

## In This Issue

- Education service changes name
- Project Essentials
- March 22 PMI-NEIC topic: "Performance Contracting"

## Links in this issue:

[Projity](#)

[PMP-Online](#)

[RSVP for March 22](#)

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## Educational service changes name

After eight years of operation, our online educational service: PMP-Online.Org is changing its name to **PM-NEIC.Org**.

We're making this change to better reflect who offers the courses and to avoid any confusion that students may have had in the past regarding claiming of contact hours or PDUs.

The new and expanded site is nearly ready for operation, and will be up and running fully before the end of March. It will continue to offer the ever-popular PMP® exam preparation course as well as several new courses. The online PMP® course now has over 600 simulated exam questions that are presented in an exam-like online style. Meanwhile, courses continue to be taught on our PMP-Online site until the change takes place.

Delivery of the coursework is via a software package called Moodle or Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment. Moodle has a large and diverse user community with over 75,000 registered users, speaking 70 languages in 138 countries.

We're also working on a Projity course (an on-line MS Project® clone), as well as a "How to Complete the PMP® Examination Application" course. (<http://www.projity.com>)

The next PMP® exam preparation course begins **April 3**, so if you're interested in taking it, please visit [www.PMP-Online.org](http://www.PMP-Online.org) to register.

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## Project Essentials

### *"Understanding What a Project Is"*

By Greg L. McCormick, PMP

(Note to readers: it is important to know the meaning of *italicized words and phrases* that appear in this article. Definitions can be found in the Glossary of the **PMBOK® Guide**.)

How do you define the word "project"? Some people base their definition on the number of people or the length of time who would be involved. I have heard people say that any activity involving more than one person or lasting more than one month is a project.

The Project Management Institute (PMI®), however, defines a *project*

Guest writers are encouraged to contribute.

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March 22, 2006

PMI-NEIC Meeting

"Performance Contracting"

Hall's Guesthouse

5:30 Social Time

6:00 Dinner

7:00 Speakers:

Greg Leedy and Dave Corner  
of Trane

Members: Bring a guest  
and eat dinner free!

[RSVP \(click here\)](#)

March 22, 2006

PMI-NEIC Meeting

as "a temporary endeavor, undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result". Notice that the definition doesn't say anything about how many people are involved with the endeavor or how long it takes.

The word *unique* appears in the definition to signify that the *performing organization* intends to do something different than it usually does. In *transaction-driven organizations*, a project accomplishes something outside the realm of usual business operations, such as building a new store location. In *project-based organizations* – like construction firms – each project creates a new building that is different from all the others they've built. Either type of performing organization conducts a project when they undertake an endeavor that creates something unique.

The word *temporary* is also included in the definition to signify that projects have a definite beginning and a definite ending. A business effort which begins "accidentally" and/or which conducts its activities unofficially is not a project, nor is any effort that fizzles out and then just stops. *Initiation* is the process of formally authorizing that a new project should begin, and *Closure* is the process of formally accepting project results and bringing the project to an orderly end. Each project then, has a clearly defined beginning and a clearly defined ending.

It is up to the performing organization to determine the size and length of each project. A large project may be broken into more manageable *phases*. For example, a project to create a new computer system typically has phases for Definition, Design, Development, Testing, and Implementation. When phases are performed by different functional groups within the performing organization, or by outside contractors, each phase might be referred to as a *sub-project*. In a project to create a new office building, for example, there are likely to be sub-projects for site preparation, for erecting the main structure, and for installing the plumbing, heating, and electrical systems – each performed by a different sub-contractor.

There may be advantages to conducting a group of projects in a coordinated manner, in order to obtain benefits that are not available from managing them individually. Such a group of related projects is referred to as a *program*. For example, a Business Continuity program might have separate projects for Risk Management, Incident Management, Facility Restoration, and Business Recovery. The benefit of making each of these an individual project is that each can be more effectively managed. The benefit of making them a coordinated **program** is that the performing organization can be sure that all the contingency plans being developed would actually work together, if they were needed.