

Gone and Back Again, the Rise of Regional Project Management Conferences, and... Welcome to the February edition of the PM World Journal

David Pells, Managing Editor

Welcome to the February 2018 edition of the **PM World Journal** (PMWJ), the 67th uninterrupted monthly edition. This edition contains **37** original articles, papers and other works by **39** different authors in **17** different countries. News articles about projects and project management around the world are also included. Since the primary mission of this journal is to support the global sharing of knowledge, please share this month's edition with others in your network, wherever in the world they may be.

For the past year I have used this space to discuss important or interesting trends or issues that I see as journal editor. This month, I want to mention a trend that I've wanted to talk about for some time but found other topics somewhat higher priority – the increasing number of local and regional conferences around the world.

1980s and my first Conference Experiences

I began my professional career in 1976, learning project cost and schedule control at the Idaho National Laboratory (INL) working on a large nuclear safety project. Five years later I was working on a large defense program for a division of GTE, wandered into their corporate library and discovered an Encyclopedia of Associations in which I found a listing for the Project Management Institute (PMI®). I contacted PMI, learned that they had a chapter nearby (I was living in Northern California at the time), attended some meetings and started to learn more about both PMI and the project management profession. I learned that PMI had more chapters around the USA and that their biggest event was an annual conference called "Annual Seminars/Symposia".

Five years later I was back in Idaho, having advanced to a leadership position and helping develop an enterprise-wide project management planning process covering hundreds of projects and 5,000+ employees. By 1986, with an MBA in hand, I decided to author a paper for presentation at a project management conference. I was 10 years into my project management career and wanted to share my recent experience with our successful initiative at the INL. I discovered that PMI chapters in Seattle, Portland and Vancouver BC had launched an annual Pacific Northwest Regional Project Management Conference. So I submitted an abstract to the next regional conference in Seattle and presented a paper there, my first conference presentation. I followed that with a presentation the next year at the Northwest Regional PM Conference in Vancouver, BC.

By that time I was leading a new PMI chapter; I attended my first PMI Seminars/Symposia in Milwaukee in 1987. At that time, I knew about the regional conferences in the Pacific Northwest and the big annual PMI conference, which was mostly attended by PMI members in the United States and Canada, but few outside North America. The only way we learned about project management events was by reading PMI publications; this was long before the Internet and email. I knew nothing about PM conferences in other countries. I attended PMI's annual Seminars/Symposia in 1988, 1989 and 1990. Then things changed for me.

1990 – 2000: Dominance of Big International Events

By 1990 I was living in Dallas, Texas, working on a massive science project, the Superconducting Super Collider. That year I was also invited to assume the presidency of the PMI Dallas/Ft. Worth chapter, a young and still struggling chapter. In 1990 I also attended two international conferences, both of which I learned about through PMI. In June 1990, I travelled to Vienna, Austria to present a paper at the INTERNET'90 World Congress on Project Management. It was a new and eye-opening experience. I learned for the first time about INTERNET (the International Project Management Association, which later changed its identity to the IPMA) and its various member associations in various European countries. I became familiar with APM in the UK (actually joining APM in 1991), the Austrian PM Association and a few others. I also learned that some of those member associations conducted annual local conferences, for example in Finland and Germany.

In October 1990, I attended PMI's annual conference (PMI'90) in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, where I again met PMI leaders from around North America but also from South Africa (PMI's largest chapter outside of North America). I also met IPMA's representative, David Mathie, who was attending the PMI conference under a cooperation agreement between PMI and IPMA and was there to promote the next IPMA congress in Florence, Italy.

In 1990, I also visited Russia and Ukraine for the first time, where I met professional leaders in those countries. I participated in project management conferences in Moscow and St. Petersburg, Russia in 1993 and 1995. From 1991-2000, I attended every annual PMI conference around North America and IPMA congresses in Florence (1992), Oslo (1994) and Paris (1996). Those were the big international events in the PM World. By 1995 I had been elected to the PMI Board of Directors. In October 1995, at PMI'95 in New Orleans, I organized and managed an event called the Global Project Management Forum, to which were invited leaders of other PM associations around the world for a meeting to discuss global cooperation. About 20 such professional organizations were represented, primarily from Europe but also Brazil, India, Indonesia, New Zealand, South Africa and a few others.

In Paris in 1996, I met Brian Kooyman from Sydney who was representing the Australian Institute of Project Management (AIPM). I learned about AIPM's history, activities and annual conferences. I was invited to both Brazil and South Africa in 1999, speaking at the PMI Sao Paulo chapter's big conference and a bi-annual national conference in Johannesburg organized by PM South Africa. By that time, I knew of regional conferences in the Nordic countries (annual events called NORDNET), Russia, India, Australia, Brazil and South Africa. A few PMI chapters in North America had grown large and were starting to organize their own annual conferences. But by and large, the two big international events organized by PMI and IPMA dominated the conference schedule.

21st Century Conferences – More Local and More Personal

Since the turn of the century, everything has changed. The growth and widespread availability of the worldwide web (the internet) have helped the project management field grow rapidly around the world. Not only is project management more widely known and understood, membership in professional organizations like PMI and IPMA has skyrocketed. PMI now has hundreds of chapters worldwide, some having thousands of members. Those larger PMI chapters now sponsor their own local PM conferences, the largest and arguably most successful being in Atlanta, Denver, Houston, Sao Paulo and Toronto.

IPMA has seen new PM associations launched in many countries, a trend that is continuing as the number of IPMA member associations now exceeds 60. Some of those national

associations are also quite large, including APM in the UK with more than 20,000 members and AIPM in Australia with more than 10,000. Most national PM associations organize their own national PM conferences; several like Poland sponsor multiple events. APM in the UK has seen the greatest and most rapid growth in big regional events, now with more than 20 per year organized by APM itself, APM branches around the UK, and APM specific interest groups (SIGs). With its expansion into Latin America, IPMA associations there also organize large regional conferences each year. Altogether, national associations and their sub-organizations organize more than 100 regional one or two-day conferences each year.

In the meantime, PMI also decided to organize large regional conferences about 15 years ago. First they organized global congresses in North America (continuation of their big annual event) and in Asia, Europe and South America. The big European conference, called PMI Global Congress EMEA (Europe, Middle East, Africa) is still held in a different European capital each year. The PMI Latin American congress was changed to a series of regional conferences called PMI Tour Cono Sur, with events in various cities in Chile, Argentina and Uruguay. The PMI World Congress Asia was cancelled. Around 2007, I think PMI established regional offices in Australia, Brazil, China and India and began organizing large annual conferences in those countries. PMI has seen membership and chapters grow rapidly in Australia, Brazil and India, so their regional conferences in those countries have also become large successful events.

New and independent project management organizations and networks have also appeared in various countries, including Cameroon, China, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Nigeria, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, Zimbabwe and maybe more. The Asia Pacific Forum for Project Management (APFPM) was created about 10 years ago to promote cooperation among approximately 15 PM associations in countries bordering the Pacific Ocean. All of these organizations also organize big events, often annual regional or national conferences.

Major universities have also gotten into the conference business. The PMWJ is an organizing partner with the University of Texas at Dallas (UTD) along with the PMI Dallas Chapter of the annual UT Dallas Project Management Symposium. Now in its 12th year, this is a very good regional conference with call for papers, refereed papers accepted, two days of keynote speakers and professional presentations, meals and networking opportunities, all in world-class educational facilities. Other very good PM conferences are also organized by the University of Maryland near Washington, DC in the USA, the University of Latvia in Riga, UC London in UK and many others.

Finally, commercial organizations are getting into the act, organizing project management conferences worldwide. Some are very well attended, for example, big event aimed at those in the IT sector in the UK and USA. Global event companies now also organize conferences and workshops across Asia, the Asia Pacific and Europe. In all likelihood, there is a regional conference not far from most PM professionals around the world each year, and also a big international event not far away.

So what does this mean and why care?

Conferences are important in any professional field. In the project and program management arena, where the variety of projects and project management experience is so widespread and where learning from others is so important, conferences can be even more useful. I have written previously about the benefits that I have gained from attending conferences and about the value they create – for presenters, attendees and the profession itself. Now let me recount a few of those reasons for attending a conference.

For Presenters – Authoring a paper or creating a presentation forces one to learn more about the topic. Just as a teacher must know a lot about the subject she or he is teaching, so must a conference presenter know what she or he is talking about. Presenting at a conference or authoring/publishing a paper goes straight to one’s resume, can be an impressive and important addition to one’s qualification, and demonstrates knowledge, accomplishment and progression. And the recognition and visibility can be highly useful. Not least, speaking at a conference can bring recognition to your employer or others in your organization.

For Attendees – Anyone attending a project management conference learns a lot. For those new to project management or early in her or his career, conferences offer one of the fastest and most effective ways to learn a lot in a short amount of time. Attendees have opportunities to meet experts, gain access to resources and network with peers. This networking isn’t just about socializing either, but rather meeting others with similar interests, projects or experiences. More learning always results. Many conferences include trade shows, book displays, workshops and other learning opportunities.

For the PM Profession – Conferences help grow the body of knowledge associated with program and project management. International conferences that attract researchers and academic papers generate and disseminate significant new knowledge. Some presentations produce new approaches, topics and solutions. Even regional conferences make significant contributions, if their proceedings and presentations are available after the event. Those sponsored by PMI, IPMA and other professional bodies generate many papers and intellectual property that then go into the organization’s databases or on websites, for use by members and the public.

Every project manager and PM professional should participate in one or more conferences over the course of her or his career, either for learning, sharing or contributing to the profession. With so many conferences now available, there is no good reason not to.

Now - This month in the Journal

This is another full edition of the PMWJ with many good works from authors around the world. We begin with a letter to the editor from Russ Archibald in Mexico, and two interesting interviews by İpek Özgüler in Istanbul. İpek interviews two PMI leaders, Cecil White of PMI’s international board of directors and Süleyman Çavuşoğlu, president of the PMI Turkey Chapter. Read these, see what they have to say.

Eight Featured Papers are included this month. Alan Stretton in Australia is back with another good paper on *“Increasing project management involvement in pre-execution phases of projects.”* Dr. Pavel Barseghyan is back with part 3 of his series on *“Elements of the Mathematical Theory of Human Systems”*; parts 1 and 2 were published in the last two editions of this journal. Mark Reeson (UK/KSA) is back with another paper on sustainable communities based on his work in Saudi Arabia, *“A Smart City Starts and Ends with a Smart Community...”* Raji Sivaraman (Singapore/USA) and Michal Raczka (Poland) are back with another paper on agility, this one titled *“Cruise from Personal Agility to Organizational Agility.”* These are all good new papers by frequent PMWJ authors.

New papers are included by Hilal Al Rashid (Oman), Khaled Al Shami (France), Mosab Elbasher (Sudan/Saudi Arabia), and the Nigerian research team of Fidelis Ezeokoli, Stanley Ugochukwu, Kaetonna Ilozulike and Prof Nathan Agu. Featured papers are serious

referenced works that contribute to the global PM body of knowledge, so please give them a look and a possible read.

Five series articles are included this month. Darren Dalcher in UK has facilitated another interesting ‘*Advances in Project Management*’ article, this month by Routledge author David Booth (UK). Read Darren’s interesting introductory article titled “*Strategy as learning to discover the way forward.*” Then read David Booth’s article titled “*How strategy happens.*” How many in the PM profession really understand the strategic planning process anymore?

Dr. David Hillson has returned with another risk Doctor Briefing titled “*Risk Leaders Need to Dance the TANGO*”, an educational and somewhat entertaining article. Oliver Lehmann has contributed another great article in his series on “Project Business Management”, this one titled “*Let’s Talk Money.*” Many project and program managers need to read this article if they don’t want a major contracting catastrophe. And this month we introduce a new series on “*Applying Earned Benefit*” by Kik Piney, author of the recently published book titled *Earned Benefit Program Management*. This new series will be terrific!

Three advisory articles are included this month, by three previously published authors. Almahdy Eltonsy in Cairo has authored an interesting article on “*Decision Analysis*”; Michael O’Brochta (USA) has authored “*How to Get Executives to Act for Project Success*”; and Chandan Patary (India) is the author of “*In search of a better Product Owner*”. These articles will be of interest to different readers for different reasons. Hopefully they will be useful to some of you.

This month, we continue our support of graduate students attending SKEMA Business School in France, at their Lille and Paris campuses. This month we include the ten more excellent and interesting papers on a variety of topics, all primarily related to some aspects of contracts and contract management. We congratulate these students on their good works and their publication in the journal. Please read their papers, the first published works for most of them.

Informative reports are again included this month from Alfonso Bucero in Spain, Jouko Vaskimo in Finland and Miles Shepherd in UK. Four book reviews are also included. All of the articles, papers, reports and reviews included in the PMWJ represent significant work by the authors, and some contain significant new 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 regular; it’s important for sustaining this publication.

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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



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David L. Pells is Managing Editor of the ***PM World Journal*** (www.pmworldjournal.net) 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.

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