

Automating Your Schedule

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Special Mini Talk/Demo for 993 Summer
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Plan of Presentation

- Reasons and Motivation.
- Tools (MS Outlook, Lotus Organizer, Web-Based, and others) and Cost (some are free).
- Calendar, Tasks, Notes, (and other things that give us head/heart-ache).
- Configuration (client side, the server side, the mail server setup, etc).
- Features.
- Demo.

Reasons and Motivation

- Reasons are multifarious.
- Automation and its merits (5 Police Cars, 10 Police Men, one small stupid circuit).
- Why do we need calendaring?
 - » We have no choice, we always follow calendars, we buy electronic diaries, we buy paper calendars and scribble reminders, etc. (Don't buy anything anymore, just use your free computer)
- Trend: if there is anything that causes a headache, we look for help (**that is tools or information**) on the internet.
- Soon, if not already, it will be alien to sit on a table without a computer in front of you.

Reasons and Motivation

- Our current problem is scheduling, which we wish was automated.
- Paperless environment (we must look at this seriously), beginning of each semester, we cross boxes and send back paper, and then the mess begins. .how?
- No excuses for missing/delaying assignments/meetings.
- Committee work and load has been studied, solutions proposed, nothing worked, here the solution is implicit.
- Etc.

Tools/Description

- Free, comes with other daily utilities/software on your PC.
- Example is MS Outlook that is sitting on everyone's PC waiting to be used:
 - » You cannot imagine how much of power is packed in your machines, and how much of excellent software is available that can take care of all your gadgets, from
 - play-stations to electronic language translators,
 - free telephone calls, video-conferencing, etc.
 - Msgs to mobile phones, voice presence, virtual reality, voice boxes, etc.
 - e-commerce tools, web-hosting, free hard-disk space, etc
 - And we have seen **nothing** yet. But to effectively use future technologies, we better get into line with what is available now (and is easy to use even for grandmothers).

Tools/Description

- Client only environment, its benefits and drawbacks:
 - » cheap, no maintenance,
 - » no central systems administration or network support,
 - » of course the pc must be on the NW, (and don't ever turn it off, we must always remember that the **'Network is the Computer'**).

Tools/Description

- With server, system keep a database of all individuals calendars/schedules, resources, and supports the ACKs and NAKs of invitees.
 - » Examples of Servers: MS Exchange Server, Lotus Domino Server, etc.
- At CCSE we use the MS Exchange server where all our resources are stored (<http://www.ccse.kfupm.edu.sa/ccse/ccsenw/Windows/exchange/exchange.html>).
- Accounts maybe requested from the Deans office until you have your own servers.
- It is better for each department to begin with the installation of their own server and database.
- Schedule is publishable on the Web

Calendar and its Features

- Configure work hours, work week, time zones, holidays, etc.
- Resources (rooms, laptops, in-focus, etc) and free and busy options.
- Inviting others for meetings (automatic when scheduled, needs ack).
- With server support Ack will update their calendars.
- Meeting can be cancelled and schedules automatically updated.

Calendar and its Features

- Server automatically finds suitable slot for all people (**this will force people to keep their scheduled updated**).
- Therefore, office hours, class timings, research hours etc, all be a part of the working day (including picking your baby from the kindergarten, lunch with your wife, etc). Else someone is going to get mad!
- Can have private and public schedules (like our friends shower timings).

Calendar and its Features

- They also have to take care to leave some slots open.
- Reminders can come by e-mail, beeps (.wav files are played), or pop-up windows.
- Schedule of next 20 years (or more) can be made: you can schedule your 25th wedding anniversary and your retirement party now.
- Recurring meetings such as weekly/daily/monthly, etc., can be set simply (your dear-one's birthdays, anniversary, etc).
- Can open and view other users calendars, and hide private meetings and appointments.

Tasks

- These are sort of things you put in your things-to-do list (a personal or work-related errand you want to track through completion)
 - » Example, staying in office during last day for dropping. (Note that tasks do not need any appointment, therefore they don't go into the Calendar of Outlook)
- A task can occur once or repeatedly (a recurring task).
- A recurring task can repeat at regular intervals or repeat based on the date you mark the task complete.
 - » For example, you might want to send a status report to your Dean on the last Wednesday of every month, and get a haircut when one month has passed since your last haircut.

Tasks

- Recurring tasks are added one at a time to the task list. When you mark one occurrence of the task complete, the next occurrence appears in the list.
- The entire calendar from the KFUPM Registrar can go as Tasks to be reminded and executed during the semester (may need system administrator support).
- These can also go into the Calendar of Outlook.
- Can be filled by a secretary, or read from a database.

Contacts / Address books

- The contacts folder is like your **Mailing lists**, place for **aliases (nicknames)**, or more like your **e-mail address book** and information storage for the people and businesses you want to communicate with.
- Actually you don't need to keep others business cards anymore.
- Use the contacts folder to store the e-mail address, street address, multiple phone numbers, and any other information that relates to the contact, such as birthday or anniversary date.
- You can link any Outlook item or Office document to a contact to help you track your activities associated with a contact.

Contacts / Address books

- When you enter a name or address for a contact, Outlook separates the name or address into parts and puts each part in a separate field.
- You can sort, group, or filter contacts by any part of the name or any part of the address you want.
- From a contact in your contact list, you can click a button or menu command to have Outlook address a meeting request, e-mail message, or task request to the contact.
- If you have a modem, you can also have Outlook dial the contact's phone number.
- You can have Outlook time the call and keep a record in Journal complete with the notes you take during the conversation.

What else can you do?

- You can back up your e-mail, calendar, favorites folder etc., in case you decide to move to a new machine.
- Directing mail into appropriate folders.
- Mail can be sent with different names.
- You can add all your shortcuts to outlook and run applications from there, since you will always have outlook running on your machine
- In fact anything that comes to your mind can be done (note: answers to all queries is YES, all you have to do is to read the help and figure out how).

Summary

- A note: Don't shy away from technology, you can really improve the working environment here, and thereby improve quality of life for all of us. And like all other best things in life, you will see that it is almost free.
- Demo.