Software Assessment Form (SAF)

ProjectControls
Online.com

Introduction

ProjectControlsOnline (PCO, http://www.projectcontrolsonline.com/) uses this Software Assessment Form (SAF) as a simple assessment tool to evaluate the technical project management software.

By using this consistent set of criteria (scoring based assessment) for assessing the technical software, PCO will make it more efficient and easier for our members to compare and distinguish when reviewing/selecting the appropriate tools for use in their organisation/project with consideration of their unique requirements. We use the scoring based assessment criteria below:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

-ve   neutral   +ve

PCO Team is assessing the software totally independent of the vendors and while taking the maximum effort to be accurate, does not accept any responsibility of the software application/s and/or its performance in the practical environment. Users are encouraged to do their own assessment of the software before making the decision for any application.

Name of Assessor/s:

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Product Overview

1 **Name of Software**

PrimaveraReader

2 **Cost Information and Pricing Options**

Yes, visit https://www.primavareader.com/pricing

3 **Trial Software Version**

- Trial version is available – YES but user need to request for the download link.
- Number of days for trial version – 30 days.
- Are there any feature limits in the trial version? – No.

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4 **System Requirements**

- Runs on all currently supported Microsoft® Windows Platforms by Microsoft
- Also supports Mac OSX (PrimaveraReader 3.1version)
  https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/primavareader/id1148995647?mt=12
- Intel® Pentium II® or Pentium grade processor, Celeron Processor or Athlon Processor
- 512 MB RAM (Higher recommended)
- Hard Drive Space required: 80 MB
- No database installation required

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5 **Software Application**

PrimaveraReader is a stand-alone application which enables you to open, view and print project information from Primavera XER and XLS files without having Primavera software installed on your device. Working in an intuitive look and feel environment, team members can instantly start using PrimaveraReader, eliminating training costs and benefiting from no learning curve. PrimaveraReader is applicable to all project oriented organizations, from individual projects to large scale project and portfolio oriented enterprise corporations. Download the data sheet here.

6 **Help documentation within the software– Available via help menu options and lacks pop up features during assessment.**

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7 **Support Material**

- Software offers help at any stage – Yes by using help options.
- Software provides users with additional resources like web sites – YES
- Software provides an easy platform for receiving feedback from users – YES.
- Tutorial Material is available – YES, Documents, Videos & Webinar.

  Please visit **https://www.primaverareader.com/Resources**

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8 **Online Support**

Yes. Company website offer online support and email & phone are provided. Please visit

https://www.primaverareader.com/support or Email: **customercenter@primaverareader.com**

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9 **Technical Features**

A) Presentation and Layouts

- Layout is clear and intuitive – YES
- It is easy to navigate through the information to find features – YES
- Layout is logical – YES
- Layout is consistent in different places – YES
- Customisation: **Custom layout creation function is missing. However custom layout can be imported form P6.**

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B) Administration and Operation

- Easy to use and follow – YES
- All links work properly – YES
- Clear and complete directions are available – YES
- The software is easy to enter and exit – YES
- Customisation – **not really, but enables import function from P6.**

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C) Integration with External Software

- Integration with Primavera – NO, Only import XER file.
- ii.Integration with other tools – NO, import XLS file.
- iii.Integration with Excel – YES

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D) Printing

- Printing – **Acceptable but there is scope of improvement.**

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E) Reports (excluding graphics)

- Pre-built standard reports are available – NO
- Custom reports are available – NO
- Query Builder for reports – NO
- Reports to be exported as .csv, .xls and .pdf – NO
- Auto reports generation and distribution – NO
- Customisation: **Way around can be done to create a report but will take more time than the usual.**

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F) Graphics and Multimedia

- Graphics are well designed and rendered – Acceptable
- Background and text are pleasing and easy to read – Acceptable
- Effective colours been used – YES, more features to customise needed
- Animation and Multimedia capability – Good

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10 **Training**

Apart from classroom training, online training on frequent intervals is available and places can be reserved using company website.

Please Visit https://www.primaverareader.com/Free-Primavera-Reader-Demo

11 **Future Releases**

Not known

Why choose PrimaveraReader?

If an organization uses Primavera P6 Professional Project Management software for managing their Engineering & Construction projects than the access to the software is normally limited to planning team due to its cost. Primavera P6 Professional licenses approximately cost £2000 per user and if the software is required for a team then the cost is going to set you back. But other team members still like to view the Primavera P6 project schedule with the functionalities which enables them to understand the information in a better way.

Oracle has a tool which can accomplish this. Primavera P6 EPPM web and its addons like Primavera TeamMember or the TeamMember mobile app were designed to share project information with a team but this solution is still expensive and it's not for those who aren't willingto invest significant time, money and energy into the full Primavera P6 web suite. This is the area which is undermined in Primavera P6 and PrimaveraReader fulfils the gap.

PrimaveraReader is a viewer for Primavera P6 project plans exported as .XER or .XLS file types. It allows users to get complete control over large-scale programs as well as individual projects with the native Primavera P6 EPS (Enterprise Project Structure) and WBS (Work Breakdown Structure) structures. PrimaveraReader comes with familiar Primavera P6 look and feel, making the application very intuitive, eliminating learning curves and training costs. With various customization options PrimaveraReader allows users to customize plan views and calendars according to their own needs.

Using a viewer application makes Primavera P6 data more accessible to the team. A project team member can now receive a .xer file, open it and get a full understanding of the project without the need to log into Primavera P6 at all.

This cost effective viewer costs over 90% less than Primavera's software updates, licensing and support costs, providing economically sound productivity solution for project teams using Primavera.

Key features of PrimaveraReader include:

Trace Logic

The Trace Logic view is used for detailed analyses as it visually presents selected segments of the project schedule. This view is combined with the Activity View. When a particular activity is selected in the Activity view, the same activity will be in the focus at the bottom of the Trace Logic view showing predecessor and successor activities, and critical path arrows (red).

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Critical Path

The Critical Path feature presents the chain of project schedule activities that determine the project end date. This is important information for the project schedulers in order to monitor the critical path activities and manage the potential issues on time. Thus, any delays with the project reaching the project milestones on time can be easily noticed and appropriate action can be taken accordingly.

Driving Activities

Driving activities functionality allows the users to detect activities of great importance with regard to the deadline of the project plan. With this option team members can clearly view the activities that drive the project and need more attention and analysis.

Progress Update

PrimaveraReader contains options where users can insert proposals for updates in the Activity and Assignments views. When users enter the "Progress Update" mode, they can preview several new columns where they can update % Complete, Actual Start, Actual Finish, Activity Status and Activity codes. The proposals for Progress Update are saved in XLS file format, which is then placed in a newly created folder, in the same location where the XER schedule is. These XLS files can then be imported into the project's reflection, merged and provide a detailed view for modified parameter of each activity. The Project Scheduler then decides whether to accept or reject the updates from the team members.

Baselines view

The baselines functionality enables comparison of up to four updated versions of a project schedule. Users can get a detailed graphical presentation of the aspects that have been changed from the original schedule in the Gantt preview on the right side of the interface.

Activities view

This feature enables detailed overview and graphical representation of the activities included in the project schedule. Users can view information in the Activities panel, which is divided between the Activity Table on the left side, the Gantt chart on the right side, options ribbon at the top and the details view at the bottom of the screen.

Resources view

The resource tab shows a list of all resources needed to complete the projects included in the Enterprise Project Structure. Users can view the availability limits, unit prices and the calendar which defines their standard work time and non-work time for each resource.

Filtering options

Filtering and auto-filtering options allows preview of project data in one or more columns according to the cell contents. Users can view and navigate the display of data of interest from the activities in the project schedule, particularly if **it is a large schedule.**

Key Advantage over a Static Reports or PDF reports

- **Interactive overview of the project:**

  Each member can have their own personalized view, functionality to add/remove columns and see relationships inside an elaborate Gantt chart and there are predefined activities, WBS, resource assignments views, which provides full information regarding the specified topic.

- **Baselines comparison of project schedules:**

  Easy to spot what has been changed from the previous schedule with the clear visual comparison of the Activity updates from previous .xer file version.

- **Navigate through predecessors and successors:**

  Provides complete overview of the project relations and don't feel isolated from the whole.

Why choose PrimaveraReader?

PrimaveraReader seems to be a great tool for reading XER files and provides much functionality for reviewing a schedule. However it can further be improved if few more options can be added to the schedule:

- **Custom Layout Creation within PrimaveraReader:**

  PrimaveraReader have range of predefined layout which can fulfil the majority of user's requirement but it does not eliminate the fact that it lacks in creation of custom layout which might restrict some specific data analysis. To overcome this limitation, custom layout import functionality is provided but it increases the dependency on Primavera P6.

- **Pre-built Standard Reports or Custom Report Creation:**

  Although the USP of PrimaveraReader is to provide the interactive view of .XER file but addition of pre-built standard reports such as Project Cost Report, Activity Status Report, Logic Report, etc. or custom report creation functionality can further enhance the capability of the software.

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- **Inclusion of Custom Filtering options:**

  This option is missing in PrimaveraReader which limits user to view specific information (i.e. you can't build your own lookahead filter) and is very important function in day-to-day use. This function is very powerful in P6 and should be part of it as well.

- **Support of Primavera P6 .xml files:**

  Primavera P6 is slowly shifted towards .xml file which is not yet supported in current version of PrimaveraReader. Primavera P6 EPPM only supports .xml and that is a big reason for PrimaveraReader to support it as well.

Overall Score

During the testing, we found PrimaveraReader as a very easy to use and highly interactive tool which cannot be achieved by sharing PDF documents. It allows drill down through projects to view details for activities, Resources, and WBS such as Notes, Roles, Resources shifts and Calendars. It also has range of layouts to group and sort data, customize tables' columns, use filters and find options to get the required information. Also, there are options to quickly navigate through activity predecessors and successors and timescale options in Gantt. Moreover, it provides dynamic and multi-functional views for WBS, OBS and EPS as well.

These key functionalities aid in ensuring users get right information through the .XER file and hence worth recommending.

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