ArchiMate 3: What’s New and Why?

ArchiMate 3.0, the updated standard from The Open Group, has arrived.

by Richard Moore

In this short piece we’re going to look at why there was space for an update, and in doing so we’ll briefly cover the new material present in the spec.

So what is it about today’s environment that has invited a fresh look at the ArchiMate standard? We can identify four drivers for an update immediately.

Firstly, more and more organizations are recognizing that Enterprise Architecture isn’t just an ‘IT-thing’. In fact ArchiMate is increasingly being regarded as a means to clarify, realize and implement strategy. So this is our first driver for an update of version 2.1: increasing demand for relating EA to business strategy.

Secondly, there is the rise of technology innovations that mix IT and the physical world. The ‘Internet of Things’, for example. Before ArchiMate 3.0 we were able to model the internet, but lacked a means to deal with the ‘Things’. This means that we need a better way to model the physical world.

Thirdly, there are the small inconsistencies and opportunities for simplification and improvement that start to gather around the ongoing usage of any standard. Driver number three: improvement in the usability and accessibility of the ArchiMate standard.

Finally, there is the ongoing work in improving alignment between Open Group standards, most importantly TOGAF. Number four: the harmonization of ArchiMate and TOGAF.
So what are the changes to the framework in ArchiMate 3.0?

As mentioned already, people are increasingly using ArchiMate in a more strategic context to link strategy and EA. This has led to requests for concepts that support, for instance, capability-based planning (CBP).

**Version 3.0: supporting the link between strategy and EA**

A business-focused view of the enterprise needs to understand exactly what the business does, and where investment will reap the most value. But EA, it can be argued, is technically a communication mechanism between architects. Historically, this has sometimes made it difficult to elaborate required changes in terms that business leaders understand. And the problematic communications both way: strategy and high-level goals have often not been reflected in many EA models.

"A capability is a particular ability or capacity that a business may possess or exchange to achieve a specific purpose or outcome" - fig.1 - Capabilities

**Fig.2 - Version 3.0 introduces all the necessary concepts to model CBP**

In essence, then, capabilities (a concept introduced in ArchiMate 3.0) represent a common language that both business and IT leaders understand. CBP’s goal is to facilitate the planning of transformations in terms of capability changes over time.

So this is the driver behind ArchiMate 3.0’s new strategic concepts. Version 3.0 introduces all the necessary concepts to model CBP.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Notation Relationship</th>
<th>Structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capability</td>
<td>A capability represents an ability or capacity that an active structure element possesses.</td>
<td>Capabilities realized by Behavior elements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource</td>
<td>A resource represents an asset owned or controlled by an individual or organization.</td>
<td>Resource</td>
<td>Assigned to Capability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course of action</td>
<td>A course of action is an approach or plan for configuring some capabilities and resources of the enterprise, undertaken to achieve a goal.</td>
<td>Course of action</td>
<td>Realizes/Influences an Outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>An outcome represents an end result that has been achieved.</td>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>Realized by Outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metric</td>
<td>A metric is the extent, quantity, amount, or degree of something, as determined by measurement or calculation.</td>
<td>Metric</td>
<td>Specialization of the Driver element</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capability increment</td>
<td>A specialization of a capability realized by a specific plateau or a state in the architecture that represents a stage in the evolution of that capability.</td>
<td>No specific notation, uses the notation of Capability</td>
<td>Specialization of the Capability element</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Other changes

We also have a new layer of Physical concepts, which is highly integrated with the IT world. Physical technology is often IT-based as well. The Internet of Things is just one example, but most equipment today is computer-controlled.

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