

Using MS Project in Translation Projects Management

When building a translation project plan, there must be taken into account: the tasks involved by the project, duration of each task, task dependencies, the required resources, and the project costs. All these could be managed by using MS Project.

Setup a project

When creating a new project (using *File*→*New*), first step is to provide the start date and the date of finalizing the project. There is automatically calculated the number of working days inside this interval (for example, there are 22 working days between 1st and 30 November).

The start or finish date could be changed subsequently, at any time, by clicking *Project Information* on the *Project* menu.

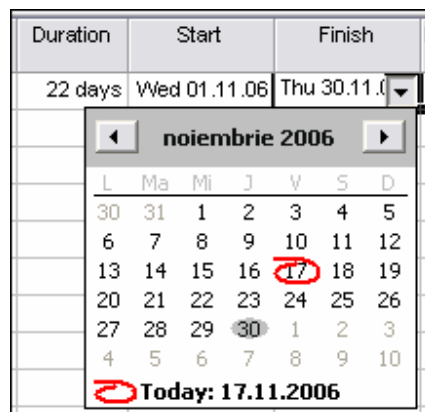


Figure 1: Setting the start and the finish date for a project

The next step is to provide the main information about the project, by using the *File*→*Properties* option, *Summary* tab: the project title, the project goal, and the people who will manage it and maintain the project file, any known limitations, and other general project notes.



Figure 2: Providing the general information about the project

By default, the project calendar refers to Monday through Friday as working days, with a schedule from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., with an hour off for lunch. These settings could be changed, for example, in order to be specified nonworking times, such as weekends and evenings, as well as special days off, such as holidays.

First, it must be verified if the option *View, Gantt Chart* is selected. Then, from *Tools, Change Working Time* shall be opened the following dialog box:

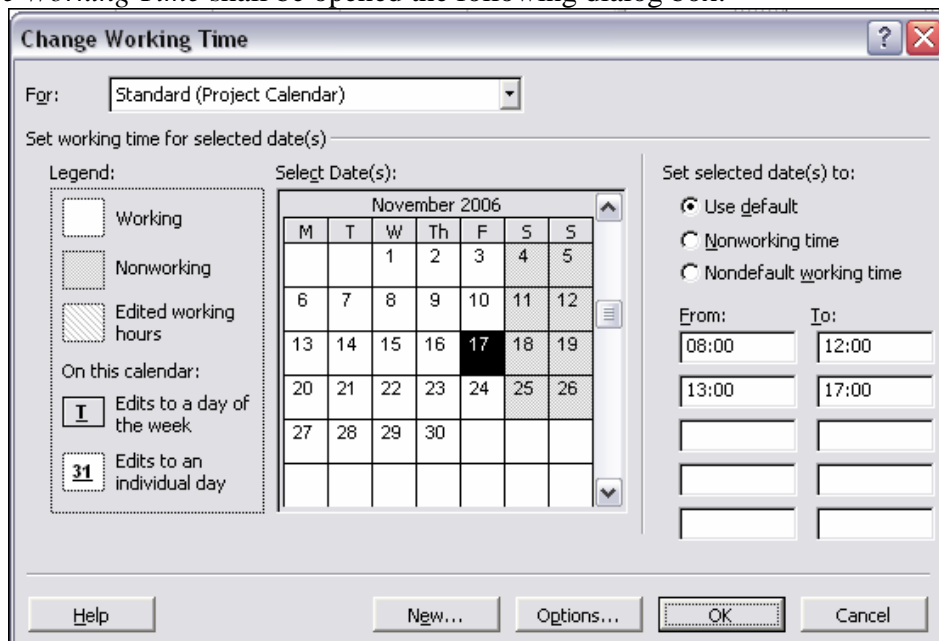


Figure 3: Changing the default project calendar settings

To change one day of the week for the entire calendar, for example, to have Fridays end at 4:00 P.M., click the abbreviation for that day at the top of the calendar, and then change 17:00 to 16:00 in the *To* column.

In order to make a certain special date free (for example, the national commemoration day), select the date, and then select the *Nonworking time radio* button.

In order to eliminate a nonworking day (for example, a Saturday in which the boss decided to convoke the employers), select the date, and then select the *Nondefault working time radio* button, and then change the working hours interval.

Entering a Task List

A typical project is a series of related *tasks*. A task represents an amount of work with a clear *deliverable*; it should be short enough to track its progress regularly. Tasks should generally be between one day and two weeks long.

We consider the following Translation project:

Source language: English

Target languages: French and Italian

Project description:

- A Word document containing 150.000 words (that must be translated and revised, not provided the QA)
- 200 simple illustrations for translation
- 750 MS Word pages for DTP

In order to establish, together with the client, the project deadline, we take into account the following standard time required for various operation:

- Translation : 2.500 words/day
- Revising : 7.500 words/day
- DTP – Word/Frame : 8 pages/hour
- Illustrations : 3 illus/hour

According to the project requirements, we could calculate the total days necessary for each unit to be addressed:

- **Translation:** $150.00 / 2.500 = 60$ days; we choose to work with a team of 4 translators, so there shall be necessary $60 / 4 =$ **15 days**;
- **Revision:** $150.000 / 7.500 = 20$ days; we suppose the revision team has 2 members, so there should be necessary only **10 days**;
- **DTP - Word/Frame:** $750 / 8 = 93,75$ hours; $93,75 / 8 = 11,72$ days; supposing that we a 2 members team for DTP, there should be necessary $11,72 / 2 = 5,86$ days; rounded off: **6 days**;
- **Screenshots translation:** $200 / 3 = 66,67$ hours; $66,67 / 8 =$ **8,33 days** (a single person).

Taking into account that revision could start after a big of translation is finished, the DTP could start after the revision end, and the screenshots translation could start after the entire translation is done, we make the following planning of activities:

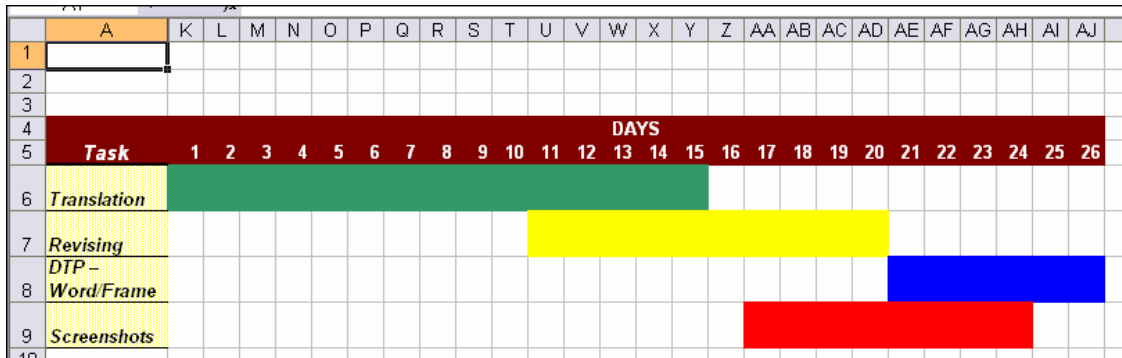


Figure 4: The general plan of the project

So, we enter in the MS Project sheet the names of the four tasks (Translation, revising, Screenshots, and DTP), and also the number of days necessary for each task, and also the start day of each task. The incorporated Planning Wizard shall apprehend that we planned the *Screenshots* translation after the text *Translation*, and shall ask us if we want to create a link between the two phases, in order to be stored the rule of succession. The same help shall be provided in the case of *DTP* task, about which the wizard shall apprehend that it follows the *Revision* task:

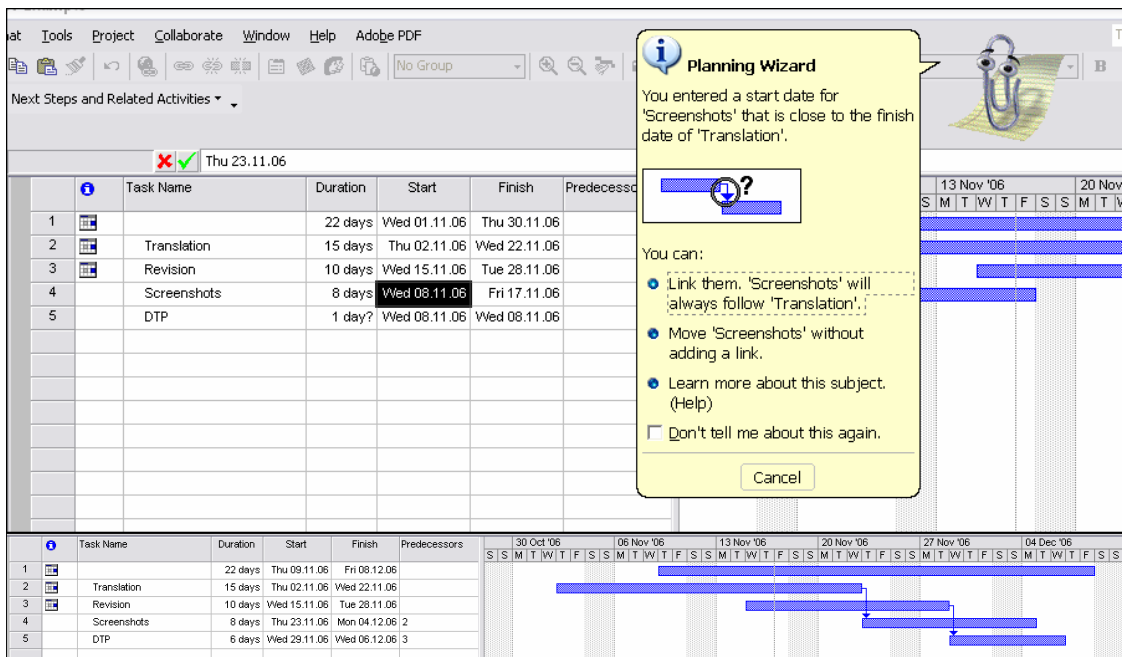



Figure 5: Editing the tasks of a translation project

The task duration could be expressed not only in days, but also in months, weeks, days, hours, or minutes, by using the following abbreviations:

- months = mo
- weeks = w
- days = d
- hours = h
- minutes = m

The relations between tasks could be established not only via the suggestions of the *Planning Wizard*, but also by deliberately setting such relations: the tasks desired to be connected shall be selected (CTRL key + mouse click), and then should be clicked the Link Tasks icon in the task bar - . There could be selected the relation type, and the number of days between the two tasks.

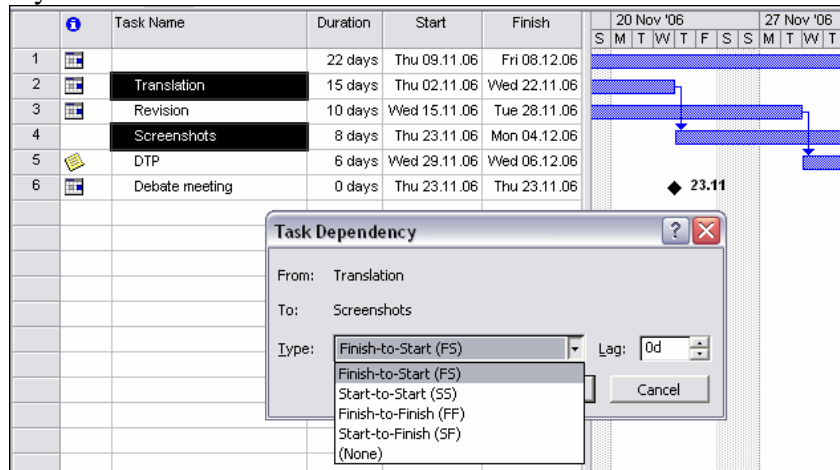


Figure 6: Establishing a relation between two tasks

It could be attached a comment to the each task, by double-clicking on the task name, and filling-in the *Notes* tab of the opened window:

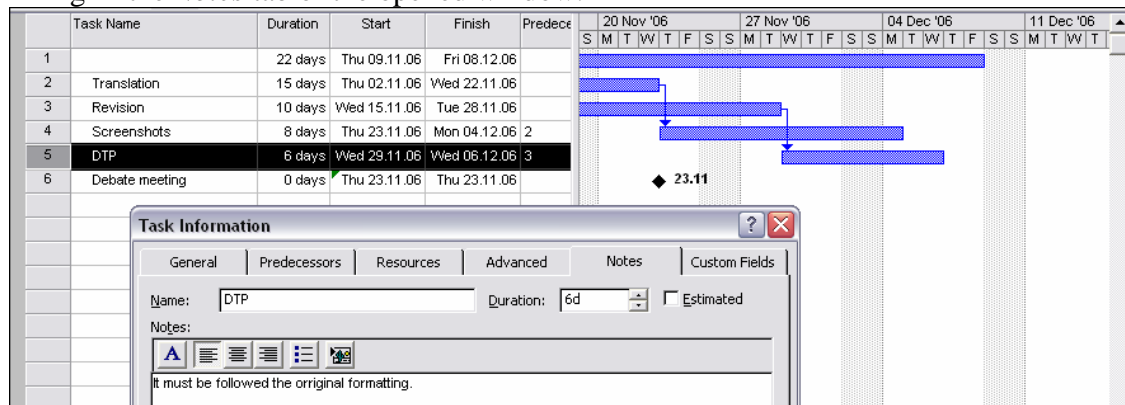







Figure 7: Attaching a comment to a certain task

In order to create a milestone (a significant event in the schedule, such as the completion of a major phase), it must be included a new task (for example with the *Debate meeting* name) which to have allocated 0 days, and have the start and finish in the same day.

Microsoft Project displays the milestone symbol  on the Gantt chart at the start of that day. Also, the tasks could be organized in a hierarchical manner, the MS Project toolbar providing the following instruments:

-  - For defining the current task as subtask of the previous one
-  - For defining the current task as a parent task of the next one
-  - For displaying the subtasks of the current task
-  - For hiding the subtasks of the current task.

The project resources

MS Project enables, through the *Resource Sheet* facility, to create a list of the people, equipment, and materials that are involved and required by the project.

From the View menu, on select the *Resource Sheet* option, in order to be displayed the resource sheet associated with the project. We shall specify as resources the name of all team members, and also, as material resources - a computer, a laptop, and a printer. For each people, it could be specified the group to which belong, and the percentage of working in the project.

	Resource Name	Type	Material Label	Initials	Group	Max. Units	Std. Rate	Ovt. Rate	Cost/Use	Accrue At	Base Calendar
1	Mark	Work		M	Translation	100%	0,00 lei/hr	0,00 lei/hr	0,00 lei	Prorated	Standard
2	Suzanne	Work		S	Translation	100%	0,00 lei/hr	0,00 lei/hr	0,00 lei	Prorated	Standard
3	Johny	Work		J	Translation	100%	0,00 lei/hr	0,00 lei/hr	0,00 lei	Prorated	Standard
4	Michelle	Work		M	Translation	100%	0,00 lei/hr	0,00 lei/hr	0,00 lei	Prorated	Standard
5	Paul	Work		P	Revision	100%	0,00 lei/hr	0,00 lei/hr	0,00 lei	Prorated	Standard
6	Gabrielle	Work		G	Revision	100%	0,00 lei/hr	0,00 lei/hr	0,00 lei	Prorated	Standard
7	Adrian	Work		A	Screenshots	100%	0,00 lei/hr	0,00 lei/hr	0,00 lei	Prorated	Standard
8	Irene	Work		I	DTP	100%	0,00 lei/hr	0,00 lei/hr	0,00 lei	Prorated	Standard
9	Amedeo	Work		A	DTP	100%	0,00 lei/hr	0,00 lei/hr	0,00 lei	Prorated	Standard
10	Computer	Material	piece				0,00 lei		0,00 lei	Prorated	
11	Laptop	Material	piece				0,00 lei		0,00 lei	Prorated	
12	Printer	Material	piece				0,00 lei		0,00 lei	Prorated	

Figure 8: The Resource sheet associated with a project

The working hours and days off defined in the project calendar (see Figure 3) are the defaults working hours and days off for each resource. When an individual resource works a different schedule entirely, or when a certain equipment is not available all the time, it could be modified the individual resource calendar. For this, it must be selected that resource in the *Resource sheet*, and from the Project menu, it must be selected the *Resource Information* option, and the *Working time* tab. There is displayed a same type of calendar as the Project calendar, but this one is strictly related to the selected resource. There could be specified some schedule particularities. For example, the date of 8th November shall be specified as free day for Michelle.


The screenshot shows the 'Resource Information' dialog box with the 'Working Time' tab selected. The 'Resource Name' is 'Michelle' and the 'Base calendar' is 'Standard'. The 'Set working time for selected date(s)' section is active, showing a calendar for November 2006. The 8th of November is highlighted, indicating it is being set as a nonworking day. The legend on the left shows 'Working' (white), 'Nonworking' (grey), and 'Edited working hours' (hatched). The 'Set selected date(s) to:' section has radio buttons for 'Use default', 'Nonworking time' (which is selected), and 'Nondefault working time'.

Figure 9: Associating a particular calendar to a specific task

In order to return to the task list, there must be selected Task option in the toolbar, or the *Gantt Chart* option from the *View* menu.



The next step consists in assigning resources to the tasks. The assignment could be changed at any time. It could be assigned more than one resource to a task and it could be specified whether a resource works full-time or part-time on a task. If the work assigned to a resource exceeds the daily full-time allotment indicated in the resource's working time's calendar, *MS Project* displays the name of the over allocated resource in red in resource views.

So, there must be selected a certain task, and then must be clicked the  icon from the toolbar in order to assign resources to it. There is displayed the resources list, from which it should be selected those that should be assigned to the selected task.

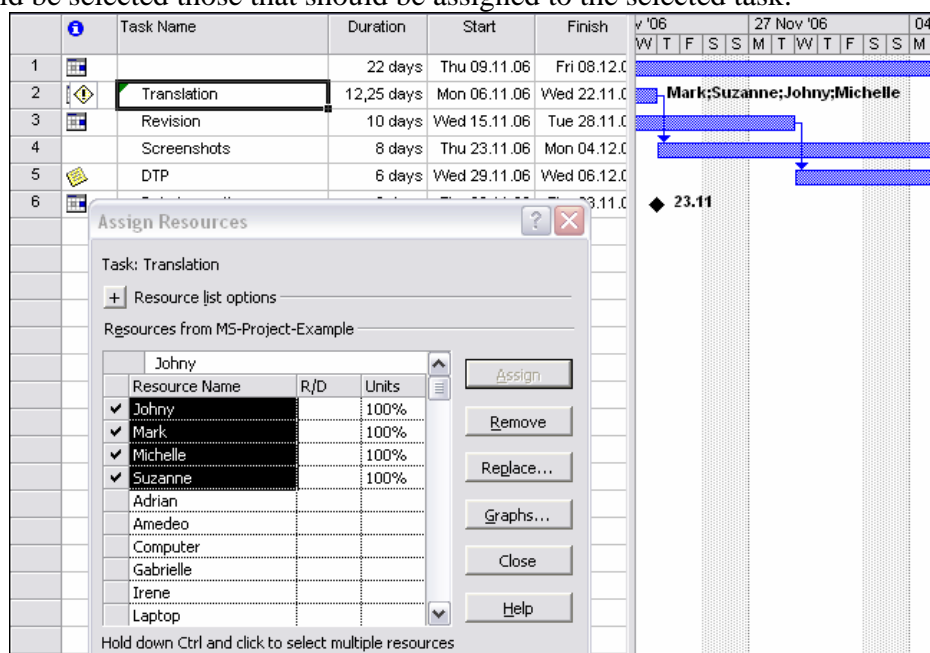


Figure 10: Assigning resources to a certain task

Because Michelle is free on 8th November, the duration of the Translation task is increased automatically with 0,25 days.

After the resources assignment to tasks, there could publish the assignments to *Microsoft Project Server*. By this way, the team members can accept the assignments and see their individual task lists along with expected durations and deadlines. If there is not available a *Microsoft Project Server*, it could be specified that the collaboration shall be established only by e-mail. By this way, there is available the list with resources distribution, and also the list with the tasks and theirs assigned resources:

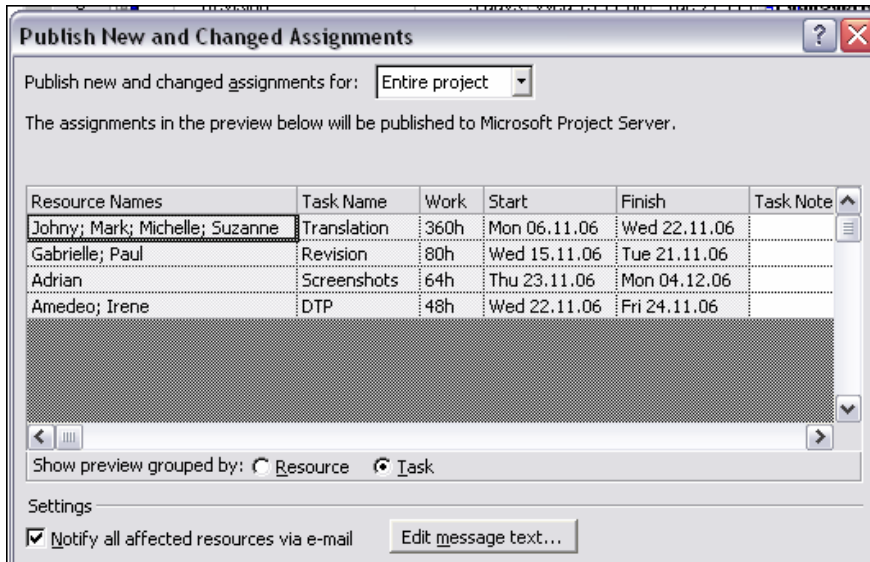
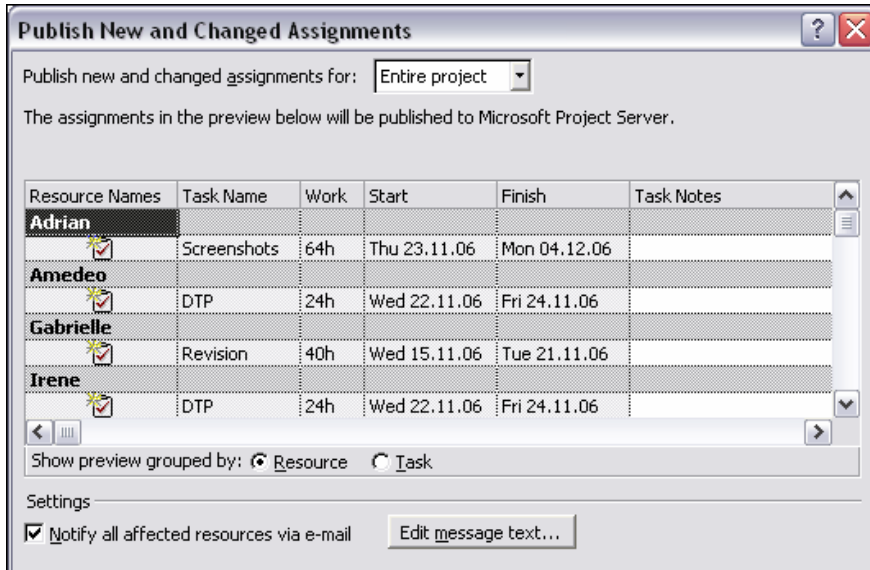


Figure 11: The list of resources allocated to the tasks, organized according the resources and according the tasks

After these assignments, the Gantt Chart is enriched with the resources allocated for each phase of the project:

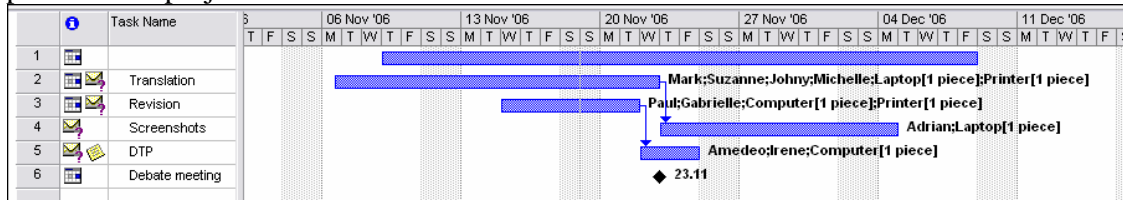



Figure 12: Gantt Chart after the resources assignment to tasks

The project settings mentioned above could be modified at any time. Also, if a certain task couldn't be finished in time, it could be split in two subtasks at a certain time interval, by selecting that task, and then the Split Task icon in the toolbar - .

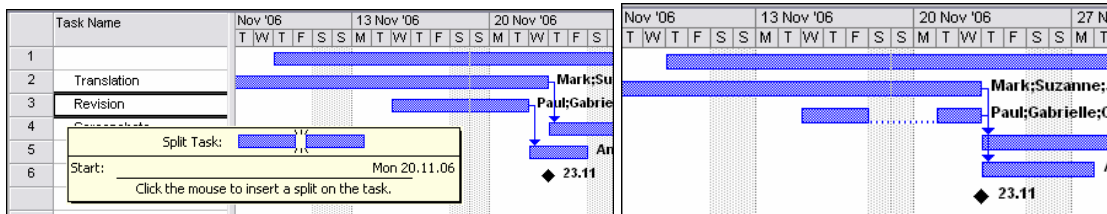
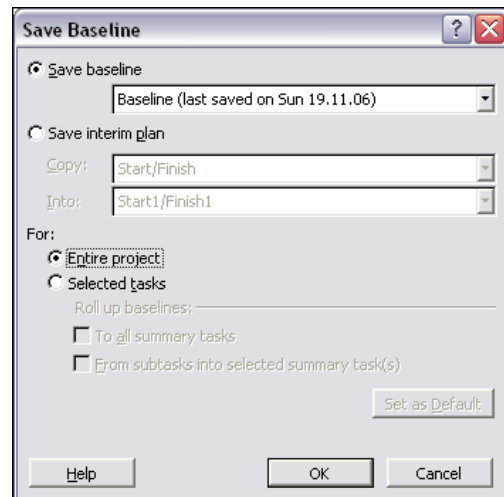


Figure 13: Splitting a task in two subtasks at a certain time interval

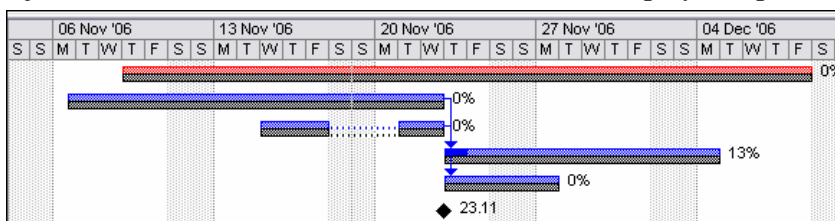
In order to delete a certain task, there must be selected the corresponding row by clicking on the identifier number at the beginning of the task row, and then there must be pressed the DEL key.

After entering the entire project information, there must be saved a *baseline* of the project's information. This enable to track progress, see variances, and make the necessary corrections. For example, it could be seen which tasks started later than planned, how much work assigned resources have actually performed, and whether the budget is on track. For this purpose, from the *Tools* menu, it must be selected the *Tracking* option, and then *Save Baseline*. There could be mentioned that the current baseline is for the entire project, or only for the (previously) selected tasks. There could be saved up to 11 baselines in a project plan.

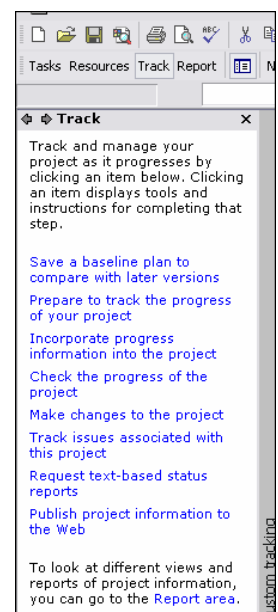


After saving a baseline of the project's information, it could be saved up to 10 *interim plans* as checkpoints during the project (by selecting also *Tools, Tracking, Save Baseline*, and then the *Save interim plan* radio button).

In order to keep track and to update the task progress, it should be used the *Tracking Setup wizard*, which is part of the *Project Guide*. For this, on the *Project Guide* toolbar, click *Track*. There shall be displayed a pane in the

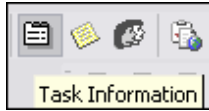


left side of the window, from which it must be selected the *Prepare to track the progress of your project* option. The task progress bar could be displayed by selecting the *View, Tracking Gantt* option. There could be



done various changes, and then - in order to store them - On the *Collaborate* menu, click *Update Project Progress*.

In order to update a task's progress as a percentage, in the Gantt chart, there must be selected that task, then clicked on *Task Information* icon, and in the *Percent complete* box, typed a whole number between 0 and 100.



In order to compare the actual task information to the baseline should be selected *View, Table, Variance*.

The track of resources effective use is illustrated through the option *View, Resource usage*:

	Resource Name	Work	Details	13 Nov '06							20 Nov '06						
				S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	
	- Unassigned	0 hrs	Work														
		0 hrs	Work														
1	- Mark	90 hrs	Work		8h	8h	8h	8h	8h			8h	8h				
	Translation	90 hrs	Work		8h	8h	8h	8h	8h			8h	8h				
2	- Suzanne	90 hrs	Work		8h	8h	8h	8h	8h			8h	8h				
	Translation	90 hrs	Work		8h	8h	8h	8h	8h			8h	8h				
3	- Johnny	90 hrs	Work		8h	8h	8h	8h	8h			8h	8h				
	Translation	90 hrs	Work		8h	8h	8h	8h	8h			8h	8h				
4	- Michelle	90 hrs	Work		8h	8h	8h	8h	8h			8h	8h	8h			
	Translation	90 hrs	Work		8h	8h	8h	8h	8h			8h	8h	8h			
5	- Paul	40 hrs	Work				8h	8h	8h			0h	8h	8h			
	Revision	40 hrs	Work				8h	8h	8h			0h	8h	8h			
6	- Gabrielle	40 hrs	Work				8h	8h	8h			0h	8h	8h			
	Revision	40 hrs	Work				8h	8h	8h			0h	8h	8h			
7	- Adrian	64 hrs	Work												8h	8h	
	Screenshots	64 hrs	Work												8h	8h	
8	- Irene	24 hrs	Work												8h	8h	
	DTP	24 hrs	Work												8h	8h	
9	- Amedeo	24 hrs	Work												8h	8h	
	DTP	24 hrs	Work												8h	8h	
10	- Computer	2 piece	Work (j)				0,2	0,2	0,2			0	0,2	0,2	0,33	0,33	
	Revision	1 piece	Work (j)				0,2	0,2	0,2			0	0,2	0,2			
	DTP	1 piece	Work (j)												0,33	0,33	
11	- Laptop	2 piece	Work (j)		0,08	0,08	0,08	0,08	0,08			0,08	0,08	0,08	0,13	0,13	
	Translation	1 piece	Work (j)		0,08	0,08	0,08	0,08	0,08			0,08	0,08	0,08			
	Screenshots	1 piece	Work (j)												0,13	0,13	
	Debate meetin.	0 piece	Work (j)												0		
12	- Printer	2 piece	Work (j)		0,08	0,08	0,28	0,28	0,28			0,08	0,28	0,28			
	Translation	1 piece	Work (j)		0,08	0,08	0,08	0,08	0,08			0,08	0,08	0,08			
	Revision	1 piece	Work (j)				0,2	0,2	0,2			0	0,2	0,2			

Figure 14: The Resources usage track

So, the *MS Project* provide a lot of facilities for keeping the track of all tasks and resources, and for obtaining a lot of views on the managed data. The information included in the project could be formatted by using the MS Office well-known Formatting toolbar, and also could be printed.