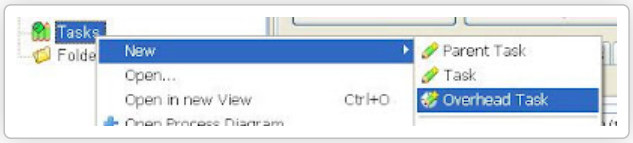
Improving projects

The Improving Projects blog from Huge IO (UK & Ireland) is primarily about products, organisations and projects... and how to improve them. As well as musings on agile processes, software engineering in general, and methods like Kanban and Scrum, there's advice here too for users of process planning, execution and improvement tools - and the metrics they can provide. https://uk.huge.io

Thursday, May 14, 2009

What is an "overhead" task?

When starting to use xProcess there are a number of terms that may be unfamiliar. What for example is an "overhead" task?



In general terms an overhead task is one which *does not directly result in the modification or qualification of a required project deliverable*. Under this definition most management activities, meetings, planning and monitoring are overheads, while specifying, designing, coding, documenting and testing are "payload" activities.

In xProcess there are 2 ways of specifying how a task will be scheduled: *date-based* or *effort based*.

Date-based tasks are generally more applicable to overheads. They run from a date to a date (the date may be derived from other dates such as project start and end or target dates) and have a specified time (or percentage of available time) to determine the effort required per day. If there are no resources available to carry out the task the start and end date are not changed - they will just consume less time in the schedule.

Effort-based tasks are the more normal type of task in xProcess. They have a specified size and required effort (see this link for the difference between size and effort). Their start and end dates are derived from the effort required and the availability of suitable resources (people who have matching role types and skills).

You don't have to use overhead tasks in your process - for example you could include in your estimates the time that will be required for these other activities. However it is useful to get a view from the time booked to overheads of the efficiency of your process and where improvements might be made.

By Andy at May 14, 2009

Labels: Effort, Overhead tasks, Size, task patterns, xProcess

2 comments:

Marcelo Mrack said...

I agree (and using) the "overload tasks" in our projects, at LM2 Consulting.

Thanks for this post, and keep rocking Andy ;)

1:00 am

Andy said...

Thanks Marcelo.

PS> They are "overhead" tasks :-) though I agree they very readily overload team members!

11:28 am

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Andy

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Breakout sessions that ensure everyone in the meeting meets everyone else

Lockdown finds us doing more and more in online meetings, whether it's business, training, parties or families. It also finds us spendin...

Number of people	Group size (range)	Nominal group size	Number of sessions	Session I	Session II	Session III	Session IV	Session IV
4	2	2	3	**(1 2) (3 4)**	**(1 3) (2 4)**	**(1 4)(3 2)**		
5	2-3	2	3	(1 2) (3 4 5)	(1 3) (2 4 5)	(1 4 5) (3 2)		
6	2-3	3	4	(1 2 3) (4 5 6)	(1 4) (2 5) (3 6)	(1 5) (4 3) (2 6)	(1 6) (4 2) (5 3)	
7	2-4	3	4	(1 2 3) (4 5 6 7)	(1 4 7) (2 5) (3 6)	(1 5) (4 3) (7 2 6)	(1 6) (4 2) (7 5 3)	
8	2-3	3	4	(1 2 3) (4 5 6) (7 8)	(1 4 7) (2 5 8) (3 6)	(1 5) (4 8 3) (7 2 6)	(1 8 6) (4 2) (7 5 3)	
9	3	3	4	**(1 2 3) (4 5 6) (7 8 9)**	**(1 4 7) (2 5 8) (3 6 9)**	**(1 5 9) (4 8 3) (7 2 6)**	**(1 8 6) (4 2 9) (7 5 3)**	
10	3-4	3	4	(1 2 3) (4 5 6) (7 8 9 10)	(1 4 7) (2 5 8) (3 6 9 10)	(1 5 9 10) (4 8 3) (7 2 6)	(1 8 6) (4 2 9 10) (7 5 3)	
11	3-5	3	4	(1 2 3) (4 5 6 11) (7 8 9 10)	(1 4 7) (2 5 8) (3 6 11 9 10)	(1 5 9 10) (4 8 3) (7 2 6 11)	(1 8 6 11) (4 2 9 10) (7 5 3)	
12	4	2	5	(1 2 3 4) (5 6 7 8) (9 10 11 12)	(1 2 5 6) (7 8 5 6) (1 2 9 10)	(1 2 7 8) (5 6 11 12) (3 4 9 10)	(1 2 9 10) (7 8 11 12) (3 4 9 10)	(1 2 11 12) (9 10 7 8) (5 6 3 4)

Understanding Cost of Delay and its Use in Kanban

Cost of Delay (CoD) is a vital concept to understand in product development. It should be a guide to the ordering of work items, even if - ...

"Plan of Intent" and "Plan of Record"

Ron Lichty is well known in the Software Engineering community on the West Coast as a practitioner, as a seasoned project manager of many su...

Delay Cost and Urgency Profiles

Understanding Cost of Delay (Part 2): Delay Cost and Urgency Profiles In part one of this series of blogs on Understanding Cost of Dela...

Labels

Size

State Transition Diagram

Stephen Palmer

Strategy

Survivability Agenda

SwiftTeams

Takt Time

Targets

task patterns

Test-Driven Development

Throughput

Tim Harford

Time in process

TOC

Top-down/Bottom-up Planning

Touch Time

Troy Magennis

Urgency

User-Defined Schema

Utilisation

Value-adding Time

Vasco Duarte

Velocity

Version Control

Ware Myers

Waterfall

Web Client

web services

Weighted Shortest Job First (WSJF)

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