

## Oracle Primavera FAQs

We have provided answers to a lot of common questions in the sections below - just click on the question to see the answer - but if you can't find your specific question listed then please call us and we'll be happy to help. If we can't give you an answer immediately we'll usually be able to provide one within 24 hours.

### General

- What is Primavera, exactly?

Primavera is not just a single product, but is now a brand name covering a suite of products focused exclusively on helping project-intensive businesses manage their entire project portfolio lifecycle, including projects of all sizes. It is estimated that projects totalling more than US\$6 trillion in value have been managed with Primavera products. Companies turn to Primavera project portfolio management solutions to help them make better portfolio management decisions, evaluate the risks and rewards associated with projects, and determine whether there are sufficient resources with the right skills to accomplish the work. These best-in-class solutions provide the project execution and control capabilities needed to successfully deliver projects on time, within budget and with the intended quality and design.

### Portfolio and Programme Management

- What is Portfolio Management?

Portfolio management is a term used by project management professionals to describe methods for analyzing and collectively managing a group of current or proposed projects based on numerous key characteristics. The fundamental objective is to determine the optimal mix and sequencing of proposed projects to best achieve the organisation's overall goals - typically expressed in terms of hard economic measures, business strategy goals, or technical strategy goals - while honouring constraints imposed by management or external real-world factors.

Typical attributes of projects being analyzed include each project's total expected cost, consumption of scarce resources (human or otherwise), expected timeline and schedule of investment, the expected nature, magnitude and timing of benefits to be realised, and relationship or inter-dependencies with other projects in the portfolio.

- What is Programme Management?

According to the Project Management Institute "a programme is a group of related projects managed in a coordinated manner to obtain benefits and control not available from managing them individually. Programmes may include elements of related work outside of the scope of the discrete projects in the programme... Some projects within a programme can deliver useful incremental benefits to the organisation before the programme itself has completed."

Bearing this in mind it can be seen that programme management necessarily operates at a level above individual projects and is focused on coordinating and prioritising of resources across projects, managing links between the projects and minimising the overall costs and risks of the programme.

- Which Primavera products offer this functionality?

Both P6 PPM and P6 EPPM provide the ability to group projects together into "portfolios", but this is simply a mechanism for simplifying access to specific groups of projects. In either product a portfolio can be defined to contain projects within a specific programme, and reports can be produced for the portfolio/programme as a whole.

There are some basic portfolio analysis functions in P6 EPPM, with dashboard reports that can be configured to display and compare key project data, but for a comprehensive portfolio management solution that you should consider Primavera Portfolio Management. This product (formerly ProSight, acquired by Primavera Inc. in 2006) can operate standalone, but comes with a direct interface to P6 EPPM that allows exchange of data in both directions.

### **Project Management**

- Is Primavera P6 the same as Oracle Projects?

No. Oracle Projects is part of the Oracle E-Business Suite. The [Primavera Gateway](#) can be used with a suitable "provider" (connector) to integrate P6 and EBS.

Integrating Oracle Projects with Primavera P6 provides a comprehensive Enterprise Project Portfolio Management solution and performs the following features:

- Brings together complex scheduling and industry-specific PPM processes with project financial management, skills and inventory management, and other enterprise solutions
  - Provides end-to-end visibility and control for improved decision making, coordination, and collaboration
  - Provides consolidated view of enterprise and project portfolio for an accurate, up-to-date view of project, resources, and financial performance
  - Creates coherent and complete solution for Enterprise PPM with ERP, database, middleware, and analytics
- What's the difference between P3E, P5 and P6?

They are basically different versions of the same product. When the replacement for P3 was first released it was known as Primavera Project Planner Enterprise, which was soon shortened to P3E. There was a v3.5 and a v4.0 of this product, before the name changed to P5 and then P6 in line with the version number. When Oracle acquired Primavera Inc. in 2008 "P6" became a brand name rather than a product version and so the next version (although sometimes referred to as P7) was officially named P6 v7. The latest products have followed normal Oracle practice in

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being "releases" rather than "versions", and were called P6 R8.0 through R8.3. The latest software is P6 R8.3.2.

- What's the difference between P6 and Primavera Contractor?

Primavera Contractor is Primavera's entry level project management product, designed to allow contractors to exchange planning data with clients using P6 EPPM or PPM for their project management. It offers a similar level of functionality to Microsoft Project but can generate the .xer files typically required for bid submissions on major engineering and construction projects. More information on Primavera Contractor is available [here](#). You may also find this [feature comparison chart](#) useful.

- What are the differences between P6 EPPM and P6 PPM?

The most obvious difference is the architecture. P6 PPM is a traditional client/server Windows application that runs on a PC (physical or virtual) and stores its data in a relational database (Oracle or SQL Server). P6 EPPM is a 3 tier web application whose client runs in a web browser. The middle tier runs on a web application server (WebLogic or WebSphere) and communicates with the database. Since R8.1 all administrative tasks are managed via the web interface, although a Windows "optional client" is also available to allow users without web access to work with the software. In R8.2 this desktop client is identical for both PPM and EPPM, but when connected to an EPPM database none of the administrative functions are available.

There are also major differences between the reporting capabilities of the two versions. P6 PPM continues to run the traditional reports found in earlier versions of the product, while P6 EPPM also uses Oracle's BI Publisher to create web based reports that are viewed via dashboards in the browser. It also provides connectivity to other reporting tools - see the Reporting and Business Intelligence section below for more on this.

The final major difference is connectivity. P6 EPPM ships with a Java API that allows the development of custom interfaces to other products, and a Web Services interface layered on top of the API. The product is also designed to integrate with Oracle's Business Process Management toolset. In contrast, P6 PPM only offers the SDK, a desktop interface that exposes the underlying database as an ODBC data source. (Note: As of R8.3, P6 Professional ships with a Java API as well)

You may find this [feature comparison chart](#) useful.

- Can you configure P6 PPM as a multiuser system?

Although the most common use for P6 PPM is as a "standalone" installation (see below) on a laptop or single PC, it is perfectly possible to configure it so that multiple networked PCs access a single server based database. If you do not require the web based dashboards and integration capabilities of P6 EPPM this may well be your most suitable configuration.

- Which project management product is right for me?

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There is no easy answer to this, as a lot depends on your current IT landscape and precisely how you wish to make use of your planning tool. If you wish to integrate P6 seamlessly with other applications then it is likely that PPM will not be able to deliver what you require due to the withdrawal of the API in R8.1. We will happily advise on the pros and cons of deploying either version in your environment.

- What is a "standalone" copy of P6?

This typically refers to a copy of P6 where the database and client application are running on the same machine - often a laptop. Prior to the acquisition of Primavera Inc. by Oracle, this was a standard option in the installer which performed a hands-off installation of a database server (originally Borland Interbase, then SQL Server Express) on to the machine in question as part of the process. With the release of P6 v7 the database was changed to Oracle XE and then at P6 R8.0 the standalone option was withdrawn. It now exists again - from P6 R8.1 PPM onwards, you are able to select a standalone installation that uses Oracle 10g XE as the back end.

The advantage of this type of installation is that you do not have to have previously installed a database on the machine, as one is provided free of charge. There are restrictions associated with Oracle XE though - it is limited to 4GB of data, will only use up to 1GB of any available memory, and will only execute on 1 CPU core. If any of these are likely to cause problems you should use a full copy of Oracle or SQL Server to store your data. Note that that P6 R8.x **will not work** with SQL Server Express unless you are upgrading an existing standalone system based on an earlier version of P6.

- Can I still purchase P3 and/or SureTrak?

Unfortunately not - they were withdrawn from sale at the end of 2010. The nearest equivalents from the current product range are Contractor or P6 PPM.

### **Business Intelligence and Reporting**

- What reports come with Primavera P6?

Primavera P6 PPM ships with a library of text reports which can be scheduled to run as a batch. You can also develop custom reports and print out graphics such as Gantt Charts or resource histograms from the appropriate view.

While Primavera P6 EPPM still allows you to run traditional batch reports, it also offers an additional library of reports designed to operate within Oracle BI Publisher via a Restricted Usage Licence (RUL) for BI Publisher. These can be triggered on demand from within the web client or scheduled to run periodically, with their results available for view within the web client. If you want to make any changes to these reports then you will have to purchase a Full Usage Licence (FUL) of BI Publisher to allow you to develop your own reports.

- What is the Primavera Reporting Database?

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There is a large amount of data displayed within P6 that is calculated on the fly and not stored in the project management database (PPMDB or EPPMDB). As a result Oracle introduced the concept of a reporting database external to the project management database. This is optimised for reporting purposes and contains fields storing calculated values. In versions prior to R8.1 the creation and updating of the reporting database required an administrator to set up several additional databases and configure standalone scripts to carry out the ETL (extract, transform, load) operations. From P6 EPPM R8.1 the reporting database schema forms part of the standard EPPMDB database, and the scheduled publishing of data is administered from within the product.

Once the publishing of data to the reporting database has been configured, any external reporting tool (e.g. PCF's QEI Management Reporting or Crystal Reports) can be used to extract data from it.

- What is Primavera Analytics?

Primavera Analytics is an add-on product for Primavera P6 EPPM which consists of a star schema data warehouse and a set of prebuilt reports and queries that run within Oracle Business Intelligence products. The data warehouse is fed from the EPPM reporting database and can be also connected to other BI applications.

### **Risk Analysis**

- What's the difference between Primavera Risk Analysis and PertMaster?
- Does Primavera P6 contain any risk analysis functionality?

### **Contract Management**

- What does Primavera Contract Management do?

This product has always had a confusing name, as the one thing it does not do is manage contracts. It is actually a system designed for teams managing construction projects (contracts) which enables them to collaborate, track issues and costs, monitor contractor performance and manage documents.

The current version is a web application built on top of Oracle's WebLogic application server and Business Intelligence Publisher reporting tool. It can be linked to external document management systems, and can exchange cost and schedule data with Primavera P6 EPPM and JD Edwards.

### **Implementation, Interfacing and Integration**

- Can P6 be interfaced to an ERP system?

Absolutely, this is very common. The [Primavera Gateway](#) ships with a connector for SAP as standard, and connectors for other ERP systems are also available.

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- Can P6 be interfaced to an Asset Management system?

This is a fairly common requirement and the [Primavera Gateway](#) can be used to deliver this integration. Connectors are available for common Asset Management Systems like MAXIMO.

- I need to develop a bespoke interface to P6 - what options do I have?

If you only require a desktop solution then you can use the SDK, which exposes a proportion of the data within the project management database (including calculated fields) as an ODBC Data Source. You can then write code in any environment that supports communication via ODBC to exchange data with P6. The SDK is available for both PPM and EPPM systems.

More complex integrations are possible using the API. This is a set of Java classes that expose the business logic and objects and makes them available for inclusion in any Java application. From v6 to R8.0 the API was available for all installations; as of R8.1 the API was limited to EPPM only. This decision was reversed at R8.3 and is once again available for both variants of P6. EPPM systems.

It is also possible to make use of the [Web Services](#) interface to P6; this is layered on top of the API and provides interoperability with any other applications that make use of Web Services. For example, the Oracle Business Process Management suite can be used in combination with event-driven messages from P6 to develop standard business processes for project approval, initiation and update.

Note that use of the SDK incurs no extra licencing costs, while the API and Web Services require additional licences.

### Training

We provide experienced trainers who can conduct online and classroom training on Primavera P6. If you have a need to learn Primavera then you can send us an email at [trainings@paliumtrainings.biz](mailto:trainings@paliumtrainings.biz) and we will be happy to respond.