The Nimble Elephant: Agile Delivery of Data Models using a Pattern-based Approach

John Giles

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The Nimble Elephant: Agile Delivery of Data Models using a Pattern-based Approach John Giles "Get it done well and get it done fast" are twin, apparently opposing, demands. Data architects are increasingly expected to deliver quality data models in challenging timeframes, and agile developers are increasingly expected to ensure that their solutions can be easily integrated with the data assets of the overall organization. If you need to deliver quality solutions despite exacting schedules, "The Nimble Elephant" will help by describing proven techniques that leverage the libraries of published data model patterns to rapidly assemble extensible and robust designs. The three sections in the book provide guidelines for applying the lessons to your own situation, so that you can apply the techniques and patterns immediately to your current assignments.

The first section, Foundations for Data Agility, addresses some perceived aspects of friction between "data" and "agile" practitioners. As a starting point for resolving the differences, pattern levels of granularity are classified, and their interdependencies exposed. A context of various types of models is established (e.g. conceptual / logical / physical, and industry / enterprise / project), and you will learn how to customize patterns within specific model types.

The second section, Steps Towards Data Agility, shares guidelines on generalizing and specializing, with cautions on the dangers of going too far. Creativity in using patterns beyond their intended purpose is encouraged. The short-term "You Ain't Gonna Need It" (YAGNI) philosophy of agile practitioners, and the longer-term strategic perspectives of architects, are compared and evaluated. Consideration is given to the potential of enterprise views contributing to project-specific models. Other topics include industry models, iterative modeling, creation of patterns when none exist, and patterns for rules-in-data. The section ends with a perspective on the modeler's possible role in agile projects, followed by a case study.
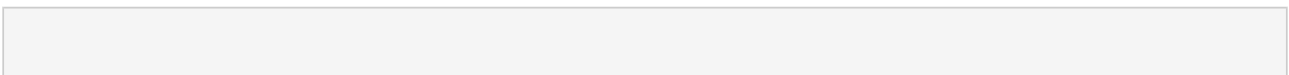
The final section, A Bridge to the Land of Object Orientation, provides a pathway for re-skilling traditional data modelers who want to expand their options by actively engaging with the ranks of object-oriented developers.

I'm delighted to see that John has put his extensive experience and broad knowledge of data modeling into print! John's ability to simplify the complex, and to share his knowledge and enthusiasm - and humor - with colleagues, comes through in this very useful and readable book. I recommend it to anyone working with data.
- Monika Remenyi, Senior Data Architect, Telstra

John Giles has written a compelling and engaging book about the importance of data modeling patterns in the world of agile computing. His book is clearly and simply written, and it is full of excellent examples drawn from his extensive experience as a practitioner. You will see the enthusiasm and passion that John clearly has for his work in data modeling. And you will see in his book that any interchange with John will always have its fair share of good humor and wisdom!
-Professor Ron Weber, Dean, Faculty of IT, Monash University

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