

Topic 2: What is enterprise architecture?

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Enterprise architecture is often misunderstood to mean the architecture of our technology or IT infrastructure alone. In fact, it means the architecture of our organizational structure (our civic business machine) that relates unified strategic goals to knowledge management activities and technology.¹⁾ With the proper enterprise architecture, government entities can ensure that unified standards, policies, and procedures are developed and governed over to advance our use of knowledge assets and develop and manage services that reduce overhead and create value for constituents at all levels of government.

The practices related to enterprise architecture will ensure:

- Business processes and data points are mapped and stored in a way that allows standardization, analysis, continual process improvement, and change management across organizations (We will understand how our business processes and data relate and can be optimized for efficiency and cost savings, and we will no longer have to rely on costly technical resources to change code within our new systems when a business process needs to be changed);
- Information is structured, classified, indexed, and made available in a way that it can be easily searched, accessed, and used in other information systems (We will be able to easily and without great expense use data from one information system in another, and easily find data for analysis and reporting across systems);
- Technology provides a platform that standardizes system development processes across government entities and private sector partners makes systems and data interoperable and allows light business applications to be built from digital services (We will be able to significantly reduce the cost of information system development and maintenance, and avoid technology bloat); and
- Applications are built to unified standards to ensure they can be scaled to handle capacity, are reliable and secure, and do not have costly and unnecessary “bells and whistles.” We will be able to control the scope of our business applications because vendors will be building to participatory standards.

¹⁾

Enterprise Architecture, UW Information Technology. Accessed January 24, 2019.

<http://www.washington.edu/uwit/divisions/isss/ea/>

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