

Principles and properties	Structures
✓ Versatility	✓ Module
Conceptual integrity	✓ Dependency
✓ Independently changeable	Process
✓ Automatic propagation	✓ Data access
Buildability	
✓ Growth accommodation	
✓ Entropy resistance	

CHAPTER SIX

Data Grows Up: The Architecture of the Facebook Platform

Dave Fetterman

**Show me your flowcharts and conceal your tables, and I shall
continue to be mystified. Show me your tables, and I won't
usually need your flowcharts; they'll be obvious.**

—Fred Brooks, The Mythical Man-Month

Introduction

MOST CURRENT STUDENTS OF COMPUTER SCIENCE INTERPRET that Fred Brooks quote to mean “show me your *code* and conceal your *data structures*....” Information architects have a solid understanding that *data* rather than *algorithms* sit at the center of most systems. And with the rise of the Web, data that the user produces and consumes motivates the use of information technologies more than ever. Glibly, web users don’t navigate to QuickSort. They visit a storehouse of data.

This data may be universal, like a phone directory; proprietary, like an online store; personal, like a blog; open, like local weather conditions; or tightly guarded, like online bank records. In any case, the user-facing functionality of almost any web presence boils down to delivering an interface to a set of site-specific core data. This information forms the core value of most any