



TechWriter
placements & services

Improve your personal usability

using project management as a tool

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Why this topic

- **The issues**
- **Applying usability to people**
- **Using Project Management as a tool**

What is usability?

ISO defines usability as

"the extent to which a product can be used by specified users to achieve specified goals with effectiveness, efficiency and satisfaction in a specified context of use."

What makes a TC more usable?

- Flexibility, ability to reprioritise
- Autonomy
- Ability to manage people
- Fit with organisation
- Quick learner / willingness to learn
- Attention to detail
- Strong tool skills

Project Management

ISO: A unique process consisting of a set of coordinated and controlled activities with start and finish dates, undertaken to **achieve an objective** conforming to specific requirements including constraints of time, cost and resources.

Areas of concern

- Determine project assumptions
- Risks – identify, manage and mitigate
- Manage and predict issues
- Agree project control processes
- Identify the critical path
- Quantify effort to complete tasks

4 stages of Project Management

Planning

Implementing / Execution

Controlling and Monitoring

Closeout / Completion

Planning

- Scoping the project
- Time estimates
- Risk identification and quality standards
- Communication plan, change management, risk management
- Having a plan of action
- Getting resources

The risks

- Client requirements are often unclear, and unrealistic
- Scope changes
- Inputs are delayed – the system is still in testing, politics
- Key people not available
- Brought in late in the process

The customer view

- Clients are nervous about getting the desired outcome
- They may be paying a lot of money and often have not worked with you before (contractor).
- Time is short to deliver, may already be late
- Their reputation may be on the line

A typical risk management assessment

Risk	Likelihood 1-5 rare to almost certain	Severity 1-5 insignificant to catastrophic	Impact Effect on project	Mitigation Strategy to prevent or actions if occurs	Assigned to
Unavailability of SMEs	3	4	Delay in delivery or compromise on accuracy of information	Time booked 1 week in advance, identification of backup person	Project manager
Missed milestone	4	2	Impact on others e.g. training delayed	Regular progress meetings	Writer

Project Charter

- Project objectives
- Scope – what is included and what excluded
- Stakeholders – who are they, what is their role
- Risks – severity, mitigation
- Communication – how, what and when
- Timeline with milestones

Preparing a timeline

- Work backwards
- Define key deliverables
- Estimate then add 50%
- Chunk into smaller parts – provide for progressive delivery

Linking back to usability...

- **Be usable - consider your client as a user of your services**
- **Treat every significant documentation activity as a project**
- **Understand and address your client's needs - esp risks and communication**
- **Agree the boundaries upfront - get signoff on key items for your peace of mind**

Some useful resources

- JoAnn Hackos “Managing your documentation projects” (and other works)
- Monash web site
www.its.monash.edu.au/staff/projects/project-management - good templates