as a group.

I would imagine that if we were to draw the triangle, scope, time and money that uniform equilateral triangle had already morphed into a scalene triangle; with time demising, the cost of this will soon be realized.

As we met after week one, the dynamics of the team seemed good, most team members had input, but scoping the exercise was difficult as the determination of what exactly was to be produced by the company was infinitesimal un-deterministic. The only information given to us was that the new branch of supermegaglobalcorp was to produce an internal product within one year of setup.

An internal product; three of the team members had previously done two modules with the infamous JJ.Collins responsible for lecturing object oriented analysis and design and design patterns. Having this information under their belts proved somewhat disruptive and deciding on what exactly was being built would prove difficult. Two of the other team members where not familiar with software processes and the idea of creating bespoke software in superglobalmegacorp did not entail recreating the wheel, but rather extending the wheel with some functionality.

As with most corporations’ internal bespoke software solutions have for the most part already been established. A new product would either replace an old product, which would probably be dependent on some other product. For example changing out AIB’s websites but the database of information staying the same, or extending or creating a new interface to an antiquated system.

From an engineering perspective this would be hard to grasp, the idea of taking part of a building and using it to build another is probably not the best plan, but in most software solutions this is almost always the case.

After the struggle with this realization, came the complexity of organizing some sort of schedule. Creating a software product within a year of opening in a global corporation is probably not realistic. A more wise decision of creating a new branch would be integrating this branch into current operations slowly moving them way into their own projects.

From personal experience, I can recall when the Team lead of the Windows Servers Services Team in EUEC Intel announced he was changing position. I can recall the next in line saying that it would take him a year to train in someone new regardless of the background experience, as with large corporations, its not about what you’ve learned from a book or even the processes of another company. This will not prepare you for the process structures and policies that will take time to learn coupled with the fact that the person training you in will also have their own work to do.

This brought about the discussion of the workforce required and the resources needed to make this happen, after a bit of discussion we agreed that the parent company would have to lease us out already seasoned developers who are familiar with the software architectures already present within the company, the policies, guidelines and tools to be used internally.

After this discussion we then finished up our somewhat abstract overview of the project and the difficulties that we presenting themselves we documented. We then broke the meeting agreeing on work to be done by each individual to be presented for the next meeting!