

# Architect as Storyteller

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What do you do for a living?

How often have you been  
asked that question?







What would you say  
you do around here?

Define architect.

“Have you ever put 20 agile engineers in a room and asked them each to write down their definition of architecture? I did once. I got 20 different answers.”

–Matt Parker

<https://content.pivotal.io/blog/agile-architecture>

Some of them might even be right.



My first exposure to an  
"architect" was great!

Though we referred to  
him as Dr. Evil...



Small matter of  
implementation detail!

From my seat, looked  
like a good gig.



“Technical decision maker.”

Make all the fun choices.



Which language should we use?

What patterns should we employ?



Which JavaScript library will we  
regret using in 6 months?

Where do I sign up?!?

But it turns out that isn't  
really the job is it?

At least not all there is to it.



Certainly an important skill.

We have to evaluate technologies  
and make decisions.

Often quickly with  
incomplete information.

But there's more to it than that.



We have to sell our decisions.

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a small, light-colored rectangular sign. The hand is positioned on the left side of the frame, with the thumb and index finger gripping the top edge of the sign. The sign is held steady, displaying the text 'ALWAYS BE CLOSING' in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The background is a blurred image of a person wearing a light purple or lavender shirt, suggesting a professional or business setting. The lighting is soft and even, highlighting the texture of the skin and the fabric of the shirt.

**ALWAYS  
BE  
CLOSING**

Can be unnatural to some of us.

Technology gave us an escape  
from messy human interactions!



PEOPLE...

NOT A BIG FAN



It comes with the paycheck.

We have to convince more  
than our technical staff.

Though that is pretty darn  
important isn't it?

People often vote with their feet.



We have to persuade  
our leadership.

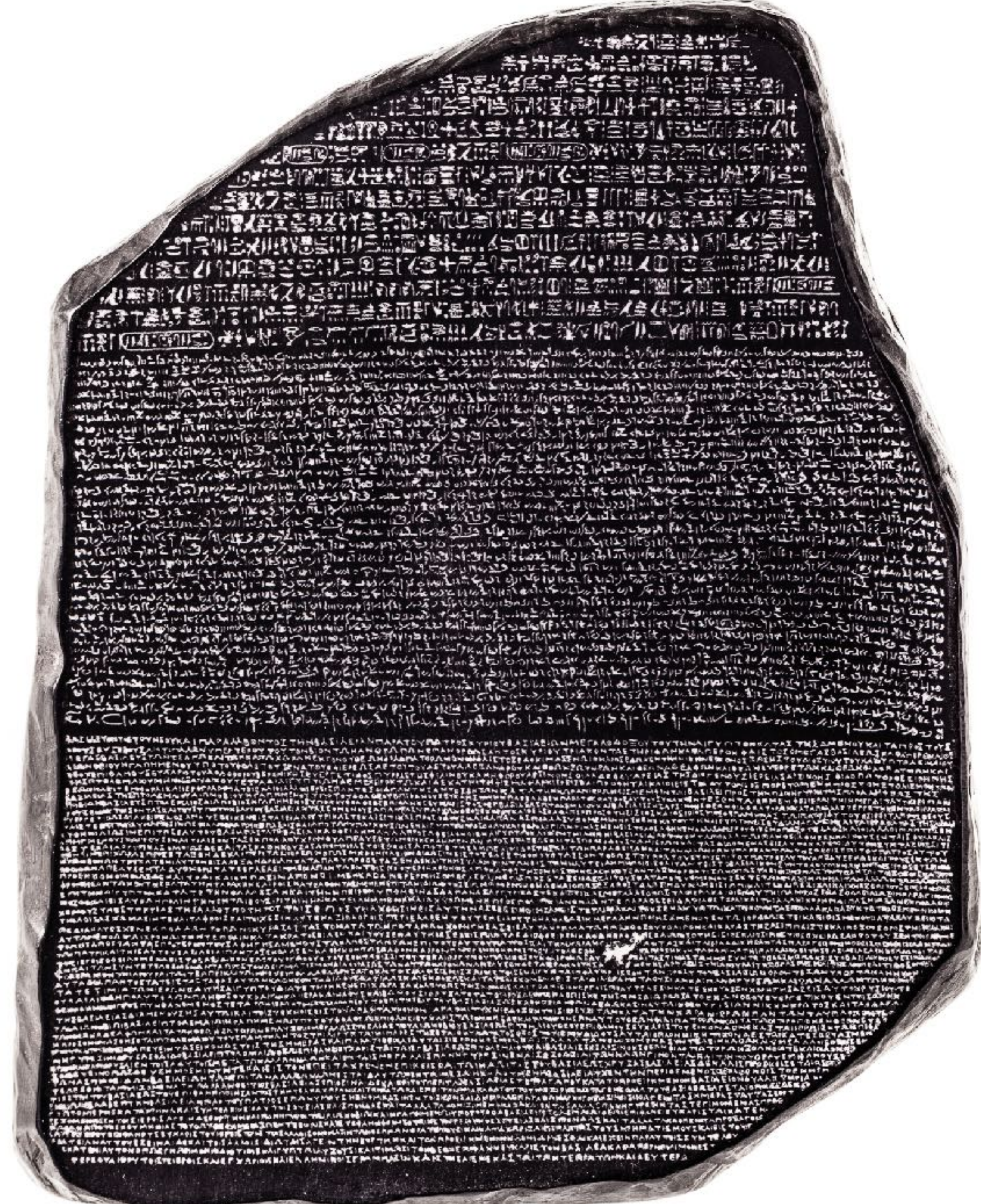
Our business partners.

Our peers.

We have a veritable  
plethora of stakeholders.

And they don't speak  
the same language...











# The Architect Elevator – Visiting the upper floors

<https://martinfowler.com/articles/architect-elevator.html>

We have to travel from the  
“engine room to the penthouse.”

Many organizations still look at  
IT as a pure cost center.

Not a center of innovation.

Technology is disrupting everything.

<https://techcrunch.com/2016/03/16/technology-is-disrupting-everything/>

Hotels. Taxis. Cars. Groceries.

Your industry.



We have to be able to  
tell a compelling story.

We need to be able to move  
between the floors.

We need to know what resonates.

Is it all about cost savings?

Speed to market?

Developer productivity?

I know what some of  
you are thinking.



Who do I look like?

# Shakespeare

To be,  
or not  
to be...

Et tu,  
Brut!

Holla!

Hail,  
Caesar!

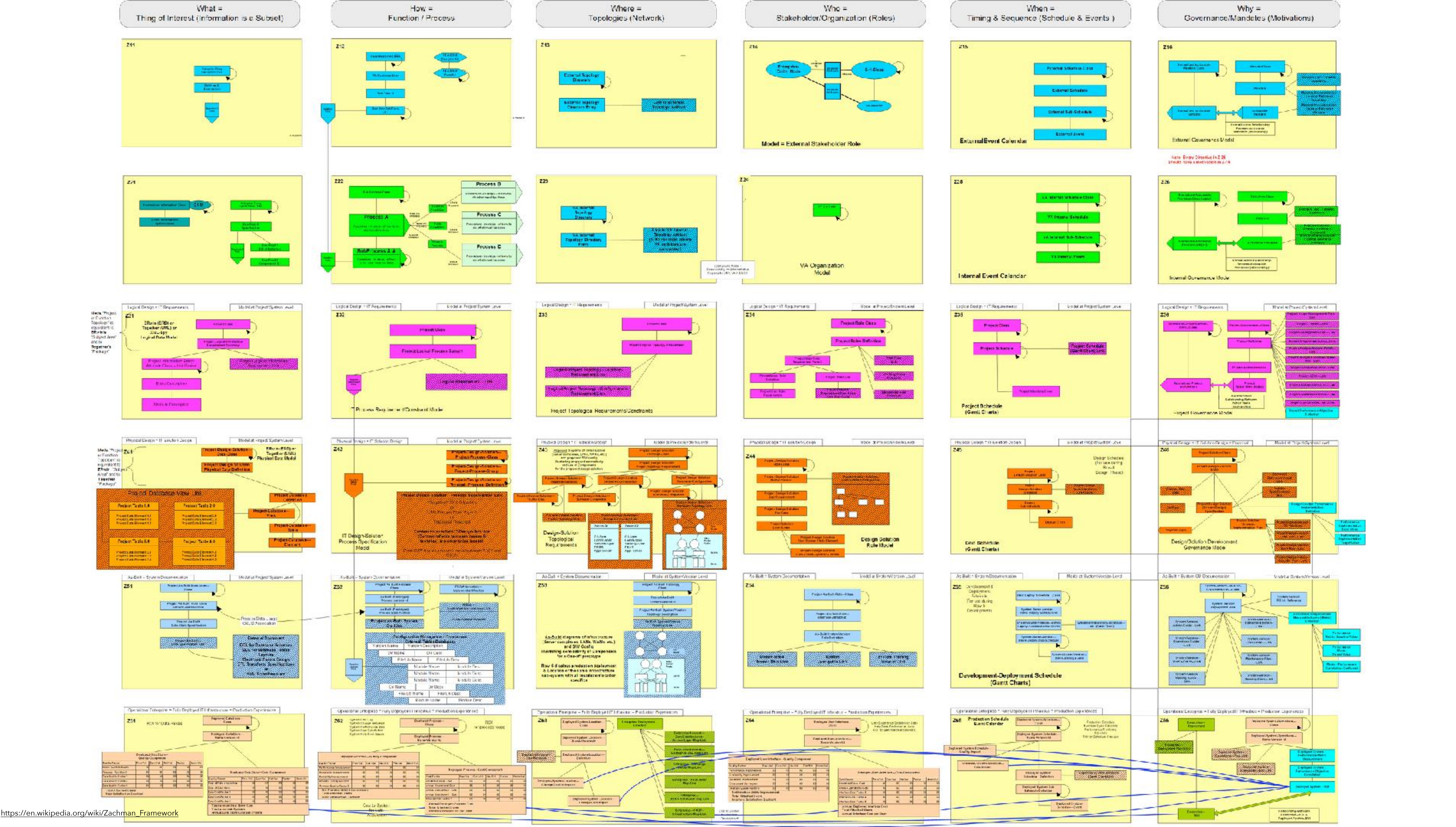
All the world's  
stage





It only takes one monkey...







How many of those have you  
seen in your life as an architect?



How many of those  
have you created?

It can serve a purpose.

Shows the big picture.

Impress leadership.

Shock and awe.

Can also be counterproductive.

People tune out...



"You probably can't read this..."

Trust me, it is really impressive.

Ultimately, we need to spend  
less time creating these...

L

H N

D F N

P T X Z

U Z D T F

D F N P T H

P H U N T D Z

N P X T Z F H

$\frac{20}{30}$

$\frac{20 \text{ ft}}{6.1 \text{ m}}$

$\frac{20}{20}$

$\frac{20 \text{ ft}}{6.1 \text{ m}}$

$\frac{20}{15}$

$\frac{15 \text{ ft}}{4.6 \text{ m}}$

And more time relating to people.

Explaining technical concepts  
to nontechnical people!

It is hard.

What do you mean when you  
say the cloud is elastic?







Sometimes the stories aren't ours.

We are often the keeper of tales.

Institutional memory if you will.

Why did we do it this way?

We might even have  
had a good reason!



Vital that we keep those  
stories alive and well.

Architecting is hard!

Our world doesn't need another  
dry architecture document.

It needs compelling stories.

I'm not suggesting you  
use iambic pentameter!

Who knows, might help.

But think about the story  
you are trying to tell.



And shape your message  
to your audience.

Good luck!