



Using Your Fissure Simulation in a Project Management Class Environment – SimProject Alliance Prototype Project

Basic Options

- Have the students, in teams of 4 or 5 run the simulation during one or two class periods. Preferably towards the end of the course. If you assign the reading of the Reference material (about 30 - 45 minutes) as homework, it should take a total of about 3 hours to plan and run the project. A good guideline is about 45 minutes to one hour to plan and 2 to 2.5 hours to run the project.
- Have the students, in teams of 4 or 5 run the simulation as a non-class time assignment.
- Have the students plan the project before class and in teams of 4 or 5 run the project during class. This should take about 2 or 2.5 hours.
- It works well to have the teams present project closure reports on their projects. Each team can present their final status with regards to schedule, cost, scope and quality objectives. Teams can also share what worked, what they would do differently, and what they learned.
- Have the students run the simulation as an individual in class and report their results.
- Have the students run the simulation as an individual homework assignment.



Loading and Running Your Fissure Simulation – SimProject Alliance Prototype Project

About These Instructions

In these instructions you will find the following sections:

- Why Computer Simulation?
- About the SimProject Alliance Prototype project
- Installing the SimProject Alliance Prototype project
- Launching the SimProject Alliance Prototype project
- Running the SimProject Alliance Prototype project
- Sales and Technical Support Contacts



Why Computer Simulation?

Simulations Help Students Turn Knowledge into Performance

Fissure recognized early that our clients wanted not only to understand good project management and leadership but also to be able to translate that knowledge into performance that affects the bottom line. Organizations expect that the return on training and consulting dollars be realized as soon as possible. This "instant" performance expectation means students must quickly apply their new skills in their workplace settings.

The problem is in transforming newly learned knowledge into workplace practices. Most training classes only provide knowledge and one or two practice sessions. Students leave the training without the comfort or competence to apply what they have learned, and their performance improvement is not maximized. Comfort and competence comes from repetition and feedback either "on the job" or in some simulated workplace environment. If this can be accomplished in the training, performance improvement in the workplace is maximized.

These market expectations and our understanding of what it takes to turn knowledge into performance inspired Fissure to create our simulation capability. Project management and leadership are a complicated mix of processes, tools, and soft skills, and simulation is the only way to practice this mix of skills in an integrated experience over a short timeframe. In our 2 and 3-day simulation based workshops participants are introduced to new skills and then guided in a safe, mentored, "learn by doing" environment, which fosters retention and application of skills.

The simulations were authored by a distinguished group of project managers and leaders with over a century of experience. The authors led projects in a broad range of industries and were responsible for budgets from thousands to billions of dollars. We guarantee that our simulation workshops will not only educate you but will give you the confidence to apply those skills on the job.

Computer-based simulation is used to develop competencies needed in the workplace. Students practice new skills, make mistakes, and learn from their mistakes. The process is similar to pilots using a flight simulator - and just as effective. Students are guided to the discovery of solutions to business problems that work. They develop the skills to be more effective employees, without the delay and expense of on-the-job training. Through simulation, knowledge is turned into performance.

There are many advantages to using a computer simulation for skills learning:



- Learn from mistakes with no risk
- Quick connection between cause and effect
- Build and test project mental models
- Build and test leadership mental models
- Try new techniques/approaches
- Push your performance boundaries
- Learn by doing
- Learn from others in a team setting

Computer-based simulation learning is considerably more effective than lecture only-based learning:

- The experience is real, invoking real emotions and real learning
- Challenges are presented to the student as they manage a project to get the work done on time and under budget
- The decisions the student makes while running the simulation have consequences ranging from very good to very bad and immediate to long term
- The decisions the student makes while running the simulation have an impact on the bottom line results of the project (time, cost and quality)
- The simulation teaches technical and soft skills in an integrated way
- There is no “right” answer, there are many paths to success and just like on real projects, there is lots of uncertainty (random events)

About the SimProject Alliance Prototype Project

The SimProject Alliance Prototype project is a sample product from Fissure Corporation. Fissure develops and sells computer simulation workshops and computer simulations for skill learning (www.Fissure.com). Our simulations give individuals a safe environment in which to practice and develop an integrated set of skills, like those required for project management.

The SimProject Alliance Prototype project is our project management simulation product loaded with a fairly simple project, only 7 tasks and 10 potential team members while our advanced project has 22 tasks and 30 potential team members.

You will be expected to read about the company, project and people available to your project. You will plan your project (resources and budget) and make typical project decisions each week (staff assignments, meetings, education, etc.). You



will run your project a week at a time, analyzing your results each week, referring to your weekly reports, and making your decisions for the next week. As you run each week you will be presented with communications from people within the company, team members, or other parties related to the project. You will have a choice on how to respond to these communications and all the decisions you make will impact how your project progresses.

You are now ready to install and run SimProject Alliance Prototype project. Please follow the instructions on the following pages.



Installing SimProject Simulation

Recommend using Microsoft Windows 2000 Professional or XP

Place the CD into your CD drive

1. Click on the Start menu button
2. Select "run"
3. Use the "Browse" function to find the CD drive, open the drive and double click on the SimProject Demo icon.
4. Select "OK"
5. This starts the installation process – follow the instructions
6. The installation takes about 1-2 minutes

Launching SimProject Simulation

Once installation is complete you can launch SimProject

1. Click on the Start menu button
2. Select "Programs"
3. Select "SimProject"
4. Click on "SimProject"
5. SimProject will load your demonstration simulation

Running SimProject Simulation

First – SimProject Tour

1. Click on the parrot, "Peedy". Say "Yes" to his invitation to show you around.

Second – Background Information, the "References" button

Spend some time reading and maneuvering around the "References" information (Figure 1). This is where you will find information about:

- your company, Uniworld and its policies (e.g. Staffing, Education, and Team Meetings)
- your project, Alliance Prototype (e.g. Project Charter, Network Diagram, and Task Descriptions)
- the people available for assignment on your project (e.g. name, skill, performance review and resume)
- your "Inbox", where to find important memos (e.g. Assignment Memorandum) sent to you, the Alliance Prototype project manager

The more familiar you are with this information the easier it will be for you to plan your project (the next step) and make your weekly decisions (how you "run" the project following the completion of your planning). Any "Reference" information can be printed at any time.

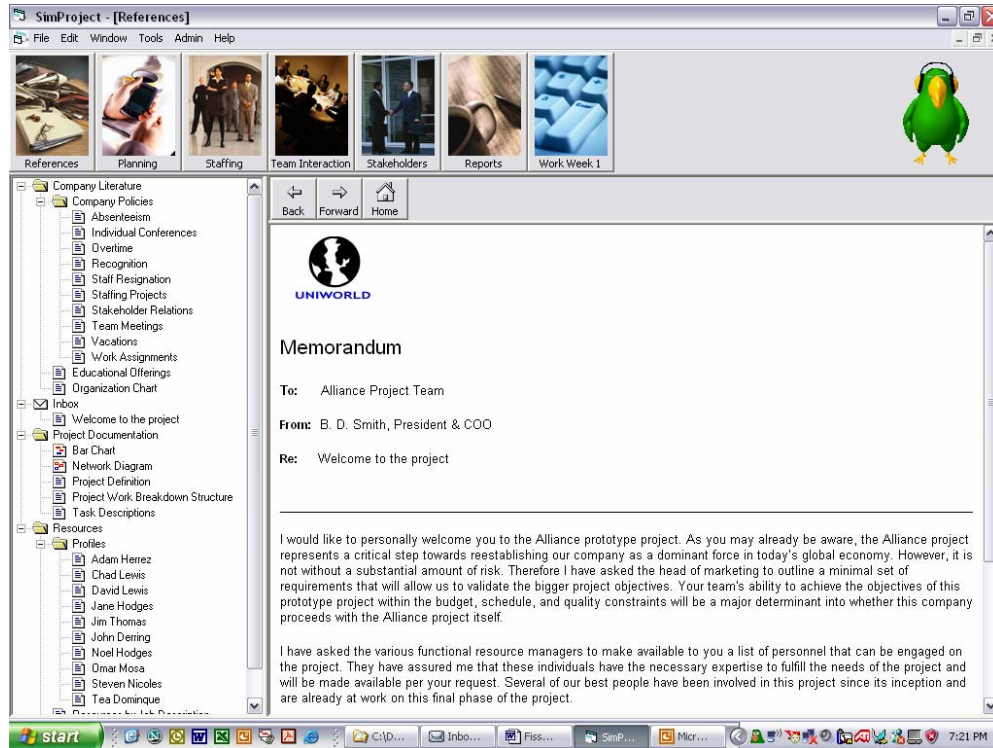


Figure 1 – Alliance Prototype Project References: Company Policies, Educational Offerings, Organization Chart, Inbox, Project Documentation and Resources

Third – Planning your project

SimProject is just like a real-life project. You should complete your plan before starting your project. You know from the information in the “References” section what tasks need to be planned (WBS, Bar Chart and/or Network Diagram) and what skills are required for each task (Task Descriptions). Use that information and the information about the available people for your project to complete a resource plan for your project. You will find the resource plan as a tab “under” the “Planning” button (Figure 2).

You will find that David Lewis is available for assignment on your project beginning in week #1. He is assigned to Task #1 (Systems Design) in weeks 1, 2 and 3. You must decide by week, what task you will assign to David Lewis. You must also decide when you need to “hire” additional staff based on the task descriptions (skills) and Bar Chart (timetable). Just click on an “empty” skill cell and a drop down box will appear with the available skills sets. Once you select a skill set, clicking on the associated resource cell presents a drop down box of available resources of that skill set. Remember to “hire” each resource 2 weeks before you want to assign them to a task. Click on the week you need to hire them and select the “hire” option. Fill in the next week with “hire” (it takes 2



weeks before they are available for assignment) and fill in subsequent weeks with the task number you want them to work on that week. Select “release” in the week you no longer need them on the project and are willing to have them reassigned back to the resource pool (once released you will have to hire them to bring them back onto your project). Within the weekly resource assignment window there are useful quick look buttons to the Bar Chart, Network Diagram and to the respective personal resource information to facilitate your planning.

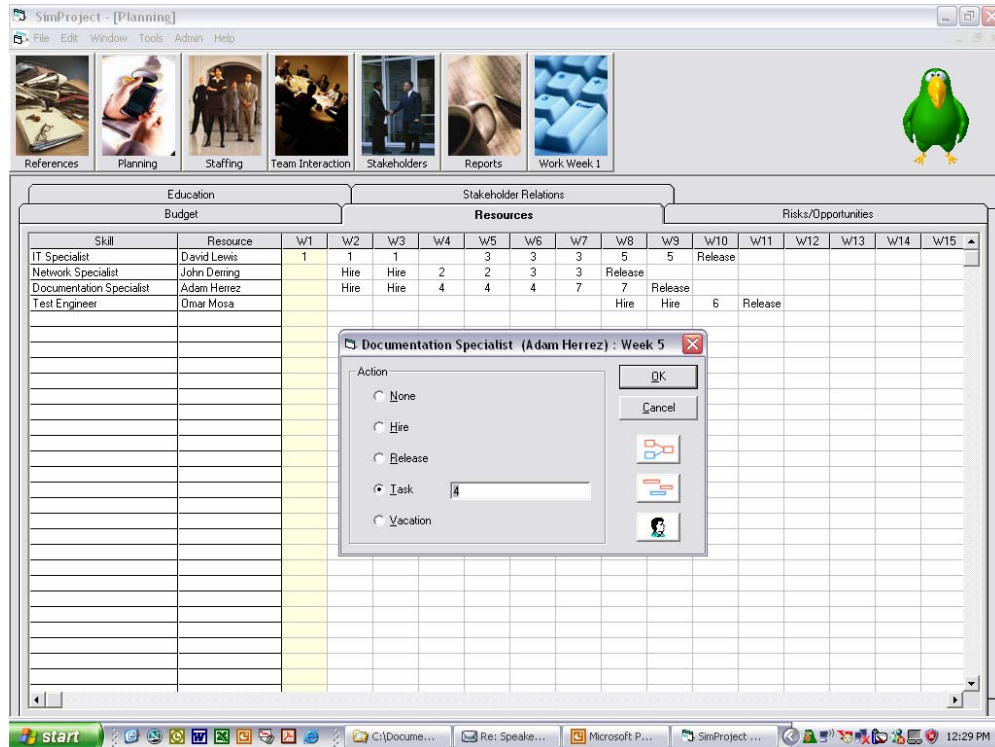


Figure 2 – Alliance Prototype Project Human Resource Plan by Staff, Task and Week

As you complete your resource plan, the appropriate labor costs will be allocated to the Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) elements for the associated tasks and can be viewed on the Budget tab (Figure 3).

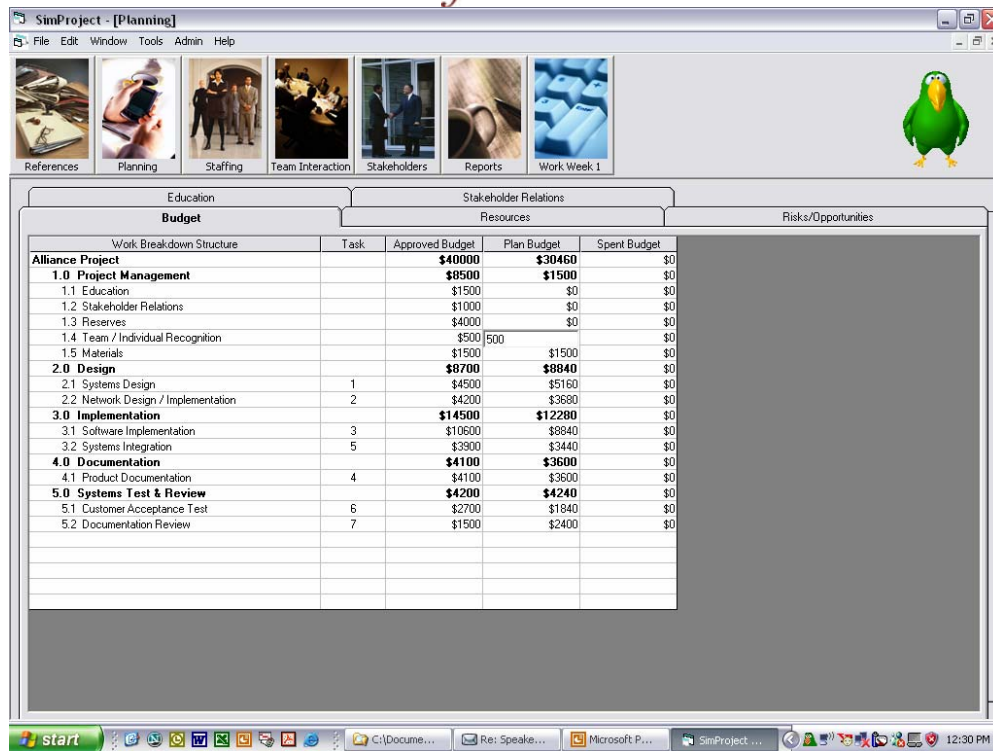


Figure 3 – Alliance Prototype Project WBS and Budgets

Once your resource plan is complete, go to the Education, Stakeholder Relations and Risks/Opportunities tabs to plan your intended costs for those actions on your project. In Education just select a training course, week number you plan to utilize the training and the resource you plan to send (Figure 4). You can plan as many training sessions as you want. Refer to descriptions of the training sessions in the References window (Figure 1). In Stakeholder Relations just select the interaction you plan for a particular stakeholder in a particular week. You can plan as many stakeholder interactions as you want (Figure 5). Refer to descriptions of the stakeholder interactions in the References window (Figure 1). In Risks/Opportunities just select a “blank” event line and enter the appropriate information (risk/opportunity event name, probability of occurrence, cost impact (place the “-” sign after the amount for an opportunity, example 10,000-), and action to take when the event occurs. If the event will impact the critical path, select that box and enter the number of weeks the event will impact the schedule (Figure 6).

Finally, enter an amount for Team/Individual Recognition in the appropriate WBS element (Budget tab – Figure 3). This should complete your planning for now. Any of this information can be printed at any time. Make sure your total budget does not exceed the approved budget.

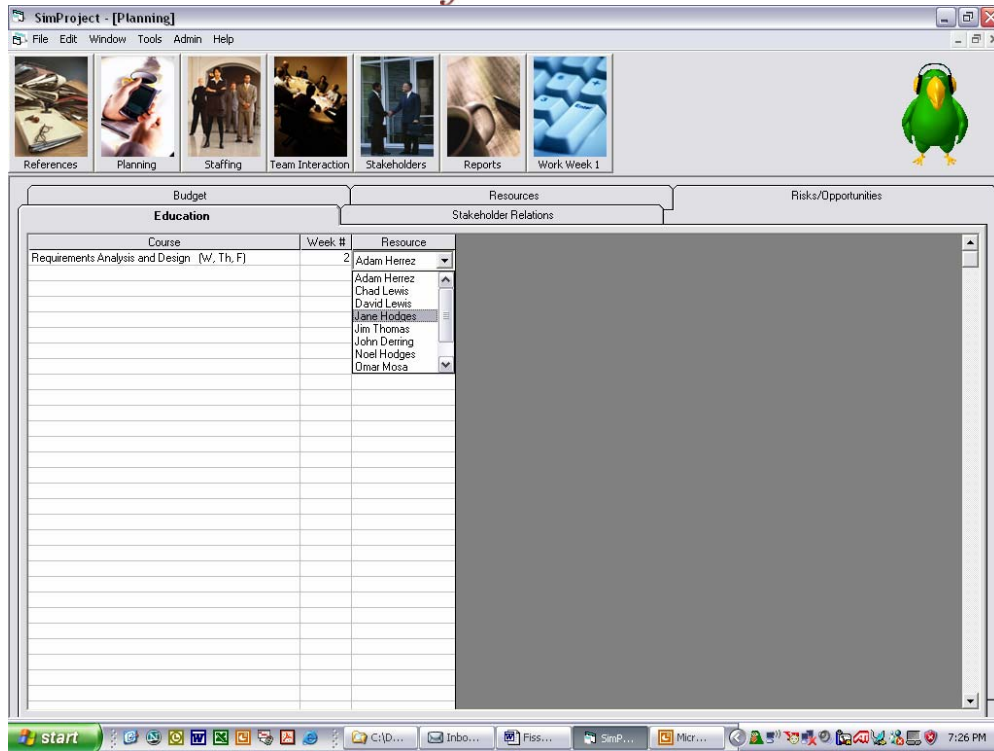


Figure 4 - Education Plan by Class, Week and Staff or Team

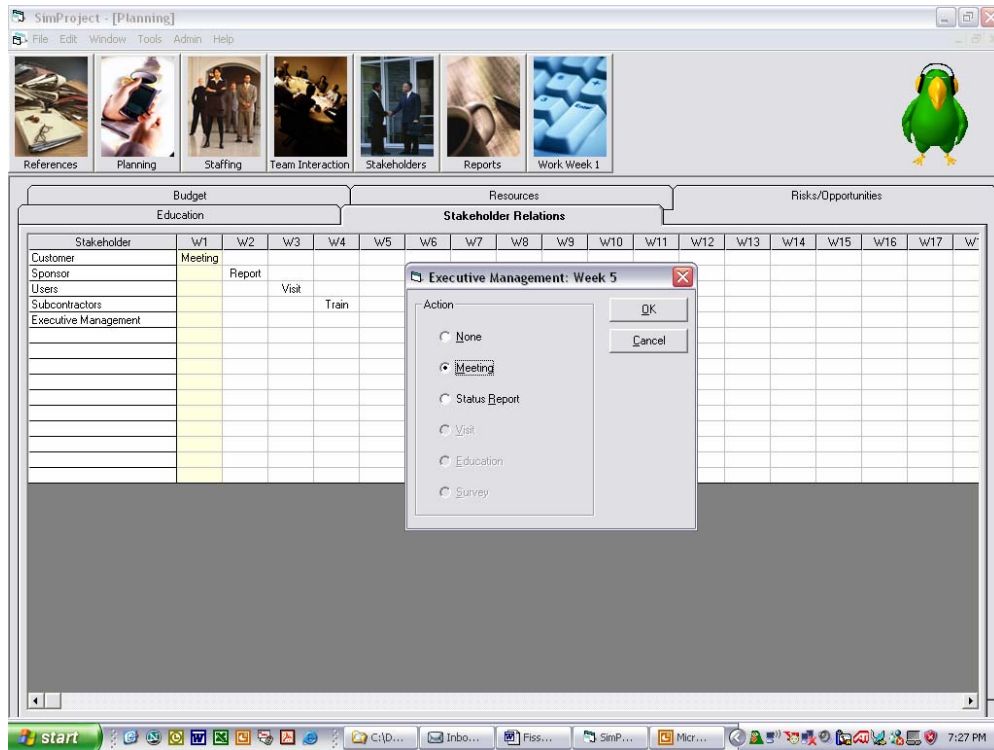


Figure 5 - Stakeholders Plan by Stakeholder and Interaction

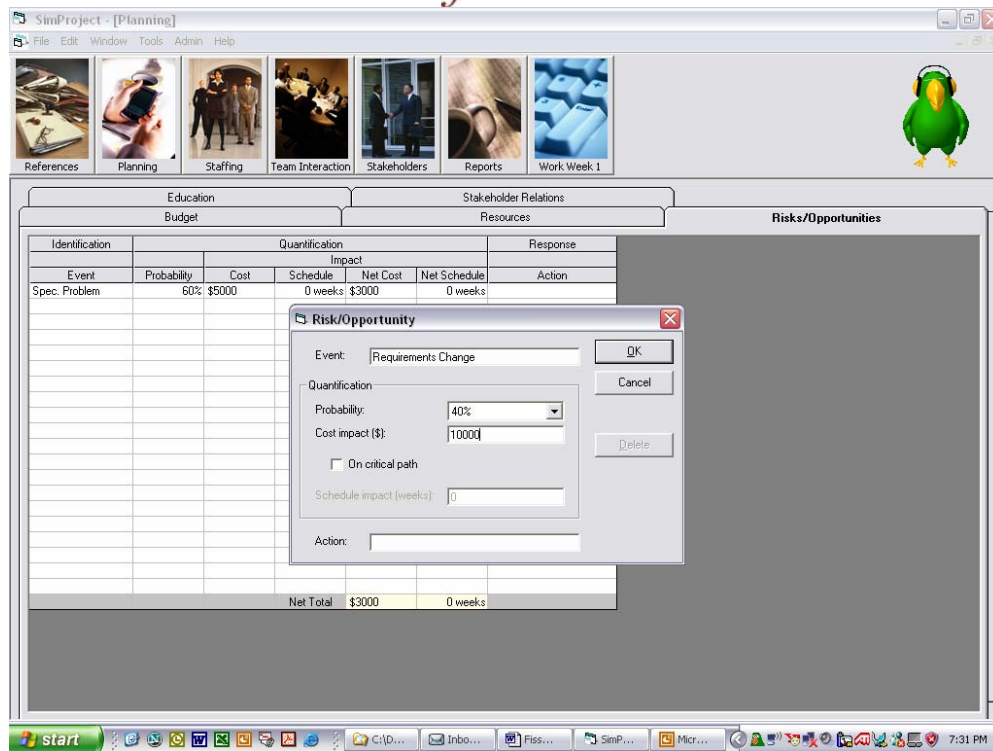


Figure 6 - Risks/Opportunities Plan by Event, Probability and Impact

Fourth – Weekly Decisions

You have completed your plan and that is great. But because SimProject is again just like a real project, you need to implement the decisions in your plan each week through the “Staffing, Team Interactions, and Stakeholders” buttons. As you make weekly decisions reference your plans and update them to reflect any changes you decide to make. Updating your plan as you manage the project will help you keep control and make subsequent decisions easier.

It is natural to assume that since the plan is in the computer for staffing, training, education and stakeholder interactions that the decisions will be implemented automatically – THIS IS A BAD ASSUMPTION! **Make sure you make your staffing, training, education and stakeholder interactions decisions every week before you run the week.**

It is helpful to select the display of your resource plan and then select the “Staffing” button as this allows you to see your resource plan in the back ground as you make your weekly staffing decisions.



Weekly decisions you need to make each week before “running” the week are:

- Staffing – select individuals you want to add to your team or remove from your team (Figure 7). Note that there is a “quick look” button to your resource plan located in the lower left hand corner of the window.
- Task Assignments – assign individuals to work on specific tasks and request overtime (Figure 8). Within the assignment window there is a useful quick look button to your resource plan to facilitate your planning.
- Team Meetings – select the day, the duration, and topic(s) (Figure 9)
- Individual Conferences – select the individual, the day, the duration, and the topic(s) (Figure 10)
- Training – select the individual or team and the specific training (Figure 11)
- Recognition – select the individual or team and the recognition (Figure 12)
- Stakeholder Relations – select the stakeholder and the interaction (Figure 13)

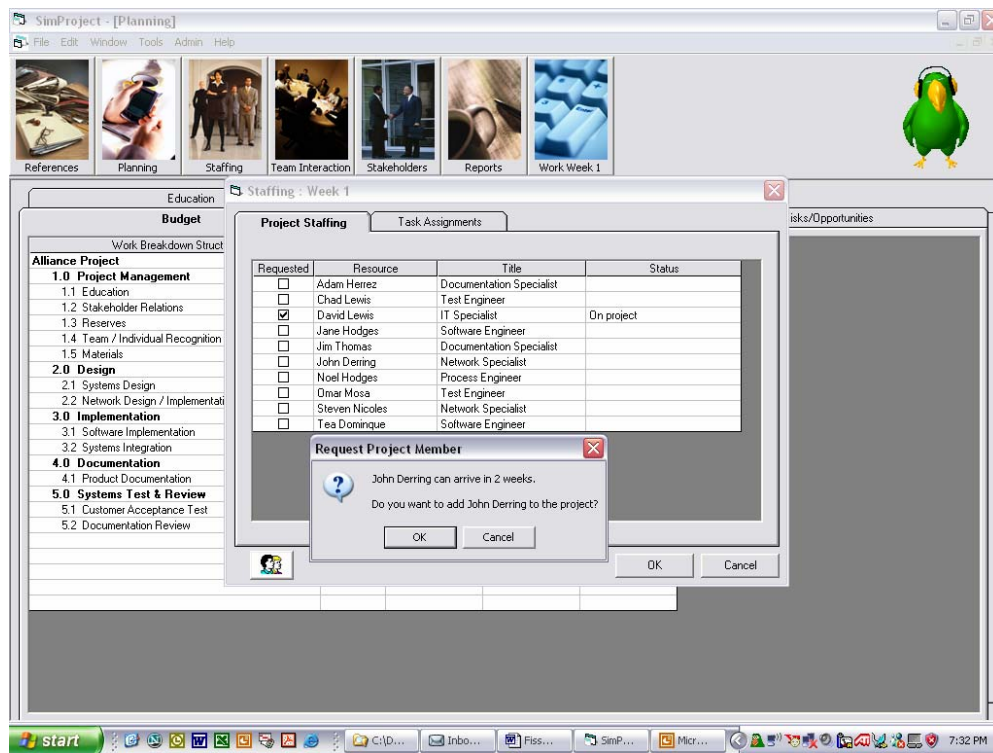


Figure 7 - Project Staffing Decisions by Staff

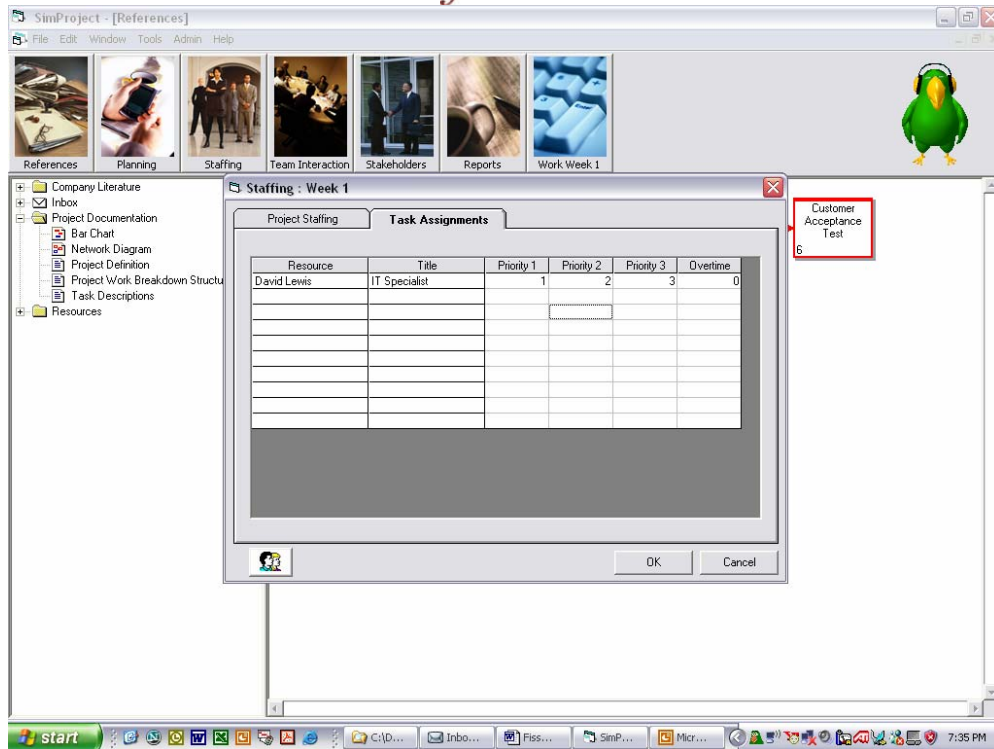


Figure 8 - Task Assignments and Overtime Decisions by Staff

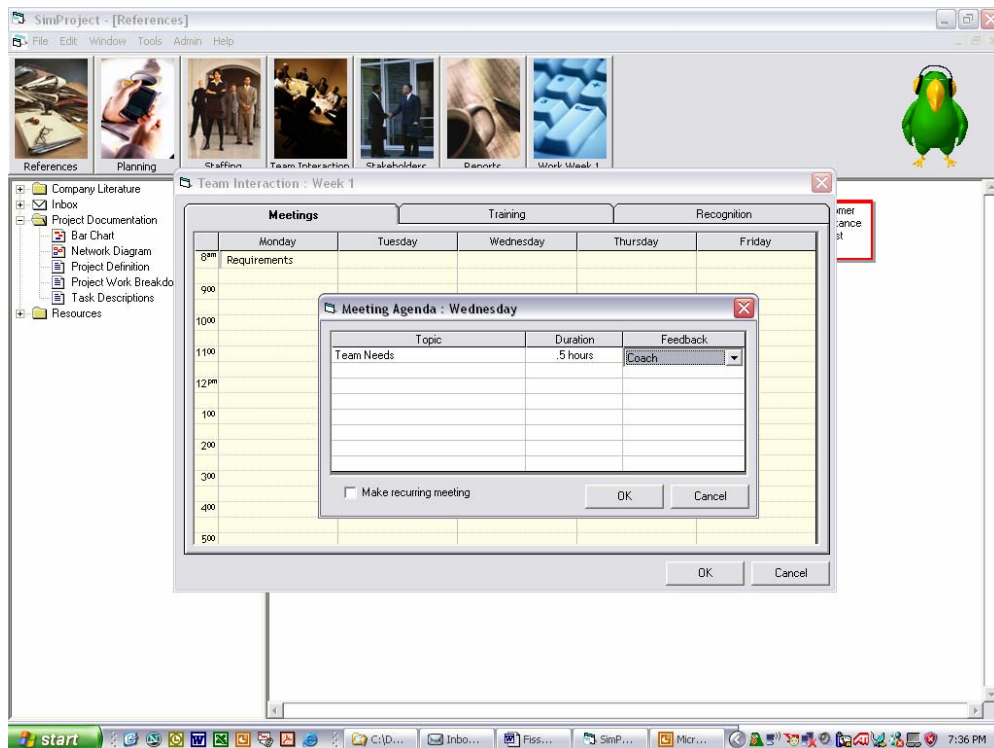


Figure 9 - Team Meetings Decisions by Day, Topic, Duration and Feedback

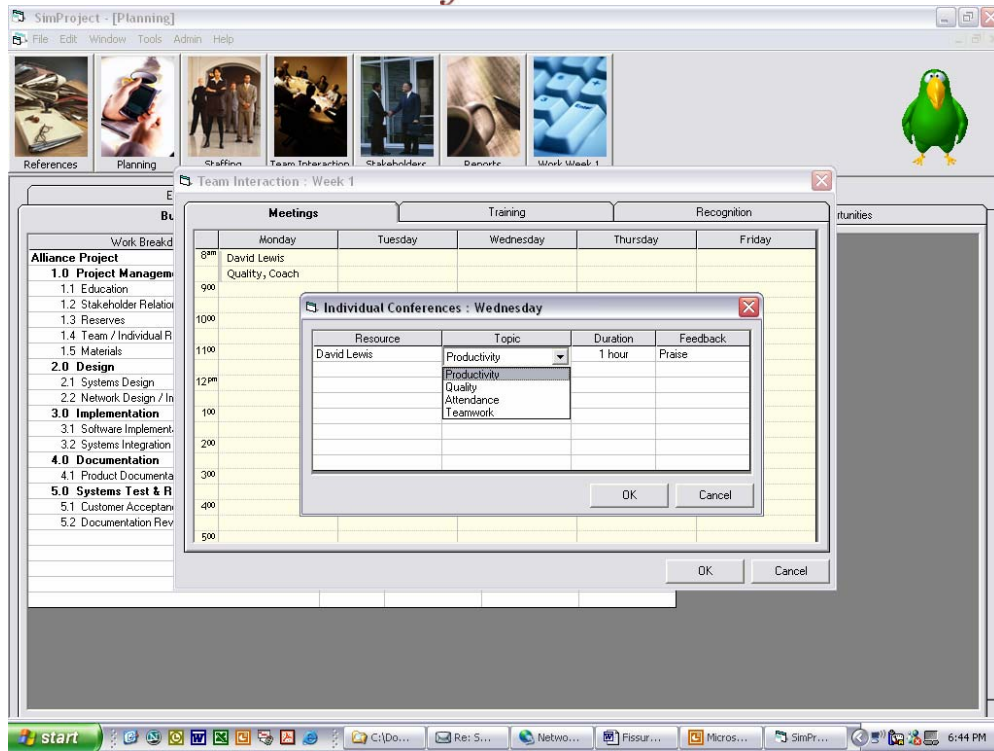


Figure 10 - Individual Conferences Decisions by Staff, Topic, Duration and Feedback

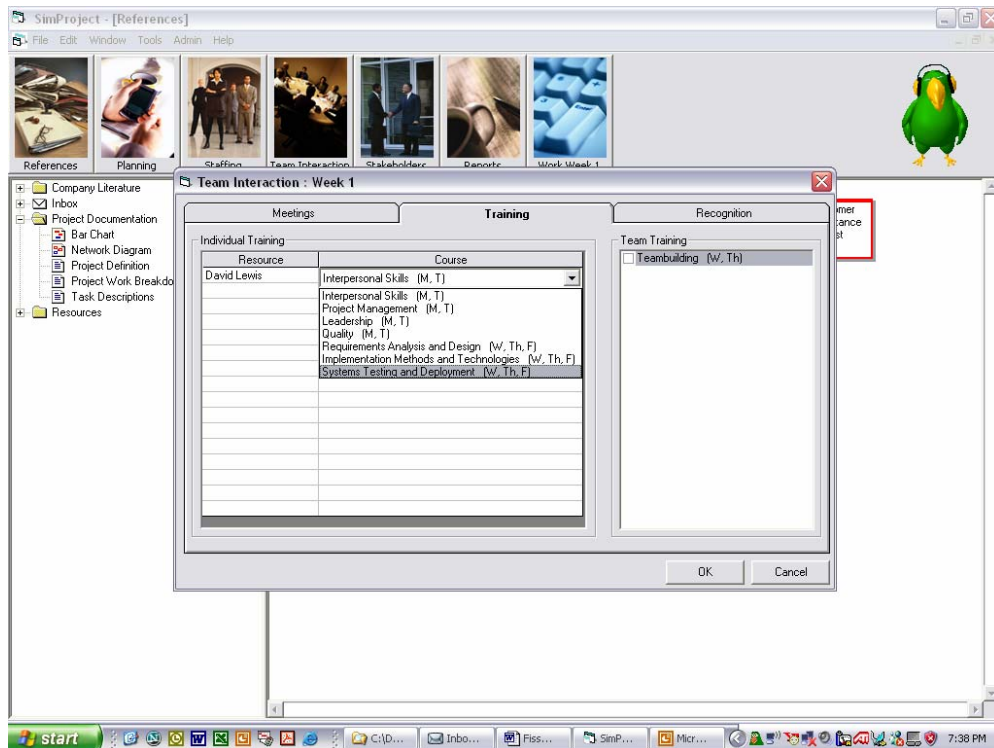


Figure 11 - Training Decisions by Staff and Class

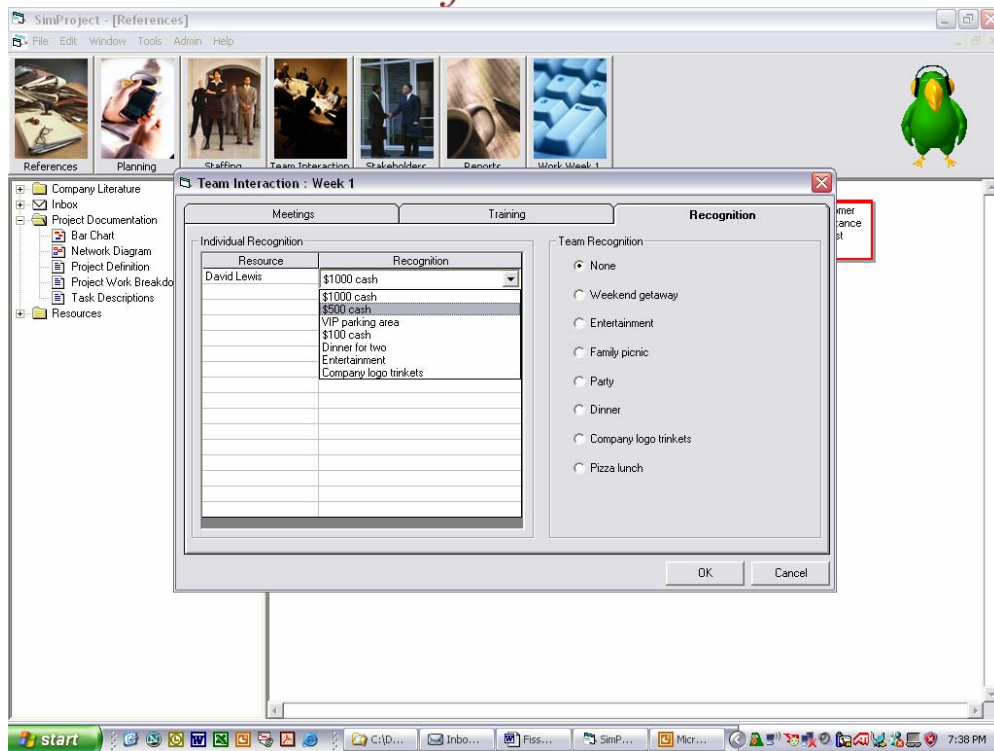


Figure 12 - Recognition Decisions by Staff and Award or Team Award

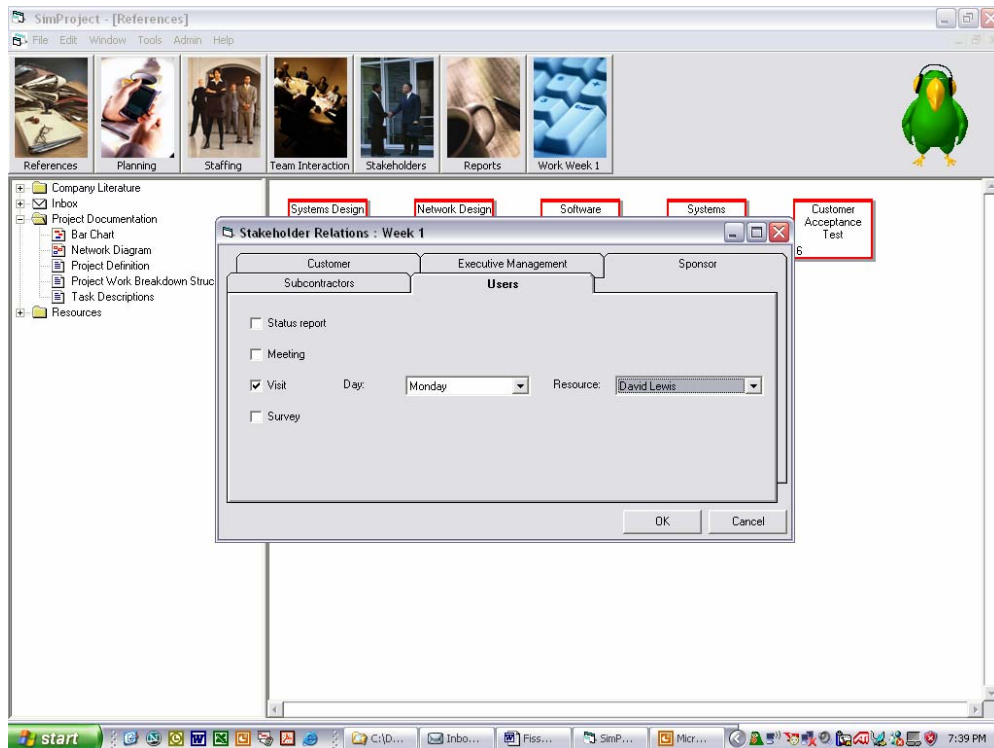


Figure 13 - Stakeholders Relations Decisions by Stakeholder and Interaction



Fifth – Running your project

You have made your decisions for the week and now you are ready to “run” the project by clicking on the “Work Week” button. The button will indicate the “number” of the project week you are running. As you run the week, you will be presented with communications from various sources, read the communications carefully and choose your response (Figure 14). The decisions you make prior to running the week and the decisions you make as you run the week determine the results you will see this week and subsequent weeks.

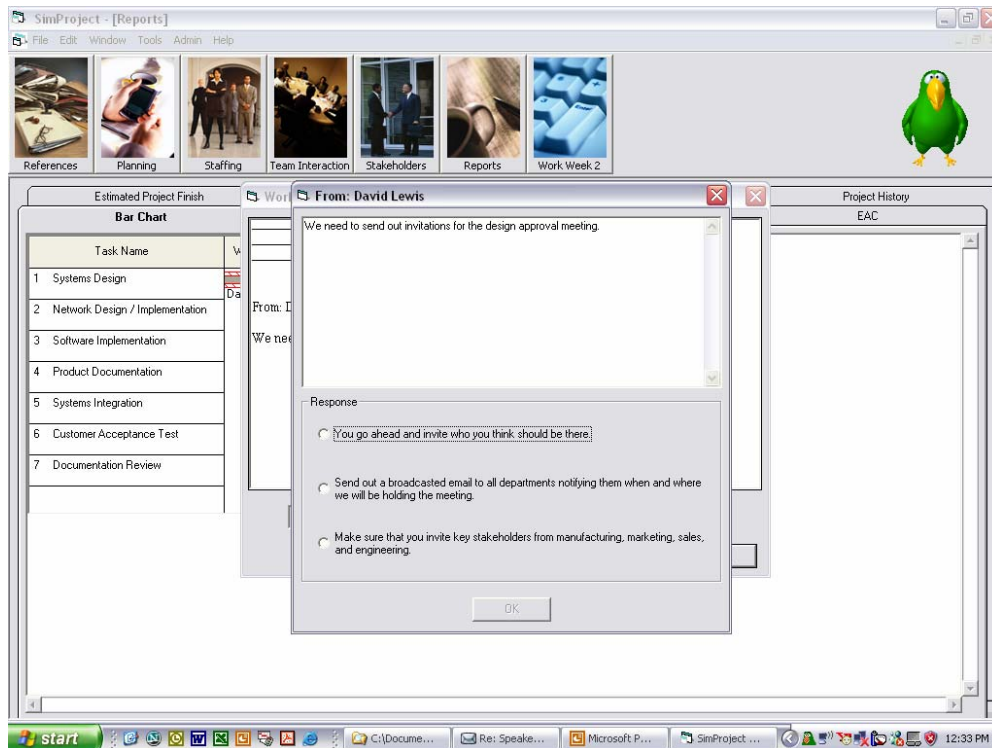


Figure 14 - Run Week: Weekly Communication and Responses

At the completion of each week a report of the week’s decisions and results will be displayed (Figure 15). This report can be printed and is also viewable via the History tab within the Reports screen.

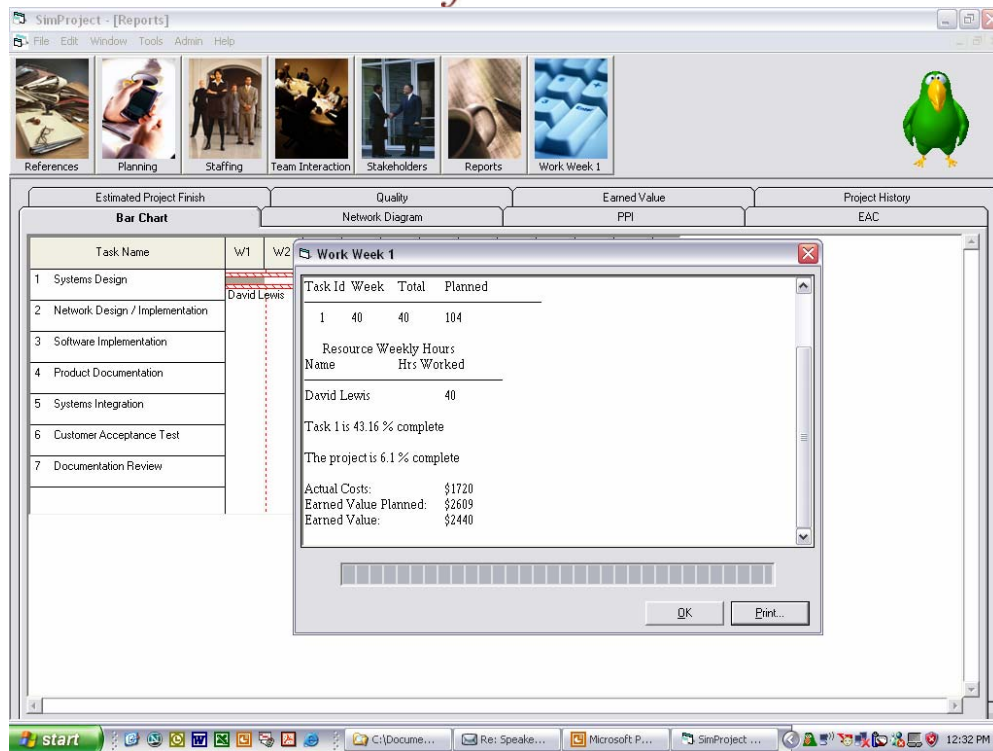


Figure 15 - Run Week: Week Completion Communication

Sixth – Reports

The “Reports” button gives you access to various project management reports you will use to help you assess your current project status. Each report is listed and briefly described below and a sample screen shot follows as well.

- Bar Chart – project timetable, task status (Figure 16)
- Network Diagram – task dependencies/sequence (Figure 17)
- PPI – Project Performance Index: % budget spent/ % project complete (Figure 18)
- EAC – Estimate at Completion: cost (Figure 19)
- Estimated Project Completion: schedule (Figure 20)
- Quality – number of “open” defect reports (Figure 21)
- Earned Value – comparison of planned earned value (what you planned to have accomplished), actual cost, and earned value (what you have actually accomplished) (Figure 22)
- Project History – a report of each week’s decisions and results (Figure 23)

Look at them carefully each week, and use them to help make your weekly decisions. Don’t forget to keep your plans updated, especially your resource plan. Any of this information can be printed at any time.

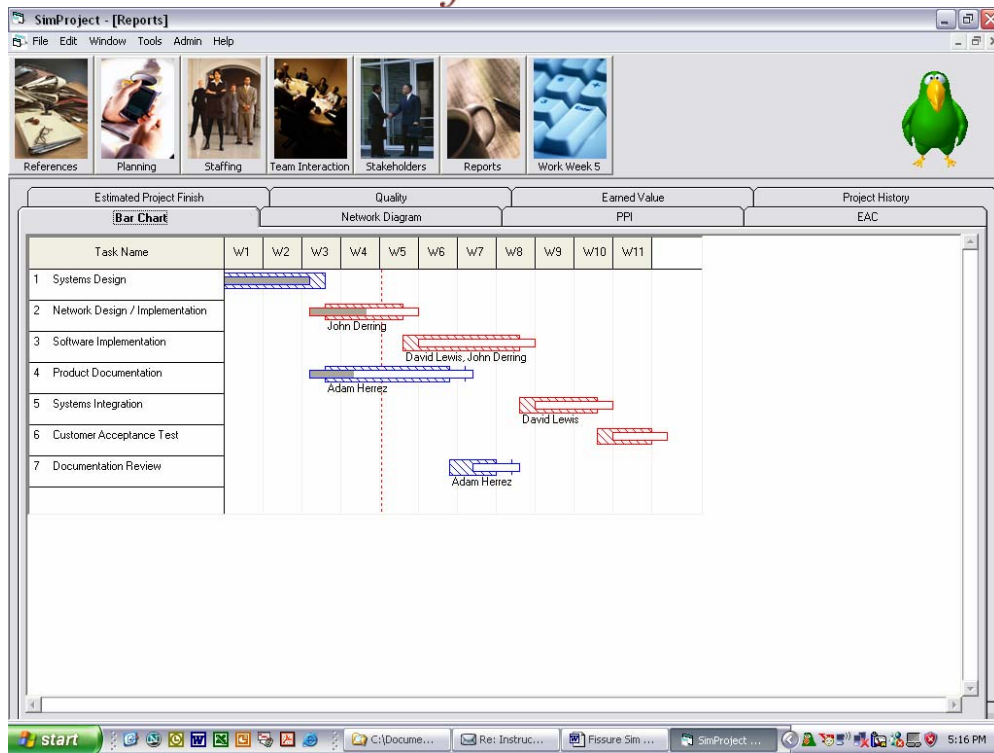


Figure 16 - Reports Screen – Bar/Gantt Chart

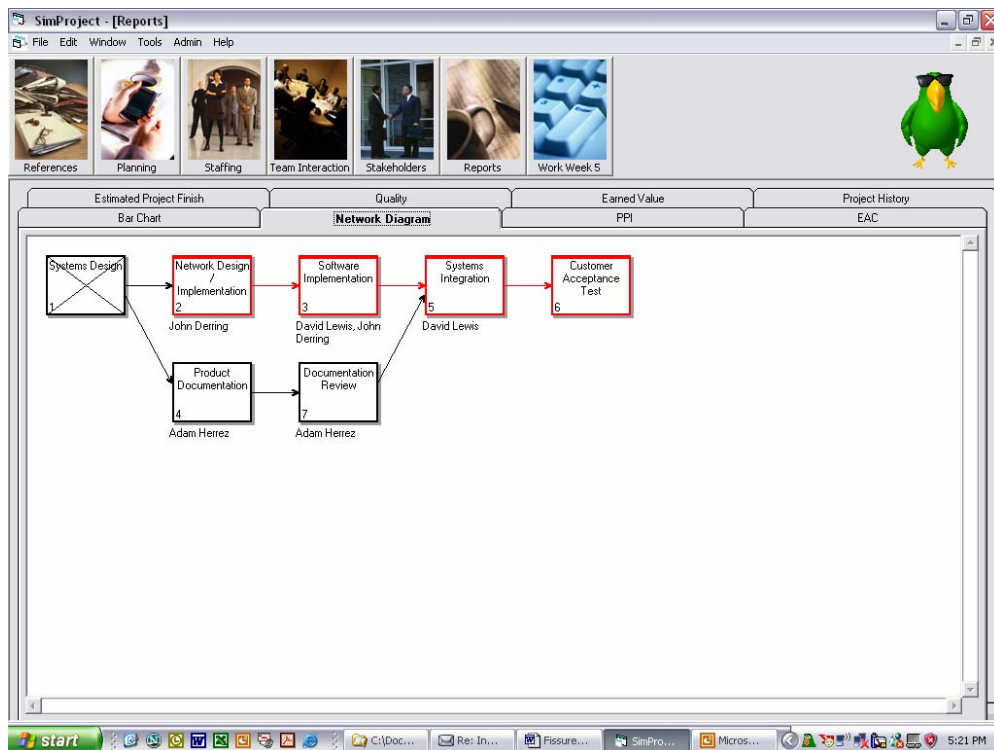


Figure 17 - Reports Screen – Network Diagram

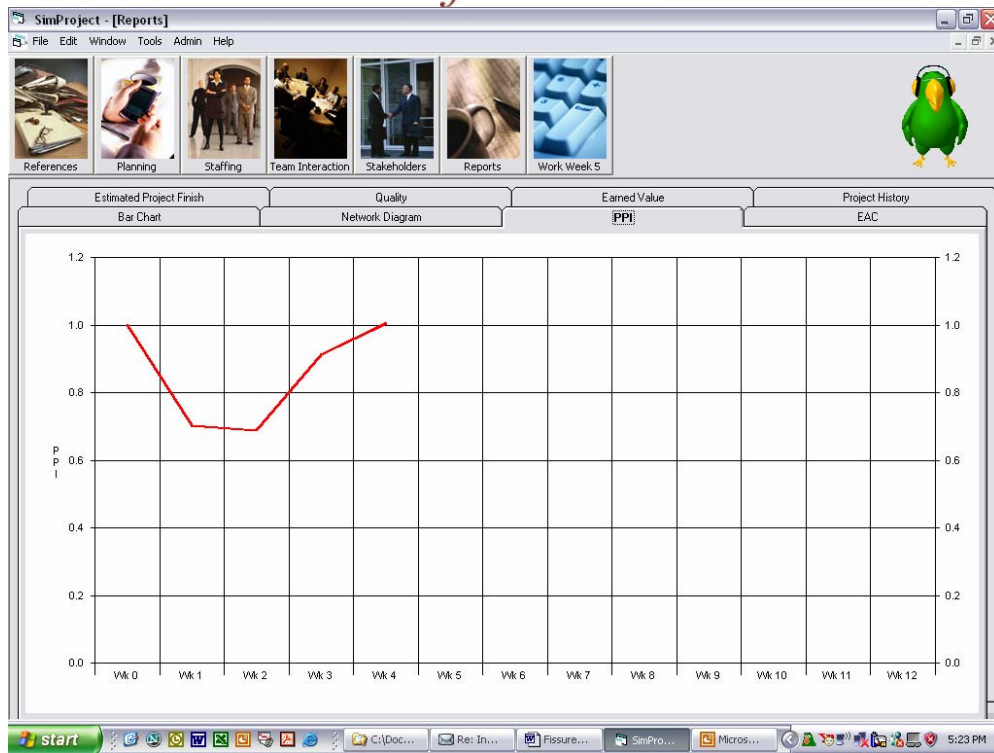


Figure 18 - Reports Screen – Project Performance Index

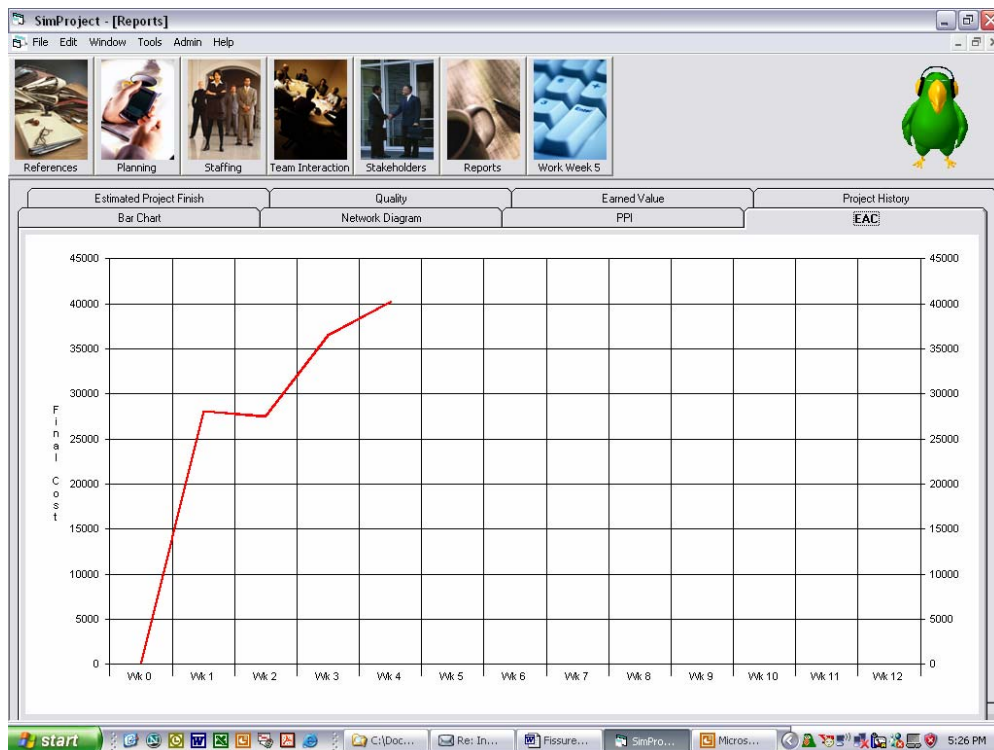


Figure 19 - Reports Screen – Estimate at Completion (cost)

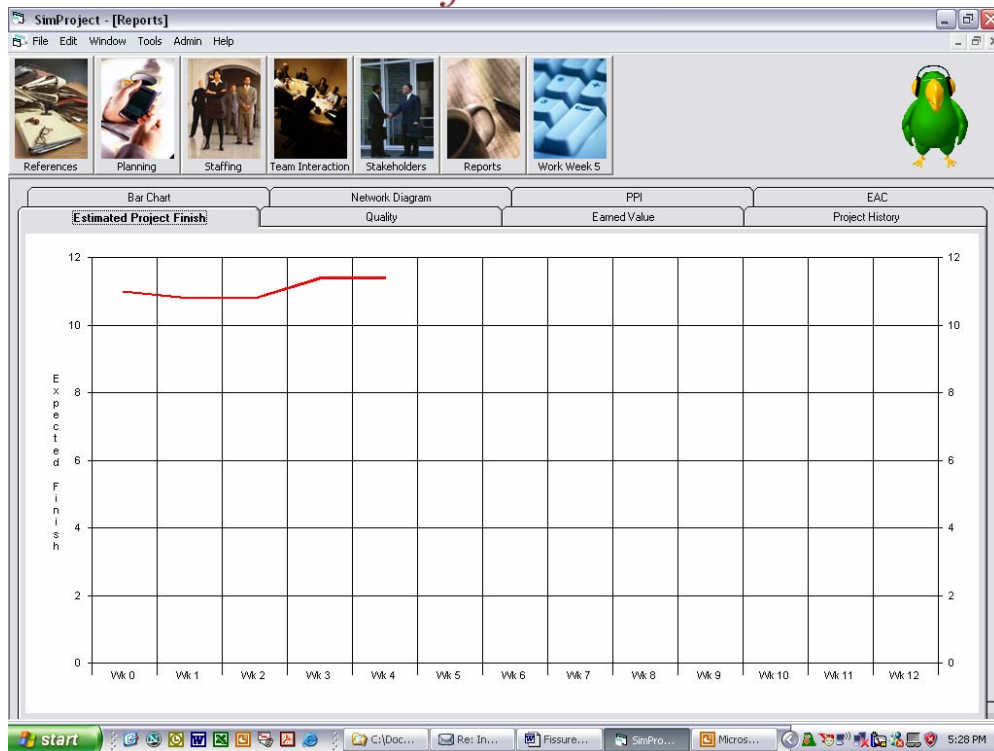


Figure 20 - Reports Screen – Estimated Project Finish (schedule)

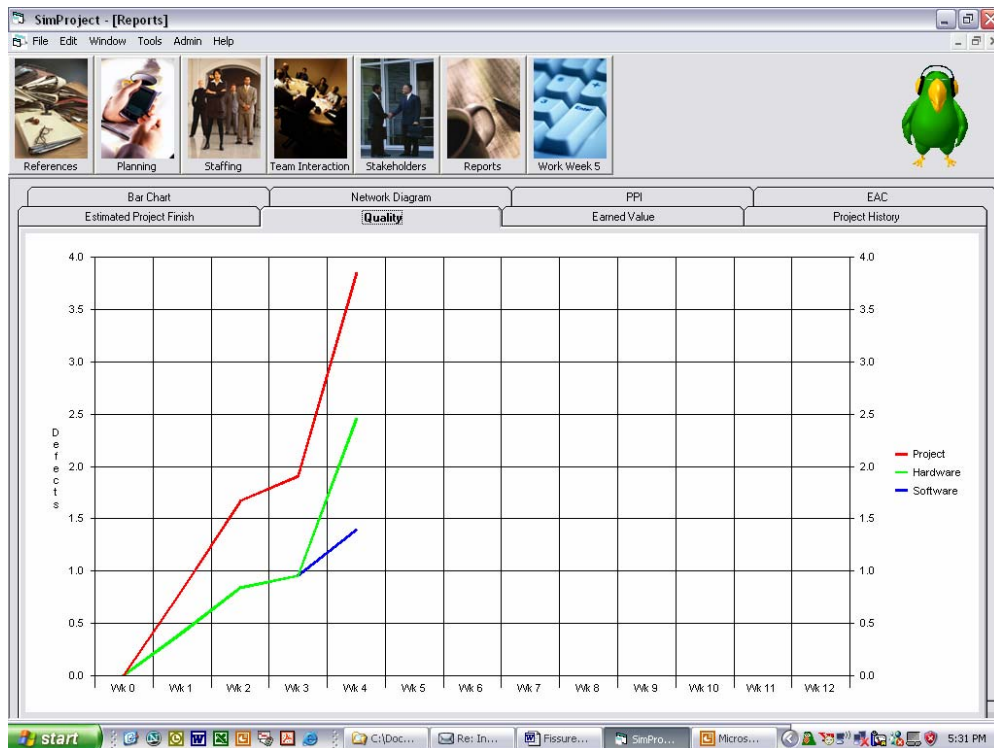


Figure 21 - Reports Screen – Quality (number of open defects)

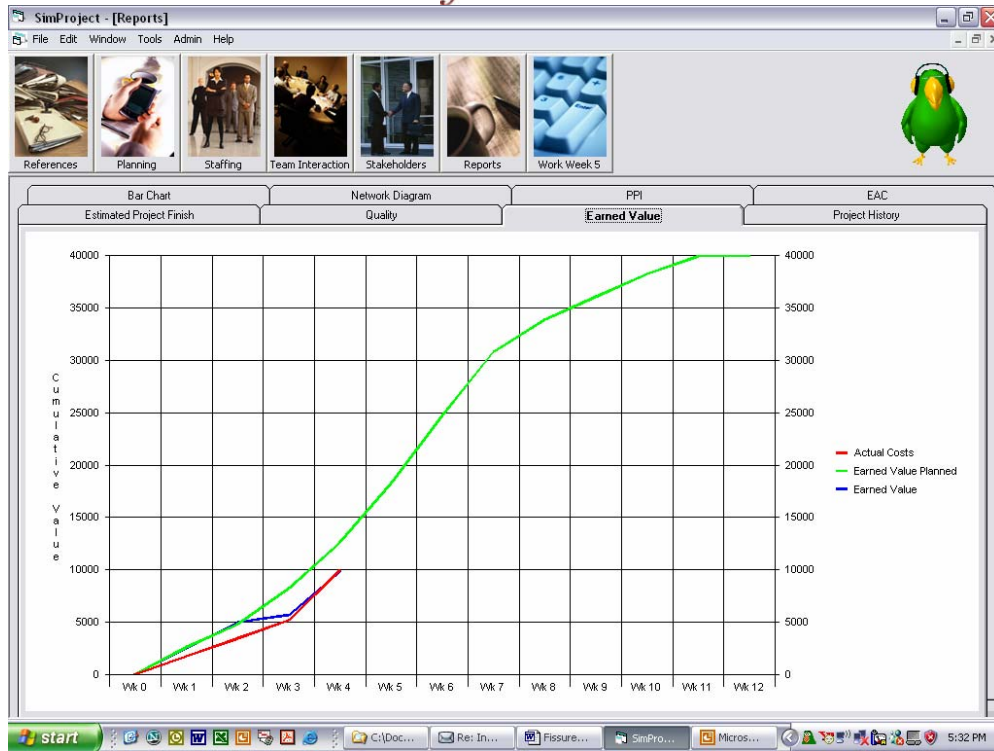


Figure 22 - Reports Screen – Earned Value

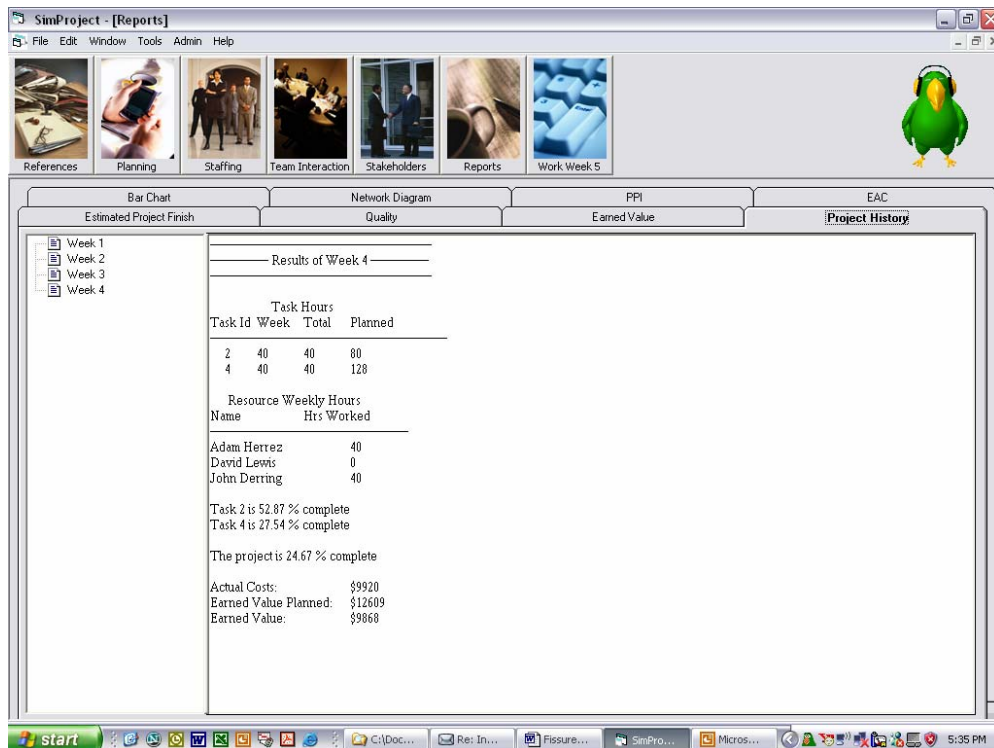


Figure 23 - Reports Screen – Project History



Good luck and have fun!

Sales and Technical Support Contacts

For questions and support contact Fissure at:
1-877-877-6333 or info@Fissure.com

Descriptions of Fissure Project Management Simulation Workshops

Develop your project management skills and knowledge in 3 day workshops that include computer simulation, lecture, teamwork and fun. Learn from instructors who are experienced project managers and excellent teachers. Fissure offers two project management simulation workshops (sign up as an individual for a public class or talk to us about an on-site workshop): Basic Project Management Simulation workshop and Advanced Project Management Simulation workshop. See detailed descriptions on the following pages or visit us at www.Fissure.com for our current public schedule and for descriptions of these and other simulation and non-simulation based training.