

Issue Briefs are designed for practitioners with limited time and a need to know about the latest industry-based knowledge.

Free Project Management Tools

By Benjamin R. Krauss, PMP
SEARCH



Public safety agencies are continuously managing both capital and noncapital projects:

- **Capital projects**¹ can range from a relatively simple radio system upgrade or information technology upgrade to more complex and longer duration endeavors, such as the implementation of a new records management system (RMS) or a regional radio system.
- **Noncapital projects**² often include efforts to develop training plans to support the deployment of new equipment, such as new less-than-lethal force tools, or

1. According to the BusinessDictionary.com, a capital project is a long-term investment project requiring relatively large sums to acquire, develop, improve, and/or maintain a capital asset (such as land, buildings, dykes, and roads).

2. A noncapital project is any project that does not meet the definition of a capital project.

regional interoperable communications plans to enable the management and operational use of new or existing communications resources.

As budgets diminish, public safety project managers must find new ways to manage projects with fewer resources. Free project management tools can support both capital and noncapital public safety projects. They can be used by first responders, such as police, fire, or emergency medical services (EMS), in a small, rural law enforcement or fire department as well as a large urban or statewide public safety agency. Many of these user-friendly tools have broad-based utility for a variety of projects. Although they are designed for people with a basic understanding of project management, these tools can also support experienced project managers in supervising public safety projects more efficiently and effectively.

A project is defined as “a temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result.”³

3. *Project Management Body of Knowledge*, 4th Edition (Project Management Institute, 2008), 434.



At a high level, this *Issue Brief* will describe:

- Free project management publication tools
- Free software tools that can support project managers
- How these tools can be used to increase efficiency and/or effectiveness
- Limitations of the tools
- The level of skill needed to use the tools

The goal of this *Issue Brief* is to provide an overview of several free project management tools and summarize how they can be used to support public safety projects. The project management tools are divided into two categories to address the needs of the target audience: publications and software.

The target audience for this *Issue Brief* is public safety first responders (e.g., police, fire, EMS, and emergency communications) responsible for project management. The tools contained in this *Issue Brief* are offered as illustrative examples. New tools, especially freely available software, are being created every day. By making first responders aware that such tools exist and showing how they might be used to manage public safety projects, first responders will be able to do additional research to find tools that fit their skills and needs.

During these challenging economic times, most agencies are experiencing reduced federal, state, and local funding. By utilizing free project management tools, public safety agencies can increase the efficient use of resources to support the management of their projects.

Consider this scenario:

A consortium of agencies in your community has decided to pool their resources to plan, manage, and implement a regional radio system. A primary objective of this system is to increase region-wide communications interoperability while balancing limited funding and other resources. You have been tasked with managing this project.

Significant budgetary limitations have resulted in personnel reductions, increased workloads for existing staff, and limited funding for ongoing activities. Budgets have been cut, and law enforcement, fire, and EMS agencies are working to do more with less. At the same time, the existing radio systems are a hindrance to providing regional incident response. Funding has been set aside for the regional radio system, but you must manage the project funds closely. There are few dollars for project management tools. How should you proceed?

Free Project Management Tools and How to Use Them

During the background research and development of this *Issue Brief*, the author reviewed many publications and software tools. Based on the needs of the intended audience, the list of project management tools was distilled down to three suites of publications and five software applications to be highlighted in this *Issue Brief*.

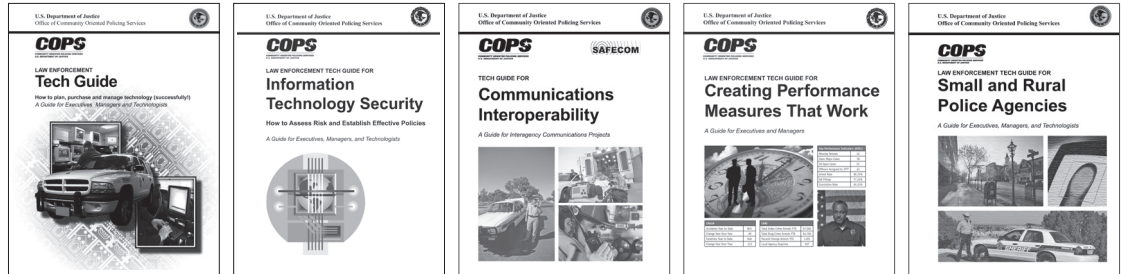
First responders responsible for project management often request basic and foundational project management tools during technical assistance⁴ and public safety project management training. As such, many of the publication-based tools identified in this *Issue Brief* are foundational public safety project management resources. However, these are but a few examples to introduce project management tools and concepts. Other options could be available that are just as or more suitable for different project management purposes.

4. See "Training," SEARCH Group, Inc., www.search.org/products/training.

Free Project Management Publications

The Law Enforcement Tech Guide Series

The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) and SEARCH, The National Consortium for Justice Information and Statistics, developed a series of tech guides for the public safety community to help with planning, managing, and implementing public safety projects.



The tech guides provide a suite of project management resource tools designed to help organizations plan and manage public safety projects, starting with the original *Law Enforcement Tech Guide—How to Plan, Purchase, and Manage Technology (Successfully!)*. They are designed to help organizations successfully implement performance improvement programs.

Publications such as the *Law Enforcement Tech Guide* series help to provide the knowledge first responders need to manage projects successfully. They include systematic instructions, from the beginning of the project, to the development of a project decision-making structure, to the process for vendor selection, to implementation.⁵

How to Use These Guides:

These tools help support the effective management of projects because they were designed for public safety practitioners. They were developed to provide practical information to a full range of project team members, from new team members with a basic-to-moderate level of project management knowledge, to highly experienced project managers. Each guide focuses on a specific organizational need:

- General public safety project management
- Performance improvement
- Communications interoperability
- Small and rural agencies
- Information technology (IT) security

Benefits, Efficiency, Effectiveness, and Level of Skill Needed to Use These Tools:

Benefits: The guides support a wide variety of projects.

Efficiency: There is no need to reinvent the wheel; these tools are based on best practices from a practitioner perspective.

Limitations: More complex projects may require additional, more in-depth resources.

Skill Level: They are user-friendly and easy to follow.

The tech guides can be ordered from the COPS Response Center at: www.cops.usdoj.gov/RIC/ResourceSearch.aspx or 800.421.6770.

These free resources may also be downloaded directly from the SEARCH website at: www.search.org/programs/safety/techguides.

Project Planning Resource Toolkit

SEARCH has developed a *Project Planning Resource Toolkit* to assist project managers with drafting their project plan. A suite of project management tools are contained in this free toolkit to help manage many elements of project planning, such as developing a decision-making structure, communications plan, and risk plan. It also contains a project checklist, which can serve as a reminder to the project manager about developing the various areas of the project plan for all nine knowledge areas (see chart on page 4). The toolkit's templates are designed to be applicable to a broad assortment of public safety projects for virtually any-sized agency.

5. See "Law Enforcement IT Projects: A Roadmap to the Guide," in *Law Enforcement Tech Guide: How to Plan, Purchase and Manage Technology (Successfully!)* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services), 8. www.search.org/files/pdf/TECHGUIDE.pdf; www.cops.usdoj.gov/ric/ResourceDetail.aspx?RID=243.

Project Management Areas **Project Plan Elements and Checklist**

Templates are available in the full Project Planning Resource Toolkit for plans highlighted in BLUE.

Governance (1)

■ **Project Management Decision-Making Structure**

Defined: The project management decision-making structure identifies the roles, responsibilities, and authorities of the project team. It is clearly defined and communicated to all stakeholders. Refer to the SEARCH project management decision-making structure template.

■ **Project Charter**

Defined: The project charter includes the project purpose or justification, measurable objectives, high-level requirements, high-level project description, high-level risks, summary milestone schedule, summary budget, project approval requirements, assigned project manager, responsibility and authority level, and name of the Executive Sponsor or other person(s) that authorize the project. The project charter is developed in cooperation with all stakeholders, signed by the Executive Sponsor, and communicated to all stakeholders. Refer to the SEARCH project charter template.

Human Resources (2)

■ **Project Staffing Plan**

Defined: The project staffing plan defines team roles, responsibilities, and authorities. Decisions are made with full user involvement. User committees are involved as part of the project management decision-making structure. This can be integrated with the project management decision-making structure.

Scope (3)

■ **Project Scope Statement**

Defined: The project scope statement defines what is included and what is not included in the project. Scope is clearly defined with the project team, users, and vendor. Scope is realistic, with achievable expectations. A well-developed and executable change management process is used to manage "scope creep." Scope is managed in alignment with the goal, objectives, and business case detailed in the project charter.

Time (4)

■ **Project Schedule**

Defined: The project schedule includes the dates for planned activities and dates for milestones (significant project events). The project schedule is developed by the project team with full user involvement. It is realistic, identifies deliverables, measurable interim milestones, and resources within a master schedule.

Cost (5)

■ **Project Budget**

Defined: The budget includes all the estimated costs for the project activities and deliverables. A realistic budget takes into account internal/external one-time and reoccurring cost estimates. It is created by the Project Manager in cooperation with financial representatives after the scope is defined and the schedule completed. The budget may also include lifecycle planning to promote sustainment.

Quality (6)

■ **Project Quality Assurance (Q/A) Test Plan**

Defined: The quality assurance plan articulates the Q/A process. Functionality, reliability, and performance requirements are clearly defined, and minimum acceptance criteria are identified, specific, measurable, and valid.

Communications (7)

■ **Project Communications Plan**

Defined: The communications plan clearly identifies who you need to communicate with, what they need communicated to them, in what detail, and how often. A comprehensive communications plan effectively keeps users and stakeholders informed, involved, and up-to-date throughout the life of the project. Refer to the SEARCH project communications plan template.

Risk (8)

■ **Project Risk Management Plan**

Defined: The risk management plan identifies the risk, severity, probability, frequency, and responsible party for the response. Response and mitigation plans are developed for each risk. The plan is created after scope is identified and updated throughout the project. Refer to the SEARCH project risk management plan template.

Procurement (9)

■ **Project Procurement Process Plan—RFP, RFI, etc.**

Defined: A procurement plan identifies the structured method for acquiring the equipment/technology based on functional specifications and needs involved the stakeholders. A detailed procurement document is developed to support a comprehensive selection process (vendor reference checks, financial report reviews, and current user evaluations, qualitative and quantitative evaluations).

Integration (10)

■ **Project Management Integration Plan**

Defined: The project integration includes formal documentation for governance; human resources, scope, time, cost, quality, communications, risk, and procurement. The project integration plan is framework/outline for the above mentioned plans. Refer to the SEARCH project assessment checklist.

How to Use These Templates:

These tools are model templates based on common project planning and management needs. They were designed for any public safety project team member with a basic-to-moderate level of project management knowledge and experience. Each template provides instructions for developing the content and is in Microsoft Word so that users can customize.

Benefits, Efficiency, Effectiveness, and Level of Skill Needed to Use These Tools:

Benefits: These tools are versatile and adaptable to agencies of any size.

Efficiency: These tools were developed for a wide variety of projects.

Limitations: The model provides templates for only four components of project management:

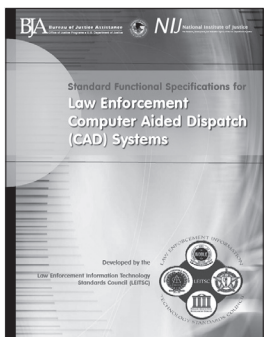
- Project decision-making structure
- Project communications plans
- Project charter
- Project risk management

Skill Level: They are user-friendly and easy to follow.

These template forms and the complete *Project Planning Resource Toolkit* can be downloaded directly from the SEARCH website at:

www.search.org/files/doc/Project-Planning-Resource-Toolkit.docx

Computer-Aided Dispatch and Records Management System Publications



One of the steps in project management is to define functional specifications in preparation for procurement. To help do this, the Law Enforcement Information Technology Standards Council (LEITSC)⁶ developed a suite of tools to help identify standard functional specifications for contemporary computer-aided dispatch (CAD) and records management system (RMS)

technologies.⁷ The suite is designed to help identify fundamental CAD and RMS functions, as well as to offer effective strategies for successfully acquiring and implementing the systems. Four publications make up the suite:

- *Standard Functional Specifications for Law Enforcement Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) Systems*
- *Standard Functional Specifications for Law Enforcement Records Management Systems (RMS)*
- *A Project Manager's Guide to RMS/CAD Systems Software Acquisition*
- *NIEM (2.0)-Conformant IEPDs for CAD & RMS Systems*

How to Use These Publications:

These tools can serve as references for the entire project team when documenting functional specifications and preparing for system procurement. The suite clearly lays out the operational functionality a CAD system or RMS is designed to support—from incident reporting to using the information within an RMS for investigative analysis and crime reporting.

Benefits, Efficiency, Effectiveness, and Level of Skill Needed to Use These Tools:

Benefits: This suite can be used to identify the functional specifications for a CAD and RMS project and prepare the project team to procure the system.

Efficiency: Users can save time developing functional requirements.

Limitations: These documents present only the minimal suggested CAD and RMS functionality.

Skill Level: A basic-to-moderate level of project management knowledge is needed.

The LEITSC publications can be downloaded directly from the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) website at:

www.theiacp.org/Technology/OperationalTechnologies/CADRMS/tabid/831/Default.aspx.

6. "The International Association of Chiefs of Police, National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, National Sheriffs' Association, and Police Executive Research Forum make up LEITSC, also known simply as the Council. The Council consists of 10 people: each organization contributes one member and one staff liaison, and a project support specialist and the project manager round out the group. Together, these participants represent the law enforcement community as a whole on issues related to information technology (IT) standards." (Heather Ruzbasan Cotter, "The Law Enforcement Information Technology Standards Council (LEITSC): Frequently Asked Questions," *The Police Chief*, vol. 74, no. 6, June 2007, www.policchiefmagazine.org/magazine/index.cfm?fuseaction=print_display&article_id=1199&issue_id=62007.)

7. See "CAD/RMS," International Association of Chiefs of Police, www.theiacp.org/Technology/OperationalTechnologies/CADRMS/tabid/831/Default.aspx.



Free Software Tools to Support Project Management

A plethora of open-source and freeware project management software⁸ tools are available to project managers who need only do an Internet search on “free project management tools” to retrieve pages of possibilities.

This *Issue Brief* identifies a few project management-specific tools that address basic project management needs, providing an introduction to the broad range of fairly easy-to-use tools that are available without cost. However, many that are available are lighter versions of shareware⁹ and should be downloaded with that caution in mind.

Some of the tools described below are actually office-productivity or other more general-use software tools that can be applied to specific project management needs. There are also commercial tools specifically designed to be used for project management available at a cost.

Even though most online collaborative tools support access control, there is always a risk that information disseminated using these tools will be accessible on the Internet to anyone. It is prudent to consider this risk when developing and posting content online. See the *Law Enforcement Tech Guide for Information Technology Security: How to Assess Risk and Establish Effective Policies*¹⁰ for more information on the process of developing and implementing effective information security policies and protecting information from accidental or malicious compromise.



8. Software applications mentioned in this *Issue Brief* may be registered trademarks of their respective owners.

9. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines shareware as “software with usually limited capability or incomplete documentation which is available for trial use at little or no cost but which can be upgraded upon payment of a fee to the author.”

10. See *Law Enforcement Tech Guide for Information Technology Security: How to Assess Risk and Establish Effective Policies* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services). www.cops.usdoj.gov/RIC/ResourceDetail.aspx?RID=276 or www.search.org/files/pdf/ITSecTechGuide.pdf.



Collaboration Software

SkyDrive



SkyDrive is a free file hosting service that allows users to upload files to online storage hosted by Microsoft and then access them from a web browser.¹¹ SkyDrive can be used to manage nationwide projects where document collaboration is necessary.

How to Use This Tool:

Project team members can use this service to share project files such as minutes from meetings, planning documents like draft equipment specifications, the project plan, or any other documents that need to be maintained for potential access by project team members. The web-based service requires only a browser, so team members can access documents from any computer with an Internet connection. In fact, SkyDrive is even available on mobile devices by downloading a free app.

The SkyDrive website is permissions-based. As such, users must create a Windows Live account and be invited to participate in the collaboration site. The project manager can set rights within the site, limiting functions to read-only or enabling full editing privileges. As documents are uploaded or edited, the editor can send a message to specific team members—or the entire team—inviting them to review changes or make comments.

The site provides 25 GB of free storage and accepts all Microsoft file types as well as standard image file types and PDFs. Users can create files directly in SkyDrive in Microsoft Word, Excel, Power Point, and One Note formats, or users can create the files locally and upload them to the site. For those team members who do not have the Microsoft Office 2010 suite of tools, this feature allows them to contribute using standard formats. As part of the broader Windows Live site (where SkyDrive is hosted), users can also use the free e-mail (Hotmail) and instant messaging tools for project communication.

Benefits, Efficiency, Effectiveness, and Level of Skill Needed to Use This Tool:

Benefits: SkyDrive is a user-friendly collaboration tool that allows users to upload and download files with minimal effort. It increases collaboration and sharing of project information, especially when project team members are separated by distance.

Efficiency: Documents are located in one spot and retrievable from any computer with an Internet connection and web browser (or from a mobile device), saving time.

Limitations: An Internet connection is required in order to access files.

Skill Level: This is fairly easy to use. Online tutorials make learning the service simple.

11. "Introducing the new SkyDrive," Microsoft Corporation, <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-HK/skydrive/home>.



Skype

Skype is a software application that allows users to make voice and video calls over the Internet.¹² Calls to other users within the Skype service are free.

How to Use This Tool:



This tool can be used for making voice calls regarding critical project status updates. With most travel budgets significantly curtailed, Skype can be used for conference calls where the

project participants are spread throughout a region, or beyond, without incurring long-distance fees or conference bridge fees. Skype can also call land-line or mobile phones, but that feature is available at a cost. Free video calling is also available and can be used to bring participants into a vendor demonstration or training where they might not otherwise have been able to participate.

Users need only a computer with speakers and a microphone, a high-speed Internet connection, and a Web camera for video calls. Skype also has an instant messaging feature that can be used for project communication.

Benefits, Efficiency, Effectiveness, and Level of Skill Needed to Use This Tool:

Benefits: Free voice and video calling to other Skype users.

Efficiency: Organizations can save money in travel, time, and long-distance fees using video conferencing and free calling.

Limitations: There is a fee for Skype-to-Plain Old Telephone Service (POTS) calls; however, the cost is minimal.

Skill Level: This is easy to use.

Office Productivity Software

OpenOffice



Apache OpenOffice is an open-source office software suite for word processing, spreadsheets, presentations, graphics, databases, and more. It works on all common

computers, stores data in an international open-standard format, and can read and write files from other common office software packages. Apache OpenOffice can be downloaded and used for free.¹³

How to Use This Tool:

If users just need simple project tracking tools and do not have access to other documents, spreadsheet, presentation, and database software, Apache OpenOffice can be a solution:

- The spreadsheet application can be used to identify, schedule, and track the tasks that need to be completed or to develop a project budget and track expenditures. Users can also use it to collect operational and functional requirements and then capture the team's ratings of vendor responses to the requirements.
- The word processing software can be used to create project documents, such as a business case.
- The presentation software can be used to brief stakeholders on the project's status.

Some may find it hard to imagine that a public safety agency does not have access to office productivity software; however, in some small and rural agencies (and potentially in large agencies as well), saving on the expense of office productivity software may mean there are funds available for more important use. Project management does not always require the use of project management-specific software to track tasks, resources, and build work breakdown structures. For less complex projects, a spreadsheet tool or document software may be the right tool for the job.

12. See "About Skype," <http://about.skype.com/>.

13. See "Why Apache OpenOffice.org," www.openoffice.org/why.

Benefits, Efficiency, Effectiveness, and Level of Skill Needed to Use This Tool:

- Benefits:** This allows users access to standard office software without paying for expensive licenses. Apache OpenOffice will open and allow users to save files in other office software formats.
- Efficiency:** This offers a variety of tools that can support project activities. The applications within Apache OpenOffice offer templates, collaboration features such as versioning, the ability to open HTML and XML documents, and more.
- Limitations:** When opening other office software files in Apache OpenOffice, some formatting may not carry over.
- Skill Level:** The software is easy to use, especially if users are already familiar with other office productivity software.

Project Management Software

GanttProject

GanttProject¹⁴ is an open-source project management tool with features that enable users to:

- Create a project Gantt chart¹⁵
- Create a work breakdown structure
- Draw dependencies
- Define milestones
- Assign resources to tasks
- Generate a program evaluation and review technique (PERT) chart from a Gantt chart
- See the project's critical path
- Import Microsoft Project files, and export data to Microsoft Excel (or other office productivity applications using .csv format)

The project website has a tutorial video, a “frequently asked questions” blog, a “tip of the day” feature that provides help on startup, and a forum where users can share information and problems and report bugs.

14. See “GanttProject,” GanttProject Team, www.ganttproject.biz.

15. A Gantt chart is a bar chart that illustrates a project schedule. See “Gantt chart,” Wikipedia, last modified April 24, 2012, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gantt_chart.

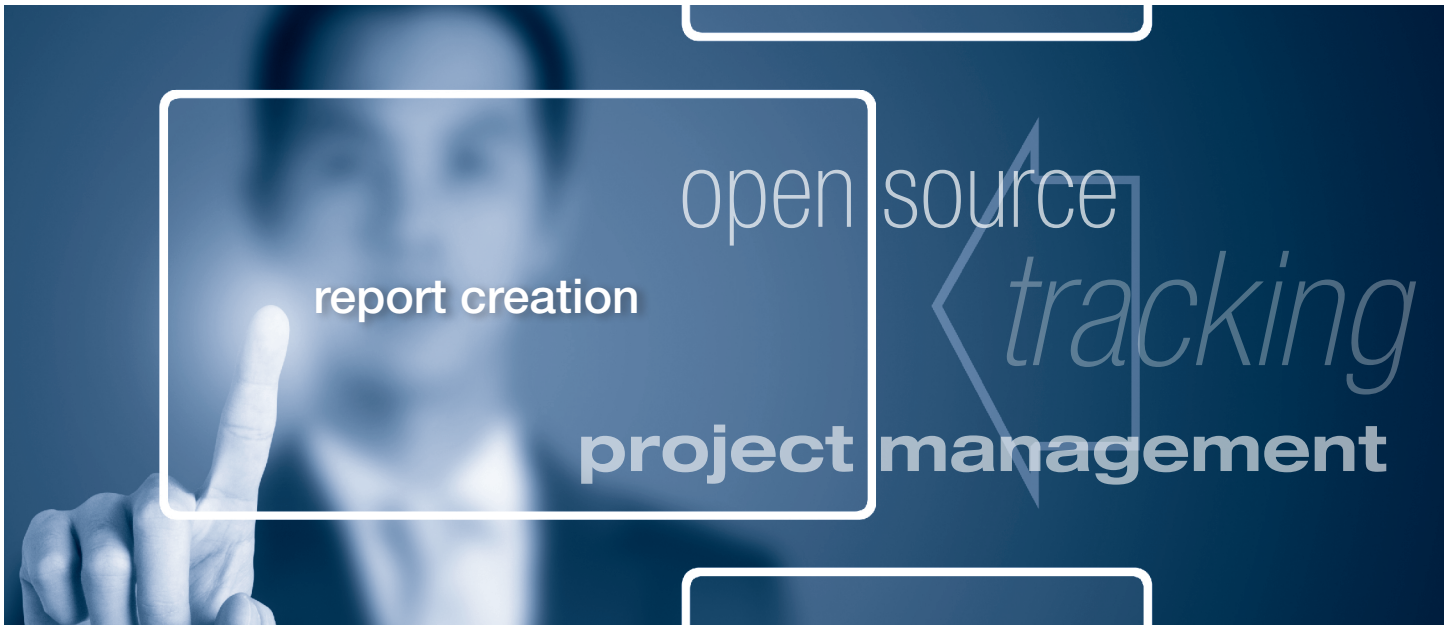
How to Use This Tool:

Every project has tasks that must be fulfilled in order to complete the project. Simple projects may have few tasks, while complex projects may have hundreds or even thousands. Some tasks will be dependent on others being completed. Each task can be assigned to someone who is responsible for its completion; in the case of a simple project, all tasks may all be assigned to one person. Regardless, to ensure the project timeframe stays on course, a project tracking tool is useful.



Benefits, Efficiency, Effectiveness, and Level of Skill Needed to Use This Tool:

- Benefits:** This allows users access to simple project management software without paying for expensive licenses. While not as robust as some commercial project management software, GanttProject provides a tool for simple task and resource tracking.
- Efficiency:** This tool provides the project manager with a view of the project's status and a means to easily produce a report on the project's status for others.
- Limitations:** Support for users is limited to user forums, the tutorial, and a video. The U.S. holiday schedule is unavailable, but users can assign days off to a resource manually. As of 2012, the software also appears to not have had a major version release since 2009, though a beta version of a new release is available.
- Skill Level:** This tool requires some knowledge of project tasking.



OpenProj

The basic version of OpenProj¹⁶ is also an open-source project management tool. Like GanttProject, it has many features for task and resource tracking, reporting, and producing Gantt charts. It is slightly more feature-rich and has a few more reporting tools.

One major issue is that Gantt and other outputs cannot be converted to PDFs;¹⁷ however, users can print the report and direct the software to print the file to a PDF output if they have a full version of Adobe. While there is no video tutorial for this product, user forums and support documentation are more complete than those of GanttProject.

Benefits, Efficiency, Effectiveness, and Level of Skill Needed to Use This Tool:

- Benefits:** This allows users access to simple project management software without paying for expensive licenses. While not as robust as some commercial project management software, OpenProject provides a tool for simple task and resource tracking.
- Efficiency:** This tool provides the project manager with a view of the project's status and a means to easily produce a report on the project's status for others. The software is regularly updated and works on multiple operating systems.

Limitations: Support for users is limited to a software help feature, user forums, and a project tracking area where bugs, support requests, and patches are viewable.

Skill Level: This tool requires some knowledge of project tasking.

Conclusion

Project management requires planning, documenting, collaborating, and monitoring. Tools to manage these activities do not need to be expensive or complicated. Free project management tools can support the critical planning and execution of a public safety project.

This *Issue Brief* was designed to provide an overview of free project tools, show how they can be used, and identify the benefits they can provide to public safety agencies.

The chart on page 11 summarizes and compares the benefits, efficiency, limitations, skill level, and accessibility of each project tool discussed in this *Issue Brief*.

16. See "OpenProj—Project Management," Geeknet, Inc., <http://sourceforge.net/projects/openproj/>.
 17. This feature is available in a subscription version of this software.

Tool	Benefits	Efficiency	Limitations	Skill Level	Accessibility
Law Enforcement Tech Guide Series	Supports a wide variety of projects	Tools based on best practices from a practitioner perspective	Complex projects may require more in-depth resources	User-friendly and easy to follow	Hard copies can be ordered; available online for immediate download
SEARCH Project Planning Resource Toolkit	Versatile and adaptable to agencies of any size	Useful across a wide variety of projects	Provides templates for only four components of project management	User-friendly and easy to follow	Online
LEITSC—Suite of CAD and RMS Publications	Used to identify the functional specifications for a CAD and RMS project and to prepare the project team to procure the system	Can save time developing functional requirements	Documents present only the minimal suggested CAD and RMS functionality	Requires basic-to-moderate level of project management knowledge	Online
Collaborate Software: SkyDrive	Allows users to upload and download files with minimal effort to increase collaboration and sharing of project information across distances	Documents retrievable from devices with Internet connection and web browser	Requires an Internet connection	Online tutorials make learning the service simple	Online
Collaborate Software: Skype	Free voice and video calling to other Skype users	Saves money in travel, time, and long-distance fees with video and conference calling	Low fee for Skype-to-telephone calls	Easy to use	Online
Office Productivity Software: Apache OpenOffice	Access to standard office software without paying for expensive licenses; allows file saving in other office software formats	Offers tools to support project activities, including templates, versioning, and ability to open HTML and XML documents	When opening other office software files in OpenOffice, some formatting may not carry over	Easy to use, especially if users are familiar with other office productivity software	Online
Project Management Software: GanttProject	Access to simple project management software without paying for expensive licenses	Provides managers with project status view and means to easily produce project status report	Support limited to user forums, tutorial, and video	Requires some knowledge of project tasking	Online
Access to simple project management software without paying for expensive licenses	Provides project managers with project status view and means to easily produce project status report; regularly updated; works on multiple operating systems	Support limited to software help, user forums, and project tracking area to view bugs, support requests, and patches	Requires some knowledge of project tasking	Online	Online

Policy Development, Training, and Technical Assistance Resources

- **U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office):** The COPS Office is the component of the U.S. Department of Justice responsible for advancing the practice of community policing by the nation's state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies. The community policing philosophy promotes organizational strategies that support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime. The COPS Office does its work principally by sharing information and awarding grants to law enforcement agencies around the United States to hire and train community policing professionals, acquire and deploy cutting-edge crime-fighting technologies, and develop and test innovative policing strategies. See www.cops.usdoj.gov.
- **SEARCH, The National Consortium for Justice Information and Statistics:** SEARCH offers technical assistance to local and state justice agencies to develop, manage, improve, acquire, and integrate their automated information systems. SEARCH not only works with individual justice agencies (such as a police department that is implementing a new records management system, or a court acquiring a new case management system), but also works with multidisciplinary groups of justice agencies to assist them in planning for and integrating their information systems at local, state, and regional levels. For more than four decades, SEARCH assistance programs have provided both on-site and in-house, no-cost technical assistance to justice agencies throughout the country. SEARCH staff has considerable experience in helping public safety agencies develop project communications plans. See www.search.org/products.

This *Issue Brief* is part of a series that SEARCH developed for the public safety/justice community in partnership with the U.S. Department of Justice, COPS Office.

Questions, comments, or feedback: Please contact SEARCH at www.search.org/about/contact/.

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Captain Thomas W. Turner
Chairman, SEARCH

Ronald P. Hawley
Executive Director, SEARCH

Scott M. Came
Deputy Executive Director, SEARCH



COPS
COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING SERVICES
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE



U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services
145 N Street, N.E.
Washington, DC 20530
www.cops.usdoj.gov

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