Tip and Trick Bulletins

2004 No. 5
2/5/04

Tips, Tricks & Techniques for Project Controls Software

IN THIS ISSUE

Primavera Project Planner (P3)
- Version 3.1

Understanding the Data Date in P3

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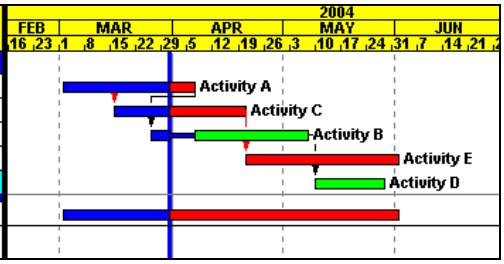
It is very important to remember that the data date in P3 always depicts the beginning of the work hour or day. For a baseline schedule, the first day of the schedule starts on the data date, as P3 counts the day of the data date the first day of the schedule. For a schedule update with the panning unit of day, the data date always starts in the morning (say 6:30 AM in most cases) of the specified date. For example, to update a project as of Tuesday night, make Wednesday morning the data date.

Similarly, if you update a schedule weekly as of Friday night (or Sunday night which will take into the account of the weekend work as necessary), the data date should be Monday morning, If you update a schedule monthly as of the end of the month, the data date should be the first day of the following month. If you are still confused, try to create some simple schedule and play with the data date to see the differences.

Furthermore, understanding this concept is even more important when the schedule is cost or resource loaded. While the one day may not make a big deal from the timescale point of view, it will certainly make your earned value totally out of whack. Here are some examples.

I have created a simple cost loaded schedule as shown. Assuming that this schedule has been updated as of the end of March 2004 in concept. First, I ran the schedule with the data date of March 31, 2004.

Activity ID	Activity Description	Orig Dur	Rem Dur	%	Early Start	Early Finish	Budgeted Cost	Cost to Date
TEST								
1	Activity A	25	5	80	02MAR04A	06APR04	2,500.00	2,000.00
3	Activity C	27	15	44	16MAR04A	20APR04	2,700.00	1,200.00
2	Activity B	25	23	8	26MAR04A	07MAY04	2,000.00	200.00
5	Activity E	30	30	0	21APR04	01JUN04	3,000.00	0.00
4	Activity D	15	15	0	10MAY04	28MAY04	1,500.00	0.00
Total		66	45	28	02MAR04A	01JUN04	11,700.00	3,400.00



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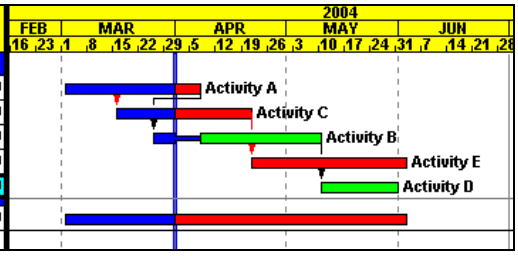
Then, I ran the schedule with the data date of April 1, 2004.

Activity ID	Activity Description	Orig Dur	Rem Dur	%	Early Start	Early Finish	Budgeted Cost	Cost to Date
TEST								
1	Activity A	25	5	80	02MAR04A	07APR04	2,500.00	2,000.00
3	Activity C	27	15	44	16MAR04A	21APR04	2,700.00	1,200.00
2	Activity B	25	23	8	26MAR04A	10MAY04	2,000.00	200.00
5	Activity E	30	30	0	22APR04	02JUN04	3,000.00	0.00
4	Activity D	15	15	0	11MAY04	31MAY04	1,500.00	0.00
Total		67	45	28	02MAR04A	02JUN04	11,700.00	3,400.00



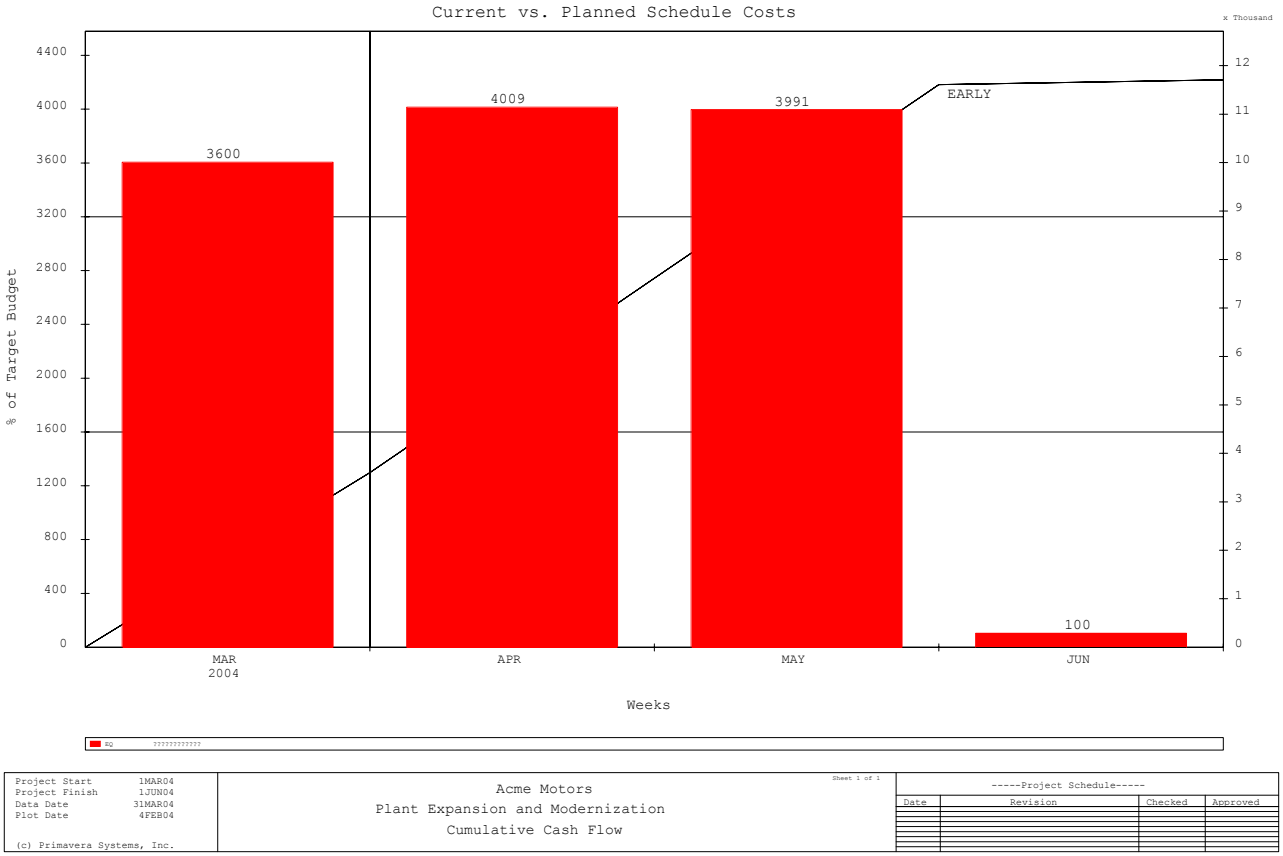
You can simply see the differences of the end date. Well, you may think this is no big deal, just a day difference. Now, let's look at the cost reports.

Assuming that they are cost loaded with the following Budget Cost and Cost to Date as of the end of March 2004.

	Budget Cost	Cost to Date (As of March 2004)
Activity A	2,500	2,000
Activity B	2,000	200
Activity C	2,700	1,200
Activity D	1,500	0
Activity E	3,000	0
Total	11,700	3,400

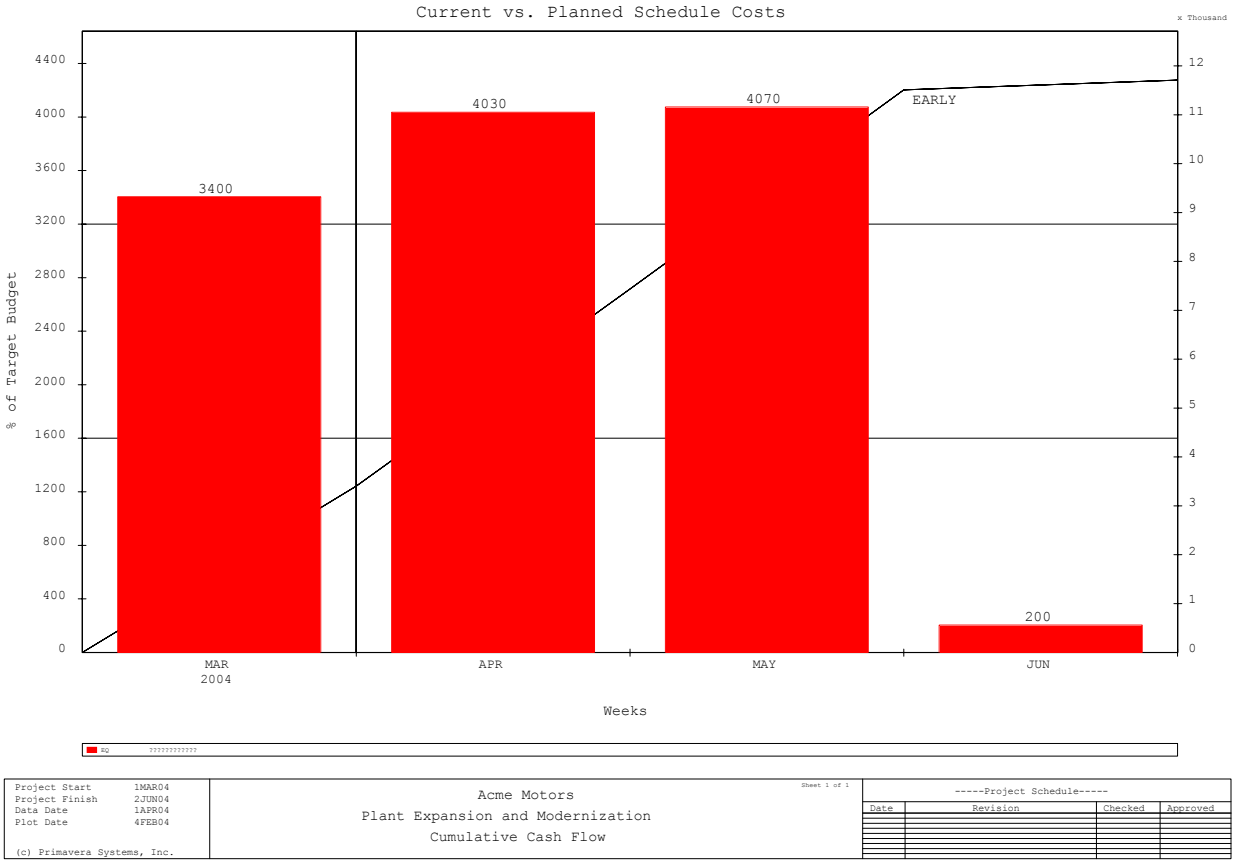
As you can see, both layouts all clearly depict that the cost to date as of the end of March 2004 is $ 3,400.

Now, let's run the cumulative case flow curve to see what happen. First, I ran the schedule with the data date of March 31, 2004, which is the last day of the month. Then, I printed out the cumulative cash flow report.



Wait a minute, how come the cost to date for March become $ 3,600, instead of $ 3,400?

Now, let's run the schedule again with the data date of April1, 2004, and printed out the same curve.



It turned out the cost to date for March 2004 is $ 3,400, which is correct.

What caused the differences? I am going to run another report to show you the detail. This report is called cost loading report, which can show all the detail cost forecast distribution for each activity.

Here is the cost loading report based on the data date of March 31, 2004.

PRIMAVERA PROJECT PLANNER

REPORT DATE 04FEB04 RUN NO. 40 COST LOADING REPORT START DATE
01MAR04 FIN DATE 01JUN04
15:42

DATA DATE
31MAR04 PAGE NO. 1
Cost Loading - Detailed by Month TOTAL USAGE FOR MONTH

ACT ID	DESC	MAR 2004	APR 2004	MAY 2004	JUN 2004	JUL 2004
COST - ( )						
1	Activity A	2100.0	400.0			
2	Activity B	200.0	1408.7	391.3		
3	Activity C	1300.0	1400.0			
4	Activity D			1500.0		
5	Activity E		800.0	2100.0	100.0	
TOTAL	COST	3600.0	4008.7	3991.3	100.0	
	REPORT TOTAL	3600.0	4008.7	3991.3	100.0	

Here is the cost loading report based on the data date of April1, 2004.

PRIMAVERA PROJECT PLANNER

REPORT DATE 04FEB04 RUN NO. 42 COST LOADING REPORT START DATE
01MAR04 FIN DATE 02JUN04
15:44

DATA DATE
01APR04 PAGE NO. 1
Cost Loading - Detailed by Month TOTAL USAGE FOR MONTH

ACT ID	DESC	MAR 2004	APR 2004	MAY 2004	JUN 2004	JUL 2004
COST - ( )						
1	Activity A	2000.0	500.0			
2	Activity B	200.0	1330.4	469.6		
3	Activity C	1200.0	1500.0			
4	Activity D			1500.0		
5	Activity E		700.0	2100.0	200.0	
TOTAL	COST	3400.0	4030.4	4069.6	200.0	
	REPORT TOTAL	3400.0	4030.4	4069.6	200.0	

As you can see from these two tabular reports, the Activity A and C based on the data date of March 31, 2004 have $ 100 more than the other report. Why? The problem is on the day of March 31, 2004, P3 still consider that day is not being started (e.g., the start day of the calculation), therefore, spread a portion of the remaining cost in that day. Is this the result you have expected? I guess not. The only way to make it correct is to set the data date the first day of the following month.

Final Words

I realize that most people would loosely refer the data date as of the end of the month. However, it is a whole different story in P3.