

Making Everything Easier!™

Microsoft® **Project 2010** FOR **DUMMIES®**

Learn to:

- Manage project schedules with Project 2010
- Work with new scheduling tools and the ribbon interface
- Assign and share resources and understand calendars
- Create impressive reports

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Author of Project 2007 For Dummies®



Project 2010 For Dummies®

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by Nancy Muir



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About the Author

Nancy Muir has written dozens of books on business and technology topics ranging from desktop applications, project management, and distance learning, to an award-winning book on character education for middle-schoolers and a textbook on computer science for community colleges. Prior to her freelance writing career, Nancy taught workshops in project management to Fortune 500 companies and was a manager in both the computer and publishing industries. She lives in the Pacific Northwest with her husband Earl, with whom she has collaborated on three books, including *Nanotechnology For Dummies*. She writes a column on computers and the Internet for retirenet.com, and has authored three books about computing for seniors: *Computers For Seniors For Dummies*, *Laptops For Seniors For Dummies*, and *Using the Internet Safely For Seniors For Dummies* (with co-author Linda Criddle).

Dedication

To my husband Earl who puts up with my work schedule and makes every minute away from work fabulous.

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Introduction

Project management probably started back when a few cave dwellers got together and figured out how to work as a team to bag a wooly mammoth for their Sunday dinner. Some fellow — I'll call him Ogg — probably took the lead as the very first project manager. He drew things in the dirt with a stick to help his team members understand the strategy of the hunt, and communicated with them in ughs and grunts. Unlike you, he had no boss to report to, no budget, and no deadlines (lucky Ogg), but the fundamental spirit of a project was there.

Over the years, project management has evolved as a discipline that involves sophisticated analyses and techniques, projections, tracking of time and money, and reporting. Project management software — which has been around only about 25 years or so — has brought a new face and functionality to project management that would have left our friend Ogg ughless.

About This Book

Microsoft Office Project 2010, the most recent incarnation of the world's most popular project management software, offers a tremendous wealth of functionality to users. However, it's probably not like any other software you've ever used, so mastering it can seem a daunting process. One trick is to understand how its features relate to what you do every day as a project manager. Another is to get someone like me to tell you all about its features and how to use them.

In *Microsoft Office Project 2010 For Dummies*, my goal is to help you explore all that Project offers, providing information on relevant project management concepts while also offering specific procedures to build and track your Project plans. But more importantly, I offer advice on how to make all these features and procedures mesh with what you already know as a project manager to make the transition easier.

Foolish Assumptions

I've made some assumptions about you, gentle reader. I figure that you are computer literate and know how to use a mouse, a keyboard, software menus, and toolbars. I assume that you know how to use most common Windows functions (such as the Clipboard) as well as many basic software functions (such as selecting text and dragging and dropping things with your mouse).

I do not assume that you've used Project or any other project management software before. If you're new to Project, you'll find what you need to get up to speed, including information on how Project works, finding your way around Project's interface, and building your first Project plan. If you've used an earlier version of Project, you'll find out about Project 2010 and all the new features it provides.

Conventions Used in This Book

I should explain a few odds and ends to make using this book easier:

Web site addresses, known as URLs, are shown in monofont, like this: www.microsoft.com.

Ribbon commands are given in the order in which you select the tab and command (without the group), for example, “Choose Project⇒Project Information.” (For more on Project’s new Ribbon, see Chapter 2.)

Options in dialog boxes use initial caps even if they aren’t capitalized on your screen to make it easier to identify them in sentences. For example, what appears as Show summary tasks in the Options dialog box will appear as Show Summary Tasks in this book.

How This Book Is Organized

This book is designed to help you begin to use Microsoft Office Project 2010 to plan, build, and track progress on projects, keeping in mind tried-and-true project management practices and principles. I divided the book into logical parts that follow the process of building and tracking a typical project plan.

Part I: Setting the Stage for Project

Part I explains what Project 2010 can do for you as well as what types of input you have to provide to use it successfully on your projects. You'll get your first glimpse of Project views and discover how to navigate around them. You'll begin to build Project plans by making calendar settings, building a task outline, and then entering timing and timing relationships for those tasks.

Part II: People Who Need People

Part II is the Project resources section: You discover all you need to know about creating and assigning work resources, material resources, and fixed costs to tasks in a project. You also discover how using resources on your project relates to the costs you accrue over time.

Part III: Well, It Looks Good on Paper . . .

Up to now, you've been mapping out your project plan. Now it's time to see whether that plan meets your needs in terms of budget and timing. Project offers a whole toolbox to help you modify resource assignments and task timing to trim your costs and meet your deadlines so that you can finalize your plan. You also get briefed on how to modify the format of items in your project to make your plan look as polished as possible, both on-screen and in print.

Part IV: Avoiding Disaster: Staying on Track

As any experienced project manager knows, projects just about never happen the way you thought they would. In this part, you save a picture of your plan — a *baseline* — and then begin to track actual activity against your plan. You also take a look at methods of reporting your progress, and how to get back on track when you find yourself derailed. In the final chapter, I provide advice on how to use what you glean from your projects to make better planning choices going forward.

Part V: Working with Enterprise Projects

With all that Project Professional has to offer the enterprise via its Project Server and Project Web App (also called Project Web Application; formerly called Project Web Access) functionalities and SharePoint online services, you can share documents online with your project team, have team members report their work time, and even integrate Project information with Outlook. This part shows you the basics of what Project Server can do, and how to use Project Web App from both the managers' and users' perspective.

Part VI: The Part of Tens

Ten seems to be a handy number of items for humans to put into lists, so this part gives you two such lists: Ten Golden Rules of Project Management and Ten Project

Management Software Products to Explore. The first of these chapters tells you about some dos and don'ts that can save you a lot of grief when you're using Project for the first time (or the fifth time, for that matter). The second offers a look at some add-on products and complementary software products that bring even more functionality to Microsoft Office Project.

What You're Not to Read

First, you don't have to read this book from front to back unless you really want to. If you want to just get information about a certain topic, you can open this book to any chapter and get the information you need.

That said, I have structured the book to move from some basic concepts that equip you to understand how Project works through the steps involved in building a typical project. If you have an overpowering need to find out the whole shebang, you can start at the beginning and work your way through the book to build your first Project plan.

Icons Used in This Book

One picture is worth . . . well, you know. That's why *For Dummies* books use icons to give you a visual clue as to what's going on. Essentially, icons call your attention to bits of special information that may very well make your life easier. Following are the icons used in this book.



Remember icons signal either a pertinent fact that relates to what you're reading at the time (but is also mentioned elsewhere in the book) or a reiteration of a particularly important piece of information that's, well, worth repeating.



Tips are the advice columns of computer books: They offer sage advice, a bit more information about a topic under discussion that may be of interest, or ways to do things a bit more efficiently.



Warning icons spell trouble with a capital *T*: When you see a warning, read it. If you're not careful, you might do something at this point that could cause disaster.

Where to Go from Here

It's time to take what you've learned in the project management school of hard knocks and jump into the world of Microsoft Office Project 2010. When you do, you'll be rewarded with a wealth of tools and information that help you to manage your projects much more efficiently.

Here's where you step out of the world of cave-dweller project management and into the brave, new world of Microsoft Office Project 2010.

This book is accompanied by a companion Web site filled with project management goodies, including links to project management add-on software and some example Microsoft Project files that you can experiment with. To access this book's Web site, point your Web browser to www.dummies.com/go/project2010.