



**MODULE:  
MANAGING BUSINESS PROJECTS**

**ASSIGNMENT TITLE:  
SOFTWARE APPRAISAL**

**DECEMBER 2009**

**Important Notes:**

- ❖ Please refer to the Assignment Presentation Requirements for advice on how to set out your assignment. These can be found on the NCC Education *Campus*. Scroll down the left hand side of the screen until you reach Personal Support. Click on this, and then on Policies and Advice. You will find the Assignment Presentation Requirements under the Advice section.
- ❖ You must familiarise yourself with the NCC Education Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism Policy and ensure that you acknowledge all the sources which you use in your work. The policy is available on *Campus*. Follow the instructions above, but click on Policies rather than Advice.
- ❖ You must complete the ‘**Statement and Confirmation of Own Work**’. The form is available on the Policies section of *Campus*. Scroll down the left hand side until you reach Personal Support. Click on this and then click on Policies and Advice.
- ❖ Please make a note of the recommended word count. You could lose marks if you write 10% more or less than this.
- ❖ You must submit a paper copy and digital copy (on disk or similarly acceptable medium). Media containing viruses, or media which cannot be run directly, will result in a fail grade being awarded for this module.
- ❖ All electronic media will be checked for plagiarism.

**Marker's comments:**

**Moderator's comments:**

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**Moderated**

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## Introduction

There is a growing range of project management software tools available. These tools can help project managers not only to plan but also to manage people and processes. Complex projects probably cannot be run without such tools. Selecting the right tool needs to be done with care.

## Aim

The aim of this assignment is for you, through research, to gain an appreciation of what project management software tools can do and how they can help in the running of projects.

## The Scenario

You work in the IT Department of a large organisation. The organisation has recently appointed a new Head of IT. The new Head of IT is not happy with the project management software currently used internally, and asks you to research and evaluate potential replacement software.

You must search for software that has strengths in project tracking, control and plan adjustment, not just first phase planning.

Ideally, the replacement software should facilitate dynamic plan changes, and provide support for both impact assessment and the communication of plan changes.

## Task 1 – 10 Marks

Write a description of a typical project lifecycle, focusing on when changes are most likely to occur. For example, changes are common in the transition from one phase to another, when client review takes place.

State what should happen (according to good practice) when such changes are made. For example, documentation should be updated, risks re-assessed, changes communicated to relevant parties, then stored in the configuration library.

Use this model as a guide when reviewing what support software tools offer to these activities.  
**(Deliverable: 1000 words)**

## Task 2 – 10 Marks

Create an evaluation instrument - a selection criteria checklist, with a list of essential/ desirable attributes and functions. Explain why you have chosen these attributes and why you think they are important.

## Task 3 – 40 Marks

Search for and select a range of FOUR project management software tools suppliers. Read what their products have to offer and run their demo software in order to understand the features and functions provided. Evaluate each tool against your evaluation checklist. Note any features or functions **not** covered by your checklist.

Construct a table that summarises your findings and allows comparison to be made between the products.

## Task 4 – 20 Marks

Produce a report that:

- Describes the suppliers and their products.
- Comments on the software tools' strengths and weaknesses e.g. products met requirements in some areas but not in others. Use the table constructed in Task 3 to support your commentary.
- Makes recommendations on the tool(s) to buy, giving reasons.

**(Deliverable: 2000 words)**

## Task 5 – 10 Marks

Write a brief commentary on the research process covering the:

- Research brief given to you (was it precise enough?)
- Limitations of the exercise (did you find the information you wanted?)

Explain how you would do it next time.

**(Deliverable: 500 words)**

## Task 6 – 10 Marks

Combine the deliverables and outputs from Task 1 to 5 into a single document. The document must be properly structured with a Table of Contents, appendices and references listed where appropriate.

## Guidance

There are numerous suppliers of these kinds of software tools, and many allow you to access demo versions of their software for free.

Consult with your tutor regarding the construction of the evaluation checklist.

## Submission Requirements

One single word-processed document as described in Task 6 above. A digital version must be submitted on disk or similarly acceptable medium.

**Warning: All media must be virus free!**

Media containing viruses, or media which cannot be run directly, will result in a FAIL grade being awarded for this module.

**You must read and understand NCC Education's policy on 'Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism'. You must complete the 'Statement and Confirmation of Own Work' form and attach the completed form to your assignment.**