

Interview with Prof Semih Bilgen

UYMS'16 Program Committee Chair



Interviewed by İpek Sahra Özgüler
Istanbul, Turkey

Semih Bilgen is a 1973 graduate of METU Electrical and Electronics Engineering Department. He got his MS degree in Computer Science from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in 1976 and his PhD in Electrical Engineering from Manitoba University in 1982. He was with the Department of Management in METU from 1976 to 1984, and with the Electrical and Electronics Engineering Department of the same university from 1984 to 2014, with a brief interlude in 1992-93 in the Eastern Mediterranean University in Cyprus. His research interests have been in information systems, software engineering and in computer networking. Currently he is with the Computer Engineering Department of Yeditepe University in Istanbul. He has provided consulting service for many public and private organizations. A detailed CV may be accessed at: cse.yeditepe.edu.tr/~sbilgen

İpek Sahra Özgüler (Özgüler): Good morning Professor Bilgen. Can you give some information to PM World Journal readers about the significance of UYMS'16?

Semih Bilgen (Bilgen): Yes. I sincerely thank you for giving me this opportunity.

The National Software Engineering Symposium (UYMS) to be held in Çanakkale on October 24-26 this year has been attracting a widening audience, not only from software engineering circles in the narrow technical sense, but also from project managers, information systems specialists, and management specialists, coming from

a much broader spectrum of professionals and researchers in software-related endeavours.

UYMS started in 2003 as a bi-annual symposium, but due to increasing demand and participation, it has been organized annually since 2011. This year will be the 10th reunion. It started as essentially an academic affair, and has now become a major get-together for researchers, practitioners and advanced users.

I don't think it is an exaggeration to say that today almost no profession is completely free from the influences of information technologies in general and software engineering in particular. The symposium provides a venue for awareness about current technologies and the research agenda at a national as well as global scale.

Özgüler: Does UYMS'16 have any special significance for professionals and researchers of project management?

Bilgen: I would definitely respond in the affirmative: First of all, project management is, today, one of the most information-intensive, hence software-intensive professions at a global scale. That means recent developments in software technologies definitely reflect on project management approaches and techniques.

Secondly, but not less importantly, project management is one, if not the most significant, component of software engineering. While some professionals as well as authors may still see software engineering as simply a sophisticated term for advanced programming, a brief look at any respectable software engineering journal, academic program or professional organization will reveal that the software product is only as good as the organization by and process through which it is developed. More precisely, consistent product quality cannot be achieved without process maturity, in all industries, but more so in the software industry.

We all know that since the 1990's, the concept of process quality has become central to the practice and theory of software engineering, and this directly connects to the realm of project management. Today, we are experiencing the integration of project management with software engineering in the application of agile techniques not only in the narrow sense of software development but more commonly in the planning, design and implementation of large scale integrated systems projects that may involve varying levels of low level program development.

In short, yes, UYMS is posing an ever stronger appeal for the project management community.

Özgüler: Does this mean that not only software engineers but people from other disciplines are also welcome in UYMS'16?

Bilgen: Very much so. In fact, even though the term "software engineering" is more than 40 years old, many professionals from a diverse spectrum of engineering, management and various other professional backgrounds are currently practising in the discipline. This is perhaps due to the fact that the academic community has been slow

in responding to the educational needs of the IT revolution that has been taking place in the last forty years. Computer Science and Computer Engineering departments have also lagged in supplying a sufficient number of trained professionals. It is well known (e.g. recent Gartner reports) that until and possibly beyond 2020, formal training programs in computer engineering and software engineering will not be able to close the gap between the global demand and supply for IT specialists. This definitely includes software engineers. So we need individuals trained in many different disciplines to adapt to software engineering professionalism. Venues such as UYMS provide opportunities for fruitful interaction among such individuals.

Özgüler: How is the participation from outside of Turkey?

Bilgen: Despite having hosted renowned international keynote speakers, UYMS has from the beginning been a national symposium, and as such, an overwhelming majority of contributors have been Turkish, or at least Turkish-speaking. An abstract in English accompanies all submitted papers, but the language of the symposium is Turkish. This, I expect, will continue, at least in the near future. Nevertheless, non-Turkish-speaking contributors are definitely welcome, as their participation certainly does enrich the contents of the presentations as well as enhancing networking possibilities among professionals and academicians alike.

Özgüler: How does the refereeing process work?

Bilgen: All contributions except the invited keynote speech are strictly peer-reviewed. Typically three anonymous referees from the program committee are assigned to each submitted paper and they are expected to review the paper as to its relevance, rigour, originality and quality of presentation. Each year, extended and revised versions of five best papers selected by the program committee are published in an international peer-reviewed journal.

Özgüler: Are contributed papers expected to present results of original research exclusively?

Bilgen: No. While such contributions are definitely solicited and more than welcome, we include in our programs reports on work-in-progress as well as on industrial experience worth sharing with colleagues. As long as papers do not simply recount the history of yet another application of well-known techniques or tools, we tend to encourage submissions on lessons-learned from industrial real-life cases.

Özgüler: Can you summarize this year's symposium calendar?

Bilgen: Your readers can access detailed information at: [//uyms.comu.edu.tr](http://uyms.comu.edu.tr). Proposals for special sessions and educational seminars will be accepted until May 2, abstracts for papers may be submitted until June 3 and full papers must be received by June 10. Acceptance announcements are scheduled for September 2, the deadline for early registration and for receiving accepted papers in printable format is September 16. The symposium will take place on October 24-26.

Özgüler: Thank you for your time.

Bilgen: I thank you for the opportunity to reach the readers of PM World Journal. We are looking forward to seeing you and your readers in Çanakkale in October.

About the Interviewer



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İpek Sahra Özgüler graduated from the Istanbul University with the Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Engineering and from Middle East Technical University with an MSc degree in Software Management. She became a certified PMP in January, 2012 and a certified SCRUM Master in 2014. She works as international correspondent at PMWJ. Before joining PMWJ, she worked for global multinational companies and leading local companies such as Coca Cola, Deloitte, Turkcell Superonline, Havelsan and TAV IT. Over the years, she has gained extensive experience in managing various medium and large scale projects, programs and portfolios.

Her article named “When I Decided to Develop Multi Processing Project Manager’s System” was published in the book “*A Day in the Life of a Project Manager*”. She has published several articles in the *PM World Journal* and one in PMI’s *PM Network* magazine. İpek is actively involved in sailing, writing and discovering new cultures. She can be contacted at ipeksahra@gmail.com.