Case Study: Strangler Pattern at Blackboard Learn (2011)

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Assignment 6.2

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In 2011, Blackboard Learn used the Strangler Fig Pattern, which is an architectural approach that involves gradually wrapping and replacing old code with new code. This allows for an incremental and controlled migration process. The approach was aimed to minimize disruption to users and reduce the risk of failure, as it involved replacing small pieces of the legacy system at a time.

In the process there was some key activities such as:

* Breaking down the problem
  + David Ashman had started to notice that the code commits had decreased, meaning that the developer productivity went down. It was showing that an increase of difficulty of introducing code changes
* Changing the organization to allow modernization
  + This is where the fig pattern comes in. It was meant for developers to work in separate modules that were decoupled from the monolithic code base. Then accessed through fixed APIs.
* Establishing clear outcomes and priorities
  + Blackboard Inc. was scaling exponentially that the chief architect needed a solution quickly.
* Identifying seems to isolate components
  + The lead times got longer, which in term had bad outcomes for the people that used it.
* Building transitional architecture to allow coexistence
  + When the building blocks were put into effect, the development team was able to work more autonomously without having to constantly communicate with each other. Developers that were moving their code to the building block modules was decreasing the size of the monolith source code repository.
* Introducing new development practices and organizational changes
  + With the introduction of Strangler Fig Pattern, it allowed developers to work safer as the mistakes resulted in small, local failures instead of major ones that would impact the entire system.

# References

Kim, G., Humble, J., Debois, P., & Willis, J. (2016). *The DevOps Handbook How to Create World-Class Agility, Reliability, & Security in Technology Organization.* Portland: IT Revolution.