Let’s Teach Architecting High Quality Software

Linda Northrop

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MY GEOGRAPHY LESSON

Pittsburgh, PA
USA

Australia

Hawaii
Let’s Teach Architecting High Quality Software
Software
SOFTWARE PERVADES OUR WORLD

Software is an integral part of our everyday lives.

Software has become the bottom line for many organizations who never envisioned themselves in the software business.
WHERE BEHAVIOR COUNTS MOST

much is required of software.

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Let’s Teach Architecting High Quality Software

Quality
QUALITY

Quality software is software that is fit for its intended purpose.
Let’s Teach Architecting High Quality Software

High Quality
HIGH QUALITY

High quality software meets business goals and user needs.
It has the right features and the right attributes.
UNIVERSAL BUSINESS GOALS

INCREASED MARKET SHARE
QUICK (OR RIGHT) TIME TO MARKET
EFFECTIVE USE OF LIMITED RESOURCES
PRODUCT ALIGNMENT
LOW-COST PRODUCTION
LOW-COST MAINTENANCE
MARKET AGILITY
MIND SHARE

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE
THE ULTIMATE UNIVERSAL GOAL

SUBSTANTIAL
QUICK
SUSTAINABLE
PROFIT
USER NEEDS

- Required capability
- Low learning threshold
- Ease of use
- Predictable behavior
- Dependable service
- Timely response
- Timely throughput
- Protection from unintended intruders and viruses
- ……

Software product goals should address user needs.
THE RIGHT FEATURES

SOFTWARE NEEDS TO HAVE THE RIGHT FUNCTIONALITY:

The software does what I want it to do and not (a lot) more.
THE RIGHT QUALITY ATTRIBUTES

Quality attributes include
• Performance
• Availability
• Usability
• Modifiability
• Security
• Etc.

Quality attribute requirements stem from business and product goals.

Key quality attributes need to be characterized in a system-specific way.

Scenarios are a powerful way to characterize quality attributes and represent stakeholder views.
PARTS OF A QUALITY ATTRIBUTE SCENARIO

SOURCE → Stimulus → Artifact: Process, Storage, Processor, Communication → Response → RESPONSE MEASURE
If function were all that mattered, any monolithic software would do, ... **but** other things matter...

The important quality attributes and their characterizations are key.

- Modifiability
- Interoperability
- Availability
- Security
- Predictability
- Portability

**Quality Attribute Drivers** → **Software Architecture** → **Software**

**analysis, design, development**

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SOFTWARE STRATEGIES ARE NEEDED

BUSINESS AND PRODUCT GOALS

SOFTWARE STRATEGIES

PROCESS QUALITY

PROCESS IMPROVEMENT

IMPROVED ARCHITECTURE PRACTICES

PRODUCT QUALITY
Let’s Teach Architecting High Quality Software

Architecture
WHAT WE NEED IN SOFTWARE

Well-designed software architecture that
• lays out the basic elements of construction
• is known to satisfy important quality goals

Well-defined parts – components that
• have specified roles and interfaces
• have known properties
• behave predictably in a given assembly

Well-defined production plan that prescribes
• the order and method of assembly
• individual and team goals
WHAT WE NEED IN SOFTWARE

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Well-defined production plan that prescribes
• the order and method of assembly
• individual and team goals
FOCUS: SOFTWARE ARCHITECTURE

From our experience

The quality and longevity of a software-intensive system is largely determined by its architecture.

Many large system and software failures point to

- inadequate software architecture education and practices
- the lack of any real software architecture evaluation early in the life cycle

Risk mitigation early in the life cycle is key.

- Mid-course correction is possible before great investment.
- Risks don’t become problems that have to be addressed during integration and test.
WITHOUT SOFTWARE ARCHITECTURE FOCUS

Poorly designed software architectures result in

- greatly inflated integration and test costs
- inability to sustain systems in a timely and affordable way
- lack of system robustness
- in the worst case, product or project cancellation
- in all cases, failure to best support the user
WHY IS SOFTWARE ARCHITECTURE IMPORTANT?

- Represents **earliest** design decisions
  - hardest to change
  - most critical to get right
  - communication vehicle among stakeholders

- **First** design artifact addressing
  - performance
  - modifiability
  - reliability
  - security

- Key to systematic **reuse**
  - transferable, reusable abstraction

The **right architecture** paves the way for system **success**. The **wrong architecture** usually spells some form of **disaster**.
Informally, software architecture is the blueprint describing system composition.

A software architecture is often depicted using an ad hoc box-and-line drawing of the system that is intended to solve the problems articulated by the specification.

- Boxes show elements or “parts” of the system.
- Lines show relationships among the parts.
A SOFTWARE ARCHITECTURE (?)

- Control process (CP)
  - Prop loss model (MODP)
  - Reverb model (MODR)
  - Noise model (MODN)
DEFINITION: SOFTWARE ARCHITECTURE

“The software architecture of a program or computing system is the structure or structures of the system, which comprise the software elements, the externally visible properties of those elements, and the relationships among them.”

IMPLICATIONS OF OUR DEFINITION

- Software architecture is an abstraction of a system.
- Software architecture defines the properties of elements.
- Systems can and do have many structures.
- Every software-intensive system has an architecture.
- Just having an architecture is different from having an architecture that is known to everyone.
- If you don’t develop an architecture, you will get one anyway – and you might not like what you get!
A human body comprises multiple structures.

A static view of one human structure

A dynamic view of that structure

One body has many structures, and those structures have many views.

So it is with software...
These views are needed by the cardiologist…

…but will they work for the orthopedist?

Different stakeholders are interested in different structures. Views must represent the structures in which the stakeholders are interested.

So it is with software…
You should know

- **structure** – an actual set of architectural elements as they exist in software or hardware

- **view** – a representation of a coherent set of architectural elements, as written by and read by system stakeholders.
  - A view consists of a representation of a set of elements and the relations among them.

You should provide

- views that help evaluators and stakeholders understand the software architecture.
THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS

without careful architectural design.

And so it is with software.
OTHER ARCHITECTURES - 1

Enterprise architectures are a means for describing business structures and processes that connect business structures.¹

- focus on business processes, dataflow, systems (including software packages), and their interconnection
- do not address the details of software design
- DoDAF, FEAF, and TEAF are generally regarded as enterprise architectures.

OTHER ARCHITECTURES - 2

A system architecture is a means for describing the elements and interactions of a complete system including its hardware elements and its software elements.

System architecture is concerned with the elements of the system and their contribution toward the goal of the system, but not with their substructure.

System Architecture: “The fundamental and unifying system structure defined in terms of system elements, interfaces, processes, constraints, and behaviors.”

Systems Engineering is a design and management discipline useful in designing and building large, complex, and interdisciplinary systems.

WHERE DOES SOFTWARE ARCHITECTURE FIT?

Enterprise architecture and system architecture provide an environment in which software lives.

- Both provide requirements and constraints to which software architecture must adhere.
- Elements of both are likely to contain software architecture.
- Neither are a substitute for or obviate a software architecture.

In large, complex, software-intensive systems **both software and system architectures are critical** for ensuring that the system is fit for the intended purpose.
Let’s Teach Architecting High Quality Software

Architecting
REQUIREMENTS IN VARIOUS FORMS

AVAILABLE KNOWLEDGE

SYSTEM

ARCHITECTURE

REQUIREMENTS BEGET DESIGN
FACTORS INFLUENCING ARCHITECTURES

Where do architectures come from?

System requirements, constraints, business and product goals certainly, but that’s not all.

Architectures are influenced by

• stakeholders of a system
• technical and organizational factors
• architect’s background
INFLUENCE OF SYSTEM STAKEHOLDERS – 1

Stakeholders have an interest in the construction of a software system.

Stakeholders might include

- customers
- users
- developers
- project managers
- marketers
- maintainers

Stakeholders have different concerns that they wish to guarantee and/or optimize.
SUMMARY: INFLUENCES ON THE ARCHITECTURE

ARCHITECT’S INFLUENCES

STAKEHOLDERS

DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

TECHNICAL ENVIRONMENT

ARCHITECT’S EXPERIENCE

ARCHITECT(S)

REQUIREMENTS

ARCHITECTURE

SYSTEM

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FACTORS INFLUENCED BY ARCHITECTURES

- Structure of the development organization
- Goals of the development organization
- Customer requirements
- Architect’s experience
- Technical environment
- The architecture itself
A CYCLE OF INFLUENCES

Relationships among business goals, product requirements, architects’ experience, architectures and fielded systems form a cycle with feedback loops.

- Influences to and from architectures form a cycle.
- An organization can manage this cycle to its advantage.
ARCHITECTURE BUSINESS CYCLE (ABC)

ARCHITECT’S INFLUENCES

STAKEHOLDERS

DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

TECHNICAL ENVIRONMENT

ARCHITECT’S EXPERIENCE

REQUIREMENTS

ARCHITECT(S)

ARCHITECTURE

SYSTEM

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SOFTWARE ARCHITECTURE AXIOMS

1. Software architecture is the bridge between business and product goals and a software-intensive system.

2. Quality attribute requirements drive software architecture design.

3. Software architecture drives software development through the life cycle.
SYSTEM QUALITIES AND SOFTWARE ARCHITECTURE

System Specification
System Quality Attributes *

Software Architecture

System Capabilities and Software Quality

* Performance
  Security
  Interoperability
  Reliability
  Availability etc.

* Determines level of quality
  Drive
  Drives
SOFTWARE ARCHITECTURE COROLLARIES

1. Software architecture is the bridge between business and product goals and a software-intensive system.

2. **Quality attribute requirements drive the design of the software architecture.**
   - Quality attribute requirements stem from business and mission goals.
   - Key quality attributes need to be characterized in a system-specific way.
   - Scenarios are a powerful way to characterize quality attributes and represent stakeholder views.

3. Software architecture drives software development throughout the life cycle.
SOFTWARE ARCHITECTURE
COROLLARIES

1. Software architecture is the bridge between business and product goals and a software-intensive system.

2. Quality attribute requirements drive the software architecture design.

3. **Software architecture drives software development throughout the life cycle.**
   - Software architecture must be central to development activities.
   - These activities must have an explicit focus on quality attributes.
   - These activities must directly involve stakeholders.
   - The architecture must be *descriptive and prescriptive.*
ARCHITECTURE-CENTRIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Architecture-centric activities include the following:

- creating the **business case** for the system
- understanding the **requirements**
- creating and/or selecting the architecture
- **documenting and communicating** the architecture
- analyzing or evaluating the architecture
- setting up the appropriate **tests and measures** against the architecture
- **implementing** the system based on the architecture
- ensuring that the implementation **conforms** to the architecture
ARCHITECTURE IN THE LIFE CYCLE

Domain Understanding

feeds

Requirements

drive

Architecture

specifies components and services

Make

Buy

Mine

Commission

Components and Services
ARCHITECTURE IN THE LIFE CYCLE

1. Domain Understanding
   - Defining Business Case and Product Context
   - Feeds

2. Requirements
   - Requirements Engineering
   - Drive

3. Architecture
   - Architecture Definition and Documentation
   - Specifies components and services

4. Make
   - Component/Service Development

5. Buy
   - OTS and Open Source Utilization

6. Mine
   - Mining Existing Assets

7. Commission
   - Developing an Acquisition Strategy

8. Components and Services

Software System Integration

Testing

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ARCHITECTURE IN THE LIFE CYCLE

- Domain Understanding
  - Defining Business Case and Product Context
- Requirements
  - Requirements Engineering
  - Architecture Definition and Documentation
  - Architecture Evaluation
- Architecture
  - Make/Buy/Mine/Commission Analysis
- Components and Services
  - Make
    - Component/Service Development
  - Buy
    - OTS and Open Source Utilization
  - Mine
    - Mining Existing Assets
  - Commission
    - Developing an Acquisition Strategy
- Existing talent
- Market availability
- Legacy base
- Organizational policy
- Software System Integration
- Testing
STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

The organizational goals and the system properties required by the business are rarely understood, let alone fully articulated.

Customer quality attribute requirements are seldom documented, which results in

- goals not being achieved
- inevitable conflict between different stakeholders

Architects must identify and actively engage stakeholders in order to

- understand real constraints of the system
- manage the stakeholders’ expectations
- negotiate the system’s priorities
- make tradeoffs
WHAT MAKES A GOOD ARCHITECTURE?

There is no such thing as an inherently good or bad architecture. Architectures are more or less fit for some stated purpose.

The “goodness” of an architecture can be determined with respect to business and product goals

• Assume that two systems are functionally identical. One system can only be “better” if its architecture promotes qualities that are required to meet business goals and/or product goals.
IMPEDIMENTS TO ACHIEVING ARCHITECTURAL SUCCESS

Lack of

• adequate architectural talent and/or experience
• time spent on architectural design and analysis
• architecture-centric acquisition practices

Failure to

• identify the key quality attributes, characterize them, and design for them
• properly document and communicate the architecture
• evaluate the architecture in a qualitative way
• understand that standards are not a substitute for a software architecture
• ensure that the architecture directs the implementation
• evolve the architecture and maintain documentation that is current
• understand that a software architecture does not come free with COTS or services
CHALLENGES FOR THE ARCHITECT

• What are the driving quality attributes for your system?
• What precisely do these quality attributes such as modifiability, security, performance, and reliability mean?
• How do you architect to ensure the system will have its desired qualities?
• How do you document a software architecture?
• How do you know if software architecture for a system is suitable without having to build the system first?
• Can you recover an architecture from an existing system?
SOME SEI TECHNIQUES AND METHODS

- creating the **business case** for the system
- understanding the **requirements**
  - Quality Attribute Workshop (QAW)
- **creating and/or selecting** the architecture
  - Attribute-Driven Design (ADD) and ArchE
- **documenting and communicating** the architecture
  - Views and Beyond Approach
- **analyzing or evaluating** the architecture
  - Architecture Tradeoff Analysis Method (ATAM)
  - Cost Benefit Analysis Method (CBAM)
- **implementing** the system based on the architecture
- ensuring that the implementation **conforms** to the architecture
  - ARMIN (and DiscoTect)
SEI METHODS AND QUALITY ATTRIBUTES

- QAW
- ADD
- ArchE
- Views and Beyond
- ATAM
- CBAM
- ARMIN
- (DiscoTect)

- are explicitly focused on quality attributes
- directly link to business and mission goals
- explicitly involve system stakeholders
- are grounded in state-of-the-art quality attribute models and reasoning frameworks
- are documented for practitioner consumption
- are applicable to real-world challenges and systems
TRENDS IN SOFTWARE ARCHITECTURE - 1

Organizations big and small are recognizing the importance of software architecture. For example,

- Microsoft
  - Regional Architecture Forums
  - Architect’s Council
  - Architect Certification
- Raytheon
  - Architecture Center of Excellence
  - mandatory architecture classes and methods
- IBM
  - Grady Booch writing the online Architect’s Handbook
- Automotive domain
  - Siemens, Bosch, and Delphi all have architecture initiatives
- US Army
  - Army Software Architecture Initiative
TRENDS IN SOFTWARE ARCHITECTURE - 2

Books, courses, certificate programs, conferences, workshops on software architecture abound.

New technologies (MDA, SOA, aspects) change the incidentals but the fundamentals of software architecture and quality attributes are enduring.
Let’s Teach Architecting High Quality Software
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SOFTWARE ENGINEERING PERSPECTIVES - 3

Engineers

Managers

Process

Product

Tools

Life Cycle

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SOFTWARE ARCHITECTURE

both influences and is influenced by all perspectives
SOFTWARE ENGINEERING EDUCATION

What do we teach and how does it address this model?

The norm

Product perspective: OOA + OOD + OOP + …

Process perspective: agile methods, XP, TSP + …

These are a good starting perspective but software engineering students need more

• Business context
• Quality attributes
• Software architecture
ARCHITECTURE PRINCIPLES TO TAKE AWAY

Software architecture is important because it

• provides a communication vehicle among stakeholders
• is the result of the earliest design decisions
• is a transferable, reusable abstraction of a system

The degree to which a system meets its quality attribute requirements is dependent on architectural decisions.

Every software-intensive system has a software architecture.

Just having an architecture is different from having an architecture that is known to everyone, much less one that is fit for the system’s intended purpose.

An architecture-centric approach is critical to achieving and implementing an appropriate architecture.

High quality software requires architecture practices.
THE ROLE OF EDUCATORS
THE WELL EDUCATED GRADUATE
LET’S TEACH ARCHITECTING HIGH QUALITY SOFTWARE

It’s time that all software engineering students know the principles of software architecture and how to use effective software architecture practices.

Every facet of our society depends on software.

To ensure high quality software we need to teach our students to architect high quality software.
THANKS TO THE SEI SOFTWARE ARCHITECTURE TEAM

Felix Bachmann, Len Bass, Joe Batman, John Bergey, Phil Bianco, Paul Clements, James Ivers, Larry Jones, Rick Kazman, Mark Klein, Reed Little, Paulo Merson, Robert Nord, William O’Brien, Ipek Ozkaya, Rob Wojcik, Bill Wood
THANKS TO MY DEAR FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE

I dedicate this keynote to Jim Tomayko. Jim was a leading contributor to software engineering education and a role model to all educators.
THANK YOU!

It has been my honor and pleasure to spend this time with you.

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For more information:
http://www.sei.cmu.edu/architecture/sat_init.html
REFERENCES

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Software Architecture in Practice, Second Edition

Documenting Software Architectures: Views and Beyond

Software Product Lines: Practices and Patterns