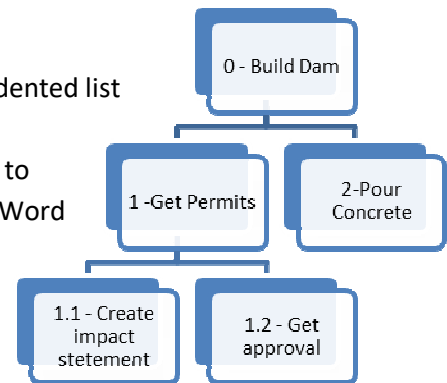# Useful Free Schedule Software (or software that you are already likely to have)

for creating work breakdowns, network diagrams, and schedules   JDO 2/2/18
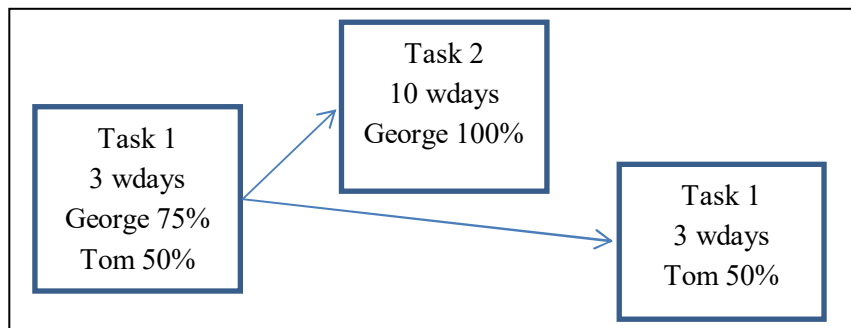
WBS

1. www.wbstool.com is a free web service that allows you to draw a graphical WBS in your browser then save it in the cloud as a file that you can share with others. You can export it in formats that are readable by Microsoft Project, Microsoft Word (buggy), or as an image. It works very well for this limited task. Tip: A WBS can become too big to readably print on a single letter-size page. Here's a tip that worked for me in printing these large WBS's.
    a. Save an image of the WBS as a jpg file using the Image button in the Download toolbar.
    b. Open the jpg file using Microsoft Paint.
    c. Use Paint's Page Setup dialog to scale the image across multiple pages - for example 2 pages across and 1 page down.
    d. Preview the printout to make sure it looks readable.
2. A spreadsheet or word processor will allow you to create an indented list for a text WBS.
3. Microsoft Office (Word, PowerPoint) has a tool that allows you to draw an org chart. You can use this to draw a WBS instead. In Word 2010, it is Insert/ SmartArt/Hierarchy and looks like the example to the right →
4. If you prefer to draw a WBS in the format of a mind map, www.xmind.net is a good, free mind mapping program to start with.

Network Diagram

5. Although not elegant, you can always draw the network by hand and scan the sheets of paper.
6. Microsoft Visio can draw network diagrams.   One of my students recently suggested draw.io as a free, web-based alternative to Visio. Another suggested Lucid Charts.
7. Use autoshapes and connectors in Word or PowerPoint. This will give you lines that stay connected when you move the boxes. An example is below. Instructions for Word and PowerPoint 2003 and earlier versions: http://office.microsoft.com/ en-us/word-help/draw-flowcharts-with-word-and-powerpoint-HA001055266.aspx. For Word and PowerPoint 2007 and later: (Make sure you first

Task 2
10 wdays
George 100%

Task 1
3 wdays
George 75%
Tom 50%

Task 1
3 wdays
Tom 50%

insert a new drawing canvas as described in the instructions. Otherwise the connectors will not stick.) http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/word-help/draw-or-delete-a-line-connector-or-freeform-shape-HA010355850.aspx

Gantt Chart with Dependencies
8. The free spreadsheet that I share with students and clients will draw a Gantt and calculate the dates if you enter the information from your network diagram. It is a standard Excel file with macros. It needs no other programs. Get it from the Resources / Tools tab of www.spspro.com. Be sure to read the instructions on how to set up the starting parameters!
9. GanttProject is open source software that is a little more elegant at drawing Gantt charts once you have the network diagram done. It also handles resources, which the spreadsheet does not. The user interface is a bit quirky, but it is free, it works, and it looks more elegant than the spreadsheet. Version 2.5 is still in final beta testing as of January 2012, but it has many improvements so I suggest you try it first and only downgrade to the older version if necessary. http://www.ganttproject.biz/
10. www.gantter.com is a free web service that provides a Microsoft Project lookalike with the most commonly used subset of Project features, including a nice Gantt view (no network diagram unfortunately). It integrates with Google Docs for sharing and works in a standard web browser. It is barely out of Beta testing and there have been reports of lingering bugs, especially with the Google Docs integration, so be careful if you use it.
11. Several of my clients use Smartsheet.com. It is web-based, handles dependencies, and automatically emails specified people about changes. It also has many of the features of a spreadsheet program, and it integrates with Google Docs. So far I'm impressed. (Subscription fee.)

The Big Gun
12. Microsoft Project (various versions) does everything except a graphical WBS, and a lot more. It is powerful and has a steeper learning curve than the simpler tools. Cost is $450 and up, but many academic and non-profit institutions have site licenses or access to academic discounts. You can get a 60-day free trial here: http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/evalcenter/ee404758.aspx

Others –
If you have favorite software to add to this tip sheet, please let me know! I periodically update this tip sheet with new information and make it available on Synergy's "Resources" web page at www.spspro.com/resources.htm. Check there for the latest version.

These have been mentioned to me recently but I have not yet tried them: Wikipedia (search "project management software") for comparisons of features, Team Gantt, OmniPlan.

G2 Grid (www.g2crowd.com/categories/project-management) is a crowd sourced site for comparison of software, and can help you keep track of the ever-changing apps in the project management software field.

G2 Crowd Grid for Project Management

G2 Grid (www.g2crowd.com/categories/project-management) is a crowd sourced site for comparison of software, and can help you keep track of the ever-changing apps in the project management software field. Note that this comparison is automated and crowdsourced, and should be taken with a large grain of salt. Many of the apps in the grid are very different, for example Basecamp and MS Project. Here is an excerpt explaining their rating system:

"The best Project Management Software products are determined by customer satisfaction (based on user reviews) and scale (based on market share, vendor size, and social impact) and placed into four categories on the Grid.

- Leaders offer project management products that are rated highly by G2 Crowd users and have substantial scale, market share, and global support and service resources.
- High performers provide products that are highly rated by their users, but have not yet achieved the market share and scale of the vendors in the Leader category.
- Contenders have significant Market Presence and resources, but their products have received below average user Satisfaction ratings or have not yet received a sufficient number of reviews to validate their products.
- Niche products do not have the Market Presence of the Leaders. They may have been rated positively on customer Satisfaction, but have not yet received enough reviews to validate their success."

Synergy Professional Services, LLC   11330 SW Foothill Drive, Portland, OR 97225
Contact: Jeff Oltmann, jeff@spspro.com   www.spspro.com, (503) 644-6433