

# Controlling “Scope Creep” In Information Systems Projects: A Data Flow Diagram Approach

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## Abstract

*Recent interviews with Information Systems (IS) professionals have uncovered some of the challenges in managing IS projects. Pressures to complete systems in short amounts of time often present project scope problems. Some consultants have reported that many projects are generally given a brief planning and design period followed by extensive development time to meet due dates. This methodology often requires several project revisions, extra development time and increased costs before customers agree on and accept a completed system.*

*In support of these findings, Olson (2004) states that any IS project can be assessed in three dimensions: cost, quality and time. He further argues that most projects will meet any two of the dimensions, but very few meet all three. Our findings suggest that most projects meet due date and cost dimensions initially, but customers generally question system quality leading to changes in scope. At issue is whether the system developer decreased quality to meet the due date, or whether the customer has actually added features to the system.*

*The analysis of data flows has long been accepted by IS researchers for designing systems. Unfortunately, many IS professionals are not applying the approach to projects due to time constraints. We argue that applying data flow analysis with Project Management techniques can reduce revision time and further define project scope. We show that primitive, or almost primitive IS processes correspond to project development tasks. In turn, programs such as MS Project can be used to plan, track and manage project scope and costs.*