

Keeping software projects under control

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Adrian Smith

- Studied computer science
- Been in Vienna since 1998
- Working as a software developer, architect, project manager, etc.
- Mainly web stuff (Perl, PHP, Java)
- Manages a small team
- For hire

The situation (last year)

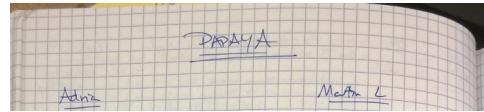
Doing customer projects

- 2-3 customers
- 2 web designers
- 3 software developers



My old process

(1) My book



(2) Emails to team

Recommendations to-dos job-website

 Adrian Smith <adrian.m.smith@gmail.com> 26/02/2013

to Martin, Lucian, Armin

Hi Martin,

So from the meeting yesterday we have at least the following tasks:

- LinkedIn doesn't work from the server; we're not sure why not! (Link [here](#); user papaya, pw bang, software is /opt/jobwebsite-pre on same server as mobilereport pre)
- I've changed the way potential applicant's identities work. Removed the fact that an email address was a special case. See r4308 and email yesterday ("Recommend a job advert to a candidate")
- A recommendation should send a msg. Don't worry about the text of the message, the link etc. But it should go over LinkedIn msg, email, etc. Usage of (modified) "momento" pattern for "Messagable" or similar.
- In addition, there is Gender.unknown (Email 15 Feb), and the fact we have two Genders. Would be great if you could look at that, I'm sure it's just a small point.

We also have the issue that FB messages don't work via XMPP yet; but let's leave that for now, we have more important things.

Cheers, Adrian



The problems

- Devs: “What shall I work on next?”
- Customer: “When will it be done?”
- Me: “Are devs delayed?”
- What impact do delays have?
- What impact do requirements changes have?
- Took 30% of my time (high costs!)



Searching for a solution

- Paper? Whiteboard? Kanban?
- Tool? Which tools?
- Books on the subject?
- Blogs on the subject?



Searching for a solution

- What are my requirements?



Record all the tasks



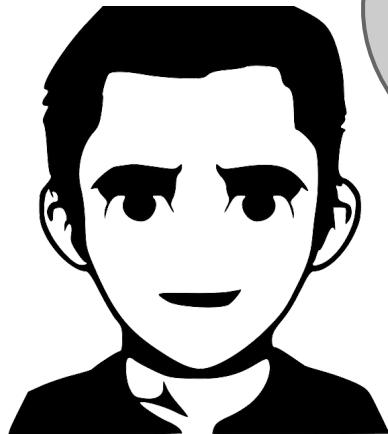
When will task be finished?

To work this out, you need to know:

- How many tasks are there?
- How long will they take?
- How many hours are available to do them?

How long will each task take?

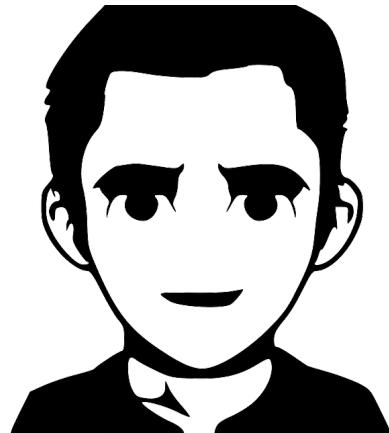
Mr Foo
(Programmer)



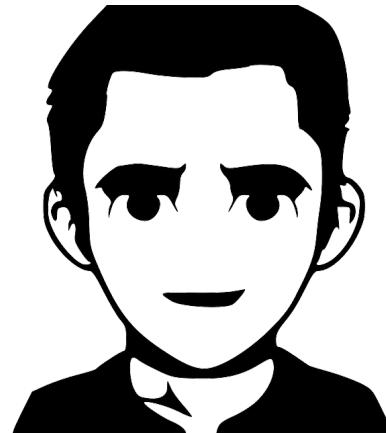
This might take
2 hours ... Hmm but
it might all go wrong,
might take **6 hours** ...

Who is available when?

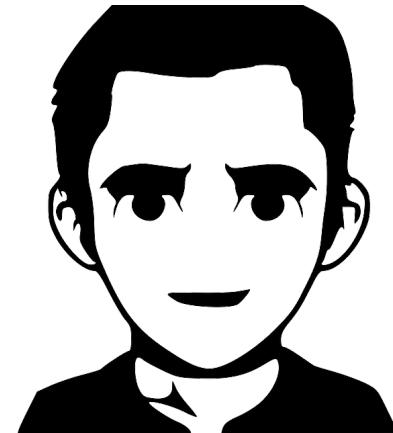
Martin
available
on Fridays



Adrian
has lots of
meetings



David is
on
vacation



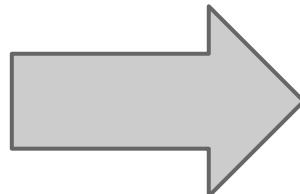
Is the project on track?

- What's the expected delivery date?
- What's the deadline?

Foresee deadline problems

Previously

On the deadline day, notice it isn't finished



Now

Relax! Two months to go.
There is time to take action:

- De-scope features
- Inform customer
- Hire more people

Anyone can update estimates

No need to:

- Bob to email me he's going to take longer
- And I update the plan because I'm
“the project manager”

Dependencies

The reality is:

- Must do software design before development
- Should do HTML before development
- Should do photoshops before development
- Can only test after development

Critical path analysis

“Imagine” a customer suggests things should go faster. How?

“What do I have to speed up, in order to deliver earlier?”

Living Plan

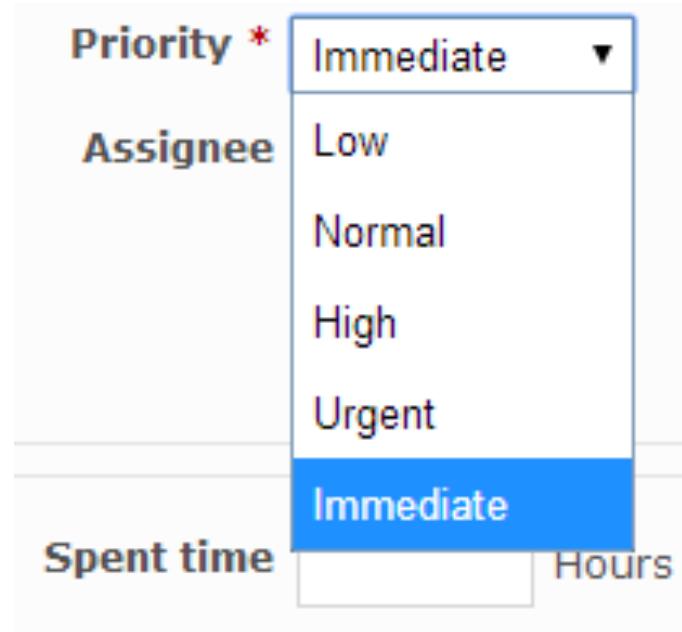
Change happens:

- Things take longer (or shorter?)
- Customer changes their mind
- People get ill, etc.

Proj Mgmt doesn't stop once the initial plan has been created.

Priorities

- Priority vs Importance
- What's the difference between “High” and “Urgent”?
- Use meaningful names such as “Bug on the live system”



Online

Not everyone's in the office:

- Work from home
- Remote employees

This means:

- **Not** on Adrian's paper notebook
- **Not** on a whiteboard

Solutions



Get in contact

Blog www.databasesandlife.com

Slides www.bitly.com/proj-mgmt-5-june

Available for hire

Java - PHP - Perl - HTML - Development -
Architecture - Project Management