



Introduction to Software Architecture Michael Coblenz



Slide credit: Michael Hilton at CMU

Learning Goals

- Understand the abstraction level of architectural reasoning
- Appreciate how software systems can be viewed at different abstraction levels
- Distinguish software architecture from (object-oriented) software design
- Use notation and views to describe the architecture suitable to the purpose
- Document architectures clearly, without ambiguity

Software Architecture

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

[Bass et al. 2003] Note: this definition is ambivalent to whether the architecture is known, or whether it's any good!

Why Understand Architecture?

- Every system has an architecture
- But if you design the architecture intentionally, it's likely to be better!
- Let's look at an example

Example: Email Client



Example: Email Client



Example: Email Client



Two Kinds of Requirements

- Functional requirements: what the system should do
 - "The system shall enable the user to read email."
 - Generally, these are either met or not met (if not met, the system is unacceptable)
- Quality attributes: the degree to which the software works as needed
 - "The system shall fetch I GB of email in under I minute."
 - Sometimes called "non-functional requirements"
 - Maintainability, modifiability, performance, reliability, security
 - Generally, these can be achieved in degrees

Goal: Meet Quality Requirements

- Maintainability / Modifiability
- Performance
- Scalability
- Availability
- Usability

Key lesson: software architecture is about selecting a design that meets the desired quality attributes.

Software Design vs. Architecture

Levels of Abstraction

- Requirements
 - high-level "what" needs to be done
- Architecture (High-level design)
 - high-level "how", mid-level "what"
- OO-Design (Low-level design, e.g. design patterns)
 - o mid-level "how", low-level "what"
- Code
 - low-level "how"

Design vs. Architecture

Design Questions

- How do I add a menu item in VSCode?
- How can I make it easy to add menu items in VSCode?
- What lock protects this data?
- How does Google rank pages?
- What encoder should I use for secure communication?
- What is the interface between objects?

Architectural Questions

- How do I extend VSCode with a plugin?
- What threads exist and how do they coordinate?
- How does Google scale to billions of hits per day?
- Where should I put my firewalls?
- What is the interface between subsystems?

Objects

Model

Design Patterns



Design Patterns



Design Patterns



Architecture



Architecture



Architecture



Next concept: views

• Often, there's too much information for you to show it all at once.

SAMDAG San Diego Regional Bike Map



Son Diego Fire Dispatch Online Public Map



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Why Document Architecture?

• Blueprint for the system

- Artifact for early analysis
- Primary carrier of quality attributes
- Key to post-deployment maintenance and enhancement
- Documentation speaks for the architect, today and 20 years from today
 - As long as the system is built, maintained, and evolved according to its documented architecture
- Support traceability.

Views and Purposes

- Every view should align with a purpose
- Views should only represent information relevant to that purpose
 - Abstract away other details
 - Annotate view to guide understanding where needed
- Different views are suitable for different reasoning aspects (different quality goals), e.g.,
 - Performance
 - Extensibility
 - Security
 - Scalability
 - o ...

Common Views in Documenting Software Architecture

• Static View

- Modules (subsystems, structures) and their relations (dependencies, ...)
- Dynamic View
 - Components (processes, runnable entities) and connectors (messages, data flow, ...)
- Physical View (Deployment)
 - Hardware structures and their connections

Software Architectural Styles

- A style describes a family of architectures
- Each style promotes some quality attributes and inhibits others
- Learning these patterns can enable you to make good architectural choices
- Important: "pure" styles rarely occur in practice
- But I will teach them as pure so we can study them individually
- Each style includes:
 - Components
 - **Connectors** that describe relationships between components

1. Pipes and Filters (one style in the "data flow" family of styles)



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Example: Compilers



Example: UNIX pipes

- Filters: processes
 - Ports: stdin, stdout, stderr
- Pipes: buffered streams
 - Pipes carry byte streams (usually assume: UTF-8 strings)

Pipes vs. Procedures

	Pipes	Procedures
Arity	Binary	Binary
Control	Asynchronous, data-driven	Synchronous, blocking
Semantics	Functional	Hierarchical
Data	Streamed	Parameter/return value
Variations	Buffering, end-of-file behavior	Binding time, exception handling, polymorphism

Table from David Garlan

Analysis

- Quality attributes promoted:
 - Modifiability: can insert or remove filters
 - Modifiability: can redirect pipes
 - Reuse
 - Performance: enables parallel computation
- Quality attributes inhibited:
 - Usability: hard to build interactive applications this way
 - Performance: may have to translate data to be sent on pipes
 - Cost: writing filters may be complex due to common pipe data format
 - In some cases, correctness, if need to synchronize across pipes