

Motivation

As leader of the architecture board, I'm always looking for triggers to challenge the status quo. Discussions involving real-life examples and scenarios of organisations trying to achieve zero outage often raises many valuable and insightful points. Imagination can only go so far – there is always the need for detail if a solid implementation is to be applied and from this, dependable design nuggets can then be extracted.

The difficulty is to identify the *use cases* and get to this required level of detail. We tend to use this term fairly regularly in our IT language, however, there does not seem to be a universally agreed definition, nor a standard methodology and format to develop and articulate use cases. However, if there was an agreed practice and standard, it might motivate business analysts, architects and product managers to document and share use cases. When a use case library becomes part of a shared IT knowledge system, it can easily be used to improve the quality, applicability and prescription of the architectural guidance.



Terminology clarification

Let's look at some definitions one can find quickly on the internet:

Wikipedia¹:

- ▶ In software and systems engineering, a use case is a list of actions or event steps typically defining the interactions between a role (or actor) and a system to achieve a goal. The actor can be a human or other external system.
- ▶ Use case analysis is an important and valuable requirement analysis technique that has been widely used in modern software engineering since its formal introduction by Ivar Jacobson in 1992.
- ▶ Use-case Analysis: the breakdown of business-level functions across actors and organisations allows the actors in a function to be identified and permits a breakdown into services supporting/delivering that functional capability

“ LIST OF ACTIONS OR EVENT STEPS

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The Open Group TOGAF® standard²:

- ▶ Use-Case: A view of organisation, application, or product functionality that illustrates capabilities in context with the user of that capability.

1. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Use_case
2. TOGAF® is a registered trademark of The Open Group