

## **Five Disruptive Trends affecting Projects and Project Management, maybe more – and Welcome to the June 2017 PMWJ**

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Welcome to the June 2017 edition of the **PM World Journal** (PMWJ). This 59<sup>th</sup> edition contains **35** original articles, papers and other works by **44** different authors in **19** different countries. News articles about projects and project management around the world are also included. We are proud of the range and diversity of works and authors published in this journal each month. Since the primary mission of the PMWJ is to support the global sharing of knowledge, please share this month's edition with others, wherever in the world they may be.

Since last August, on the recommendation of several editorial advisors, I have used this space to mention significant trends or issues that I see as journal editor. This month I want to mention five such trends, in the context of a panel I will be moderating at the 11<sup>th</sup> annual UT Dallas Project Management Symposium in August. The theme for this year's conference being held on the UTD campus in Richardson, Texas during 17-19 August is "Disruptive Leadership". The panel discussion is titled "Disruptive Trends affecting Project Management". I thought it might be interesting to discuss these trends here this month.

### **Disruptive Trends**

According to Collins online dictionary, "disruptive" means to prevent something from continuing or operating in a normal way. [1] According to Wikipedia, A "disruptive innovation" is an innovation that creates a new market and value network and eventually disrupts an existing market and value network, displacing established market leading firms, products and alliances. [2] According to the online Cambridge English Dictionary, a "trend" is a general development or change in a situation or in the way that people are behaving. [3] I think most definitions of these terms will be consistent, regardless of the source. A disruptive trend then might be defined as a general change in the way people or things normally operate.

How does this relate to or matter to project management, or projects for that matter? The answer should be obvious to most. Disruptive trends or changes can affect the conditions, environment and context of most projects. A disruptive change might mean that the product of a project will be obsolete or less useful to customers. It might mean a major new risk or opportunity for an organization. It might mean that new information, training, tools or technologies will be needed. Trends can affect individual projects, project managers, teams, stakeholders and organizations, or even entire markets, industries and professions. I believe it is critical that we as professionals monitor trends affecting our work and our profession. And awareness of disruptive trends is absolutely required if we are to survive.

### **The Five Trends**

Based on Google searches on "disruptive trends", there seems to be no shortages of opinions regarding trends in technology, various industries and at various times. New ones are announced each year by big consultancies, publications, media outlets and others. The

environment for projects of all kinds keeps changing, with regards to technologies, markets, economies and especially the organizational context. Some trends seem more disruptive than others, seem to be disrupting the project environment, the application of traditional project management processes, and even the project management field itself. Here are the five trends that were selected to discuss in the August panel. In each case, some questions are posed. Each topic deserves more attention than offered here though, in my opinion.

**Agility** – The popularity of Agile project management, which has been growing now for about 15 years, has stimulated a distinct move towards more “agile” management decision-making at all levels. Agile project management brought distinct advantages to software development projects. The idea of achieving incremental benefits/value rather than waiting for the traditional project planning, design and build cycle to play out has appealed to managers in many organizations, not just in software or information technologies. Executives and customers want results faster and faster. Is this a good idea? Does “Agile Project Management” itself need to evolve? Do traditional project change control processes need to change? Are there industry-specific variations, risks and opportunities related to agility that need to be explored and defined? Have you seen these issues emerge? I certainly have.

**Digitalization** – As more organizations in more industries digitize their documents and records, the world really does seem to be moving to “paperless” data, information and work; that certainly includes projects and project management. Is this the real reason for the growth in project management among technology professionals and organizations? Doesn’t every project now involve digitization of records, which means IT projects related to digitization, database connectivity and management, communication issues, data security, hardware and software, cloud engagement and other related topics? Doesn’t every project manager and project management professional, regardless of industry or project type, need to become familiar with these digital topics? In some industries, it may be even more extreme. For example in architecture and construction Building Information Modeling (BIM) systems can now combine design, engineering, construction and maintenance information management with project planning, scheduling, cost and communication capabilities. This is an exciting development, but one with widespread implications for project management in those industries and projects involving physical facilities. It seems to me that every project team needs deep IT capabilities.

**The Internet of Things** – Up until quite recently, I thought about the “Internet of Things” or IoT in terms of connecting personal devices and home appliances. The applications and implications are far greater. IoT is revolutionizing such industries as aerospace, automotive, construction, defense, healthcare and medicine, IT/ICT, oil and gas, transportation and many others. Let’s just consider two examples. The US Department of Transportation has an entire program underway called “Intelligent Transportation Systems” in which the research and development includes smart materials, smart vehicles, smart infrastructure, smart traffic control systems and their interconnections.[4] Future vehicles will communicate with highway infrastructure, other vehicles, traffic and weather information systems, police and security systems and who know what more. Within individual vehicles, many components already contain computer chips so subsystems can communicate with each other, the immediate surroundings and other vehicles.

In the healthcare field, my mother-in-law recently had a heart monitor implanted that communicated with her doctor’s office; when an anomaly occurred, they called to check on her. Miniaturization and the related ability to embed integrated circuits in devices and even medications are allowing unbelievable advances in the treatment of diseases and disabilities. Within hospitals, offices and emergency vehicles, intelligent medical devices and systems can communicate with each other and with central databases. Changes can

be monitored; doctors and staff can be alerted. In these industries and others, what are the implications for project planning, design, procurement (and supply chains), implementation, stakeholder engagement and more?

**Digital Insecurity** – Data and database security has been an important topic for many years. But now it seems that the internet is becoming less and less secure. As hackers and criminals have become more sophisticated, and state-sponsored actors in data breaches have emerged, there seem to be more hacks, more digital crime, more threats and more insecurity related to data and information. Yes, personal information should be safe and protected. But what about program, project and organizational data? Does your project have full and robust database backup and security? Are you sure, or are these issues delegated to an IT department or person? Many small organizations may not even have an IT department. How is your project data protected? Are digital security threats on your risk register? Do you or anyone on your team fully understand the issues and risks?

**The Gig Economy** – The “gig” economy is here, perhaps partially propelled by the global financial crisis in 2008. But just consider the other four trends mentioned above. Is it any surprise that short term gigs have become more common, especially among technology professionals? As more digitalization, connectedness, insecurity permeate more programs and projects, and more executives want results faster, more short terms initiatives, tasks and solutions are launched. At the same time, over the last ten years more employers are more reluctant to hire on a full-time basis in order to avoid the high cost of medical insurance, taxes and other employee “benefits”. This latter trend is exacerbated by an aging population in many countries, which multiplies the real and potential costs of healthcare, so more older workers are also finding themselves underemployed. Now many professionals are simply going from project to project; long term employment is no longer the norm. What does this mean for the project management professional field, to careers and to project-based organizations? When a traditional project life cycle for any large project can take years, how does the proliferation of short-term project gigs affect project teams and outcomes? What are the risks and opportunities?

There are many other potentially disruptive trends existing or emerging in the project management field. Because projects now permeate all industries and elements of society, many general trends can also have an indirect yet significant impact on project management. For example, demographic changes can impact organizations and project teams, stakeholders, communication methods, project outcomes, project environments, etc. Technology changes can affect many aspects of both projects and project management. Discussion of those trends will have to wait for another day.

### **So What?**

A few questions have been posed in the paragraphs above. For the panel at the August UT Dallas symposium, I have suggested the following learning objectives for participants:

1. Gain some understanding of the trends discussed and how they might impact projects, project management, the project management field and individual careers;
2. Gain some appreciation for the usefulness of identifying potentially disruptive trends, including potential risks to projects and organizations; and
3. Identify potential steps for reducing risks and seeking opportunities associated with emerging trends affecting project management.

What are some other questions or implications? What are some other potentially disruptive trends? Please send an email to me at [editor@peworldjournal.net](mailto:editor@peworldjournal.net).

## **Now - This month in the Journal**

Now for this month's journal which again contains some interesting and outstanding works.

We start with a Letter to the Editor from Bob Youker in Maryland and three interesting interviews conducted by PM World correspondent in Istanbul, Ms. Ipek Sahra Özgüler. Following the recent PMI Turkey PM Summit conference in Ankara, Ipek cornered three of the keynote speakers from that event – Dave Harbath, Motiva International; Jennifer Young Banker, PMI Metrolina Chapter president; and Kevin Ciccotti, project leadership coach. Check out their answers to Ipek's good questions.

Five outstanding featured papers are included this month. Three are new papers by previous PMWJ authors Alan Stretton (Australia), Oluseye Olugboyega (Nigeria) and Dr. Moustafa Abu Dief (Saudi Arabia). Their papers are solid and important contributions. The two papers by new authors are especially significant – Gender Issues in Project Planning and Management by four researchers in Uganda, and The Stakeholder Perspective by Massimo Pirozzi in Rome. Frankly, the paper on gender issues may be one of the most important papers we have ever published; please read it and send me your reaction. All of these featured papers make important contributions to the global PM body of knowledge.

Four series articles are included. As usual, Prof Darren Dalcher in UK has facilitated another excellent '*Advances in Project Management*' article by Routledge author Prof Tony Bendell in UK. Darren's fascinating introductory article is titled "Coming to terms with the unknown: Re-invoking Knightian uncertainty." Tony's article is titled "Are Projects and Project Managers Fragile, Robust or Anti-Fragile." Just from the titles, you know these are interesting articles. Magda Septanyan in The Netherlands, representing David Hillson's Risk Doctor Partnership, has authored "The Anatomy of Risk" in which she takes us back to the basics, but from a different perspective. A fourth article in the series on *Managing and Working in Project Society* is included this month, authored by Professors Timothy Wilson and Rolf Lundin in Sweden. Their article is titled "Championship or Collective Behavior: Another Look at Entrepreneurial Activities." These articles are all enlightening, authored by global experts.

Three advisory articles and one commentary are included this month. The advisories cover risk management (Priti Vaid, India), Agile (Sharon Herstein, USA) and leadership (Britta Eremit, Germany). Good tips from experienced PM professionals! The commentary by German Bernate in Bogota is on the topic of "culture in multinational projects", a subject ripe for opinions.

We are happy to include a Personal Story this month, "Two plus two equals...?" by Ruby Tomar in India. Ruby tells the story of an IT project gone haywire and what she had to do to turn things around. Sometime leadership simply means survival, with success to follow.

This month we kick into high gear our republication of conference papers in the Second Editions category. Each year the PMWJ acts as media partner for three annual project management conferences: the Scientific Conference on Project Management in the Baltic States, hosted by the University of Latvia in Riga each April; the University of Maryland's annual PM symposium in College Park, Maryland, USA each May; and the UT Dallas PM Symposium each August. In addition to helping promote these important regional conferences, we also agree to republish selected papers from the events. This month we include three each from the April conference in Riga and the May conference in Maryland.

The papers from the Riga event include “A Project Manager’s Personal Agility Sightings” by Raji Sivaraman (Singapore/USA) and Michal Raczka (Poland); “Agile Transformation in Project Organizations: Issues, Conditions and Challenges” by Pawel Paterek (Poland); and “Life is a Project: Enabling Life Skills in Cross-Cultural Transitions” by Neil Robinson (UK). The UMD papers include: “Performance Management Readiness: How to Assess Your Organization’s Foundation for Performance Management” by Susan Hostetter and Jim Miller; “The Enterprise Program Management Office: Another Best Practice at the National Nuclear Security Administration” by Jessica Kunkle, Alma Contreras, Wayne Abba, Michael Haase and David Pells; and “What to Expect when You’re Expecting (A Major Organizational Change)” by Amanda Arriaga and Jessica Ballew. All authors of the UMD papers this month are Americans. These papers were selected for a reason, they are good papers of potential interest to many practitioners and students around the world.

Interesting regional reports are again included this month from Alfonso Bucero in Spain, Jouko Vaskimo in Finland, Miles Shepherd in the UK and Cecilia Boggi in Argentina. These are very interesting updates from these four professional leaders who we are very happy to call International Correspondents and editorial advisors. Their reports also describe some important local projects and make interesting reading.

Five good book reviews are also included, provided by members of the PMI Dallas Chapter. Through our PM book review program, PMI members can receive a free book, up to 10 PDUs and good visibility in exchange for producing a good book review. Everybody wins through this program: reviewers (free book, free PDUs, visibility), PMI chapter (publicity, chapter benefit), book authors and publishers (positive reviews, free publicity), and the PMWJ (good content). Our book reviews are not just PR blurbs, they create new knowledge based on our standard format which forces reviewers to offer substantive feedback. So please take a look, see what’s new and if you agree. We are happy to work with other organizations interested in establishing a similar book review program.

All of the articles, papers, reports and reviews this month contribute to the global project management body of knowledge. Please read those of interest to you, then share them with others. Sharing knowledge multiplies the impact of good ideas, and some ideas (like projects) can change the world.

The rest of this article is our monthly boilerplate. Please read if this is your first time with the PMWJ or read again if you are a subscriber; it’s important for sustaining this publication.

## **Share Your Experience, Research and Knowledge**

We invite you to share your own experience, knowledge or research results related to program and project management. A wide variety of original works are included in the PMWJ each month. Share knowledge and gain visibility for yourself and your organization; publish a paper or article in the PMWJ. See our [Calls for Papers](#) and review the [Author Guidelines](#) for the journal. Then just email your original work to [editor@pmworldjournal.net](mailto:editor@pmworldjournal.net). The PMWJ is not a refereed journal; however we can publish your work quickly (for sharing with thousands of readers around the world and for immediate reference). The PMWJ is also indexed by EBSCO, which means that your work may also be read and referenced by students and researchers around the world long into the future.

## **Opportunities to get involved**

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many opportunities to author works for the journal and free membership in the PM World Library. For more, visit <http://pmworldjournal.net/team/international-correspondents/>.

If you are teaching project management at a college or university, or an active academic leader or researcher in the P/PM field, our “Offer for Students of Project Management” provides three areas of potential interest to students – publishing opportunities, free library memberships and a virtual research internship. We will soon introduce a Research Scholar opportunity. For information about these programs, please contact [info@pmworldlibrary.net](mailto:info@pmworldlibrary.net).

If you are a student of project management at an accredited university, consider our virtual project **research internship** program. [Learn about our interns here.](#) See opportunities for students at <http://pmworldlibrary.net/students/>. The PMWL supports continuous learning in the field of program and project management but is proving especially useful for students. Help us create a global resource; visit [www.pmworldlibrary.net](http://www.pmworldlibrary.net) and become a member.

### **Thanks to Authors and Sponsors**

I want to thank the authors who contributed to this edition of the PMWJ. Most have included an email address at the end of her or his author profile. If you find an article or paper useful or interesting, let the author know. Better yet, ask questions, start a discussion, share information and knowledge. We also want to thank our advisors, correspondents and contributing editors around the world. These teams include leaders from academic and professional organizations in around 50 countries.

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### **Share it forward**

If you found something interesting in the PMWJ this month, please **SHARE IT FORWARD** - send the link to colleagues, co-workers or friends. If you have knowledge or a story to share, submit an article or paper for publication. We are especially interested in those that contribute to solving global problems. Thank you for reading this month’s edition of the PMWJ, have a great January and good luck with your projects!

### **References**

1. <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/disruptive>
2. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disruptive\\_innovation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disruptive_innovation)
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**David L. Pells** is Managing Editor of the ***PM World Journal*** ([www.pmworldjournal.net](http://www.pmworldjournal.net)) and Managing Director of the PM World Library ([www.pmworldlibrary.net](http://www.pmworldlibrary.net)). David is an internationally recognized leader in the field of professional project management with more than 35 years of experience on a variety of programs and projects, including engineering, construction, energy, defense, transit, technology and nuclear security, and project sizes ranging from thousands to billions of dollars. He has been an active professional leader in the United States since the 1980s, serving on the board of directors of the Project Management Institute (PMI®) twice. He was founder and chair of the Global Project Management Forum (1995-2000), an annual meeting of leaders of PM associations from around the world.

David was awarded PMI's Person of the Year award in 1998 and Fellow Award, PMI's highest honor, in 1999. He is also an Honorary Fellow of the Association for Project Management (APM) in the UK; Project Management Associates (PMA - India); and Russian Project Management Association. Since 2010 he is an honorary member of the Project Management Association of Nepal. From June 2006 until March 2012, he was the managing editor of *PM World Today*. He occasionally provides high level advisory services for major programs, global organizations and the U.S. federal government. David has a BA in Business Administration from the University of Washington and a Master's degree in business from Idaho State University in the USA. He has published widely and spoken at conferences and events worldwide.

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