Digital disruptors and digital connectors in project management

Project management research

Karen Thompson
In this presentation ...

• A puzzle
  – project management
  – social media
• Practitioner research
• Findings
  – and a retrospective
• Conclusions
  – and recommendations for practice
Research at the intersection of project management and social media
Social media are disrupting business and society, so .... what about project management?

A match made in heaven, or a waste of time?
Project management (traditional view)

- Planning -> action
- Objective monitoring & control
- Change managed (resisted?)
- Project becomes disconnected from environment
Social media

The socio-technical systems that employ mobile and web-based technologies to provide space for social interaction, communication and collaboration

Adapted from Zhao et al (2013)
The research

- Practitioner based, bottom-up
- Focus on next generation of project managers
  - minimal organisational constraints
  - disposed to use social media
- Series of interviews with teams & individuals
  - business consultancy projects
  - range of disciplines
  - alumni 2-3 years
- Validated with professional PMs
- 36 participants
Overview

Organisational context

Technological characteristics

Team characteristics

Task characteristics

Technology types
- Social network
- Shared workspace
- Instant messenger
- Micro blogs
- Videos & images
- Online meeting

Collaborating
Sharing work
Document sharing & storage

Managing
Assigning tasks
Reporting status
Decision making
Project log
Managing change

Engaging team members
Keeping in contact
Informal information sharing
Requesting/providing feedback
Reminders, requests & prompts
Sharing ideas/discussion
Problem solving
Lessons learnt

Sharing vision

Horizon scanning
Accessing experts

Efficiency
Quality
Information management
Flexibility
Transparency
Creativity
Emotional impacts
- Connection
- Motivation
- Enjoyment
- Focus
- Trust

Distraction
Fear of overload
Risk of info loss

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Conclusions
SECI model of knowledge transformation
(Nonaka & Konno 1998)

In this presentation
- A puzzle
- Findings
- Conclusions
Knowledge in project management
(Reich & Wee 2007)

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Socialization

Externalization

Internalisation

Combination

Project management
(traditional view)
# Project knowledge with social media

## Socialization
- Support for & conducting meetings
- Informal information sharing
- Requesting & providing feedback
- Reminders, requests & prompts
- Keeping in contact
- Discussions
- Solving problems
- Brainstorming

## Externalization
- Assigning tasks
- Checking/reporting work progress
- Decision making
- Project log
- Managing changes
- Solving problems
- Brainstorming
- Capturing lessons learnt

## Internalisation
- Horizon scanning
- Gathering external information
- Accessing external experts
- Checking/reporting work progress
- Solving problems
- Brainstorming
- Capturing lessons learnt

## Externalization
- Recording task allocation
- Organising meetings
- Storing & sharing files
- Sharing work
- Distributing project information externally

## Combination

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Project as an action process

Vision → Action → Change

In this presentation → A puzzle → Practitioner research → Findings → Conclusions
Project as a learning process

(Turner 2014, Daft & Weick 1984)

Scanning
(Data collection)

Interpretation
(Data given meaning)

Vision

Learning & Action

Change

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Recommendations for practice

Use social media in project management to ...

Support disruption
• Share ideas and new knowledge
• Request and provide feedback
• Capture learning
• Surface concerns and solve problems
• Communicate across project boundary

Make connections
• Connect team members to project
• Connect problems to solutions
• Project to external environment
Project communication

Zone of Awareness

Zone of Connection

Zone of Participation
engagement in learning & action

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References and further reading

Association for Project Management 2014. APM web briefing - Social media in project management, is it a waste of time? Available online: https://www.apm.org.uk/sites/default/files/APM%20web%20briefing%20-Social%20media%20in%20project%20management,%20is%20it%20a%20waste%20of%20time_0.pdf [last accessed 22 June 2016]


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