U. S. Railroad Retirement Board

Data/Object Domain Architecture

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Data/Object Domain Definition

The scope of the Data/Object Domain is to define the mechanics for managing, securing, designing, defining and maintaining the integrity of the data and objects without regard to platform. It addresses the need for high-quality, consistent data and objects in support of the business functions of the RRB. It requires that the data and objects be accurate and easily accessible. It provides standards and guidelines for accessing data and objects for decision support and analytical processing. The life cycle of data and objects begins with data entry, continues through transactional, operational and decision support, and ends with obsolescence and/or archival of data.

For the purposes of efficiency, all references in this document to data include data and objects.

Domain Technology Categories

- ➢ Database Management Systems
- ➢ Data Warehouse
- ➢ Imaging/Optical Disc
- ➢ Micrographics/Paper
- ➢ Data Modeling

- ➢ Data Replication
- ➢ Data Backup and Recovery
- ➢ Data Administration
- ➢ Data QA/QC
- ➢ Query Tools

Data/Object Domain Principles Summary

1. Enterprise data will be managed through a dedicated data administration function. This function will manage a centralized metadata repository.

2. All data will have an identified owner. The data owner is accountable for the data, identifies its metadata and is responsible for coordinating change management.

3. Appropriate data management techniques will be used to maintain data security, availability and recoverability.

4. Data design must be integrated in the appropriate phases of the systems development life cycle.

5. Data that is accessible from existing sources, both internal and external, should be reused wherever practical.

6. Use of enterprise data must adhere to the agency's security, privacy and confidentiality policies.

7. Production, analytical and ad hoc reporting on data must be addressed in requirements definition and data design.

8. Design teams will employ technological features of the DBMS/RDBMS to provide more robust validation and editing of the data when appropriate.

9. Purchased data management tools must be industry-proven (have a significant market share) and adhere to industry standards.

- There is an increasing need to access RRB applications and data via the Internet.
- There is a greater need to access data in a distributed computing environment (use and process data crossing PC and mainframe platforms).
- Changes in law and regulations involving the Railroad Retirement Act may impact enterprise business and data needs. For example, the pending Railroad Retirement and Survivors' Improvement Act legislation would increase reporting requirements and require revisions to existing code and processes as well as defining and storing additional data.
- eXtensible Markup Language (XML) – The Federal CIO Council has established an interagency XML Working Group to facilitate the efficient and effective use of XML through cooperative efforts among government agencies, including partnerships with commercial and industrial organizations. The eXtensible Markup Language (XML) embodies the potential to alleviate many of the interoperability problems associated with the sharing of documents and data. However, realizing the potential requires cooperation not only within but also across organizations.
- SQL is being used with increased frequency, especially in the distributed processing environment.
- The future viability of IDMS is in question, and alternative systems such as IBM's DB2 will be investigated.
- The RRB beneficiary population is declining.
- There has been an increase in the legislative and regulatory changes involving RRB business partners and their resulting impact on enterprise business needs (e.g., CPI corrections, SSA, IRS).
- The enterprise is using and relying on the RRB Intranet with increased frequency.
- There is a potential for future outsourcing of certain business functions.
- RRB workforce changes are expected due to an aging workforce and retirements over the next several years.
- The RRB is looking to consolidate existing databases.
- There is an increase in the amount of redundant data stored at RRB.
- The number of RRB employees who will be telecommuting (due to legislative mandate) is expected to rise.
- The demand for customized data and data presentation is increasing.
- Systems and processing should be designed to allow "One and Done" handling. Customers, either internal or external, should be able to complete their request in a single interaction/contact with the RRB.

Background of Data/Object Technologies at the RRB

Over the years data at the RRB has been available on paper, punch cards, magnetic tape, microfiche, micrographics, disk and recently imaging. The RRB acquired the first IDMS DBMS (DATABASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM) in the seventies from Cullinane Corporation. It provided navigational access to IDMS mainframe databases. The database management services included automatic journaling, logging, reporting and error recovery. The data was stored on mainframe disk drives and made online transactions processing available.

CA-IDMS navigational access supports the processing of hierarchical and network structured databases. It allows the program to keep record currencies and establish and maintain relationships between records. It also provides a higher level of control within program processing. The centerpiece of the CA-IDMS environment is the Integrated Data Dictionary. The dictionary is the

central repository of information about the IDMS environment. The dictionary maintains definitions of data structures, application components, systems and users. Computer Associates acquired IDMS from the Cullinane Corporation in 1989.

With the 12.0 release in 1995, CA provided the SQL option, which provided relational access to IDMS DBMS with the capability of creating, and managing a RDBMS (Relational Database Management System). This feature allowed current applications to continue to run unchanged, and SQL could be used to access the same data in new and existing applications. Through the use of CA-IDMS SERVER software, PC SQL-based tools can access the mainframe legacy data. The SQL option enables open access to CA-IDMS mainframe data. Because CA-IDMS SQL and CA-IDMS Server provide support for Microsoft Open Database Connectivity (ODBC) interface, Graphical User Interface (GUI) application development and end-user tools can be used with CA-IDMS mainframe data.

Recently the RRB has begun to use image technology. The RRB is in the process of creating applications that will access the mainframe legacy data within non-relational databases and make the information available over the Internet to our clients. Future plans will provide RRB clients access to additional information using the Internet.

Detailed Domain Principles

Domain Principle 1

Centralized Data Administration
Enterprise data will be managed through a dedicated data administration function. This function will manage a centralized metadata repository.
> Rationale:
>> Helps in data standardization.
>> Helps associate data with business processes.
>> Reduces unintended redundancy of data.
>> Helps identify global data.
>> Recognizes data as a valuable resource.
>> Helps RRB maintain data integrity.
>> Enables reuse.
>> Develops and enforces standards to ensure consistency (definition, naming, use, size) across applications and platforms.
>> Enables more efficient use of data storage.
>> Provides technical support/self-service.
> Implications:
>> Extends the time line for development.
>> May need additional data administration staff.
>> Governance process must have clear responsibilities and consequences.
>> To be effective, it has to apply to all development efforts where agency data is involved.
>> Requires education and training.
>> Will require big effort to capture all data dictionary inventory.
>> May speed development where data assets exist.
>> Will require consensus of stakeholders for initial definition and changes.
>> Ensures that metadata is developed and maintained.
>> Enforceable standards need to be developed if not already in place.

Domain Principle 2

Data Ownership
All data will have an identified owner. The data owner is accountable for the data, identifies its metadata and is responsible for coordinating change management.
Rationale:
>Promotes one set of validation rules.
>Promotes data standardization.
>Associates data with relevant business processes.
>Recognizes data as a valuable resource.
>Helps maintain accuracy, consistency and appropriate use of the data.
>Promotes reuse.

Implications:
>Data owners and data users must reach consensus.
>Data owners must be identified and documented in metadata.
>Current data must be inventoried to create metadata.
>Owners/users have the responsibility to communicate the need for changes.
>Users have the responsibility to communicate problems.
>Requires education and training.
>Requires procedures for responsible use of data.
>Owners will be responsible for obsolescence and archiving.
>Archiving must be addressed during the design phase.
>Owner will be responsible for ensuring that archived data remains accessible and usable.
>Ongoing quality assurance and periodic data review must be provided.

Domain Principle 3

Data Availability and Recoverability
Appropriate data management techniques will be used to maintain data availability and recoverability.
Rationale:
>Minimizes disruption of critical business functions.
>Maintains reliability of data.
>Complies with standard enterprise security procedures.

Implications:
>Appropriate backup and recovery plans must be established and maintained.
>Routine backup schedule must be established.
>Business resumption plans must be included and maintained in addition to a backup site.
>Roles and responsibilities need to be defined.
>Coordination is needed with other affected domains.
>Systems should be developed with backup and recovery in mind.
>Must adhere to appropriate security, confidentiality and privacy principles.
>Must be applied to all platforms.

Domain Principle 4

Data Design
Data design must be integrated in the appropriate phases of the systems development life cycle.
Rationale:
    Ensures that proper database design principles are followed.
    Promotes better implementation planning.
    Broadens design team understanding of business needs and issues.
    Reduces unintended redundancy of data.
    Helps identify global data.
    Recognizes data as a valuable resource.
    Helps RRB maintain data integrity.
    Enables reuse.
    Helps ensure consistency (definition, naming, use, size) across applications and platforms.
Implications:
    A database administrator must be included in the design team.
    May extend time line due to constraints in DBA availability.
    Applies to efforts that extend beyond single/limited use.
    Databases will be promoted into production only after DBA review and sign off.
    May need additional DBA staff.
    Database designers must regularly exchange information about the databases under their jurisdiction.

Domain Principle 5

Data Operation
Data that is accessible from existing sources, both internal and external, should be reused wherever practical.
Rationale:
    Lessens storage space required.
    Improves accuracy, timeliness and currency of data.
    Promotes retrieval of only required data.
    Supports real-time, one and done.
    Reduces redundancy across platforms and business partners.
    Lessens RRB security burden.
    Reduces overall maintenance costs.
Implications:
    Assumes a reliable connection.
    Assumes data availability.
    Will need agreements from data owners (especially for external sources).
    Certain business needs may require storage of redundant data.
    Requires education, training and communication of reusability techniques.
    Requires a metadata repository and public view access to it.
    Will be greater impact if shared data or metadata is changed.
    Allows use of batch processes when necessary.
    May result in more inefficient processing such as additional I/O or network traffic.

Domain Principle 6

Data Security, Privacy and Confidentiality
Use of enterprise data must adhere to the agency's security, privacy and confidentiality policies.
Rationale:

Prevents unauthorized release of data.
Ensures authenticity of data.
Ensures consistency of security/privacy regardless of platform.
Limits liability exposure.

Implications:

Requires awareness training in regard to policies and current security approaches.
Requires adherence   to RRB security policy through reporting/monitoring with appropriate support tools.
Guidelines for the use of enterprise and cross-enterprise data must be maintained, updated and communicated. This includes vehicles such as email, Internet, file transfer communication, etc.

Domain Principle 7

Reporting Requirements
Production, analytical and ad hoc reporting on data must be addressed in requirements definition and data design.
Rationale:

Lowers cost in the long term.
Improves reporting capabilities.
Improves customer satisfaction.
Provides robust data accessibility.

Implications:

Extends lifecycle. Additional tasks will be added to requirements definition and data design.
May impact efficiency of non-reporting functions.
May require more user and developer involvement in requirements definition.
System owner needs to determine priority of requirements.
Allows design team to determine the most appropriate data design.
May require additional resources for data storage.

Domain Principle 8

Employ Data Constraints
Design teams will employ technological features of the DBMS/RDBMS to provide more robust validation and editing of the data when appropriate.
Rationale:

Maintains consistency of the metadata, data content and business rules.
Provides opportunity to edit data as it is stored.
Promotes 'one and done'

Implications:

May increase response time when adding creating or modifying data.
Conflicts between data accuracy and business process needs will have to be resolved.
Requires DBMS/RDBMS training and education.
Requires coordination across platforms and organizations.

Domain Principle 9

Data Management Tools

Purchased data management tools must be industry-proven (have a significant market share) and adhere to industry standards.

Rationale:

Provides consistency.

Reduces overhead.

Don't have to learn many different tools.

Enhances knowledge base.

Eases enterprise analysis because the data will be more comparable.

Implications:

Requires education and training.

May result in higher upfront cost, but lower long term cost.

Provides greater number of 'off-the-shelf' options.

Must establish who is responsible for selecting the standard tools.

Tools must be agency approved.

Pattern 1

Capture and use metadata.

Purpose
To promote reusability of data.

Applicability
Use this pattern in data design and application design.

Assumptions
- It is assumed that this pattern will be included in the systems development life cycle.
- An enterprise metadata repository will need to be created.
- A data administration function will need to be clearly defined.
- Tools for storage and query of the metadata must be evaluated and purchased.
- Training for use of the products will need to be done.
- Training on metadata guidelines, standards and procedures will need to be done.
- Quality assurance for data will be a data administration function.
- The data administration staff may delegate functions. For example, in the initial development of an application, a project team member may handle some data administration tasks.
- In product selection, we want a product with multiple access paths and a search capability.

Structure Overview

None

Detailed Pattern Description

- A metadata entity will minimally include the following entries. Each type of entity will require specific entries. For example, a data element will require a picture entry. A file would not.
  - Name
  - Owner
  - Use cross reference
  - Definition
  - Type (e.g., data item, object, image, file, etc.)
- Develop guidelines for:
  - Data administration
  - User reference

Benefits
1. Promotes consistent documentation for the data.
2. Supports and improves data reusability.
3. Improves change management because you know who owns the data and who uses the data.
4. Supports the concept of data being a corporate asset.
5. Improves systems development life cycle by accessing a repository of information about enterprise data.

Consequences
1. Initially, the systems development life cycle may be increased as the data repository is being populated.
2. Additional personnel will be required to accomplish the data administration function.
3. The acquisition, training and maintenance of software tools will require funding.
4. Errors in the central repository will have greater impact.

Variations
    None.

Related Patterns
    None.

Known Uses
    None.

Domain Participants

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Data	Distinct pieces of information, usually formatted in a special way. Data can exist in a variety of forms, as numbers or text on pieces of paper, as bits and bytes stored in electronic memory.
Data Modeling	Used to develop an accurate model, or graphical representation, of the client's information needs and business processes. The data model can act as a framework for the development of the new or enhanced application. Data modeling can occur in logical design and physical design.
Data Owner	The enterprise organization (bureau, division or section) responsible for development, maintenance and stewardship of the data. The data owner's responsibilities include: • coordination with users to ensure that data meets expected needs; • participation in developing and validating metadata components related to business needs; • coordinating and reporting metadata changes to data administration; • monitoring the data for accuracy and validity; and • change management.
Enterprise	In the computer industry, this term is used to describe any large business organization that utilizes computers. In our case, Enterprise refers specifically to the RRB.
Enterprise Data	Data that supports the business conducted at the RRB and is made available to all approved RRB and business partners. Enterprise data may be housed either at the RRB itself or by one of the RRB's business partners. Data created and used only by individual users or business units is not considered to be enterprise data. This type of data may be used for analysis, for creating specialized, limited use, internal reports, or as temporary work files. An example of this type of data is an Access database used to answer a research question and housed on a PC's hard drive.
Industry Standard	Industry standards usually refer to those sanctioned by national or international standards bodies or industry groups that dictate how products are developed, deployed or interoperate with each other. However, a data processing item like a data format, programming language, communication protocol, or operating system can often be considered a standard, not because it has been approved by a standards organization, but because it is widely used and recognized by the industry as being standard. Standards are extremely important because they are indicative of technologies that are strongly supported by many customers and a broad information technology industry base.
Metadata	Metadata is data about data. It is a way of documenting information about data. Metadata includes things like the name, owner, length, valid values and description of a data element. It could describe how and when and by whom a particular set of data was collected, and how the data is formatted. In database management systems, metadata files are such things as index files and data dictionaries, and store administrative information.
Object	Generally, any item that can be individually selected and manipulated. This can include text, shapes, pictures, sounds, etc.
Platform	The underlying hardware or software for a system. The platform defines a standard around which a system can be developed. Once the platform has been defined, software developers can produce appropriate software and managers can purchase appropriate hardware and applications. The term is often used as a synonym of operating system. The term cross-platform refers to applications, formats, or devices that work on different platforms.

| Domain Principle | Relationship Between RRB's Domain Principles And Conceptual Architecture Principles | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Conceptual Architecture Principles | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
	CA 1	CA 2	CA 3	CA 4	CA 5	CA 6	CA 7	CA 8	CA 9	CA 10	CA 11	CA 12	CA 13	CA 14	CA 15	CA 16	CA 17	CA 18	CA 19	CA 20	CA 21	CA 22	CA 23	CA 24	CA 25
D-1		X			X		X							X											
D-2					X		X	X						X											
D-3							X									X	X								
D-4					X		X							X									X		
D-5							X							X											
D-6							X									X									
D-7				X	X				X														X		X
D-8								X																	
D-9											X									X					

Conceptual Architecture Guiding Principles:
1. Use guidelines consistent with the Federal Enterprise Architecture. 2. Support a single Enterprise Wide Technical Architecture (EWTA). 3. IT projects are to be consistent with the Enterprise Architecture. 4. IT projects are to be consistent with the Enterprise Architecture. 5. Reduce integration complexity. 6. Technical architecture must be extensible and scalable. 7. Manage information and data as enterprise-wide assets. 8. Validate information as close to its source as possible. 9. Enhance the ability to capitalize on and exploit business information. 10. Support multiple data types. 11. Make an informed buy versus lease versus build decision before proceeding with any new development project. 12. Require shorter development cycle times. 13. Keep current with emerging technologies and their applicability to enterprise architecture. 14. Maximize infrastructure asset reuse. 15. Sustain reliable connectivity. 16. IT systems will be implemented in adherence with the agency's security, confidentiality and privacy policies. 17. The agency will use a consistent set of security interfaces and procedures. 18. Reduce total cost of operation (TCO). 19. Extend E-Mail to Become a Corporate Information Exchange Vehicle. 20. Adopt Open Systems Standards. 21. Reduce duplicate information systems. 22. Reduce duplicate information systems. 23. Maximize and exploit Internet and Intranet technologies and approaches. 24. Integrate Enterprise Architecture into the investment management process. 25. Customer perception is a measure of the quality of the automation processes.