



# 12 MORE

## ESSENTIAL SKILLS FOR SOFTWARE ARCHITECTS

Dave Hendricksen

FREE SAMPLE CHAPTER

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# **12 MORE ESSENTIAL SKILLS FOR SOFTWARE ARCHITECTS**

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# 12 MORE ESSENTIAL SKILLS FOR SOFTWARE ARCHITECTS

DAVE HENDRICKSEN

◆ Addison-Wesley

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First printing, August 2014

*To my wife, Jennifer, my son, Tim, and my daughter, Katie.*

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# CONTENTS

---

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| Preface  | xix      |
| Acknowledgments  | xxiii    |
| About the Author   | xxv      |
| <br>   |          |
| <b>Part I: Project Skills</b>                            | <b>1</b> |
| <br>   |          |
| Chapter 1: Partnership                                   | 5        |
| What Is a Partnership?                                   | 6        |
| What Are the Key Aspects of a Partnership?               | 6        |
| Alignment  | 6        |
| With Whom Do I Need to Be Partners?                      | 7        |
| Finding the Thought Leaders                              | 9        |
| Knowing the Influencers                                  | 10       |
| Establishing Trusted Adviser(s)                          | 10       |
| Community Review (Architecture Review Board)             | 10       |
| Seeking Alignment before Making Key Decisions            | 11       |
| Alignment of a Shared Vision Enables Partnerships        | 11       |
| Trust  | 12       |
| Establishing Trust                                       | 12       |
| Establishing Open Disclosure                             | 12       |
| Avoiding Getting Spread Too Thin (Overcommitting)        | 13       |
| How to Unwind after You Have Overcommitted               | 14       |
| Learning to Say No                                       | 15       |
| Trust Enables Transparency—the Lifeblood of Partnerships | 16       |
| Context  | 17       |
| Realizing the Nature of the Partnership                  | 17       |
| Being Aware of Your Business Context                     | 18       |
| Technical Decisions Require Partnerships                 | 18       |
| Key Point: Technical Decisions Are Political Decisions   | 19       |
| Presenting the Situation First (Give Context)            | 19       |
| Having Your Partners' Backs                              | 20       |



---

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Contributing to Your Partners' Successes                         | 20        |
| Safety in Numbers  | 21        |
| Collaboration  | 21        |
| Bringing Value to the Table                                      | 22        |
| Becoming a Mentor  | 22        |
| Seeking a Mentor   | 23        |
| Partnerships Can Be a Source of Opportunity                      | 24        |
| Partnerships Are a Step toward Ideation                          | 24        |
| Collaboration Drives Stronger Partnerships                       | 24        |
| Relationships  | 25        |
| Partnerships Are Not Just about Business                         | 25        |
| Making Deposits before You Start Withdrawing                     | 25        |
| External Partnerships  | 26        |
| Bad Experiences in the Past?                                     | 26        |
| Avoiding Caustic Members of the Organization                     | 26        |
| Summary  | 27        |
| References   | 28        |
| <br>   |           |
| <b>Chapter 2: Discovery</b>                                      | <b>29</b> |
| What Is Discovery?   | 30        |
| The Keys to Discovery  | 30        |
| Understanding the Customer                                       | 32        |
| Partnering with Sales, Marketing, and<br>New Product Development | 32        |
| Meeting with Customers   | 37        |
| What Will Delight the Customer?                                  | 43        |
| Understanding the Market   | 43        |
| Learning about the Customers' Customers                          | 46        |
| Where Are the Customers Willing to Spend Money?                  | 47        |
| What Is the Competition Doing?                                   | 48        |
| Listening to Themes across Customers                             | 50        |
| Understanding Your Business                                      | 51        |
| Learning What Your Business Wants to Do                          | 52        |
| Personalizing Your Company's Strategic Goals                     | 52        |
| Developing a Business Context for Decision Making                | 52        |
| Summary  | 53        |
| References   | 53        |
| <br>   |           |
| <b>Chapter 3: Conceptualization</b>                              | <b>55</b> |
| Ideation   | 56        |
| Getting Involved Early   | 57        |
| Conceptualization: Bringing Ideas to Life                        | 58        |

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| Concept Formation   | 59        |
| What Language Are They Speaking?  | 59        |
| What Problem Is Being Discussed?  | 60        |
| When Arriving Late to the Ideation Party, Be Cautious<br>about Committing | 62        |
| What Does This Concept Look Like?   | 63        |
| Concept Reification   | 67        |
| Minimum Viable Product  | 67        |
| The Need for Experimentation  | 68        |
| Establishing Assumptions Can Help Harmonize the Vision                    | 68        |
| Establishing Essential Capabilities and Customer Roles                    | 69        |
| Reify with Customers  | 70        |
| Concept Evolution   | 71        |
| Being a Student of History  | 71        |
| Embracing Multiple Perspectives   | 72        |
| Seeking Conceptual Integrity  | 73        |
| Recognizing Adjacent Opportunities  | 75        |
| Summary   | 75        |
| References  | 76        |
| <br>  |           |
| <b>Chapter 4: Estimation</b>  | <b>79</b> |
| Estimates Overview  | 80        |
| What Is the Purpose of the Estimate?                                      | 80        |
| Is There an Established Project Context?                                  | 82        |
| What Is an Architectural Approach?  | 82        |
| Understanding the Estimating Process                                      | 84        |
| Estimating Pipeline   | 84        |
| Types of Projects   | 85        |
| Alternative Ways of Financing Projects                                    | 86        |
| Understanding the Business Process  | 87        |
| Developing the Architectural Approach                                     | 88        |
| Is This a Partnership or a Contractual Relationship?                      | 88        |
| What Is the Business Rationale for the Project?                           | 89        |
| What Is the Marketing Approach?   | 89        |
| Is This a Repeat Estimate?  | 90        |
| What Risks Have You Identified? Can You Mitigate Them?                    | 91        |
| Are You Building a Platform?  | 93        |
| Are You Re-platforming?   | 93        |
| What Technologies Are in Play?  | 94        |
| What Is the Organizational Structure?                                     | 95        |
| Do You Need to Seek External Research?                                    | 96        |
| Have You Identified Leverageable Components?                              | 96        |

---

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| Estimating Strategies                               | 97         |
| Plan for Unknowns and Challenges                    | 97         |
| Be Realistic: Don't Cave In Just to Get the Project | 98         |
| Keep the Critical Things Close                      | 98         |
| Develop Estimating Feedback Loops                   | 98         |
| Minimize Organization Coupling and Cohesion         | 98         |
| PowerPoint as You Go                                | 99         |
| Develop Checklists                                  | 99         |
| Gain Executive and Organization Buy-in Early        | 99         |
| Estimating Principles                               | 99         |
| Know the Hard Problem                               | 100        |
| Provide Options                                     | 100        |
| Leave Design Decisions Open                         | 100        |
| Know the Schedule                                   | 100        |
| Know What You Want                                  | 100        |
| Avoid Being Negative                                | 100        |
| Seek Opportunities to Say Yes                       | 100        |
| Bargain Hard Now, Not Later                         | 101        |
| Don't Cave In                                       | 101        |
| Trust Your Gut Feeling                              | 101        |
| Beware of Projects That Others Have Estimated       | 101        |
| Know the Business's Targeted Build Price            | 101        |
| Bringing It All Together                            | 102        |
| Knowing Your Timeline                               | 102        |
| Who Is Involved with Estimating?                    | 102        |
| Understanding Your Leverage Points                  | 103        |
| Putting It All Together                             | 103        |
| Engaging Executives                                 | 103        |
| Selling the Estimate                                | 104        |
| Summary   | 106        |
| References  | 106        |
| <br>  |            |
| <b>Chapter 5: Management</b>                        | <b>109</b> |
| Architecture Management Defined                     | 110        |
| Areas of Architectural Responsibility               | 110        |
| Striving toward Technology Excellence               | 111        |
| Establishing a Vision                               | 112        |
| Raising Awareness of Technical Debt and             |            |
| Funding the Right Solution                          | 112        |
| Keeping the Technical Environment Interesting       | 113        |
| Finding Potential Patents                           | 114        |
| Seeking Data Center and Operations Support for      |            |
| Your Direction                                      | 114        |

---

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Generalizing the Solution   | 115 |
| Making It Strategic   | 115 |
| Leveraging Solutions  | 115 |
| Delivering Projects   | 116 |
| Partnering with the Project Manager                                     | 116 |
| Eliminating Dependencies Ruthlessly                                     | 116 |
| Managing Expectations   | 116 |
| Mastering the Development Process                                       | 117 |
| Being Where the Problems Are  | 118 |
| Being Aware of Nontransparency on Your Projects                         | 118 |
| Limiting the Number of Contractors in Leadership<br>Positions           | 119 |
| Providing Technical Management (Areas of Responsibility)                | 119 |
| Managing by Walking Around  | 120 |
| Resolving Issues  | 121 |
| Asking the Tough Questions  | 121 |
| Dealing with Problems in the Moment                                     | 121 |
| Saying No, but with Options   | 122 |
| Striving to Be Consistent in Your Decisions                             | 122 |
| Learning to Deal with Things Head-on, Cards Faceup<br>on the Table      | 124 |
| Knowing What You Are Willing to Cave On When<br>Negotiating             | 124 |
| Being Willing to Challenge Areas You Don't Agree with<br>(Respectfully) | 124 |
| Being Willing to Stand Your Ground                                      | 125 |
| Knowing What Is Not Your Problem  | 125 |
| Partnering with Executives  | 125 |
| Managing Risk through Transparency                                      | 125 |
| Reviewing Estimates   | 126 |
| Limiting the Number of Boxes on Diagrams                                | 126 |
| Raising Technology Awareness  | 126 |
| Having Your Boss's Back   | 127 |
| Avoiding Interrupting Executives When They Are Talking                  | 127 |
| Being Confident   | 127 |
| Managing Your Time  | 127 |
| Limiting the Number of Projects to Which You Commit                     | 128 |
| Defining Your Role and Bounding It                                      | 128 |
| Prioritizing Where to Engage Your Time                                  | 128 |
| Learning to Make Decisions on Limited Data and<br>with Limited Time     | 130 |
| Attending Meetings Only If You Are an Active Participant                | 130 |
| Getting a Deadline  | 130 |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Delegating to Those You Trust                       | 130 |
| Meeting in Person                                   | 131 |
| Grooming Technical Talent                           | 131 |
| Having an Architecture Mentorship Program           | 131 |
| Having a Technology Forum                           | 132 |
| Encouraging Members of Your Technical Team to       |     |
| Attend Local Conferences and User Groups            | 132 |
| Hiring the Best People: Don't Just Fill a Position  | 133 |
| Enhancing Your Skill Set                            | 134 |
| Sitting with Other Architects                       | 134 |
| Doing Something Technical Every Day                 | 134 |
| Focusing on What Scares You                         | 135 |
| Becoming an Expert in an Area                       | 135 |
| Looking for Projects Where You Can Grow Your Skills | 135 |
| Summary   | 136 |
| References  | 136 |

## **Part II: Technology Skills** **139**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Chapter 6: Platform Development                      | 143 |
| Platform Development Defined                         | 144 |
| The Elements of Platform Development                 | 144 |
| Capabilities   | 145 |
| Defining the Set of Objectives                       | 145 |
| Defining the Set of Capabilities                     | 146 |
| Focusing on Leverageable Capabilities                | 146 |
| Developing a Strong Conceptual Model                 | 147 |
| APIs Are the Keys to the Kingdom                     | 147 |
| Ecosystem  | 148 |
| Platform Users                                       | 148 |
| Platform Ownership                                   | 148 |
| Platform Management                                  | 155 |
| Platform Development                                 | 158 |
| Acknowledging the Costs Associated with the Platform | 161 |
| Managing Platform Quality                            | 162 |
| Platform Integration                                 | 162 |
| Scalability  | 164 |
| Security   | 164 |
| Guiding Principles                                   | 164 |
| Seek Exceptional Quality                             | 164 |

---

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| Seek Operational Excellence  | 164        |
| Seek Configurability over Hard Coding  | 165        |
| Seek Leverageability   | 165        |
| Seek Redundant Architecture  | 165        |
| Seek Linear Scalability  | 166        |
| Avoid Platform Entanglement  | 166        |
| Avoid Platform Sprawl  | 166        |
| Keep Upgrading to Current Technologies   | 166        |
| Summary  | 166        |
| References   | 167        |
| <b>Chapter 7: Architectural Perspective</b>                                    | <b>169</b> |
| Architectural Perspective Defined  | 170        |
| Architectural Principles   | 170        |
| The Principle of Least Surprise  | 170        |
| The Principle of Least Knowledge (aka the Law of Demeter)                      | 172        |
| The Principle of Least Effort (aka Zipf's Law)                                 | 172        |
| The Principle of Opportunity Cost  | 173        |
| The Principle of Single Responsibility   | 175        |
| The Principle of Parsimony (aka Occam's Razor or KISS)                         | 175        |
| The Principle of Last Responsible Moment<br>(aka Cost of Delay)                | 176        |
| The Principle of Feedback  | 177        |
| Architectural Concerns   | 177        |
| Availability   | 178        |
| Scalability  | 180        |
| Extensibility  | 181        |
| Repeatability  | 182        |
| Compatibility  | 182        |
| Sustainability   | 182        |
| Security, Disaster Recovery, Business Continuity, and<br>Open-Source Licensing | 183        |
| Third-Party Integration  | 183        |
| Architectural Communication  | 183        |
| Domain Model   | 184        |
| Process Diagram  | 184        |
| Context Diagram  | 185        |
| User Interface Mock-ups  | 186        |
| Logical Architecture Diagram   | 186        |
| Executive Overview Diagram   | 187        |
| Hardware Environments Diagram  | 187        |
| Risks, Assumptions, Issues, and Dependencies (RAID)                            | 188        |

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|  |            |
|--|------------|
| Bringing It All Together   | 191        |
| Summary  | 192        |
| References   | 192        |
| <b>Chapter 8: Governance</b>   | <b>193</b> |
| Governance Defined   | 194        |
| Governance Principles  | 194        |
| Avoid Vendor Lock-in   | 194        |
| Encourage Open-Source Usage  | 195        |
| Minimize the Cost of Disruption (aka Enable Business<br>Continuity Planning and Disaster Recovery) | 196        |
| Enable Loose Coupling between Business Units   | 198        |
| Leverage Common Capabilities   | 199        |
| Ensure Regulatory Compliance   | 200        |
| Ensure Security  | 201        |
| The Principle of Least Privilege (aka the Principle of<br>Least Authority)                         | 202        |
| Seek Unified Identity and Access Management  | 202        |
| Seek Data Portability (aka Avoid Data Lock-in)   | 203        |
| Seek Integration and Automation  | 203        |
| Areas of Governance  | 203        |
| Estimates  | 204        |
| Management Concerns  | 205        |
| Architecture   | 206        |
| Design   | 208        |
| Building, Coding, Integrating, Deploying, Testing,<br>and Monitoring                               | 208        |
| Governance and a Healthy Tension with Agile  | 209        |
| Summary  | 210        |
| References   | 210        |
| <b>Chapter 9: Know-how</b>   | <b>213</b> |
| Know-how Defined   | 214        |
| Developing Know-how  | 215        |
| Developing Know-how Relevance  | 215        |
| Developing Know-how Currency   | 218        |
| Developing Know-how Excellence   | 221        |
| Know-how Synthesis   | 229        |
| Know-how-Driven Architecture   | 230        |
| Summary  | 231        |
| References   | 232        |

---

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| <b>Part III: Visionary Skills</b>                  | <b>233</b> |
| <b>Chapter 10: Technology Innovation</b>           | <b>237</b> |
| Technology Innovation Defined                      | 238        |
| Trend Awareness                                    | 238        |
| Areas of Trend Awareness                           | 240        |
| Applying Trend Awareness                           | 241        |
| Business Alignment                                 | 242        |
| Paying Attention to Trends on Customer Inquiries   | 242        |
| Getting Customer Feedback                          | 242        |
| Analyzing Customer Feedback                        | 243        |
| When to Be Cautious about Trends                   | 243        |
| When to Embrace a Trend                            | 245        |
| Strategic Research                                 | 245        |
| Research Approaches                                | 246        |
| Technology Innovation Principles                   | 247        |
| Seek Approved but Minimal Time and Funding to      |            |
| Explore  | 247        |
| Make Small Bets                                    | 248        |
| Use Technology Scouting to Scan and Track the      |            |
| Trends Regularly                                   | 248        |
| Have a Lab Area                                    | 249        |
| Use Rapid Experimentation with User Feedback Loops | 250        |
| Show the Business and Customers Prototypes         | 250        |
| Introduce New Technologies at the Edge             | 250        |
| Pragmatic Technology Innovation                    | 252        |
| Summary  | 253        |
| References   | 254        |
| <b>Chapter 11: Strategic Roadmapping</b>           | <b>255</b> |
| Strategic Roadmapping Defined                      | 256        |
| Elements of a Strategic Roadmap                    | 257        |
| Strategically Focused                              | 257        |
| Time Sequenced                                     | 257        |
| Organized by Swim Lanes                            | 257        |
| Dependency Aware                                   | 257        |
| Visually Represented                               | 258        |
| Collaborative in Nature                            | 258        |
| Code Named   | 258        |
| Context Dependent (Personalized)                   | 258        |
| Multidisciplinary and Specialized                  | 258        |



---

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Prioritized  | 259 |
| Iterative in Nature  | 259 |
| Updated  | 259 |
| Published  | 259 |
| Measurable   | 259 |
| Roadmapping Strategies   | 260 |
| Whiteboarding the Roadmap Using Sticky Notes                               | 260 |
| Starting with the End (aka Work Backward)                                  | 260 |
| Holding Workshops  | 260 |
| Thinking of Roadmapping as a Project                                       | 261 |
| Capturing Underlying Guiding Principles                                    | 261 |
| Roadmapping Principles   | 261 |
| Keep It Simple   | 261 |
| Partner with the Business  | 262 |
| Get Moving   | 262 |
| Have Fun   | 262 |
| Strategies without Goals Are Pointless                                     | 262 |
| Identify Areas That Require Research and Innovation                        | 263 |
| Identify Skill and Knowledge Gaps  | 263 |
| Be Flexible on the Timing of Getting to the Destination                    | 263 |
| Be Willing to Take a New Route   | 263 |
| It's Not about the Details; Focus on the Destination and<br>Key Milestones | 264 |
| Follow What Energizes You  | 265 |
| What Is an Architect's Role in Roadmapping?                                | 265 |
| Where Can You Use Roadmaps?  | 266 |
| Roadmap Considerations   | 266 |
| Roadmap Socialization  | 268 |
| Celebrating Milestones Achieved  | 269 |
| Summary  | 269 |
| References   | 270 |
| <br>   |     |
| Chapter 12: Entrepreneurial Execution                                      | 271 |
| Entrepreneurial Execution Defined  | 272 |
| Elements of Entrepreneurial Execution                                      | 272 |
| Entrepreneurial Spirit   | 274 |
| Calculated Risk Taking   | 275 |
| Delivering Results   | 276 |
| Entrepreneurial Execution Principles                                       | 276 |
| Affordable Loss Principle  | 276 |
| Lemonade Principle   | 276 |
| Patchwork Quilt Principle  | 277 |

---

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Bird-in-the-Hand Principle                                      | 277 |
| Pilot-in-the-Plane Principle                                    | 277 |
| Seize the Moment  | 278 |
| Follow Your Passion   | 278 |
| Learn to Pivot  | 279 |
| Learn by Doing (Making Mistakes), but Do It<br>Cost-Effectively | 280 |
| Seek Feedback   | 281 |
| Seek Leverage   | 282 |
| Architecting with Entrepreneurial Execution                     | 283 |
| Summary   | 284 |
| References  | 284 |
| <br>  |     |
| Epilogue: Bringing It All Together                              | 287 |
| Thinking about Skill Development                                | 288 |
| Final Thought   | 289 |
| <br>  |     |
| Index   | 291 |

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# PREFACE

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*“Architecture is not a profession for the faint-hearted, the weak-willed, or the short-lived.”*

—Martin Filler

*“Architecture and building is about how you get around the obstacles that are presented to you. That sometimes determines how successful you’ll be: How good are you at going around obstacles?”*

—Jeremy Renner

*“Architecture is a service business. An architect is given a program, budget, place, and schedule. Sometimes the end product rises to art—or at least people call it that.”*

—Frank Gehry

*“Architecture is invention.”*

—Oscar Niemeyer

*“I loved logic, math, computer programming. I loved systems and logic approaches. And so I just figured architecture is this perfect combination.”*

—Maya Lin

*“I think about architecture all the time. That’s the problem. But I’ve always been like that. I dream it sometimes.”*

—Zaha Hadid

*“The Internet is probably the most important technological advancement of my lifetime. Its strength lies in its open architecture and its ability to allow a framework where all voices can be heard.”*

—Adam Savage

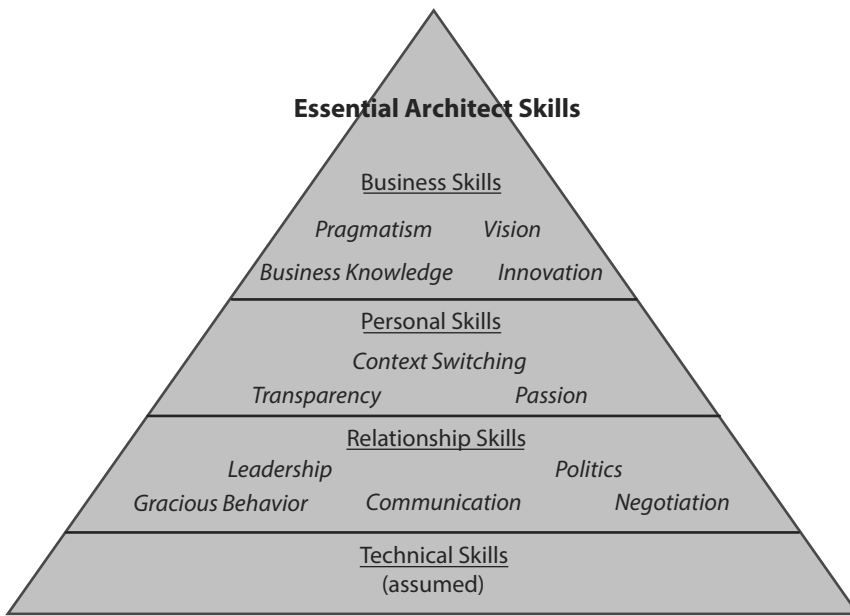
## BOOK MOTIVATION

This book and my first book (*12 Essential Skills for Software Architects*) focus on the skills needed to become a successful software architect.

Software architecture is about learning how to relate to people and learning how to think about things with an eye toward architecture. *12 Essential Skills for Software Architects* focused on soft skills; without these, the rest of the journey is nearly impossible.

Shortly after I completed my first book, I began receiving questions about the assumed technical skills (shown in Figure P.1) that are referred to but not discussed.

This book dives into the details of those assumed skills—the technical skills you need on a daily basis in the role of an architect. It is the combination of soft *and* technical skills that will enable you reach your goals.



**Figure P.1** Twelve essential skills for software architects

## BOOK GOALS

My goals for this book are to

- Enable excellence in software architecture through skills development
- Enable architectural success in a business context
- Promote an architectural approach for thinking about the enterprise

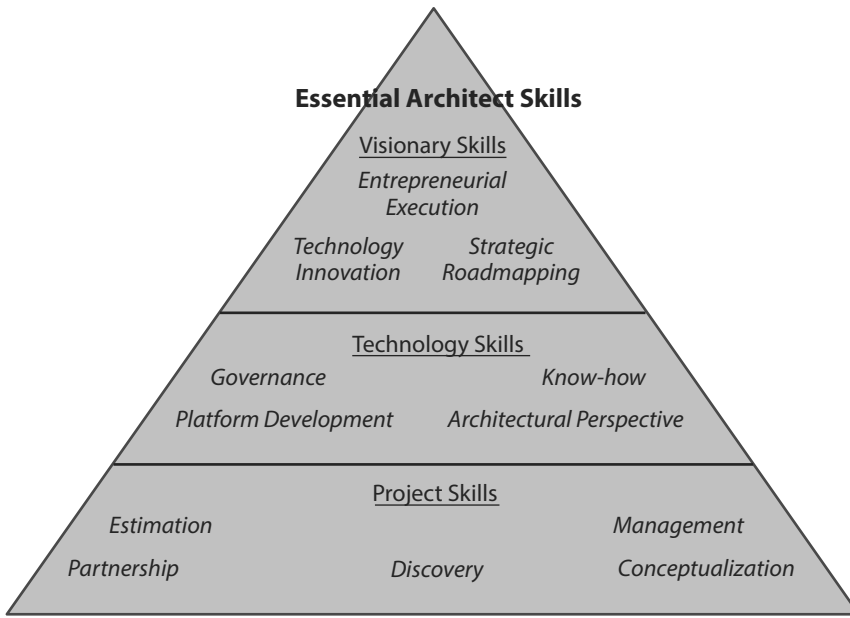
## BOOK ORGANIZATION

The format and style of this book are intended to help evoke critical thinking about your specific set of projects, your areas of architectural oversight, and your areas of direction-setting leadership. These take the form of project skills, technology skills, and vision skills.

These three areas are organized as follows:

- **Part I: Project Skills.** These skills enable you to drive projects from early ideation to project delivery through
  - Partnership (Chapter 1)
  - Discovery (Chapter 2)
  - Conceptualization (Chapter 3)
  - Estimation (Chapter 4)
  - Management (Chapter 5)
- **Part II: Technology Skills.** These skills ensure that the right technologies are built, bought, or leveraged through
  - Platform Development (Chapter 6)
  - Architectural Perspective (Chapter 7)
  - Governance (Chapter 8)
  - Know-how (Chapter 9)
- **Part III: Visionary Skills.** These skills enable the pursuit of the business's long-term competitive vision through
  - Technology Innovation (Chapter 10)
  - Strategic Roadmapping (Chapter 11)
  - Entrepreneurial Execution (Chapter 12)

The three parts can be thought of as a layered set of skills for software architects (see Figure P.2). Each layer is the basis for the layer above it.



**Figure P.2** Technical skills pyramid

Each of the chapters within the book is written to be read independently of the other chapters. This independence should enable you read the book in the order of your interests or needs.

I hope you enjoy reading the book and that you learn some new things that will enable you to become an excellent architect and better understand the role of an architect.

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at [dave@hendricksen.org](mailto:dave@hendricksen.org).

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In addition, I would like to say thank you to my wife, Jennifer, and son, Tim, for reviewing the book.

Finally, I would like to say thank you to my family and parents for their patience and support while I wrote this second book.



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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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*“The most complicated skill is to be simple.”*

—Dejan Stojanović

*“I strive for an architecture from which nothing can be taken away.”*

—Helmut Jahn

My name is Dave Hendricksen, and I am a Big Data architect for Thomson Reuters. These days I spend most of my time working on big data-related projects that span Thomson Reuters. I have also worked on WestLawNext (an online legal research tool), Optimus (a learning platform), and a wide variety of other projects, generally focused on new product development—I love to innovate. I also help run and organize an architecture mentorship program and a technology forum at Thomson Reuters.

Every day is busy and challenging; for me that equates to fun and engaging.

I have been married for 25 years to a beautiful lady. We have two great kids, one cat, one dog, and a *koi* pond. We have some lake property—it seems as if that’s a requirement when you live in Minnesota, the Land of Ten Thousand Lakes. It is also the location of summertime building projects: trebuchet, go-cart, rain barrel water collection system, robotic lawn mower, and so on.

In a similar vein, I spend a fair amount of time mentoring the Eagan High School FIRST Robotics Team. We try to run our program like a small business—we need to raise money, market our team, build a product, and compete in tournaments.

Being the lead mentor for a large robotics team (more than 80 kids and more than 30 mentors) has many parallels to being an architect on large-scale development projects. There are a wide variety of opinions of what should be done, limited resources, limited time, and you need to deliver a successful product.

In short, I love to plan, research, organize, teach, mentor, architect, and build things.

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## TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION

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*“Innovation is the central issue in economic prosperity.”*

—Michael Porter

*“Innovation has nothing to do with how many R & D dollars you have. When Apple came up with the Mac, IBM was spending at least 100 times more on R & D. It’s not about money. It’s about the people you have, how you’re led, and how much you get it.”*

—Steve Jobs

*“Because, you know, resilience—if you think of it in terms of the Gold Rush, then you’d be pretty depressed right now because the last nugget of gold would be gone. But the good thing is, with innovation, there isn’t a last nugget. Every new thing creates two new questions and two new opportunities.”*

—Jeff Bezos

*“I believe in innovation and that the way you get innovation is you fund research and you learn the basic facts.”*

—Bill Gates

*“Learning and innovation go hand in hand. The arrogance of success is to think that what you did yesterday will be sufficient for tomorrow.”*

—William Pollard

Have you ever been at a conference and attended a really cool presentation? It focused your attention on a new area you were not familiar with, and it captured your interest. Later in the week, you noticed more sessions that were focused on different perspectives of the same technology or approach.

This kind of clustering of conference presentations—or magazine articles or blog posts—is usually a signal that a new trend is emerging. It may not have wide appeal yet, and it may not emerge into anything concrete, but it

sounds fascinating and seems to address a real issue you are dealing with. Your ability to recognize these types of new trends can open up opportunities for your business and enable you to be a leader in the implementation of a new technology within your organization. On the other hand, the new opportunity could lead you down a rabbit hole with technology that has little support or interest from the wider development community internally or externally.

This chapter unveils one of the essential skills needed by a software architect: the ability to identify, assess, and infuse new and potentially disruptive technologies in a business-centric fashion.

## TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION DEFINED

*Technology innovation* is the ability to

- Look where research, technology, and your industry are heading
- Identify trends and opportunities that are aligned with your business's strategic goals and objectives
- Partner with the business and customers to discover solutions
- Make recommendations about the adoption of new technologies into the organization and their timing

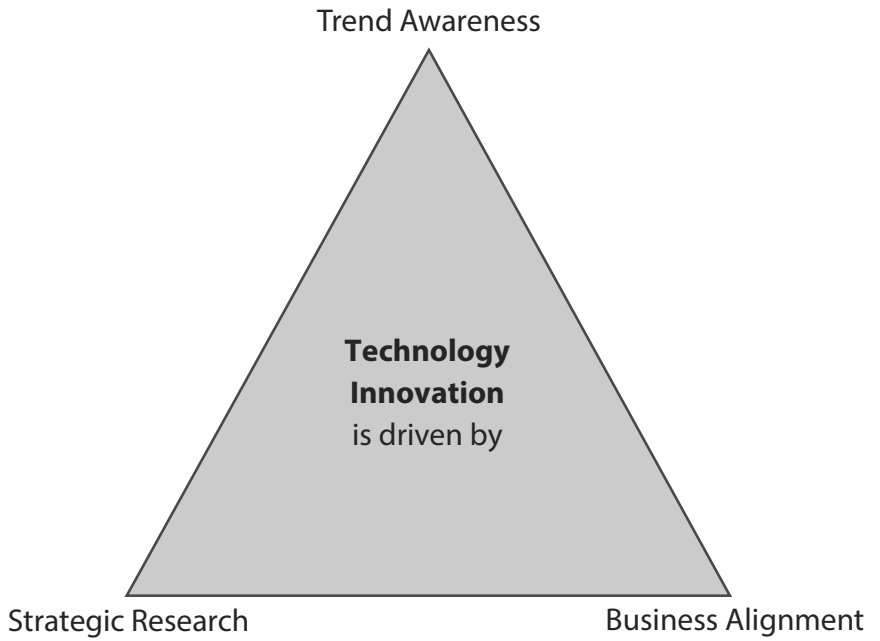
Technology innovation is linked to the theory of Moore's Law, which predicts the doubling of computing hardware capacity every two years. Many digital devices are impacted by Moore's Law as processing power, memory, and other technical capabilities improve over time, speeding exponential growth and technology innovation.

Technology innovation is best done in partnership with the business to align with the company's strategies and goals. It also helps ensure that technologies are not selected simply for their "cool" factor (see Figure 10.1).

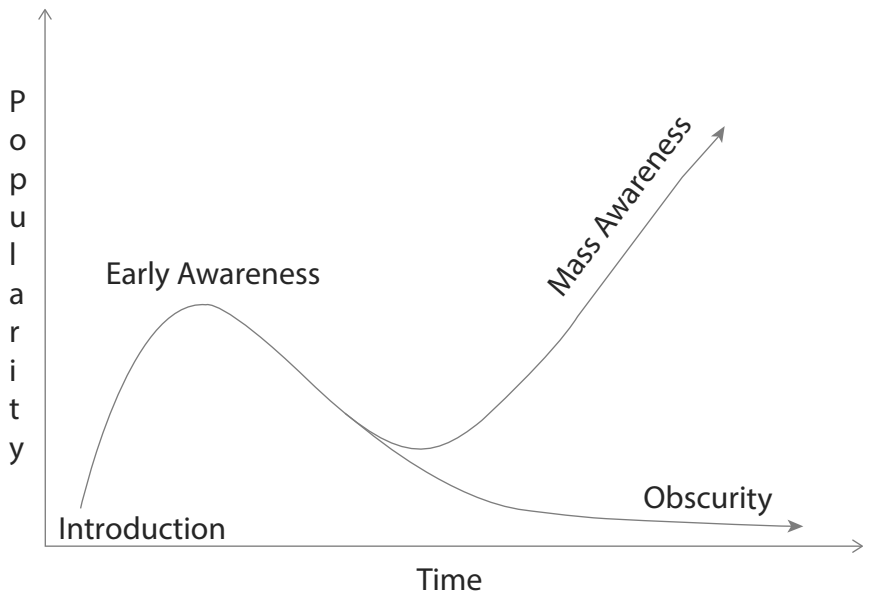
## TREND AWARENESS

*Trend awareness* is your window into where interesting technologies are heading. It provides you with a glimpse of the possible new disruptive technologies, business models, processes, and so on that can either give you a leg up on the competition or put you at a disadvantage.

The trend diagram in Figure 10.2 shows the typical peaks and valleys in popularity that new technologies tend to follow over time. Observing the



**Figure 10.1** Technology innovation



**Figure 10.2** Trend diagram

popularity of technologies, business models, processes, and related areas can give you a good sense of what is happening in the industry at the macro scale. Companies such as Gartner, GigaOM, and Forrester Research typically gather and publish this kind of information on technology topics such as big data, mobile, gamification, and others as they start to gain critical mass and awareness.

Your ability to quickly identify promising new technology trends and predict their eventual success or failure will help you avoid spending time and resources on those technologies that end up toiling in obscurity and eventual failure.

### Areas of Trend Awareness

A wide variety of trends are potentially applicable to your architectural areas of responsibility and should be observed on a regular basis. These include the following:

- **Industry.** What are the economic conditions that affect your industry? Is it in a cycle of growth, stability, or decline? The economics that are pervasive in your industry can and will affect the degree to which you will be able to attract technology investment from the business.
- **University research.** What areas are universities researching that may be of interest to your business and lead to potential partnerships? Knowing what schools are doing in research areas that are of interest to your business partners can be a great source of new information and talent in the form of interns and new hires as well as an area for potential joint research projects.
- **Open-source tools.** What tools and technologies are gaining or declining in popularity and community support, especially those that have more business-friendly licensing arrangements? These are potential candidates for adoption if they are growing in popularity and community support or candidates for elimination or replacement if the community interest is declining.
- **Conferences.** Conferences can be a great way to get a quick glimpse of what the new and emerging “hot” technologies are. The presentations at these conferences can give you a jump start into background information about new technologies and some of the early experiments and results. This will help you become aware of which areas are working well and which areas are still rough around the edges and need more time and testing.



- **Regulatory compliance.** Being aware of the types of changes that regulatory bodies are considering can help prepare you to plan the aspects of the architecture that may need to remain flexible to account for new regulatory requirements.
- **Hardware capabilities.** Hardware is constantly changing. Taking the time to keep up with key vendors and their roadmaps can help you prepare for hardware that may enable better performance or less expensive solutions in the near future.
- **Cloud capabilities.** The area of cloud computing is evolving quickly. Understanding the capabilities provided by cloud vendors can enable elastic growth with little or no effort. The key challenges are to understand the costs and data lock-in that may be associated with the varying solutions.
- **Customers' competitive knowledge.** One of the best ways to keep up with your competitors is to closely partner with your customers. They can be an excellent source of information about what your competitors are up to and what they are promoting as strategic advantages and differentiators.
- **Vendor capabilities.** A large number of vendors make capabilities available for a price. Some vendors are leaders in their areas of expertise. They often have a solid understanding of what others are doing and what is working well and what is not. Working with these types of vendors can be a great partnership. The key is to ensure that the value being added by the vendor is greater than the cost of using their products.
- **Intellectual property.** Working with your intellectual property counsel or in-house general counsel can help you keep up to speed on areas where the business may want to go after the development of patents or other intellectual property.
- **E-mail alerts.** Many online sources allow you to set alerts based on keywords. When you hear of a new technology or development, you can put an alert on it using the keywords associated with the technology. Then when there are new updates or recent news, you'll be one of the first to know, which will help you consistently monitor the space.

### Applying Trend Awareness

Trending information can be used as a source of guidance when you are trying to determine if a particular area is worth diving into in more detail. It can serve as an early warning that there is a technology-related change in direction that could impact the business, it can serve as an alert that there is

a new opportunity for your business, or it may just serve as a confirmation that there is no cause for concern in this area, at least for now.

Remember that the rate of change may be exponential, and you should expect that things will change quickly in a given technology focus area. Your ability to check in on a regular and frequent basis will help you stay on top of the trends that signal technological changes that could impact your industry and disrupt your business.

## BUSINESS ALIGNMENT

*Business alignment* is a critical success factor to technology innovation.

### Paying Attention to Trends on Customer Inquiries

If you are receiving a fair number of inquiries from customers about a particular new trend, it may well be worth your time to consider investing in this area. It is quite possible that they are using this new capability as a differentiator and a means of comparing and contrasting different solutions.

Although the capability may be not be a primary use case for what they want to use the product for and it may not even be used that often, it is something they can put on a checklist and use to make a decision.

Such items can help them gain support and excitement within their organization about why using the product they are considering is a good choice. It can help them justify the cost for the change or the purchase to begin with.

### Getting Customer Feedback

Your customers are one of your best sources of information. There are different kinds of customers:

- **Fans.** They always have great things to say. Listen for patterns. The key is to find out what is behind the patterns. What is driving their adoption, and what maintains their enthusiasm for your products?
- **Utilitarians.** They are using your product because it is convenient, it is easy, it is practical, and it makes financial sense. The key here is to understand the key value proposition that keeps them coming back.
- **Captives.** They are using your product because they have to. Either they are not the decision makers about buying your product or there are no competing products in the marketplace. The key here is to

understand who drives the purchasing decisions and what influences them.

- **Followers.** They are using your product because others said it was a great product. The recommendation can come from many different sources; it could be from a friend, or it could come from online comments. The key here is to find out what people are recommending and why. This is your real value; it's an endorsement. In a similar fashion, hearing the negative things others are saying about your product can give you insights into what you need to improve.

No matter who your customers are, you want to make it easy for them to provide feedback. If you use a survey, keep it short, provide some multiple-choice questions, and provide a place for them to type in their comments in their own words. They may praise your product or roast your product, but getting a wide variety of feedback from your customers can give you insights into where you need to go and what improvements you should pursue. It may be as simple as adding link on the product's website to solicit ways to improve the product.

### Analyzing Customer Feedback

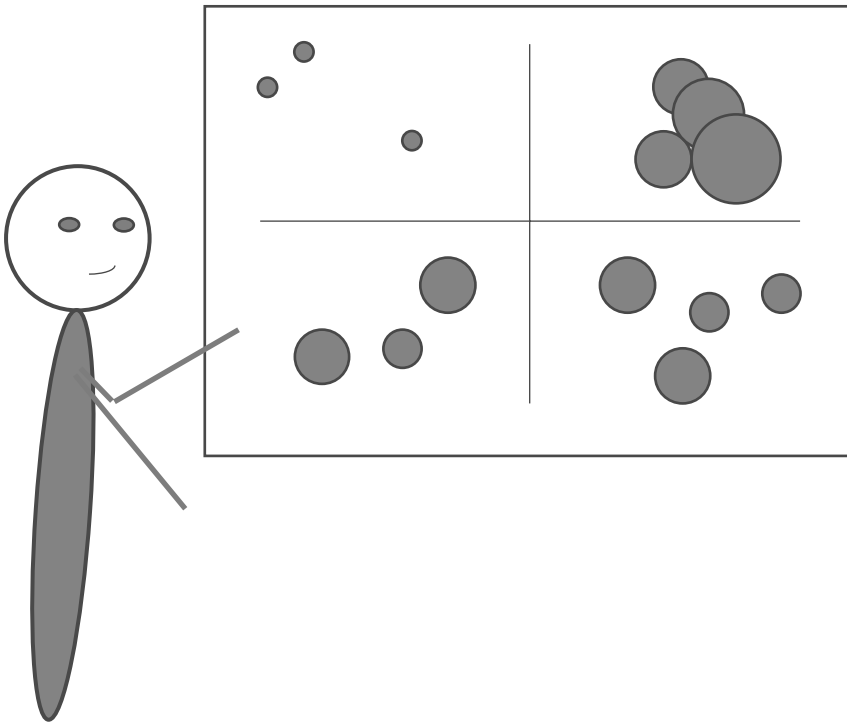
Once you get the customer feedback, ensure that internally everyone has access to the information, whether it is good or bad. The more access everyone has to this information, the more it can help influence their daily decisions about the work they do (see Figure 10.3).

Look for common patterns in what is being said. You are looking to tell a story that can be used to help understand how your product is doing in the marketplace and help drive where investments should be made.

### When to Be Cautious about Trends

There are a variety of situations when following or looking to follow new trends is simply not a good idea. For example:

- There is a great new technology and you want to reimplement a system that already works and that customers love.
- You are coming to the close of a major release and the team is working to stabilize the system.
- Your current system is already experiencing significant operational challenges, and the root cause is not known.
- Switching costs outweigh any perceived or realized gains.



**Figure 10.3** Customer trend analysis: customer feedback can give you investment insights.

One of your major goals as a technology architect is to manage risk, not introduce it. You need to ensure that you have adequate time to recover from destabilizing the system after the new technologies, approaches, or patterns have been introduced. As the idiom goes, “Discretion is the better part of valor.”

The last thing you want to do is harm your reputation unnecessarily or be viewed as reckless by the executives who are overseeing the work that you do. To mitigate this risk, always go in with your eyes wide open and be willing to listen to other people’s perspectives, whether positive or negative. Seek to understand their concerns and make sure you’re considering feedback from all levels.

Any change is difficult, and you don’t want to make it harder by pushing something your company and its people or customers aren’t ready for.

Patience and persistence are valuable skills at this time. If you are right, as mass awareness grows eventually people will come around to seeing the value of your approach and recommendations. Remember that being too early can be just as bad as being too late. Timing is everything.

### When to Embrace a Trend

There are a variety of situations that naturally lend themselves to exploring trends and bringing new and innovative approaches to the problems that need to be solved. These include the following:

- The business wants to do a technology refresh and modernize the technology stack for an important application or system.
- The business wants to establish a presence in a new market with a new set of applications or systems.
- The current set of technologies, approaches, and processes has been determined to be inadequate for solving the problems at hand, and a new approach is not only warranted but welcomed by everyone involved.

If you seek to introduce new ideas at the appropriate times, you will gain the trust of the business that you can take a pragmatic approach to moving the business forward. This form of partnership will serve you well.

## STRATEGIC RESEARCH

*“Research is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose.”*

—Zora Neale Hurston

At any given time there are only a limited number of research projects or areas that can be undertaken. Several factors should be considered when determining what areas are the ones that should be explored. These include

- **Alignment with strategic business goals.** Research should be focused on an area that both the business and technology need to learn about in order to be able to move forward with a particular set of projects or areas that the business wants to pursue or invest in.
- **Agreed-upon prioritization.** Both technology and the business should agree that this area of research is needed, that the limited funding available for this type of research would be well spent, and that this is a high priority for both areas.

- **Agreed-upon purpose.** Both technology and the business should be in agreement about the purpose and desired outcomes of the research. Is it to determine the feasibility of pursuing a particular area? Is it to reduce the risk? Is it to help appropriately size the investment request? Is it to better understand the threat that this technology poses to the business? Is it to better understand the opportunities a particular area may offer? Are there legal and regulatory issues that need to be fleshed out?
- **Agreed-upon time and resource allocation.** Both technology and the business should agree upon a time box that this research will fit into. Ideally, this is measured in days. The goal should be to do the research in a cost-effective manner, and to the greatest degree possible limit the amount of time, money, and resources being used to pursue it. Are there other areas in the business with which you can share the cost of this research if it turns out to be a larger endeavor?
- **Agreed-upon report-out mechanism.** As the research is pursued, how will the progress and lessons learned be reported out to the business? Are there natural points at which these report-outs can help determine if this area of research is worth continuing to pursue? Are there other areas of the business that would be interested in the outcomes of the research? Can you post these findings in an internally accessible collaboration area to let others know how the research is progressing? If necessary, can you control who has access to the research findings, depending on the nature of the research?

The key is to partner with the business to determine the parameters that surround strategic research.

## Research Approaches

Several different approaches to pursuing research can be taken, such as the following:

- **Business unit driven.** This research is done internally within a business unit. The resources working on it typically are not devoted 100% to research.
- **R & D.** This research is done by a dedicated research and development team. It is often staffed with resources who have Ph.D.s in specific areas of interest to the business. They also are typically actively involved in the broader academic research community.
- **University partnership.** This research is done in partnership with a university. It allows the university to get exposure to challenging

business problems and information that is generally not publicly available, and the business gets access to professors and students who specialize in a particular area of interest.

- **Open innovation challenges.** This is a research challenge that typically is constructed in partnership with a company such as InnoCentive. Working with you and your team, they will help frame the research problem or question into a challenge. They will also handle any intellectual property treatments and any awards for the winners of the challenge. The challenge itself can be open to the public or open only to those within your business. A successful challenge typically results in a crowdsourced solution to a specific business problem.
- **Corporate innovation labs.** These are effectively start-up groups that are formed within the overall business. They focus on rapid experimentation and validated learning through interacting with real customers. They often employ A/B testing to help drive decisions about which alternative solution is working better.

The goal is to pick the approach or mix of approaches that makes the most sense for your business situation. The key is to find ways to inject new ideas and approaches into the business that will enable it to grow.

## TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION PRINCIPLES

Technology innovation has the ability to bring disruptive technologies to the business. The challenge is to bring these technologies forward at the right time and in partnership with the business to enable the best possible chances for success.

### Seek Approved but Minimal Time and Funding to Explore

Ideally, you should be able to get a limited amount of business-approved work time to explore new technologies and trends. This may take the form of

- Small research projects
- Exploratory prototypes
- Reading research papers
- Attending conferences that are focused on the area of business interest
- Reading blogs, magazines, or books that may enable new capabilities

Citing successful and innovative companies such as Google, 3M, and HP that allow employees “innovation time” to focus on and research new areas may also help in your efforts to obtain approval.

Ideally, your research request would be done in conjunction with your business partners in an area that

- They are looking to move into
- Is currently extremely hard for them to solve
- Requires a significant amount of manual effort to deal with

### Make Small Bets

The goal is to survive to live another day. You don’t want the entire business riding on a single investment if you are unsure of its long-term future. Being prudent with these kinds of decisions allows you to fail quickly, with the least amount of disruption to the business, and learn how to improve.

### Use Technology Scouting to Scan and Track the Trends Regularly

The goal with scouting technology trends is to learn about new things on a regular basis (see Figure 10.4) and find out

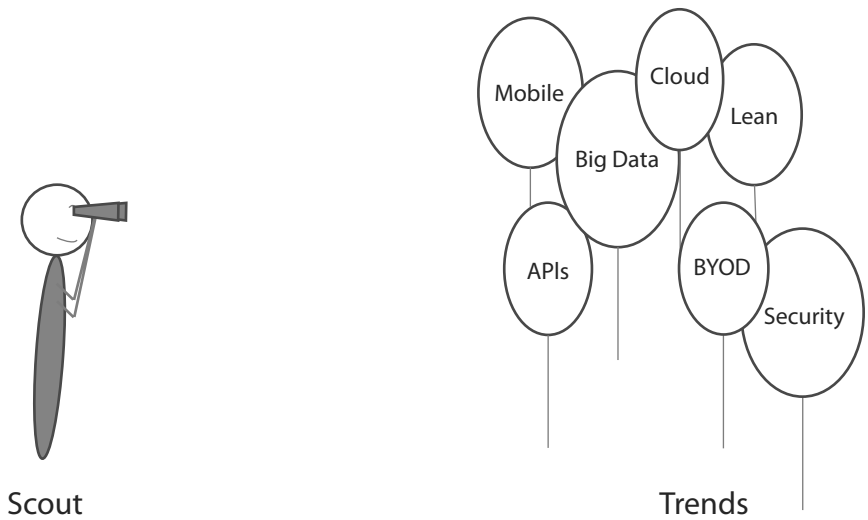
- What is applicable to the business
- What things need to wait on the back burner while they mature
- What things warrant further investigation

Keep an eye on new and emerging trends using the scouting method of scanning the landscape to identify what’s new and interesting, then track those trends that look promising and apply them to your business. Scanning and tracking technology trends is of less value if the information obtained is not shared, so try to find a venue to share your findings and continue to make updates so your research is up-to-date and relevant.

#### **Note**

Maximize the quality of your trend analysis and limit the amount of time you spend by staying hyper-focused and hyper-aware using a technique called “scanning and tracking.”





**Figure 10.4** Trend scouting

Unless you are in some special circumstance, trends and trend investigation should not consume a large portion of your time. Major trends change less frequently—you may see the direction change every 6 to 12 months—while minor trends change more rapidly.

By quickly *scanning* an area of research interest and *tracking* any major changes, you'll build up a knowledge base that will make your efforts more efficient the next time you *scout* the area. Catching these changes, whether the trends are gaining momentum or fading, gives you an indication of whether or not it is worth spending additional time and resources to learn more about a particular area and report out your findings.

### Have a Lab Area

Having a lab environment can allow you play around with new technologies without a lot of visibility from other areas. For the areas in which you find success, you can bring them forward and have them progress toward a production environment.

Setting up a small lab typically doesn't cost too much and allows you to do things that would scare the data center folks to no end.

### **Use Rapid Experimentation with User Feedback Loops**

Experiments allow you to get firsthand knowledge of what is working or not working and a sense of what the real problems are. When experiments are combined with user feedback, you gain the ability to navigate toward customer needs. In many respects, this is similar to driving a car. You use the information that surrounds you to navigate toward your desired goal.

### **Show the Business and Customers Prototypes**

As you have success with new technologies, show the business what is possible. A working example is worth an amazing amount to the business:

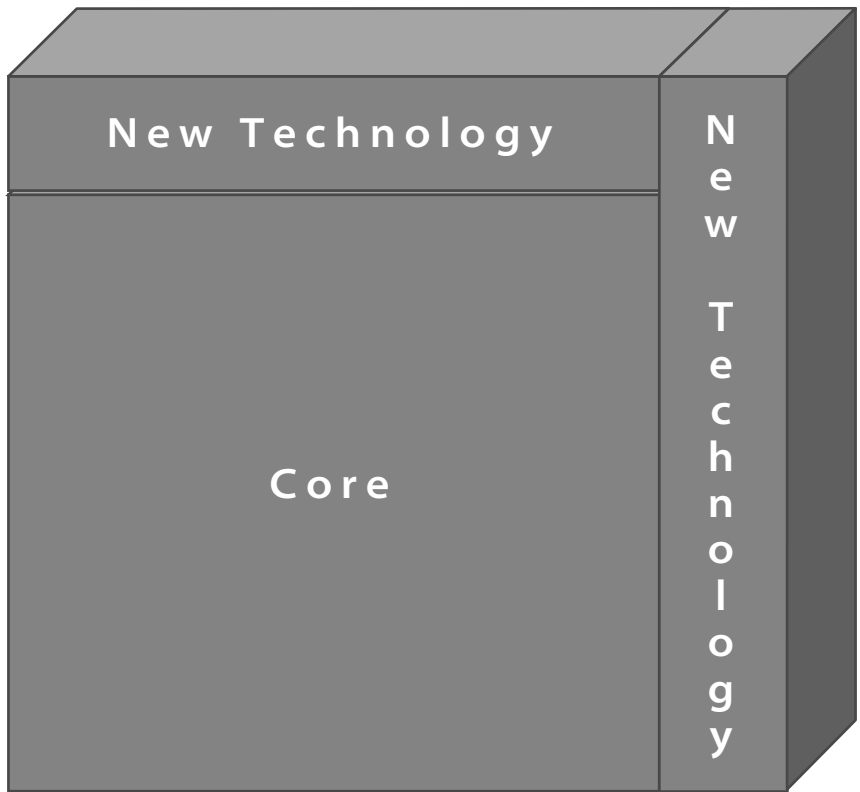
- It demonstrates initiative on your part.
- It reduces risk on the part of the business if it chooses to pursue the opportunity.
- It engages your mind in thinking of new ways and approaches to solving problems.
- Small innovations can grow into large enterprises and help sustain the business for the long haul.
- It engages the development team and shows them that working in your company will give them the opportunity to work on cool things and stay current with the industry.

### **Introduce New Technologies at the Edge**

As you look to introduce new technologies into existing systems or even new systems, try to find areas near the edge of the systems that will have minimal impacts on the core (see Figure 10.5). This enables you to operationalize the new technology in a quiet manner.

If it fails, the impact will be relatively small and the executives will be less likely to take notice.

On the other hand, if you take out the core revenue-generating software for any period of time, you are likely to get a direct call from senior executives and have some very unpleasant meetings in which your judgment is questioned.



**Figure 10.5** Keeping trendy areas near the edge of your activities will minimize the overall risk of trying out new things and the visibility of failures.

If this does occur:

- Be the first to approach the executives.
- Let them know what the situation is.
- Let them know what the possible resolutions are.
- Let them know what path you recommend.

You are much better off being proactive in this situation than reactive. It gives you an opportunity to be in control and to some degree manage the message that is delivered.

## PRAGMATIC TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION

The key to pragmatic technology innovation is not so much what is here today; the key is to see what is emerging and anticipating the future needs of your business partners and their customers. Watching Gartner's Hype Cycles, attending leading conferences, and following blogs can help give you a sense of where the industry investments are being made.

Take the time to play around with these technologies; if possible, find a low-profile project to test them on. The important point is to understand what problems are being solved or what business needs will be met.

How does this apply to your business? Think about these questions:

- Where is your business going?
- Where are your chief competitors going?
- Where are your competitors investing?
- Is the business landscape changing?
- Are there new emerging competitors?
- Is your customer base changing? Is it expanding? Shrinking? Aging?
- What is happening to your customers' business model?
- Do you know why your customers' business model is changing?
- What affects your market adoption?
- Do you need to be more aligned with trendy marketing and product appearance?

Taking the answers to these questions into account can help you navigate the tricky waters of what trends to be aware of, what trends to act upon, and what trends you should ignore.

Today, large sweeping trends are influencing technology. These include the following:

- **Big data.** The big data movement is transforming people's thoughts about data analytics, data visualization, and content processing. Hadoop and MapReduce are becoming widely used technologies across all industries. An ever-growing set of technologies is integrating with the Hadoop Distributed File System (HDFS) and making access to big data ubiquitous. Your ability to understand customers and craft user-centric experiences has never been more important. Incorporating information life-cycle semantics into your

architecture can enable significantly improved user experiences as your understanding of the users increases.

- **Mobile.** Expectations of mobile as a primary application access point are becoming commonplace. Understanding the user experience within your application as being lean forward (highly interactive) versus lean back (consuming content) is critical to ensuring that the user has a great experience. This understanding along with anticipating users' tendencies to multitask can drive your architectural approaches for the best ways to deliver content.
- **Networked platforms.** With the rise of cloud computing and the proliferation of devices and sensors, platforms are slowly becoming more and more interconnected. Understanding the need to interact with users as well as systems can help drive the architectural layering and the secure API development that are needed to enable networked platforms.

The trends are constantly changing. The key is to be aware of them and to understand their ability to impact your areas of technology innovation. The trends tend to move relatively slowly, but your awareness of them and your ability to apply them appropriately to your business at the right time are critical to keeping your architecture current and relevant to the business.

## SUMMARY

The road to technology innovation begins with

- Being aware of the trends
- Aligning with the business
- Engaging in strategic research
- Using innovation principles
- Being a pragmatic technology innovator

Watching and following trends can be fun and exciting. They can easily distract you from the job at hand. However, they are also the eyes into the future that may provide opportunity or peril. Architects need to be familiar with the trends that are swirling around them and approach them with caution.

Technology innovation is a critical aspect of software architecture. Learning when and where to introduce new and potentially disruptive technologies into the business is essential for business growth and operational stability.

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# INDEX

- A**
- Acquisition projects, estimating, 86
  - Advisory boards, for platform development, 150–151
  - Affordable Loss Principle, 276
  - Agile development, and governance, 209–210
  - Alignment
    - architecture review board, 10–11
    - choosing partners, 7–9
    - community review, 10–11
    - decision making, 11
    - influencers, 10
    - shared vision, 11–12
    - stakeholders, 8–9
    - thought leaders, 9
    - trusted advisers, 10
  - Alternative financing, 86–87
  - Ambiguity, dealing with, 217
  - API explorers, 154
  - APIs, designing, 147–148
  - Applications
    - consolidating during platform development, 163
    - vs. platforms, estimation, 93
  - Approach reviews, 206
  - Architectural approach to estimation. *See* Estimation, architectural approach
  - Architectural communication. *See also*
    - Presentations
      - context diagrams, 185
      - domain models, 184
      - executive overview diagrams, 187
      - hardware environment diagrams, 187–188
      - in the ideation and discovery phases, 184
      - logical architecture diagrams, 186–187
      - process diagrams, 184–185
    - RAID (risks, assumptions, issues, dependencies), 188–191
    - system boundaries, showing, 185
    - system components, showing, 186–187
    - user interface mock-ups, 186
    - work flow, showing, 184–185
  - Architectural concerns
    - availability, 178–179
    - business continuity, 196–197
    - changing the system, 182
    - compatibility, 182
    - disaster recovery, 196–198
    - extensibility, 181–182
    - maintenance windows, 179
    - open-source licensing, 195–196
    - power outages, 179
    - repeatability, 182
    - scalability, 180–181
    - security, 201–202
    - server failure, 179
    - site loss, 179
    - site outages, 179
    - software compatibility issues, 179
    - storage failure, 179
    - storage full, 178–179
    - sustainability, 182–183
    - third-party integration, 182–183
  - Architectural elevator speech, 126
  - Architectural overviews, platform development, 154
  - Architectural perspectives. *See also specific perspectives*
    - definition, 170
    - overview, 171
  - Architectural principles
    - cost of delay, 176–177
    - KISS (Keep It Simple, Stupid), 175–176
    - Law of Demeter, 172
    - meeting user expectations, 170–172
    - minimizing dependencies, 172
    - narrowly defining services, 175
    - Occam’s Razor, 175–176
    - Principle of Feedback, 177
    - Principle of Last Responsible Moment, 176–177
    - Principle of Least Effort, 172–173
    - Principle of Least Knowledge, 172
    - Principle of Least Surprise, 170–172
    - Principle of Natural Intuition, 171



- Architectural principles (*continued*)
  - Principle of Opportunity Cost, 173–175
  - Principle of Parsimony, 175–176
  - Principle of Single Responsibility, 175
  - solving immediate problems, 172–173
  - Zipf’s Law, 172–173
- Architecture review board, 10–11
- Architecture reviews
  - approach, 206
  - development, 207
  - enterprise, 207
  - executive, 206–207
  - governance areas, 206–207
  - hardware, 207
  - peer, 207
- Assumptions
  - establishing, 68–69
  - RAID (risks, assumptions, issues, dependencies), 68–69
- Automation, governance principles, 203
- Availability, architectural concerns, 178–179
  
- B**
- Bargaining, in estimation, 101
- BCPs (business continuity plans), 197–198
- Big data trends, 252–253
- Bird-in-the-Hand Principle, 277
- Blogging, 225
- Building, governance area, 208–209
- Business case estimate, 82
- Business case validation estimates, 82
- Business continuity, architectural concerns, 196–197
- Business continuity planning, governance principles, 196–198
- Business discovery, 52
- Business goals
  - aligning research with, 245
  - discovery of your business, 52
  - platform development ecosystems, 153
  - strategic roadmapping principles, 262
- Business unit driven research, 246
  
- C**
- Calculated risk taking, 275–276
- Capabilities
  - APIs, designing, 147–148
  - conceptual models, 147
  - defining, 146
  - defining objectives, 145–146
  - definition, 144
  - establishing, 69–70
  - leveraging, 146–147
- Captive customers, 242–243
- Caving in
  - decision making, 124
  - in estimation, 101
  - resolving issues, 124
- Changing the system, architectural concerns, 182
- Checklists for estimation, 99
- Cloud capability trends, 241
- Code names, strategic roadmapping, 258
- Coding, governance areas, 208–209
- Collaboration
  - becoming a mentor, 22–23
  - bringing value to the table, 22
  - giving feedback, 23
  - moving toward ideation, 24
  - seeking a mentor, 23–24
  - as a source of opportunity, 24
  - strategic roadmapping, 258
  - strengthening partnerships, 24–25
- Commitment
  - concept formation, 62–63
  - overcommitment, 13–15
  - time management, 127–128
- Communication. *See* Architectural communication; Documentation; Presentations; Visual models
- Community review, 10–11
- Company assets, consolidating during platform development, 157–158
- Compatibility, architectural concerns, 182
- Competition, studying, 48–50
- Complexity, reducing, 72–73
- Concept evolution
  - adjacent opportunities, 75
  - conceptual integrity, 73–75
  - history of the concept, 71–72
  - multiple perspectives, 72–73
  - reducing complexity, 72–73
- Concept formation
  - conceptual diagrams, 64
  - context diagrams, 64
  - customer involvement, 65–66
  - domain models, 59, 61
  - early involvement, 65

- identifying main concepts, 60
  - listening to the customer, 65–66
  - making a commitment, 62–63
  - problem scope, 60–62
  - saying no, 62–63
  - speaking the customer's language, 59–60
  - visual models, 63–67
  - Concept life cycle, 58
  - Concept reification
    - assumptions, establishing, 68–69
    - customer involvement, 70–71
    - customer pain points, 70
    - customer roles, establishing, 69–70
    - definition, 67
    - essential capabilities, establishing, 69–70
    - experimentation, 68
    - MVPs (minimum viable products), 67
    - POCs (proofs of concept), 68–69
    - reevaluating the product concept, 69–70
  - Conceptual diagrams, 64
  - Conceptual integrity, 73–75
  - Conceptual models for platform capabilities, 147
  - Conceptualization. *See also* Ideation
    - concept life cycle, 58. *See also specific stages*
    - early involvement, 57
    - overview, 55
  - Concerns. *See* Architectural concerns
  - Conferences
    - attending, 220
    - presenting at, 223
    - for professional development, 132–133
    - trends, 240
  - Configurability vs. hard coding, 165
  - Consolidating
    - applications during platform development, 163
    - company assets during platform development, 157–158
  - Context
    - business, 17
    - contributing to your partner's success, 20–21
    - for decision making, 52
    - guarding relationships, 20
    - safety in numbers, 21
    - technical decisions, 18–19
    - when presenting information, 19–20
  - Context diagrams, 64, 185
  - Contractors
    - in leadership positions, 119
    - for platform development, 158
  - Contractual relationships vs. partnerships, in estimation, 88–89
  - Corporate innovation labs, 247
  - Cost estimation. *See* Estimation
  - Costs
    - of delay, architectural principle, 176–177
    - of disruption, governance principles, 196–198
    - platform development, 161–162
    - saving money, 228
  - Credibility, 275
  - Customer feedback
    - analyzing, 243
    - getting, 242–243
  - Customer inquiries, trend analysis, 242
  - Customer involvement
    - concept formation, 65–66
    - concept reification, 70–71
  - Customer pain points, 70
  - Customer roles, establishing, 69–70
  - Customers. *See also* Discovery, of customers; Users
    - of platforms
      - captives, 242–243
      - fans, 242
      - followers, 243
      - interaction with during platform development, 153
      - perspective of, 35–37
      - as platform users, 148, 153
      - themes, identifying, 50–51
      - training courses. studying, 37
      - utilitarians, 242
      - value, identifying, 47–48
    - Customers' competitive knowledge trends, 241
  - Customer's language
    - concept formation, 59–60
    - learning, 42
    - NPD (new product development), 34
- ## D
- Dashboards, 226–227
  - Data centers, 114–115
  - Data lock-in, governance principles, 203
  - Data portability, governance principles, 203
  - Deadlines, time management, 130
  - Decision making
    - alignment, 11
    - business context for, 52
    - consistency, 122–124
    - knowing when to cave, 124

- Decision making (*continued*)
    - with limited data and time, 130
    - role of alignment, 11
    - standing your ground, 125
    - technical decisions as political decisions, 18–19
  - Delegation, 130–131
  - Delivering projects
    - areas of responsibility for architects, 119–120
    - concentrating on problem areas, 118
    - contractors in leadership positions, 119
    - eliminating dependencies, 116
    - managing by walking around, 120–121
    - managing expectations, 116–117
    - mastering the development process, 117
    - nontransparency, 118–119
    - partnering with project managers, 116
  - Delivering results, 276
  - Demos, platform development, 154
  - Dependencies
    - eliminating, 116
    - minimizing, 172
    - RAID (risks, assumptions, issues, dependencies), 116
  - Dependency awareness, strategic roadmapping, 257
  - Deployment
    - governance areas, 208–209
    - platform development, 159–160
  - Design reviews, 208
  - Development process, mastering, 117
  - Development reviews, 207
  - Development staff. *See* Teams
  - Diagrams
    - conceptual, 64
    - context, 64, 185
    - executive overview, 187
    - hardware environment, 187–188
    - logical architecture, 186–187
    - process, 184–185
    - simplifying, 126
  - Disagreement, voicing, 125
  - Disaster recovery
    - architectural concerns, 196–198
    - governance principles, 196–198
  - Discovery. *See also* Strategic research
    - definition, 30
    - keys to, 30, 31. *See also specific keys*
  - Discovery, of customers
    - accessing products, 36
    - customer's language, 34, 42
    - customer's perspective, 35–37
    - interviewing key people, 36
    - marketing department, 32–37
    - meeting with customers, guidelines for, 37–43
    - NDA (nondisclosure agreements), 38
    - NPD (new product development), 34–35
    - partnering with customers, 32–37
    - sales department, 32–37
    - studying marketing materials, 35–36
    - support calls, 36
    - techniques for, 35–37
    - training courses, 37
  - Discovery, of the market
    - customer themes, 50–51
    - customer values, 47–48
    - guidelines, 43–46
    - studying the competition, 48–50
    - [the]customer's customer, 46–47
  - Discovery, of your business
    - business context for decision making, 52
    - goals and strategies, 52
  - Divestitures, platform development, 158
  - Documentation, platform development, 159. *See also*
    - Presentations
  - Domain models
    - architectural communication, 184
    - concept formation, 59, 61
  - Drive-by estimation, 80–81
- ## E
- Ecosystems, platform development
    - advisory boards, 150–151
    - aligning with company goals, 153
    - conflicting requirements, 153
    - consolidating applications, 163
    - consolidating company assets, 157–158
    - contractors for, 158
    - costs, 161–162
    - definition, 144
    - deployment, 159–160
    - divestitures, 158
    - documentation, 159
    - funding, 149–150
    - grooming the right team, 158–161
    - intellectual property management, 160–161
    - interaction with end customers, 153
    - leveraging common assets, 163
    - leveraging other platforms, 163

- mergers and acquisitions, 157
  - mobile support, 163–164
  - on-boarding new partners, 153–154
  - oversight, 150–151
  - platform awareness and acceptance, 154–155
  - platform integration, 162–164
  - platform management, 155–158
  - platform ownership, 148–155
  - platform users, 148, 153
  - political issues, 150–151
  - pre-engagement materials, 152
  - quality management, 162. *See also* Technology excellence
  - requirements management, 152–153, 159
  - steering committees, 150–151
  - timely feedback, 153
  - type of integration, 163
  - user interface, 163
- Education. *See* Enhancing your skill set; Know-how
- E-mail, time management, 131
- E-mail alerts, trends, 241
- Enhancing your skill set. *See also* Know-how
- becoming an expert, 135
  - doing technical things every day, 134–135
  - local conferences and user groups, 132–133
  - mastering the development process, 117
  - mentorship programs, 131–132
  - sitting with other architects, 134
  - stretching your comfort zone, 135
  - technology forums, 132
- Enterprise reviews, 207
- Entrepreneurial execution
- architecting with, 282–283
  - calculated risk taking, 275–276
  - credibility, 275
  - definition, 272
  - delivering results, 276
  - depth of knowledge, 274
  - elements of, 273–276
  - focus, 274
  - innovation, 274
  - optimism, 274
  - passion, 274
  - thriving on adversity, 274
  - trusting your gut, 274
- Entrepreneurial execution, principles
- Affordable Loss Principle, 276
  - Bird-in-the-Hand Principle, 277
  - following your passion, 278–279
  - learning by doing, 280
  - Lemonade Principle, 276–277
  - Patchwork Quilt Principle, 277
  - Pilot-in-the-Plane Principle, 277
  - pivoting, 279–280
  - seeking feedback, 281–282
  - seeking leverage, 282–283
  - seizing the moment, 278
  - shiny object syndrome, 277
- Entrepreneurship, definition, 272
- Estimation
- business case estimate, 82
  - business case validation, 82
  - drive-by, 80–81
  - governance areas, 204–205
  - level of detail, 80–82
  - overview, 80–84
  - project context, 82
  - purpose of, 80–82
  - quick sizing effort, 80–81
  - rough order of magnitude, 81
- Estimation, architectural approach
- business rationale, 89
  - external research, 96
  - issues to consider, 92
  - leverageable components, 96–97
  - marketing approach, 89–90
  - organizational structure, 95–96
  - overview, 82–84
  - partnerships vs. contractual relationships, 88–89
  - platforms vs. applications, 93
  - repeat estimates, 90–91
  - re-platforming, 93–94
  - risk management, 91–93
  - technologies involved, 94–95
- Estimation principles
- avoiding negativity, 100
  - bargaining, 101
  - beware of external estimates, 101
  - caving in, 101
  - flexibility in design decisions, 100
  - knowing the hard problem, 100
  - knowing the targeted price, 101–102
  - opportunities to say yes, 100–101
  - providing options, 100
  - scheduling, 100, 102
  - trusting your gut, 101

- Estimation process
    - for acquisition projects, 86
    - alternative financing, 86–87
    - engaging executives, 103–104
    - financing, business process, 87–88
    - for integration projects, 86
    - leverage points, 103
    - for maintenance projects, 85
    - for migration projects, 85
    - for new/enhancement projects, 85–86
    - personnel involved, 102
    - pipeline process, 84–85
    - project centric financing, 87
    - reviewing estimates with executives, 126
    - selling the estimate, 104–106
    - spending envelope financing, 86–87
    - timeline, 102
    - types of projects, 85–86
    - validating the estimate, 105–106
    - visual presentation, 103
  - Estimation strategies
    - concentrating on the critical, 98
    - developing checklists, 99
    - estimation feedback loops, 98
    - executive and organizational buy-in, 99
    - organization coupling and cohesion, 98
    - planning for unknowns and challenges, 97
    - PowerPoint presentations, 99
    - realistic expectations, 98
  - Executive overview diagrams, 187
  - Executive reviews, 206–207
  - Executives. *See also* Management
    - engaging in the estimation process, 103–104
    - estimation buy-in, 99
  - Experimentation, 68
  - Extensibility, architectural concerns, 181–182
  - External partnerships, 26
- F**
- Fans, 242
  - FAQs, platform development, 152
  - Feedback
    - giving, 23
      - during platform development, 153
      - seeking, 281–282
  - Feedback, from customers
    - analyzing, 243
    - getting, 242–243
  - Feedback loops
    - for estimation, 98
    - technology innovation principles, 250
  - Financing
    - alternatives, 86–87
    - business process, 87–88
    - governance areas, 206
    - platform development, 149–150
    - project centric, 87
    - spending envelope, 86–87
    - technology innovation principles, 247–248
  - Follower customers, 243
  - Funding. *See* Financing
  - Fuzzy front end. *See* Conceptualization
- G**
- Goals, business
    - aligning research with, 245
    - discovery of your business, 52
    - platform development ecosystems, 153
    - strategic roadmapping principles, 262
  - Goals, quality, 164
  - Governance
    - and agile development, 209–210
    - definition, 194
  - Governance areas
    - architecture reviews, 206–207
    - building, 208–209
    - coding, 208–209
    - deploying, 208–209
    - estimates, 204–205
    - finance, 206
    - integrating, 208–209
    - IT compliance, 206
    - legal compliance, 206
    - management concerns, 205–206
    - monitoring, 208–209
    - overview, 204
    - portfolio management, 205
    - procurement, 205
    - product lines, 205–206
    - regulatory compliance, 206
    - testing, 208–209
  - Governance principles
    - automation, 203
    - business continuity planning, 196–198
    - cost of disruption, 196–198
    - data lock-in, 203

data portability, 203  
 disaster recovery, 196–198  
 IAM (identity and access management),  
     202–203  
 integration, 203  
 leveraging common capabilities, 199–200  
 loose coupling between business units, 198–199  
 open-source usage, 195–196  
 Principle of Least Authority, 202  
 Principle of Least Privilege, 202  
 regulatory compliance, 200–201  
 security, 201–202  
 vendor lock-in, 194–195  
 Grooming technical talent. *See also* Mentoring  
     hiring the best people, 133–134  
     local conferences and user groups, 132–133  
     mentorship programs, 131–132  
     technology forums, 132  
 Guiding principles, platform development  
     configurability *vs.* hard coding, 165  
     definition, 144  
     leverageability, 165  
     linear scalability, 166  
     operational excellence, 165  
     platform entanglement, 166  
     platform sprawl, 166  
     quality goals, 164  
     redundant architecture, 166  
     technical debt, 165  
     upgrading to current technologies, 166

## H

Hack-a-thons, attending/hosting, 221  
 Hard coding *vs.* configurability, 165  
 Hardware capability trends, 241  
 Hardware environment diagrams, 187–188  
 Hardware reviews, 207  
 Hiring the best people, 133–134

## I

IAM (identity and access management), 202–203  
 Ideation phase. *See also* Conceptualization  
     architectural communication, 184  
     definition, 56  
     in partnerships, 57  
 -ilities. *See* Architectural concerns  
 Industry trends, 239–240

Influencers, 10  
 Innovation, entrepreneurial execution, 274  
 Instrumentation, 226–227  
 Integration  
     governance areas, 208–209  
     governance principles, 203  
     platform development, 162–164  
     types of, 163  
 Integration projects, estimation, 86  
 Intellectual property  
     management, 160–161  
     trends, 241  
 Introducing new technologies, 250–251  
 IT compliance, 206

## K

KISS (Keep It Simple, Stupid), 175–176  
 Know-how. *See also* Enhancing your skill set  
     applying to your domain, 215–217  
     blogging, 225  
     conferences, attending, 220  
     conferences, presenting at, 223  
     currency, 214, 218–221  
     dealing with ambiguity, 217  
     definition, 214  
     developing a model, 217  
     excellence, 214, 221–229  
     hack-a-thons, attending/hosting, 221  
     instrumentation, 226–227  
     leveraging online resources, 221  
     online communities, 225–226  
     open-source projects, 225–226  
     performance tuning, 227–228  
     POCs (proofs of concept), 220, 222  
     project management, 228–229  
     relevance, 214, 215–218  
     saving money, 228  
     scaling, 227–228  
     selling, 217–218  
     software construction process, 229  
     teach a class, 224  
     user groups, as resources, 222–223  
     vetting, 217–218  
     writing a book, 224–225  
 Know-how, technology knowledge  
     acquiring, 218–221  
     evaluating technologies, 215–217  
 Know-how-driven architecture, 230–231

- L**
- Lab areas, 249–250
  - Law of Demeter, 172
  - Learning by doing, 280
  - Legal compliance, 206
  - Lemonade Principle, 276–277
  - Leverage, seeking, 282–283
  - Leverageability, platform development, 165
  - Leverageable components, in estimation, 96–97
  - Leveraging
    - capabilities, 146–147
    - common assets, 163
    - common capabilities, 199–200
    - online resources, 221
    - other platforms, 163
    - solutions, 115
  - Live demos
    - acquiring know-how, 223
    - platform development, 154
  - Logical architecture diagrams, 186–187
  - Loose coupling between business units, 198–199
- M**
- Maintenance projects, estimating, 85
  - Maintenance windows, architectural concerns, 179
  - Making small bets, 248
  - Management. *See also* Executives
    - definition, 110
    - key areas of responsibility, 110. *See also specific areas*
  - Management concerns, governance areas, 205–206
  - Managing by walking around, 120–121
  - Managing expectations, 116–117
  - Managing your time. *See also* Time allocation
    - avoiding e-mail, 131
    - defining your role, 128
    - delegating, 130–131
    - limit meeting attendance, 130
    - limiting commitments, 128
    - making decisions under constraints, 130
    - meeting in person, 131
    - prioritizing, 128–130
    - setting deadlines, 130
  - Market, discovery of
    - customer themes, 50–51
    - customer values, 47–48
    - guidelines, 43–46
    - studying the competition, 48–50
    - [the]customer’s customer, 46–47
  - Marketing approach to estimation, 89–90
  - Marketing materials, discovery of customers, 35–36
  - Measuring strategic roadmapping, 259
  - Meetings
    - with customers, guidelines for, 37–43
    - limiting your attendance, 130
    - time management, 130
  - Mentoring, 22–23. *See also* Grooming technical talent
  - Mentorship programs, 131–132
  - Mergers and acquisitions, platform development, 157
  - Migration projects, estimating, 85
  - Mobile support, platform development, 163–164
  - Mobile trends, 253
  - Modeling concepts. *See* Visual models
  - Models, developing, 217
  - Monitoring, governance areas, 208–209
  - MVPs (minimum viable products), 67
- N**
- NDA (nondisclosure agreements), 38
  - Negativity in estimation, 100
  - Networked platforms, trends, 253
  - New/enhancement projects, estimating, 85–86
  - NPD (new product development), 33–35
- O**
- Objectives, defining, 145–146
  - Occam’s Razor, 175–176
  - On-boarding new partners, 153–154
  - Online communities, source of know-how, 225–226
  - Online resources, leveraging, 221
  - Open disclosure, 12–13
  - Open innovation challenges, 247
  - Open-source licensing, architectural concerns, 195–196
  - Open-source projects, source of know-how, 225–226
  - Open-source tools, trends, 240
  - Open-source usage, governance principles, 195–196
  - Operational excellence, 165
  - Operations support, 114–115
  - Optimism, 274

Organizational structure, and estimation, 95–96  
Organizations  
    coupling and cohesion, 98  
    estimation buy-in, 99  
Overcommitment  
    avoiding, 13–14  
    coping with, 14–15  
Oversight, platform development, 150–151  
Ownership, platforms, 148–155

## P

Partnering with executives  
    avoid interrupting, 127  
    confidence, 127  
    having your boss's back, 127  
    managing risk through transparency, 125–126  
    reviewing estimates, 126  
    simplifying presentation diagrams, 126  
Partnerships. *See also* Relationships  
    choosing partners, 7–9  
    conceptualization, 57  
    context, 17  
    *vs.* contractual relationships in estimation,  
        88–89  
    contributing to your partner's success, 20–21  
    with customers, 32–37  
    definition, 6  
    external, 26  
    having your partner's back, 20  
    ideation, 57  
    key aspects, 6. *See also specific aspects*  
    moving toward ideation, 24  
    on-boarding new partners, 153–154  
    political decisions, 19  
    with project managers, 116  
    safety in numbers, 21  
    as a source of opportunity, 24  
    strengthening, 24–25  
    technical decisions, 18–19  
    with universities, 246–247  
Passion, 274, 278–279  
Patchwork Quilt Principle, 277  
Patent searches, 114  
Peer reviews, 207  
Performance tuning, 227–228  
Perspective. *See* Architectural perspective  
Pilot-in-the-Plane Principle, 277

Pipeline estimation process, 84–85  
Pivoting, 279–280  
Platform, definition, 143  
Platform development  
    consolidating company assets, 157–158  
    contractors for, 158  
    definition, 144  
    key elements, 144–145. *See also specific elements*  
Platform entanglement, 166  
Platform sprawl, 166  
Platforms  
    *vs.* applications, estimation, 93  
    awareness and acceptance, 154–155  
    integration, 162–164  
    managing, 155–158  
    ownership, 148–155  
    users, 148, 153  
POCs (proofs of concept)  
    calculated risk taking, 275  
    concept reification, 68–69  
    developing know-how currency, 220  
    developing know-how excellence, 222  
Political issues  
    platform development, 150–151  
    technical decisions, 18–19  
Portfolio management, governance areas, 205  
Power outages, architectural concerns, 179  
PowerPoint presentations, for estimates, 99  
Pre-engagement materials, platform development,  
    152  
Prerecorded product overviews, platform develop-  
    ment, 152  
Presentations. *See also* Architectural communica-  
    tion; Documentation; Strategic roadmapping;  
    Visual models  
    architectural overviews, 154  
    estimates, 99, 103  
    FAQs, 152  
    on-boarding new partners, 153–154  
    PowerPoint, 99  
    pre-engagement materials, 152  
    prerecorded product overviews, 152  
    scripted live demos, 154  
    simplifying diagrams, 126  
    white papers, 152  
Principle of  
    Feedback, 177  
    Last Responsible Moment, 176–177



- Principle of (*continued*)
- Least Authority, 202
  - Least Effort, 172–173
  - Least Knowledge, 172
  - Least Privilege, 202
  - Least Surprise, 170–172
  - Natural Intuition, 171
  - Opportunity Cost, 173–175
  - Parsimony, 175–176
  - Single Responsibility, 175
- Principles of
- architecture. *See* Architectural principles
  - cost estimation. *See* Estimation principles
  - entrepreneurial execution. *See* Entrepreneurial execution, principles
  - governance. *See* Governance principles
  - platform development. *See* Guiding principles, platform development
  - roadmapping. *See* Strategic roadmapping, principles
  - technology innovation. *See* Technology innovation, principles
- Prioritization
- strategic research, 245–246
  - strategic roadmapping, 259
  - time management, 128–130
- Problem resolution. *See* Resolving issues
- Process diagrams, 184–185
- Procurement, governance areas, 205
- Product lines, governance areas, 205–206
- Professional development. *See* Enhancing your skill set; Know-how
- Project centric financing, 87
- Project life cycle diagram, 3. *See also specific stages*
- Project management know-how, 228–229
- Project skills, 1–3. *See also specific skills*
- Projects, delivering
- areas of responsibility for architects, 119–120
  - concentrating on problem areas, 118
  - contractors in leadership positions, 119
  - eliminating dependencies, 116
  - managing by walking around, 120–121
  - managing expectations, 116–117
  - mastering the development process, 117
  - nontransparency, 118–119
  - partnering with project managers, 116
- Proofs of concept (POCs). *See* POCs (proofs of concept)
- Publishing strategic roadmaps, 259
- Q**
- Quality goals, platform development, 164
  - Quality management, platform development, 162. *See also* Technology excellence
- R**
- RAID (risks, assumptions, issues, dependencies), 188–191
  - Rapid experimentation, 250
  - R&D approach to research, 246
  - Redundant architecture, 166
  - Reevaluating the product concept, 69–70
  - Refactoring code, 35
  - Regulatory compliance
    - governance areas, 206
    - governance principles, 200–201
    - trends, 241
  - Reification. *See* Concept reification
  - Relationships. *See also* Partnerships
    - dealing with caustic people, 26–27
    - external partnerships, 26
    - give-and-take, 25–26
    - overcoming bad experiences, 26
    - purpose of, 25
  - Repeatability, architectural concerns, 182
  - Re-platforming, estimation, 93–94
  - Report-out mechanism, strategic research, 246
  - Requirements management
    - conflicting requirements, 153
    - platform development, 152–153, 159
  - Research. *See* Discovery; Strategic research
  - Resolving issues
    - asking the tough questions, 121
    - being consistent in your decisions, 122–124
    - head-on, 124
    - knowing what is not your problem, 125
    - knowing when to cave, 124
    - in the moment, 121–122
    - RAID (risks, assumptions, issues, dependencies), 188–191
    - saying no, with options, 122

- standing your ground, 125
- voicing disagreement, 125
- Reviews
  - design validation, 208
  - estimates, 126
- Reviews, architecture
  - approach, 206
  - development, 207
  - enterprise, 207
  - executive, 206–207
  - hardware, 207
  - peer, 207
  - review board, 10–11
- Risk management
  - A/B testing, 275
  - calculated risk taking, 275–276
  - estimation, 91–93
  - minimizing investments, 275
  - RAID (risks, assumptions, issues, dependencies), 188–191
- Risks, assumptions, issues, dependencies (RAID), 188–191
- Roadmapping. *See* Strategic roadmapping
- Rough order of magnitude estimation, 81
  
- S**
- Saying no
  - concept formation, 62–63
  - importance of, 15–16
  - resolving issues, 122
- Saying yes, in estimation, 100–101
- Scalability
  - architectural concerns, 180–181
  - linear, 166
- Scaling, know-how, 227–228
- SCQA (situation, complication, question, answer).
  - See* SCRAP (situation, complication, resolution, action, politeness)
- SCRAP (situation, complication, resolution, action, politeness), 19–20
- Scripted live demos, 154
- Security. *See also* Disaster recovery
  - architectural concerns, 201–202
  - governance principles, 201–202
- Seizing the moment, 278
- Selling know-how, 217–218
  
- Server failure, architectural concerns, 179
- Shared vision, 11–12
- Shiny object syndrome, 277
- Site loss, architectural concerns, 179
- Site outages, architectural concerns, 179
- Skill development, 287–288. *See also* Enhancing your skill set; Grooming technical talent; Know-how; Mentoring
- Skills. *See* Project skills; Technology skills; Visionary skills
- Soft skills, 287–288
- Software compatibility issues, architectural concerns, 179
- Software construction process, 229
- Spending envelope financing, 86–87
- Stakeholders, identifying, 8–9
- Steering committees for platform development, 150–151
- Sticky notes, strategic roadmapping, 260
- Storage failure, architectural concerns, 179
- Storage full, architectural concerns, 178–179
- Strategic research. *See also* Discovery
  - alignment with business goals, 245
  - approaches, 246–247
  - business unit driven approach, 246
  - corporate innovation labs, 247
  - external, 96
  - open innovation challenges, 247
  - prioritization, 245
  - purpose of, 246
  - R&D approach, 246
  - report-out mechanism, 246
  - time and resource allocation, 246
  - university partnerships, 246–247
- Strategic roadmapping
  - architect’s role, 265–266
  - considerations, 266–267
  - definition, 256
  - finding what energizes you, 265
  - key milestones, 264–265, 269
  - socialization, 268–269
  - uses for, 266
  - visual representation, 258
  - visualizing, 256
- Strategic roadmapping, elements of
  - code names, 258
  - collaboration, 258

- Strategic roadmapping, elements of (*continued*)
    - context dependency, 258
    - dependency awareness, 257
    - iteration, 259
    - measuring, 259
    - multidisciplinary, 258
    - personalization, 258
    - prioritization, 259
    - publishing, 259
    - specialization, 258
    - strategic focus, 257
    - swim lanes, 257
    - time sequencing, 257
    - updating, 259
    - visual representation, 258
  - Strategic roadmapping, principles
    - finding what energizes you, 265
    - focus on the destination, 264–265
    - getting started, 262
    - having fun, 262
    - keeping it simple, 261–262
    - key milestones, 264–265
    - partnering with the business, 262
    - setting goals, 262
    - skill and knowledge gaps, identifying, 263
    - taking a new route, 263–264
    - target areas, identifying, 263
    - timing flexibility, 263
  - Strategic roadmapping, strategies
    - capturing underlying principles, 261
    - roadmapping as a project, 261
    - sticky notes, 260
    - whiteboarding, 260
    - working backward, 260
    - workshops, 260–261
  - Strategic solutions, 115
  - Striving toward technology excellence
    - data centers and operations support, 114–115
    - dealing with technical debt, 112
    - establishing a vision, 112
    - generalizing solutions, 115
    - keeping technical staff engaged, 113
    - leveraging solutions, 115
    - patent searches, 114
    - strategic solutions, 115
  - Support calls, discovery of customers, 36–37
  - Sustainability, architectural concerns, 182–183
  - Swim lanes, strategic roadmaps, 257
  - System boundaries, showing, 185
  - System components, showing, 186–187
- T**
- Teaching classes, 224
  - Teams. *See also* Grooming technical talent
    - hiring the best people, 133–134
    - for platform development, 158–161
  - Technical debt, 112, 165
  - Technical skills, 287–288
  - Technologies involved in estimation, 94–95
  - Technology excellence. *See also* Quality management
    - data centers and operations support, 114–115
    - dealing with technical debt, 112
    - establishing a vision, 112
    - generalizing solutions, 115
    - keeping technical staff engaged, 113
    - leveraging solutions, 115
    - patent searches, 114
    - strategic solutions, 115
  - Technology forums, 132
  - Technology innovation
    - definition, 238
    - pragmatic, 252–253
  - Technology innovation, business alignment
    - customer feedback, 242–243
    - trend analysis, 243–245
    - trends on customer inquiries, 242
  - Technology innovation, principles
    - feedback loops, 250
    - introducing new technologies, 250–251
    - lab areas, 249–250
    - making small bets, 248
    - rapid experimentation, 250
    - time and funding, 247–248
    - trend scouting, 248–249
  - Technology innovation, strategic research
    - alignment with business goals, 245
    - approaches, 246–247
    - business unit driven approach, 246
    - corporate innovation labs, 247
    - open innovation challenges, 247
    - prioritization, 245

- purpose of, 246
  - R&D approach, 246
  - report-out mechanism, 246
  - time and resource allocation, 246
  - university partnerships, 246–247
  - Technology innovation, trend awareness
    - applying, 241–242
    - big data trend, 252–253
    - cloud capabilities, 241
    - conferences, 240
    - customers' competitive knowledge, 241
    - e-mail alerts, 241
    - hardware capabilities, 241
    - industry, 240
    - intellectual property, 241
    - mobile trend, 253
    - networked platform trend, 253
    - open-source tools, 240
    - regulatory compliance, 241
    - university research, 240
    - vendor capabilities, 241
  - Technology knowledge management, 141. *See also* Know-how
  - Technology leverage, 141. *See also* Platform development
  - Technology oversight, 141. *See also* Governance
  - Technology skills. *See also specific skills*
    - dimensions of, 141
    - overview, 139–140
  - Testing, governance areas, 208–209
  - Third-party integration, architectural concerns, 182–183
  - Thought leaders, 9
  - Time allocation. *See also* Managing your time
    - strategic research, 245–246
    - technology innovation principles, 247–248
  - Training. *See* Enhancing your skill set; Know-how
  - Transparency
    - delivering projects, 118–119
    - in partnerships, 16–17
    - risk management, 125–126
  - Trend analysis, 243–245
  - Trend awareness
    - applying, 241–242
    - big data, 252–253
    - cloud capabilities, 241
    - conferences, 240
    - customer inquiries, 242
    - customers' competitive knowledge, 241
    - e-mail alerts, 241
    - hardware capabilities, 241
    - industry, 240
    - intellectual property, 241
    - mobile, 253
    - networked platforms, 253
    - open-source tools, 240
    - regulatory compliance, 241
    - trend analysis, 243–245
    - trend scouting, 248–249
    - university research, 240
    - vendor capabilities, 241
  - Trend scouting, 248–249
  - Trust
    - establishing, 12
    - learning to say no, 15–16
    - open disclosure, 12–13
    - overcommitting, 13–15
    - transparency, 16–17
  - Trusted advisers, 10
  - Trusting your gut
    - entrepreneurial execution, 274
    - estimation, 101
- U**
- University partnerships, strategic research, 246–247
  - University research trends, 240
  - Upgrading to current technologies, 166
  - User groups
    - for professional development, 132–133
    - as resources, 222–223
  - User interface
    - mock-ups, 186
    - platform development, 163
    - Principle of Least Effort, 172–173
  - Users of platforms, 148, 153. *See also* Customers
  - Utilitarian customers, 242
- V**
- Validating estimates, 82, 105–106
  - Vendor capability trends, 241
  - Vendor lock-in, governance principles, 194–195
  - Vetting know-how, 217–218

Vision, establishing, 112

Visionary skills, 233–235. *See also specific skills*

Visual models

concept formation, 63–67

conceptual diagrams, 64

context diagrams, 64

## **W**

White papers, platform development, 152

Whiteboarding, strategic roadmapping,  
260

Work flow, showing, 184–185

Workshops, strategic roadmapping,  
260–261

Writing a book, 224–225

## **Z**

Zipf's Law, 172–173