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## Live & in Color – Is the World of PM Ready for Prime Time?

*David L. Pells*

During October 2006, I had the opportunity to participate in two international project management (PM) conferences, in Sao Paulo, Brazil and Seattle, Washington, USA. In both places, a pmforum.org team attempted to “cover” these events as correspondents for traditional news media might. I am not sure that we were successful. This article describes our experiences and raises the question, is the world of PM ready for such visibility?

As a keynote speaker, I had the privilege to attend the PMI Sao Paulo International PM Seminario in Sao Paulo, Brazil during 3-5 October 2006. With more than 600 attendees, it was one of the largest PM conferences ever held in Latin America. It was quite successful by all accounts and measures. During the week that I was in Sao Paulo, I formed a team with Alcides Santopietro, our international correspondent in Brazil. We decided to prepare “breaking news” stories each day during the conference, prepared “on site”, then emailed to our webmaster in the USA for posting on [www.pmforum.org](http://www.pmforum.org).

There was a lot to report on: attendance, keynote papers, featured presenters, exciting topics, PM vendors, new PM products, new PM books, networking events, and news from the local PMI chapters in Brazil. We managed a few stories, but there was much more that we did not report. Fortunately, the conference organizers in Sao Paulo had arranged two features to help the press: a press booth in the vendor exhibition area where the local press could interview speakers and participants, and a booth with “restricted entrance” where invited participants could use computers that were also connected to the internet. We took advantage of these features in Sao Paulo, preparing and “posting” our stories each day. In addition to ourselves, representatives of at least two local Brazilian media organizations seemed to be working non-stop in the press booth interviewing presenters for magazines, newspapers and television coverage.

Our experience in Seattle was different. Nelson Soucek, webmaster and design director for pmforum.org, and I attended the PMI World Congress 2006 – North America, held during 20-24 October at the Washington State Convention & Trade Center. Although it was the largest conference ever sponsored by the Project Management Institute (PMI®), and perhaps the largest in history held anywhere with over 3,000 attendees, there was no visible press presence or coverage. There was no “press room” or booth in the vendor exhibition area. While both PMI and Microsoft, official congress sponsor, provided terminals for internet connections, there seemed to be no facility for actually producing content. According to a PMI spokesperson prior to the event, only “mainstream” media would be granted passes, interviews or access.

Of course, in Seattle as was the case at the smaller conference in Brazil, there were too many stories to cover them all. Nevertheless, we were able to prepare two breaking news stories each day, informing the rest of the world about events and developments in Seattle. However, it was not so easy. Part of the difficulty can be attributed to our own inefficiencies. At the same time, PMI did not seem prepared to share "the news" with those who were unable to be in Seattle, including all those outside of North America for whom the travel costs might have been prohibitive. I am not blaming PMI. I think that few PM societies or organizations have considered that many others around the world are now interested in what is happening in the world of PM. Few PM associations or conference organizers have taken extra steps to accommodate "the press" or provide facilities or features to facilitate "press coverage" of their events. Is it now time?

The world of PM is continuing to grow. The interest in modern PM is growing rapidly in North America, Europe, and worldwide, as investments in information technologies have skyrocketed and become more visible. On the demand side, modern PM is being embraced by organizations across all industries and project types. PMI has estimated that there are at least 2.5 million serious PM practitioners in the world today, with project expenditures worth several trillion US dollars each year. I believe the numbers are much higher, as projects now permeate not only industry but also government and society.

On the supply side, PM education is now a billion dollar industry. PM software and technology vendors have a market worth at least \$5 billion per year. PM services generate another \$10 billion in revenues/costs annually, and much more if turnkey PM services for construction, energy, engineering and defense projects are included. Even in the PM profession, professional societies around the world include over 300,000 professionals, affect many more, and account for nearly \$100 million in expenditures. Based on these estimates, it seems to me that there could be thousands of people each day searching the web for news and information related to PM. Why isn't there more PM news and information available? I think it is only a matter of time before the "mainstream" media discover PM, and the importance of modern PM in our world. In the meantime, those of us in the PM world should take whatever steps we can to make more PM news and information more widely visible and available.

We at PMForum.org and PM World Today have plans to provide more PM related news to the world of PM, on a global basis. We will be reporting on more PM conferences, congresses and events, more developments, with daily breaking news stories. As we add International Correspondents around the world to our network, we expect the coverage of news from around the world of PM to increase. However, we are only the reporters. PM professional societies, conference organizers, PM vendors and other suppliers must also understand the need to prepare news releases, make timely announcements, and make news and information available to those who report it. They should take steps to facilitate news coverage at their events. Even PMI chapters can take steps to inform both the general public and the world of PM, as every activity or development at the local level should be of interest to someone associated with local projects or PM.

The PM News "business" is underserved, and it should begin to grow. We are working to transform [www.pmforum.org](http://www.pmforum.org) into a true PM news portal. In addition to breaking news, we post press releases related to PM, post information about upcoming PM conferences and events, and provide links to suppliers of PM products and services (Expert Resources). We want to provide a true service, an online resource, for the world of PM – access to important and relevant PM news and current information. PM World Today is an extension of that mission, providing PM professionals and practitioners worldwide with both news and new articles, case studies, viewpoints and useful papers by real experts.

Maybe we are breaking new ground. In any case, let's all spread the word (and the news) about modern PM. It is another way that we can work together to make the world a better place.

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