**Why They Just Don’t Get It**

**Communicating about Architecture with Business Stakeholders**

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**Abstract:**

The infamous gap between business and IT manifests itself every time people communicate across it. As professional services consultants, Jochem Schulenklopper and Eelco Rommes have witnessed it many times during meetings and workshops. Visual notations that might be intuitive for IT specialists but impervious for business stakeholders can’t bridge the gap. So how can these communities avoid talking past each other and reach a common understanding? Read this insightful story to ­ find out. —Cesare Pautasso and Olaf Zimmermann, department editors.

**Introduction:**

The models and descriptions created using these languages fulfil the architects needs but only understandable by the people with only similar knowledge and background. Visual communication serves us well to bridge the gap with business stakeholders. These practices come from multiple disciplines such as psychology, designing graphics, communication science and cartooning.

**Body of paper:**

Most of the IT architects don’t really speak their business stake holder language. Common architecture languages favour much of the documents correctness and completeness over expressiveness and clarity. The models and descriptions created using these languages fulfil the architects needs but only understandable by the people with only similar knowledge and background.

Visual communication serves us well to bridge the gap with business stakeholders. These practices come from multiple disciplines such as psychology, designing graphics, communication science and cartooning. They’re intended to aid all architecture stakeholders who are involved in understanding, effective analysis, and complete discussion.

**4.1 How architects communicate:**

The architect tools for communicating are often blunt and unusable. IT architects love to communicate and they also deigned tools and new languages for it. But the problem is what if we try to communicate with non-architects.

Effective communication means adapting the message to audience, speaking their language and selecting only relevant information and presenting it. Architects communicate with a diverse set of stakeholders like end users, developers, operators to make the matters more interesting. Each of them speaks a different language and has his or her own way of understanding of the system.

**4.2 Bridging the Communication gap:**

One common approach is to simply ignore the differences and use a common language all the architects are familiar with. Implicitly we expect the audience to learn our language and understand.

Another different approach is to become a polyglot by learning all available the languages. This is hard to work and takes the time that we don’t have. The problem still remains that whether you can communicate different thoughts, analysis and effective solutions in a common language that’s not grounded in IT architecture. We will definitely feel uncomfortable during the communication.

Another way is to create a common language together with your stakeholders that you use to communicate about different IT architecture and their major concerns. If the topic is important and sufficiently complex this will be the best choice. This is done in incremental phases in which we develop visualizations and their languages in parallel. One advantage of this approach is that the resulting language is suitable to the audience. This does not mean that you invent a completely new language that covers all business concerns from the scratch. No everyone who makes financial decisions has an economics degree. we use the feedback to create a better version of the architecture description and design between workshops: clearer, more complete and more effective.

**Examples:**

**Information flowing through a landscape of applications**:

Mostly IT architects present images of the IT landscape as a collection of applications, connections and databases which is hardly interesting to the business users. One of the more successful visual patterns shows the actual use of an IT landscape by using metro line to illustrate the flow of information or execution of business processes.

**Visualizing quality attributes dynamically:**

In internal projects we experiment with letting business metrics determine an application’s size in visualization, discovering whether that helps effectively communicate the crux of the matter. Some examples like the applicants positioned in the center of the landscape has the lowest availability why? , the applicants serving most users don’t receive proportional budgets Is that aligned with our plans?

**Conclusion/Future Work:**

Further research and practise in this field will increase our knowledge of how people with and without technical background perceive and understand architecture visualizations. When we learn to speak the language of our target audiences they will finally understand what we are trying to convey.

**References:**

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