Software Design Basics

Software design is a process to transform user requirements into some suitable form, which helps the programmer in software coding and implementation.

For assessing user requirements, an SRS (Software Requirement Specification) document is created whereas for coding and implementation, there is a need of more specific and detailed requirements in software terms. The output of this process can directly be used into implementation in programming languages.

Software design is the first step in SDLC (Software Design Life Cycle), which moves the concentration from problem domain to solution domain. It tries to specify how to fulfill the requirements mentioned in SRS.

Software Design Levels

Software design yields three levels of results:

- **Architectural Design** **-** The architectural design is the highest abstract version of the system. It identifies the software as a system with many components interacting with each other. At this level, the designers get the idea of proposed solution domain.
- **High-level Design-** The high-level design breaks the 'single entity-multiple component' concept of architectural design into less-abstracted view of sub-systems and modules and depicts their interaction with each other. High-level design focuses on how the system along with all of its components can be implemented in forms of modules. It recognizes modular structure of each sub-system and their relation and interaction among each other.

- Detailed Design- Detailed design deals with the implementation part of what is seen as a system and its sub-systems in the previous two designs. It is more detailed towards modules and their implementations. It defines logical structure of each module and their interfaces to communicate with other modules.

Modularization

Modularization is a technique to divide a software system into multiple discrete and independent modules, which are expected to be capable of carrying out task(s) independently. These modules may work as basic constructs for the entire software. Designers tend to design modules such that they can be executed and/or compiled separately and independently.

Modular design unintentionally follows the rules of 'divide and conquer' problem-solving strategy this is because there are many other benefits attached with the modular design of a software.

Advantage of modularization:

- Smaller components are easier to maintain
- Program can be divided based on functional aspects
- Desired level of abstraction can be brought in the program
- Components with high cohesion can be re-used again
- Concurrent execution can be made possible
- Desired from security aspect

Concurrency

Back in time, all software are meant to be executed sequentially. By sequential execution we mean that the coded instruction will be executed one after another implying only one portion of program being activated at any given time. Say, a software has multiple modules, then only one of all the modules can be found active at any time of execution.

In software design, concurrency is implemented by splitting the software into multiple independent units of execution, like modules and executing them in parallel. In other words, concurrency provides capability to the software to execute more than one part of code in parallel to each other.

It is necessary for the programmers and designers to recognize those modules, which can be made parallel execution.

Example

The spell check feature in word processor is a module of software, which runs alongside the word processor itself.

Coupling and Cohesion

When a software program is modularized, its tasks are divided into several modules based on some characteristics. As we know, modules are set of instructions put together in order to achieve some tasks. They are though, considered as single entity but may refer to each other to work together. There are measures by which the quality of a design of modules and their interaction among them can be measured. These measures are called coupling and cohesion.

Cohesion

Cohesion is a measure that defines the degree of intra-dependability within elements of a module. The greater the cohesion, the better is the program design.

There are seven types of cohesion, namely –

- **Co-incidental cohesion** - It is unplanned and random cohesion, which might be the result of breaking the program into smaller modules for the sake of modularization. Because it is unplanned, it may serve confusion to the programmers and is generally not-accepted.
- **Logical cohesion** - When logically categorized elements are put together into a module, it is called logical cohesion.
- **Temporal Cohesion** - When elements of module are organized such that they are processed at a similar point in time, it is called temporal cohesion.
- **Procedural cohesion** - When elements of module are grouped together, which are executed sequentially in order to perform a task, it is called procedural cohesion.
- **Communicational cohesion** - When elements of module are grouped together, which are executed sequentially and work on same data (information), it is called communicational cohesion.
- **Sequential cohesion** - When elements of module are grouped because the output of one element serves as input to another and so on, it is called sequential cohesion.
- **Functional cohesion** - It is considered to be the highest degree of cohesion, and it is highly expected. Elements of module in functional cohesion are grouped because they all contribute to a single well-defined function. It can also be reused.

Coupling

Coupling is a measure that defines the level of inter-dependability among modules of a program. It tells at what level the modules interfere and interact with each other. The lower the coupling, the better the program.

There are five levels of coupling, namely -

- **Content coupling -** When a module can directly access or modify or refer to the content of another module, it is called content level coupling.
- **Common coupling-** When multiple modules have read and write access to some global data, it is called common or global coupling.
- **Control coupling-** Two modules are called control-coupled if one of them decides the function of the other module or changes its flow of execution.
- **Stamp coupling-** When multiple modules share common data structure and work on different part of it, it is called stamp coupling.
- **Data coupling-** Data coupling is when two modules interact with each other by means of passing data (as parameter). If a module passes data structure as parameter, then the receiving module should use all its components.

Ideally, no coupling is considered to be the best.

Design Verification

The output of software design process is design documentation, pseudo codes, detailed logic diagrams, process diagrams, and detailed description of all functional or non-functional requirements.

The next phase, which is the implementation of software, depends on all outputs mentioned above.

It is then becomes necessary to verify the output before proceeding to the next phase. The early any mistake is detected, the better it is or it might not be detected until testing of the product. If the outputs of design phase are in formal notation form, then their associated tools for verification should be used otherwise a thorough design review can be used for verification and validation.

By structured verification approach, reviewers can detect defects that might be caused by overlooking some conditions. A good design review is important for good software design, accuracy and quality.

Software Design Strategies

Software design is a process to conceptualize the software requirements into software implementation. Software design takes the user requirements as challenges and tries to find optimum solution. While the software is being conceptualized, a plan is chalked out to find the best possible design for implementing the intended solution.

There are multiple variants of software design. Let us study them briefly:

Structured Design

Structured design is a conceptualization of problem into several well-organized elements of solution. It is basically concerned with the solution design. Benefit of structured design is, it gives better understanding of how the problem is being solved. Structured design also makes it simpler for designer to concentrate on the problem more accurately.

Structured design is mostly based on 'divide and conquer' strategy where a problem is broken into several small problems and each small problem is individually solved until the whole problem is solved.

The small pieces of problem are solved by means of solution modules. Structured design emphasis that these modules be well organized in order to achieve precise solution.

These modules are arranged in hierarchy. They communicate with each other. A good structured design always follows some rules for communication among multiple modules, namely -

Cohesion - grouping of all functionally related elements.

Coupling - communication between different modules.

A good structured design has high cohesion and low coupling arrangements.

Function Oriented Design

In function-oriented design, the system is comprised of many smaller sub-systems known as functions. These functions are capable of performing significant task in the system. The system is considered as top view of all functions.

Function oriented design inherits some properties of structured design where divide and conquer methodology is used.

This design mechanism divides the whole system into smaller functions, which provides means of abstraction by concealing the information and their operation.. These functional modules can share information among themselves by means of information passing and using information available globally.

Another characteristic of functions is that when a program calls a function, the function changes the state of the program, which sometimes is not acceptable by other modules. Function oriented design works well where the system state does not matter and program/functions work on input rather than on a state.

Design Process

- The whole system is seen as how data flows in the system by means of data flow diagram.
- DFD depicts how functions changes data and state of entire system.
- The entire system is logically broken down into smaller units known as functions on the basis of their operation in the system.
- Each function is then described at large.

Object Oriented Design

Object oriented design works around the entities and their characteristics instead of functions involved in the software system. This design strategy focuses on entities and its characteristics. The whole concept of software solution revolves around the engaged entities.

Let us see the important concepts of Object Oriented Design:

- **Objects -** All entities involved in the solution design are known as objects. For example, person, banks, company and customers are treated as objects. Every entity has some attributes associated to it and has some methods to perform on the attributes.
- **Classes -** A class is a generalized description of an object. An object is an instance of a class. Class defines all the attributes, which an object can have and methods, which defines the functionality of the object.

In the solution design, attributes are stored as variables and functionalities are defined by means of methods or procedures.

- **Encapsulation -** In OOD, the attributes (data variables) and methods (operation on the data) are bundled together is called encapsulation. Encapsulation not only bundles important information of an object together, but also restricts access of the data and methods from the outside world. This is called information hiding.
- **Inheritance -** OOD allows similar classes to stack up in hierarchical manner where the lower or sub-classes can import, implement and re-use allowed variables and methods from their immediate super classes. This property of OOD is known as inheritance. This makes it easier to define specific class and to create generalized classes from specific ones.
- **Polymorphism -** OOD languages provide a mechanism where methods performing similar tasks but vary in arguments, can be assigned same name. This is called polymorphism, which allows a single interface performing tasks for different types. Depending upon how the function is invoked, respective portion of the code gets executed.

Design Process

Software design process can be perceived as series of well-defined steps. Though it varies according to design approach (function oriented or object oriented, yet It may have the following steps involved:

- A solution design is created from requirement or previous used system and/or system sequence diagram.

- Objects are identified and grouped into classes on behalf of similarity in attribute characteristics.
- Class hierarchy and relation among them is defined.
- Application framework is defined.

Software Design Approaches

Here are two generic approaches for software designing:

Top Down Design

We know that a system is composed of more than one sub-systems and it contains a number of components. Further, these sub-systems and components may have their on set of sub-system and components and creates hierarchical structure in the system.

Top-down design takes the whole software system as one entity and then decomposes it to achieve more than one sub-system or component based on some characteristics. Each sub-system or component is then treated as a system and decomposed further. This process keeps on running until the lowest level of system in the top-down hierarchy is achieved.

Top-down design starts with a generalized model of system and keeps on defining the more specific part of it. When all components are composed the whole system comes into existence.

Top-down design is more suitable when the software solution needs to be designed from scratch and specific details are unknown.

Bottom-up Design

The bottom up design model starts with most specific and basic components. It proceeds with composing higher level of components by using basic or lower level components. It keeps creating higher level components until the desired system is not evolved as one single component. With each higher level, the amount of abstraction is increased.

Bottom-up strategy is more suitable when a system needs to be created from some existing system, where the basic primitives can be used in the newer system.

Both, top-down and bottom-up approaches are not practical individually. Instead, a good combination of both is used.

Software Implementation

Structured Programming

In the process of coding, the lines of code keep multiplying, thus, size of the software increases. Gradually, it becomes next to impossible to remember the flow of program. If one forgets how software and its underlying programs, files, procedures are constructed it then becomes very difficult to share, debug and modify the program. The solution to this is structured programming. It encourages the developer to use subroutines and loops instead of using simple jumps in the code, thereby bringing clarity in the code and improving its efficiency Structured programming also helps programmer to reduce coding time and organize code properly.

Structured programming states how the program shall be coded. Structured programming uses three main concepts:

- **Top-down analysis** - A software is always made to perform some rational work. This rational work is known as problem in the software parlance. Thus it is very important that we understand how to solve the problem. Under top-down analysis, the problem is broken down into small pieces where each one has some significance. Each problem is individually solved and steps are clearly stated about how to solve the problem.

- **Modular Programming** - While programming, the code is broken down into smaller group of instructions. These groups are known as modules, subprograms or subroutines. Modular programming based on the understanding of top-down analysis. It discourages jumps using 'goto' statements in the program, which often makes the program flow non-traceable. Jumps are prohibited and modular format is encouraged in structured programming.

- **Structured Coding** - In reference with top-down analysis, structured coding sub-divides the modules into further smaller units of code in the order of their execution. Structured programming uses control structure, which controls the flow of the program, whereas structured coding uses control structure to organize its instructions in definable patterns.

Functional Programming

Functional programming is style of programming language, which uses the concepts of mathematical functions. A function in mathematics should always produce the same result on receiving the same argument. In procedural languages, the flow of the program runs through procedures, i.e. the control of program is transferred to the called procedure. While control flow is transferring from one procedure to another, the program changes its state.

In procedural programming, it is possible for a procedure to produce different results when it is called with the same argument, as the program itself can be in different state while calling it. This is a property as well as a drawback of procedural programming, in which the sequence or timing of the procedure execution becomes important.

Functional programming provides means of computation as mathematical functions, which produces results irrespective of program state. This makes it possible to predict the behavior of the program.

Functional programming uses the following concepts:

- **First class and High-order functions** - These functions have capability to accept another function as argument or they return other functions as results.
- **Pure functions** - These functions do not include destructive updates, that is, they do not affect any I/O or memory and if they are not in use, they can easily be removed without hampering the rest of the program.
- **Recursion** - Recursion is a programming technique where a function calls itself and repeats the program code in it unless some pre-defined condition matches. Recursion is the way of creating loops in functional programming.
- **Strict evaluation** - It is a method of evaluating the expression passed to a function as an argument. Functional programming has two types of evaluation methods, strict (eager) or non-strict (lazy). Strict evaluation always evaluates the expression before invoking the function. Non-strict evaluation does not evaluate the expression unless it is needed.
- **λ-calculus** - Most functional programming languages use λ-calculus as their type systems. λ-expressions are executed by evaluating them as they occur.

Common Lisp, Scala, Haskell, Erlang and F# are some examples of functional programming languages.

Programming style

Programming style is set of coding rules followed by all the programmers to write the code. When multiple programmers work on the same software project, they frequently need to work with the program code written by some other developer. This becomes tedious or at times impossible, if all developers do not follow some standard programming style to code the program.

An appropriate programming style includes using function and variable names relevant to the intended task, using well-placed indentation, commenting code for the convenience of reader and overall presentation of code. This makes the program code readable and understandable by all, which in turn makes debugging and error solving easier. Also, proper coding style helps ease the documentation and updation.

Coding Guidelines

Practice of coding style varies with organizations, operating systems and language of coding itself.

The following coding elements may be defined under coding guidelines of an organization:

- **Naming conventions** - This section defines how to name functions, variables, constants and global variables.
- **Indenting** - This is the space left at the beginning of line, usually 2-8 whitespace or single tab.
- **Whitespace** - It is generally omitted at the end of line.

- **Operators** - Defines the rules of writing mathematical, assignment and logical operators. For example, assignment operator '=' should have space before and after it, as in "x = 2".
- **Control Structures** - The rules of writing if-then-else, case-switch, while-until and for control flow statements solely and in nested fashion.
- **Line length and wrapping** - Defines how many characters should be there in one line, mostly a line is 80 characters long. Wrapping defines how a line should be wrapped, if is too long.
- **Functions** - This defines how functions should be declared and invoked, with and without parameters.
- **Variables** - This mentions how variables of different data types are declared and defined.
- **Comments** - This is one of the important coding components, as the comments included in the code describe what the code actually does and all other associated descriptions. This section also helps creating help documentations for other developers.

Software Documentation

Software documentation is an important part of software process. A well written document provides a great tool and means of information repository necessary to know about software process. Software documentation also provides information about how to use the product.

A well-maintained documentation should involve the following documents:

- **Requirement documentation** - This documentation works as key tool for software designer, developer and the test team to carry out their respective tasks. This document contains all the functional, non-functional and behavioral description of the intended software.

Source of this document can be previously stored data about the software, already running software at the client's end, client's interview, questionnaires and research. Generally it is stored in the form of spreadsheet or word processing document with the high-end software management team.

This documentation works as foundation for the software to be developed and is majorly used in verification and validation phases. Most test-cases are built directly from requirement documentation.

- **Software Design documentation** - These documentations contain all the necessary information, which are needed to build the software. It contains: **(a)** High-level software architecture, **(b)** Software design details, **(c)** Data flow diagrams, **(d)** Database design

These documents work as repository for developers to implement the software. Though these documents do not give any details on how to code the program, they give all necessary information that is required for coding and implementation.

- **Technical documentation** - These documentations are maintained by the developers and actual coders. These documents, as a whole, represent information about the code. While writing the code, the programmers also mention objective of the code, who wrote it, where will it be required, what it does and how it does, what other resources the code uses, etc.

The technical documentation increases the understanding between various programmers working on the same code. It enhances re-use capability of the code. It makes debugging easy and traceable.

There are various automated tools available and some comes with the programming language itself. For example java comes JavaDoc tool to generate technical documentation of code.

- **User documentation** - This documentation is different from all the above explained. All previous documentations are maintained to provide information about the software and its development process. But user documentation explains how the software product should work and how it should be used to get the desired results.

These documentations may include, software installation procedures, how-to guides, user-guides, uninstallation method and special references to get more information like license updation etc.

Software Implementation Challenges

There are some challenges faced by the development team while implementing the software. Some of them are mentioned below:

- **Code-reuse** - Programming interfaces of present-day languages are very sophisticated and are equipped huge library functions. Still, to bring the cost down of end product, the organization management prefers to re-use the code, which was created earlier for some other software. There are huge issues faced by programmers for compatibility checks and deciding how much code to re-use.
- **Version Management** - Every time a new software is issued to the customer, developers have to maintain version and

configuration related documentation. This documentation needs to be highly accurate and available on time.

- **Target-Host** - The software program, which is being developed in the organization, needs to be designed for host machines at the customers end. But at times, it is impossible to design a software that works on the target machines.

Design-notations

Software Design Strategies

Software analysis and design includes all activities, which help the transformation of requirement specification into implementation. Requirement specifications specify all functional and non-functional expectations from the software. These requirement specifications come in the shape of human readable and understandable documents, to which a computer has nothing to do.

Software analysis and design is the intermediate stage, which helps human-readable requirements to be transformed into actual code.

Let us see few analysis and design tools used by software designers:

Data Flow Diagram

Data flow diagram is graphical representation of flow of data in an information system. It is capable of depicting incoming data flow, outgoing data flow and stored data. The DFD does not mention anything about how data flows through the system.

There is a prominent difference between DFD and Flowchart. The flowchart depicts flow of control in program modules. DFDs depict flow of data in the system at various levels. DFD does not contain any control or branch elements.

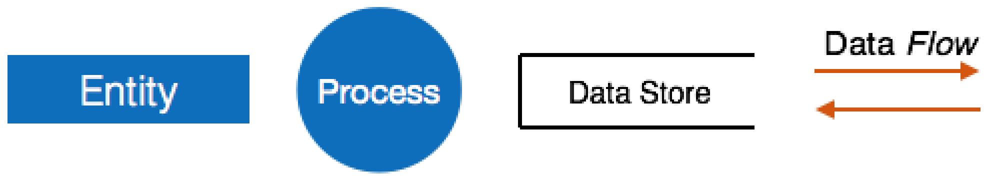
Types of DFD

Data Flow Diagrams are either Logical or Physical.

- **Logical DFD** - This type of DFD concentrates on the system process, and flow of data in the system.For example in a Banking software system, how data is moved between different entities.
- **Physical DFD** - This type of DFD shows how the data flow is actually implemented in the system. It is more specific and close to the implementation.

DFD Components

DFD can represent Source, destination, storage and flow of data using the following set of components -



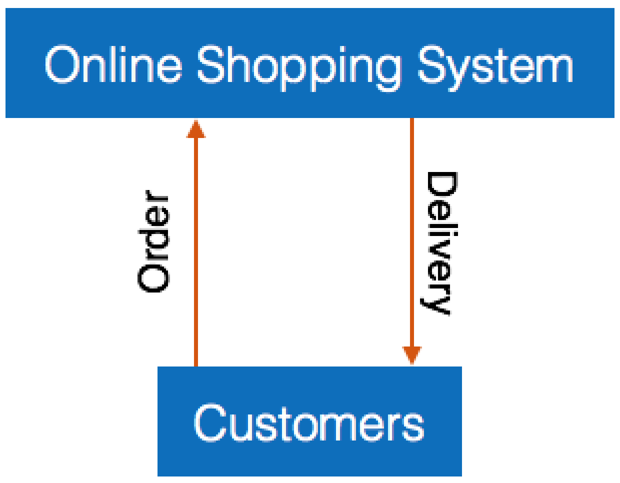
- **Entities** - Entities are source and destination of information data. Entities are represented by a rectangles with their respective names.
- **Process** - Activities and action taken on the data are represented by Circle or Round-edged rectangles.
- **Data Storage** - There are two variants of data storage - it can either be represented as a rectangle with absence of

both smaller sides or as an open-sided rectangle with only one side missing.

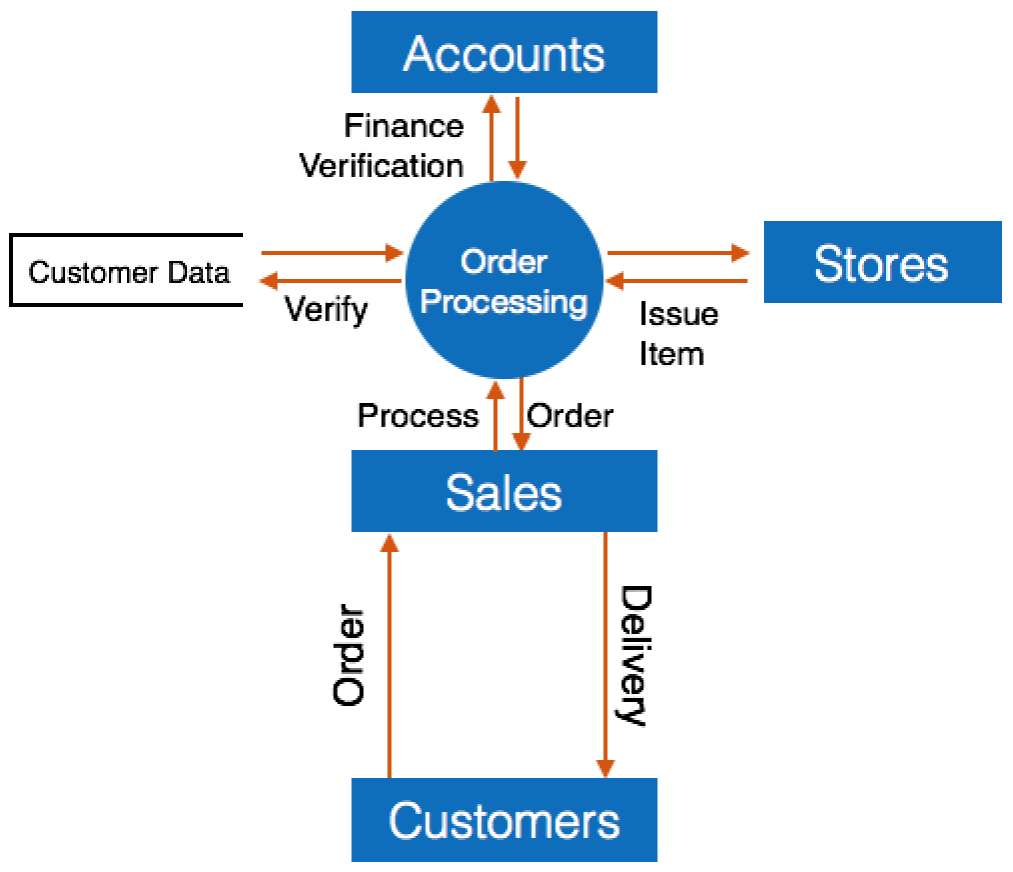
- **Data Flow** - Movement of data is shown by pointed arrows. Data movement is shown from the base of arrow as its source towards head of the arrow as destination.

Levels of DFD

- **Level 0** - Highest abstraction level DFD is known as Level 0 DFD, which depicts the entire information system as one diagram concealing all the underlying details. Level 0 DFDs are also known as context level DFDs.



- **Level 1** - The Level 0 DFD is broken down into more specific, Level 1 DFD. Level 1 DFD depicts basic modules in the system and flow of data among various modules. Level 1 DFD also mentions basic processes and sources of information.



- **Level 2** - At this level, DFD shows how data flows inside the modules mentioned in Level 1.

Higher level DFDs can be transformed into more specific lower level DFDs with deeper level of understanding unless the desired level of specification is achieved.

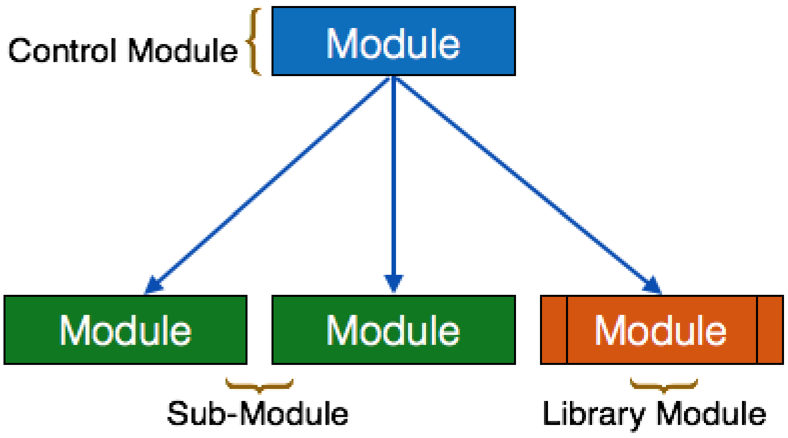
Structure Charts

Structure chart is a chart derived from Data Flow Diagram. It represents the system in more detail than DFD. It breaks down the entire system into lowest functional modules, describes functions and sub-functions of each module of the system to a greater detail than DFD.

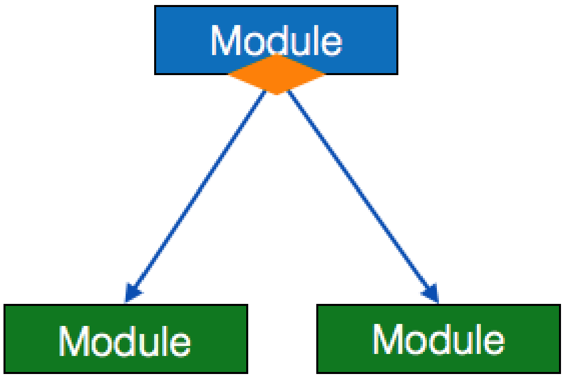
Structure chart represents hierarchical structure of modules. At each layer a specific task is performed.

Here are the symbols used in construction of structure charts -

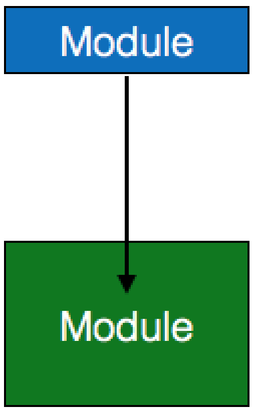
- **Module** - It represents process or subroutine or task. A control module branches to more than one sub-module. Library Modules are re-usable and inviolable from any module.



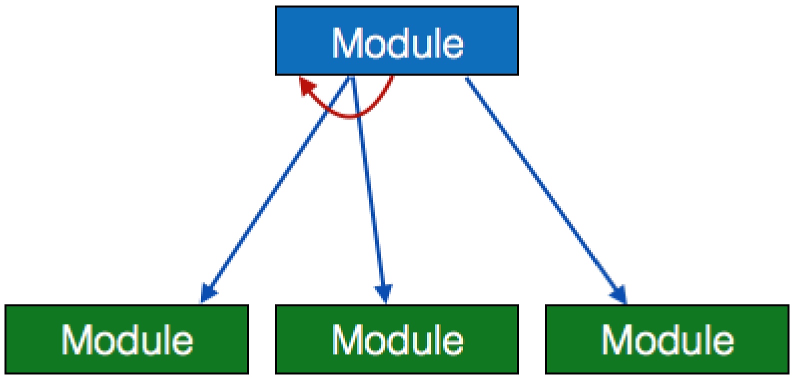
- **Condition** - It is represented by small diamond at the base of module. It depicts that control module can select any of sub-routine based on some condition.



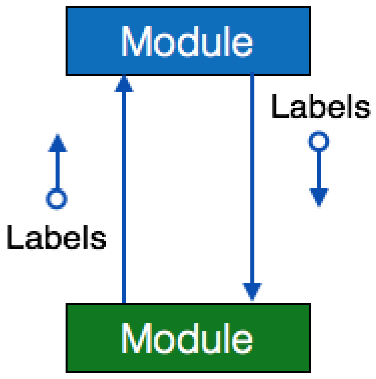
- **Jump** - An arrow is shown pointing inside the module to depict that the control will jump in the middle of the sub-module.



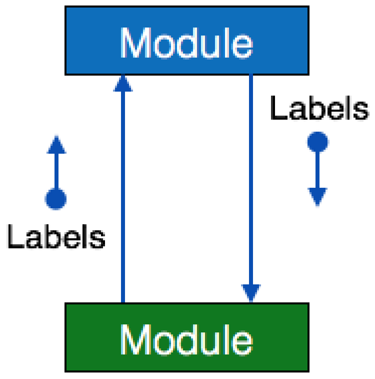
- **Loop -** A curved arrow represents loop in the module. All sub-modules covered by loop repeat execution of module.



- **Data flow -** A directed arrow with empty circle at the end represents data flow.



Control flow - A directed arrow with filled circle at the end represents control flow.

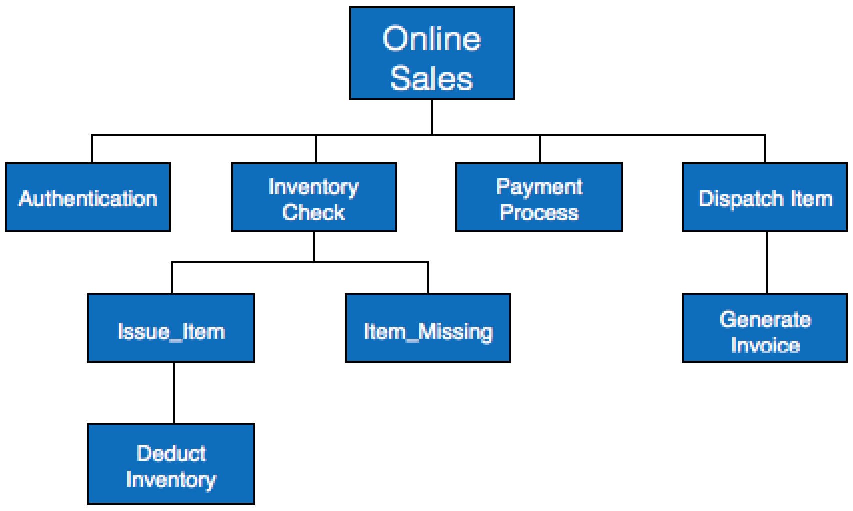


HIPO Diagram

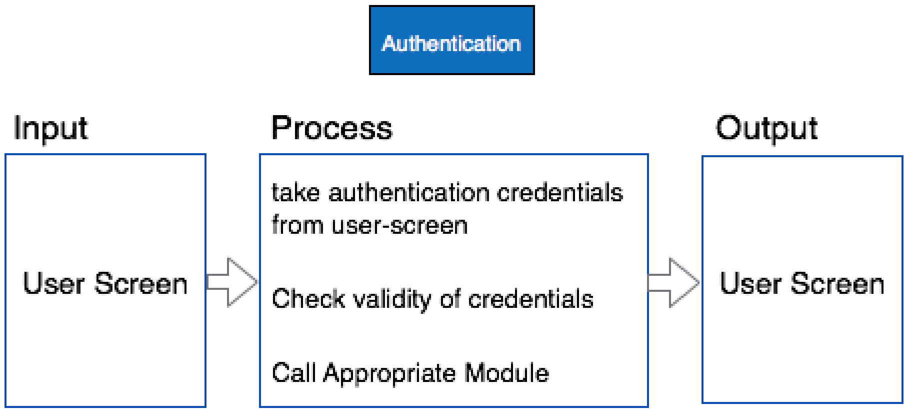
HIPO (Hierarchical Input Process Output) diagram is a combination of two organized method to analyze the system and provide the means of documentation. HIPO model was developed by IBM in year 1970.

HIPO diagram represents the hierarchy of modules in the software system. Analyst uses HIPO diagram in order to obtain high-level view of system functions. It decomposes functions into sub-functions in a hierarchical manner. It depicts the functions performed by system.

HIPO diagrams are good for documentation purpose. Their graphical representation makes it easier for designers and managers to get the pictorial idea of the system structure.



In contrast to IPO (Input Process Output) diagram, which depicts the flow of control and data in a module, HIPO does not provide any information about data flow or control flow.


Authentication
Input
Process
Output
User Screen
take authentication credentials from user-screen
Check validity of credentials
Call Appropriate Module
User Screen

Example

Both parts of HIPO diagram, Hierarchical presentation and IPO Chart are used for structure design of software program as well as documentation of the same.

Structured English

Most programmers are unaware of the large picture of software so they only rely on what their managers tell them to do. It is the responsibility of higher software management to provide accurate information to the programmers to develop accurate yet fast code.

Other forms of methods, which use graphs or diagrams, may are sometimes interpreted differently by different people.

Hence, analysts and designers of the software come up with tools such as Structured English. It is nothing but the description of what is required to code and how to code it. Structured English helps the programmer to write error-free code.

Other form of methods, which use graphs or diagrams, may are sometimes interpreted differently by different people. Here, both Structured English and Pseudo-Code tries to mitigate that understanding gap.

Structured English is the It uses plain English words in structured programming paradigm. It is not the ultimate code but a kind of description what is required to code and how to code it. The following are some tokens of structured programming.

IF-THEN-ELSE,

DO-WHILE-UNTIL

Analyst uses the same variable and data name, which are stored in Data Dictionary, making it much simpler to write and understand the code.

Example

We take the same example of Customer Authentication in the online shopping environment. This procedure to authenticate customer can be written in Structured English as:

```
Enter Customer_Name

SEEK Customer_Name in Customer_Name_DB file

IF Customer_Name found THEN

  Call procedure USER_PASSWORD_AUTHENTICATE()

ELSE

  PRINT error message

  Call procedure NEW_CUSTOMER_REQUEST()

ENDIF
```

The code written in Structured English is more like day-to-day spoken English. It can not be implemented directly as a code of software. Structured English is independent of programming language.

Pseudo-Code

Pseudo code is written more close to programming language. It may be considered as augmented programming language, full of comments and descriptions.

Pseudo code avoids variable declaration but they are written using some actual programming language's constructs, like C, Fortran, Pascal etc.

Pseudo code contains more programming details than Structured English. It provides a method to perform the task, as if a computer is executing the code.

Example

Program to print Fibonacci up to n numbers.

```
void function Fibonacci

Get value of n;

Set value of a to 1;

Set value of b to 1;

Initialize I to 0

for (i=0; i< n; i++)

{

  if a greater than b

  {

    Increase b by a;

    Print b;

  }
  else if b greater than a
  {
    increase a by b;
    print a;
  }
}
```

Decision Tables

A Decision table represents conditions and the respective actions to be taken to address them, in a structured tabular format.

It is a powerful tool to debug and prevent errors. It helps group similar information into a single table and then by combining tables it delivers easy and convenient decision-making.

Creating Decision Table

To create the decision table, the developer must follow basic four steps:

- Identify all possible conditions to be addressed
- Determine actions for all identified conditions
- Create Maximum possible rules
- Define action for each rule

Decision Tables should be verified by end-users and can lately be simplified by eliminating duplicate rules and actions.

Example

Let us take a simple example of day-to-day problem with our Internet connectivity. We begin by identifying all problems that can arise while starting the internet and their respective possible solutions.

We list all possible problems under column conditions and the prospective actions under column Actions.

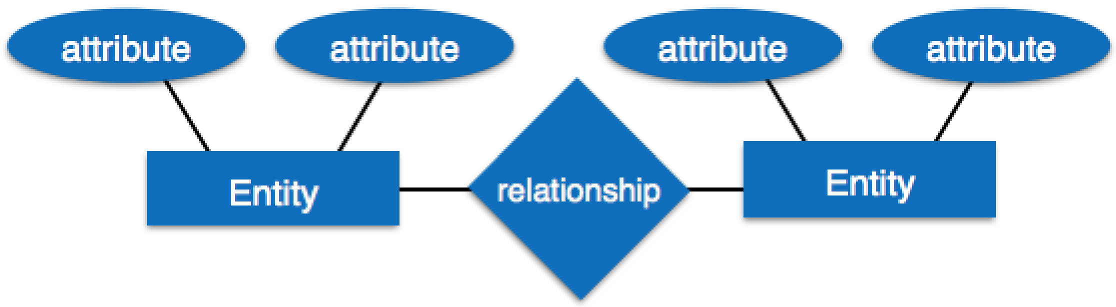
	Conditions/Actions	**Rules**							
Conditions	Shows Connected	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Ping is Working	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y
	Opens Website	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
Actions	Check network cable	X							
	Check internet router	X				X	X	X	
	Restart Web Browser							X	
	Contact Service provider		X	X	X	X	X	X	
	Do no action								

<u>Table : Decision Table – In-house Internet Troubleshooting</u>

Entity-Relationship Model

Entity-Relationship model is a type of database model based on the notion of real world entities and relationship among them. We can map real world scenario onto ER database model. ER Model creates a set of entities with their attributes, a set of constraints and relation among them.

ER Model is best used for the conceptual design of database. ER Model can be represented as follows :



- **Entity** - An entity in ER Model is a real world being, which has some properties called ***attributes***. Every attribute is defined by its corresponding set of values, called ***domain***.

For example, consider a school database. Here, a student is an entity. Student has various attributes like name, id, age and class etc.

- **Relationship** - The logical association among entities is called ***relationship***. Relationships are mapped with entities in various ways. Mapping cardinalities define the number of associations between two entities.

Mapping cardinalities:

- one to one
- one to many
- many to one
- many to many

Data Dictionary

Data dictionary is the centralized collection of information about data. It stores meaning and origin of data, its relationship with other data, data format for usage etc. Data dictionary has rigorous definitions of all names in order to facilitate user and software designers.

Data dictionary is often referenced as meta-data (data about data) repository. It is created along with DFD (Data Flow Diagram) model of software program and is expected to be updated whenever DFD is changed or updated.

Requirement of Data Dictionary

The data is referenced via data dictionary while designing and implementing software. Data dictionary removes any chances of ambiguity. It helps keeping work of programmers and designers synchronized while using same object reference everywhere in the program.

Data dictionary provides a way of documentation for the complete database system in one place. Validation of DFD is carried out using data dictionary.

Contents

Data dictionary should contain information about the following

- Data Flow
- Data Structure
- Data Elements
- Data Stores
- Data Processing

Data Flow is described by means of DFDs as studied earlier and represented in algebraic form as described.

=	**Composed of**
{}	Repetition

()	Optional
+	And
[/]	Or

Example

Address = House No + (Street / Area) + City + State

Course ID = Course Number + Course Name + Course Level + Course Grades

Data Elements

Data elements consist of Name and descriptions of Data and Control Items, Internal or External data stores etc. with the following details:

- Primary Name
- Secondary Name (Alias)
- Use-case (How and where to use)
- Content Description (Notation etc.)
- Supplementary Information (preset values, constraints etc.)

Data Store

It stores the information from where the data enters into the system and exists out of the system. The Data Store may include -

- **Files**
  - Internal to software.
  - External to software but on the same machine.

    - External to software and system, located on different machine.
- **Tables**
    - Naming convention
    - Indexing property

Data Processing

There are two types of Data Processing:

- **Logical:** As user sees it
- **Physical:** As software sees it

Principles of Software Design & Concepts in Software Engineering

Once the requirements document for the software to be developed is available, the software design phase begins. While the requirement specification activity deals entirely with the problem domain, design is the first phase of transforming the problem into a solution. In the design phase, the customer and business requirements and technical considerations all come together to formulate a product or a system.

The design process comprises a set of principles, concepts and practices, which allow a software engineer to model the system or product that is to be built. This model, known as design model, is assessed for quality and reviewed before a code is generated and tests are conducted. The design model provides details about software data structures, architecture, interfaces and components which are required to implement the system. This chapter discusses the design elements that are required to develop a software design model. It also discusses the design patterns and various software design notations used to represent a software design.

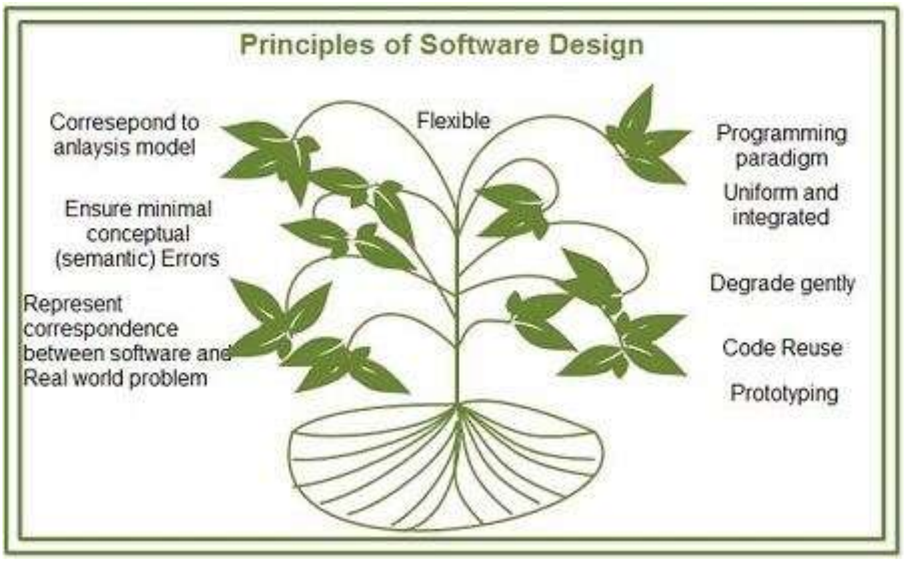
Basic of Software Design

Software design is a phase in software engineering, in which a blueprint is developed to serve as a base for constructing the software system. **IEEE** defines software design as 'both a process of defining, the architecture, components, interfaces, and other characteristics of a system or component and the result of that process.'

In the design phase, many critical and strategic decisions are made to achieve the desired functionality and quality of the system. These decisions are taken into account to successfully develop the software and carry out its maintenance in a way that the quality of the end product is improved.

Principles of Software Design

Developing design is a cumbersome process as most expansive errors are often introduced in this phase. Moreover, if these errors get unnoticed till later phases, it becomes more difficult to correct them. Therefore, a number of principles are followed while designing the software. These principles act as a framework for the designers to follow a good design practice.


Principles of Software Design
Corresepond to anlaysis model
Ensure minimal conceptual (semantic) Errors
Represent correspondence between software and Real world problem
Flexible
Programming paradigm
Uniform and integrated
Degrade gently
Code Reuse
Prototyping

Some of the commonly followed design principles are as following.

1. **Software design should correspond to the analysis model:** Often a design element corresponds to many requirements, therefore, we must know how the design model satisfies all the requirements represented by the analysis model.
2. **Choose the right programming paradigm:** A programming paradigm describes the structure of the software system. Depending on the nature and type of

application, different programming paradigms such as procedure oriented, object-oriented, and prototyping paradigms can be used. The paradigm should be chosen keeping constraints in mind such as time, availability of resources and nature of user's requirements.

3. **Software design should be uniform and integrated:** Software design is considered uniform and integrated, if the interfaces are properly defined among the design components. For this, rules, format, and styles are established before the design team starts designing the software.
4. **Software design should be flexible:** Software design should be flexible enough to adapt changes easily. To achieve the flexibility, the basic design concepts such as abstraction, refinement, and modularity should be applied effectively.
5. **Software design should ensure minimal conceptual (semantic) errors:** The design team must ensure that major conceptual errors of design such as ambiguousness and inconsistency are addressed in advance before dealing with the syntactical errors present in the design model.
6. **Software design should be structured to degrade gently:** Software should be designed to handle unusual changes and circumstances, and if the need arises for termination, it must do so in a proper manner so that functionality of the software is not affected.
7. **Software design should represent correspondence between the software and real-world problem:** The software design should be structured in such away that it always relates with the real-world problem.

8. **Software reuse:** Software engineers believe on the phrase: 'do not reinvent the wheel'. Therefore, software components should be designed in such a way that they can be effectively reused to increase the productivity.

9. **Designing for testability:** A common practice that has been followed is to keep the testing phase separate from the design and implementation phases. That is, first the software is developed (designed and implemented) and then handed over to the testers who subsequently determine whether the software is fit for distribution and subsequent use by the customer. However, it has become apparent that the process of separating testing is seriously flawed, as if any type of design or implementation errors are found after implementation, then the entire or a substantial part of the software requires to be redone. Thus, the test engineers should be involved from the initial stages. For example, they should be involved with analysts to prepare tests for determining whether the user requirements are being met.

10. **Prototyping:** Prototyping should be used when the requirements are not completely defined in the beginning. The user interacts with the developer to expand and refine the requirements as the development proceeds. Using prototyping, a quick 'mock-up' of the system can be developed. This mock-up can be used as a effective means to give the users a feel of what the system will look like and demonstrate functions that will be included in the developed system. Prototyping also helps in reducing risks of designing software that is not in accordance with the customer's requirements.

Note that design principles are often constrained by the existing hardware configuration, the implementation language, the existing file and data structures, and the existing organizational practices. Also, the evolution of each software design should be meticulously designed for future evaluations, references and maintenance.

Software Design Concepts

Every software process is characterized by basic concepts along with certain practices or methods. Methods represent the manner through which the concepts are applied. As new technology replaces older technology, many changes occur in the methods that are used to apply the concepts for the development of software. However, the fundamental concepts underlining the software design process remain the same, some of which are described here.

Abstraction

Abstraction refers to a powerful design tool, which allows software designers to consider components at an abstract level, while neglecting the implementation details of the components. **IEEE** defines abstraction as 'a view of a problem that extracts the essential information relevant to a particular purpose and ignores the remainder of the information.' The concept of abstraction can be used in two ways: as a process and as an entity. As a **process,** it refers to a mechanism of hiding irrelevant details and representing only the essential features of an item so that one can focus on important things at a time. As an **entity,** it refers to a model or view of an item.

Each step in the software process is accomplished through various levels of abstraction. At the highest level, an outline of the solution to the problem is presented whereas at the lower levels, the solution to the problem is presented in detail. For example, in the requirements analysis phase, a solution to the problem is presented using the language of problem environment and as we proceed through the software process, the abstraction level reduces and at the lowest level, source code of the software is produced.

There are three commonly used abstraction mechanisms in software design, namely, functional abstraction, data abstraction and control abstraction. All these mechanisms allow us to control the complexity of the design process by proceeding from the abstract design model to concrete design model in a systematic manner.

1. **Functional abstraction:** This involves the use of parameterized subprograms. Functional abstraction can be generalized as collections of subprograms referred to as 'groups'. Within these groups there exist routines which may be visible or hidden. Visible routines can be used within the containing groups as well as within other groups, whereas hidden routines are hidden from other groups and can be used within the containing group only.

2. **Data abstraction:** This involves specifying data that describes a data object. For example, the data object *window* encompasses a set of attributes (window type, window dimension) that describe the window object clearly. In this abstraction mechanism, representation and manipulation details are ignored.

3. **Control abstraction:** This states the desired effect, without stating the exact mechanism of control. For example, if and while statements in programming languages (like C and C++) are abstractions of machine code implementations, which involve conditional instructions. In the architectural design level, this abstraction mechanism permits

specifications of sequential subprogram and exception handlers without the concern for exact details of implementation.

Architecture

Software architecture refers to the structure of the system, which is composed of various components of a program/ system, the attributes (properties) of those components and the relationship amongst them. The software architecture enables the software engineers to analyze the software design efficiently. In addition, it also helps them in decision-making and handling risks. The software architecture does the following.

- Provides an insight to all the interested stakeholders that enable them to communicate with each other
- Highlights early design decisions, which have great impact on the software engineering activities (like coding and testing) that follow the design phase
- Creates intellectual models of how the system is organized into components and how these components interact with each other.

Currently, software architecture is represented in an informal and unplanned manner. Though the architectural concepts are often represented in the infrastructure (for supporting particular architectural styles) and the initial stages of a system configuration, the lack of an explicit independent characterization of architecture restricts the advantages of this design concept in the present scenario.

Note that software architecture comprises two elements of design model, namely, data design and architectural design.

Patterns

A pattern provides a description of the solution to a recurring design problem of some specific domain in such a way that the solution can be used again and again. The objective of each pattern is to provide an insight to a designer who can determine the following.

1. Whether the pattern can be reused
2. Whether the pattern is applicable to the current project
3. Whether the pattern can be used to develop a similar but functionally or structurally different design pattern.

Types of Design Patterns

Software engineer can use the design pattern during the entire software design process. When the analysis model is developed, the designer can examine the problem description at different levels of abstraction to determine whether it complies with one or more of the following types of design patterns.

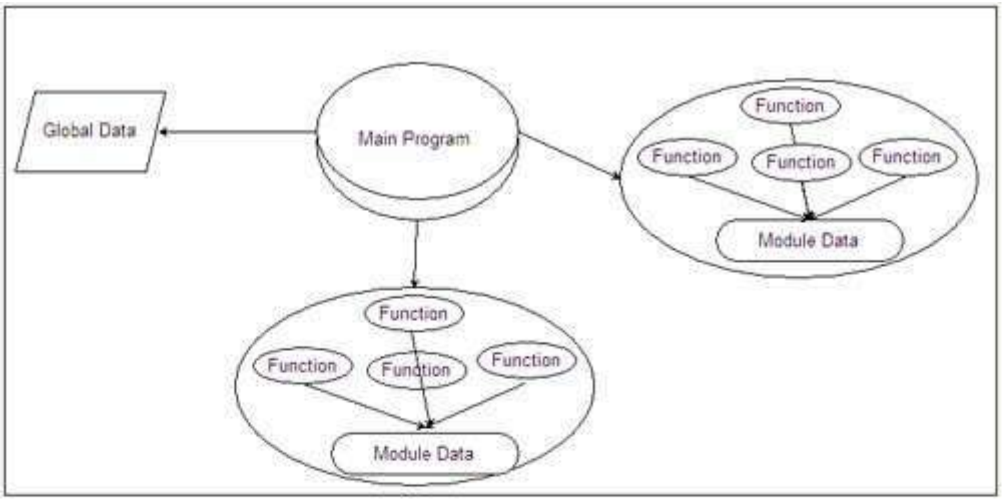
1. **Architectural patterns:** These patterns are high-level strategies that refer to the overall structure and organization of a software system. That is, they define the elements of a software system such as subsystems, components, classes, etc. **In** addition, they also indicate the relationship between the elements along with the rules and guidelines for specifying these relationships. Note that architectural patterns are often considered equivalent to software architecture.
2. **Design patterns:** These patterns are medium-level strategies that are used to solve design problems. They provide a means for the refinement of the elements (as

defined by architectural pattern) of a software system or the relationship among them. Specific design elements such as relationship among components or mechanisms that affect component-to-component interaction are addressed by design patterns. Note that design patterns are often considered equivalent to software components.

3. **Idioms:** These patterns are low-level patterns, which are programming-language specific. They describe the implementation of a software component, the method used for interaction among software components, etc., in a specific programming language. Note that idioms are often termed as coding patterns.

Modularity

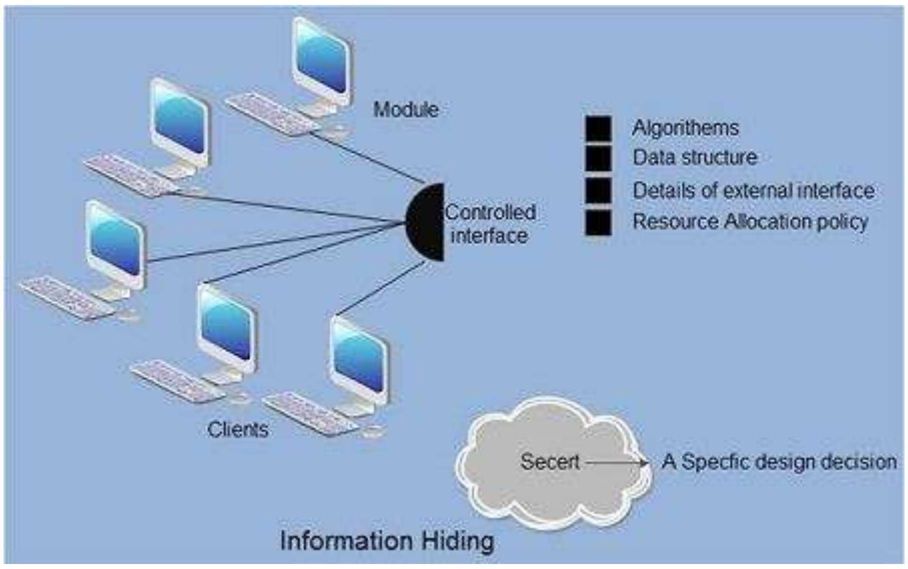
Modularity is achieved by dividing the software into uniquely named and addressable components,which are also known as **modules.** A complex system (large program) is partitioned into a set of discrete modules in such a way that each module can be developed independent of other modules. After developing the modules, they are integrated together to meet the software requirements. Note that larger the number of modules a system is divided into, greater will be the effort required to integrate the modules.



Modularizing a design helps to plan the development in a more effective manner, accommodate changes easily, conduct testing and debugging effectively and efficiently, and conduct maintenance work without adversely affecting the functioning of the software.

Information Hiding

Modules should be specified and designed in such a way that the data structures and processing details of one module are not accessible to other modules. They pass only that much information to each other, which is required to accomplish the software functions. The way of hiding unnecessary details is referred to as **information hiding. IEEE** defines information hiding as 'the technique of encapsulating software design decisions in modules in such a way that the module's interfaces reveal as little as possible about the module's inner workings; thus each module is a 'black box' to the other modules in the system.



Information hiding is of immense use when modifications are required during the testing and maintenance phase. Some of the advantages associated with information hiding are listed below.

1. Leads to low coupling
2. Emphasizes communication through controlled interfaces
3. Decreases the probability of adverse effects
4. Restricts the effects of changes in one component on others
5. Results in higher quality software.

Stepwise Refinement

Stepwise refinement is a top-down design strategy used for decomposing a system from a high level of abstraction into a more detailed level (lower level) of abstraction. At the highest level of abstraction, function or information is defined conceptually without providing any information about the internal workings of the function or internal structure of the data. As we proceed towards the lower levels of abstraction, more and more details are available.

Software designers start the stepwise refinement process by creating a sequence of compositions for the system being designed. Each composition is more detailed than the previous one and contains more components and interactions. The earlier compositions represent the significant interactions within the system, while the later compositions show in detail how these interactions are achieved.

To have a clear understanding of the concept, let us consider an example of stepwise refinement. Every computer program comprises input, process, and output.

1. INPUT

- Get user's name (string) through a prompt.
- Get user's grade (integer from 0 to 100) through a prompt and validate.

2. PROCESS
3. OUTPUT

This is the first step in refinement. The input phase can be refined further as given here.

1. INPUT
    - Get user's name through a prompt.
    - Get user's grade through a prompt.
    - While (invalid grade)

Ask again:

2. PROCESS
3. OUTPUT

Note: Stepwise refinement can also be performed for PROCESS and OUTPUT phase.

Refactoring

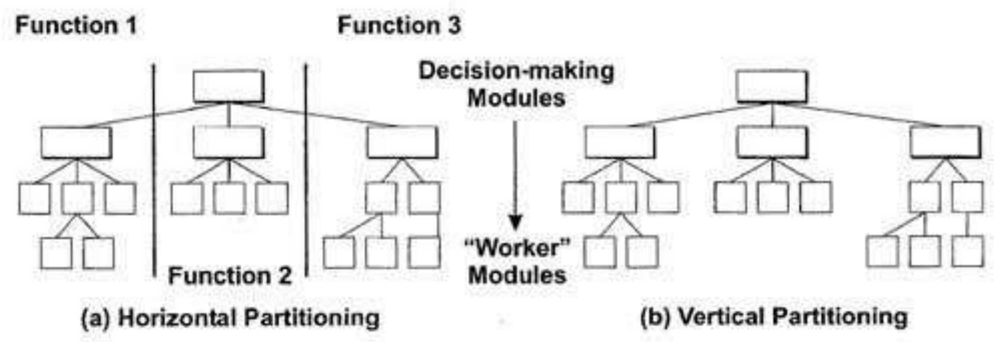
Refactoring is an important design activity that reduces the complexity of module design keeping its behaviour or function unchanged. Refactoring can be defined as a process of modifying a software system to improve the internal structure of design without changing its external behavior. During the refactoring process, the existing design is checked for any type of flaws like redundancy, poorly constructed algorithms and data structures, etc., in order to improve the design. For example, a design model might yield a component which exhibits low cohesion (like a component performs four functions that have a limited relationship with one another). Software designers may decide to refactor the component into four different components, each exhibiting high cohesion. This leads to easier integration, testing, and maintenance of the software components.

Structural Partitioning

When the architectural style of a design follows a hierarchical nature, the structure of the program can be partitioned either horizontally or vertically. In **horizontal partitioning,** the control modules are used to communicate between functions and execute the functions. Structural partitioning provides the following benefits.

- The testing and maintenance of software becomes easier.
- The negative impacts spread slowly.
- The software can be extended easily.

Besides these advantages, horizontal partitioning has some disadvantage also. It requires to pass more data across the module interface, which makes the control flow of the problem more complex. This usually happens in cases where data moves rapidly from one function to another.



Horizontal and Vertical Partitioning

In **vertical partitioning**, the functionality is distributed among the modules--in a top-down manner. The modules at the top level called **control modules** perform the decision-making and do little processing whereas the modules at the low level called **worker modules** perform all input, computation and output tasks.

Concurrency

Computer has limited resources and they must be utilized efficiently as much as possible. To utilize these resources efficiently, multiple tasks must be executed concurrently. This requirement makes concurrency one of the major concepts of software design. Every system must be designed to allow multiple processes to execute concurrently, whenever possible. For example, if the current process is waiting for some event to occur, the system must execute some other process in the mean time.

However, concurrent execution of multiple processes sometimes may result in undesirable situations such as an inconsistent state, deadlock, etc. For example, consider two processes A and B and a data item Q1 with the value '200'. Further, suppose A and B are being executed concurrently and firstly A reads the value of Q1 (which is '200') to add '100' to it. However, before A updates es the value of Q1, B reads the value ofQ1 (which is still '200') to add '50' to it. In this situation, whether A or B first updates the value of Q1, the value of would definitely be wrong resulting in an inconsistent state of the system. This is because the actions of A and B are not synchronized with each other. Thus, the system must control the concurrent execution and synchronize the actions of concurrent processes.

One way to achieve synchronization is mutual exclusion, which ensures that two concurrent processes do not interfere with the actions of each other. To ensure this, mutual exclusion may use locking technique. In this technique, the processes need to lock the data item to be read or updated. The data item locked by some process cannot be accessed by other processes until it is unlocked. It implies that the process, that needs to access the data item locked by some other process, has to wait.

Developing a Design Model

To develop a complete specification of design (design model), four design models are needed. These models are listed below.

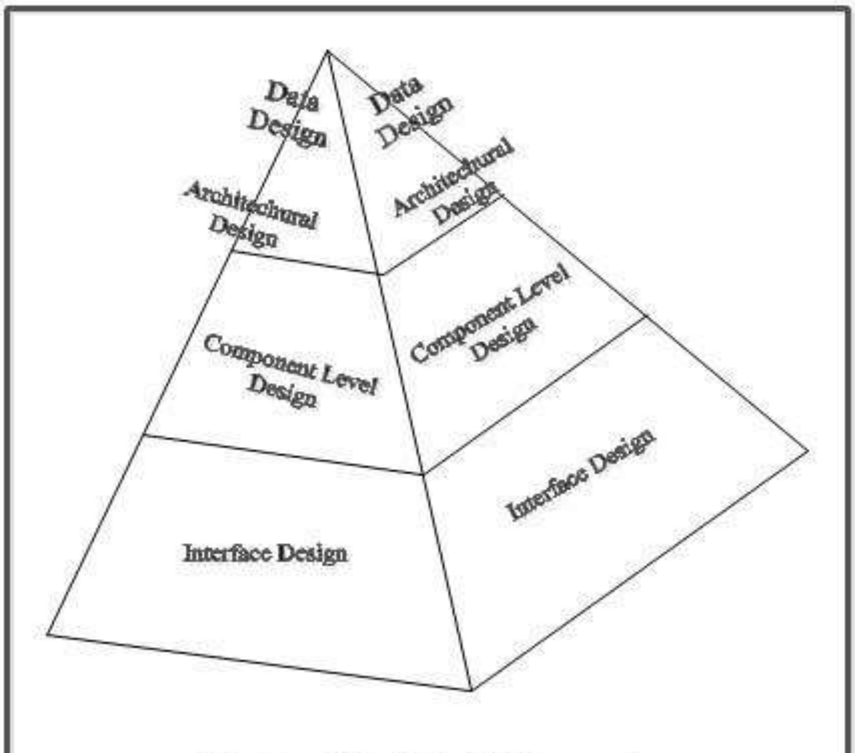
1. **Data design:** This specifies the data structures for implementing the software by converting data objects and their relationships identified during the analysis phase. Various studies suggest that design engineering should begin with data design, since this design lays the foundation for all other design models.

2. **Architectural design:** This specifies the relationship between the structural elements of the software, design

patterns, architectural styles, and the factors affecting the ways in which architecture can be implemented.

3. **Component-level design:** This provides the detailed description of how structural elements of software will actually be implemented.

4. **Interface design:** This depicts how the software communicates with the system that interoperates with it and with the end-users.



Design Model & its Elements

Differentiate Between Top Down and Bottom UP Approaches

In top down strategy we start by testing the top of the hierarchy and we incrementally add modules that it calls and then test the new combined system. This approach of testing requires stubs to be written. A stub is a dummy routine that simulates a module.

In the top-down approach, a module cannot be tested in isolation because they invoke some other modules. To allow the modules to be tested before their subordinates have been coded, stubs simulate the behavior of the subordinates.

The bottom-up approach starts from the bottom of the hierarchy. First the modules at the very bottom, which have no subordinates, are tested. Then these modules are combined with higher-level modules for testing. At any stage of testing all the subordinate modules exist and have been tested earlier.

To perform bottom-up testing, drivers are needed to set up the appropriate environment and invoke the module. It is the job of the driver to invoke the module under testing with the different set of test cases.