

# Architectural Skills

*CSSE6400*

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May 22, 2023

*Quote*

Architecture is the stuff you can't Google.

– Mark Richards *[Richards and Ford, 2020]*

*Quote*

There are no right or wrong answers in architecture—only trade-offs.

— Neal Ford *[Richards and Ford, 2020]*

### *Architectural Design*

Architects use knowledge and experience to analyse trade-offs to design architectures appropriate to the system context.

Developers – Technical Depth *[Richards and Ford, 2020]*



## Architects – Technical Breadth *[Richards and Ford, 2020]*



- Architects need greater technical breadth than depth.
- Breadth allows better consideration of trade-offs.
- Avoid trying to become an expert across many areas – you'll fail.
- Don't stop learning – increase your breadth – don't let your knowledge become stale.

### *Definition 1. Conway's Law*

Organisations design systems whose structure is inevitably a copy of the organisation's communication structure *[Conway, 1968] [MacCormack et al., 2012]*.

- First citation is original article.
- Second citation is one of several about MIT and Harvard research into the phenomenon, calling it the “mirroring hypothesis”.
- Elaborate on this point and Coplien's research into organisational sociology.

### *Conway's Law Consequences*

- Business Process Management
  - Microservices to reflect organisation structure
  - Teams formed around services
- BPM: Redesign organisation structure to reflect system you want.
  - Microservices: Design system to reflect your organisation.
  - Elaborate on benefits of both approaches.
  - Comment on benefits of small focussed teams.



### *Conway's Law Consequences*

Team insularity – more loyal to team than organisation.

- Amazon example from week 11, negotiation difficulties with other teams.
- Need to ensure inter-team cooperation.
- Possibly move people between teams.
- Cloud platforms, and microservices, also support this and with larger teams.
- Intra-team communication becomes more difficult with large teams.

## Conway's Law Issues

- Cross-cutting concerns
  - e.g. Security
- Organisation structure should align with market structure
- Physical location of teams
  - Cross-cutting concerns span services, and consequently teams.
  - Can't have a "security" service. It has to be part of every service.
  - Teams solely based around Conway's law and services may not deliver some cross-cutting concerns.
  - Cooperation, documentation and audits may be necessary.
  - Market structure may complement team structure to place teams closer to their end users.
  - Global development and outsourcing mean different teams are likely to be in different locations.
  - Requires additional overhead and documentation for cooperation between teams.

*Evidenced-Based Software Engineering*

Don't follow fads, seek evidence for good practice.

Elaborate on finding reliable sources of information and confirming facts yourself.

*Let's hear from an expert*

## Software Engineering's Greatest Hits

**what we actually know about software development  
and why we believe it's true**



**Greg Wilson**

<http://third-bit.com/talks/greatest-hits/>



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## References

- [Conway, 1968] Conway, M. E. (1968).  
How do committees invent?  
*Datamation*.
- [MacCormack et al., 2012] MacCormack, A., Baldwin, C., and Rusnak, J. (2012).  
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- [Richards and Ford, 2020] Richards, M. and Ford, N. (2020).  
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