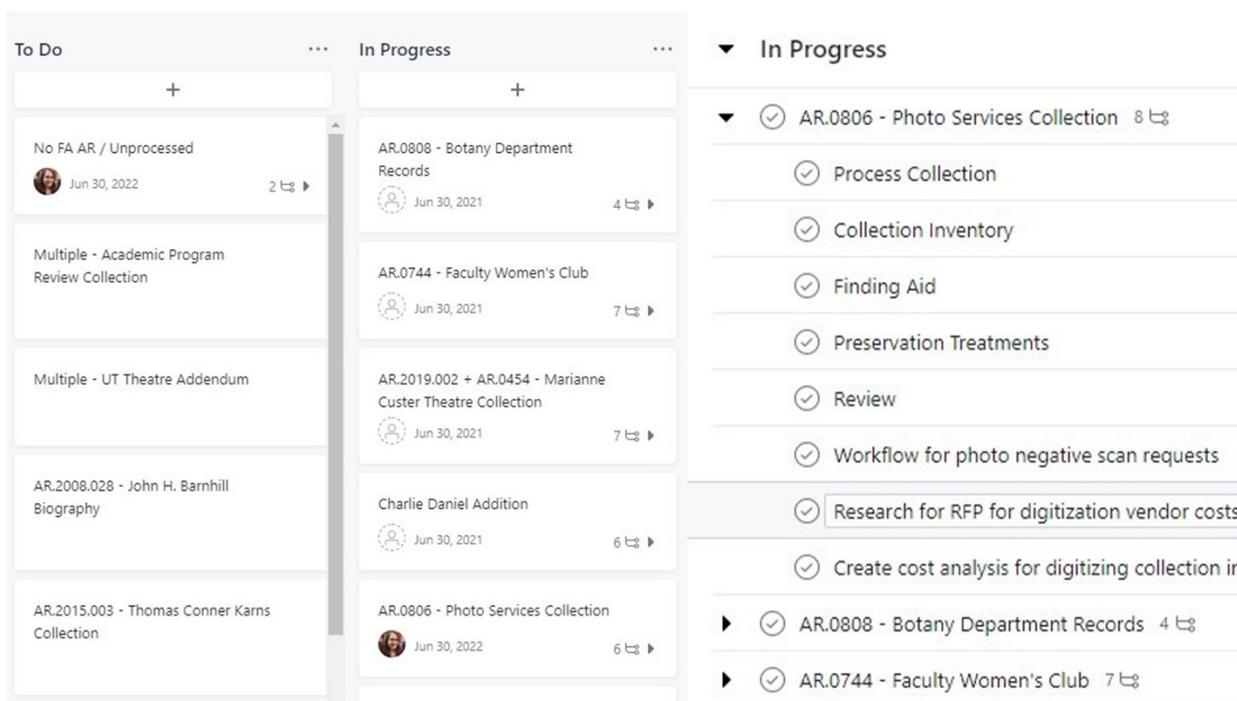


Asana

<https://asana.com/home>

Reviewed by Becky Briggs Becker, Editor-at-Large

Asana is one of the oldest task management web applications available, released as a free product in 2011 as the result of two former Facebook engineers coming together to create a productivity and collaboration tool to track multiple projects simultaneously.¹ The two engineers' company introduced additional subscription-based premium content in 2012.² Debuting the same year as [Trello](#) and predating [Airtable](#) and [Microsoft Planner](#), Asana offers both the [Kanban](#) board workflow visualization as well as project views that represent the standard to-do list, a calendar, and a timeline.

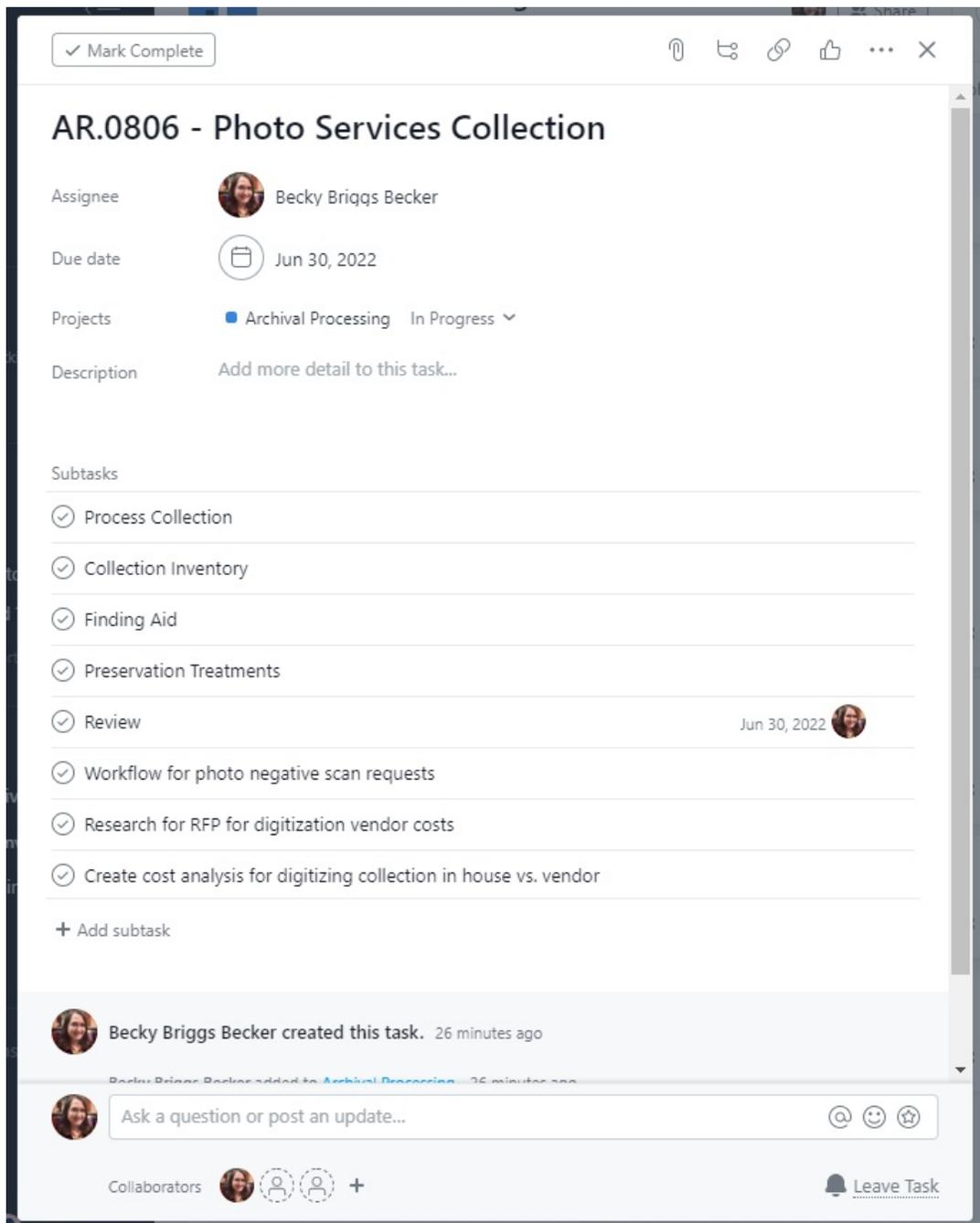


The image shows two screenshots of the Asana workspace. The left screenshot displays the 'Board view' with three columns: 'To Do', 'In Progress', and 'Done'. The 'To Do' column contains five tasks, including 'No FA AR / Unprocessed' and 'Multiple - Academic Program Review Collection'. The 'In Progress' column contains four tasks, including 'AR.0808 - Botany Department Records' and 'AR.0744 - Faculty Women's Club'. The right screenshot displays the 'List view' of the 'In Progress' column, showing a list of tasks with checkboxes and progress indicators, including 'AR.0806 - Photo Services Collection' and 'AR.0808 - Botany Department Records'.

Screenshots of two standard tabs in the Asana Workspace: Board view (left) and List view.

¹ Jessica Guynn, "Facebook Co-founder Dustin Moskovitz Unveils New Company, Asana," *Los Angeles Times*, November 2, 2011, <https://latimesblogs.latimes.com/technology/2011/11/facebook-co-founder-dustin-moskovitz-unveils-new-company.html>.

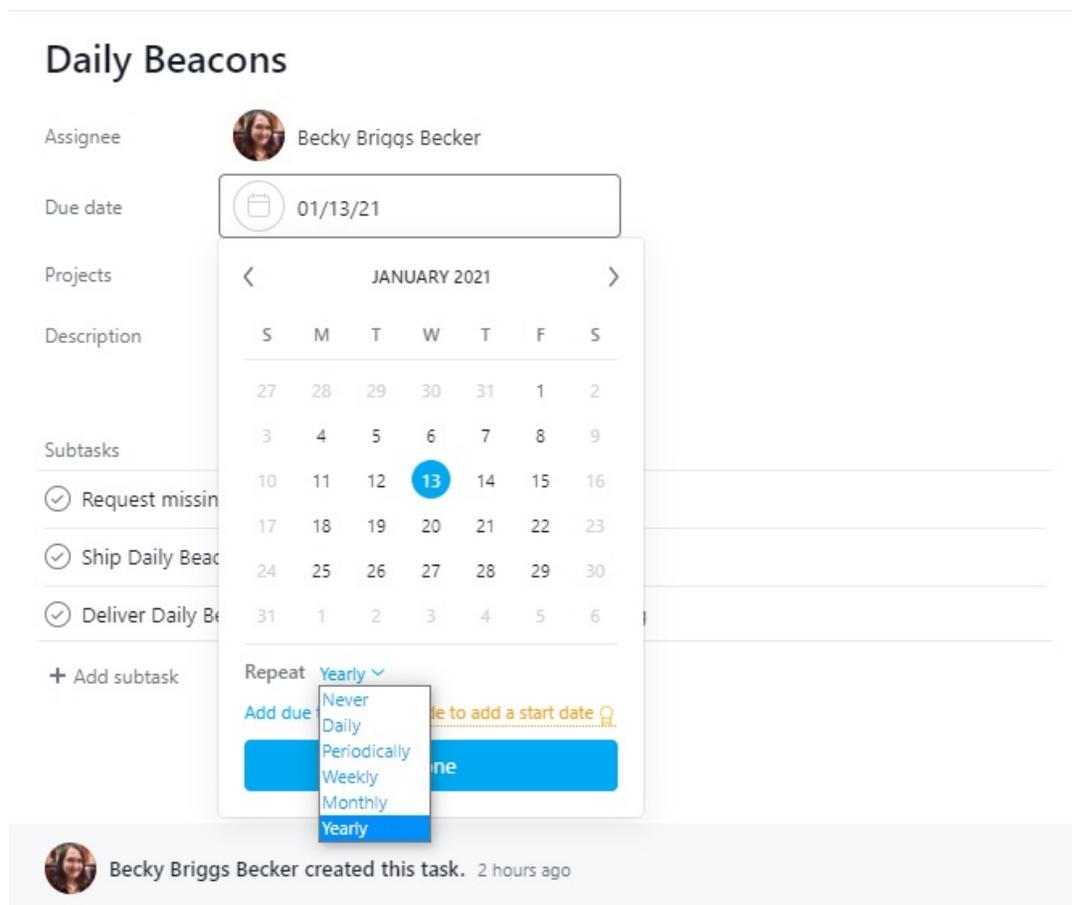
² Dustin Moskovitz and Justin Rosenstein, "Stories From Our First Year," Asana Blog, November 12, 2012, <https://blog.asana.com/2012/11/asana-first-anniversary/>.



Screenshot of a Task card with Subtasks.

Basic Asana accounts work similarly to Trello and Planner. From the main menu, or “Workspace,” a user can create a “Project” board to organize “Tasks,” or cards that specify project status, due date, description, comments, and a checklist called “Subtasks.” Users have options to manipulate Tasks, such as duplicating or merging duplicate Tasks together, adding Tasks to a different Project, or promoting or demoting a Task to a Project or a Subtask, respectively. They can attach files to a

Task with a file size limit up to 100 megabytes per file from their computer. Like Trello, Asana users can also create Tasks via email and attach files using this method. Asana also encourages integration with other third-party apps such as cloud storage apps, GitHub, Zapier, Trello, and Slack. While Asana does not permit more than one user of the same Team to be assigned an entire Task card like Planner, the two apps both enable Team members to be assigned to individual checklist items. One major difference between Asana and other project management apps is the ability to set recurring due dates for Tasks. Users can set annual, monthly, weekly, or daily due dates and, with email notifications enabled, can receive reminders about the due dates. While recurring due dates can only be assigned to Tasks but not Subtasks, this feature is especially useful for archivists with seasonal tasks to track, such as those related to collection development, donor relations, and statistics.



Screenshot of a Task card with an annual recurring due date. This Task—to mail student newspapers to the state archives for microfilming—occurs yearly.

Basic Asana accounts have access to the Asana [Guide](#), which provides an online help webpage. It includes step-by-step tutorials and full feature documentation; a community forum to ask other Asana users about known issues or how to use Asana for specific projects; and support articles and a customer service contact form. Asana also created instant communities called “Organizations,” which group users

with specific email domains together. For example, Asana automatically assigned my account, tied to my work email, to my university's Organization. All Teams within an Organization default to "request to join" permissions, providing a layer of security for Workspace managers. Users can belong to different Workspaces and Organizations and switch between them. However, users cannot view projects from different Workspaces and Organizations simultaneously. Student groups have access to a free Premium workspace for six months. Other university departments and organizations will need to subscribe to Premium, and without a higher education discount.

Asana advertises its Premium subscription service by displaying features behind a paywall. Most notably are the Timeline and Dashboard views, which are shown as tabs on the upper left portion of the Project display along with the three available views for Basic accounts. While there is a free trial, once it ends all the features associated with the Premium account disappear. These features include form creation, advanced search, data reporting, custom fields and templates, workflow rules, private Teams and Projects, Task start dates, and training opportunities. The Premium subscription costs \$10.99 per month, the Business subscription is \$24.99 a month, and Enterprise pricing is available upon request.³ Preservation technician Amanda Richards tried the Premium free trial to experiment with tracking archival and manuscript collections for preservation treatment in her lab. Asana's features, such as assigning monthly recurring Tasks, creating checklists and forms, and using and adapting templates, appealed to her needs for tracking special collections and general circulating collections projects. She expressed limitations with the app, such as the inability to assign Tasks to more than one person; the difficulty to locate files attached to cards; and the inability to use features such as start dates once they are locked behind a paywall.⁴

Overall, a basic Asana account benefits a smaller institution with up to fifteen employees assigned to a Team membership at a time. If a larger institution does not already subscribe to productivity software such as Microsoft Office 365, then an Asana Premium account might be better suited for those who desire additional features not found in other project management apps, such as creating forms and recurring tasks.

³ "Pricing," Asana, accessed September 28, 2020, <https://asana.com/pricing>.

⁴ Amanda Richards, interview by author, Knoxville, Tenn., September 6, 2019.