a vital connection

FEW project managers believe that their projects are 'simple'. There always seem to be factors that make the problem 'complex'.

Cogs in motion: categorising projects can help you match the right person to the demands of the job.

Couple this with the observation that virtually all organisations have some, often implicit, understanding that they run different types of projects, and you have all the makings of the need for taxonomy – a way of categorising projects.

Every classification scheme establishes types, or families, of related things. Research, and our own experience with clients, suggest that typically it is possible to group projects into three to five stable types, and that within the types you have to have a way of accounting for degrees of complexity.

by **Christopher Worsley**

CEO: CITI Group

organisation

Unfortunately it also appears that there are many possible categorisation schemes and what is seen as complex in one organisation is regarded as a non-issue in another.

Does this mean that finding a useful way to categorise projects is doomed? Absolutely not! The variance turns out to be caused by the purpose to which the classification scheme is being used. We have come across organisations that wish to use project categorisation to balance their portfolio; to manage their organisational risk, and

to select appropriate stage gate procedures. In the public domain the OGC (the UK's Office of Government and Commerce) has set up a scheme called RPA (risk potential assessment), which is used by government departments to determine which of the (large) procurement projects should be subject to independent review. It focuses on size and complexity of the contractual engagement.

project delivery

A common problem, and one which we were faced with recently, is to identify the profile of capability needed in the project manager to safely and successfully deliver

projects in a varied and complex portfolio.

Using a five-factor, three-level analysis of complexity, coupled with an assessment of the fundamental constraints applied to a project to define project type, we have found a powerful way of matching project managers, and their development needs, to the demands made by the projects.

So what to do? First decide what you want a category system for. Second, realise that there are a number of good schemes out there that can help you. Third, you may like to contact us for information and guidance on what is available and how to get maximum value from project categorisation.

inside... open courses 2005 – a total development framework for project and programme management

hot topics

**PMI Research Conference, July 11–14 2004
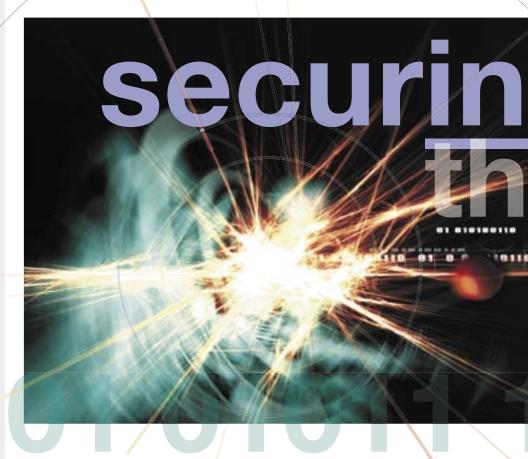By Louise Lee, CITI Course Design Authority.**

THE PMI Research Conference, chaired this year by Drs Slevin, Pinto and Cleland, was an excellent opportunity to meet the significant players in project and programme management research and to get a feel for the 'hot topic' areas. Yes, it is very American, with approximately two thirds of the speakers from North American Universities – but there are very few UK-led public forums of this nature. Perhaps a wake-up call for the APM….

A big theme was project manager competence, with particular emphasis on leadership competences. Alongside this, work on project categorisation continues. Analysis of project types is still very much based upon complexity analyses, but it was clear from the speakers that the type of model used would vary with its application – something which our Government clients would recognise when taking the OGC RPA and trying to apply it as a general portfolio risk analysis.

The highlights for me:

- A very honest evaluation by Terry Cook-Davies, of PMI's new OPM3 maturity model – "we have a way to go before we see this being practically applied".
- Dr Brian Hobbs's work on what tools project managers really use, with the tools to support project kick-off (project initiation) featuring as one of the most important in the project manager's toolkit. I'm sure you will all be relieved to know that Monte Carlo came out amongst the lowest rated!
- Dr Bredillet's paper on 'praxilogical' approaches to project management, which served to remind me why I am a practitioner – and they do research!

Of the 300 attendees at the conference only 30 were from industry. Would I attend the next conference in 2006? On balance I think yes, but my feedback to PMI would be: please, please give space for discussions around the application of the research findings – without this, from the outside in, the conference still feels disconnected from reality.

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group11

GCHQ is a forward looking organisation. Most of their people have specialist skills, one of which is Project Management, and GCHQ helps them develop and work flexibly – in ways that suit them – so that they can give of their best.

When GCHQ wanted to improve delivery capability across their organisation, they undertook a rigorous selection process that resulted in them choosing CITI to deliver a range of project management consultancy services. Their goal is to have a 'best in class' Project Management community, and to increase throughput by improving project management capability.

objectives

After a number of intensive initiation workshops to understand their business objectives and constraints, CITI's first major activity was to profile their project management community, to determine the level of individual competence and identify any potential mismatches of skill and experience. Simultaneously we began a series of health checks on the large portfolio of projects themselves to provide an independent

estimate accurately

> **Project Estimating**
> **Master classes available through open courses or on an in-company basis**

your estimate
£1,214,291.10
3.20pm
September 16
2005

YOUR sponsor calls and you just know that it is going to be a briefing for your next project and that it is going to be the big one!

You collect your jacket, walk to her office, knock and swagger in. "Great to see you. Sit down," she says. "Have I got the project for you!" You were right. She then spends the next two minutes 20 seconds telling you what has to be done: huge company-wide business process re-engineering, merging of departments, redeployment and relocation, closure and redundancy … in short, enormous business change. She then asks the enduring question: "How much will it cost and when will it finish?" Quick as a flash, you whip out your palm-top, do the

g e future

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new appointment

THE APM has announced the appointment of Dr Thomas Docker as Chairman of the APM's Professional Development Board.

Thomas is Chairman of CITI and has a wealth of experience of academic and vocational development gained over the last 26 years.

He has been an APM Council member since 2003 and has recently joined the APM Executive Board. As Thomas points out: "Accreditation in project management is an increasingly important factor as organisations become more dependent on the need to run successful projects and to demonstrate capability in their project community."

The Professional Development Board will oversee the work of professional development within APM, and will provide advice and guidance to APM staff in the development and maintenance of its qualifications and accreditation services. The APM is fully committed to raising the professional standing of project management and building on the valuable foundations established by past volunteers and former staff.

The APM has the most comprehensive set of professional qualifications available in project management and Susie Kay, who recently joined APM, has taken on the important role of Head of Professional Development.

Susie was previously Professional Adviser, Membership, Careers and Qualifications Department, at CILIP (The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals) and believes strongly in the value of continuing skills acquisition and CPD lifestyles.

> Accreditation in project management is an increasingly important factor as organisations become more dependent on the need to run successful projects

assessment of project status, structure and visibility throughout the department.

From the results of these studies, and work completed on the categorisation of their projects, GCHQ now have a much better understanding of why their project environment looks and acts the way it does. This greater understanding provides the opportunity to develop or recruit project managers, and, perhaps as crucial, to structure projects differently to accommodate the experience and skills of the project managers they have.

framework

The next major piece of work is to develop and evaluate the project management community against one of the maturity models to give senior management a framework against which the business can be measured. By assisting with project start-ups, providing project management support and project delivery improvements, our partnership approach with GCHQ allows the transfer of skills to individuals who learn on the job from interactions with CITI and continue to drive through GCHQ's project excellence.

CITI is delighted to be working in a 'clients' friend' partnership with GCHQ, whose commitment and enthusiasm to succeed with this initiative is a continuing pleasure. And they will succeed!

"We are already seeing a positive impact of working with CITI by beginning to objectively match project managers to projects within our new programmes."

Mike Hayes – Head of Profession for Project Management, GCHQ.

– or face certain death!

sums and then self-assuredly advise her that it will cost £1,214,291.10, with project closure at 3:20pm on September 16, 2005.

This is of course a fantasy ... the sponsor's. Why? The sponsor wants you to provide precise and accurate estimates, despite all the uncertainty inherent during the early project phases.

However, the fundamental reason why projects are late and over budget is that bad estimates have been used from the outset. We are notoriously bad at estimating and are intimidated into giving single-point estimates which are nothing better than guesses; massive problems then ensue further downstream.

Estimating is such an important task that CITI runs a one-day master class that focuses on this critical activity. The class size is kept small and the proceedings are highly interactive and fun in nature. Short lectures, discussions and exercises cover the why, what, when and how of project estimating and special attention is given to estimating techniques, which are practised throughout the day.

Delegates are also taught how to run a facilitated workshop and this is put to use in the final estimating exercise.

The immediate benefit of attending is a full and practical understanding of project estimating, based on best practice, industry experience and rigorous academic research. This gives delegates the necessary confidence to produce valid estimates that will form the foundation of their project plans.

new year's
resolution

CITI open courses are unique. They mix consistency of CITI approach with variety of shared experiences from different organisations and industry sectors, allowing delegates to challenge their own management style in a safe environment.

Organisations need flexible options to development, meeting individual needs whilst appreciating that delegates have commitments in the workplace. Open courses provide an opportunity to develop your team as individuals or small groups, removing the need to release large groups of people at one time.

opportunity

The 12-month schedule allows you to offer alternative dates to those delegates who can't make in-company courses, or offer selected individuals the opportunity to attend master classes or gain accreditation that isn't suitable for the rest of the group.

individual needs

You can book as few or as many delegates as you wish on to a course, allowing you to create development frameworks for individuals and small teams by selecting core courses, master classes and accreditations to suit individual needs.

2005 sees the launch of a new portfolio of open courses in a new-look brochure. As well as providing our own development framework, comprising both core courses and master classes, we have extended our offering to reflect the growing demand for method accreditation, both at PRINCE2 and MSP levels.

making the right choice

The brochure is just one of three ways to select the right course for you and your team:

■ The brochure contains short descriptions of all the open course offerings, in a compact desktop format, and an updated schedule will be sent to you every three months to slip into the back pocket, creating a brochure that never goes out of date.

■ Our website is always up to date with course descriptions, dates and location information allowing you to research and book your course without picking up the phone. You can also use our quick project management questionnaire to assess which course is right for you.

■ New for 2005 – we can provide a CD containing a fully working intranet area to install on to your server, providing access to your team so members can research and select the course they want to attend. They can then book directly with us, through secured web pages, or book with you. Either way, we can keep you up to date with who's attending what and when.

To discuss how open courses can meet your development needs, call 01908 283600 and speak to Anna Havard.

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www.citi.co.uk

citi *the project professionals*