

Opinions, LETTERS – (ENR 6/23/2003 Issue)

»The State of CPM Schedules

Your cover story¹, Critics Can't Find the Logic in Many of Today's CPM Schedules, paints a disheartening picture of the current state of CPM schedules (ENR 5/26 p. 30). It's only 46 years since Morgan Walker and I first worked out CPM for duPont and yet project people are still falling into some of the same scheduling traps warned against during CPM's childhood. The use of features like "leads and lags," "multiple calendars" and "assigned constraints" do provide some levels of schedule flexibility. In practice, their use too often leads to inconsistent schedules and misleading views of project condition.

In the early days of CPM, computing capability was at a premium. Rooting out inconsistencies in scheduling data had to be left completely to the planner. In practice, this meant deliberately limiting the use of the "flexibility" features. Today, the desktop computer I'm using to compose this letter has far more capability than the UNIVAC we used for our first CPM calculations. Thus, there is no reason why the computer cannot be programmed to tell me that my scheduling input is inconsistent and why.

Your article seems to imply that Primavera's software is missing an essential data "debugging" feature. Since that software also appears to be an effective monopoly at this time, critics might look to investing in a stand-alone data "debugging" program to test Primavera input data files. The existence of such a program just might convince Primavera to produce their own. Something should be done to elevate the general professional character of today's project schedules.

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¹ Referred article: Richard Korman – Stephen H. Daniels, *Critics Can't Find the Logic in Many of Today's CPM Schedules*, ENR 26-MAY-2003.

... Four scheduling experts, all deeply experienced in the critical path method (CPM) that uses math to draw network diagrams of a project schedule, met recently in a restaurant just outside Philadelphia. The purpose was to discuss a new unit at the Project Management Institute, in Newtown Square, Pa. The College of Scheduling they have launched would promote ...

/ Source: ENR /