

Charting the Business Integration Landscape

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1. Introduction

Providing integrated information services for an organisation is in general not a trivial task. Even agreeing on which information services are needed in a particular situation and determining what is entailed by business integration proves to be challenging.

Is business integration about the integration of business services? Or is it more appropriate to view business integration as a way to employ largely independent business services in support of different business processes?

Should one be integrating enterprise applications? And what would enterprise application integration entail?

Is business integration about new technology? Or can legacy solutions be leveraged in future business integration solutions?

Much material you will find on this site, ranging from the notion of a *Significance Language* to concepts like *Enterprise Ontologies* is in one way or another concerned with *technology-neutral* business integration.

The approach to business integration I envisage is intended to enable:

- the delivery of optimally transparent business performance metrics
- low latency adaption to change
- low impedance accommodation of change
- synergy
- serendipity

I invite you to read on...

2. Sketching the enterprise with Business Integration Diagrams

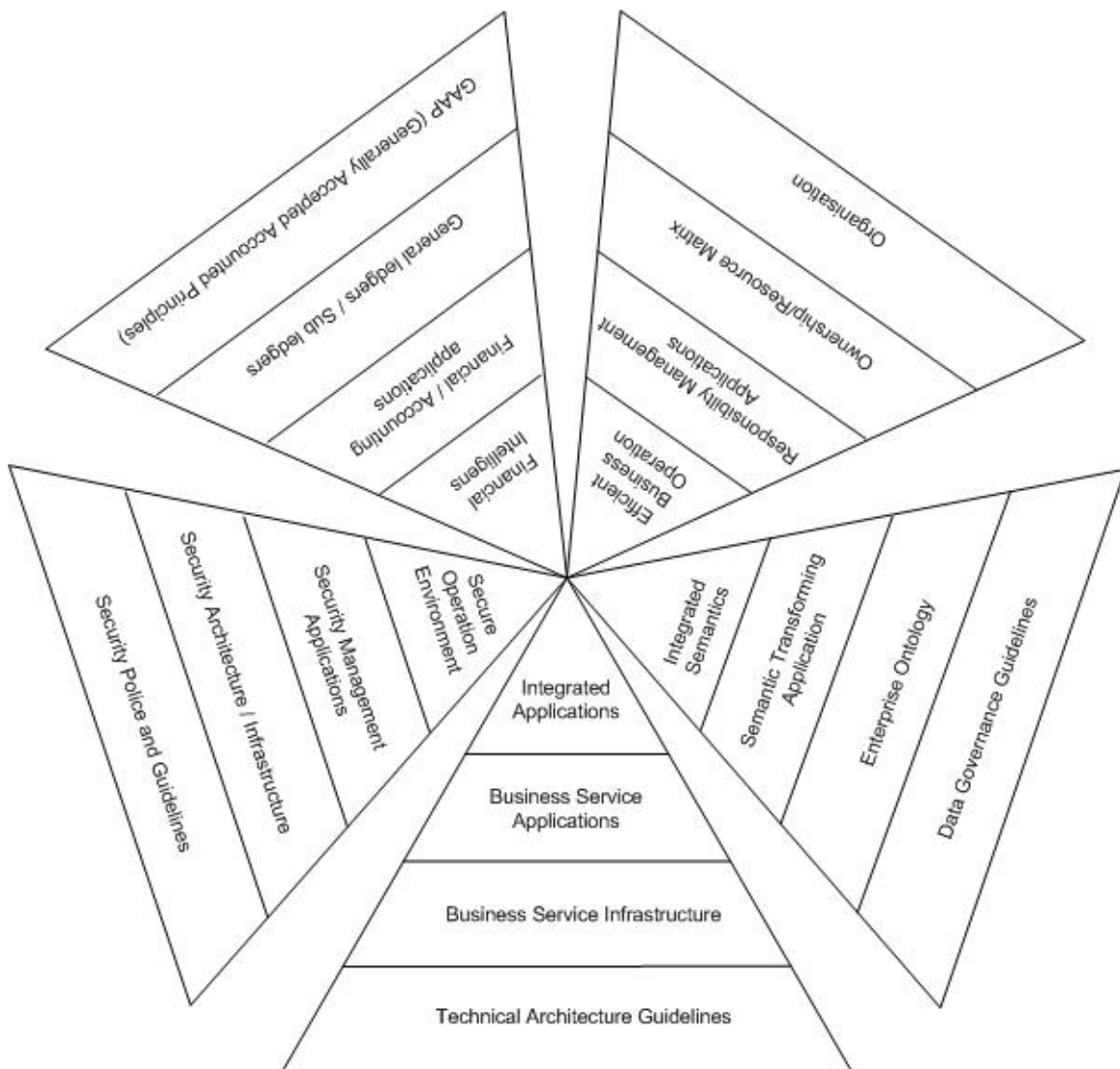
Consider for a moment the following diagram called a *business integration diagram*, which presents a multi-dimensional view of typical business.

This example diagram presents a selection of business areas represented as triangles each divided into four levels.

Each triangle, corresponding which some business area, is conceptually layered in the same way. Such a triangle will be called a *business area model*. The concept of a business area model will prove to be useful for the purpose of providing a technology neutral definition of business integration.

Note:

The number of levels employed in the business area diagrams is not fixed at four. There may be reasons to increase or decrease this number in particular instances.



A diagram of the business integration landscape...

An elaboration on business area models is presented in the following.

2.1. Level 0: The foundation

At the base of each business area model we find the governance layer. Each business area is subjected to some form of governance. Governance of a business area is often reflected by policy, guidelines, requirements, change control etc, to which a business area are might be subjected.

2.2. Level 1: The infra-structure

To enable synergy in the exploitation of resources particular to a business area, each

business area model includes as level 1, a layer corresponding with infrastructural components which are particular to the business area.

2.3. Level 2: Infrastructure management and Business Area specific applications

The common infrastructure employed in a particular business area needs to be management. These infrastructure management applications and procedures are conceptually placed on level two of each business area model in our business integration diagram.

In addition each business area will have some number of specific business applications enabling to goals specific to a business area to be achieved.

2.4. Level 3: Business Area Integration

Integrated and harmonized business operation for a particular business area is conceptually placed on level 3 of each business area model.

Thus effective and efficient business operation in a particular business area is founded on a governance model for the business area in question. It employs business area specific applications which exploit common business area specific infrastructure, to enable the delivery of services and solutions corresponding to business area specific goals.

3. Isolating and consolidating resources and components common to all business area models

In the previous section an example business integration diagram was presented as a set of business areas each represented by a four level triangle called a *business area model*. Each triangle, corresponding with a business area includes, governance, infrastructure and applications which are particular the business area.

This section defines the concept of *enterprise business integration* as additional business area models concerned primarily with the governance, infrastructure and applications necessary to increase *synergy* accross business area boundaries by exploiting *commonality* and removing unwanted barriers which impede transparency of business performance metrics and the provision of low latency and low impedance business solutions.

By consolidating the *access to* and *governance of* resources and components common to different business areas much greater degrees of low latency, low impedance business integration is feasible.

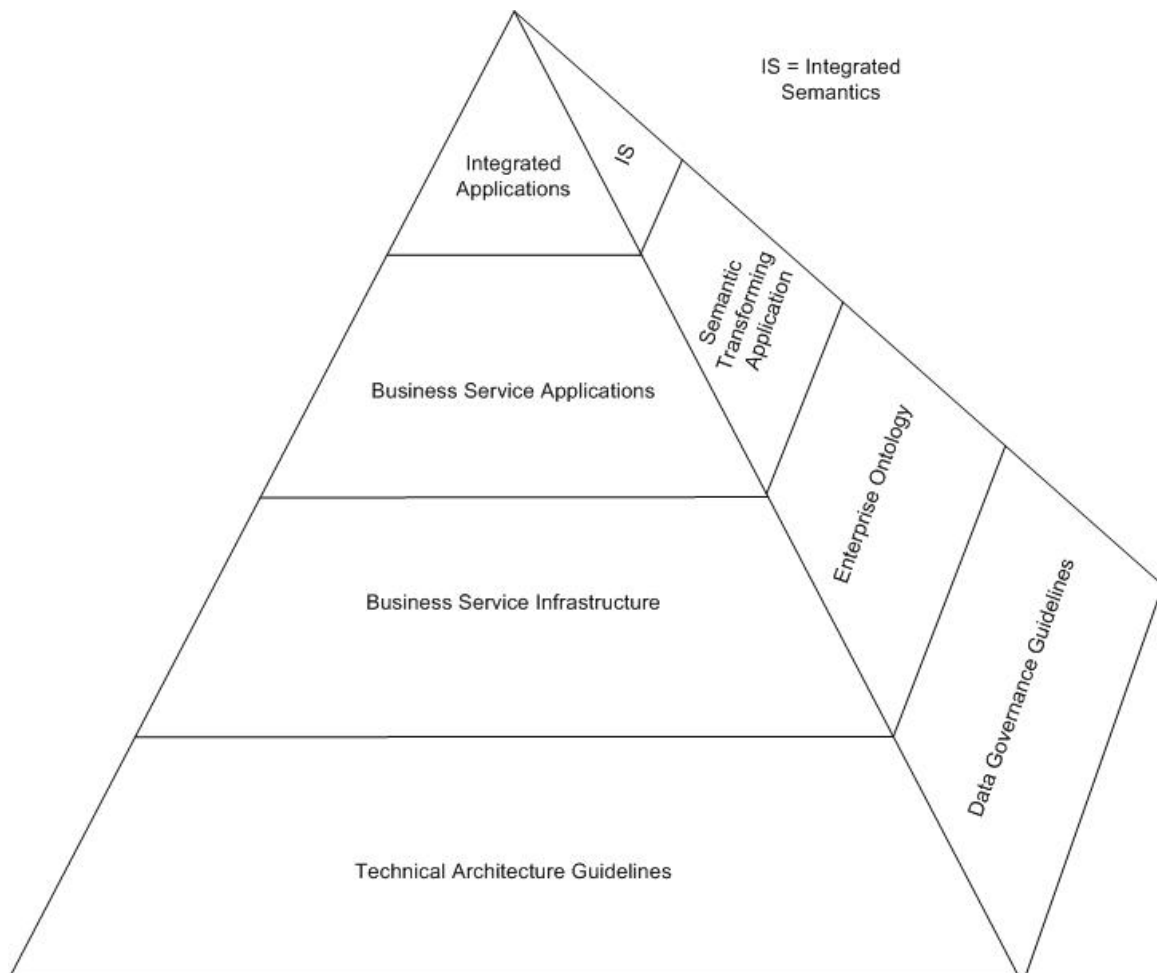
An example of a resource which would be common to different business area models in a typical enterprise *common reference data*. Which would be reference data needed by different business areas as part of their operating and reporting processes. The following

links to [The reference data portal](#) and an article by [Matthew West](#) elaborate on reference data, which is also known as [Master Data](#). Google is your friend.

Business area models which are based on the consolidation of resources found in business area diagrams are called *consolidated* business area models. Together these consolidated business area models form a *consolidated* business integration diagram.

The following diagrams generalizes the above and presents it as an example consolidated business area model.

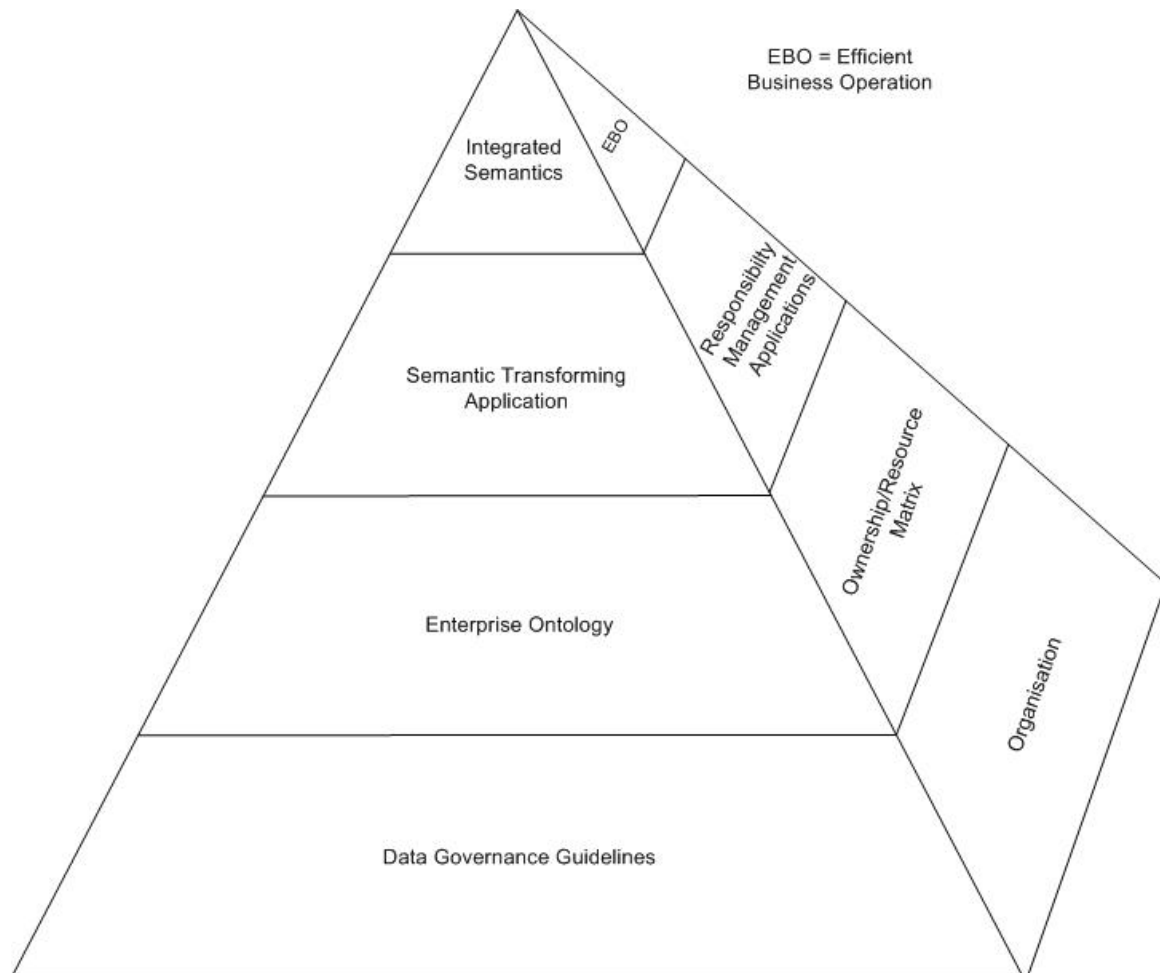
The first diagram presents a metaphysical perspective of business integration in the enterprise to serve as the foundation for all business integration efforts. In addition a technology neutral business area model for business services is presented as a mechanism to enable the realisation of efficiencies modeled in the metaphysical business area and also other business area.



A multi-dimensional diagram of the business integration landscape...

The following adds an additional business area model intended to bring the need to

embed ownership and stewardship responsibilities within the enterprise to enable the envisaged business integration efficiencies to be realized.



A multi-dimensional diagram of the business integration landscape...

Naturally these business area models are intended to serve as anchor points for further refinement and adaption to fit in to particular business realities. On this site elaboration will be found the concept of a *semantic infrastructure* will be introduced as means towards the effectuation of enterprise business integration in coherence with this introduction.