

Layered Architecture

Software Architecture

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Ogres are like onions.

Ogres have layers, onions have layers...
You get it? We both have layers.

- *Shrek*

In the beginning...

There was the big ball of mud *[Foote and Yoder, 1997]*



Figure: Image from "How to Avoid Spaghetti Code" [Gulsah, 2020].

Problem

Any change can affect any other part of the software.

“Solution”

Modularity



1

¹From <https://pixabay.com/illustrations/lego-building-game-toy-drawing-3388163/>.

Problem

Lack of discipline lets any module communicate with any other module.



2

²From <https://pixabay.com/photos/lego-to-play-to-build-module-1629073/>.

“Solution”

Layered Architecture



Figure: *Traditional* 4-tier, layered architecture.



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Question

Can you identify an example of layered architecture?

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Answer

Pick any website.

Definition 1. Layer Isolation Principle

Layers should not depend on implementation details of another layer. Layers should only communicate through well defined interfaces (*contracts*).

Definition 2. Neighbour Communication Principle

Components can communicate across layers only through directly neighbouring layers.

Definition 3. Downward Dependency Principle

Higher-level layers depend on lower layers, but lower-level layers do not depend on higher layers.

Definition 4. Upward Notification Principle

Lower layers communicate with higher layers using general interfaces, callbacks and/or events. Dependencies are minimised by not relying on specific details published in a higher layer's interface.

Definition 5. Sidecar Spanning Principle

A sidecar layer contains interfaces that support complex communication between layers (e.g. design patterns like the observer pattern) or external services (e.g. a logging framework).

Good architectural design...

Applies these principles to deliver simple, modular designs that support modifiability.



Figure: J2EE layered architecture (from *Requirements Analysis and System Design* [Maciaszek, 2007]).



Figure: PCBMER layered architecture with sidecars (adapted from *Requirements Analysis and System Design* [Maciaszek, 2007]).

PCBMER Layers

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Entity Classes representing persistent business objects.

Resource Manages interactions with external persistent data sources.

References

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