

What are the Benefits of EA Tooling?



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Introduction

Enterprise Architecture is an increasingly important department for large and medium organizations, but it's an area that has typically relied on having the right software to manage its complexity.

Nonetheless, simply laying out that organizations rely on EA tools is unlikely to gain buy-in from decision makers or other stakeholders. This guide will lay out the major and minor benefits to using enterprise architecture tools, and illustrate what you can expect.

What is the Purpose of Enterprise Architecture?

We define enterprise architecture as the following:

Enterprise architecture is a comprehensive, strategic discipline aimed to give structure to an enterprise, or organization. A good enterprise architecture creates a sustainable organization that is able to achieve its current business objectives.

As you can think of architecture being the blueprints, processes and management of a building, so enterprise architecture accomplishes the same for an enterprise. Or at least, that is what an effective EA practice can deliver; many organizations have not yet achieved such a large-scale function.

The purpose of Enterprise Architecture is to allow an organization to create a digital map of all tangible and intangible components to its business. This map can then be used for all testing, risk management, and future planning before implementing anything within the live organization itself.



What is an Enterprise Architecture Tool?

Given the range of tasks that an EA department can take on, having the right application can bring a lot of efficiency. What does an EA tool typically do? Naturally this will vary somewhat depending on different tools, but we can summarize a few common functions.

First is simply data storage. OrbusInfinity and similar tools will have a central repository to store enterprise data, keeping it all in one location and widely accessible to architects and other stakeholders.

This central repository enables collaboration. People from across the organization can access files, contribute more data and stay informed of company operations, thanks to this pre-defined structure.



An important part of Enterprise architecture is adherence to certain standards and frameworks – such as the TOGAF framework or ArchiMate notation. Similarly, integration with other applications is common. OrbusInfinity, for example, is closely integrated with Office 365, allowing architects to work within native Office applications while still having the benefits of a fully governed, shared repository.

Analysis is another key feature; with all the data that is available, offering a way for architects to provide insight, make informed decisions, and present them to stakeholders, is very important. Hence, OrbusInfinity can create and display information at a level accessible to all. Technical users can ask specific questions “What Applications are affected by this out of date standard?” Business users can draw diagram-based conclusions “What will be critical in the future?”

“Where do I need to invest?” Executive users can query the data in easy to interpret Business Intelligence dashboards. This brief list doesn’t encapsulate everything an EA tool can do, but it hits the core uses. Collecting data in a single place; allowing everyone to access, add and use that data; integrating with other applications in the enterprise; and finally giving powerful analysis and presentation features to the wider organization.

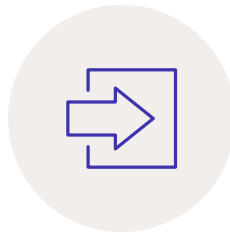
The Benefits of Enterprise Architecture Tools



A single source of truth



Governance



Collection and validation of data



Re-usability



Superior agility



Buy-in from stakeholders



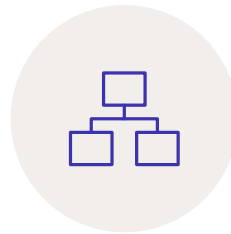
Handle complicated metamodels



Avoid redundancy



Powerful collaboration



Relationships between elements



Auto generation of reports



Analysis

A single source of truth

Thanks to central repositories, architects can work on projects confident that information and analyses are all accurate without any variance across the team. This makes it easy to share models and other data within a team, while ensuring that everything is accurate and up to date.

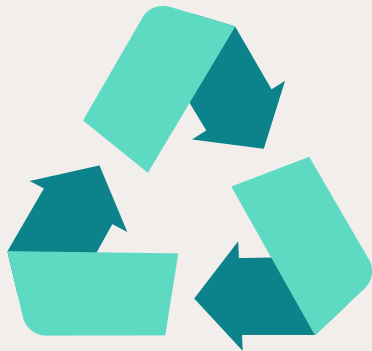
Governance

EA initiatives can involve large teams with input from dozens or hundreds of stakeholders. As well as providing a single source for all the data that this will involve, a central repository also ensures that the format and notation of this data is carefully governed. Standardization also allows for easy comparisons.



Collection and validation of data

Since the central repository can collate data from all users, from an interface (such as MS Teams, or a MS Form) that they are familiar with, input from an architect is not necessarily needed, where a manual process previously existed. Nonetheless, architects can still check to ensure validity of data, as it conforms to the predefined standards in the same repository.

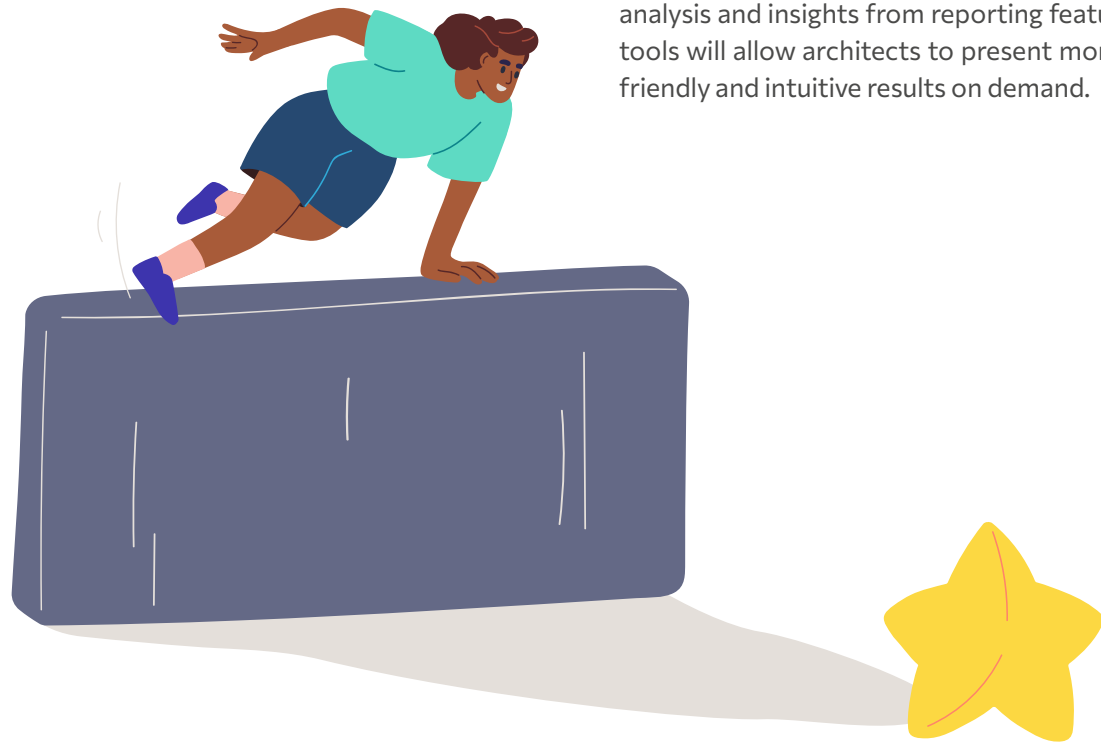


Re-usability

Modern enterprise architecture frameworks will rely on a number of building blocks that should be re-used throughout. However, manual methods of creating and using these blocks will not allow for them to be re-used where necessary, but since EA tools can store building blocks in their central repositories, this is no longer an issue. Building blocks such as applications, processes, requirements and org-units can be reused across diagrams and documents. Duplicate items can be identified and rationalized, and changes made to a building block in one diagram will propagate across all other diagrams in which it appears.

Superior agility

The modern business world is one which rewards fast movers. Being able to capitalize on opportunities, or avoid disasters, has been a key feature of the most successful forms of the 21st century. Very large firms can struggle to keep up with nimble start-ups since their size makes any change take time. Enterprise architecture is about delivering change, and an EA tool will supercharge that process to allow for much faster reaction times.



Buy-in from stakeholders

Due to the scope and complexity of enterprise architecture, gaining an understanding of initiatives can be very difficult for less involved stakeholders. Where there is a lack of understanding, that will also mean stakeholders are much less likely to support projects. As EA tools greatly simplify the presentation of often complex architecture processes, the barrier to understanding becomes much lower, which in turn means stakeholders can buy-in to a project quicker. What is more, the presentation, analysis and insights from reporting features of tools will allow architects to present more user friendly and intuitive results on demand.

Handle complicated metamodels whilst offering flexibility to simplify to your business needs

Though powerful, the likes of TOGAF and ArchiMate can at times be complicated and difficult to implement. As EA tools come with support for these models built in, the pressure to implement is often greatly reduced.

Avoid redundancy

This is essentially a combination of having a single source of truth with reusable blocks. Since everything is in one place, architects will not end up gathering the same data or performing the same analysis, while there will be no time wasted recreating diagrams manually, which already exist within the repository.



Powerful collaboration

EA Tools are at their heart collaborative applications. By enabling every architect and business stakeholder to access, read, integrate with and potentially modify the same data, collaboration becomes far simpler for an organization. As already mentioned, architects can share building blocks, business stakeholders can easily search, view or contribute to information in the repository, all in commonly used collaboration platforms such as SharePoint sites, Teams, Confluence etc.

Relationships between elements

Relationships between architecture elements, such as processes, applications, business services, and organizational entities, can be defined, managed navigated and analyzed in the architecture repository, providing a basis for meaningful impact analysis and informed business decisions. This is a huge time saver compared to making manual links, while also being more accurate.

Auto generation of reports and presentations

Auto generating documents helps achieve a high level of consistency by generating live, dynamic documents straight from a central repository – quickly and effectively, keeping in line with organizational branding.



Analysis

EA tools remove the pain and potential error of manual analysis, while also allowing for far better presentation and visualization, with stakeholders having the ability to view, compare, analyze the IT & Business landscape from anywhere.

OrbusInfinity's Unique Advantages

It's fair to say that the case for using an Enterprise Architecture application is overwhelming, but that doesn't solve the question of which tool to use.

There are a number of EA tools on the market, with differing sets of features and uses. OrbusInfinity is currently the best reviewed according to Gartner's Peer Insights, topping the charts for seven years in a row, but what distinguishes it from the competition?

Perhaps the biggest strength comes from the aforementioned integration. OrbusInfinity is the only tool on the market to fully leverage Microsoft's Office 365 suite, with powerful integrations that ensure a short learning curve and familiar interfaces. With OrbusInfinity, organizations can future proof their tooling capabilities with ongoing Office 365 enhancements from Microsoft.

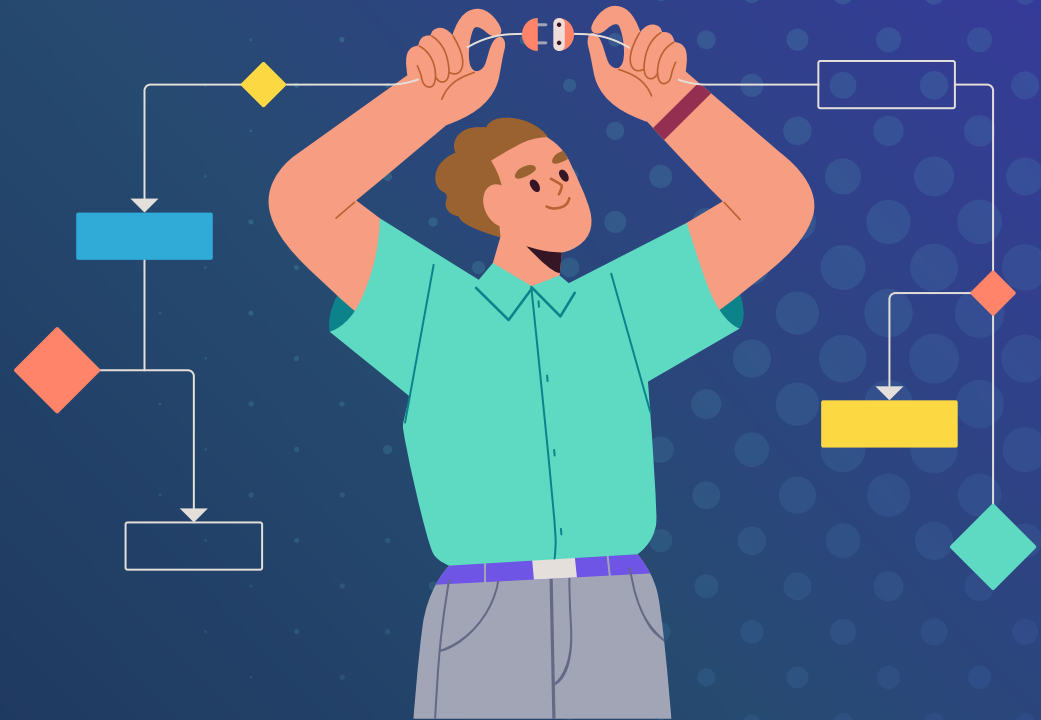
OrbusInfinity also stands out with its sheer range of capabilities. The average EA department will not just pursue a range of enterprise architecture designs, but may also take charge of strategic portfolio management; governance, risk and compliance measures such as GDPR; and business process analysis projects utilising the BPMN notation. Most tools simply can't handle such a range of tasks and require additional add-ons to compete, whereas OrbusInfinity has demonstrated its capability in as many as 28 different business use cases.



Summary

It's hardly surprising that Enterprise Architecture would rely heavily on software, given that pretty much every business function now has dependencies with various applications. Nonetheless, it is clear that organizations cannot get away with cutting corners and trying to rely on leveraging existing applications for their architecture needs.

Enterprise Architecture tools enable a huge range of possibilities, all while being more efficient and more collaborative, while minimizing the risk to the firm. The business case for using a tool is clear, and given the response of hundreds of firms, the case for OrbusInfinity is also extremely strong. For those who want to see all this in action, Orbus can offer free demonstrations all around the world, simply head over to the booking page and start the first step to transforming your enterprise architecture.



Transform your enterprise architecture

Book a tailored demo today to find out how Orbus can help you.



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