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Assignment: Case Study: Strangler Pattern at Blackboard Learn (2011)

The case study Strangler Pattern at Blackboard Learn (2011) highlights Blackboard Inc.'s challenges in 2011, focusing on their outdated J2EE codebase and old Perl code. This old code made it so that their development processes were becoming increasingly complex and error-prone, leading to longer lead times and poorer outcomes for customers.

David Ashman, the chief architect, realized that the problems would worsen without intervention. In response, in 2012, Ashman initiated a code re-architectural project using the strangler pattern. The team implemented "Building Blocks," which allowed developers to work in separate modules decoupled from the monolithic codebase and accessed through fixed APIs. This allowed each developer or team to focus on their module without constantly checking in with other teams about changes or updates. This increased their autonomy, as they had more control over their work and didn't have to wait for others to progress.

Using Building Blocks led to a decrease in the size of the monolithic source code repository because the code was being distributed across multiple smaller, more manageable repositories. This restructuring helped streamline development and made the overall system easier to maintain and scale.

Many lessons were learned from the case study, like not waiting too long to change architectures, the need for safe migration, and the techniques required to transition between different architectures. In the case study, the strangler pattern is an excellent example of a method that helps with this gradual migration. The case study shows how architecture plays such a crucial role in developing teams' overall productivity and efficiency and how it can help with old cold becomes a problem.