

Microsoft Project 2000 and Microsoft Project Central Extend Project Management to a Broader Knowledge Worker Audience

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Microsoft to Offer Free Microsoft Project 2000 Beta CDs to First 5,000 Customers

Nov. 16, 1999 - Microsoft Corp. President Steve Ballmer today announced Microsoft(r) Project 2000, a major upgrade to the world's best-selling project management software. In addition, he also announced Microsoft Project Central, a new Web-based companion product, that when used in conjunction with Microsoft Project 2000 delivers a flexible and scalable solution that enables knowledge workers on teams of any size to collaboratively manage projects.

At a time when organisations increasingly are turning to team-based structures to accomplish their work, Microsoft Project 2000 is designed to make it simple for team members to help manage the multiple details of projects. "Microsoft Project 2000 enables a broad range of knowledge workers to manage their projects more effectively," Ballmer said. "Even knowledge workers who don't think of themselves as 'project managers' can benefit from the product because it improves their ability to manage details and work together more effectively with others."

Microsoft Project Central: Increased Team Productivity

Microsoft Project Central, the new Web-based companion product for Microsoft Project, significantly improves team productivity by including team members in the project management process without requiring them to become project management experts or endure lengthy learning curves. By delivering collaborative features on a Web-based platform, Microsoft Project Central allows team members to easily participate in project planning and tracking, leading to more accurate and up-to-date project plans. For example, team members can identify missing tasks or suggest new tasks and easily submit them to the project manager for inclusion in the plan. They can provide more accurate estimates for how long it will take to accomplish tasks, and they can reassign tasks better carried out by other members of their team.

By allowing team members to more actively participate in project planning, Microsoft Project Central increases the accuracy of information available to the project manager. As a result, the project manager can ensure that tasks stay on schedule and are completed efficiently and within budget.

Microsoft Project Central also provides the project manager with better reporting tools. For example, the project manager can request a status

report, and Microsoft Project Central will take all the feedback team members submit and consolidate it into a single report, without the project manager having to cut and paste various responses. The project manager can also share project information with company executives who want to follow the progress of projects without having to become project management experts. Using Microsoft Project Central, executives can easily view the status of a single project or multiple projects throughout the organisation from a single view and provide feedback on organisational plans.

"As companies increasingly reap the advantages of teamwork to achieve greater organisational success, it is essential that all knowledge workers have access to critical project information," said Annemarie Duffy, Project Marketing Manager in Microsoft's Business and Productivity Group. "Microsoft Project 2000 and Microsoft Project Central meet this need by making it possible for groups, as well as individuals, to track projects from beginning to end."

"The new release of Microsoft Project combines improvements in existing functionality with new features that offer better control and communication of project information. Each new feature on its own may seem a small improvement, but when they are put together users will appreciate that Microsoft Project 2000 offers major benefits," said Paul Barons, Chairman of the UK Project User Group. "Microsoft Project Central offers many new tools for multi-project consolidation and greater integration with Outlook 2000 - features that users have been asking for."

"Tighter web integration enables collaborative applications to be easily and cost effectively developed, this increased functionality enables fast-changing projects to be more readily modelled and managed than ever before. Which is why we and our blue chip clients are excited at the prospect of migrating to Microsoft Project 2000 and Microsoft Project Central," said Paul Driver, President of International Relations at Program Planning Professionals. "Many projects fail as a result of a lack of communication. Microsoft Project 2000 and Microsoft Project Central provide the tools to ensure that all relevant parties are involved in the collaboration of key issues. This disciplined approach helps guarantee project success."

Flexible Analysis of Project Information

In addition to increasing team productivity, Microsoft Project 2000 provides users with greater flexibility for viewing and analysing data, and for compiling reports. Extensive new grouping tools enable project managers to manipulate data to obtain the exact information they need, in the exact format they need. Also, a wide selection of new graphical indicators enables

them to easily flag aspects of a project that are not going as planned.

Microsoft Project 2000 is easier to learn because it provides the same look that users of Microsoft Office are already familiar with. It comes with predefined templates that managers who are unfamiliar with Microsoft Project can use to quickly begin planning a new project.

Greater Organisational Efficiency

Microsoft Project 2000 now also provides an easy way to manage organisation wide projects that span multiple teams, departments or workgroups. Faster performance makes Microsoft Project 2000 a more efficient tool for planning large-scale projects. In addition, features such as the Windows(r) Installer technology used in Office 2000 are designed to minimise downtime on projects and keep users up and running longer. Developers also can use Microsoft Project 2000 as the basis for their own custom planning solutions, enabling organisations to address their specialised planning needs.

Beta Availability and Upgrade Guarantee

Microsoft is offering a free marketing beta of Microsoft Project 2000 to the first 5,000 people who order the CD from the Microsoft Project Web site at <http://www.microsoft.com/project/>. The CD includes Microsoft Project 2000, Microsoft Project Central and a Windows 2000 Deployment Template for information technology professionals who want to get an advanced start in planning their deployment of the Windows 2000 operating system with Microsoft Project 2000.

After the first 5,000 CDs, customers can order the beta for only the cost of shipping and handling. Microsoft is expected to deliver the final version of Microsoft Project 2000 in the first quarter of next year. The product will come with one copy of Microsoft Project Central, with more user licenses available at an additional cost.

Customers who purchase Microsoft Project 98 between now and April 30, 2000, are eligible for the Microsoft Project Technical Guarantee. The guarantee enables customers who buy Microsoft Project 98 to receive a free copy of Microsoft Project 2000 when it becomes available for retail sale. Microsoft encourages customers who use Microsoft Project 4.1, 4.0 and earlier versions to upgrade to Microsoft Project 98 now to ensure their file formats are compatible with Microsoft Project 2000 when the final product is released next year.

Founded in 1975, Microsoft (Nasdaq "MSFT") is the worldwide leader in software for personal and business computing. The company offers a wide range of products and services designed to empower people through great software-any time, any place and on any device.

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For customer product enquiries please advise readers to contact Microsoft Connection on 0345 00 2000.

For further press information, please contact:

Annemarie Duffy

Microsoft Ltd

Tel: 0870 60 10 100

Simon Marks or Rebecca Rabin

AUGUST.ONE COMMUNICATIONS

0208 434 5540 or 5551

simon.marks@augustone.com/rebecca.rabin@augustone.com

<http://www.augustone.com>

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