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PPPL's Project Management Office: Work Planning System

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Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory (PPPL) is a U.S. national laboratory under contract by the Department of Energy to conduct plasma physics and nuclear fusion research. With an annual budget of approximately 100 million dollars, the laboratory supports projects in various divisions such as: experimental physics, engineering, operations, IT, and facilities and infrastructure. PPPL's Project Management Office (PMO) is responsible for the oversight and implementation of all projects at the laboratory by using an online Work Planning System database.

The Work Planning System implements project management and integrated safety management tools into a comprehensive checklist for projects. It captures the scope of the project, determines project risks, interfaces, support groups, and reviews all engineering work to combine these categories into a holistic approach for the life cycle of a project. Moreover, it guidelines risk management processes and focuses on project roles and approvals.

The Work Planning System is important because it communicates project requirements and progress across a large board of people, consisting of engineers, supervisors, and directors. Monthly reviews are held for all active projects listed in the system to ensure accuracy and compliance, as well as provide oversight and feedback. This type of Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) is used by everybody at the laboratory; however, it is most important to the engineering staff working on large jobs that require multiple personnel and have a significant cost and time involvement.

In this paper, we will further explore the key functions of the PPPL's Work Planning System, highlight its importance in the project's life cycle, and discuss the development of a planned upgrade.

Eligible for student paper award?

No

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