

SOUTH AFRICA LAGS BEHIND IN DIGITAL CONSTRUCTION

By the BIM Institute

The 2016 Building Information Modelling (BIM) Institute survey shows that there is a significant lack of education in terms of digital construction and building information modelling for complex building projects in South Africa.

A cursory glance at construction projects in our major cities would give the impression that the construction industry is widening its vision and raising its game. Buildings are more innovative, our search for natural resources is becoming more technically advanced, and one would therefore think that the pace of change is such that construction projects are keeping abreast with digital technology and processes," says Vaughan Harris, executive director at the BIM Institute.

"Few would doubt that technology plays an integral part in helping the industry realise these goals by enabling enhanced design, procurement, and construction. But one only needs to scratch the surface to see it is struggling to reap the full benefits of design software, data and analytics, 3-D scanning, mobile solutions and automation in South Africa."

As some construction companies attempt to improve governance, health and safety, project controls and

upskilling, the fundamentals of traditional engineering, construction, and project management processes still appear stagnant.

"We can all agree that digital technology inevitably brings disruption in its wake, at a speed that is likely to increase, but many architectural companies still remain ignorant when it comes to new and improved digital design technology," says Harris.

The current downturn in the construction industry also does not encourage investment in upgrading systems, and cash-strapped businesses continue to use their current software systems.

The survey questioned owners, architects, engineers, and construction companies on a number of current issues to understand whether their views on BIM are aligned, or whether differences exist.

The survey offers a glimpse at how leading organisations in South Africa are using technology in construction and the built environment.

Continued on page 49

