

redGoat© - a free web tool for manage European Grants Budget proposal, but not only

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Abstract: The article presents and generally examines the necessity for project management(PM) Web-Based Tools in Romania PM field and particularly considering redGoat© - one of the few free Romanian Web-Based software as service specialized in PM. The application is user friendly, but very powerful and scalable and has been developed to facilitate the construction of a projects budget. The necessity of modern tools for managing Romanian projects has been debated extensively in articles , scientific studies that preceding the thesis: "Application performance management in the modern enterprise project management" (Lepadatu, 2010). Present article concludes with possible future ways of scaling the services offered by redGoat.org.

Keywords: project budget management, collaboration management, european grants budgeting.

1 Introduction

In 2010, a personal study presented at the end of the third chapter of the thesis "Implementation of efficient management for manage modern entrepreneurial projects" (Lepadatu, 2010), which is based on research of using computer tools for project management in Romanian reveals less more than 2% of the Romanian representative company but taking into account the limited liability companies, the percentage became 0.08%.

Following the financial crisis that percentage has increased considerably, not in a healthy way - by implementing several solutions or tools in the business environment in Romania - but due to the liquidation of many of the companies that did not survive the economic crisis.

At the end of 2013, following a broad review of models for building budgets for project proposals by the Romanian consulting companies that have structural funds as object of consultancy, as well as by many of the universities or private entities that submitted proposals for European funding, it was found that most used tools for budgets construction was spreadsheet programs.

One of the reasons that many of the subjects from examined sample have not yet turned to a specialized software tool it is their prices in conjunction with high complexity of products on the market which very often are solutions for problems or situations with a high degree of complexity.

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The result was and is still using a spreadsheet program, whose learning curve is very high, users succeeding in short time and with minimal effort to build project budgets.

We mention that we have nothing against extraordinary spreadsheet tools that successfully doing their job for budget proposals construction. However, measuring with the productivity measure, can say that construction of budget in a spreadsheet program will require some time, even if we already have a template for our project, putting aside a number of shortcomings such as the impossibility of easy scale the partners number, various collaborative aspects (somewhat solved by known SaaS or SaaS technology from Google or Microsoft), reusing and sharing of data with other projects in its portfolio (such as partners, resources etc.).

Regarding the SaaS (Software as Services), according to Gartner Group (McHall, Tom, 2011), the SaaS sales worldwide estimates in 2010 reached 10 billion USD, in 2011 – 12.1 billion USD and by the end of 2015 to reach 21.3 billion USD. Also according to Gartner Group (Gartner, 2011) study sites, CRM (Customers Relationship Management) continues to hold the largest SaaS market.

Some of the most notable criticism of the SaaS have been made by Richard Stallman from Free Software Foundation (Stallman, 2010), referring to the Service as a Software Substitute (SaaS). He believes the use of SaaS can be a violation of the principles of Free Software. According to Stallman:

- with SaaS users have only a "virtual copy" of executables that are in the server and user can not "touch" it. Thus it is impossible to change the executable and check what he undertakes. SaaS enables the server operator (company manufacturing) to change whenever want or modify user data;
- SaaS is equivalent to use proprietary software with spyware attached or a Trojan that generates an universal back door.

However, the purpose of present article is not a debate over the decision in favour of or against exposure of data in SaaS, so we will not launch in dissertations for or against Stallman's claims. However, we will list bellow some of the our daily activities that most of us undertake for years and do not appear ... affecting our lives and business:

- free email services (gmail.com, yahoo.com, hotmail.com etc);
- outsourcing for hosting the business sites and email services;
- transferring files or data through free sites (transfer.ro etc.);
- files or data archive in cloud (dropbox.com, drive.google.com etc);
- sharing files in cloud (drive.google.com, office360.com etc.)

The conclusion is that we use and often without recognizing entrust information (private and vital for our own business) to online service providers. And this is normal if assigned the actions to century we belong.

Migrating software in the online environment is a certainty. SaaS is a certainty. The only aspect that must be considered is the seriousness of the service provider.

2 Practical consideration about the need of such instruments within Romanian project management environment

In the study completed in 2013, in conjunction with the stated above the logical inference is that one of the solutions that could boost the introducing of management tools in Romanian PM environment is an online SaaS service tool.

To be used by as many entities it should meet the following conditions:

- the SaaS producer must be “a trusted” one ;
- learning curve must be the same as spreadsheet tools or even steep;
- must be fast – no one like to wait;
- technological model used for building the SaaS must be safe and must guarantee security and confidentiality of users data and also to permit future dynamical scaling of application through modular extension;
- must keep the PM scientific rigours and to use their own or hybrid clear models regarding project methodologies;
- to permit reusing of resources for all projects portfolio;
- to permit collaboration in multi-partner projects;

Further we will analyze briefly above conditions through the redGoat©

redPM Organization (<http://redpm.org>) is a private Romanian company, founded in 2013, a "start-up" in research and development on social sciences and humanities. The company was founded by Leonard LEPADATU, Ph.D. in economics and management in branch, associate professor at various universities in the country and abroad, expert in mathematical models applied in economics and project methodologies models. The company is ISO 9001:2008 (Quality Management System) and ISO 27001:2005 (Information Security Management System) certified by international body. RedPM Organization is registered as personal data operator at the National Supervisory Authority for Personal Data Processing and also at Romanian Office for Copyright as software producer. At the end of 2013 it initiated redGoat.org© project, a free software services that intend to boost Romanian applied project management. redGoat.org© will remain free forever. All this makes the application provider a particularly genuine one.

One of the toughest challenges was construction of a serious computer applications but easy to use one. Keeping the scientific rigours of project and budget management in this case was absolutely essential and great attention has been paid to the user experience and user interface. Thus we developed a model that hand away from user all complex parts of PM models, user interaction with the application becoming friendly and very

easy, thus learning curve is becoming very abrupt one. redGoat© have ticketing system through users can report any problems detected and thus be resolved by developers. redGoat© have also an internal messaging system through users are notified about changes of new versions or about future periods of maintenance.

The technologies used for programming are particularly flexible and cutting-edge, laying emphasis on state-of-art technology that can work asynchronous thus the Internet connection speed is not a factor in the decision for the performance of the software service. Also the technology used for web servers is a revolutionary one, guaranteeing national and international access to the application instantly. Databases are located on separate servers in separate locations, certainly with SSD RAID technology. Backup is done on different servers in different locations, transparent to user actions, at every 6 hours for up to three months data storage. Since the beta version, the application will support secure transfer of data (https) by purchasing a computer security certificate from one of the most trusted international organizations. Encrypting passwords is unidirectional and it is done by algorithms such md5 or sha . All this makes redGoat© an fast and safe SaaS.

3 A very briefly presentation of redGoat.org - application as service for project budget easy managing.

In terms of PM, redGoat© allows reuse all of resources, partners, cost schemes on entire project portfolio.

With redGoat© can manage:

- unlimited partners per project;
- eligible and no-eligible project costs;
- direct and indirect project costs;
- other relational project costs;
- repetitive project cost schemas;
- deductible VAT – no eligible (according Romanian legislative specifications);
- no deductible VAT but eligible (according HG.831/2012, HG.1135/2011);
- grant funding percent;
- co-financing percent for coordinator and for every project partner;
- project coordinator expenses with whole project;
- project partners expenses with whole project;
- project activities loading;
- project resources loading;

- project partners loading;
- Gantt Chart reports;
- project budget reports;
- etc.

4 Conclusions and future ways to scale redGoat.org[©]

redGoat[©] is an application created by a private entity, but is free to users and will remain free as long as it exist. redGoat[©] is under continuously developing in a fast pace and appeal to all users, interested in next generation supple and powerful software solution who could help in free and real manner the project managers community in Romania, to initiate and participate in debates for assisted project management software solution.

With future versions will develop new features such as cloning a project in order to generate project's baseline, using predefined templates in the construction of project budget, budget analysis and automatic correction, and new tools such as auto-generation of composite indicators to measure the effectiveness of ethical and transparent decision-making in the acquisition of resources (Lepadatu, 2011), and more.

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