

The Crash, March Madness, Recovery, Lessons Learned and... Welcome to the April edition of the PM World Journal

David Pells, Editor / Publisher

Welcome to the April 2019 edition of the **PM World Journal** (PMWJ). This is the 80th edition of the PMWJ; unfortunately, we broke the string of consecutive monthly editions with the cancellation of the March edition following our fatal website crash on 1 March. We have taken this opportunity to also make a few changes in both the journal and the production process, as explained below. So welcome to the new PMWJ.

For those of you who have been readers and contributors over the years, you will not notice many changes. For those who are new to the PMWJ, I want to clarify that our mission is to promote knowledge sharing and continuous learning related to program and project management (P/PM). We publish a wide range of articles, papers and reports each month from authors around the world. We take pride in the global nature of our content, as reflected again this month with 45 works by 36 different authors representing 19 different countries. Our readers are also located in dozens of countries worldwide, even though the PMWJ is primarily an English language journal. We think the PMWJ may be the most diverse publication serving the PM world.

Now what in the heck happened in March?

The Crash! And a look under the hood

As most of you may know, we produce, operate and maintain two information-based websites: the PMWJ at www.pmworldjournal.net and the PM World Library (PMWL) at www.pmworldlibrary.net. The PMWJ is an online digital publication containing 35-45 new articles and papers each month related to P/PM; it has been published since August 2012. All works published in the PMWJ are then archived in the PMWL, which has grown to now contain more than 2900 works by 1300+ authors. The PMWL has also been expanded to contain access to a great deal of additional educational information.

We use WordPress as the digital platform for creating and managing both websites. Up until March 2017, our websites were hosted on a dedicated server provided by a major US internet service provider. With the help of an offshore consultant, in early 2017 we migrated to “the cloud” in order to save money (a very significant savings, actually!). Our new configuration included databases hosted by an infrastructure-as-a-service (IAAS) provider, with dual servers in Europe and the USA. We also enabled a digital networking service (DNS) company to provide front-end caching, distribution and security functionality. Responsiveness of both websites increased while costs went down. It worked fine for two years.

On Friday, 25 February, while attempting to upgrade WordPress to the latest version for the PMWL, the server connection was lost; visitors all saw a 501 Error Message. The site was down. The problem seemed to reside with our (cloud-based) IAAS server hosting company. Our tech support advisor began to research the problem, started a “ticket” with the server provider’s tech support team, asked questions and tried to follow their advice. Guidance seemed to require a rebooting of the servers that were hosting our two databases. At 10:07 p.m. central U.S. time on Friday, March 1st, the server reboot button was pushed.

Until that time, the PMWJ website had not been affected. When the server reboot occurred, the PMWJ site went down as well. I was unaware of this fact until the next morning. Meanwhile, our tech support advisor was trying to bring the PMWL site back up. By the end of the weekend, it became clear that as a result of the server reboot, both website databases had been completely wiped out.

March Madness & Recovery

Since its creation in 2012, the PMWL website has been backed up on a daily basis using VaultPress, a security plugin for WordPress websites. While the restore capability seemed to exist, we were still unclear about what had happened and whether the cloud-based server host was functioning properly. Why had the site crashed in the first place?

For the PMWJ however, we had apparently not implemented VaultPress. I think I had long been under the impression that the one VaultPress account covered both websites. I was wrong. The journal website was not backed up properly. It also turned out that the IAAS provider also does not backup their servers for clients (which I found incredible and very hard to believe).

While our tech support consultant worked to restore the PMWL site with help from VaultPress, I began to communicate with the IAAS company that had the cloud-based servers that had been hosting our databases. I opened a “ticket” and began questioning the loss of our database; daily answers led nowhere. They denied having any responsibility for the loss, denied having the ability to recover any of our data, and basically shrugged off our disaster. They provide no telephone support, nor even provide a telephone number for the company (which is apparently based in New York). It became very very frustrating.

By the middle of March, the PMWL was back online. Because some of the pages and content in the library were linked to the PMWJ, those links were now broken. So the library had some holes in it. The PMWJ site, however, appeared to be completely gone. The March edition that I had been preparing was cancelled. We decided to completely rebuild the PMWJ website from scratch, but using a different ISP, not the cloud-based IAAS company. We also decided to use this opportunity to make some changes, improve efficiencies, increase security and renew relationships.

Thank goodness we had been archiving PMWJ contents in the PMWL all these years. All works published in the journal since 2012 are still available in the library, along with the profiles of all authors we have published. In addition, I maintain file copies of everything published in the PMWJ on my personal computer, as well as backed up on a separate storage device. But all links to anything published in the PMWJ over the years are dead. This is the big loss, as so many links to the PMWJ have been created over the last 79 months from the websites of authors and organizations around the world. The PMWJ database also represented at least 10,000 hours invested by myself and others over the last seven years. It was crazy!

In the United States, March is the month of college basketball tournaments. It’s known as “March Madness” here because almost anything can happen in the games, with favorites often losing and underdogs sometimes winning it all. I was having my own version of march madness, the craziness of this experience, the anger and frustration. But then it became apparent that the best way to proceed is with patience, knowledge gained and a positive attitude. So here we go.

Refresh & Relaunch – What’s New

This edition of the PMWJ represents the relaunch of the journal. Most past readers will notice few changes, as we’ve tried to maintain our image and approach. Maybe it’s old fashioned; but we’re not trying to sell anything. The PMWJ is a service to those who want to get published or share their knowledge.

Some pages have or will be renewed. For example, we’ve taken this opportunity to contact all of our academic advisors, global advisors and correspondents to reestablish their continued involvement and support. A few have decided to “retire”. Most have renewed their commitment, which is a real honor for us. Advertisers, sponsors and partners have renewed their commitment, which is great (although we could use more.)

The biggest change will be in the production process. Rather than a double-posting process of works and authors in the journal and library, now all PDF files will be posted in the library only with links from the monthly PMWJ. This will reduce my work and dramatically speed up the posting of new information in the PMWL each month.

Breaking news (BN) articles will now be posted first in the library as well, which you can now see on the PMWL home page at www.pmworldlibrary.net. BN articles will also automatically go into the news archives in the library at <https://pmworldlibrary.net/ppm-news/> where they can be sorted and searched by date and category. We hope to also feed the BN from the PMWL to the PMWJ soon, but for the time being, visit the PMWL for news articles.

Finally, we are implementing new and more robust backup and security functionality on both sites. (Over the last year, we have also seen an increase in malicious attacks on both sites, so there are multiple reasons for this.) We hope to implement new features as we move forward now, but we are returning to our work of producing the monthly PMWJ while growing the PMWL into a truly global resource for continuous learning. I hope you will continue reading and supporting these efforts.

Lessons Learned – What we can share

What lessons have we learned? What would we do differently? Here are just a few biggies:

- If using the services of an offshore consultant, fully understand everything proposed and the risks involved BEFORE proceeding.
- Don’t use cloud-based database storage (or hosting) services without fully understanding their policies, security and backup services, history and reputation; Understand the risks to your valuable data; if a database is mission-critical or carries legal ramifications if lost, be very very very careful (or don’t do it!).
- Don’t delegate either data security or database backup. Confirm or manage those contracts yourself.
- On the positive side, our DNS provider (CloudFlare) offers a very useful service for websites.

I’m obviously not an information technology professional, information security expert, software programmer or systems engineer. I’m a project management professional, a PM practitioner, an experienced PM guy. But I am trying to understand as much as I can about these technology and security topics. As an editor and publisher, I’m trying to get smarter. I think every project manager should do the same. The last month has been painful; hopefully we are back in business now and moving forward again.

Now - This month in the Journal

This edition of the PMWJ is full of good works from around the world. We begin with an interview by Spring at PM Review magazine in China with Professor Martina Huemann from WU Wien in Austria who was in China recently for some project management events. Her interview covers multiple topics and is quite interesting. PMR is publishing some very good articles and interviews by leading international PM experts; read this interview then visit their website (English version). A link to their website is provided at the end of the interview.

This edition includes 10 Featured Papers, four by very senior level authors in Australia, Indonesia, Peru and the USA (basically four continents), five by graduate students at SKEMA in France and one by academic researchers in Nigeria. Featured papers are all fully referenced research papers of conference quality. While the PMWJ is not a refereed journal, all contents are uploaded into EBSCO's business source database (one of the world's largest databases of business and management resources) and indexed by EBSCO, thus becoming searchable and referenceable by researchers worldwide. If you want to share your research results or get your paper published quickly, then the PMWJ can be an option. Featured papers are also serious works that contribute to the global PM body of knowledge, so please give them a read if you have any interest in the subject.

Six series articles are included this month. Darren Dalcher has authored another interesting article as well as facilitated another extraordinary article by three professors on the benefits of entrepreneurship for project management. Very useful articles are also provided by David Hillson, Oliver Lehmann, Kik Piney and Dan Epstein. All series authors are also accomplished authors of project management books. They are series authors for the PMWJ because they are true subject matter experts, so please pay them some attention.

Advisory and Commentary articles offer opportunities for experienced and knowledgeable PM experts and leaders to offer advice or opinions on specific topics. We include two each this month. Each one is very good!

Correspondents in seven different countries have provided reports this month, impressive evidence of their ongoing support. The reports from Alfonso Bucero in Madrid and Cecilia Boggi in Buenos Aires are in both English and Spanish; the report from Massimo Pirozzi in Rome is in both English and Italian. I appreciate the efforts of all of these correspondents; read their reports for some interesting and even entertaining exposes on projects and PM around the world.

We once again include seven Student Papers by graduate students enrolled in the SKEMA Business School Master of Science in Project and Programme Management and Business Development degree program. The students are studying at or through SKEMA campuses in Lille or Paris, France. The papers were prepared as deliverables for the course "International Contract Management" facilitated by Dr Paul D. Giammalvo of PT Mitratata Citragraha, Jakarta, Indonesia. Dr. Gimammlvo recommended the students and papers for publication in the PMWJ; we appreciate Paul's advocacy.

As we try to do each month, we have also included several previously published papers in our "Second Editions" category. This month, two papers are included that were previously published in the *PM World Today* eJournal, which ceased publication in March 2012, and a paper presented at the 2018 University of Maryland PM Symposium. The first two papers were authored by Paul Giammalvo and Walt Lipke, two of our regular contributors. The latter paper was co-authored by Prof Aurangzeb

Khan of COMSATS Institute of Information Technology in Islamabad, Pakistan along with Prof Mirsaw Kibnewski and John Cable from the University of Maryland.

Finally, six book reviews are included this month. One each by members of the PMI Silver Spring, Maryland Chapter and Alamo PMI Chapter in San Antonio, Texas; three by members of the PMI Dallas Chapter; and one by a current student at the COMSATS Institute in Islamabad. If anyone in the world has read a good new book on project management and would like to offer a review, we will be happy to publish it in the PMWJ. We can also provide a template for the review to simplify the process. Just contact me at info@pmworldjournal.net.

The rest of this welcome article is boilerplate. Even if you've read it before though, please take a few minutes to remind yourself of the content. We would welcome more authors, correspondents, research interns, advertisers and sponsors. If you or your organization is interested in partnering with the PMWJ, please let me know.

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 publish@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 can also be read and referenced by students and researchers around the world long into the future.

Opportunities to get involved

If you are interested in becoming a regular contributor, consider becoming an **International Correspondent**. Correspondents receive visibility in the PMWJ, introductions to others, many opportunities to author works for the journal and free membership in the PM World Library. For more, visit <https://pmworldlibrary.net/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.

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 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.

I also want to thank our advertisers and sponsors. Go to www.pmworldjournal.com and click on their logos to learn about world class PM educational products and programs. If your organization is interested in sponsorship or advertising, contact info@pmworldjournal.net

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 month and...

Good luck with your projects!

About the Author



David L. Pells

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David L. Pells is Managing Editor of the ***PM World Journal*** (www.pmworldjournal.com) and Managing Director of the PM World Library (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. He was made an honorary member of the Project Management Association of Nepal in 2010. From June 2006 until March 2012, he was the managing editor of the *PM World Today* eJournal. 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.

David lives in Addison, Texas and can be contacted at publish@pmworldjournal.net.

To see other works by David Pells, visit his author showcase in the PM World Library at <http://pmworldlibrary.net/authors/david-l-pells/>