

**AN EXPERIENCE REPORT ABOUT THE USE OF  
DOTPROJECT - PROJECT MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE  
- IN THE PRODUCTION OF MULTIMEDIA MATERIALS  
FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION (DE)**

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**Category (Methods and Technologies)**

**Educational Sector(College Education)**

**Report Purpose (Description of a Rolling Project)**

**Class (Innovative Experience)**

***SUMMARY***

*The increase of DE created new roles and media diversification for the teaching and learning process. This article presents an experience of project management, used in the production of multimedia materials for distance education. It was necessary to structure the processes, human resources, defining the offered products and than use the best practice of project management in the web open source dotProject system, with some adaptations for the context. There are presented as results, the difficulties and successes obtained based in the trio: people, processes and technologies.*

**Key-words: dotProject; Project Management; Distance Education; Production of Multimedia Material;**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

The Distance Education modality - DE - made the Teaching Institutions adept themselves to new processes that are necessary to establish distance courses. Among them, we can name: physical and technological infrastructure, staff development, creation of institutional materials and new procedures.

Several institutional materials may be used in the distance modality. We can name: the pressed material, the Virtual Learning Environment - VLE - and the available material

in CD/DVD. All of them require the development of projects for the planning and elaboration.

A project can thus be defined in terms of its distinctive characteristics - a project is a temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product or service [1].

Due to the characteristics above, all the production of multimedia material demand, that involves the production of audio and video, illustration, layout and animation are considered a project.

The results of a project are unsure by nature, considering that they refer to a product or a new service. So, a critic aspect for the project success is its effective management.

Project Management is the application of knowledge, skills, tools and techniques to project activities in order to meet or exceed stakeholder needs and expectations from a project [1].

Looking for a free software that attends the demands related to project management, it was discovered the dotProject.

The dotProject (Picture 1) is a web system that has several resources that allow the project management. It is shared under the GNU-GPL license and has its development maintained, mostly, by the Australian company Saki Computers (<http://www.saki.com.au>) that works keeping extra services related to it, as customization, tech support among others.

**Produção Multimídia** dotProject.net FREE SOFTWARE

Empresas | Projetos | Tarefas | Calendario | Arquivos | Contatos | Foruns | Chamados | Admin. de Usuarios | Admin. do Sistema

Bem-vindo Admin Person Ajuda | Meus dados | **Todo** | Hoje | Sair do sistema

Projetos Responsavel: All Users Empresa/Divisao: Todos novo projeto

por aba : por lista

Todos (40) | Nao definido (1) | Proposto (1) | Em Planejamento | **Em Execucão (8)** | Em Espera (1) | Completo(a) (21) | Template (8) | Arquivado | Gantt

selecionar por:

Color	Empresa	Nome do Projeto	Start	Previsto para	Actual	P	Responsavel	Tarefas (Meu)	Selecao
100.0%	CEAD	Tecnólogo Análise e Desenvolvimento	30/04/2009	-	30/04/2009		jcjunior	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
42.4%	CEAD	Tutorial Magic Draw	05/05/2009	-	14/05/2009		reresstel	12 (12)	<input type="checkbox"/>
30.3%	CEAD	Atividades de Apoio à Produção	01/01/2009	01/01/2009	15/05/2009		jcjunior	15	<input type="checkbox"/>
0.0%	CEAD	Vídeo EAD	06/04/2009	10/04/2009	16/04/2009		reresstel	19 (19)	<input type="checkbox"/>
85.0%	CEAD	Personagem Objeto de Aprendizagem	15/04/2009	27/04/2009	27/04/2009		julianacs	9 (9)	<input type="checkbox"/>
98.8%	CEAD	Novo Visual Moodle	07/04/2009	30/04/2009	17/04/2009		julianacs	41 (41)	<input type="checkbox"/>
71.7%	CEAD	Padrão WORD nova diagramação Fascículo impresso	30/04/2009	06/05/2009	06/05/2009		julianacs	3 (3)	<input type="checkbox"/>
81.8%	CEAD	Animação TIC	06/05/2009	06/05/2009	13/05/2009		julianacs	8 (8)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Atualiza status do projeto | Em Planejamento

Concluido

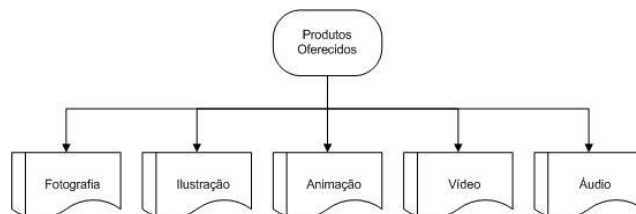
Picture 1 – dotProject - www.dotproject.net

## 2. MULTIMEDIA PRODUCTION TEAM

The development of multimedia materials to help the teaching-learning process is responsibility of multimedia production team, beginning by instructional designer and teachers planning.

### 2.1. OFFERED PRODUCTS

To standardize the processes, it was defined a group of products related to distance education. They are: photograph, illustration, video, audio, animation and layout (Picture 1).



Picture 1 – Multimedia production products

The definition of products that the multimedia production team offers, allowed the development of requirement forms and specific procedures. Besides, it contributed to the improvement of the communication between requester and team.

## 2.2.HUMAN RESOURCES

Based on the products specificities, it was performed a division of the human resources in two teams: the Design and the Audio and Video Production. The division of responsibilities was performed according to Board 1.

Design Team	Illustration
	Layout
	Animation
Audio and Video Production Team	Audio
	Video

Board 1 – Products division by team.

By this division, it was possible to qualify the team in a more specific way, therefore increasing the productivity.

## 2.3. INFORMATION FLOW

Based on the PMBOK (Guide of the group of Knowledges in Project Management developed by Project Management Institute - PMI) practices, it was developed an adaptation that resulted in 6 (six) processes (Board 2) that will compose a macro view of the production of multimedia materials.

Process	Responsible
Initiation	Instructional Designer
Planning	Multimedia Producer
Execution	Team Leader
Monitoring and Control	Multimedia Producer
Evaluation	CEAD Team
	Instructional Designer
	Multimedia Producer
Closure	Multimedia Producer

Board 2 – Responsibility by process.

### 2.3.1. INITIATION PROCESS

From the Activities Map (Picture 2), where it defines the disciplines purposes, the instructional designer and the teacher, discuss about the type of media that may be used to make the teaching and learning process easier.

S	Tema principal	Subtemas	Objetivos específicos	Atividades	T	P	Recurso do Moodle	Grau de Dificuldade*	Nota	%	Observações
01											

Picture 2 – Activities Map

All the requirement of products to the multimedia production are made by the instructional designer, that makes the requirement to the multimedia producer by standard forms. In project management, this phase is known as process initiation where is developed the Project Charter and the scope baseline.

### 2.3.2. PLANNING PROCESS

The multimedia producer receives a demand of products from the instructional designer and begins the planning process, which consists in the definition of the following items: scope, sequence and duration of activities, human resources and schedule.

The result of the planning process is a project with all the definitions mentioned above. It is inserted in the dotProject and the software undertakes of informing the instructional designer the delivery date. It also informs the human resources the complete schedule. The dotProject shares the information with the involved staff by e-mail.

### 2.3.3. EXECUTION PROCESS

Inside of each team, it begins the execution of the phases described in the project. The leader task is to share the information, guide, manage the execution and ensure the quality guarantee.

#### **2.3.4. MONITORING AND CONTROL PROCESS**

The multimedia producer is responsible for the monitoring activities and controlling the projects in execution performed by the teams: Design and Audio and Video Production. Among the activities, there are: checking and controlling the scope, monitoring and controlling the work, schedule and reporting performance.

#### **2.3.5. EVALUATION PROCESS**

There are two aspects to be evaluated: technical and functional. The technical aspect is related, mostly, to the mean of communication for which the product will be developed. The functional aspect will depend on the reach level of the requested product towards to the distance teaching. Therefore, the evaluation process may happen in different levels inside the CEAD organogram.

#### **2.3.6. CLOSURE PROCESS**

The closure process consists in the delivery of the product and the homologation made by the requester when the product arrives in its destination.

### **3. DOTPROJECT APPLIED TO THE PROCESS**

After the processes definition, information flow, division of human resources, the dotproject was used as a tool for the project management. For each product request, in the planning phase, it is created a project, with specific activities and schedules and allocation of human resource in a strategic way. Based on the trio - Processes, people and technology, it was developed the Board 3 and the Board 4 with reports of difficulties and successes obtained towards the use of dotProject as a project management tool of the multimedia production team.

## Difficulties

Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For each product, it was developed a template project in the dotProject, but some activities weren't dimensioned properly towards the products. It happened, mostly, in the video production team.</li> <li>• The closure process needs to be more specific, related to the technical specifications of the products towards the mean of communication. It is also necessary the improvement of the final product delivery process to the requester.</li> </ul>
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The lack of habit and commitment of writing reports about the developed activities.</li> <li>• Lack of updating of the activities already performed.</li> <li>• Some projects need the person responsible for the execution to make a written purpose of the product about to be developed. However, the team resists in doing this task.</li> </ul>
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The fact of the dotProject system doesn't fix a different work time for each system user, harms the accuracy of the project activities schedule. So all the users have the same weekly working hours and the same time for the beginning and end of work, which is not a reality in most cases.</li> <li>• The system surfing is a little complicated for beginner users, which makes the join process of the team more difficult.</li> </ul>

Board 3 – Difficulties in the use of dotProject

## Successes

Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The processes definition contributed to avoid the rework and to obtain a more accurate estimation towards the necessary time to execute the tasks.</li> <li>• The development of a written purpose made by the team towards a demand, allowed that the main changes were made still on paper. Increasing the productivity and fulfilling the schedule.</li> </ul>
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The improvement of communication among the human resources involved in the project.</li> </ul>
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The O dotProject provided an efficient management of the projects.</li> <li>• The dotProject became an environment of collaboration for the team, by the use of the following resources: calendar, events, forum and file sharing among others.</li> <li>• Optimized the planning process using the pre-existent reports.</li> </ul>

Board 4 – Successes in the use of dotProject

## 4. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This article had purpose of presenting an use of the best project management practice [1]. It discussed about the structure of the team of multimedia material for distance education production, using the dotProject free software as a technological tool.

It was made a reflection about the difficulties and successes, divided by the trio: people, processes and technology. As everything new, in the beginning there was a certain resistance to the use of dotProject as a tool, mostly because of the necessity of developing a daily report of the activities. However, the join of the team allowed a closer follow up and a better adequacy in the project planning.

The conclusion is that the necessity of new products for the offer of distance courses is something new and challenger for many institutions. The option by developing these products inside the institution requires qualified work force, processes definition,



information flow and a project manager with a technological tool to follow and to monitor the development of the products.

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