

Software Architectures and Patterns

Basics, Principles and Questions for processing them

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Software Architecture - Definition

- *"The fundamental organization of a system embodied in its **components**, their **relationships** to each other, and to the **environment**, and the **principles** guiding its **design** and **evolution**."*
(IEEE 1471:2000 standard)

Software Architecture - Definition

- *"Architecture represents the **significant design decisions** that shape a system, where significant is measured **by cost of change**"*
(Grady Booch, 2006)

Software Architecture - Definition

- *“The set of design decisions that must be **made early**”,
(Martin Fowler)*

Software Architecture - Definition

- *“Architecture, in the field of software development are decisions that are **hard to reverse**”,
(Matthew Parker)*

Characteristics of a good software architecture (as the heart of good information system)

- Scalable
- Reliable
- Efficient
- Secure
- Maintainable
- Extensible
- Testable
- Observable

What Software Architecture consists of?

- Structures
- Division to sub-systems
- Communication models (E.g. SPA fullstack may have REST api between Front and back, and e.g. SQL-connection with some driver between backend and database. Or a IoT system with totally asynchronous communication using message buffers/queues)
- See how the communication model above also includes the timing / execution model
- Choices on ready made environments and technology stacks
- Design patterns in code level
- Agreed principles and practices
- Naming convention and coding conventions
- Nowadays also CI affects the architecture. Think of e.g. cloud-native, container orchestration & configuration, microservices and serverless options
- Thus, architecture is related also (but not only) to the **development time**.

Examples of Software Design decisions

- 'more-synchronous' API communication (e.g. REST or GraphQL?)
OR: totally asynchronous communication with message systems like Kafka or MQTT
- Data storage solution (Can/should be hidden behind some kind of 'data access layer' but it still affects e.g. business process rule handling)
- Container-based Kubernetes & Docker
OR: Serverless solution with AWS Lambda
- What tech stack to use? (Not the choice itself, but it often affects some architectural decisions. Usually there are hinted / agreed / proven ways of doing standard solutions in each technological environment or framework. If you do not follow them, there might not be e.g. a largely proven security framework)

What types of models/diagrams exist? E.g. in UML

- **data** model, the case **business information** structure
- **processes** and **actions**, **states** and transitions
- **features** as use cases or user stories and **roles** using the features
- algorithm **programming logic**
- **communication** and **data flow**
- **software components** and packages
- **servers** and other **deployment** related plans.

+ more that I could not remember on one sitting without looking at materials

Do you need to model all these? Nowadays we only model what is necessary and/or beneficial.

Gold vault example (Juhani) of microservices. Just fast (incomplete) example of SRP/SOC.

1. One service receives images from security camera(s) and relays them to the people recognition service as images.
2. People recognition service identifies (with ML based AI) which images contain human beings and relay those image sub-parts cropped to the face recognition service
3. The face recognition service will try to identify known people and unknown people. Known people recognitions will be indicated to the known people log service. Unknown people to some other service.
4. Known people log service will make markings to the database of where the known person (employee, guard) has been spotted and when.
5. Unknown people service will log the time and face image to the database and will send notification to the control room service
6. Control room service will sound an alarm and show the unknown person face image with timestamps on the screen.

What benefits you can see in this? There are multiple. Possible to list 5+ for sure.

Three phases in programming (at least in school cases)

1. Technical studies

- Fast experiments of any kind. Speed in learning is important. But also deep understanding of at least the core concepts. Mickey mouse examples. Closer to 0% customer value, but aiming at closer to 100% technical ability development
- Only think of the customer case from technical point of view. What are the technical challenges that need to be addressed right now?

2. Architecture building

- No hurry. Refactoring, refactoring.
- Creating basis for the smooth shared development by multiple developers.
- Not just modules and files, but also ways to do and principles to follow

3. Feature development, real business case user story implementation

- Now this is the customer-centric part
- Now the development should be fast, as tech is known (from 1, OR earlier project) and architecture built (2 OR earlier).

What happens (especially in school projects) if students jump over the phases?

- Then they are trying to eat an elephant as a whole
- Leads often to the analysis-paralysis
 - "We cannot start because we don't know exactly what customer needs"
 - We do not need to know exactly, to start with the phases 1 and 2!
 - In agile development we do not need to know exactly in the phase 3 either!
 - Prototyping: Create first lean version of what customer might want.
 - Iterate: Ask feedback and start working on it
 - Should be easy, if you did not skip phases 1 and 2

Software Architecture Opinion – and Questions

- There are no correct answers to these questions
- Robert C. Martin said, based on Ivar Jacobsen book, something like this:
 - *"Architecture should be based on the business use cases of the customer – customer-centered design."*
- What would be the pros and cons of that approach?
- Would you create your architectures _based_ on use cases / user stories?
- Or would you do more traditional way, let the use cases affect **the choice** of the architecture and how it is audited, but still base the architecture on many other factors.
 - Software company does not exist for the customers. It exists to make income to the owners.
 - Customer satisfaction and retainment is a strategy to stay alive and grow the income
 - What happens to a Software company who doesn't do things efficiently and e.g. use the same architecture and tech stack in many projects for multiple customers? Note, the other competing SW companies do.

Notes on Robert C. Martin, aka 'Uncle Bob'

(These are just my own opinions with little more knowledge than listening to many of his videos. So take these with 2kg of salt 😊)

Author of e.g. the "Clean code" book

- 80-90% of what he says is brilliant and should be learned from. 10-20% should be taken with a kilogram of salt. It's opinionated and highly debatable.
- Thus, use his opinions and speeches as stimulant but not as source of the truth. And he is great in inspiring. The videos are to big part entertainment. And very good entertainment with lot of good advice to developers.
- But I do not know how much he e.g. has worked on modern DevOps, frameworks and cloud-native apps? Or what is his database development understanding level?
- Separate note, not related to him:
 - I have seen very famous and respected gurus reveal in their demonstrations that they do not understand basic things about something outside of their immediate expertise area. E.g. databases. True.

Why to have good Software Architecture?

- We spend some effort in the beginning, to make the development *easier, safer, faster, less tiring* later in the project.
- Finally this can be measured also in Euros. The software company will have a better foundation to serve also future customers.
- Investment + ROI (Return on investment). And are we talking about one week, one month, one year or multiple-year ROI?