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## **The World of Project Management- What is it?**

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What exactly is the “world of project management”? What is included? How big is it? What are its dimensions and characteristics? These are questions that I have been seriously considering for at least the last three years. And since [www.pmforum.org](http://www.pmforum.org) is supposed to be “connecting the world of project management”, I think it is time to share some thoughts on this topic. In fact, I would like to introduce a new simplified model for the world of PM that I have now been using as a basis for recent professional presentations and papers, especially those on the subject of the future of project management.

As a former active volunteer leader for the Project Management Institute (PMI®), and having spent the last 20 years active in the PM profession, I began with an understanding of those activities and things with which PMI is associated. That includes PM standards, certifications, publications, education, training, conferences, organizational components, etc. Then of course we can identify many organizations in government, industry and society that actually need and use modern PM, in various industries and sectors. There are a variety of PM software tools and solutions, and the commercial companies that develop and sell PM-related products.

We cannot forget PM education and training, and the academic institutions and commercial organizations that provide PM-related educational products and services. There are also thousands of PM consulting companies, or commercial companies that offer PM consulting services in addition to other products and services. Plus, there is a growing network of PM-related research organizations and activities underway around the world. Finally, there is a growing body of knowledge of applications, practices and theories related to managing projects, programs and portfolios of projects and programs. All of these things are present on a global basis.

It occurred to me in 2003 that project management, in fact, is now a robust industry in and of itself, while also providing solutions and support for literally all other industries in the world. As an industry, it can be considered within the context of the life cycle of an industry, or technology. So various normal stages in an industrial development process might then be considered, including research, development, education, training, implementation and usage, and the emergence of a professional body to support it. It seems to me, this is exactly what has occurred with project management over the last 30 years.

Now I would like to offer and explain my model of the World of Project Management as having the following main elements:

1. PM Research & Development
2. PM Body of Knowledge
3. PM Education & Training
4. PM Application & Experience
5. PM Supplier Marketplace (suppliers of PM-related products & services)
6. PM Profession (organizations, standards, qualifications, etc.)
7. PM Communities

Granted, this is very simplified. But it seems to me that these categories can encompass all of the PM in the world today. Let me explain as follows.

**PM Research & Development (R&D)** - This includes R&D of various PM applications, concepts, methods, models, processes and theories, carried out by both individuals and organizations. This is the source of new ideas, information and knowledge, as in any field of science or industry. R&D is conducted by individuals for academic or professional reasons, and by organizations to develop new information, products or services, or for other commercial purposes.

**PM Body of Knowledge** - This includes project life cycle analysis, critical path method (CPM), critical chain project management (CCPM), earned value analysis, management by projects (MBP), enterprise project management (EPM), project management office (PMO), strategic project management (SPM), portfolio project management (PPM), and other theories and approaches. It also includes earned value management (EVM), cost control, schedule management, quality management, risk mgmt, project resource management, communications, contracting & procurement, document control, configuration management, product development PM, and other PM-related practices, processes and systems. All subjects covered in PMI's Guide to the PMBOK, the APM BOK in the UK, other BOK documents and various textbooks on PM. Also, the software tools, models and applications for planning, controlling and managing the above subjects.

**PM Education & Training** - This element includes basic PM courses, undergraduate and graduate degree programs, and PM education for executives, professionals and individuals in the workforce. PM training includes courses and programs offered by professional associations, consultants, conference sponsors, and other organizations. PM training programs within large companies and government organizations are also common. PM training tends to be hands-on training in specific tools, methods, processes, procedures or PM subjects. This is a growing and robust segment of the PM world.

**PM Experience & Practice** - This is the real world of actual projects, programs, portfolios of projects, project & program managers, project teams, organizations that implement PM, industries associated with those projects & organizations, projects and PM in various fields of science and application, and projects & PM in government and society. It includes project-oriented governmental and industrial organizations that conduct business via programs and projects. This is a large group, covers all industries and organizations using PM, and represents hundreds of billions of \$. These projects, people, organizations and industries are the main users of PM and represent the demand for modern project management. Some important work has been done in recent years by Russ Archibald and others to define and categorize programs and projects. (see <http://www.pmforum.org/library/cases/globalslides.pdf>.)

**PM Supplier Marketplace** - PM suppliers include the individuals and organizations that develop and sell commercial PM products, services and technologies. These include turnkey project delivery services; contract PM; PM staffing and placement services; PM consulting of various types; PM education and training products & services; PM software, tools & technologies; PM books, magazines and other publications (including on-line publishing); PM knowledge vendors, including portals and websites; PM news and information vendors (media); and other PM related products and services.

**PM Profession** - Includes PM professional organizations such as the Project Management Institute (PMI), the International Project Management Association (IPMA) and various national PM associations around the world. Also included are the products and activities of those professional associations, including PM ethics, standards, certifications, publications, conferences, meetings and other products and activities that advance, promote and sustain the PM profession itself.

**PM Communities** - These are groups of individuals with common interests related to PM and include chapters of professional associations, industry groups, software tool communities of interest, members of on-line groups, and other communities of interest. PM communities are growing in size, number and importance around and throughout the world. They are often sponsored by professional organizations such as PMI or global corporations such as Bechtel, EDS, Exxon, IBM, NCR, Microsoft and many others.

Of course, all of the above can also be considered from a geographic perspective, PM around the physical world (various countries and regions of Earth), and related to specific industries or types of projects. But from my perspective, I think that everything I know about modern PM can be included in the above categories. Am I wrong? What have I missed?

The above simplified model has allowed me to "get my arms around the subject". It has also provided some perspective on the history and future of the PM profession, and just how big and important this "world of PM" really is. As more human endeavors are

planned and accomplished as projects, then it seems to me that modern PM becomes ever more important to the future of economic development and human progress.

If this is a useful model for the World of Project Management, then I propose to orient the contents of [www.pmforum.org](http://www.pmforum.org) in this way. If it is not so useful, then please let me know. Next month, I will try to provide some additional perspective on just how big the World of PM is now, in terms of numbers of individuals, organizations and economic impact. Several surveys have been conducted in recent years by Gartner, PMI and other organizations, but only for selected elements. I think it is time to study and track the size and growing influence of this world of PM, this PM "industry" that we live and work in.

Best regards,  
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David L. Pells, is the Managing Editor of PM World Today and [www.pmforum.org](http://www.pmforum.org). He is also the President and CEO of iWorld Projects & Systems, Inc., the parent company of [pmforum.org](http://pmforum.org). David is an internationally recognized leader in the field of professional project management, with over thirty years' experience in project management related activities and positions. His professional experience includes a wide variety of programs and projects, including engineering, construction, transit, defense and high technology, and project sizes ranging from several thousand to ten billion dollars. He is a former member of the board of directors of the Project Management Institute (PMI®), and was awarded PMI's person of the year award in 1998 and Fellow Award in 1999.