



The most practical project management software

# Focus on getting things done with Project Management 2.0

## Article at a glance

Are you a manager trying to complete several projects at a time? Then, you probably know how difficult it can be to stay productive, while trying to get too many things done. Yet, often project managers are turned into project secretaries by enormous amount of routine work. A new approach to project management might be a solution to this problem. Read the article and see how Project Management 2.0 can make your job easier.

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Let's have a look at a typical project manager's day. In the morning, he comes to his office and checks his e-mail for messages with project updates. He then spends hours calling his team members, e-mailing them or meeting them in person to collect all the information he needs and to make sure that everything is well and on track. After that, the manager has to merge these updates into the project plan. The updates also need to be communicated to the upper management. So the project manager has to make reports and hand them in to the company's executives to keep them aware of the project's progress. The manager also has to follow up on clients' feedback or partners' actions. During the course of the day, he constantly has to resolve issues through another endless series of e-mails, phone calls and meetings.

Looks familiar, doesn't it? E-mail is still the most popular project communication tool. An employee on an average project gets between 30 and 100 e-mails per day. The majority of these e-mails contain tasks, change requests and discussions, so it's hard to overestimate the knowledge buried in e-mail inboxes every day. This knowledge often bypasses project management tools like Microsoft Project.

Have you ever missed an important e-mail? Or forgotten to send a reply to an urgent request? Was it ever easy for you to find an indispensable piece of information buried in the thousands of messages that you have in your inbox? What if you weren't CC'd on that e-mail? It gets even worse when you need to quickly share information that's lost in your inbox with a newcomer.

This knowledge, buried in e-mails, causes project managers in too many organizations today to waste hours on transferring information from e-mails into their project management systems and back. As a result, their productivity and efficiency are damaged by this unnecessary routine. Instead of being a project leader, a project manager turns into a project secretary.

Traditional project management systems often are not integrated with e-mail. Systems like Microsoft Project are designed with the top-down project management approach in mind and aren't suited well to leverage collective knowledge in an easy way. It means they create dozens of needless, routine jobs for the project manager. Therefore, instead of helping project managers, these systems make the manager's workload even bigger.

What if managers could bring this "project secretary" job to a minimum and concentrate on the leadership part of the management job? How much more efficient and productive would the whole team become as a result? Experts say this is possible.

The change comes with the growing popularity of Enterprise 2.0 principles applied to project management. [Project Management 2.0](#) relies on the same concepts as Enterprise 2.0. The power of many, also

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known as collective intelligence, helps to build, maintain and evolve an up-to-date picture of operations. Flexible Project Management 2.0 tools merge this picture from various pieces, giving a perfect example of what enterprise social software researchers call “emergent structures.” The software supporting these two concepts, collective intelligence and emergent structures, open new opportunities for boosting your own efficiency and your team’s efficiency by cutting the daily routine and leaving more room for creativity and leadership. They make a project manager’s life easier by bringing three major benefits:

## Reducing routine work

Project Management 2.0 practices and supportive tools [eliminate](#) the need for extra meetings, phone calls, and e-mails, thus saving you time and letting you focus on getting things done. The best tools in this area are integrated with e-mail. They don’t break the habitual workflow, allowing project participants to communicate via e-mail messages. At the same time, they automatically absorb information from e-mails, which usually bypasses project management systems and is traditionally buried in the team’s inboxes. With project management 2.0 tools, this knowledge is shared and available to everybody on the team at any given moment in time.

Just imagine: there’s no need to call and ask your peer to find the important e-mail from a customer who wanted to make changes in a project schedule. Tasks, clients’ requirements, status updates, ideas, and project discussions are all captured by a single system, are shared among the project participants and are available at any given moment in time. So even if you need the information when nobody is in the office, you can still get it immediately. No need to call your employee on Saturday evening when you suddenly need to know where the project stands. Besides, there’s no need for the manager to manually adjust project plans and individual team members’ schedules.

Project Management 2.0 lets you to [avoid micromanagement](#) by allowing team members to mark updates of their part of the project work in the shared collaborative environment. This gives the project manager the up-to-date picture of where his team and the project stand. The top-down control comes in when the project manager aligns and guides those activities. Project Management 2.0 practices and tools let you gain harmony between top-down and bottom-up management styles.

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## Providing multiple project views

Besides giving an up-to-date picture of internal project operations, the new-generation technologies enable managers and other members of the project team to [view projects differently](#). Project participants can pick any reasonable sub-set of tasks, create a view with these tasks and share the view with someone who needs it. It means that more people can collaborate and contribute to the project work productively.

Each of these views can be changed by team members as the organization and its environment changes. The whole structure evolves with time. Managers, who have access to more perspectives and to broader views, can align multiple projects, avoid scheduling conflicts, and set the right priorities. Flexible, many-to-many structures that allow creating, sharing and easy merging of views are an important part of the Project Management 2.0 approach. This approach enables collective intelligence and leads to collaborative planning. In turn, collaborative planning makes organizations more productive and transparent.

## Giving the complete picture of all projects

Upper-level managers can access the global organizational view, which gives them a clear picture of where the business stands. Project Management 2.0 tools merge individual employees' to-do lists into one picture that is always up-to-date. It means that corporate executives are constantly in the loop with what's going on in the project. The information is always at their fingertips. As a result, the organization's leaders can adjust strategic plans to changes in the business environment much faster. It becomes easier for them to rapidly and cost-efficiently recognize changes and adapt to them. The whole organization becomes more agile and therefore more competitive, thanks to very simple tools and the powerful practices of Project Management 2.0.

The key to the making the whole organization more productive lays in gaining efficiency for the project manager and his team. Project Management 2.0 tools and practices become a catalyst to important innovations on the organizational level. They let everybody from team members to project managers and corporate executives focus on getting things done and spend less time on routine tasks. Naturally, software will not do the whole job alone, but it empowers people and multiplies their efforts. Project Management 2.0 democratizes project management, bringing it outside of enterprise project management offices to other departments, as well as to small and midsize businesses. It makes companies more [agile](#), projects more controllable and people more productive.

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## Author: Andrew Filev

Since 2001, Andrew Filev has been managing software teams in a global environment. His technical expertise and his management vision are reflected in online and offline articles that have had hundreds of thousands of readers. His ideas on new trends in project management are published in the Project Management 2.0 blog. Andrew has given speeches on new trends in project management and deployment of the next-generation, Web-based applications on different events, including the PMI Silicon Valley Tools and Techniques Forum and the Office 2.0 Conference (Project Management panel).

Andrew's innovative ideas and passion to improve project management tools are applied in Wrike, a leading online project management solution. Andrew now leads the company as a founder and CEO.