11-1-2014

Rightsizing Projects with EasyProjects

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Rightsizing Project Management with EasyProjects

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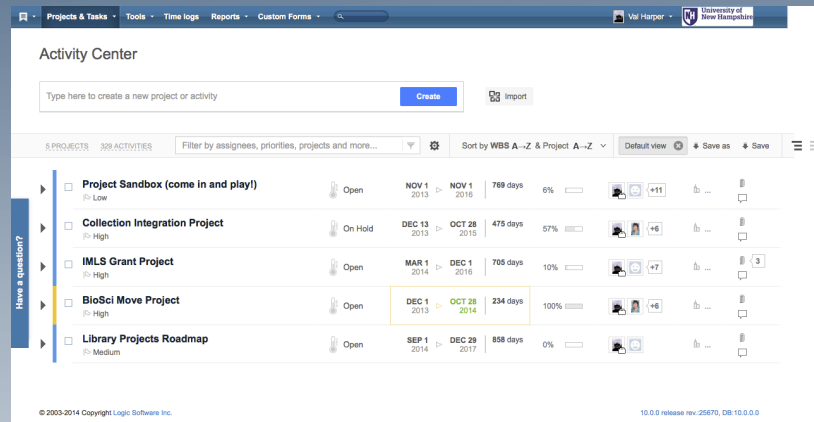**University Library, University of New Hampshire**

Problem:

The University Library is using project management methods to implement new services and manage new initiatives. Librarians and staff expressed a clear desire to prevent "scope creep", inadequate project handoff, increased workloads, and poor prioritizing. Two projects were just about to begin: a 3-year IMLS grant project to create a geospatial search interface to some of our digital collections, and the closing of a branch library and integration of its collections into the main library. Each project had its own project team.
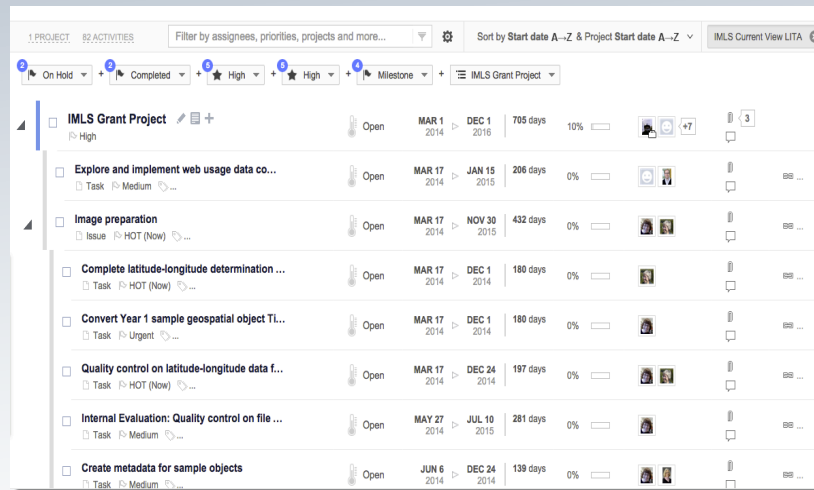
Needs and solution:

Project teams wanted a tool like Microsoft Project that they could access, add tasks to, view milestones, and check off completed tasks. Several packages were examined - EasyProjects was our choice.

- Web-based, hosted service
- Included guest seats for free, allowing the Library Dean or others to view project progress
- Customizable – could add our own data fields, remove those we did not wish to use
- Project team members could set up own "dashboards" for customized views
- Less costly than similar applications -
- Very easy to set up and use
- Included data storage for group documents
- Features included Gannt charts, calendars, milestones, reports, task assignments, weekly project updates by email
- Support was excellent

Activity Center view – all projects

Work breakdown structure

Implementation:

- Worked with EasyProject's Chief Make-It-Happen Officer Vadim Katcherovski to set up preferences and provide group training by webcast
- Set up two main projects and created a sandbox for practice
- One project team (IMLS grant) reviews the project site at every bi-weekly executive team meeting to chart progress, modify due dates, add tasks. Group members beginning to add own tasks to plan and mark off tasks accomplished. Group members who were faculty and who delegated more tasks to staff seemed more inclined to view the project in EasyProjects.
- Other team (branch library move) was more content to let the project manager maintain and report out at meetings. Group members who were functional experts or library staff seemed to focus on their own specific tasks and were less inclined to view the "big picture" through EasyProjects.

Rightsizing for the library:

- Chose not to use financial indicators (job role rates, expense tracking, etc.) – the grant budget was being handled by our campus business center, and the branch library move budget was handled by campus planners
- Chose not to implement hourly time recording
- Every task assigned to a team member, emphasizing responsibility, authority, and accountability
- Allowed all project team members full editing privileges
- Allowed a fair amount of extra time to tasks, recognizing that projects were on top of regularly assigned duties for many project team members
- Chose not to input dependencies, critical paths, but to concentrate on task assignment and due dates for now

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