

Slashdot

News for nerds, stuff that matters

Is Your Development Project a Sinking Ship?

Posted by [michael](#) on Tue Jan 04, '05 03:30 PM

from the [down-down-down-and-the-flames-went-higher](#) dept.

[gManZboy](#) writes *"Everyone knows that some software development projects succeed and other fail -- the question has always been 'why'? I'm sure we all have our favorite (likely anecdotal) explanations. Well, [these guys](#) decided to actually go out there and do a [formal survey](#), and they've got some real data on why projects actually fail (as reported by development project managers -- care to guess where 'changing requirements' ranks?). They've developed a diagnostic formula people can use to gauge the likeliness that the project they're working on right now is (or isn't) going to fail."*



(1) | [2](#)

- **Project Management Authority**

(Score:5, Insightful)

by [fembots \(753724\)](#) on Tuesday January 04, @03:31PM ([#11257219](#))

(<http://vinc.iclod.com/>)

I used to blame "constant client requirement changes" for failed projects as suggested by my project manager.

Later I realized, as suggested by the senior management, that a good project manager should not let that happen had he properly designed and managed the project.

Recently I started to think that maybe all failed projects are due to the delays inevitably imposed by the senior management who requires many policies/protocols/documents/approvals/discussions before signing off the budget.

These delays introduce deadline pressure to project manager, and allow too much time for client to ponder about other features, and most importantly, give breathing space for competitors to come up with similar products BEFORE we do.

- **Re:Project Management Authority**

(Score:4, Interesting)

by Anonymous Coward on Tuesday January 04, @03:36PM ([#11257289](#))

Flexibility to meet changing requirements is a good thing.

All too often, some sales guy will toss in a requirement like "must run on Win98"; and thousands of man hours will be wasted trying to meet something that wasn't even important to the customer.

If the original spec calls for "turn lead into gold", it's a very good thing if the requirements can

evolve as technical issues are identified.

[[Parent](#)]

- **Traceability**

(Score:5, Interesting)

by [persaud \(304710\)](#) on Tuesday January 04, @04:20PM ([#11257817](#))

(<http://dotpeople.com/>)

One result of ad-hoc software design and implementation has been government regulation of software in the financial, security and pharmaceutical sectors.

One result of government regulation has been the emergence of **requirements management** tools like Borland's CaliberRM and Telelogic's DOORS.

These tools trace every functional requirement back to a business requirement. They also track the risk (schedule, safety, robustness, performance) of every functional requirement to the rest of the system.

Vague specification, like vague design is an indicator of not understanding the problem. The first step towards understanding the problem is categorization of ignorance, such as unexpected consequences already experienced by the project.

Good requirements management tools incorporate practices that have been proven to flush out vague specifications. Good traceability educates upstream participants so they can produce better specs in the future. Better specs yield better products, including better spec management tools

[[Parent](#)]

- [Re:Traceability](#) by SoSueMe (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @05:06PM
- [Re:Traceability](#) by frank_adrian314159 (Score:3) Tuesday January 04, @06:37PM
 - [Success Metrics](#) by persaud (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @07:04PM
- [Re:Traceability](#) by serutan (Score:2) Wednesday January 05, @01:36AM
- [Re:Traceability](#) by tom's a-cold (Score:2) Wednesday January 05, @02:06AM
 - [History and Future](#) by persaud (Score:3) Wednesday January 05, @06:17AM
- [bang on the money](#) by RMH101 (Score:2) Wednesday January 05, @04:20AM
- [Re:Traceability](#) by persaud (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @04:56PM
 - [Re:Traceability](#) by persaud (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @07:39PM
 - **1 reply beneath your current threshold.**
- **1 reply beneath your current threshold.**

- **Re:Project Management Authority**

(Score:5, Insightful)

by [jeillah \(147690\)](#) on Tuesday January 04, @04:23PM ([#11257863](#))

Most products specs I've seen lately are what I call CYA specs. They ask for things that are comprehensive enough to keep the blame away from the analyst even if the requirement is for things that are difficult to implement and probably never used by the end user. A prime example of this is requirements for searching and reporting. The spec will call for the ability to search or report on any field or groups of fields, as determined by the user, with multiple search criteria for any field with the data sorted on any field. And it has to be

- **Correct, but there is more**

(Score:5, Insightful)

by [Interfacer \(560564\)](#) on Tuesday January 04, @03:44PM ([#11257398](#))

Not only do client requirements change, but management is also responsible for fubaring things.

i have been part of a project (past tense) where:

- management delivered a much too low cost estimate in order to get win the bid.
- management then expected the project manager and team to meet the deadlines that were doomed in advance.
- the software design lead designed a behemoth of a framework full of performance and design issues.
- management did not understand that if you have unexplained system behavior, you cannot say when you will have solved the problem.
- hardware design was not reviewed, just like software design. this lead to huge problems just before and during acceptance.
- near the end of the project, more and more people were reassigned to a new project that has the ability to make the department manager look good to the head office. he wants to move up. In effect, succes of the former project became a more and more distant possibility until failure was assured.

and there are probably some other things that i either forgot or purposly left out (trying to repress memories maybe ;)).

[[Parent](#)]

- [Have we meet before](#) by RodeoBoy (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @07:48PM
- [Re:Correct, but there is more](#) by alien_blueprint (Score:3) Tuesday January 04, @08:51PM
 - [Re:Correct, but there is more](#) by crazyphilman (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @09:18PM
 - [Re:Correct, but there is more](#) by haystor (Score:1) Wednesday January 05, @04:35AM
 - **1 reply beneath your current threshold.**
- [Re:Correct, but there is more](#) by crazyphilman (Score:3) Tuesday January 04, @09:46PM
 - [Re:Correct, but there is more](#) by ClintJCL (Score:1) Wednesday January 05, @10:36AM
 - [Re:Correct, but there is more](#) by crazyphilman (Score:2) Wednesday January 05, @07:24PM
 - [Re:Correct, but there is more](#) by ClintJCL (Score:1) Wednesday January 05, @07:50PM
 - [Re:Correct, but there is more](#) by crazyphilman (Score:2) Wednesday January 05, @08:56PM
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- **Change Transparency a.k.a. Big Visible Charts**

(Score:4, Informative)

by [persaud \(304710\)](#) on Tuesday January 04, @03:46PM ([#11257424](#))

(<http://dotpeople.com/>)

Release managers can track requirement changes and their impact (effort, schedule) on the project. These changes can be reported separately from the primary schedule, so that everyone

can see the impact of scope changes.

Change is not bad. Adapting to environmental changes (competition, customer education by early prototypes, vendor roadmaps) can make the difference between a one-shot failed project and a multi-generation successful product.

[Big Visible Charts](#) [xprogramming.com] is a time-tested technique for **non-political** status reporting that helps everyone (from senior management to QA) take responsibility for the global impact of local changes. Grab a few unused monitors and create a wall-mounted status display with 1-minute project status updates, you'll be amazed at the results.

[[Parent](#)]

- [Re:Change Transparency a.k.a. Big Visible Charts](#) by jqh1 (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @06:08PM
 - [Re:Change Transparency a.k.a. Big Visible Charts](#) by persaud (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @06:16PM
 - [Re:Change Transparency a.k.a. Big Visible Charts](#) by Anonymous Coward (Score:3) Tuesday January 04, @06:18PM
 - [Re:Change Transparency a.k.a. Big Visible Charts](#) by persaud (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @06:30PM
 - [Dashboards](#) by hughk (Score:2) Wednesday January 05, @04:10AM
 - **1 reply beneath your current threshold.**
- [Re:Project Management Authority](#) by bwalling (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @03:47PM

- **Re:Project Management Authority**

(Score:5, Insightful)

by [Mr_Huber \(160160\)](#) on Tuesday January 04, @05:13PM ([#11258366](#))

(<http://slashdot.org/>)

The difficulty here is making absolutely sure the client and the management know the difference between a working prototype with canned data and a fully functional application capable of handling real world situations. All too often, I've seen really good prototypes either turn into the actual product, or be the source of unrealistic estimates of project status. (After all, if the demo works, how hard can the rest be?)

I remember reading an article by Joel Spolsky where he advised to deliberately make the UI for demos less than polished. Make it look like something that was knocked together. Make it too pretty and the client will think you're almost done. After all, to the client, the UI is the app. If that looks done, the guts of the thing must be near done as well.

[[Parent](#)]

- [Re:Project Management Authority](#) by Open Council (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @06:18PM
- [Re:Project Management Authority](#) by jeko (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @10:02PM
- [Re:Project Management Authority](#) by StarsAreAlsoFire (Score:1) Wednesday January 05, @01:39AM
- [Re:Project Management Authority](#) by llefler (Score:2) Wednesday January 05, @01:10PM
- [Re:Project Management Authority](#) by j-pimp (Score:2) Wednesday January 05, @09:10AM
- **2 replies beneath your current threshold.**

- [Over design](#) by grahamsz (Score:3) Tuesday January 04, @04:04PM
 - [Re:Over design](#) by Bill Dog (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @04:46PM
 - [Requirement Frequency vs. Implementation Cost](#) by persaud (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @05:19PM
 - [Re:Over design](#) by grahamsz (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @07:40PM
 - [Re:Over design](#) by llefler (Score:2) Wednesday January 05, @01:17PM
 - [Re:Over design](#) by grahamsz (Score:2) Wednesday January 05, @01:36PM

- **Re:Project Management Authority**

(Score:4, Insightful)

by [Linker3000 \(626634\)](#) on Tuesday January 04, @04:12PM ([#11257725](#))

I used to blame "constant client requirement changes" for failed projects as suggested by my project manager.

My experience shows this to be quite valid sometimes regardless of how much project control you attempt - a classic scenario goes like this:

- 1) The customer is invited to a 'proof of concept' or 'milestone' demo of the proposed system
- 2) The customer requests new features or amendments to original spec
- 3) The new features are subjected to a cost/benefit analysis by both parties
- 4) Customer **wants** the changes and so the contract clause relating to 'additional or amended requirements' kicks in and a new pricing structure is drawn up.
- 5) Customer complains that they are being 'forced into a corner' with the new charges - they want everything completed but aren't willing to pay the extra but feel that if they don't agree you'll walk away from the project
- 6) Developers have to decide whether to make the amendments within existing budget, even though it's additional workload, or insist that the customer covers some or (hopefully) all of the charges.
- 7) Customer complains and says they won't pay - OR they agree, but you just know that at the end of the contract you'll get a serious amount of grief trying to extract the full and fair cost of the work from the customer.
- 8) Customer pulls plug and takes your proposal elsewhere for someone else to work on, or you decide to cut your losses and jump ship anyway.

[[Parent](#)]

- [Re:Project Management Authority](#) by Linker3000 (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:18PM
 - [Early Prototyping](#) by persaud (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @04:36PM
 - [Coding should be like building a house](#) by cheekyboy (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @07:00PM
 - [Re:Coding should be like building a house](#) by fiber_halo (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @10:48PM

- [Re:Project Management Authority](#) by Jboy_24 (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @07:29PM
- [Slips at the beginning of the schedule never count](#) by MerlynEmrys67 (Score:3) Tuesday January 04, @04:21PM
- [keep a strong launch focus](#) by clsc (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @05:11PM
- [Re:Project Management Authority](#) by Anonymous Coward (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @05:12PM
- [Re:Project Management Authority](#) by ricka0 (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @05:25PM
- [Re:Project Management Authority](#) by vatima (Score:1) Wednesday January 05, @04:15AM
- **[2 replies](#) beneath your current threshold.**

- **So...**

(Score:5, Funny)

by [Blue-Footed Boobie \(799209\)](#) on Tuesday January 04, @03:31PM ([#11257227](#))

"They've developed a diagnostic formula people can use to gauge the likeliness that the project they're working on right now is (or isn't) going to fail"

So, if I know it is going to fail, do I still have to try?

- **Re:So...**

(Score:5, Funny)

by [2A \(841921\)](#) on Tuesday January 04, @03:42PM ([#11257370](#))

but what will really bake your noodle later, is would the project still have failed, if I hadn't told you it would?

[[Parent](#)]

- [Re:So...](#) by kin_korn_karn (Score:3) Tuesday January 04, @03:44PM
 - [Re:So...](#) by SoSueMe (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @04:42PM
 - [Re:So...](#) by budgenator (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:59PM
 - [Re:So...](#) by kin_korn_karn (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @05:33PM
 - **[1 reply](#) beneath your current threshold.**
- [Re:So...](#) by Blue-Footed Boobie (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @03:44PM

- **Re:So...**

(Score:5, Funny)

by [Neil Blender \(555885\)](#) <neilblender@gmail.com> on Tuesday January 04, @03:46PM ([#11257429](#))

but what will really bake your noodle later, is would the project still have failed, if I hadn't told you it would?

Dude, Oracle jokes are so next week.

[[Parent](#)]

- [Re:So...](#) by 2A (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @04:21PM
 - [Re:So...](#) by Frogbert (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @10:47PM
 - **[1 reply](#) beneath your current threshold.**
- [Well...](#) by abb3w (Score:3) Tuesday January 04, @04:13PM
- [Re:So...](#) by sweatyboatman (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:21PM
- [Re:So...](#) by tiredwired (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:23PM
- [Re:So...](#) by killjoe (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:40PM

- [Re:So...](#) by tanguyr (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @05:54PM
 - [Re:So...](#) by EvilTwinSkippy (Score:3) Tuesday January 04, @05:12PM
 - [Re:So...](#) by AndroidCat (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @05:14PM
 - [Re:So...](#) by phats garage (Score:2) Thursday January 13, @02:20PM
 - [1 reply](#) beneath your current threshold.

- **"changing requirements" less bad than no change**

(Score:4, Insightful)

by Anonymous Coward on Tuesday January 04, @03:33PM ([#11257246](#))

Changing requirements is far less bad than a frozen spec based on overanalysis by MBAs who never spoke to customers.

- [never spoke, or spoke too much..](#) by E IS mC(Square) (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @04:15PM
 - [Re:"changing requirements" less bad than no chang](#) by tchuladdiass (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @04:07PM
 - [Re:"changing requirements" less bad than no chang](#) by llefler (Score:2) Wednesday January 05, @01:28PM
 - [1 reply](#) beneath your current threshold.
 - [Re:Ah, the requirements...](#) by duffbeer703 (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:48PM
 - [Re:Ah, the requirements...](#) by duffbeer703 (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @05:23PM
 - [1 reply](#) beneath your current threshold.
 - [1 reply](#) beneath your current threshold.
 - [Requirements](#) by Theatetus (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @06:38PM
 - [1 reply](#) beneath your current threshold.
 - [RTFA](#) by Bush Pig (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @09:18PM
 - [Re:RTFA](#) by llefler (Score:2) Wednesday January 05, @01:41PM
 - [3 replies](#) beneath your current threshold.
- [Yeah but...](#) by Anonymous Coward (Score:3) Tuesday January 04, @03:33PM

- **The formula**

(Score:5, Funny)

by [superpulsicle \(533373\)](#) on Tuesday January 04, @03:34PM ([#11257266](#))

Fair management expectations

+ Well allocated budget

- Patch fixing firedrills

- unnecessary marketing spinoffs

+ free donuts

= success

- **Answer**

(Score:5, Funny)

by [bonch \(38532\)](#) <bonch@slackersguild.com> on Tuesday January 04, @04:44PM ([#11258066](#))

(<http://www.slackersguild.com/> | Last Journal: [Friday November 11, @09:11PM](#))

"Is Your Development Project a Sinking Ship?"

Why yes, we make submarines. Hoo-hah!

[[Parent](#)]

- [Re:Answer](#) by spitefulcrow (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:58PM
- [Sociology...](#) by Duhavid (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @05:19PM
- [4 replies](#) beneath your current threshold.

• I blame perfection

(Score:5, Insightful)

by [Anonymous Crowhead \(577505\)](#) on Tuesday January 04, @03:34PM ([#11257269](#))

People who sit around for months or years trying to design the perfect system. It doesn't exist.

Compromise gets projects done.

- [Re:I blame perfection](#) by LazyNerd (Score:3) Tuesday January 04, @03:50PM
 - [Re:I blame perfection](#) by Snaller (Score:2) Thursday January 06, @10:48AM

○ Do you have evidence of this?

(Score:4, Insightful)

by [expro \(597113\)](#) on Tuesday January 04, @03:53PM ([#11257504](#))

I have lots of evidence of failed projects due to failure to plan.

It can take months or years of thought and discussion to reasonably avoid extreme catastrophies.

While it is silly to try to plan every detail and anyone who claims to do so is lying, a simple elegant, successful general approach is seldom the first one to pop into the head. It takes a lot of thought. Of course, for those incapable of such forethought, why not fail earlier rather than later.

[[Parent](#)]

- [Re:Do you have evidence of this?](#) by scottme (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:09PM
 - [Re:Do you have evidence of this?](#) by Anonymous Coward (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @04:15PM
 - [I did not say perfect it. I said plan and design.](#) by expro (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @05:40PM
 - [Re:I did not say perfect it. I said plan and desig](#) by llefler (Score:2) Wednesday January 05, @01:59PM
 - [I only control technology.](#) by expro (Score:2) Thursday January 06, @02:18PM
 - [My pior answer was too short.](#) by expro (Score:2) Thursday January 06, @02:49PM
 - [Re:Do you have evidence of this?](#) by iabervon (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:33PM
 - [Re:Do you have evidence of this?](#) by expro (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @05:24PM
 - [Re:Do you have evidence of this?](#) by SoSueMe (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @05:19PM
 - [Re:Do you have evidence of this?](#) by wrook (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @08:52PM
- [Re:I blame perfection](#) by EvilTwinSkippy (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @05:18PM
 - [Re:I blame perfection](#) by bladesjester (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @07:51PM
- [Re:I blame perfection](#) by ph1ll (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @06:33PM
 - [Re:I blame perfection](#) by llefler (Score:2) Wednesday January 05, @02:08PM
- [Re:I blame perfection](#) by Evil Poot Cat (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @06:35PM
 - [1 reply](#) beneath your current threshold.

- [2 replies](#) beneath your current threshold.
- [the real question is, using their formula...](#) by testednegative (Score:3) Tuesday January 04, @03:36PM

- **Aggressive scheduling**

(Score:4, Interesting)

by [kevin_conaway \(585204\)](#) on Tuesday January 04, @03:36PM ([#11257301](#))

(<http://pyscrabble.sf.net/> | Last Journal: [Thursday April 28, @01:48PM](#))

Our project is currently suffering from aggressive scheduling. We are put on too tight of a timeframe to allow even the most minor setbacks. Changing requirements seems to be the nature of the game, and when we dont allot enough time to accomodate these changes, we get into trouble.

- [Re:Aggressive scheduling](#) by Anonymous Coward (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @03:46PM
- [Remove cloud cover](#) by persaud (Score:3) Tuesday January 04, @04:00PM
 - [HUH? Re:Remove cloud cover](#) by SMQ (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @04:15PM
 - [If you wait until the schedule is broken](#) by persaud (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:23PM
 - [Re:Remove cloud cover](#) by Bill Dog (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @04:22PM
 - [Re:Remove cloud cover](#) by persaud (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:27PM
- [Re:Aggressive scheduling](#) by mutterc (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @09:23PM
- [1 reply](#) beneath your current threshold.

- **Projects fails because no one ever learns**

(Score:5, Insightful)

by [Ckwop \(707653\)](#) * <2WKJb6O@ckwop.me.uk> on Tuesday January 04, @03:37PM ([#11257304](#))

(<http://www.ckwop.me.uk/>)

It's as simple as that unfortunatly - we *never* learn from our mistakes. Over the last thirty years every system we can dream of has been built from nuclear power plant control system to stock market analysis systems.

Yet we keep playing the buzzword bingo with our new systems, e.g. "Extreme programming", we still keep promise a schedule we can't keep to, we still allow the customer to shift requirement much later in the project than should be allowed, management still don't have enough dialog with the programmers on the ground floor, the list goes on..

Wake up! We're not special.. the construction industry has been doing huge projects of equal complexity for centuries. Get past your intellectual snobbery and start working together..

Simon.

- [Re:Projects fails because no one ever learns](#) by Anonymous Coward (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @03:46PM
- **Re:Projects fails because no one ever learns**

(Score:4, Interesting)

by [LWATCDR \(28044\)](#) on Tuesday January 04, @03:51PM ([#11257485](#))

(Last Journal: [Thursday November 03, @11:14AM](#))

"Wake up! We're not special.. the construction industry has been doing huge projects of equal complexity for centuries. Get past your intellectual snobbery and start working together.."

Umm no they have not. Construction is one of the slowest to change industries on the planet. Take a hotel It is really just room after room. You design one room and then multiply that out to make a floor. Then you stack the floors and you have a building. The key is standardized everything. Look at your average home. It is still built out of sticks or concrete blocks. Very little has changed in a very long time. The latest thing is metal studs but it took decades for them to become commonplace in homes. Very little changes and very little in really innovative. And if you think that building projects are always on time and on budget.... Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Not on your life.

[[Parent](#)]

- [Re:Projects fails because no one ever learns](#) by Ansonmont (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:25PM
 - [Re:Projects fails because no one ever learns](#) by LWATCDR (Score:3) Tuesday January 04, @05:37PM
 - [Re:Projects fails because no one ever learns](#) by virtual_mps (Score:2) Wednesday January 05, @09:26AM
- [Re:Projects fails because no one ever learns](#) by SunFan (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @06:07PM
 - [Re:Projects fails because no one ever learns](#) by LWATCDR (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @11:06PM
- [Re:Projects fails because no one ever learns](#) by curious.corn (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @06:25PM
- **[2 replies](#) beneath your current threshold.**
- [Re: 'doghouse' theory of software](#) by Punctuated_Equilibri (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @03:51PM
 - **[1 reply](#) beneath your current threshold.**
- [Re:Projects fails because no one ever learns](#) by swimmar132 (Score:3) Tuesday January 04, @03:54PM

- **Re:Projects fails because no one ever learns**

(Score:4, Insightful)

by [VeriTea \(795384\)](#) on Tuesday January 04, @04:16PM ([#11257769](#))

(Last Journal: [Saturday July 10, @02:06PM](#))

I would repeat after you, but what would I gain by repeating something that isn't true?

Ok, there is a lot of truth there, but to dismiss the analogy out of hand is to miss some very important lessons. My dad manages large-scale construction projects so I know a little bit about the industry.

Some lessons that may relate

1. The team that designs a project is always different from the team that constructs the project. They are seldom even from the same company. The client gets to arbitrate between the two when conflicts come up.
2. Many projects are extensively estimated after design, but before construction by the constructor (who has much more experience and motivation to accurately assess project costs than the designing company).
3. Design firms, and construction firms often specialize in very specific types of buildings

Here is a pretty good paper by Mary Shaw explaining why software is not yet an engineering discipline (IEEE). <http://www.sce.carleton.ca/faculty/ajila/4106-5006/Prospect%20Eng%20Soft.pdf> [carleton.ca]

[[Parent](#)]

- [Re:"Software Engineering" is not yet "Engineering"](#) by fyrie (Score:3) Tuesday January 04, @04:57PM
 - [10 year old article](#) by tallbill (Score:1) Wednesday January 05, @12:12AM
 - [Re:10 year old article](#) by fyrie (Score:1) Wednesday January 05, @01:14PM
 - [Re:10 year old article](#) by tallbill (Score:1) Thursday January 06, @05:18PM
 - [Re:Construction Analogy Fundamentally Incorrect](#) by 10am-bedtime (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:43PM
 - [1 reply](#) beneath your current threshold.
 - [2 replies](#) beneath your current threshold.
- [Re:Projects fails because no one ever learns](#) by dreamt (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:10PM
 - [1 reply](#) beneath your current threshold.
- [Re:Projects fails because no one ever learns](#) by GeorgeMcBay (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:23PM
- [Kidding yourself](#) by alienmole (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:26PM
- [Re:Projects fails because no one ever learns](#) by Fulcrum of Evil (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:35PM
- [Re:Projects fails because no one ever learns](#) by TiggertheMad (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:36PM
- [Re:Projects fails because no one ever learns](#) by mpcooke3 (Score:3) Tuesday January 04, @04:44PM
 - [Re:Projects fails because no one ever learns](#) by Thuktun (Score:2) Wednesday January 05, @11:02AM
 - [Re:Projects fails because no one ever learns](#) by mpcooke3 (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @07:57PM
 - [Re:Projects fails because no one ever learns](#) by mpcooke3 (Score:3) Wednesday January 05, @04:32AM
 - [2 replies](#) beneath your current threshold.
- [Re:Projects fails because no one ever learns](#) by EvilTwinSkippy (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @05:29PM
- [bingo](#) by clsc (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @05:36PM
- [Re:Projects fails because no one ever learns](#) by Bob9113 (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @06:00PM
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• **Ratio of Intelligence to Project Complexity**

(Score:5, Insightful)

by [severoon \(536737\)](#) on Tuesday January 04, @03:37PM ([#11257307](#))

(Last Journal: [Tuesday September 14, @03:59PM](#))

I've done a lot of thinking about this...I've come to the conclusion that too often, management tries to replace good ol' fashioned thinking with process. It doesn't work. People tend to get focused in on what they're doing to the exclusion of all else, and that means the smart people are cubbyholed and only have

half the story and can't see where other parts of the project are failing, and dumb people have free reign over their little part.

If the ratio of intelligence to complexity is too low, then the project will fail no matter what process is in place or who is managing it. That's all there is to it. There's a lot of cool stuff out there to be done in development...sadly, most of the good ideas will never make it because the people working on them don't use common sense and best practices...they're just not smart enough to see what's important and what isn't.

This isn't one of those self-important diatribes from a holier-than-thou developer, either...true I'm a developer, but I admit when I'm too dumb to handle the particulars of a project; usually, that means the project is too complex for most people, but they press on anyway. Those projects always go down in flames eventually.

You have to know what the strengths and weaknesses of your team and its members are, and exploit those to the fullest. Maybe, then, you can barely accomplish a project if the goal of that project is simple enough.

- [Smart People](#) by persaud (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @03:55PM
 - [Re:Smart People](#) by persaud (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @06:43PM
 - **1 reply beneath your current threshold.**
- [I utterly agree](#) by SuperKendall (Score:3) Tuesday January 04, @03:57PM
 - [Re:I utterly agree](#) by killjoe (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:45PM
 - [Re:I utterly agree](#) by Rich0 (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @05:14PM
 - [Re:I utterly agree](#) by killjoe (Score:2) Wednesday January 05, @12:07AM
 - [Re:I utterly agree](#) by severoon (Score:2) Thursday January 06, @01:01PM
 - [I don't think rare people are that fickle...](#) by SuperKendall (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @11:37PM
 - [Re:I don't think rare people are that fickle...](#) by killjoe (Score:2) Wednesday January 05, @12:12AM
 - [Not true at all](#) by SuperKendall (Score:2) Wednesday January 05, @01:56PM
 - [Re:I utterly agree](#) by Carewolf (Score:2) Wednesday January 05, @06:00AM
 - [Re:I utterly agree](#) by EvilTwinSkippy (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @05:32PM
 - [Re:I utterly agree](#) by SunFan (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @06:29PM
 - [Re:I utterly agree](#) by Red Pointy Tail (Score:2) Wednesday January 05, @12:00AM
 - [You would think so but...](#) by SuperKendall (Score:2) Wednesday January 05, @01:53PM
 - **1 reply beneath your current threshold.**
 - [The point of "Process"](#) by jfw25 (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @05:01PM
 - [Re:Ratio of Intelligence to Project Complexity](#) by Gyorg_Lavode (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @05:15PM
 - [Correct](#) by sg3000 (Score:3) Tuesday January 04, @05:21PM
 - [Sigh.](#) by Benanov (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @03:38PM
 - [Re:Sigh.](#) by Neurowiz (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @03:47PM
 - [Re:Sigh.](#) by javaxman (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:03PM
 - [Re:Sigh.](#) by Squid (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:35PM
 - **Blame the P.M. - usually**

(Score:5, Insightful)

by [jacobcaz \(91509\)](#) on Tuesday January 04, @03:38PM ([#11257318](#))

(<http://www.successminders.com/>)

Every project, whether it's a development project, implementation or business process engineering, that has failed for us has been because of poor project management. Period.

We've had people who didn't know how to accurately scope business requirements, get buy in from other departments and generally "play nice" enough to keep everything running smoothly. Your P.M. needs to be able to be a hard ass, but also to be a buddy.

It boils down to excellent management skills and excellent people skills and without *both* you're setting a project up for disaster. A good P.M. needs to know when to tell senior management it's asking for the impossible too, and a good P.M. needs to know he has kung-fu so he can get away will telling senior management their idea *won't* be implemented.

- [Managing Up](#) by persaud (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @03:50PM
 - [Re:Managing Up](#) by Angry Toad (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:01PM
- [Re:Blame the P.M. - usually](#) by Fnkmaster (Score:3) Tuesday January 04, @03:53PM
- [Re:Blame the P.M. - usually](#) by John_Sauter (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @03:57PM
 - [Re:Blame the P.M. - usually](#) by jacobcaz (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:01PM
 - [Re:Blame the P.M. - usually](#) by AltaMannen (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @06:05PM
 - [Re:Blame the P.M. - usually](#) by John_Sauter (Score:2) Tuesday January 18, @10:05AM
 - [Re:Blame the P.M. - usually](#) by winwar (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @07:16PM
- [Re:Blame the P.M. - usually](#) by IronChef (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:38PM
- [Re:Blame the P.M. - usually](#) by davecb (Score:2) Wednesday January 05, @10:18AM
- **[1 reply](#) beneath your current threshold.**

• Cosmo Quiz

(Score:5, Funny)

by [brw215 \(601732\)](#) on Tuesday January 04, @03:38PM ([#11257321](#))

(<http://cs.nyu.edu/brw215>)

Is this simply the nerd version of the ages-old cosmo quiz? I fail to see how "The one-minute risk assessment" is any more comprehensive or meaningful than the "Does he think you are fat"-type quizzes that make their way through women's magazines.

- [Married with Children quote](#) by Matt Perry (Score:3) Tuesday January 04, @04:42PM
 - [Re:Married with Children quote](#) by SunFan (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @06:31PM
 - [Re:Married with Children quote](#) by vettemph (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @07:33PM
 - [Tommy Boy quote](#) by danish (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @08:48PM
- [OT Joke\(?\)](#) by marko123 (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @04:55PM
- **[1 reply](#) beneath your current threshold.**
- [Buzzword Alert](#) by leonscape (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @03:39PM

• Skill sets for Project Management

(Score:5, Insightful)

by [ag4vr \(705570\)](#) on Tuesday January 04, @03:39PM ([#11257340](#))

One key element that appears to be missing is the qualifications of the manager or management team. Project management is a different skill set from design or development.

It's not to say that a good designer or developer cannot be a good project manager; it's just a different job, like asking a plumber to rewire your house.

- [Re:Skill sets for Project Management](#) by chochos (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @05:49PM
- **1 reply** beneath your current threshold.
- [Overruled by beancounters](#) by tjlsmith (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @03:43PM
- [I blame the If statements](#) by TheFairElf (Score:3) Tuesday January 04, @03:44PM
 - [Re:I blame the If statements](#) by NoInfo (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @03:54PM
 - [Re:I blame the If statements](#) by Fulcrum of Evil (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:59PM
 - [Re:I blame the If statements](#) by yohan1701 (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @03:57PM
 - [Re:I blame the If statements](#) by Greslin (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:07PM
 - [Re:I blame the If statements](#) by loconet (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:20PM
 - [Re:I blame the If statements](#) by emiddlec (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @04:23PM
 - [Not to get into it...](#) by Run4yourlives (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @04:44PM
 - [Re:Not to get into it...](#) by emiddlec (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @05:13PM
 - **1 reply** beneath your current threshold.
 - [Re:I blame the If statements](#) by Eneff (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:25PM
 - [Re:I blame the If statements](#) by Duhavid (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @07:16PM
 - [Read The Pragmatic Programmer immediately.](#) by Jerk City Troll (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:33PM
 - [Re:Read The Pragmatic Programmer immediately.](#) by Duhavid (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @07:19PM
 - [Re:I blame the If statements](#) by TiggertheMad (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:48PM
 - [Re:I blame the If statements](#) by xv4n (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @07:44PM
 - [Re:Poor implementation](#) by WinterSolstice (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:20PM
 - **2 replies** beneath your current threshold.
- [Care to guess where 'changing requirements' ranks](#) by Kenja (Score:3) Tuesday January 04, @03:45PM
- [Is Your Development Project a Sinking Ship?](#) by i 3 joo! (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @03:48PM
 - **1 reply** beneath your current threshold.

- **It always comes down to people**

(Score:4, Insightful)

by Anonymous Coward on Tuesday January 04, @03:50PM ([#11257475](#))

It ALWAYS comes down to people. This article looks to be a discussion relevant more to a commercial environment than an open source one, but I guess the same fundamental principle is true - without the right people you will not succeed. This means competent and motivated technical people, clueful and skilled management, and customers willing to be reasonable and pay for what they are getting. Take away any one of these elements, and there is no technique in the world which will result in something everybody can define as a success.

These guys break down the problems into useful categories, which will be helpful for good teams who want to know how to be more efficient. But for my money a group of serious, decicated people who honestly want to get the job done and do it well will usually get there, barring external factors beyond their control messing it up. It might take a while, cost \$\$, etc. but they'll make it, because they WANT to.

Many (I would even say most) successful open source projects succeed because they have one or several individuals willing to put the work in to make something happen. The tools they use or the way they work are less important than determination to get it done and do it well. Those without that wither

on the vine.

In theory, commercial companies and development teams should be motivated by the \$\$ they are paid, but that doesn't always translate into doing the job well. There are PHBs, lazy workers, unreasonable customers, and all the other joys of life out there. There is no magical "business formula" which can transmute this combination into a good product.

Don't get me wrong, project management and efficiency techniques are a very good thing, but only when you've got the people to make good use of them.

- [If your project. . .](#) by smooth wombat (Score:3) Tuesday January 04, @03:52PM
 - [Re:If your project. . .](#) by igny (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @04:38PM
 - [2 replies](#) beneath your current threshold.

- **This has already been done**

(Score:5, Interesting)

by [Neurowiz \(18899\)](#) on Tuesday January 04, @03:52PM ([#11257502](#))

(<http://www.neurowiz.com>)

... since 1994, the Standish Group has been publishing the results and reasons of IT projects. [Go here for the original report.](#) [standishgroup.com]

We've gone from about 25% of projects being "successful" (on time, on budget, meeting stated needs) to about 31%. So translated, that means 2/3ds of the time you get into your car or get on an elevator, it'll work as you want.

Consistently, the top reasons for projects failing, for the past 10 years?

1. Unclear, poor requirements
2. Lack of user involvement
3. Lack of buy-in and support by upper management

I have to agree with other comments made, this isn't rocket science. We just need some time and maturity as an industry. Civil and mechanical engineering have had thousands of years to work out their kinks. The software engineering science has had to deal with technology and implementation far outpacing our understanding of the basics and principles involved.

But we're getting better.

Honestly, if the world at large knew how brittle, fragile and reliant on heroism most of the critical financial and industrial software was, there would be a huge outcry. It's one of the shameful aspects of our industry.

- [Re:This has already been done](#) by slowhand (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @04:00PM
- [Re:This has already been done](#) by glh (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:07PM
 - [Re:This has already been done](#) by Neurowiz (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:11PM
 - [Re:This has already been done](#) by glh (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:17PM
 - [Re:This has already been done](#) by Neurowiz (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @07:35PM
 - [1 reply](#) beneath your current threshold.
- [Re:This has already been done](#) by YU Nicks NE Way (Score:3) Tuesday January 04, @04:24PM
- [The Golden Rule of PM](#) by ip_freely_2000 (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @03:54PM

- **It's not magical**

(Score:5, Interesting)

by [beldraen \(94534\)](#) <beldraen_sd.beldraensdomain@com@com> on Tuesday January 04, @03:57PM ([#11257549](#))

Having many years of successful software project management under my belt, I can tell you it boils down to two concepts: professional training and discipline.

There are a million and one books and surveys and they all say the same thing. First, there is a formal process for the development of anything (not just software). This starts with the formal documentation process and meetings to discover functional and non-functional issues. Second, there is a very strong sense by everyone to want to adjust it a little more. From senior managers who allow scope creep to managers who want steps to be cut to make up time to programmers constantly who rewrite the code because they think they can squeeze 5% more time out of a loop that runs for less than a second in a process.

Most people do not realize that in a successful formal process that the actual time in a software project that is used to build the software should amount to only about 30% of the project's development time. The other 70% is time spent on documentation, meetings, and testing to ensure that the 30% of time used on software development is actually what the company is needing. And, it is discipline that keeps people on the project process in the face of the fear of not getting the project done right. The process has to be allowed to work, both to reach a project end point and to have unobstructed process from which to learn.

The part I get a kick out of is that just because people write software or run a company that they somehow think they just ought to know why projects work. If complex systems were just so easy, why would we need formal training? After all, anyone can build a bridge successfully without training, right? I am not being hard on people, though. I had this exact same thought years ago and what I figured out is that the vast majority of the software industry is so poorly trained that it doesn't even realize that it is poorly trained.

Successful software development books have been around for more than 30 years. Go read! Better than that, get a university degree. The more liberal the better. Honestly, it is worth it. Here is a good place to start: Systems Analysis and Design by Kendall and Kendall (ISBN 0-13-041571-5)

- [Re:It's not magical](#) by Anonymous Coward (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @05:21PM
 - [Re:It's not magical](#) by beldraen (Score:2) Wednesday January 05, @02:38AM
 - **2 replies beneath your current threshold.**
- [Re:It's not magical](#) by ednopantz (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @10:40PM
 - [Re:It's not magical](#) by tom's a-cold (Score:2) Wednesday January 05, @02:25AM
 - [Re:It's not magical](#) by beldraen (Score:2) Wednesday January 05, @02:33AM
- [Re:It's not magical](#) by beldraen (Score:2) Wednesday January 05, @02:25AM
- **2 replies beneath your current threshold.**
- [Quilty Software](#) by RManning (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @03:58PM
 - [Re:Quilty Software](#) by BullfrogJones (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @04:09PM
 - [Re:Quilty Software](#) by RManning (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @04:14PM
- [I question](#) by joeflies (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @03:59PM
- [How long](#) by Timesprout (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @03:59PM
- [Please check my math](#) by Spackler (Score:3) Tuesday January 04, @04:00PM
 - [Re:Please check my math](#) by Xoro (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:21PM
 - [Re:Please check my math](#) by Squid (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:21PM

- **[1 reply beneath your current threshold.](#)**
- [Interesting survey results...](#) by glh (Score:3) Tuesday January 04, @04:02PM
 - [Re:Interesting survey results...](#) by glh (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:10PM
 - [Re:Interesting survey results...](#) by cavemanf16 (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @05:22PM
- **laziness and negligent behavior**

(Score:4, Funny)

by [dj42 \(765300\) *](#) on Tuesday January 04, @04:03PM ([#11257616](#))

(Last Journal: [Friday April 29, @11:56AM](#))

In my experience, it is usually drugs, alcohol, too much sleep, unconcerned management, or a combination thereof that causes projects to fail. Have you ever tried to project-manage after 8 double vodkas, a short nap, and a full rack of ribs?

- [Re:laziness and negligent behavior](#) by 2A (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @06:03PM
- [In my personal experience...](#) by papasui (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:03PM
- **I'll RTFA in my next comment but first...**

(Score:4, Informative)

by [museumpeace \(735109\)](#) on Tuesday January 04, @04:05PM ([#11257638](#))

(Last Journal: [Monday July 18, @06:18PM](#))

I'll suggest everybody who has not yet done so should RTF precedents for such a study...it is as ancient as it is true: [Brooks "Mythical Man Month"](#) [yourdon.com] describes the reasons projects blow up pretty well. For all the technology heaped on software development in the 30 years since the book came out, very little has changed: Software projects are complicated beasts attempted by mere humans. [Steve McConnell's books](#) [amazon.com] will be more familiar to /. readers and his approach to project management tries to head off the "changed requirements" fiascos with a feedback and correction mechanism of frequent critical project reviews...I wonder if that actually has worked for anyone:-)

- [Re:I'll RTFA in my next comment but first...](#) by museumpeace (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @04:12PM
- [Re:I'll RTFA in my next comment but first...](#) by Anonymous Coward (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @04:31PM
- [Re:I'll RTFA in my next comment but first...](#) by CharlieG (Score:2) Wednesday January 05, @12:45PM
- [Re:I'll RTFA in my next comment but first...](#) by cpeterso (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @05:16PM
 - [Re:I'll RTFA in my next comment but first...](#) by cranos (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @09:14PM
- **[1 reply beneath your current threshold.](#)**
- [Pretty well known by now](#) by HeyLaughingBoy (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:07PM
- [Responsibility](#) by marko123 (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:08PM
- [From the original, unedited article...](#) by Swamii (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:08PM
- [We're waaay beyond sinking...](#) by Anonymous Coward (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @04:09PM
- [Geeks are too geeky](#) by scottjpearson (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @04:09PM
 - [Re:Geeks are too geeky](#) by KagatoLNX (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:59PM
 - [Re:Geeks are too geeky](#) by scottjpearson (Score:1) Wednesday January 05, @09:28AM
- [Dissimilarity and Some Insights.](#) by Badgerman (Score:3) Tuesday January 04, @04:11PM
 - [Re:Dissimilarity and Some Insights.](#) by Fulcrum of Evil (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @05:04PM
- [Lack of focus](#) by jmichaelg (Score:3) Tuesday January 04, @04:13PM

- [Recipe for failure](#) by SilverspurG (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @04:13PM
- [YES!!](#) by javaxman (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:14PM
- [neanderthal project management methodologies](#) by kpharmer (Score:3) Tuesday January 04, @04:15PM
- [This is not new.....](#) by jeffc128ca (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @04:15PM
 - [Re:This is not new.....](#) by Inthewire (Score:1) Friday January 14, @11:59PM
- [Unrealistic expectations](#) by grassy_knoll (Score:3) Tuesday January 04, @04:16PM

- **death march projects...**

(Score:4, Interesting)

by [capsteve \(4595\)](#) on Tuesday January 04, @04:17PM ([#11257778](#))

(<http://www.doink.org/>)

i actually was "assigned" to supervise a death march project at my last employer. my "new" manager(6th one in one year) knew the project was going to be canned(didn't confirm the inevitable to me, even when confronted), and most of the people would be absorbed into other projects or simply layed off. why was it a doomed project? politics.

someone else in our organization (at another geographical location), happened to be better aligned with the top management group, and used this to their advantage to eliminate competing projects, or in some cases eliminate the internal competition and take the projects over as their own.

of course at the time i had no idea what i was getting into(or who my "competition" was). no matter what our team did to produce a superior product, our project was cancelled for reasons beyond our control. i ended up stressing out and nearly damaged my health and my relationship...

then i read a book call Death March: The Complete Software Developer's Guide to Surviving "Mission Impossible" Projects. i soon realized that we were set up as an ugly style project, doomed(in fact designed) to fail.

it's good to understand why projects fail, i have not yet RTFA, but i'm sure it will compliment some of the discussions/concepts in the death march book. good read.

- [Management is just plain stupid...](#) by SurfTheWorld (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:18PM
 - [Re:Management is just plain stupid...](#) by furball (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @05:15PM
 - [Re:Management is just plain stupid...](#) by SurfTheWorld (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @06:30PM
 - [Re:Management is just plain stupid...](#) by fishbowl (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @06:12PM
 - [Re:Management is just plain stupid...](#) by SurfTheWorld (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @06:43PM
- [What is considered a success](#) by fedork (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @04:18PM
- [100% of projects that are never released fail.](#) by navigator (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @04:31PM
 - [Otherwise known as](#) by persaud (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @05:04PM
- [Sausage and Software](#) by bulach (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @04:36PM
- [Exactly backwards?](#) by raider_red (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:37PM
- [Not a good study: Too much "after the fact" reason](#) by Systems Curmudgeon (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:45PM
- [That's one sexy graphic!](#) by woods (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @04:49PM
 - [Re:That's one sexy graphic!](#) by fred fleenblat (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @06:37PM
- [My Development Project is a Pirate Ship](#) by dexter riley (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:49PM
- [methodology?](#) by belmolis (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:49PM

- [It's all about white goods](#) by 91degrees (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @04:53PM
- [Bizarre scale](#) by Freddles (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @04:53PM

- **Sources of open source project failure**

(Score:4, Interesting)

by [Bootsy Collins \(549938\)](#) on Tuesday January 04, @04:54PM ([#11258160](#))

It would be interesting to see such an analysis done with an open source-centric viewpoint: why open source/free software projects fail.

It would be necessary to structure the survey carefully to avoid the obvious results that don't contain useful information. For instance, Sourceforge is littered with old projects that never got past alpha or pre-alpha because no one was interested except for the project initiator (who never created enough of a start to encourage significant involvement from others), and the project initiator eventually lost interest him/herself. That may be the way in which most open source projects fail -- but that knowledge is of little use to someone running a project and looking for tips on management. There are of course books about aspects of this topic; but it would be nice if someone were to do a similar survey of open source projects that **did** get their legs underneath them, that did produce something that enticed involvement and an interested user community, only to eventually fail.

- [Re:Sources of open source project failure](#) by FooBarWidget (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @05:18PM
 - [Re:Sources of open source project failure](#) by Bootsy Collins (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @06:18PM
 - [Re:Sources of open source project failure](#) by FooBarWidget (Score:2) Wednesday January 05, @05:14AM
 - **[1 reply beneath your current threshold.](#)**
- [Re:Sources of open source project failure](#) by fred fleenblat (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @06:25PM
 - [Re:Sources of open source project failure](#) by Bootsy Collins (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @06:56PM
 - [Re:Sources of open source project failure](#) by fred fleenblat (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @07:46PM
- [Re:Sources of open source project failure](#) by SunFan (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @06:37PM
 - [Re:Sources of open source project failure](#) by Bootsy Collins (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @06:44PM
 - [Re:Sources of open source project failure](#) by SunFan (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @07:16PM
 - [Re:Sources of open source project failure](#) by SunFan (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @11:56PM
 - **[1 reply beneath your current threshold.](#)**

- **Lot's and lot's of project failures**

(Score:4, Insightful)

by [archilocus \(715776\)](#) on Tuesday January 04, @04:55PM ([#11258170](#))
(<http://www.nickjenkins.net/program/>)

I'm working for a large Telco doing roughly 80-120 IT projects every calendar year worth about

\$200M. Most of them get through in one way or another, but some fail spectacularly and *all* of them have ridiculous overheads, delays and frustrations.

Best example of a crash-and-burn is a transaction engine designed to process a simple text file from another company. Should have been 6 months/\$500K, project actually folded at 2 years / \$3M and now we're going round for a second bite at the cherry (but with a new project name!!!).

Why do they fail ? Lot's of reasons.

Sometimes the user's requirements are unclear. Sometimes we're using the wrong spanner for the job. Sometimes the team loses the plot and we get a jumbo jet when we wanted a paper air plane. And we're always under pressure on time, but that's business - if we don't get there first someone else will.

What's the root cause?

Complexity. We let our systems get too complex and now a two line code change can cost >\$500K because the down stream effects will hit ten other systems that generate \$1M/day of revenue.

The moral - KISS. Use the simplest solution for the job. Don't let the sales guy run away with it, don't let your geek-ego run away with it, don't let the user's get over excited and your project might just come in on time on budget. As someone else said... it isn't rocket science... or shouldn't be...

- **After I RTFAed...**

(Score:5, Insightful)

by [Eneff \(96967\)](#) on Tuesday January 04, @04:57PM ([#11258191](#))
(<http://ibsulon.cc/>)

Thanks [mirrordot!](#) [mirrordot.com]

Tiwana and Keil were asking MIS directors what **they** thought, not project managers or developers, leading me to believe that this is more based on client perception than someone with experience working on said projects.

That said, they ranked changing requirements last when talking about risk of failure, and actually said that inappropriate methodology was the top reason of project failure.

Now, while a lack of any sort of methodology is a disaster waiting to happen, I have a difficult time believing that a bad fit for a project creates more risk than project complexity and shifting requirements combined, as they suggest.

sigh

Do you really believe that a client is going to place shifting requirements as a risk? After all, they're the ones asking for the changes!

- [Re:After I RTFAed...](#) by tanguyr (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @05:28PM
 - [Re:After I RTFAed...](#) by Eneff (Score:3) Tuesday January 04, @06:19PM
 - [Re:After I RTFAed...](#) by tanguyr (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @07:01PM
- [Re:After I RTFAed...](#) by anonymous_wombat (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @06:45PM
- [methodology...](#) by DrVomact (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @08:05PM
- [Re:After I RTFAed...](#) by Bob9113 (Score:2) Wednesday January 05, @01:41AM
- [MS Project & Backwards Planning](#) by Martin71a (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @05:02PM

- [Software Project Survival Guide](#) by Titusdot Groan (Score:3) Tuesday January 04, @05:03PM
- [That is...](#) by hotspur_fan (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @05:05PM

- **Out of Control Projects**

(Score:4, Interesting)

by [Ann Elk \(668880\)](#) on Tuesday January 04, @05:07PM ([#11258301](#))

Chris Peters (former Microsoft VP) wrote an interesting documented called "Is Your Project Out of Control". It seems to have appeared on the net in [various](#) [stanford.edu] [formats](#) [brightwork.com].

- [where does having confusing metrics fit in?](#) by MegaThawt (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @05:10PM
- [Universal Elixir and Other Computing Projects Whic](#) by plcurechax (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @05:14PM
- [I was going to measure the validity](#) by ndunn (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @05:16PM
- [One minute Risk?!?!?!?!?!?](#) by DataCannibal (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @05:21PM
- [Project Timeline Equation:](#) by Morologous (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @05:22PM
- [Most of these are known and addressed](#) by Mr_Huber (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @05:36PM
- [Would you present that survey to your boss?](#) by angel'o'sphere (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @05:37PM
 - [The main reasons for failure](#) by angel'o'sphere (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @05:52PM
- [Bad math in article = Failure?](#) by edge_crumpler (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @05:55PM
- [Changing requirements? Hah!](#) by Rorschach1 (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @06:00PM
- [As seen by senior IT managers](#) by ClosedSource (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @06:07PM
- [Don't forget the humans](#) by Open Council (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @06:08PM
- [PM is for the semi-competents](#) by O2dude (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @06:14PM
- [my experience](#) by Anonymous Coward (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @06:26PM
- [Mmm.](#) by mwillems (Score:3) Tuesday January 04, @06:30PM
 - [Re:Mmm.](#) by tshak (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @10:02PM
 - [Re:Mmm.](#) by ndunn (Score:1) Wednesday January 05, @12:18PM
 - [Re:Mmm.](#) by mwillems (Score:2) Wednesday January 05, @05:26PM
- [Then there's the Road-worker effect](#) by mcrbids (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @06:30PM
- [Overlooked](#) by RomulusNR (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @06:56PM
- [Bias](#) by Bloater (Score:3) Tuesday January 04, @06:57PM
 - [Re:Bias](#) by psykocrime (Score:2) Thursday January 06, @11:47PM
- [Small teams with a strong vision](#) by Anonymous Coward (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @07:23PM
- [Bad Idea?](#) by daVinci1980 (Score:3) Tuesday January 04, @07:30PM
- [one reason...](#) by the-build-chicken (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @11:05PM
- [How I've been successful](#) by fzammett (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @11:53PM
 - [Re:How I've been successful](#) by Trillan (Score:2) Friday January 07, @10:14PM
 - **[1 reply](#) beneath your current threshold.**
- [It's jealousy...](#) by chuckw (Score:2) Wednesday January 05, @01:41AM
- [This is how its done!](#) by Channing (Score:1) Wednesday January 05, @01:43AM
- [What a buncha cry-babies!](#) by Anonymous Coward (Score:1) Wednesday January 05, @01:49AM
- [Experience](#) by overlordhab (Score:1) Wednesday January 05, @02:11AM
- [I have a dream ...](#) by smokestacklightning (Score:2) Wednesday January 05, @02:20AM
- [Ask John Carmack](#) by HogynCymraeg (Score:1) Wednesday January 05, @03:52AM
- [Easy!](#) by burdalane (Score:1) Wednesday January 05, @04:31AM
- [One flaw with the survey...](#) by SweetImpact (Score:1) Wednesday January 05, @02:03PM
- [Re:A classic one for me](#) by Neil Blender (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @03:44PM

- [Re:A classic one for me](#) by MrBandersnatch (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:07PM
- [Re:here's a mirror.](#) by rainmayun (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @03:44PM
 - [Re:here's a mirror.](#) by dgatwood (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @04:04PM
 - [Re:here's a mirror.](#) by BobPaul (Score:3) Tuesday January 04, @04:27PM
 - [Re:here's a mirror.](#) by Bill Dog (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @05:12PM
 - [Re:here's a mirror.](#) by winwar (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @07:26PM
 - [Re:here's a mirror.](#) by BobPaul (Score:2) Wednesday January 05, @01:00AM
 - [Re:here's a mirror.](#) by mcrbids (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @07:53PM
 - [Re:here's a mirror.](#) by clodney (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @05:00PM
 - [Re:A classic one for me](#) by stratjakt (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @03:50PM
 - [Re:A classic one for me](#) by wuice (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @11:26PM
 - **1 reply** beneath your current threshold.
 - [Re:here's a mirror.](#) by JaffaKREE (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @03:51PM
 - [Re:here's a mirror.](#) by BobPaul (Score:1) Tuesday January 04, @04:19PM
 - [Re:here's a mirror.](#) by BobPaul (Score:2) Tuesday January 04, @03:52PM

- **Re:A classic one for me**

(Score:5, Insightful)

by [SoTuA \(683507\)](#) on Tuesday January 04, @04:03PM ([#11257622](#))

When your project manager hands you a project started by a rookie and tells you, "It's 95% done. All you have to do is the final touches."

Aaaah, that one is subject to the 95% rule:

The first 95% of the project takes 95% of the time, and the remaining 5% takes the other 95% of the time"

(loosely quoted from some fortune)

[[Parent](#)]

- [Re:A classic one for me](#) by SixDimensionalArray (Score:2) Wednesday January 05, @12:47AM
 - [Re:A classic one for me](#) by danme (Score:1) Wednesday January 05, @12:16PM
- **1 reply** beneath your current threshold.
- **22 replies** beneath your current threshold.

(1) | [2](#)

Only that in you which is me can hear what I'm saying. -- Baba Ram Dass

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