GUEST EDITORIAL PREFACE

Special Issue on UX and Project Management:
Part 1

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WHY WE NEED NEW APPROACHES TO PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Part I of this Special Issue on Project Management and User Experience stems from several trends emerging at the crossroads of the field of technical and professional communication and the many industries we train professionals for. Specifically, the design of digital products and services such as websites, mobile applications, enterprise software, intranets, and desktop software provides a new challenge for project managers. Many contemporary PMs must now coordinate cross-functional teams containing an increasingly diverse array of professionals. These teams are often developed around the needs of the users of digital technologies, a position in a globally-distributed economy that is typically synonymous with the customer, client, or stakeholder.

Within such an environment, project teams may include professionals as wide-ranging as user experience designers, web developers, technical communicators, business managers, product developers, and localization and translation specialists. Such professionals also represent a dizzying array of knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs), all of which must be channeled toward particular project goals. In this context, PMs who wish to cultivate effective project management techniques must be more flexible, adaptable, and reflective than ever before. PMs need new approaches to project management that enable them to adapt to the rigors of an unpredictable workflow.

In the wake of these challenges, Part I of this special issue presents scholarship that provides new approaches to project management for researchers, practitioners, and students within technical and professional communication and related fields. In "Agile writing: A project management approach to learning," Joseph Moses presents an approach for using scrum that stands to contribute valuable new insights into how technical communicators build and manage cross-functional writing teams within academia and beyond. In "Communicating user experience: 'Wicked' problems, patchwork personas, and the ICTD project lifecycle," Hilary Sarat-St

Peter adapts the user experience method of persona development into an inventional activity for professional communicators who want to develop funded projects with stakeholders in the developing world. In "A study of a federally funded project between higher-ed institutions in the U.S. and Pakistan: Intercultural academic project management," Anirban Ray, Colleen Reilly, and Jeremy Tirrell relate initial findings from a study of the challenges faced by project managers who are coordinating heterogeneous, distributed teams. Finally, in "Mapping the workspace of a globally distributed 'Agile team," Benjamin Lauren explores how the exigencies of physical spaces within organizations can be designed to support an agile workflow.

This scholarship stands to open up productive new conversations regarding how project management techniques must be adapted to new workflows. These articles ask hard questions regarding how the spaces, techniques, and exigencies of knowledge work open up new possibilities for teamwork. At the same time, authors reflect on the difficult challenges to teamwork presented by such trends as workflow distribution, cultural heterogeneity, and the affordances of physical workplaces. More importantly, however, authors in this issue open up new topics for discussions that project managers and other professionals need to have with their team members in order to successfully adapt to the challenges to come.

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