Root Causes of IT Project Failure Series: Introduction to the Series

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DisputeSoft experts have worked on over 100 cases where the central dispute is best summarized as a failed software/IT project implementation. Based on our more than 300 years of combined experience in such matters, we have catalogued the root causes of these more than 100 cases of IT project failure, of which more than 40 have progressed to expert deposition or trial.

Over the next few months, we will highlight and discuss some of the most prominent root causes of software implementation failure. We invite your comments and feedback. If you have litigated IT failure cases, we would like to hear whether your perspectives on the causes of IT project failure are similar or different.

The next blog post in this series covers the legal Causes of Action that are typically pled in these matters to establish necessary foundational context for the more substantive discussions to follow, indicated by the list below. This list highlights the most common root causes identified through our work. Each category or issue will be discussed in its own unique blog, where we explore the issue, the common facts that result in a dispute, the typical positions that each party (*e.g.*, the supplier and customer) takes in these disputes, and the facts, legal issues and areas of opinion presented to an IT causation expert for consideration. Examples of root causes that will be discussed in forthcoming blogs include:

(1) Lack of "Meeting of the Minds" Regarding Requirements

(2) Inadequate Requirements Documentation

(3) Lack of Subject Matter Expertise in Requirements Elicitation

(4) Improper Sign-off and Acceptance of Requirements

(5) Inadequate Requirements Traceability

(6) Unclear Customer and Supplier Responsibilities

(7) Failure to Adapt Business Processes to the New System

(8) Inappropriate Choice of Solution: COTS v. OOTB Solutions

(9) Inappropriate Implementation: Configuration v. Customization

(10) Misrepresentation of Software Capabilities / Functionality

(11) Failure to Manage Scope Creep and Exercise Control

(12) Inadequate Design Documentation

(13) Faulty Design

(14) Poor Project Management

(15) Inadequate and/or Unqualified Project Personnel

(16) Failure to Adhere to an Established Project Schedule and Budget

(17) Faulty Data Migration

(18) Inadequate Testing

(19) Poor Defect Management / Poor Maintainability

(20) Failure to Adhere to SLAs

This list is by no means exhaustive, but it provides a birds-eye view of the complexities of IT projects, and the numerous root causes of their failure. Many, if not all of these topics, are deserving of far more than a short blog post. Indeed, many, or most of them, deserve their own blog series, which is exactly what we intend to do with this series. When we reach a topic that, in our experience, warrants a much more detailed treatment, we will further sub-serialize that topic.

If there are other topics that you would like DisputeSoft to cover, just let us know here and we will make every effort to accommodate, though we cannot tell you when your topic will be covered. If you would like to be notified each time an article in this blog series is published, sign-up here.

## *Jeff Parmet*

Founder & Managing Partner

Jeff Parmet is a widely respected IT dispute resolution specialist who has served as a consulting or testifying expert on more than 200 software-related disputes. Jeff serves DisputeSoft clients in the capacity of software failure expert, software intellectual property expert, Internet/E-commerce expert, or computer forensic and electronic discovery expert, depending on the requirements of the particular matter. The hallmark of Jeff's practice is independent and objective technical consulting services leading to advice and/or expert witness testimony involving information technology.

T.J. Wolf

Senior Consultant & General Counsel

Since joining DisputeSoft in 2016, T.J. Wolf has consulted for clients on a variety of software related matters, including breach of contract disputes, software implementation failure matters, and intellectual property matters involving allegations of copyright infringement and trade secret misappropriation. By researching and analyzing documentation to produce content and support for expert reports, T.J. has become deeply involved in analyzing the root causes of many IT failure cases and assessing misappropriation in intellectual property matters.
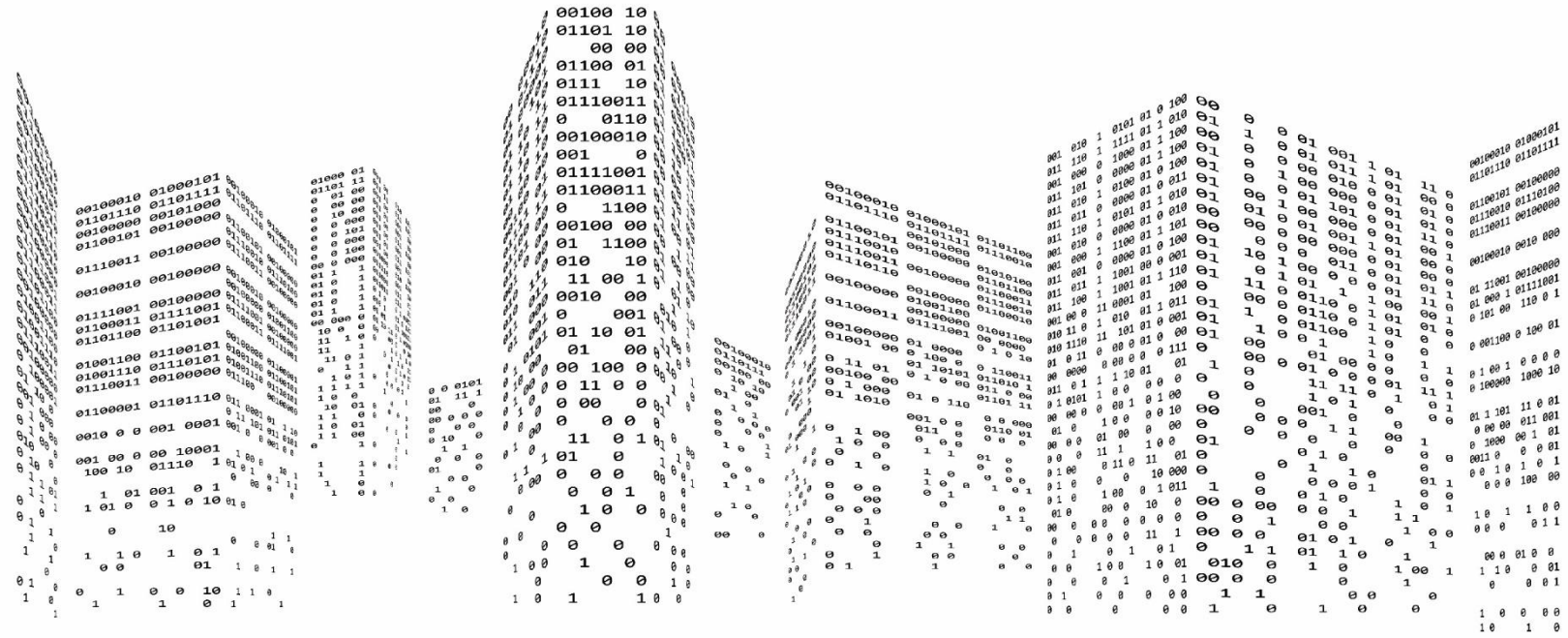
If you are in need of a software project failure expert, we invite you to consider DisputeSoft.

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