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Enterprise Architecture : An Overview

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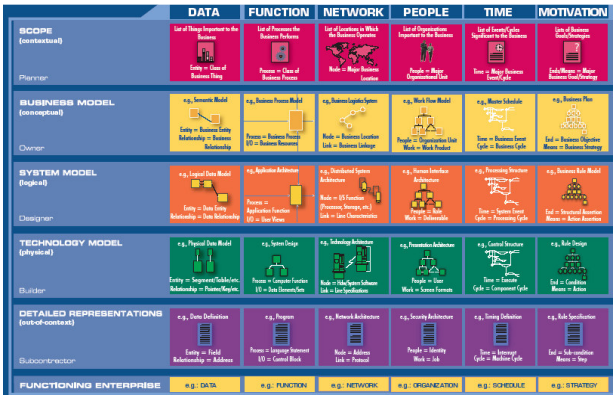
An enterprise is a business or organization formed to produce a product or provide a service. An architecture is the design of any type of structure, whether physical or conceptual, real or virtual. A framework is a set of assumptions, concepts , values and practices that constitutes a way of viewing reality. Enterprise Architecture (EA) is all about interrogatives and perceptions. Interrogative means a word or form used to ask a question. The 6 interrogatives in the Zachman Framework for EA (hereafter referred to as the ZF) are : what ,how, where, who, when and why. The ZF differs from the other architectural framework tools in its independent holistic view of the enterprise.

The ZF is: a tool, a schema, a vehicle. The ZF is **NOT** : a methodology, a cookbook, a technology, a programming language, a coding style. The starting point is that people , not technology are the lynch pins that create a successful enterprise. The purpose of the ZF is to provide a classification schema for artifacts that describe the various types of designs used to create and deploy anything, but more commonly information systems. The ZF is organized as 36 cells arranged in a 6 by 6 matrix. It is a two dimensional schema.

Q and A

How can EA and the ZF help keep a business 'healthy' ?

They do this by learning and understanding each cell in the framework. When you do this you can reason why things work and why things fail. More importantly you can help prevent or minimize failure. The cause and prevention of this business 'disease' involves the ability to communicate and understand the basics of science, humanity, business and technology. These are the primary ingredients of a happy and healthy business life.



To download a full-size pdf of this diagram go to http://www.zifa.com/framework.pdf. The copyright is held by the developer John Zachman.
This sheet is based on a summary of the first chapter of *"Enterprise Architecture Using the Zachman Framework"* 2003, O'Rourke.C et.al, publ.Thomson Learning. This book is available at www.amazon.com.

Q and A

Why classify things ? Why is the ZF a classification tool ?

The ability to think and reason is helpful when learning EA. To make thinking and reasoning about something easier, it helps to classify what you are learning or discovering. Classification is something we all learned in kindergarten.

The most complex problems in the world can be reduced to a total of 36 abstract issues. EA teaches you the rules of those issues. John Zachman's Framework for EA also called 'the framework' is a classification schema made up of 6 rows and 6 columns. Each intersecting row and column identifies a primitive topic. When combined, these topics include every detail a business needs in order to make decisions that create wealth and values for the organization.

Conclusion

The Framework (ZF) is not a "silver bullet". But if the schema enables you to be better, faster and cheaper than your competition then you are better off and you will not get fired!.
Quote from John Zachman ***"I would argue , we are never going to solve the enterprise problems of dealing with orders of magnitude increases in complexity and orders of magnitude increases in the rate of change unless we not only believe that architecture is practical but we actually change our behavior and DO it".***