

# Lehnert Computer Services

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Ask the Teacher – November, 2005  
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**Question:** How can I see where my project went wrong?

**Answer:** This is a short question with a long answer. MS Project is great at showing you this but you have to give it some information to work with first before it can give you the answer.

1. **Set a Baseline** – You can set a baseline for the entire project or a range of selected tasks in the project. Most project managers I have worked with don't have the project fully elaborated at the time the project starts but could very well have a phase of the project completed. Hint: It would be very helpful to end the phase with a milestone task. Set the baseline by phase (range of selected tasks). It is amazing how much more information the system will give you just for setting the baseline.
2. You must be **tracking your project**. Remember when you track by percent complete, the percent is duration not work if you are using the tracking toolbar buttons. Your best bet if you are not entering hours is to use the "Update tasks" button on the tracking toolbar so you can enter start and end dates of the tasks. This is essential to see "where did I go wrong".
3. After you have entered your tracking information, you must **reschedule the uncompleted work**. If you have set a baseline for a phase, you will want to select the tasks of that phase. Then go to Tools → Tracking → Update project. Use the second option to reschedule the uncompleted work. Enter in the reschedule date – the system will reschedule the work the day after the date you select. Then click OK. Your project will move up the work based on the task relationships, constraints, deadlines and resource availability.
4. Now to answer your question – go to the **detail Gantt view** (Views → More Views → Detail Gantt). You will see at the left of the Gantt bars the number of days or hours that your tasks have slipped. It is a great view to see where did I start going wrong and how much time do I need to pick up to get back on schedule. You will also see lines with day or hours on the right side of the Gantt bars – these will represent slack – the amount of time the task can slip without effecting the ending date of the project. If you are only working on a phase of the project, the ending milestone for the phase will represent how close you are to meeting the deadline of the phase.