HOW CAN TOGAF BE IMPROVED - **PART 2**

In a previous article I covered some of the top criticisms of TOGAF with some tips, advice, and workarounds to minimise the weaknesses in its documentation. This article continues with some more of the common complaints and will give you some tips and links to overcome the limitations of TOGAF. If you haven't read it already, check out the fi rst article on this topic.

Download hundreds of FREE TOGAF 9 resources at **Orbus Software** today!

www.orbussoftware.com/resources

Difficult to Understand

The issue

TOGAF doesn't always explain EA concepts in the best or easiest way, and you may not realise if you haven't fully grasped a key point.

Some suggestions

Most of the techniques and concepts in EA are actually very easy to understand... they just need to be explained in straightforward language, using good examples, and great diagrams. The problem is that these concepts and techniques often appear more complicated than they need to be!

Try finding your own simple explanation for each TOGAF concept or technique and make it as simple and straightforward as you can. For example, the enterprise continuum can be broken down into several simple ideas: where possible, reuse rather than reinvent; adapt generic ideas to fit your specific needs; any enterprise may share EA components that are common to other players in the same industry segment; etc... It is often easier to grasp each of these ideas in isolation, and then later combine them to make sense of the overall concept; for example, the enterprise continuum is a combination of all of the ideas that I listed earlier in this paragraph (plus a few more!).

WHATS WRONG WITH TOGAF? - **PART 2**

Not Enough Practical Exercises

The issue

The best way to learn about EA is by putting the ideas into practice, but the focus in TOGAF is to teach you the theory, rather than explain through worked examples.

Some suggestions

This is a bit of a Catch-22 – to learn the theory you need to put it into practice; to practice as an enterprise architect you need to know the theory.

TOGAF does provide some examples in the form of the scenarios used in the Part 2 examination, and it also provides some examples (rather randomly) in the documentation (for example, in the deliverables and artifacts, such as Figure 31-2: Example Architecture View - The Open Group Business Domain). But these examples can be difficult to relate to the sort of projects that you might be working on.
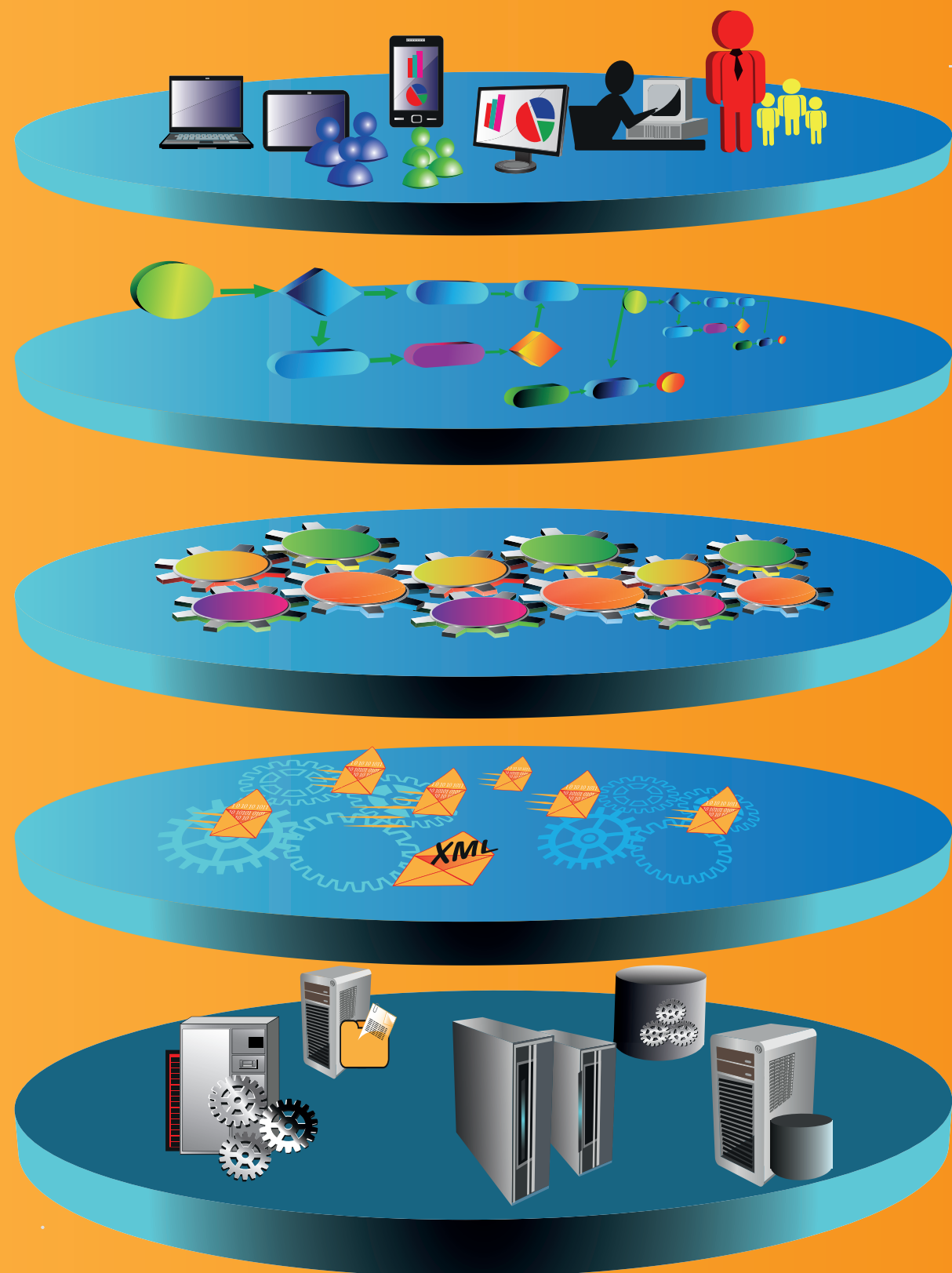
Try seeking out case studies or examples that apply TOGAF – especially in situations that are like ones you are working on. You can find good examples in the presentations made at various EA conferences or through an Internet search. You might also want to work through an iteration of the ADM as if you are using it in practice, and try fitting the TOGAF examples into that.

Misleads the Naïve

TOGAF gives an impression of how enterprise architecture works that is far from reality. As such a novice might think that practicing EA is a simple case of following the steps of the ADM

WHATS WRONG WITH TOGAF? - **PART 2**

The fact that you can become TOGAF certified after taking a short course and passing two multiple choice exams also hints that becoming an enterprise architect is easy!

Some suggestions

As with many professional disciplines, the day-to-day work of an enterprise architect is not a simple, sequential process.

The description of the ADM might imply that EA comprises ten phases that are repeated over and over. The alphabetical labelling of the phases suggests a sequential flow; while the crop circle diagram indicates a cyclical workflow. But an enterprise architect is faced with numerous challenges every day, with thoughts constantly switching from one project to another, from high-level to detail, from strategy to solution, or from business domain to a technical domain. Bear in mind then, that once you have "learned" TOGAF you will probably need to unlearn it – or at least adapt it to meet reality. With EA you learn the rules before you can break them.

Becoming an enterprise architect is so much more than gaining TOGAF certification, and it would be naïve for anyone to think that TOGAF certification is equivalent to being a fully qualified enterprise architect.

Conclusion

TOGAF is a start point, not an end point. TOGAF is a part of enterprise architecture, but EA is far more than TOGAF. You can learn about TOGAF on two levels – foundation and certified. But you really need a third (and maybe a fourth) level of training. Level 3 is to learn how to apply what you have learned in practical situations; level 4 is probably the ongoing learning of EA over a lifetime (I started in EA in 1984 and I'm still learning!)

OrbusSoftware