Practice vs. Prescription - An Examination of the Defined Roles in the NZ BIM Handbook

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ABSTRACT

The emergence of formal BIM-specialist roles was one of the earliest and more obvious changes to industry practice resulting from the introduction of BIM, but literature suggests that the scope of tasks and responsibilities within such a role remains poorly defined. Following the lead of earlier international guides and handbooks, the recently developed New Zealand BIM Handbook provides a definition of the key roles required for successful BIM implementation in a project. A set of minimum responsibilities are prescribed for project, discipline and technical elements of each BIM-specialist role. This Handbook, however, is now being introduced into an industry in which BIM practice has been evolving over several years in a far less structured manner. In order to identify current practice within such roles, New Zealand BIM specialists across a range of disciplines were interviewed. The resulting analysis examines the prescribed roles and responsibilities, as set out in the Handbook, in the light of existing practice. The discussion encompasses skill sets, role development, reporting and accountability, and the background and training of specialists. Differences in practice between disciplines are identified, and wider concerns over the career trajectory of the BIM specialist are discussed.