

## ADePT: planning, management & control of design projects

Many schedule over-runs and cost over-spends in the construction industry are the result of contractors working with poorly coordinated design information. The 'ADePT' technique and associated software suite are used to develop Integrated Design Schedules (IDSs) which ensure that designers are able to work together to generate a fully coordinated design - note that without an IDS this can be very difficult to achieve and co-ordination is often still being sought during the construction itself.

ADePT is a highly structured approach to planning, and subsequently managing, the design activities within a project. The approach is aimed at development of a design schedule which is fully integrated across the design disciplines and sub-contractors and based on the critical flows of information between members of the design team. Subsequent management of information flows is regarded as a much better way of controlling the design process than simply monitoring production of deliverables or rate of fee spend. There are three stages to planning with ADePT, and a further management stage.



ADePT identifies a sequence of activities which minimizes the iteration in the design process and ensures any assumptions which the team need to make are ones which can be made with confidence. This is achieved by weighting the dependencies between activities. The calculation of a sequence prioritizes the availability of outputs associated with the most critical dependencies. Any interdependent, iterative groups of activities which remain in the process following sequencing are often multi-disciplinary. They represent places in the design process where design team members should work concurrently to solve the interdependent problem. Usually they also represent elements of the construction, and therefore of the design output, which require co-ordination.

Having produced a target design schedule, the design process needs to be controlled. ADePT incorporates an approach to process control which pre-empts deviation from the target schedule by analyzing constraints, which then allows the schedule to be kept up-to-date and used in meaningful way.

In Summary, the ADePT methodology and software suite provides a means of planning, managing and controlling the delivery of a project on the basis of coordinated interdisciplinary working. There are many benefits to decision-makers from utilizing this approach: the number of assumptions that cannot be made with confidence is minimized; risk and cost implications can be understood and subsequently managed; wasteful iteration can be eliminated; and focus can be given to taking interconnected decisions quickly and effectively. Ultimately, the approach offers a means of planning, controlling, and managing projects in an informed, coherent, and achievable manner.

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