

How to Create an Architecture Overview

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Abstract

A short specific overview of an architecture is a powerful means during product creation. This article addresses how to create such an overview. One of the main issues is the need for *breadth*, what needs to be included and for whom, and the balancing act of providing sufficient *depth*, what are crucial details that are part of this top-level description. Also the way of describing is discussed, from stakeholder needs to ambiguity and the level of formalism.

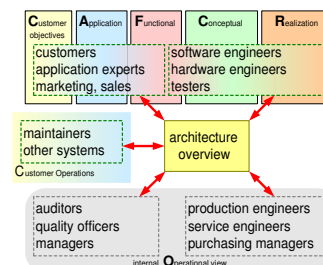
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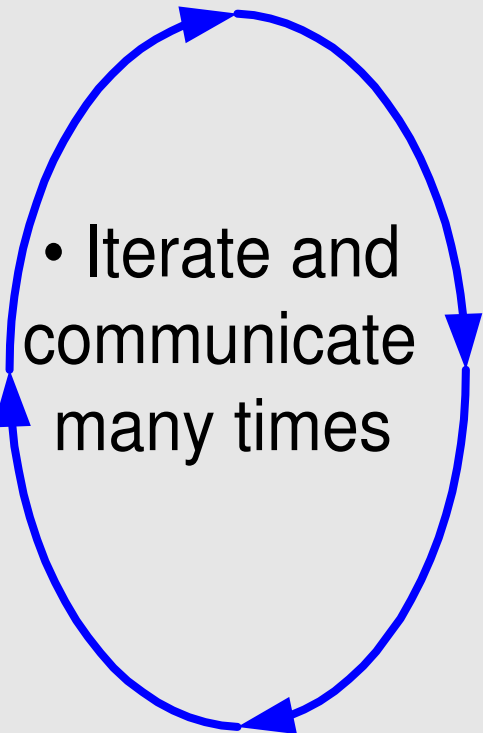
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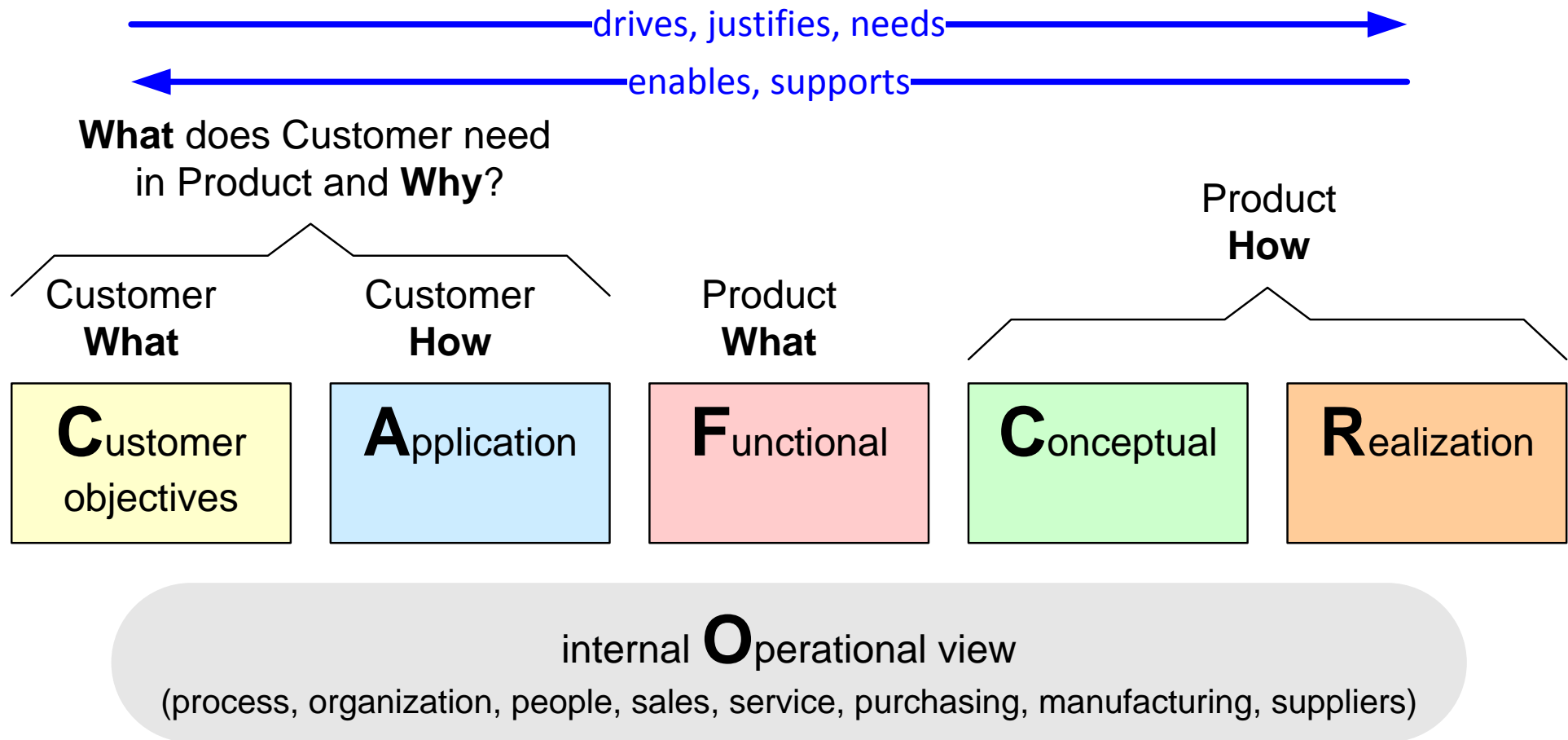


Approach to Create Architecture Overview

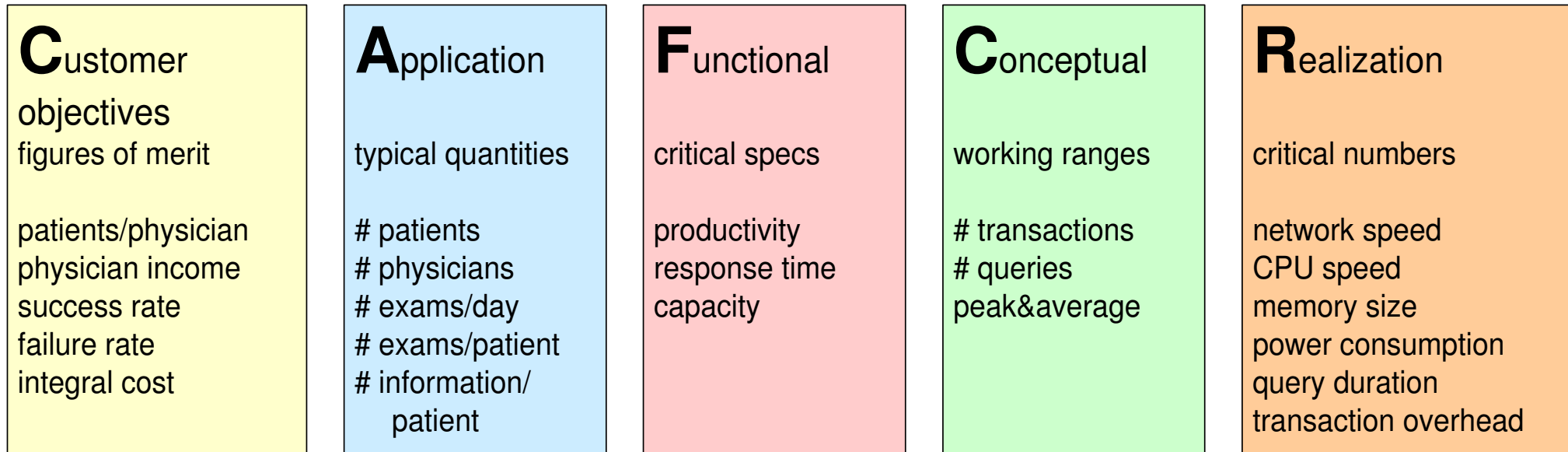
- Identify scope: *product, market, system, context*
- Bottom-up fact finding and quantification
- Top-down identify *stakeholders, concerns, views and models*
- Determine most relevant issues: *important, valuable, critical, costly* , ...
- Define overview *structure and presentation*



CAFCR model



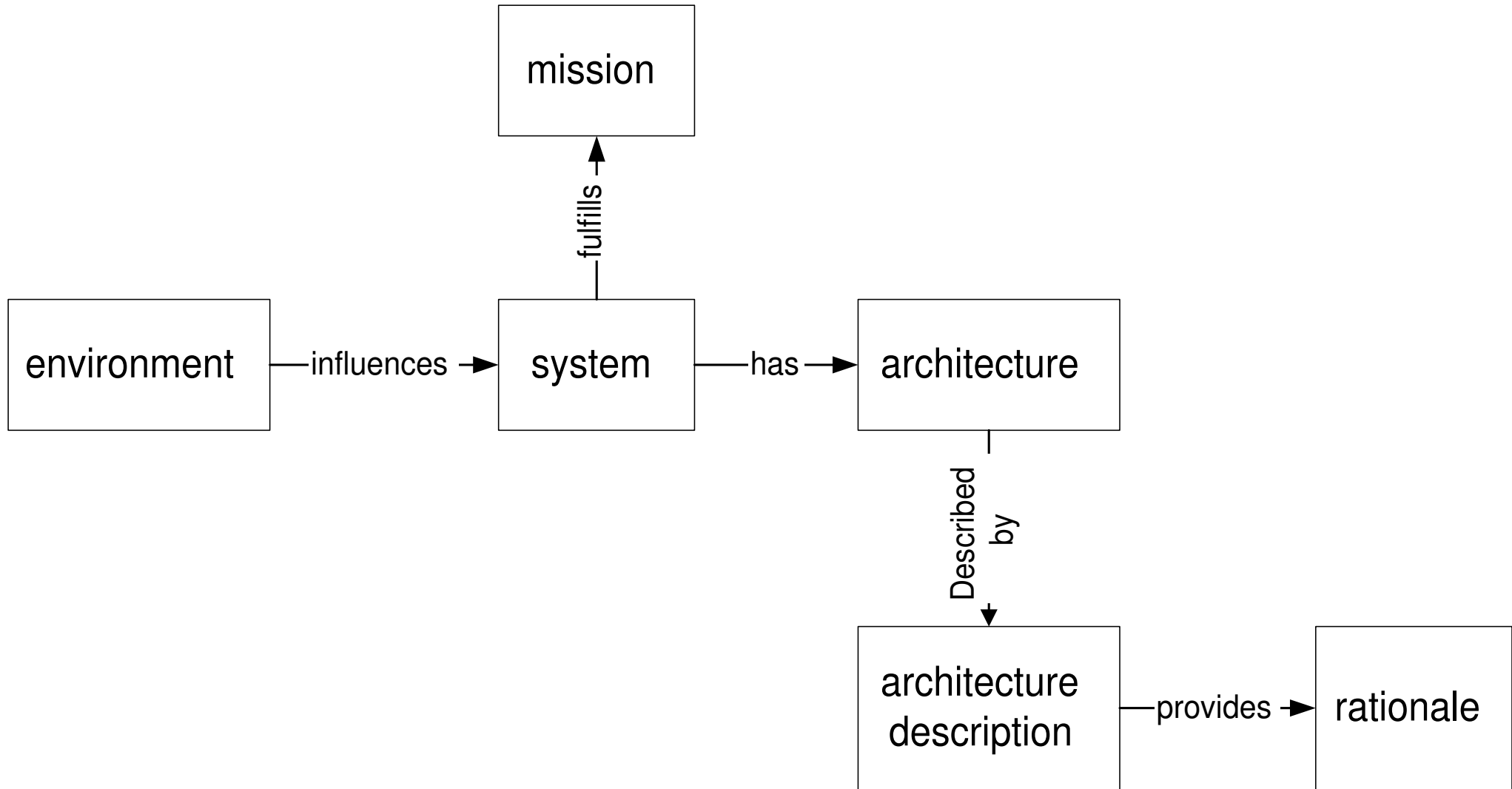
Bottom up fact finding and quantification



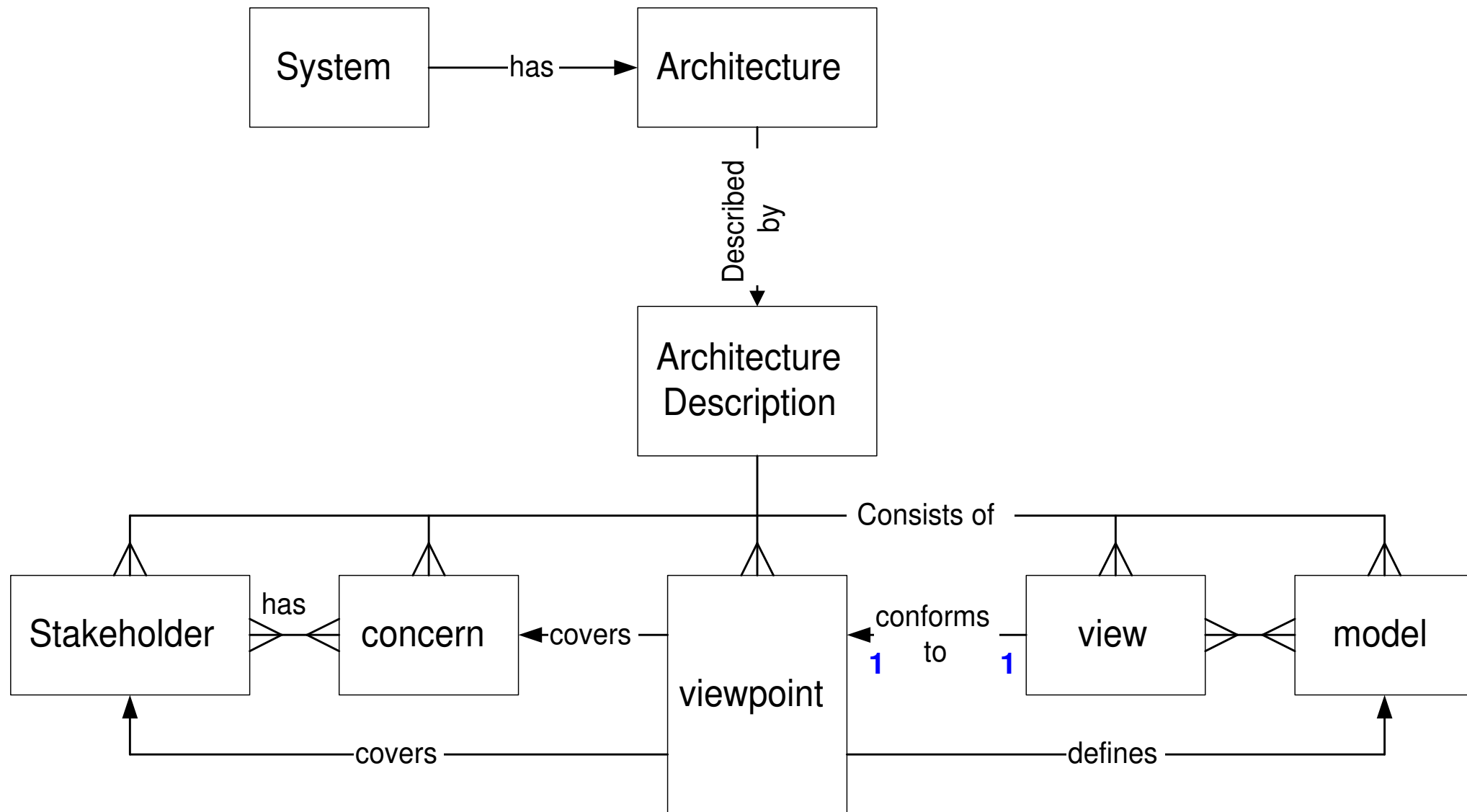
internal **O**perational view

market size	product life cycle	maintenance effort	# suppliers	effort	project size
market share	business model	update frequency	partners	cost	# engineers/discipline
growth rate	market segments	service crew	competitors	time	# teams

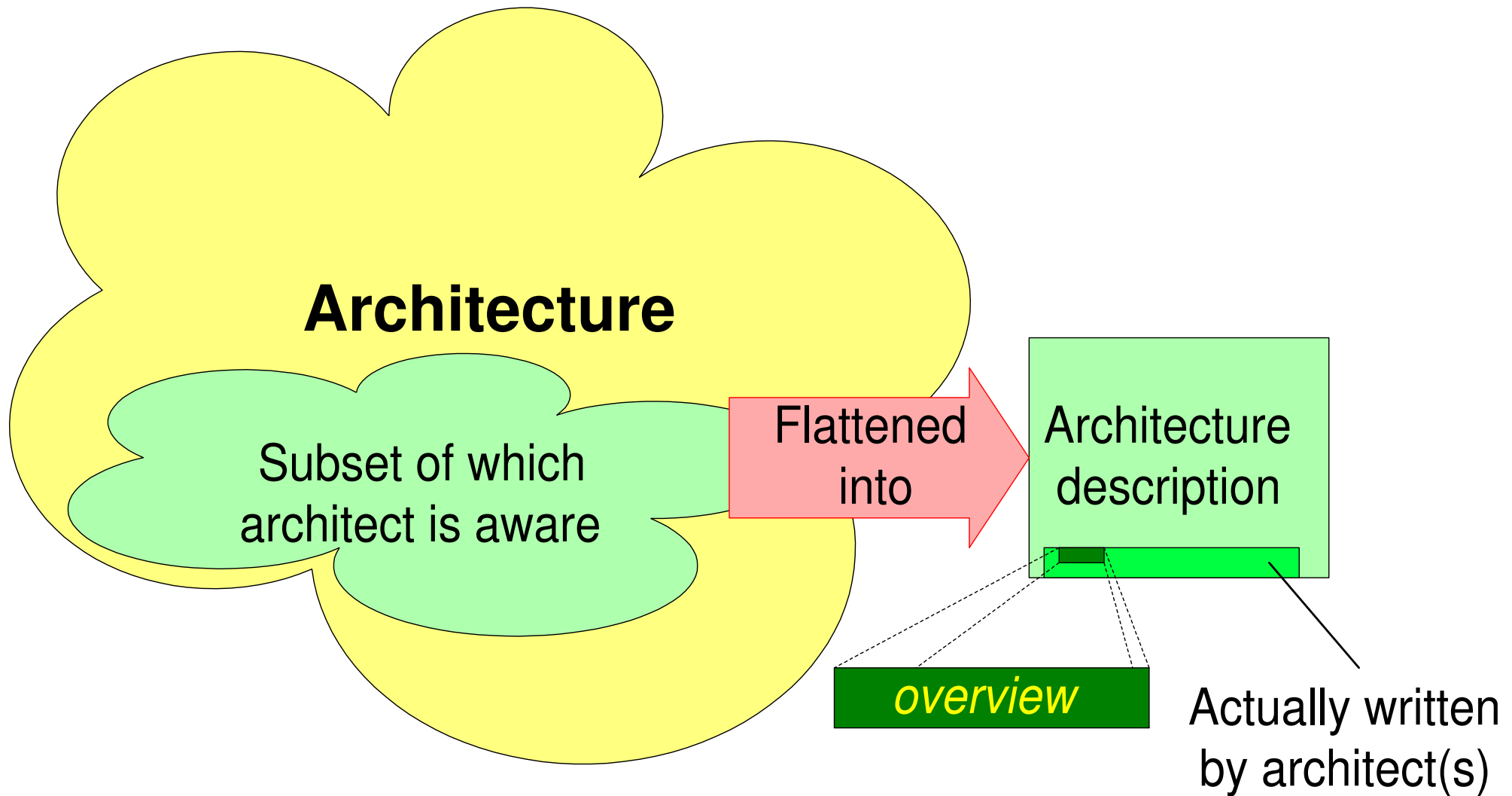
IEEE 1471 top level



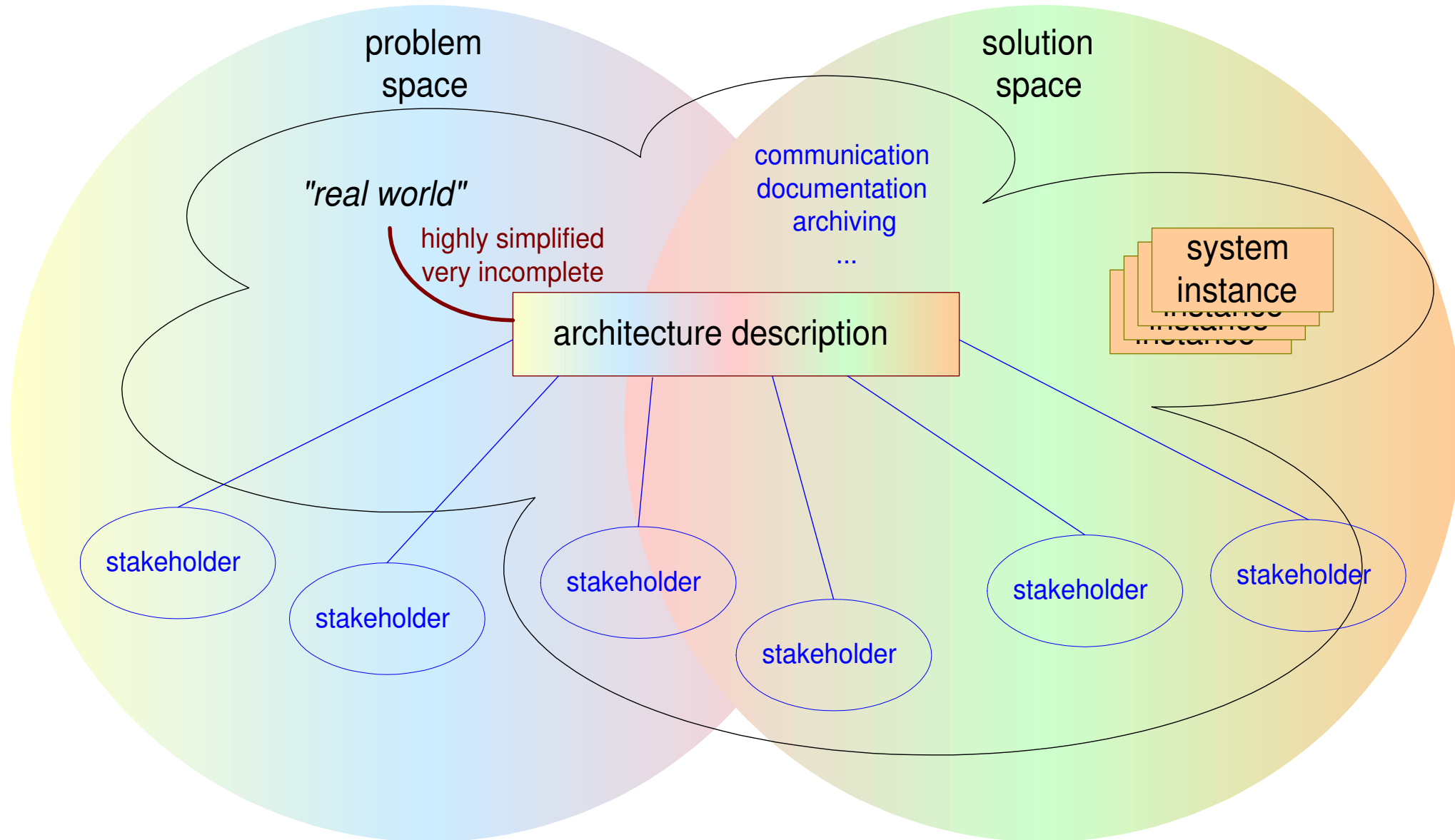
IEEE 1471 view level



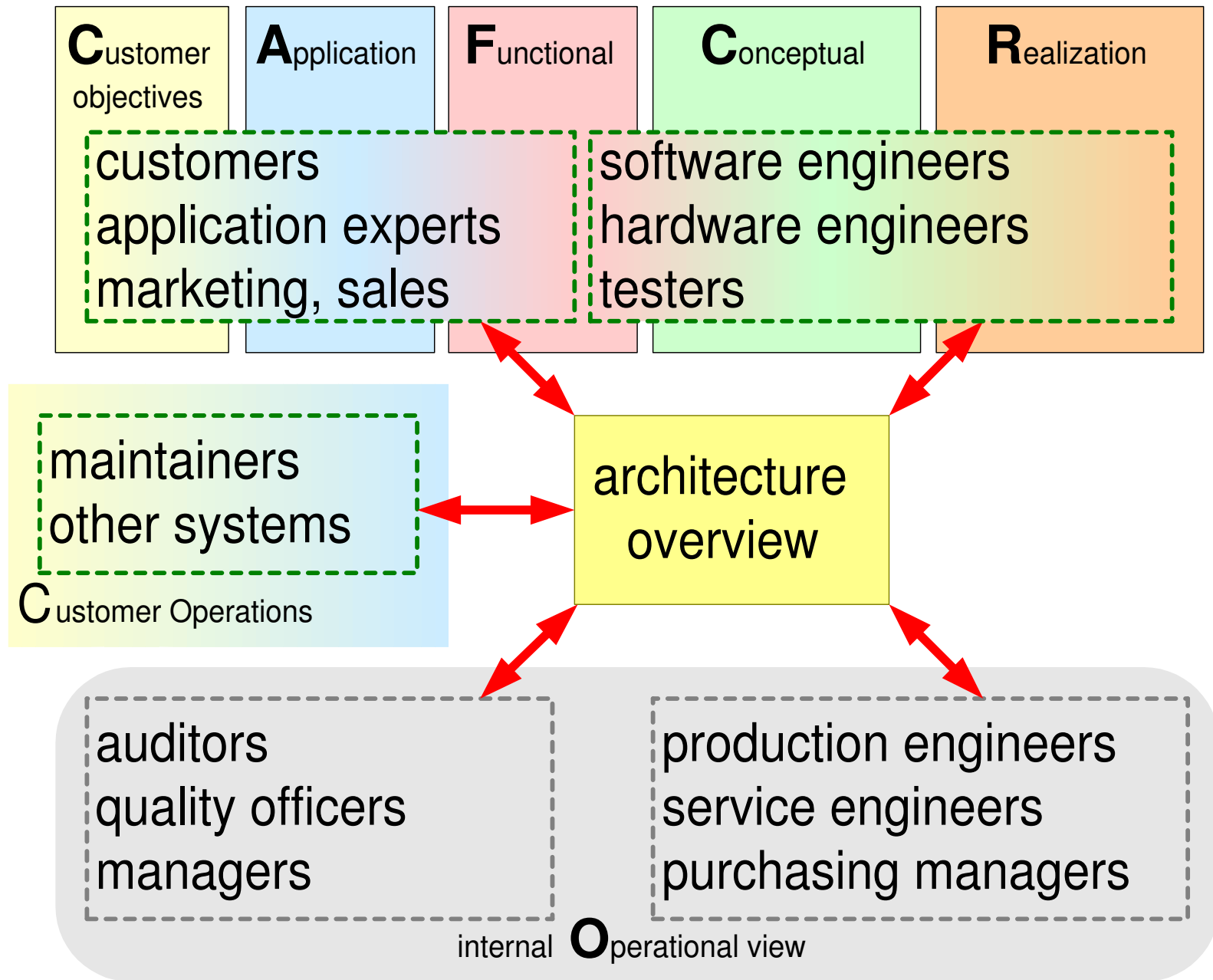
Architecture Overview



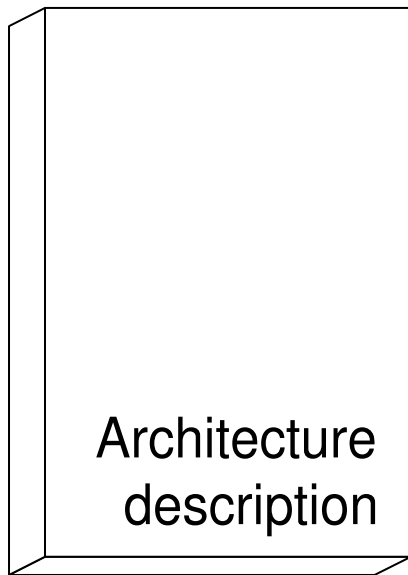
Role of Architecture Description



Stakeholder of an Architecture Overview



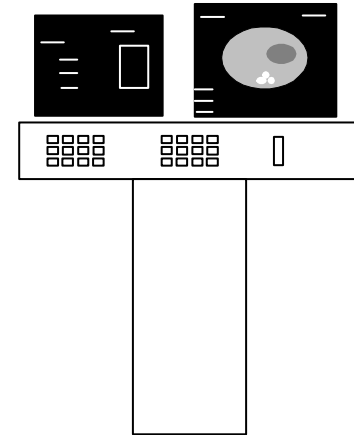
Form and Medium



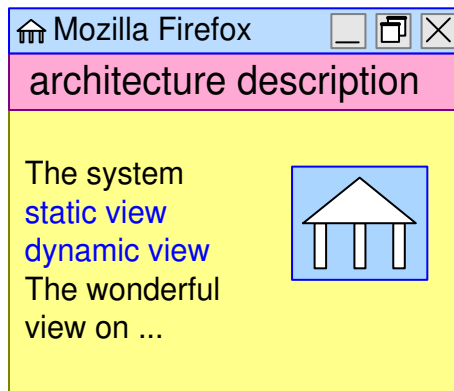
book



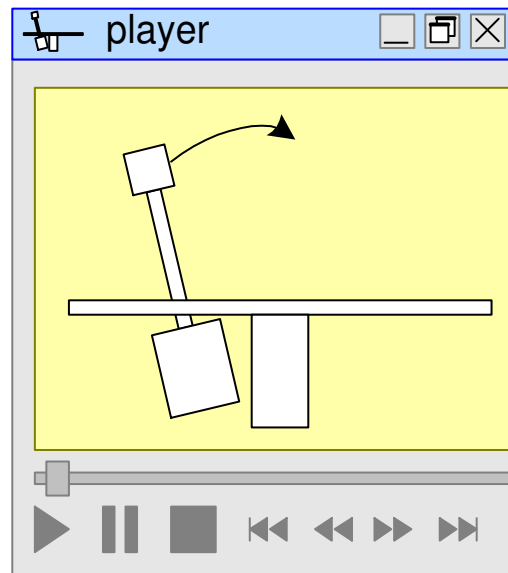
mock-up



prototype



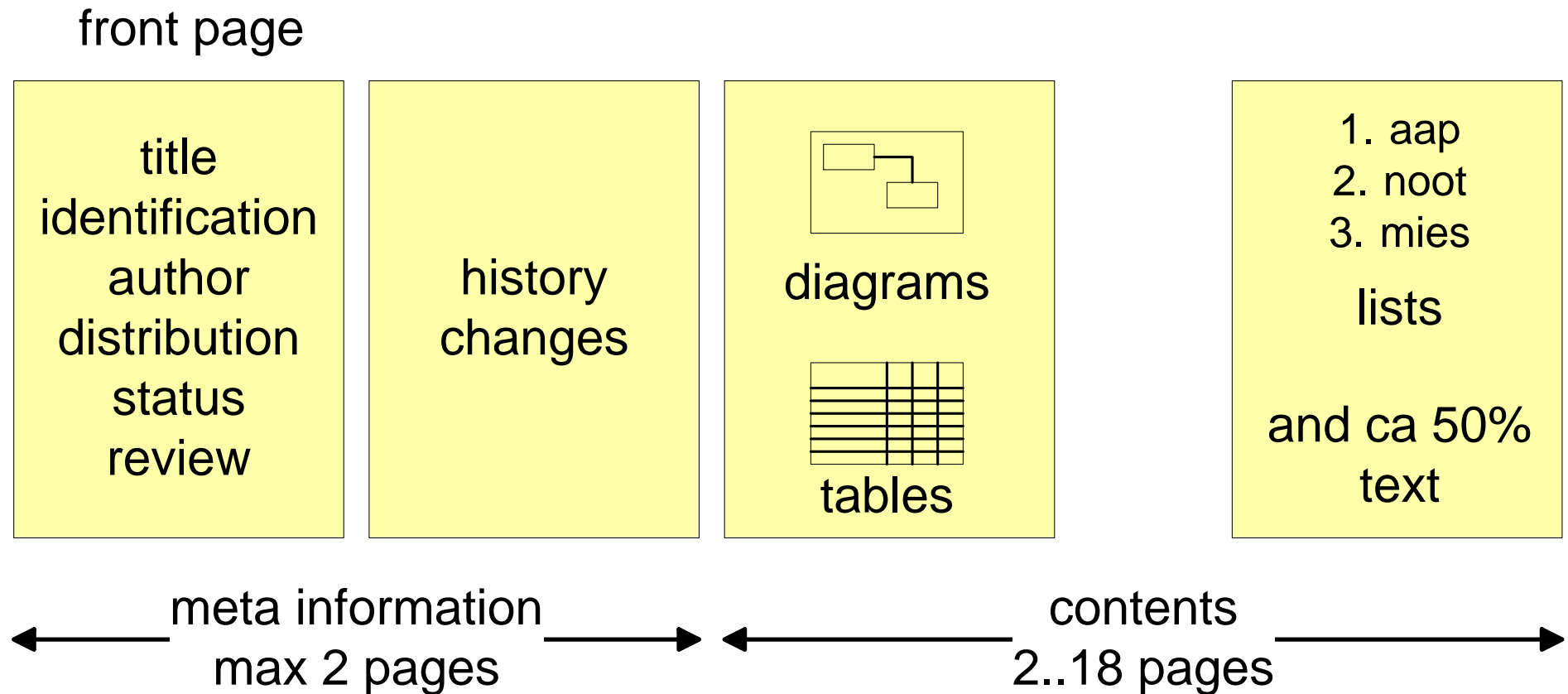
active content



dynamic content



Payload: the Ratio between Content and Overhead



Language Recommendations

- * Keep your sentences short
- * Prefer active verbs
- * Use 'you' and 'we'
- * Choose words appropriate for the reader
- * Don't be afraid to give instructions
- * Avoid nominalisations
- * Use positive language
- * Use lists where appropriate

from Plain English Campaign

<http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/files/howto.pdf>

Ideal Structure does not Exist

