

TRIED AND TESTED

A closer look at the latest project management software product releases – on show this month, PROJECT in a box.

PROJECT in a box says...

PROJECT in a box helps users to define the methodology they want to apply to a particular project or programme. These can be standards provided for free including full authentic PRINCE2®, lighter P2 methods, MSP, a bidding method, DSDM Atern agile method, or can even be a company's own customised or bespoke method created and managed by them. The method provides the team with navigation, templates, guidance and reporting frameworks that help them through the process steps recommended to deliver the type of project being managed.

It also provides the project manager or PSO team with assurance tools to determine the status of their project and the level of interaction by their team in processes and with key controls like logs and plans. A wide range of controls, status and commentary data at a project or portfolio level can also be reported on individually or rolled up to dashboards at a touch of a button.

What are the key benefits?

Setting and tracking the consistent implementation of different types of projects across your organisation, improving your confidence in the following of standards and guidance, the steps taken to tackle challenges and the early identification of deviations. Also significant time saving on management reporting at stage or work package, project, programme and portfolio levels. For more information visit www.projectinabox.org.uk

You say...

Denis Benham is one of three IT project managers and one project support staff at Humberside Police, who are responsible for in excess of 40 IT projects, including six national Police projects. They have been using the PROJECT in a Box Professional application since 2006.

One of the first things I do in the morning is to log-on to PROJECT in a box. This allows me to look at all my projects in one place and view and update the narrative, and it gives me a clear view of the status of my full portfolio.

The other big benefit is the reporting. It uses the project traffic light system – so whether on hold, started, in progress, on track, or in exception – you can quickly ascertain the status of each project in the portfolio.

This is really useful when it comes to dealing with the force senior management team as they can look across the status colours and where they see red, or an exception, flag it up – which saves on time when it comes to scrolling through large documents.

This simplicity runs throughout the application. Straight from the box, it guides you through PRINCE2® project methodology dependant on the size and criticality of the project. Project in a box is totally flexible, if you don't want to use full PRINCE2® method you can select a brief method, and go straight to the project documents that you wish to use for your project utilising the 'P2 Method Picker'.

The only downside, personally, is that I wish I had the time to get to know the product better and realise the full potential of the product. The application never stands still. Unlike some applications, where you may get an upgrade maybe once a year, with this product you get constant upgrades and new releases, extending the functionality every time.

We're just about to upgrade to the web interface version, which is massively important for us because it will allow other people within our organisation to access documentation about the project lifecycle.

For smaller and medium size organisations and project teams, PROJECT in a box is ideally suited for its ease of use and value for money – and in terms of functionality, it ticks all the right boxes.

Product information and user details supplied by client; user verdict sourced independently by Project.