

Welcome to the August 2021 PMWJ¹

David L. Pells

Welcome to the August 2021 edition of the PM World Journal (PMWJ), the 108th monthly edition. This month's PMWJ contains 33 new works by 39 different authors representing an astounding 19 different countries. I am proud of the diversity of voices, locations and perspectives represented in the PMWJ each month. This edition is particularly rich, with a variety of interesting and significant contributions.

First, I apologize for the late publication of the journal this month. As Oliver Lehmann once reminded me, sometimes real life interferes with our work, as it has for me lately. That said, I was gratified to hear from several readers after this welcome article was not included when the August edition went live this weekend. Better late than never, hopefully, so here it is.

Entertaining? Shocking? Irreverent? What is your reaction to the **letter to the editor** this month from SARS-CoV-2? And what is a "Pandemic Magnification Institute"? Let's see who responds next month.

Reflecting the wide range and impact of projects across industries and places, three great **interviews** are included this month. Spring (Yu Yanjuan) in China has reached across the globe to interview American PMO guru Rich Malzman. Adriana Cibelli in Buenos Aires has interviewed a brilliant young Argentinian entrepreneur and founder/CEO of a very successful corporate gaming company. Aina Aliieva in Toronto has reached out across the Pond to interview British agilest, author and influencer Duena Blomstrom. Check out these very interesting interviews.

Four of the eight **featured papers** this month are from academic researchers in Nigeria. I am proud to be providing a publishing vehicle for researchers and teachers at some of Nigeria's leading technical universities, where project management seems very well positioned. Don't be put off by the local nature of their research; the topics, findings and results are applicable in many other locations. Meanwhile, Alan Stretton has contributed another paper this month, expanding on his recursive strategic management model to more fully encompass operations – where project outcomes and benefits are actually realized. The papers by Lola Saliba in Lebanon and Brane and Luka Semolič in Slovenia are entirely new topics – Lola's proposed Airplane Model and the Virtual Open Innovation System from the Semolič team. Danilo Arba's sixth PMWJ paper is one of his most important, on the topic of "Future Directions of Cost and Productivity Estimating with Artificial Intelligence (AI)". If you have time, please read these; then send the authors a comment or reaction.

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Three regular contributors and two guests have authored **series articles** this month. Prof John Cable has concluded his series on “Converting to Online Teaching” with a final “What Have We Learned?” He shares some results and feedback after two-plus years of virtual teaching at the University of Maryland. Frank Saladis in New York has authored a new article in his series on positive leadership with “Focusing on the need to upscale yourself and your team.” Continuous learning is not only smart but project and career-critical now. Prof Darren Dalcher introduces the guest article this month in the “Advances in Project Management” series with broad (and highly useful) new perspective in “What you don’t know may still bite you: Learning to deal with the unknown.” The guest article is “Winning the Uncertainty Game: Turning Strategic Intent into Results with Wargaming” by Daniel Orišek and Jan Oliver Schwarz based on their book on the same topic published by Routledge. Do we really understand the difference between risk and uncertainty? Maybe not!

Advisory articles are almost always useful to some of our readers and this month should be no exception. Henk Venema and Henny Portman in The Netherlands have authored “TOAH and Programs” in which they describe ‘The Organizational Agility Heartbeat’ (TOAH), a new ‘framework’, an organizational rhythm for agile teams working on multiple projects and programs. Could this be useful in your organization? Val Jonas at Risk Decisions in Oxford discusses “The Snowball Effect”, how decisions by middle managers taken in a vacuum - ignoring key information and disconnected from final outcomes - can wreak havoc. She describes a more productive alternative. Dr. Ken Smith offers time-tested information and guidance for performing “better bottom-line benefit/cost analysis for multi-year projects.” I hope one or more of these articles can be helpful to you or someone in your organization.

Commentaries are personal observations or discussions on topics of personal interest; some are quite personal indeed. Bob Prieto, a very experienced executive from the engineering and construction industries, weighs in on a topic on which he has previously addressed in technical papers. In “Rethinking Interface Management”, Bob considers the rapidly changing conditions now affecting hard industries, and especially ambiguity and complexity. How do we even identify the critical interfaces on our projects? Angelica Larios revisits a controversial topic, “is project management a profession?”, is PM consulting or even consulting?

Personal stories are some of my favorite works; I wish we could get more to publish. This month we have a great one. Dr. Ken Smith, at 88 years one of our older and more experienced authors, shares his recent interview for the “Diplomatic Oral History of the United States” (DOH), part of the U.S. Library of Congress’ ‘American Memory Archives.’ According to Ken, “My *around-the-world odyssey* with USAID in Development Administration to further and foster U.S. Foreign Aid Policies focused on applying Program & Project Management ‘Best Practices’ and innovations to infrastructure, economic, and social development projects — as well as intermittent disaster relief activities — in many countries; *despite often-deficient organizational environments*. Subsequent consulting – *also in project management* — was with the World Bank Group, African and Asian Development Banks, and the UN, as well as with

USAID.” His story is long and fascinating; we are very lucky to still have Ken sharing his experience and knowledge with our readers.

I am deeply grateful for our loyal correspondents who continue to author **reports** for the PMWJ. Ipek Sahra Ozguler in Istanbul’s report this month is rather the first of a proposed new series of collected observations by project management experts and thought leaders on important new topics or trends. This month it’s “Digital Transformation” with statements from five well-known figures in the PM world. Alfonso Bucero has provided a new update on the PM profession in Spain from Madrid, in both English and Spanish languages. Jouko Vaskimo has provided an update from both the PM Association of Finland and the PMI Finland Chapter, as well as latest news on important large projects underway in Finland. Miles Shepherd in Salisbury has authored another highly informative and entertaining report about projects and programs around England of potential interest to those in our world. He covers good news, not so good news, government projects, billionaire projects and baby beavers. Read his report and smile!

Readers of this journal will know that we republish previously published works in our **Second Editions** category, as a way to provide both new visibility for deserving works as well as to increase our monthly contents. In any case, republished works are almost always papers that our readers would not otherwise know about. This month, we include another older (2011) paper by Bob Prieto, and two papers presented earlier this month at the virtual University of Maryland PM Symposium, for which we serve as a media partner each year. The topics should all be useful to some of you, perhaps especially Jim Suits’ UMD paper titled “Retaining Agility When You Work in a Waterfall”. Read how a U.S. government agency is actually achieving agility on international programs.

Two **book reviews** are included this month, by PMI members located in Texas and Maryland. Our book review programs slowed down during the 2020/21 pandemic as in-person PMI meetings stopped but may be about to pick up again. Our book reviews serve two primary objectives: to create new knowledge through personal observations by book reviewers, and to provide PMI members with a relatively easy way to obtain PDU’s by authoring book reviews, that we then publish (providing readily available evidence of having done the review). If you have read a good PM book lately, consider authoring a book review. I will forward a template if you like.

We conclude with a few recently published breaking **news articles**. We cannot keep up with everything going on in the PM World, but perhaps these news items are worth knowing about.

Have a good month everyone, and
Good luck with your projects!

About the Author



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David L. Pells, PMI Fellow, HonFAPM, ISIPM, PMA, SOVNET is Managing Editor and publisher of the **PM World Journal** (www.peworldjournal.com) and Managing Director of the PM World Library (www.peworldlibrary.net). David is an internationally recognized leader in the field of professional project management with more than 40 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 occasionally acts as project management advisor for U.S. national laboratories and international programs, and currently serves as an independent advisor for a major U.S. national security program.

David Pells has been an active professional leader in the United States since the 1980s, as founder and president of several PMI chapters, founder of PMI's first SIG (Project Earth), and member of the PMI board of directors 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; the Instituto Italiano di Project Management (ISIMP - Italy); Project Management Associates (PMA - India); and the Russian Project Management Association (SOVNET). In 2010 he was made an honorary member of the Project Management Association of Nepal.

Former managing editor of *PM World Today*, he is the creator, editor and publisher of the *PM World Journal* (ISSN: 2330-4880). David has a BA in Business Administration from the University of Washington and an MBA from Idaho State University in the USA. He has published widely and spoken at conferences and events worldwide. David lives near Dallas, Texas and can be contacted at editor@peworldjournal.com.

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