Web Application Architecture

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Motivation

SW development project contains many unknowns from start

- "... with proper design, the features come cheaply. This approach is arduous, but continues to succeed."
 - Dennis Ritchie

Many developers made this experience

• → best practices, paths to follow

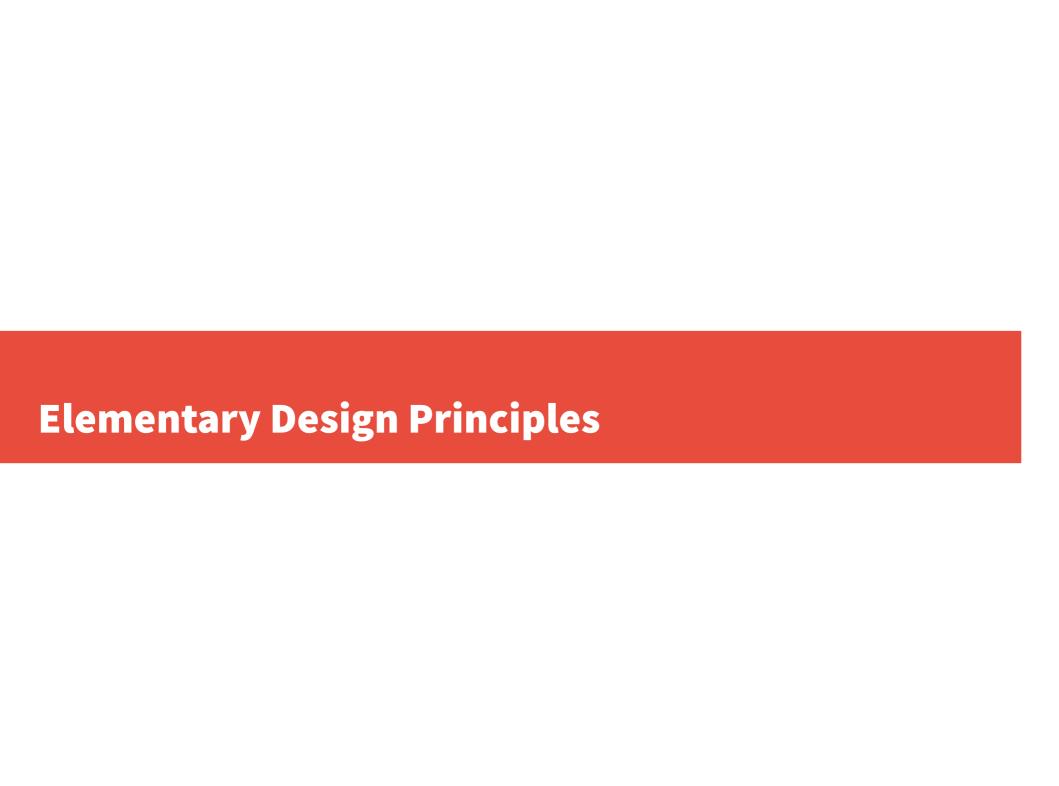
Contents

Elementary design principles

- Code organization
 - Single responsibility, Separation of concerns, Encapsulation, DRY
- Dependencies and their expression
 - Inversion of control, Dependency injection

Web Application Architectures

- Monolithic application, microservices
- Application layers, common patterns
- Cross-cutting concerns, Aspect-oriented programming



Separation of Concerns

- Code dealing with different work should be kept separate
- Increases
 - Testability
 - Reusability
 - Readability

Example: for user registration, implementation of input validation is irrelevant

Example files: soc_bad.example, soc_good.example

Same principle applies on class, package, module, universe level!

• Specifically for object-oriented design: A class should have one, and only one, reason to change.

- If class has multiple responsibilities
 - → each responsibility has own specifications
 - → change of one responsibility specification (= reason to change the class) may impact ability of the class to fulfil the others
 - → fragile design

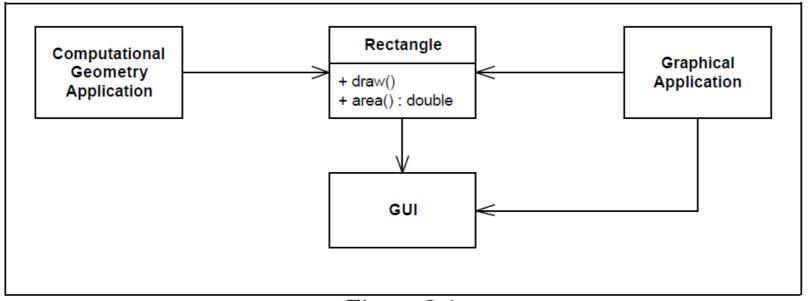


Figure 8-1
More than one responsibility

Problems with this design:

- Computational application depends on GUI library through Rectangle
- If Graphical application requires Rectangle to change, it may force rebuild (test, deployment) of the Computational application

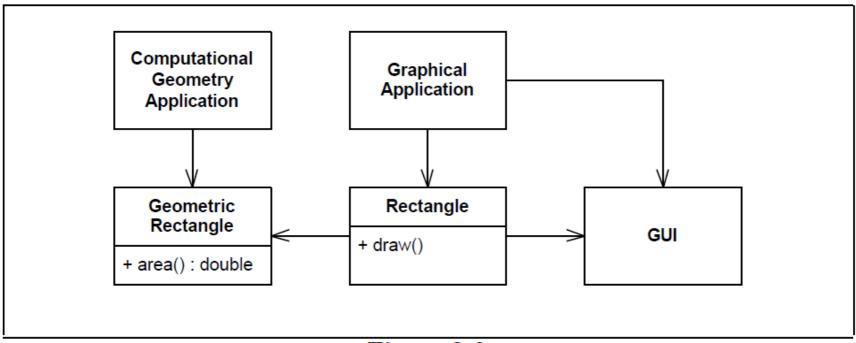


Figure 8-2
Separated Responsibilities

Encapsulation

- Prevent direct access to internal state of object/module
 - Note encapsulation is not an OOD-related principle only
- State read/change should happen only through well-defined public interfaces
 - Class/module owns its state and should control how it is changed
 - Auto-generating getters and setters breaks encapsulation quite often!

Examples: enc_bad.example, enc_good.example

Don't Repeat Yourself (DRY)

DRY says that every piece of system knowledge should have one authoritative, unambiguous representation.

Dave Thomas

System knowledge consists of

- Code, database schemas
- Test cases and scenarios
- Documentation
- •

Don't Repeat Yourself (DRY)

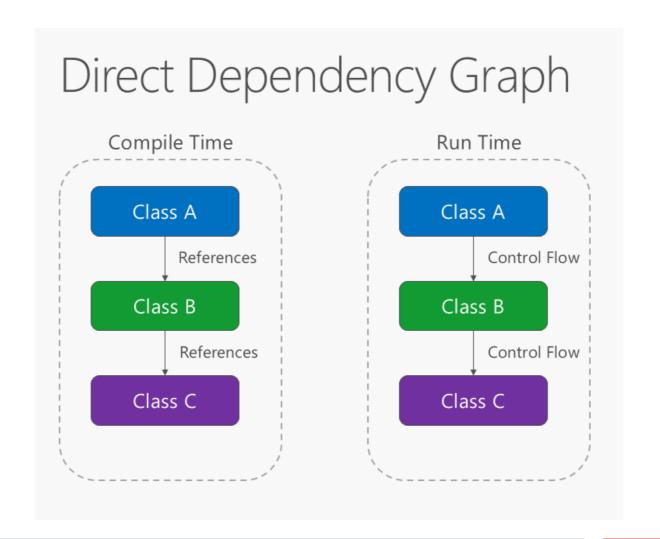
- Multiple representations of single piece of information
 - → you have to update them all when changes happen
 - → awful lot of work to do
 - → or they end up out of sync with each other

Don't Repeat Yourself (DRY)

Authoritative representation = change only that and generate the other required representations automatically, if needed

- Example: Database schema
 - Authoritative representation: UML data model
 - Derivative representations generated from the UML model: SQL DDL scripts
 - Example files: dra_model.pdf, dra_ddl.sql

Dependency Inversion – Direct Dependencies



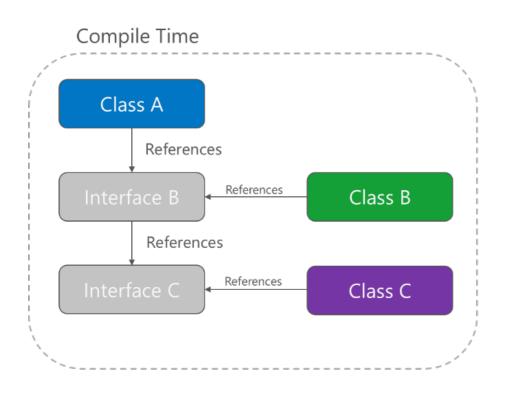
Dependency Inversion – Direct Dependencies

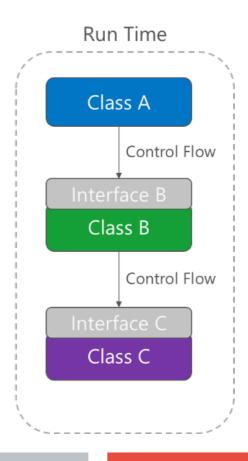
 Direct dependencies mean tight coupling between Class A and Class B

- It makes difficult to replace one implementation of Class B with another
 - Changes in class A would be necessary
- → Higher level parts of system depend on the lower parts
- Higher level abstractions should not depend on implementation details.

Dependency Inversion

Inverted Dependency Graph





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Dependency Inversion

- Both high- and low- level modules depend on/implement abstractions (interfaces)
 - → loose coupling between modules
 - → easy to replace one implementation with another
 - Implementation does not impact the world beyond its interface

Explicit Dependencies

 Applications/modules/classes should advertise required dependencies for proper functionality

- Solutions on several layers:
 - Installation e.g. Linux packaging system
 - Build Maven, Gradle (both Java), npm (node.js), setuptools/pip (python), etc.
 - Code constructor/function parameters

Explicit Dependencies

Explicit code dependencies

- Neither functions, classes nor methods should depend on a particular global state
- Functions should always take all required dependencies as arguments
- Classes should take all required dependencies as constructor parameters
 - In other words object must be in initialized, consistent state after constructor call
 - Optional parameters can be set via setters, but the class code must be functional even if they remain unset!

Example: explicit_dep.example

Sidestep: Inversion of Control

- Generic term expressing that our code is not in control of program flow: some other code (e.g. a framework) is in control
- Common use-cases: dependency injection, window GUIs
- Common misconception: inversion of control == dependency injection
 - Dependency injection represents the IoC concept, but not the other way around
 - See the example by Martin Fowler: ioc.example

Dependency Injection

- Main idea: separate code for populating objects with their dependencies
 - Configuration either in code or text (XML) file
 - This code is commonly provided by so called DI Containers (such as Spring, EJB, PicoContainer)
- Result: replacing dependencies requires changes at one place (the configuration) instead of all places of use

Dependency Injection - Constructor

Dependencies are injected via constructor

- → classes have to explicitly declare their dependencies
- Preferred for mandatory dependencies
- Example: di_constructor.example

Dependency Injection - Setter

Dependencies are injected via setters

- → classes have to provide setters for their dependencies
- Preferred for optional dependencies
- Example: di_setter.example
 - You can see the examples are very similar. The difference is mainly conceptual.

Dependency Injection - Attribute

Dependencies are injected directly to attributes

- → classes don't have to provide setters for their dependencies
- Works with some DI containers, but hides the dependencies from their users
 - → consider it to be an anti-pattern and avoid
 - Sometimes it can be useful though (e.g. when writing unit tests)
- Example: di_attribute.example

Service Lookup

Dependency resolution approach alternative to dependency injection.

Main idea: there is an all-knowing object (service locator) which can retrieve any instance we need.

- We still need to keep reference to the service locator
- Example with Spring: servicelookup.example

Dependency Injection vs Service Lookup

- DI uses Inversion of Control principle, Service Lookup does not
- Dependency Injection can be more difficult to debug (more complicated implementation)
- Service Lookup forces dependency on the service locator
 - That is especially a problem when writing a library which others should use
- Service Lookup is less flexible, but easier to implement

Sources + Additional Reading

Robert C. Martin: Principles of OOD

http://www.butunclebob.com/ArticleS.UncleBob.PrinciplesOfOod

Microsoft .NET Guide: Architectural Principles

https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/dotnet/standard/modern-web-apps-azure-architec ture/architectural-principles

Martin Fowler: Inversion of Control Containers and the Dependency Injection pattern

https://martinfowler.com/articles/injection.html



Important aspects

- How is the application deployed 1,2,3,n processes/servers?
 - Impacts how application can be scaled horizontally
 - Impacts difficulty of deployment updates
- How the application looks from the outside world
 - Impacts how applications can be integrated
- Development constraints
 - Used technologies, development team allocation

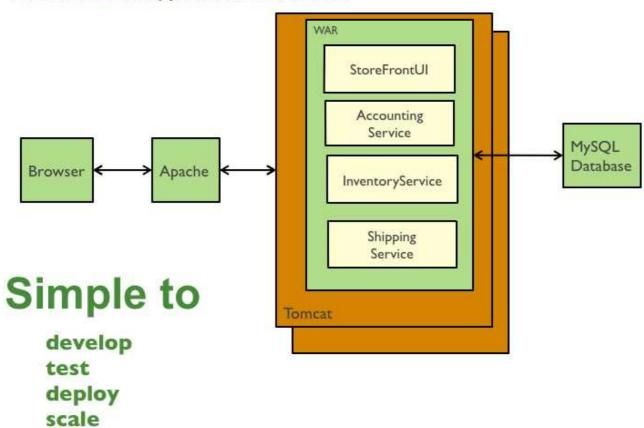
Your typical application:

- UI component e.g. HTML + CSS + JavaScript running in browser
- Server application with some kind of web-service API
 - Handles all the functionality → monolith (even though it has a web-service API!)
- Database server for storing data e.g. MariaDB

Example: Accounting application

- The server handles the following actions:
 - User authentication
 - Invoice processing
 - Salaries
 - Document printing
 - Tax returns
 - Company/Customer management
 - Payment orders
 - •

Traditional web application architecture



Main pros

- Easy to load into IDE just one project
- Easy to deploy one archive/folder which is uploaded to the server runtime
- Simple scaling running multiple copies

Works nicely until the application grows, then...

Main cons (when the application is large)

- Large codebase is difficult to understand especially for new team members
 - → decline of code quality over time
- Long start-time for VMs (e.g. Java, .NET) wasted time during development and problems with deployment up-time
- Scaling is not so easy anymore
 - Cannot scale just portions which are heavily used
 - Various resource requirements by different parts of the application

Main cons (when the application is large)

- Problems with scaling development
 - People influence each other with their work → big coordination costs
- Fixed technology stack
 - Whole application must be written in the same technology
 - Upgrades to newer framework versions are difficult due to size and amount of people involved
 - Change of framework means rewriting a lot of code

Service-Oriented Architecture

- Attempt on solving issues with monolithic applications
- Or a corporate buzzword...
- Nowadays almost useless term:
 - Many people understand SOA as many different things
 - Google the term and see for yourselves
 - Read: https://martinfowler.com/bliki/ServiceOrientedAmbiguity.html
- So instead of wasting time on SOA, we define what a service is and work with that

Service-Oriented Architecture

Services should:

- Be a black box for their consumers
- Have a clear agreement on how-to communicate with them (client-service contract)
- Be loosely-coupled services need to know only contract to communicate with each other → no direct, implementation-specific dependencies
- Be stateless service either responds to client with a value or an error message

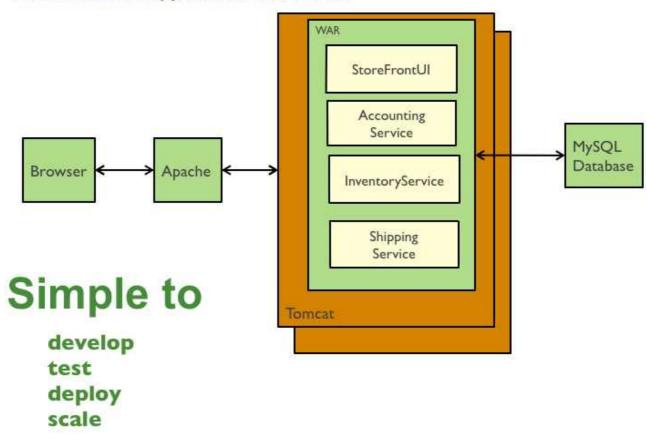
Service-Oriented Architecture

- Services communicate by sending messages via:
 - HTTP web-services, SOAP
 - Message queues
- Increases complexity due to integrations
- → Monolithic applications integrated via web-service API are not a good SOA
 - Issues with monolithic architecture remain
 - Additional complexity of service integrations

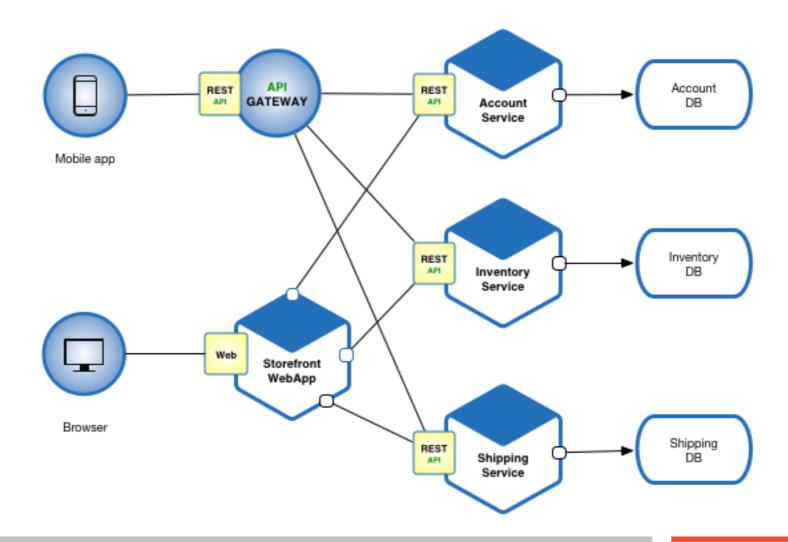
- One application splitted into several small services
 - Each runs as separate process on either same, or more often different (virtual) server
- Based on Unix concept of "Do One Thing and Do It Well"
- Each service handles one small well-defined area of functionality

Example: Monolithic Web Application

Traditional web application architecture



Example: Microservices



Main pros

- Each service is relatively small
 - Easy to develop (also for new team members)
 - Easy to test individual functionality
- Fast deployment small services start faster
- Flexible horizontal scalability you scale only those services which you need
- You don't need to take down entire application for updates

Main pros

- Easy to scale development
 - Teams can take responsibility of a service → limited interference
- Each service can be implemented using different technology
- Relatively easy technology upgrades and refactoring due to limited scope of services

Main cons

- Relatively difficult to deploy due to distributed nature
 - Industry standard development tools are only slowly adapting from monolith applications to microservice pattern
 - Containers (Docker) help a lot with that
 - → increased maintenance costs
- Integration testing required and expensive

Main cons

- Use-cases that span across multiple services present a challenge
 - Require coordination of multiple teams
 - Transaction handling is difficult in distributed environment
- Possible increased resource costs
 - Fach service should have own datastore
 - Each service process usually runs in on VM
 - Each service requires own runtime which may have significant overhead (e.g. JVM)

Monolith vs Microservices

- Each has its uses
- Monolith is easier to develop and maintain as long as the application remains relatively small
- Complexity of microservice distributed deployment does not pay off for small applications
- But for large projects, the microservices allow better scalability, testing, and decrease complexity of individual code packages
 - And for languages without static type system, microservices are almost a necessity

Sources + Additional Reading

Microservice Architecture:

https://microservices.io/index.html

ASP.NET Guide: Common Application Architectures https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/dotnet/standard/modern-web-apps-azure-architecture/common-web-application-architectures

Martin Fowler: Microservices

https://martinfowler.com/articles/microservices.html

Common Web Application Design Principles

"If you think good architecture is expensive, try bad architecture."

- Brian Foote and Joseph Yoder

Application Layers

 Application code is separated into "layers" by its responsibilities (separation of concerns)

User Interface

Business Logic

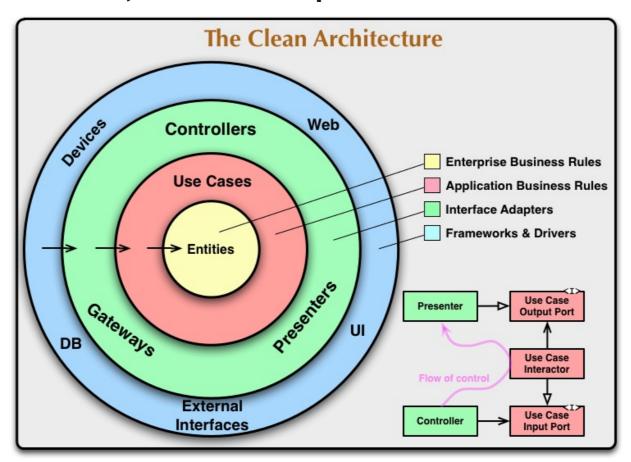
Data Access

Src:

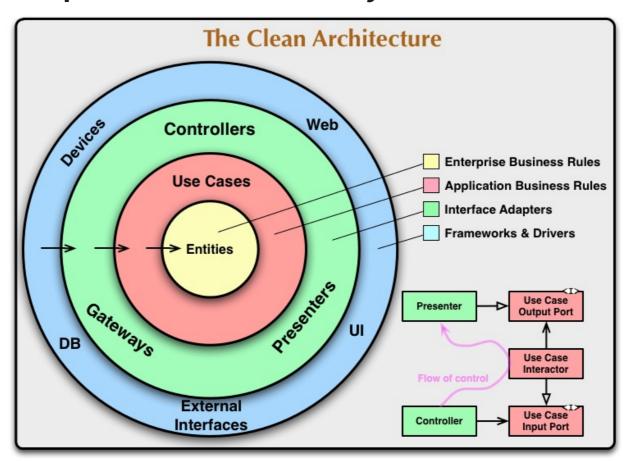
Application Layers

- Layers encapsulate functionality inside application
- Layers communicate via interface
- → easier management and replacement
 - e.g. MySQL storage replaced by MongoDb
- → easier testing
 - e.g. replace real database access with mocks for unit tests

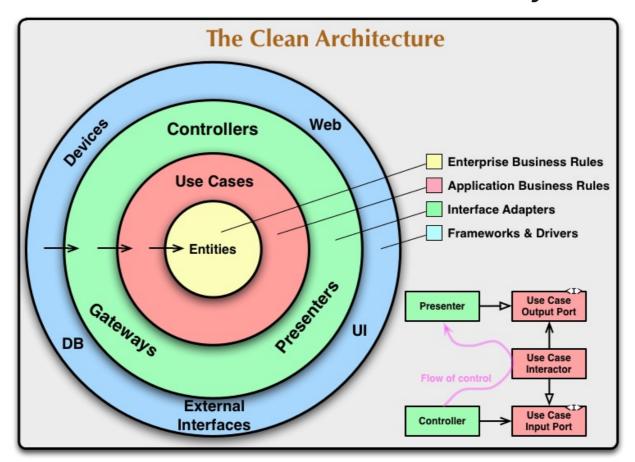
• Different schema, same concept



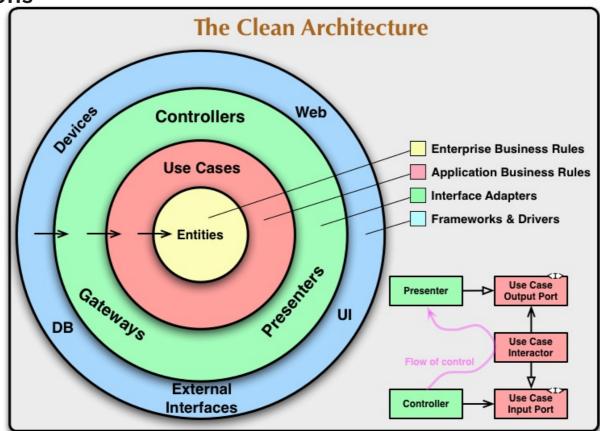
• Main rule: dependencies are always from the outside inwards



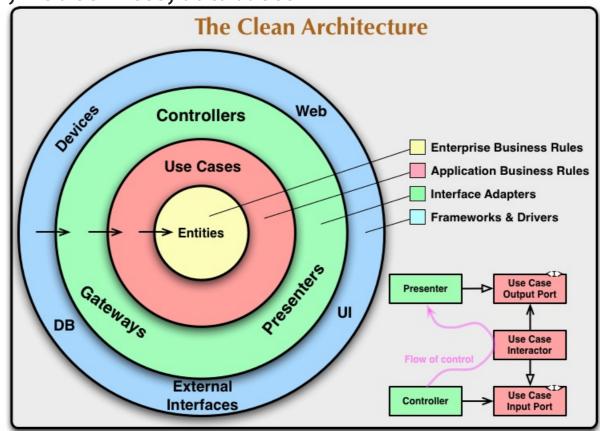
Entities: Generic rules shared across whole system



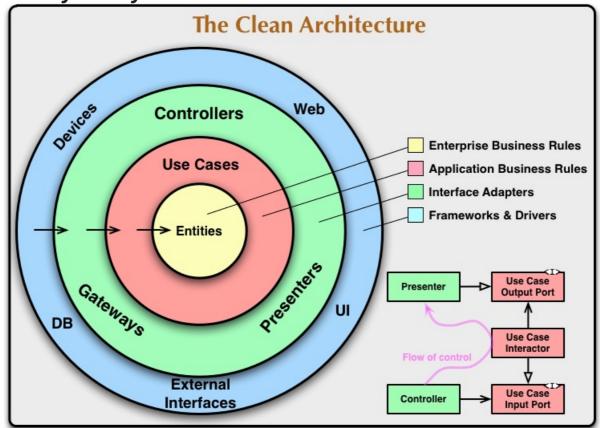
 Use Cases: application-specific rules, control data flow to/from entities and invoke their functions



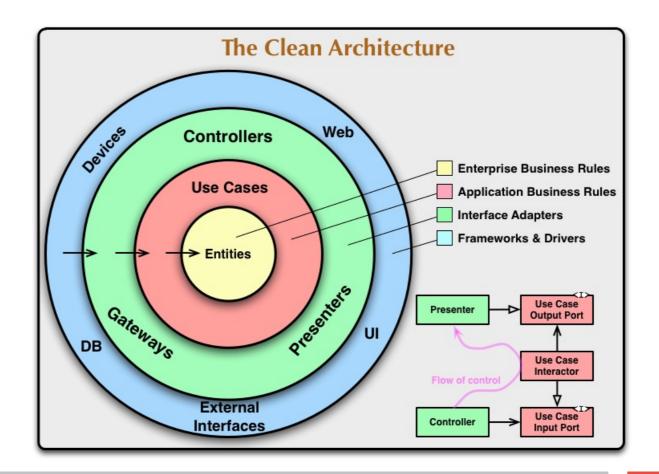
 Interface adapters: convert data from entities/use cases into format for external systems – UI, web services, databases



 Frameworks and drivers: external frameworks and tools, databases, etc. You only connect those to your system.



More layers as needed. The concept is what is important here!



Simple Example: Discussment library

https://github.com/danekja/discussment

- Important things to check:
 - Inner references in core module (Service classes reference depend on the entities)
 - Core module provides interfaces for DAOs (Dependency Inversion)
 - Concrete DAO implementations depend on Core
 - UI module depends on Core

Application Layers

- Realization of separation of concerns principle and encapsulation on code level
- Dependency paths go from upper/outer layers to lower/inner layers
 - Commonly implemented vie dependency inversion principle
- Allows reuse of inner parts on multiple outer places
 - e.g. application logic can be called from:
 - Web UI
 - Smartphone app via web services
 - Test framework during unit tests

Application Layers

Common layers

- Presentation layer
- Application logic layer
- Data Access layer

Common cross-cutting concerns

- Security
- Transactions
- Logging

Data Layer

• Responsibilities:

- HOW the data are stored (format)
 - Relational schema, rules for documents in document databases, file format, etc.
- Mapping between internal application format (entities) and storage format (SQL)
- The actual READ/WRITE functionality

Business Layer

Responsibilities:

- Realize application functionality
- Change state of entities
- Trigger data storage access

Presentation Layer

• Responsibilities:

- Accept input from user
- Call application functions
- Present result to user

Further reading

- Robert C. Martin, Clean Architecture Overview https://8thlight.com/blog/uncle-bob/2012/08/13/the-clean-architecture.html
- Robert C. Martin, Clean Architecture, Prentice Hall; 1 edition (September 20, 2017), ISBN-13: 978-0134494166 (yep, the book)
- Brian Foote, Joseph Yoder: Big Ball of Mud, Fourth Conference on Patterns Languages of Programs, PloP 97 http://www.laputan.org/mud/mud.html#BigBallOfMud
- Alistair Cockburn, Hexagonal Architecture https://web.archive.org/web/20180822100852/http://alistair.cockburn.us/Hexagonal+archit ecture
- Jeffrey Palermo, Onion Architecture https://jeffreypalermo.com/2008/07/the-onion-architecture-part-1/
- ASP.NET Guide: Common Application Architectures https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/dotnet/standard/modern-web-apps-azure-architecture/c 640mmon-web-application-architectures

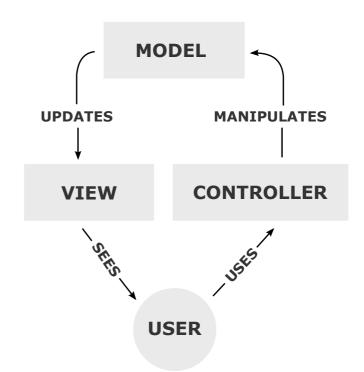


Common WebApp Design Patterns

- The following sections discuss commonly used design patterns
- Exact definitions of these patterns vary based on source, technology...
- → remember the principle of separating concerns
- → always consider the best approach to solving your goal
- → do not focus on following a pattern just for the sake of it

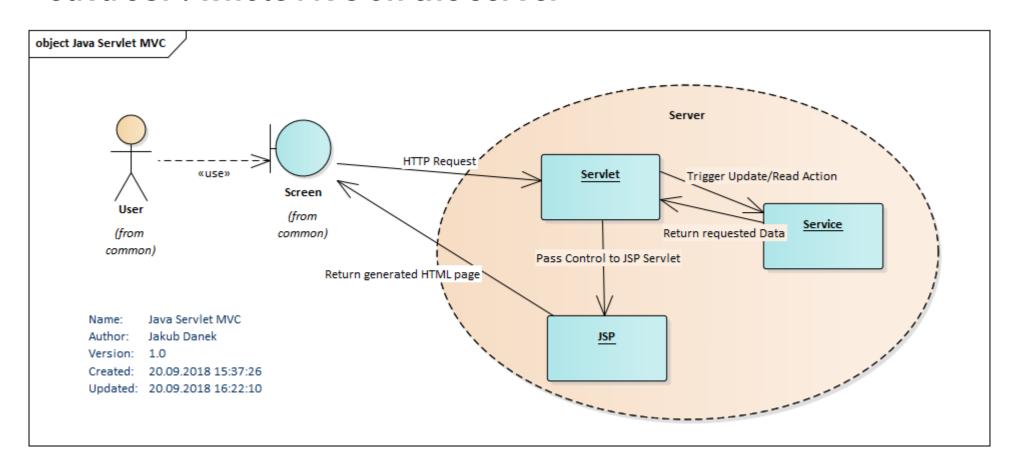
Terminology

- Model data and application logic
- View displays data from model
- Controller handles input events
- Originally from Smalltalk-80 GUI



Many flavours in web applications

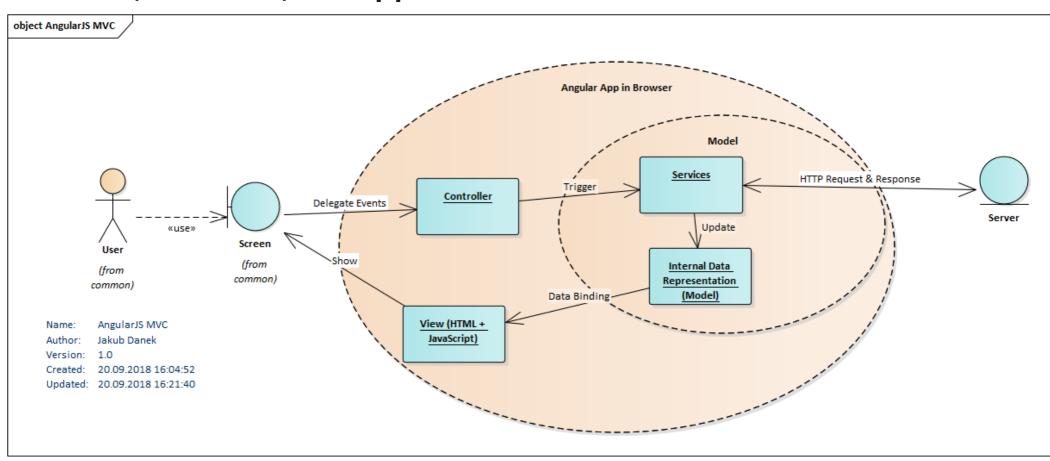
Java JSP: whole MVC on the server



- Java JSP: whole MVC on the server
- Differences to basic MVC schema:
 - Model (services) do not directly inform view (JSP) about changes controller does that
 - Instead, new View is generated for each request in form of HTML page
 - → notifications about Model change are not necessary
 - JSP is the actual View, HTML page is its output
 - Note: Both Controller and View are implemented as Servlets (remember what servlet container does with JSPs?)

- AJAX/SPA: Part/Full application in browser
- Terminology: These terms are not limited to MVC!
 - AJAX = Advanced Javascript and XML
 - Technology which allows updating html directly in browser without the need to get full page HTML from the server
 - SPA = Single Page Application
 - Application which run fully in browser and view changes are handled by Javascript manipulation of DOM
 - Data are received from the server, but HTML is generated in browser

AJAX/SPA: Part/Full application in browser



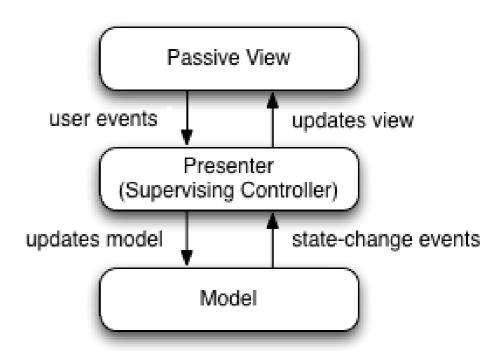
AJAX/SPA: Part/Full application in browser

- Controller handles input events (link/button click, input changes) and delegates to model for action
- View observes the model data for change
- → when data change, view updates itself

Model-View-Presenter

 Breaks connection between Model and View

 Presenter is a Controller which also serves as direct mediator between View and Model



Model - View - Presenter

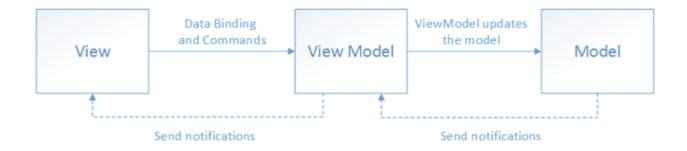
- View consists of individual Widgets
 - Widget can be a:
 - Button
 - Input field
 - Set of input fields
 - A form
- Each Widget has own Presenter which handles its events and sets the data it shows

Model - View - Presenter

- Presenters form a hierarchy:
 - Page Presenter
 - Menu presenter (handles View changes)
 - Form Presenter (handles form submit actions)
 - Input fields presenters
 - Submit button presenters (handles e.g. when the button is enabled)
- Presenter receives user input event, delegates to Model and then updates the View with result

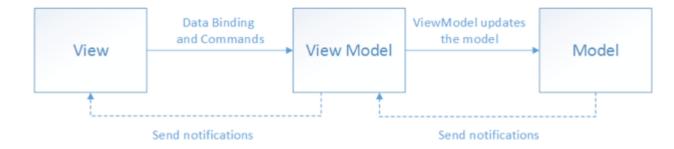
Model - View - ViewModel

Another way of breaking coupling between Model and View



Originally introduced by Microsoft for its ASP.NET/WPF frameworks

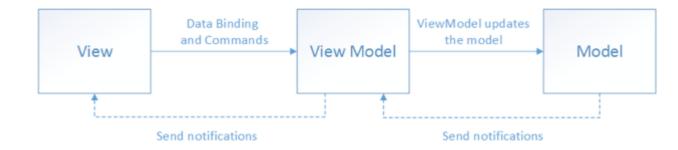
Model - View - ViewModel



ViewModel provides

- Data for View
 - Converts data from internal Model into format which suitable for display
- Commands
 - Reactions to user input commands are mapped to button clicks, input changes etc.

Model – View - ViewModel



Communication with View:

 Via DataBinding and Notifications – View is notified about data change in ViewModel via events and updates itself

Communication with Model

- ViewModel calls Model functions to trigger application logic
- ◆ ViewModel forms both data and functional interface between View and Model

Model - View - * Comparison

	MVC	MVP	MVVM
User Input	Controller handles all user input and calls Model/changes View	Widgets pass user input to their respective presenter, which calls Model/changes View	Actions in View mapped to Commands in ViewModel. Commands call Model/trigger View change
View Updates	View observes the model and updates itself when notified	Presenter updates View when Model changes	View observes ViewModel data and updates itself when notified
View – Model communication	Yes, View observes Model	No	No

Model - View - Whatever

- Many different opinions on exact definition of these patterns
- Each application implements them in their own flavour
- → Do not worry about terminology too much
- Important things to take away:
 - Separate your presentation and application logic
 - There are multiple paths for such separation
 - Follow guidelines and best practices for your chosen technology as well as internal team rules
 - → same structure everywhere → easier to navigate through new project

WebApp Design Patterns Sources

- Mike Potel, MVP
 http://www.wildcrest.com/Potel/Portfolio/mvp.pdf
- Martin Fowler, GUI Architectures https://martinfowler.com/eaaDev/uiArchs.html
- Martin Fowler, Observer Synchronization https://martinfowler.com/eaaDev/MediatedSynchronization.html
- DrDobbs, MVC Paradigm in Smalltalk
 http://www.drdobbs.com/tools/the-mvc-paradigm-in-smalltalkv/184408445
- Microsoft MVVM
 https://docs.microsoft.com/cs-cz/xamarin/xamarin-forms/enterprise-application -patterns/mvvm



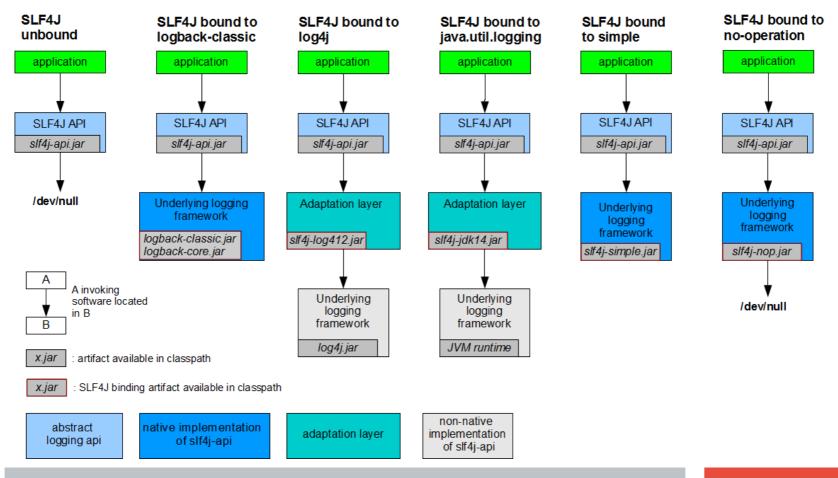
Certain functionality is required on all layers

- Security user authorization
 - Presentation layer to decide if user can see particular page/view
 - Application layer to decide if user can invoke particular action/read data
- Logging technical, debug logs, audit logs
 - Everywhere to log what the application/user are doing
- Transactions
 - Application and Data layer to ensure atomicity of actions we will talk more about this in the persistence lecture

Certain functionality is required on all layers

- naive implementation introduces dependencies into all layers
 - expensive to change
 - Clutters implementation with unrelated code
 - Difficult to test

Approach 1 – API dependency and configuration



Src: https://www.slf4j.org/manual.html

- Approach 1 API dependency and configuration
 - Commonly used with logging facades
 - Application depends on interface, not implementation
 - Allows to call logging API at any place of your code
 - Changing logger implementation requires only:
 - Replace logger implementation library
 - Provide new configuration
 - Actual application code does not need to change

Approach 2 – Aspect-Oriented Programming (AOP)

What is an Aspect?

- A module (typically a class) that contains code which would be otherwise called/duplicated among multiple classes
- Technologies implementing AOP ensure that the Aspect code is executed when particular method is called (and other conditions apply)
 - e.g. logging aspect could for each method call of any class in our application's business layer log: timestamp, user, method and class name, input parameters
 - e.g. security aspect could check that all methods from our business layer are called only if user has been authenticated

Cross Cutting Concerns – AOP Example

```
//no aspect
Class UserManager {
     AuthenticationManager auth;
     User addRoleToUser(User user, Role role) {
        //throws unauthorized exception on fail
        auth.checkCurrentUserHasRole(Roles.ADMIN);
       //attach role to user, save etc
```

Cross Cutting Concerns – AOP Example

Terminology:

- Join Point place of program execution at which the cross-cutting code is run
 - Commonly is a method execution (but not exclusively)
 - This course focuses on method execution only
- Pointcut predicate expressing whether action should be executed at certain join point
 - e.g. execution(* UserManager.add*(..))

Terminology:

- Advice action taken by aspect joins pointcuts and the actual code to be executed
 - e.g. @Before("execution(* UserManager.add*(..))")
 public void doAdminCheck(){...}
- Types of Advices
 - The aspect code can be executed at several places in respect to the particular join point:
 - Before
 - After
 - After returning (with the return value)
 - After throwing (with the exception thrown by the method)
 - Around (meaning part of aspect code is executed before and part is executed after the actual join point)

• Terminology:

- Weaving process of linking aspects to the advised code
- Types of Weaving
 - Compile time
 - Load time
 - Runtime

Compile-time weaving

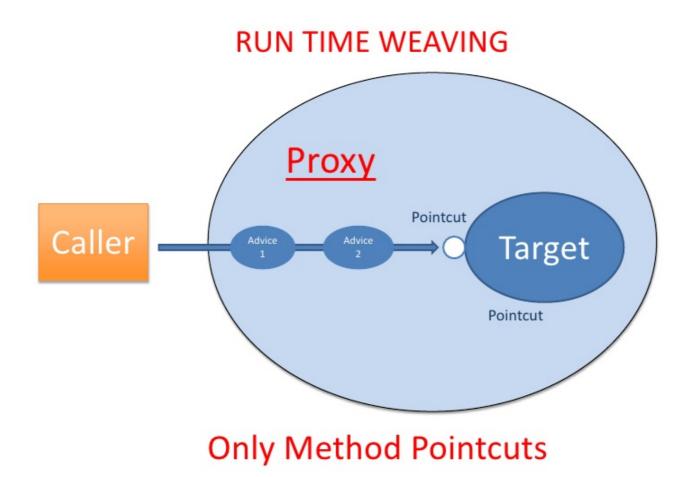
- Accomplished by custom compiler
 - Analyses code, searches for aspects and pointcuts
 - Creates modified version of classes which contain the relevant code
- Issues:
 - Custom compiler required
 - Debugging tools might have issues with figuring out program execution mapping to source code

Load-time weaving

- Accomplished by custom class loader
 - Analyses binaries, searches for aspects and pointcuts
 - Creates and loads modified version of classes which contain the relevant code
- Issues:
 - Custom class loader required
 - Debugging tools might have issues with figuring out program execution mapping to source code

Run-time weaving

- Accomplished by creating proxies of the classes by subclassing
 - References to proxies are used instead of the actual objects
 - Proxies contain the aspect's code and invoke the original methods
- Pros:
 - The original classes remain intact at runtime
- Issues:
 - Bigger memory footprint due to creating subclasses and their instances
 - It is difficult/impossible to use pointcuts pointing at private methods



Cross Cutting Concerns – Sources & Reading

https://docs.jboss.org/aop/1.1/aspectframework/userguide/en/html_single/index.html

http://www.eclipse.org/aspectj/doc/released/progguide/starting-aspectj.html

https://docs.spring.io/spring/docs/5.0.9.RELEASE/spring-framework-reference/core.html#aop

https://www.slideshare.net/rohitsghatol/aspect-oriented-prog-with-aspectj-spring-aop