



Human Systems

Human Systems and Research

For Human Systems, research is the critical factor that lies at the heart of all good consultancy. Access to robust global research is what makes the difference between simply believing that something works, and knowing that it does – and providing evidence of this!

The importance of good research data is typically undervalued by organisations simply because it is often impractical and expensive to embark on the kind of wide ranging research that could reduce risk and improve the likelihood of success.

With Human Systems involved, organisations have access to knowledge derived from a vast range of relevant industry research, covering both past and present activities. For a fraction of the investment of a single bespoke research project, Human Systems' clients can gain the knowledge they need, precisely when they need it.

Research underpins all of the services offered by Human Systems. Two of its principals, Dr. Lynn Crawford and Dr. Terry Cooke-Davies met presenting research papers at a project management conference, while each was working towards their doctorate.

Since completing their research degrees, the two have assembled a formidable list of papers in research journals, at conferences, and in monographs. A partial list is attached in section 4 below.

In addition, Drs. Crawford and Cooke-Davies are involved in three current research programmes supported by the Project Management Institute (PMI). More information can be found on the PMI web site, www.pmi.org

1 Exploring the Role of the Executive Sponsor

This is the first time a research project will focus specifically on the position of the executive project sponsor; a role that plays an integral part in organisational project management and project governance. The primary investigative team is based in Oceania, Europe, North America and Africa, ensuring well-grounded research and early communication to PMI members and other stakeholders.

The team of five researchers is led by Lynn Crawford, and includes Terry Cooke-Davies.

2 Understanding the Value of Project Management

The value resulting from investments in project management has been hard to define and measure, despite much discussion.

This rigorous, coordinated, multidisciplinary, multi-method investigation is designed to help the profession understand and quantify the value of implementing project management in today's organisations.



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The total value of the research study, including the in-kind time and material contributions of all participating universities and organisations, is over \$2.5 million (US). PMI is providing \$1.14million of this in grant funding.

Principal investigators for the project are Dr. Janice Thomas, Director of Athabasca University's MBA in Project Management, and Mark Mullaly, President of Interthink Consulting in Edmonton, Alberta. The grant is one of the largest of its kind in the field of project management, and will enable an international team of researchers to investigate how project management is implemented in organisations, and how organisations assess the value of project management practices. Cross-disciplinary research teams from China, North America, South America, Australia and Europe will address the question of project management value from diverse theoretical and organisational points of view,. Lynn Crawford and Terry Cooke-Davies are actively involved in many aspects of this project.

3 Impact of Complexity Theory on Project Management

The issue of theoretical foundations in project management research has been a central point of debate among both practitioner and scholarly communities for quite some time. There is a growing concern about the dominance of various versions of control theory, operations research or systems theory in the studies of projects and project management which are largely normative and prescriptive in character. This is also the dominant but unspoken basis of the overwhelming majority of management practice in commercial and public organisations, whether derived from scientific management, or from the human relations perspective.

The emerging field of complexity science can be shown to comprise at least three major strands: chaos theory, dissipative structures, and complex adaptive systems. One aim of the proposed project will be to 'map out' the whole field of complexity science, showing which elements have been, or might be, of particular helpfulness in project management research or practice. That is, however, simply the preliminary step.

In a series of case studies the research will make use of one specific strand of complexity theory to illuminate what it means to work on, and manage projects if these are seen as 'complex responsive processes of relating' and how, from such a perspective, we can understand and deal with the dilemma of project success/failure, the paradox of project control, the nature of project risk and instability of project plans.

The team of four principal investigators, led by Dr. Svetlana Cicmil of the University of the West of England, includes both Lynn Crawford and Terry Cooke-Davies.

4 Recent Research Published by Human Systems' Principals

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2. ----. (2001) *Towards Improved Project Management Practice: Uncovering the Evidence for Effective Practices Through Empirical Research*. USA: Dissertation.com.
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Conference, 2002. Philadelphia: Project Management Institute, 2002.

5. ----. (2004a) "Project Management Maturity Models." *The Handbook of Managing Projects*. P. W. G. Morris, and J. K. Pinto, Chapter 49. New York: Wiley, 2004.
6. ----. (2004b) "Project Success." *The Wiley Guide to Managing Projects*. P. W. G. Morris, and J. K. Pinto, 99 to 122. Hoboken, New Jersey: J. Wiley & Sons, 2004.
7. ----. (2004c) "Consistently Doing the Right Projects and Doing Them Right: What Metrics Do You Need?" *PMI Global Congress 2004 - Europe*. Philadelphia, PA: PMI, 2004.
8. ----. (2004d) "De-engineering Project Management. Regarding projects as examples of "complex responsive processes of relating", rather than as "business processes" in need of re-engineering. *Proceedings of IRNOP VI. Sixth International Conference of the International Network of Organizing by Projects* Turku, Finland, 2004.
9. ----. (2005) "The Executive Sponsor – The Hinge Upon Which Organizational Maturity turns?" *PMI Global Congress 2005 – Europe* Philadelphia, PA: PMI, 2005.
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13. ----. (2004) Professional Associations and Global Initiatives. In: Morris, P W G and Pinto, J K (Eds.) *The Management of Projects Resource Book*, New York: Wiley and Sons (in press)
14. ----. (2004) Global Body of Project Management and Knowledge. In: Morris, P W G and Pinto, J K (Eds.) *The Management of Projects Resource Book*, New York: Wiley and Sons (in press)
15. Crawford, Lynn., J Brian Hobbs, J Rodney Turner (2005) Project Categorization Systems: Aligning Capability with Strategy for Better Results. Newtown Square, PA: Project Management Institute
16. ----. (2005) Senior Management Perceptions of Project Management Competence. *International Journal of Project Management* 23 (1): 7-16
17. ----. (2005) Senior Management Perceptions of Project Management Competence. *International Journal of Project Management* 23 (1): 7-16
18. Crawford, Lynn., and T. J. Cooke-Davies. "Project Governance: The Pivotal Role of the Executive Sponsor.", *PMI Global Congress 2005 – North America*, Philadelphia, PA: PMI, 2005
19. Dinsmore, P. C., and T. J. Cooke-Davies. *The Right Projects Done Right. From Business Strategy to Successful Project Implementation*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2005.