

Simple, Powerful Project Management

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Primavera SureTrak Project

Manager 3.0 is a major

upgrade to its 2.0

predecessor, a worthy project

management package in its

own right. The latest version

adds better interface

adherence to usual Windows

standards and a much

improved set of interfaces to

email and the web. SureTrak

Project Manager is actually

the entry level product in

Primavera's line of workgroup

and enterprise management

software that integrates much

higher levels of resource

management. In version 3.0,

you'll find a web publishing wizard that allows you to easily publish a project to an intranet or extranet and update it readily. In addition, projects can be managed directly by email and even updated remotely using the Primavera Post Office. This feature works well, and in conjunction with the web publishing feature makes SureTrak Project Manager work well with the web. These web features, however, fall short of Microsoft Project 2000's almost complete integration with the web. Other usability improvements include faster view switching, the ability to customize bars for selected activities, customizable resource layouts that can be reused and filters that can be used to

screen out parts of a project as needed. Since these filters are interactive and can be saved and reloaded, they are very flexible and make it easy to simplify a view of a particular part of a project.

(click to see larger image)

Perhaps the most innovative new feature is a variable timescale that emphasizes the current time period, such as the current week, and shrinks the rest of a project's timeline. This highlights the current phase of the project beautifully and makes it easier to see current problems. In addition, SureTrak's PERT charts can now be displayed with a timescale in a partial attempt to have the best of both worlds: a complete look at project components and

dependencies and an overview of how well the project is on track. SureTrak Project Manager 3.0 still lacks a lot of the high end power features of Microsoft Project, including less flexibility in scheduling intricate parts of a process. You cannot split a task and put a break in the middle of it, for example. On the flip side, an excellent Project KickStart Wizard makes it really easy to get started and have a new project planned and mapped out quickly. Nevertheless, SureTrak Project Manager is not a match for Microsoft Project 2000, though it is a worthy addition to the project management ranks. The KickStart Wizard would be worthwhile for the novice project manager with modest

needs in terms of power and who must get started with planning immediately. At \$499, it is priced much the same as competing products.

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