

Week 3 Discussion: Scope Management

What is involved in project scope management, and why is good project scope management so important on information technology projects?

Project Scope management involves planning the project scope in a scope management plan, defining the project scope in a project scope statement, and developing a work breakdown structure (WBS) decomposing and outlining the tasks involved in the project and their planned completion times (Schwalbe, 2007).

Clients will always modify the requirements for a project at some point in the SDLC in such a way that the scope will be impacted (Macronimous, 2008). It doesn't matter how well designed the prototypes, how thoroughly the requirements are documented, there is invariably a disconnect between what the client actually needs and what they have helped define.

The idea of holding the client to the defined scope is impractical. If the client, halfway through a software project, looks at the work that's been accomplished, and says, "That's not what I meant." Or, "I know I said it could go out with the next phase, but without it, this phase might as well not go out." It doesn't matter how well scoped a contract you hand them with their signature on it; the software still doesn't deliver what they need. A project manager with a great deal of diplomacy is needed in these instances in order to get the client to understand that the scope creep will require de-scoping something out of the project, increasing the cost, or extending the deadline by having a scope-change process in place (Mochal, 2004).

Luckily, iterative development lifecycles mitigate this problem by breaking a large scope into several projects of smaller scopes. This way, when scope creep does occur, it is limited to the current iteration. MS Project is also nice in these instances, for its ability to automatically adjust all elements following additional requirements or milestone-slippages in the WBS.

Macronimous, *Managing Scope Creep in Web Project Development*. Retrieved from Macronimous on May 1, 2009 at:
http://www.macronimous.com/resources/managing_scope_creep_in_web_project_development.asp

Mochal, Tom (2004). *Poor scope-management practices could precipitate project failure*. TechRepublic. Retrieved from TechRepublic on May 1, 2009 at:
http://articles.techrepublic.com.com/5100-10878_11-5034542.html

Schwalbe, Kathy (2007). *Information Technology Project Management*. Course Technology, Boston, Massachusetts.