

COMA Tool

Collaborative Modeling Architecture

Version 4.0

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Supported by:

FLANDERS DC
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Table of Contents

1	Requirements	3
2	The COMA Command Bar	4
3	Managing COMA Sessions.....	5
4	Developing proposals.....	7
5	Evaluating the Proposals.....	9
6	Selecting the Base Model.....	12
7	Reusing Parts of Existing Models.....	14
8	Technical Details	15

1 Requirements

The COMA tool runs under Windows XP, 2000, Vista and Windows 7.

It requires that MS Visio 2007 is installed.

It requires LAN access to a shared network folder.

2 The COMA Command Bar

On startup of Visio, and if you have not already done so, you are asked to enter your user name. Enter your name, e.g. Peter, if you work alone. If you work together with someone on the same computer then enter both names as one, e.g. Peter+Jan.

This name is stored in the file *user.ini* in your *My Documents* folder. On subsequent startups you are no longer asked but greeted with “Welcome, <user name>”.

At startup the normal Visio startup screen is shown. In addition you will find a new command bar that contains the buttons for working with COMA.

The command bar offers the commands *Create COMA session*, *Join COMA session*, *Propose model*, *Open proposal*, *Score proposal*, and *Display scores*.

3 Managing COMA Sessions



Create COMA session

This command creates a new COMA session. The session creator also becomes the session facilitator. The facilitator is the only one who can display the scores of the models (see below) and other participants joining the session cannot become facilitators.

To create a session you first have to select a COMA folder. This folder should be accessible to all session participants. It typically resides on a shared network folder. If M: is the shared network folder then M:\COMA could be the COMA folder.

After that you are asked to supply the name of the model that is supposed to be developed in the session. The name of the model is at the same time also the name of the session. If you are about to model the processing of an order, an appropriate name would be *ProcessOrder*.

The system creates a folder with the name of the model/session in the COMA folder and sets your status to facilitator.



Join COMA session

This command allows a user to connect to an existing COMA session. It assumes that such a session has already been created by the facilitator and it implies that you get the status of a non-facilitator. Your activities are therefore limited to those allowed for participants. So you cannot display the scores, for example.

You are first asked to select the COMA folder. Please ask the facilitator where to find this folder. It is typically the name of a network share followed by \COMA, e.g. M:\COMA. Make sure that you select the right folder. Otherwise you will not be able to join the session.

After selecting the folder you are requested to enter the name of the model that is supposed to be developed during the session. This name is at the same time also the name of the session. Please ask the facilitator for the name of the model/session. Make sure that you enter upper and lower case letters in the right way as the name is case-sensitive.

If you did everything right you will be notified that you are connected to the session. From now on you can work together with the facilitator and the other participants connected to the session.

4 Developing proposals

The first step in a COMA session will typically be that you develop your own model. Please ask the facilitator which diagram type is to be used for the session, e.g. a BPMN Diagram, an EPC Diagram, a UML Activity Diagram, or the like. Open a new diagram of the respective type and start drawing your model.

When you are finished you can first store your model locally in a folder of your choice. Then you make the model available to the group by proposing it (see next page).



Propose model

When you click this command you make a proposal to the group to use your model as a base model for further work. Your model will be evaluated by the group together with the proposals made by the other group members.

Please make sure that your model is open and active before you press the button. You will receive a notification about whether the operation was successful or not.

If it was successful your model is stored in the session folder under the following name: *<ModelName>.<UserName>.vsd*. It can now be opened by other group members.

5 Evaluating the Proposals

After the proposals have been developed, there is usually an evaluation of these proposals. The evaluation is performed by the peers, i.e. by the same people who developed the models. This means that you will be asked to look at the proposals of the other group members and give them a score. After the scoring round an average score for each proposal will be determined and the best proposal is used for further development.

Please ask the facilitator how scoring is supposed to be done. The score is a value between 0 and 10. The facilitator needs to determine on what basis the score is awarded, e.g. for the completeness of the model, its correctness, its understandability and so on. You also need to know when to give a score of 0, when a 5 and when a 10.



Open proposal

Before you can score a proposal you first have to open it to be able to take a look at it. The function *Open proposal* will allow you to do that. When you click it a file dialog will open and show you the proposals that have been created. You select one of them, e.g. the first, and then the respective model will be opened in Visio and you can inspect it.

Make sure that you consider the proposal in the light of the criteria that have been given to you by the facilitator. When you are sure about the score that you want to give you can proceed to the next page (*Score proposal*).

After that you open the next proposal in the list until all proposals have been scored. Consider that you are not allowed to score your own proposal!



Score proposal

When you have made up your mind about the appropriate score for the proposal you can click on *Score proposal*. A popup window will open containing a slider that is initially in the middle (score of 5) but that can be moved in the range of 0 to 10.

Move it to the score that you plan to award the proposal and click on OK. If you made a mistake the first time you can click on *Score proposal* again and give it a new score. The new score will overwrite the old one.

6 Selecting the Base Model

When all participants have logged their scores the facilitator can look at the average scores for each model (see next page). She can also choose to show these scores to the participants via a beamer. This is usually done to encourage a competitive spirit and to increase transparency.

The facilitator usually takes the proposal with the highest score as a base model. The base model is not the final model. It is just the proposal that is used in the further development of the model. This further development typically consists of a consolidation round where the participants have the chance to request changes to the model.

In this round you can suggest issues that are considered in your own proposal but not in the base model. This way we make sure that all issues are taken care of even if the respective proponents have not won the competition.

The selection of the base model involves that the facilitator opens the winning proposal and stores it under a new file name, e.g. *ProcessOrderVI.vsd*. Please ensure that the file name contains only one dot to avoid confusion with the names that are given by the system.



Display scores

This button can only be clicked by the facilitator. If a participant does so an error message will be shown. If the facilitator clicks it the average scores of all proposals will be displayed in a popup window with three columns.

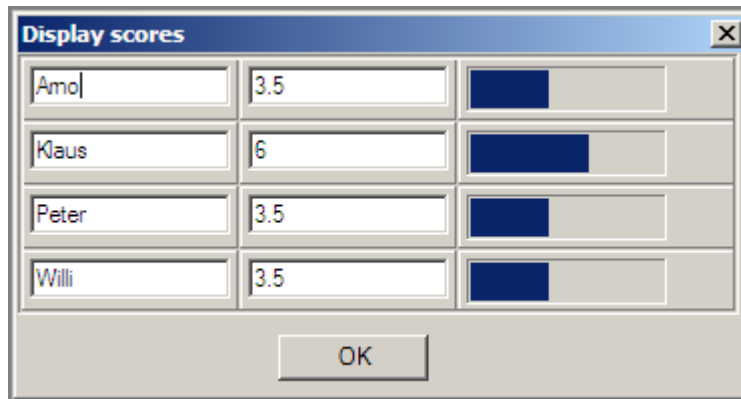


Figure 1. Scores window

The first column shows the name of the proponent, the second the numerical score, and the third a progress bar with corresponding length.

7 Reusing Parts of Existing Models

The COMA tool supports the reuse of parts of existing models from other diagrams, in particular from open proposals by other group members. You can reuse only a part of the source model or the whole as you see fit. The mechanism used for this is the conventional copy-and-paste routine. For this purpose the modeler first goes to the respective diagram he wants to copy from. There the desired area to be reused is selected. This can be done in one of two ways:

1. Use the mouse to mark a rectangular area in the usual way. All elements in this area are automatically selected.
2. Hold the *Shift* button pressed and click on the desired elements one by one. Do this only for the nodes. The arcs between them will be included automatically.

Now copy the selected elements, go to your own diagram and paste them there.

8 Technical Details

This chapter describes the effects of certain tool functions on the *COMA folder*. In the following we will assume that this folder is **M:\COMA** and that the name of the model (and the session) is “**ProcessOrder**”. We further assume that the name of the user is *Peter*.

Propose model:

The system will save the active document in a file named:

COMA folder\sessionName\modelName.userName.vsd

For example:

M:\COMA\ProcessOrder\ProcessOrder.Peter.vsd

Score proposal:

The system will store the score as a string in a file named:

COMA folder\sessionName\modelName.proponentName.userName.score

For example:

M:\COMA\ProcessOrder\ProcessOrder.Klaus.Peter.score

Observe that this means that Peter has scored Klaus' model.