*Technical Communication* Special Issue: "Emerging forms of Project Management in Technical and Professional Communication"

**Special Issue Editors**
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**Overview**
Recently, scholarship in technical and professional communication (TPC) has examined economic and structural transformations that have influenced how projects are being managed at different workplaces. For instance, the near ubiquitous use of information communication technologies (ICTs) has brought on "the rise of networked organizations" (Rainie and Wellman, 2012) which has contributed to decentralized team structures (Spinuzzi, 2015), and changing production cycles and processes (Dubinksy, 2015). Furthermore, these changes have influenced how we define our values as field and the career paths available to us (e.g., St.Amant and Meloncon, 2016: Brumberger and Lauer, 2015). Unfortunately, lost in conversations about these large-scale changes are discussions about project management (PM). Dicks (2013) has argued, despite being "critically important" to TPC, PM lacks a "dedicated" body of research in the field. A review of the literature in TPC in the last ten years since Joanna Hackos' (2007) *Information Development* seems to support this claim.

In a recent integrative literature review we conducted on PM in TPC, we found two apparent themes in both academic and practitioner accounts:

1.  PM is often presented as an adjacent practice to other concepts or practices (e.g., content management, leadership, or collaboration), instead of grounding such practices together theoretically (e.g., providing a framework for related concepts like collaboration, leadership, interpersonal communication, and teamwork) and contextually (e.g., contextualizing relationships between several related workplace practices and structures like information management and management philosophies); and,

2.  PM is described or discussed primarily in terms of skills (e.g., as a necessary skill or as something requiring particular skills) and relationships (e.g., how it relates to teams, collaboration, intercultural communication, communication theory, and educating people).

Our themes suggest what Dicks (2013) argued: TPC has regularly studied circumstances that influence how projects get managed, but rarely PM itself. In much of the existing scholarship,

we are in danger of treating PM as a fixed process or a mere skillset—a method—as if it is devoid of methodology and epistemology. But we assert that PM methodologies, as John Law (2004) reminds us, make arguments about how knowledge is created, and so they are political and contribute in tangible ways to people's experiences at work.

Given the (lack of) research on PM, one useful area that TPC might contribute to is emerging forms of PM. As more organizations assemble cross-functional teams staffed with TPCs and adopt Agile, SCRUM, Lean, SixSigma—or perhaps some combination of these—we might examine how emerging methods influence workplace experiences. As well, TPC might argue for more rhetorically-grounded approaches to PM in the field (e.g., Kampf, 2006) to counter the effects of emerging methods on individuals, teams, and customers (e.g., see Carliner, 2012; Dicks, 2010; Walton, 2013). Finally, research on PM might also give useful insight into essential questions raised about the role of TPCs as they contribute to cross-functional teams (Hart and Conklin, 2006).

In this special issue, we hope to address the empirical research gap on PM in TPC that Dicks (2013) identified and publish articles exclusively focused on emerging PM methods in TPC. We invite proposals that engage with one or more of the below questions. We also invite proposals that focus on emerging forms of PM beyond the questions identified here.

**Questions to consider for this special issue**

- How can TPC participate in shaping emerging forms of PM? How has it already?
- How does emerging methods of PM and organizational networks influence how TPC work is practiced, particularly by distributed teams?
- What questions of inclusivity on project teams are raised by emerging methods of PM?
- How is TPC work impacted by emerging PM frameworks, systems, and theories?
- In what ways do emerging methods affect the industry/academy relationship of TPC?
- What rhetorical theories and frameworks can TPC offer emerging PM methods?
- How can/should feminist theory inform emerging PM frameworks and approaches?
- How do emerging PM methods influence team workflow?
- How might TPC theorize soft skills like leadership and collaboration in relation to PM?
- What is the interplay between emerging PM methods and entrepreneurship?
- How does PM approaches intersect and/or influence work in healthcare and medicine?
- What roles does PM have in enacting social justice in the workplace?
- What methodological approaches should/might be used to study project management (e.g., participatory action research, etc.)?
- How do emerging PM work in non-profit contexts?
- What is the relationship between emerging PM and digital governance?
- How do post-Agile PM methods function? Is Agile still relevant?
- What is the future of research in PM in TPC?
- How might TPCs engagement with emerging forms of PM influence organizational culture?

**Proposal Instructions**

Proposals should be no more than 400 words in length and are due by Saturday, April 1. Completed proposals or questions can be sent to Guest Editor Ben Lauren: blauren@msu.edu

Proposals should include:
- The submitter's name, affiliation, and email address
- A provisional, descriptive title for the proposed article
- A summary of the topic/focus of the proposed article, including a description of methods used
- An explanation of how the proposed topic/focus connects to the theme of the issue
- An overview of the structure/organization of the proposed article (i.e., how the author will address the topic within the context of the proposed article)

**Timeline**

| Date | Action |
|---|---|
| February 1, 2017 | CFP is released on listservs, etc. |
| April 1, 2017 | Deadline for authors submit proposals |
| May 1, 2017 | Proposal acceptance notifications are emailed to authors |
| August 15, 2017 | Authors submit first draft of manuscripts |
| October 1, 2017 | Reviews sent to authors |
| January 1, 2018 | Authors submit final manuscripts |
| February 15, 2018 | Editors submit final revised manuscripts for copyediting |

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