The Challenge for the Wideman Glossary 6.1 Update

Can the Glossary be made more user-focused?

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Introduction

It has always surprised us that the subject of Communications seems to have received the least specific attention in most of the authoritative pronouncements on the practice of project management.[1] At the same time, the related subject of ***Information*** Management is hardly mentioned at all. We find it surprising because if you think about it, if you want to produce something unusual it is a good idea to make it a "project".

However, to do so you need a plan, and this plan will likely call for materials, tools, equipment, and people to do the work – as well as communicating, administration and record keeping. But then nothing will happen unless those people are told what to do. And for that matter, ideally, all the other people[2] impacted should also be told what to expect.

Consequently, communication is a foundational activity in all that goes on in a project. And clear, cryptic and accurate communication is essential if mistakes at the expense of the project's time, cost and successful outcome are to be avoided.

Hence the need for a relevant Glossary of Terms that provides that common understanding for those people working on a given project.

The Challenge

In our last month's introduction to *What's New in Glossary v6.1*[3] we introduced version 6.1 of our Wideman Comparative Glossary of Project Management Terms. However, we did so on a different basis compared to previously. Instead, we announced different selections of terms suited to different audiences, that is, relevant to different interests. Why did we do this?

In that previous Introduction we made the point that it is essential to have successful communication between a project's clients, or sponsor, and the people who will do the work. That is, if the result of the project is to be successful in delivering an acceptable and satisfactory outcome. But successful communication requires a common language especially suited to the occasion. Failure at this level inevitably leads to miscommunications, resulting in incorrect work that then has to be corrected, consuming unwanted time and cost.

Why has this need come about? It is probably because project management has developed in different directions, more specifically into different disciplines at different hierarchical levels. At the same time, project management is being recognized and hence being expanded into many different product sectors (Areas of Application). In so doing, it has become clear that not only are many terms unsuited to some areas of application, but for those that are, the corresponding definitions are not necessarily appropriate or ideal for the occasion.

One of the big benefits of the *Wideman Comparative Glossary of Project Management Terms* has been the presentation of different definitions for the same term, according to different sources. That does not mean that only one of the definitions is correct and all the others are wrong, but rather that different meanings may be ascribed to a given term under different project circumstances. Given these

circumstances, we have tentatively concluded that Glossary users should prefer to have a Glossary relevant to their environment without it being bogged down with a lot of content of little or no interest.

We may all think that we speak the same language.[4] But at a slight exaggeration, consider a visit to your doctor calling for some examination or other. When you get back the report of the examination and the doctor's prescription, both documents are filled with arcane language known only to the medical professionals. How frustrating is that? Fortunately, another professional, the pharmacist, comes to the rescue and checks your prescriptions and provides you with what you need. We like to think that our glossaries will do the same.

With over 7,000 entries representing around 5,000 terms, the challenge is: Which term and its respective definition belongs where?

Justification for different groupings – Project Management hierarchy

Our first need was to find a name, or label, for referring to this large collection of glossary terms. Actually, that was solved a long time ago with the label "Project Management Terms". However, since the Glossary has grown beyond that of a single project, it follows that Project Management must also grow likewise.

Hence, we should now define Project Management as:

> "The whole domain of project activity encompassing governance, portfolio management, program management, the management of a single project, and all related tools and techniques."

By the same token, and when needed, we can refer to the conduct of an individual project as "Single Project Management" (SPM).

So all of that provides us with a breakdown of five levels ranging from Governance to Tools and Techniques as shown in Figure 1 below.

Group	Glossary Name	Ref**	Type	Level in Group hierarchy and Comments
Project Management Domain	Go**V**ernance	**V**	Corporate Policy	Overarching all PM activities
	Port**F**olio	**F**	PPfM Discipline	Level 1-Incl. relevant T&T High
	Pro**G**ram	**G**	PgM Discipline	Level 2-Ditto
	Pro**J**ect	**J**	SPM Discipline	Level 3-Ditto
	Tools & Tech**N**iques	**N**	PM Processes	Level 4-All T&T only Low

Note: The letters in the column marked "Ref**" are used for sorting, but also appear in the various Glossaries to show when the term appears in related Glossaries.

Figure 1: Hierarchy levels in project management

Justification for different groupings – Industry/Product sectors

In this version of our Glossary we have made an important distinction that is not yet accepted by many practitioners.

That distinction is a differentiation between the management of the project, i.e. "***Project*** Management", and the management of the development of the required outcome or product – what ever that might be.

This we call "***Product Development*** [Management]". Of course, in practice, Project Management and Product Development must be closely integrated, as we shall note later. With this distinction in mind, we studied each and every definition in our listing of 7,000 or so Glossary entries.

As expected, it was evident that many project management terms and their definitions could be applied in many product sectors. However, a significant number were primarily relevant only in Product Development activities. Indeed, about a third of the entries in the Glossary are currently relevant to Product Development rather than Project Management.

That made it worthwhile studying which industries use, or could potential use, project management in their business. And those that do are typically grouped into specific product industries. When that is the case, we refer to that as an "Area of Application" (AofA) of project management. As expected, there are many definitions in our long list of terms and definitions that appear to be more relevant to an AofA than to one or more of the five project management hierarchical levels shown in Figure 1. And then they are often applicable only to specific products rather than all products.

Internet research

Internet research showed that there are quite a number of organizations that publish lists of Product/Product Sectors for various purposes. For our study we chose to select a limited number of such lists that appeared appropriate as follows:

A. Industry Sectors, Public Works Canada, Internet, accessed 10/25/15
B. International Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities (ISIC), Rev.4, Internet, accessed 10/25/15
C. Outline of industry, Major industries, Wikipedia, Internet, accessed 10/25/15
D. Business sectors, Everis consulting, Internet, accessed 10/25/15
E. Canada Business Network, Industry sectors, Internet, accessed 10/25/15
F. Archibald, Multi-dimensional Classification of Projects, Figure 9, http://www.maxwideman.com/guests/categorization/multi_dimensional.htm
G. Yahoo! Finance, Industry by Sector, Internet, accessed 10/25/15
H. ISO TC258 draft Vocabulary for Project Program and Portfolio management, work in progress.

A study of these lists quickly determined that the number of potential project management AofAs amount to several hundreds, and this number is no doubt increasing every day. So the issue now is whether it is possible to sort these areas of application into a limited number of groups that are representative of collections of industry sectors. That is, collections that are relevant for purposes of a simplified project management classification arrangement.

Taming the long list of industry sectors

Work and workers

As noted earlier, there have been numerous attempts to segregate industry sectors into some meaningful groupings, often for a variety of different purposes. In our case, we are interested in the style of management most suited to different types of project. Here, for this Glossary exercise, we may turn to the conclusions reached in the paper: *Toward a Fundamental Differentiation between Project Types*.[5] The basic premise of this paper is simple:

> **For a project to be successful, different types of project work, associated with different types of product, need to be managed differently.**

For example, it is perceived wisdom that trying to manage a software development project like you would manage the design and construction of a high-rise building would not produce the best outcome – nor would it be vice versa. Yet both types of project have clear starts and ends, both require architectural design effort, both can usefully use network planning, both must meet quality standards and so on. So what makes the difference?

We may put the premise of the Shenhar-Wideman paper, as quoted above, another way. By and large:

> **Different types of work require different types of workers who respond better to different types of management.**

Note, however, that closer examination reveals that it is not really the project management that needs to change, but the management of the development of the product!

Types of work

To this end, authors Shenhar and Wideman identified two fundamentally different types of work, at least to the extent of the work involved in the major elements required to complete a particular project. Here's what they wrote:[6]

> "**A. Craft Work**
>
> Craftwork is work that has been done before, essentially requiring repetitive effort. It is an activity that fundamentally repeats a previous activity, can be improved through repetition, and conforms to the learning curve phenomena.
>
> Such work is the result of ***manual dexterity***. Examples might be concrete forming, assembling a chair, repairing a car and so on.
>
> **B. Intellect Work**
>
> Intellect work is work that requires substantial creative effort. It has not been done before, it is exploratory in nature, and will likely require iteration. It requires new ideas and imagination.
>
> Such work is the result of applying ***brainpower***. Examples include developing a new theory, new process, new invention and so on."

As one wag put it, it is the difference between "Brain and Brawn".

Significant difference in types of output

However, the authors also identified another crucial difference between the two types of project, namely what type of outcome or product is being produced? This inevitably determines the type of work required to produce the product. In this respect the authors concluded that the following much simplified differentiation is evident:[7]

> "**A. 'Tangible' Product**
>
> A tangible product is one in which the primary value is in the physical artifact. It is the value of the artifact that distinguishes it from other products. A new building is a well-recognized example of this type of product.
>
> **B. 'Intangible' Product**
>
> An intangible product is one in which the value is in its intellectual property. Although there is some physical result, this is not the essence of the product. The essential feature

is new information and its physical aspect is only a vehicle for its conveyance and transformation. Software is a prime example."

Putting "Work" and "Product" together

As a side note, in many of the more recent definitions added to our Glossary, the term "Technical" refers to the work of creating the project's product. This is in contrast to referring to the numeric type topics of project management such as managing cost, or developing a network schedule. Moreover, this technical (product development) work is typically conducted in "Stages", while the management of the Project as a whole is typically separated into "Phases".

For example, in PRINCE2 there are two types of time divisions. A project is divided into "phases" to define management decision points – PRINCE2 calls these "Management ***Phases***". The second type is the "Technical ***Stages***" that are groupings of selected technical techniques used in the development of the product.

These two classes of time intervals do not necessarily overlap but rather, in normal planning, the ***Phases*** of ***Project*** Management encompass the ***Stages*** of ***Technical*** Product Development.

Now, if we put *Work* and *Product* together as a 2x2 matrix we arrive at a basic Project Classification as shown in Figure 2:[8]

Type of Work in the Project		Type of Product from the Project	
		Tangible	**Intangible**
Intellect		**3. Example:** Development of an all-new electric car	**4. Example:** Development of a new theory
Craft		**1. Example:** Detailing and construction of a building	**2. Example** Updating a procedures manual

Figure 2: Basic 2x2 Project Classification Categories based on primary products

To arrive at practical terms and their respective definitions for the four types shown in the chart, we researched the listings of industry sectors presented earlier. They are listed as columns A through H as shown in Appendix A, Figures A1 and A2: *Tables of Industry Sectors According to Different Sources*".

Comments regarding Appendix A

Appendix A sets out a Table of Industry Sectors as identified from different sources:

1. Below each source document title in columns A through H is shown the number of discrete entries at the group level in the original source document.
2. For simplicity in displaying the comparison between sources in the table, we have grouped a number of lesser industries together in a given column. Hence the number of occupied rows is less than the original number shown at the top.
3. Note that the entries in column A through H are themselves headings that cluster numerous similar project management Areas of Application, so that the table as a whole covers the whole area of potential project activity.
4. Column I contains our suggested representative term for each row in question.
5. Column J identifies the general category of the row according to one of the four types, 1 through

4, displayed in the *Basic 2x2 Project Classification* table in Figure 2.

6. Finally, the four that we feel are best representative of the industries in each of the categories are hi-lighted in yellow. This selection is based generally on the size of the industry in question and the extent of recognition of that industry in project management literature.
7. Of course, our selection necessarily tends to be very subjective, especially as many industries engage in projects that range from simple maintenance to advanced research.

Figure A1 shows Work Types 1 & 2
Figure A2 shows Work Types 3 & 4

Summary of our deliberations

Putting all this together, we can now add these descriptions to our original Figure 1 to present a summary chart of Glossaries as shown in Figure 3.

Group	Glossary Name	Ref**	Type	Level in Group hierarchy and Comments
Project Domain	Go**V**ernance	**V**	Corporate Policy	Overarching all PM activities
	Port**F**olio	**F**	PPfM Discipline	Level 1-Incl. relevant T&T High
	Pro**G**ram	**G**	PgM Discipline	Level 2-Ditto
	Pro**J**ect	**J**	SPM Discipline	Level 3-Ditto
	Tools & Tech**N**iques	**N**	PM Processes	Level 4-All T&T only Low
Industry/Product Sector (Area of PM Application)	**C**onstruction	**C**	Tangible-Craft	Group Category 1 Low
	Healthcare (Administration)	**H**	Intangible-Craft	Group Category 2
	Manufacturing	**M**	Tangible-Intellect	Group Category 3
	Info **T**echnology (& High Tech work)	**T**	Intangible-Intellect	Group Category 4 High

Note re column marked "Ref**": As well as being used for sorting, these letters appear against each entry in the various Glossaries to show in which other Glossaries the entry will be found. This provides an indication of the degree of universality of the term in question.

Figure 3: Glossaries in the Project Domain and in Industry/Product Sectors

Of course, we recognize that our analysis and findings are far from perfect; not least because of the number of subjective judgments we have had to make. Nevertheless, we hope that we have achieved our objective of developing a set of Glossaries that are more user-friendly, useful and reliable.

End Notes

[1] *Communications* is the shortest section in the Project Management Institute's PMBOK® documents, as compared to all the other specialty subjects. However, communication is woven throughout all the topics.
[2] I.e. The "stakeholders".
[3] See http://www.maxwideman.com/papers/glossary6_1/intro.htm
[4] In this case English
[5] Shenhar, Dr. A., and R. Max Wideman, *Toward a Fundamental Differentiation between Project Types*, http://www.maxwideman.com/papers/differentiation/purpose.htm, 2002
[6] Ibid, http://www.maxwideman.com/papers/differentiation/work.htm
[7] Ibid, http://www.maxwideman.com/papers/differentiation/product.htm
[8] Ibid http://www.maxwideman.com/papers/differentiation/matrix.htm.

Figure A1: Table of Industry Sectors identified by Different Sources – Work Types 1 & 2

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
Pub Works Canada **Original 25**	**ISIC-Rev4** **Original 21**	**Wikipedia** **Original 17**	**Everis.com** **Original 14**	**Canada Bus Network** **Original 11**	**Archibald** **Original 10**	**Yahoo - Finance** **Original 9**	**ISO TC258** **Original 4**	**Typical short-form label** **2 selected**	**Work Type** **(See Fig 2)**
Engineering Construction Infrastructure Asset management	Construction Real estate	Construction		Construction	Facilities International development		Construction	**Construction**	**1**
Forest Paper Packaging	Agriculture	Agriculture Food industry		Agriculture		Agriculture		Agriculture	**1**
Metals	Mining		Mining	Natural resources		Mining		Mining	**1**
Retail consumer	Retail Trade		Consumer goods	Retail Wholesale		Consumer goods		Retail	**1**
Energy/Utilities	Electricity Water	Energy Water	Utilities Energy	Energy		Utilities		Utilities	**1**
Healthcare Pharmaceuticals	Health Social Home Help	Healthcare	Health Pharmaceuticals			Healthcare	Healthcare	**Healthcare** *	**2**
Government Public services	Public administration Private administration		Public sector					Administration *	**2**
Communications	Education Communications	Information industry		Information Communications	Communication Systems		IT (hardware)	Communication	**2**

** Healthcare and Public Services are two very large areas of administrative type projects involving similar type outputs.
Note: Category Type 1 projects generally result in Craft/Tangible outcomes. Type 2 projects generally result in Craft/Intangible outcomes.

Figure A2: Table of Industry Sectors identified by Different Sources – Work Types 3 & 4

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
Pub Works Canada	**ISIC-Rev4**	**Wikipedia**	**Everis.com**	**Canada Bus Network**	**Archibald**	**Yahoo - Finance**	**ISO TC258**	**Typical short-form label +2 selected**	**Work Type (See Fig 2)**
Automotive Industrial Manufacturing Chemicals	Manufacturing	Chemicals Telecom (hardware) Manufacturing	Telecom Manufacturing	Manufacturing		Industrial		**Manufacturing**	**3**
Aerospace		Aerospace Defense	Aerospace Airlines	Aero Defense			Defense	Defense	**3**
Entertainment Media	Entertainment	Entertainment Mass media			Media Entertainment Events			Entertainment	**3**
Transportation	Transportation		Transport	Transportation				Transport	**3**
Technology (software)	Professional Scientific Technical Computer industry			Science Technology	Research & Development Business organizational change Software	Technology		**IT (Information-Technology)**	**4**
Banking Financial services Insurance Sovereign wealth Private equity	Finance Insurance	Financial services	Banking Insurance		Product Services	Financial		Finance	**4**
Hospitality & Leisure	Accommodation	Hospitality industry	Tourism	Tourism Travel Culture Leisure				Tourism	**4**

Note: Category Type 3 projects generally result in Intellect/Tangible outcomes. Type 4 projects generally result in Intellect/Intangible outcomes.