

Proposal for Creation of a SIM Enterprise Architecture Working Group

October 1, 2006

Background

Enterprise Architecture (EA) has been in SIM's peripheral vision for many years. SIM's IT Complexity Reduction Working Group wrote a report in 1999 entitled *Enterprise Architecture Requirements for Information Technology Vendors*.¹ Professor and SIM Board member Jerry Luftman's assessment of "IT-business strategic alignment maturity" included the degree to which "the enterprise architecture is integrated."² And *Computerworld* recently reported that Professor Kate Kaiser, who led a "SIM study of 104 CIOs to determine their skill needs through 2008" found that "there is much more emphasis on the business domain" and the article went on to rank "enterprise architecture" at the top of the "business domain" skills.³

Despite IT's awareness of the concept and its importance, there is not a standard definition of the term "enterprise architecture" and thus a high potential for ambiguity. This is one of the issues the SIM EA Working Group would like to address. For now, we offer as a working definition the one used by the General Accountability Office (GAO) of the federal government, who reports that known US government spending on EA is nearly \$1 billion dollars: "An enterprise architecture is a blueprint for organizational change defined in models [using words, graphics, and other depictions] that describe (in both business and technology terms) how the entity operates today and how it intends to operate in the future; it also includes a plan for transitioning to this future state."⁴ EAs "provide a clear and comprehensive picture of an entity, whether an organization (e.g., federal department, agency, or bureau) or a functional or mission area that cuts across more than one organization (e.g., financial management)."⁵

CIO Magazine opined last year that "[e]nterprise architecture has long been the concept that dared not speak its name. Some CIOs go to great lengths to avoid using the term with their business peers for fear of scaring, alienating or simply boring them to death. But companies ... that have stuck with it are beginning to reap the savings, flexibility and business alignment that its proponents have been promising for nearly 20 years."⁶ The difficulty many of us seem to have in getting our minds around the concept of EA is in part a function of the subject matter, perhaps what is one of humankind's most complicated creations, the enterprise itself. Our professional biases and historically stove-piped world exacerbate the situation. But if things like

1 SIM IT Complexity Reduction Working Group, October 1999, *Enterprise Architecture Requirements for Information Technology Vendors*, http://www.simnet.org/Content/NavigationMenu/Resources/Download_Page32/ICRWhitepaper.pdf.

2 Jerry Luftman, October 7, 2003, *IT-Business Strategic Alignment Maturity Assessment*, http://www.simnet.org/Content/NavigationMenu/Resources/Library/Download_Page3res/ITBusinessAlignment.pdf.

3 Stacy Collett, July 17, 2006, "Hot Skills, Cold Skills," *Computerworld*, <http://computerworld.com/action/article.do?command=viewArticleBasic&articleId=112360>.

4 *Enterprise Architecture: Leadership Remains Key To Establishing And Leveraging Architectures for Organizational Transformation*, GAO-06-831, August 2006, <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d06831.pdf>.

5 *Information Technology: Enterprise Architecture Use Across The Federal Government Can Be Improved*, GAO-02-6, February 2002, <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d026.pdf>.

6 Christopher Koch, March 1, 2005, "A New Blueprint For The Enterprise," *CIO Magazine*, <http://www.cio.com/archive/030105/blueprint.html>.

alignment, rapid introduction, complexity reduction, speed, and agility are design objectives that answer the question “what do we want it to look like?” Then perhaps at least part of the answer to the question “how do we accomplish it?” is Enterprise Architecture. Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke calls it “intangible capital.” In his June 2006 commencement speech at MIT he said:

In the case of information and communication technologies, new economic research suggests that the investments in associated intangible capital -- figuring out what to do with the computer once it's out of the box -- are quite important indeed. In my view, important investments in intangible capital remain to be made, as much still remains to be learned about how to harness these technologies most effectively.⁷

Whatever we call it, some are asking, “Does IT have the courage to bring Enterprise Architecture ‘out of the closet’?”

But perhaps the question we should be asking ourselves is, “Can IT afford not to seize the opportunity to be ‘the keeper of all the knowledge’ about the enterprise?” It could be no more than an historical accident that IT has been afforded first chance at this critical responsibility, largely due to the fact that we have done a reasonably good job managing the technical architecture of the enterprise. If we believe that information is power, then the potential is high for internal turf struggles and political machinations concerning who gets managerial responsibility for all of the information about the enterprise. In short, who will “own” the enterprise architecture for an organization? Being the keeper of the EA has the potential to ensure IT’s seat at the strategic table. The purpose of this Working Group is to help make that happen.

Mission of the Working Group

The SIM Enterprise Architecture Working Group will identify and share processes, methods, tools, concepts, and best practices to enable IT organizations to understand, create, and manage EA in partnership with the business. This will in turn help these same IT organizations substantially enhance the way they manage change, reduce complexity, reengineer processes, plan, strategize, govern, manage projects, and deliver value. The Working Group will achieve these objectives by:

1. Developing a common understanding of what “EA” is and why it is important to the organization
2. Proposing materials for the CIO to use to make EA simple to comprehend and verbalize to his/her peers and others in the enterprise.
3. Determining, through a survey of SIM membership (and other groups if possible), the current state of EA practices. These metrics can then serve as benchmarks so SIM members can determine how their organizations compare with others. This may also include a methodology for an organization to “self-survey” itself against the collective metrics.
4. Understanding the challenges and opportunities for the CIO’s organization in leading EA.
5. Sharing how organizations have successfully implemented and managed EA.

⁷ Commencement address by Ben S. Bernanke, June 9, 2006, <http://web.mit.edu/newsoffice/2006/comm-bernanke.html>.

6. Identifying EA best practices including the critical initiatives and enabling processes for the successful leadership and management of EA.

Deliverables

A SIM white paper that achieves the mission objectives, and includes

1. Background and definitions,
2. The survey's findings,
3. Identification of best practices,
4. Success stories, and
5. Key issues and critical success factors.

Financial

- Individual members will cover their own expenses incurred to attend meetings including travel, accommodations, and meals.
- SIM will provide administrative assistance, the SIM membership list with contact information only to be used for the survey, a Working Group website, and printing and distribution costs of the white paper.
- Individual members will pay a Working Group participation fee of \$300. per participant to help to cover cost of the survey and its administration, intra-group communications, and costs associated with writing and presenting the Group's findings and report.

Logistics

- Assuming the group's members agree to it, the Working Group will be co-chaired by Professor Leon Kappelman and a practitioner to be determined. Dr. Kappelman is Professor of Information Systems, Director Emeritus of the IS Research Center, a Fellow of the Texas Center for Digital Knowledge, and Associate Director of the Center for Quality & Productivity, in the College of Business at the University of North Texas (UNT) in Denton, Texas. He co-chaired the SIM Y2K Working Group from 1996 to 2000 during which time the Working Group conducted four annual surveys of SIM's membership on the state of Y2K practices and published four SIM white papers. He has done EA work for the Executive Office of the President of the United States and the Department of Veterans Affairs, given presentations and written on EA, and testified before the US Congress on EA practices in the federal government.
- Meetings will take place at least quarterly. More frequent conference calls and e-meetings will be conducted as needed.
- First meeting will be one and one-half to two days, tentatively during the first ten days of January 2007. Thereafter, to be determined.
- Tentative timetable is to produce a white paper in time for *SIMposium 2007*.

Initial Interest

Dr. Kappelman made a dozen preliminary inquiries about participation in this Working Group. The following twelve individuals representing nine enterprises and have expressed an interest in participating. Five are CIOs, two are chief enterprise architects, three are academicians, and two are consultants. They are all either SIM members already or will join SIM as one of the requirements for participation:

- Alex Pettit, CIO of the City of Denton, Texas

- Aviall (merged with Boeing September 20, 2006)
 - Joe Lacik, CIO
 - Russell Douglas, Director of Integration and Operations
- Ephraim McLean, IS Professor @ Georgia State Univ. and former SIM Board member
- IS Research Center at UNT
 - John Windsor, Professor and Director
 - Chang Koh, Associate Professor and Managing Director
- Jeff Coulter, Senior Consultant at Perot Systems
- John Zachman, CEO of Zachman International
- Merv Tarde, CIO of Interstate Batteries
- Maurice Leatherbury, CIO of the University of North Texas
- US Department of the Interior (pending okay from their Ethics Office)
 - Edward Meagher, Deputy CIO
 - Colleen Coggins, Chief Architect

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