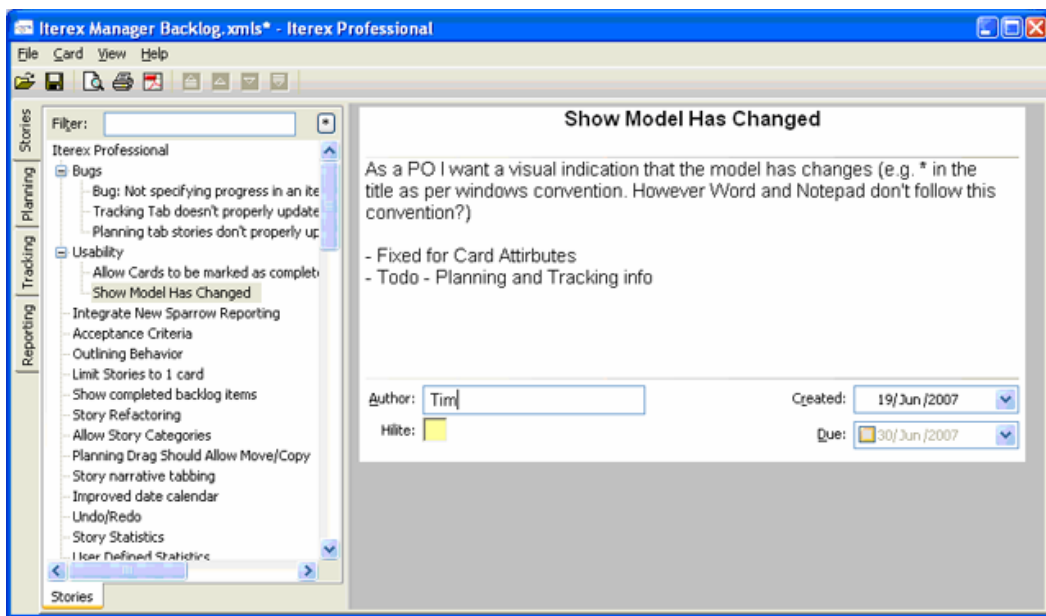# IterEx

Product: Iterex Professional
Author: Tim Mackinnon
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License: Professional
Dialect: Dolphin Smalltalk 6
Keywords: Agile, Story Cards, Planning, Velocity, Dolphin Smalltalk
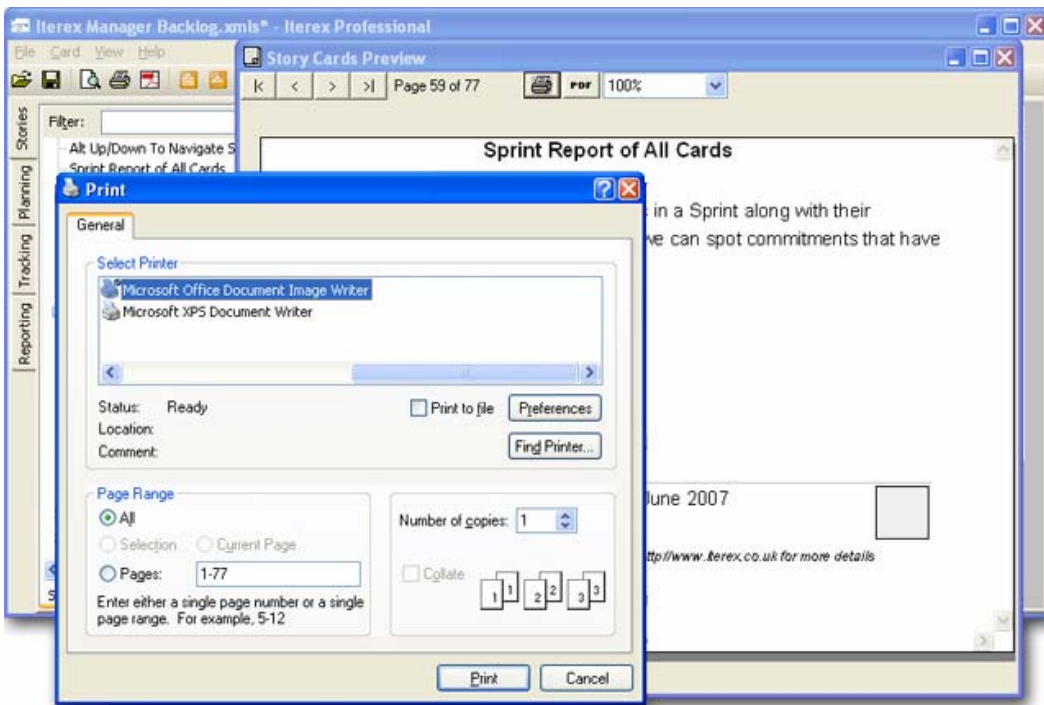
URL: http://www.iterex.co.uk/links/professional.htm

Iterex Professional –
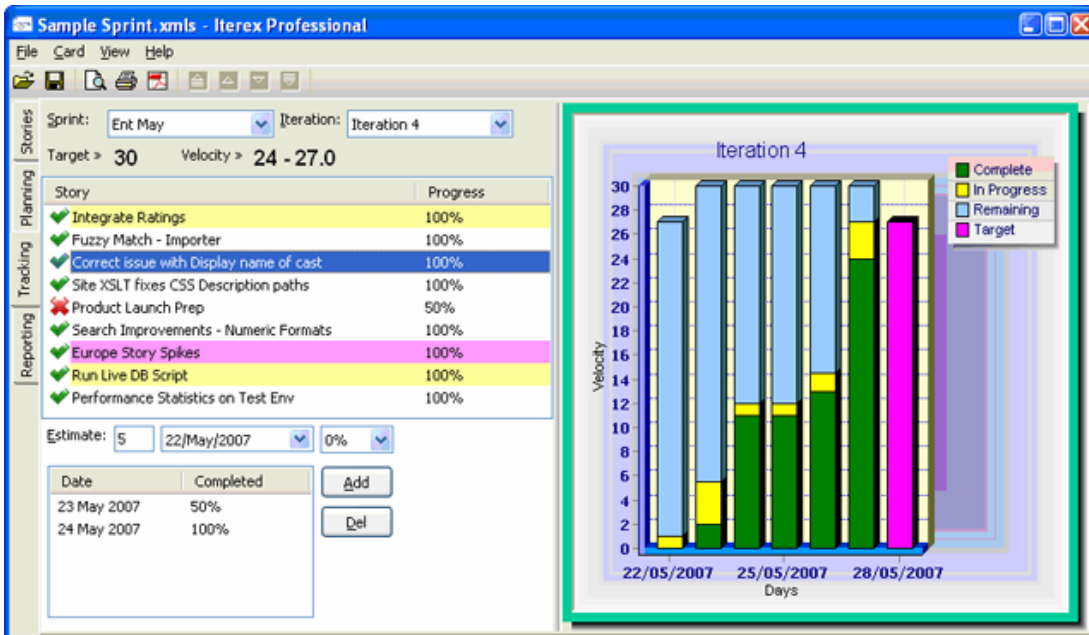### Supporting simplicity with a small touch of technology

Iterex Professional is a Dolphin Smalltalk application that helps teams split their ideas into small meaningful pieces for easy estimation and progress tracking. It provides a rich native Windows interface letting users quickly enter ideas without breaking their flow of thought, and produces vivid tracking charts for group reflection. The Iterex vision is an agile outliner for efficiently tracking the progress of ideas from inception to final completion, whilst preserving simplicity.
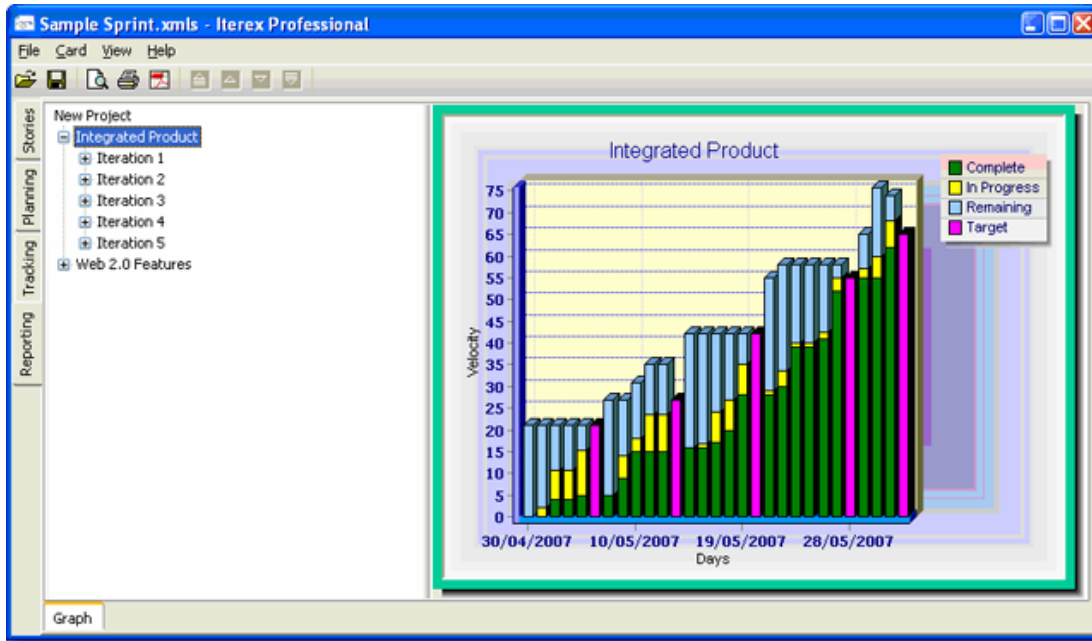

Importantly, Iterex doesn't try to replace the idea of paper story cards described by Beck/Cunningham - in fact one of its main features is that it prints any of its items onto 6x4" index cards which can be used in any type of planning activity. We actively encourage users to print out cards and physically use them for more effective planning sessions.

Once cards are entered into the product, teams can quickly organise them into iterations of work, while recording estimates. Iterex adds up these estimates and shows them against measured progress so that the team can prioritize cards and quickly drag them around to get a balanced workload that is likely to be successful. As work is completed, users record a simple completion status which updates an indicative graph of progress so far. A green bar shows the progression of completed items, a yellow bar the amount of work still unfinished, and a blue bar the current remaining scope.

These highly visual graphs can be printed out to help the team focus its efforts on completion. There are also graphs that show historical progress over the course of many iterations.

It doesn't look like Smalltalk

By leveraging the native support of Dolphin, the powerful Smalltalk technology is hidden from the end user – it looks like a polished application breaking the mould that Smalltalk is dated. The final .exe also easily integrates with the Windows OS, allowing projects to be double clicked for easy editing.

Seamless ActiveX for quick turnaround

High developer productivity was also possible as not all components of Iterex had to be written from scratch. Dolphin provides excellent integration to native ActiveX controls and Iterex was able to quickly integrate with the sophisticated Steema TChart graphing library and an off the shelf reporting component.

Leveraging the Smalltalk community

Iterex also draws from the experience of the active Dolphin and Smalltalk communities and makes use of several popular libraries. Sixx is used to save models in XML, allowing users to make use of XSLT or XPath tools. It has also enabled the internal Iterex model to grow iteratively with conversion hooks that have enabled an easy schema migration. Feedback to Sixx's authors from a real project has also helped them improve the library and add features that benefit everyone.

Iterex also makes use of a Dolphin user contribution allowing resources to be easily bound into the final product executable. The US ImageChanging ResourceStripper simplifies deployment by automatically including .ico and .jpg files into the final stripped image, resulting in a neat and compact final executable.

Iterative Development and ongoing features

Iterex is still an iterative work in progress, and is currently in beta status. As such we use the tool to manage its own backlog of items and have many additional new features and polish.