Model Driven Design of Web Applications

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TeCWeB

Departamento de Informática

Schedule

Mon June 19	Introduction/ Overview (Schwinger)	1h
	Requirements Modeling	75m
Tue June 20	Conceptual Modeling	30m
	Navigation Modeling - Navigational Classes	60m
	Project activity Start modeling the example problem	45m
Wed June 21	Navigation Modeling - Contexts and Access Structures	90m
	Project activity Navigation modelling of example problem	45m
Thu June 23	Interface Design	60m
	Project activity Introduction to HyperDE – undestanding the enviroment, start of implementation of solution to example problem	75m
Fri June 24	Project activity Finishing the implementation of example problem	120m
	Wrap-up Overview of what has been done Discussion on further work	30m

My Own Bias

- Web applications are “Advanced Information Systems”
- Solution to complex problems is done by a *man-machine team*; the part done by the machine is an Advanced Information System
- Advanced Information Systems allow knowledge representation:
  - “informally”, when processed by the human being (hypertext/hypermedia)
  - “formally”, when processed by the computer (AI, KBSs, DBs, IR, etc…)
  - Boundary between formal and informal is arbitrary and can be moved

My Own Bias

- Hypertext paradigm is used to
  - Help humans process informally represented knowledge
  - Integrate both representation
- Interactivity
  - Paradigm shift - non-sequential, user-controled
  - Time dependent data

Design Issues for Web applications

- How do we characterize what tasks are to be supported?
- What are the information items?
- How does one navigate and process information items?
- How are information items perceived?
- How do we take the user into account in the application itself?
- Can we reuse designs effectively?
- Can we be systematic in the process?

Some premises

- Should be Model-based
  - allow abstractions to control complexity
- No single model solves it all!
- Should support various possible software architectures
- Should have a diagrammatic notation whenever possible
- Domain Specific Languages (DSLs) should be employed when possible

Graphical Notations

- Are graphical notations really easier?
- Human being has special purpose hardware – cognitive apparatus
- Map visual properties onto domain properties
  - shape
  - color
  - position
  - size
- Be consistent in the mapping
- Adequate choice of visual property still an art...
- Can't express everything graphically!

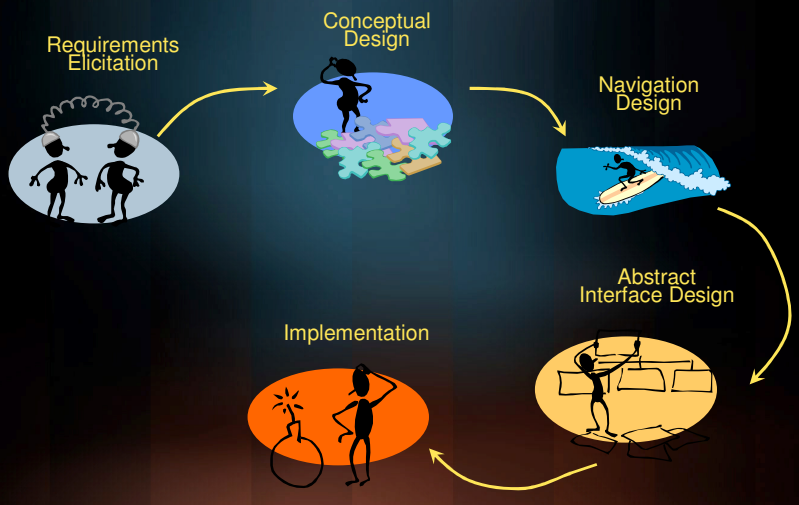
Some premises

- A good Web application is a good hypermedia application
- We will use OOHDM/SHDM as a reference
  - http://www.tecweb.inf.puc-rio.br/oohdm

Useful abstractions

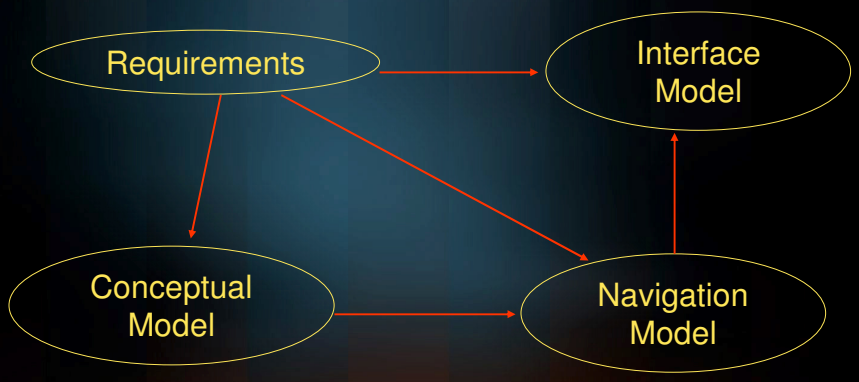
- User Interaction Diagrams
- Conceptual Model
- Navigation Model
- Abstract Interface
- Domain Specific Languages (DSLs)
- Design Patterns
- Frameworks
- Design Rationale

OOHDM/SHDM Phases



Requirements

Requirements Elicitation



Characterizing Tasks

- Several design methods employ Scenarios and Use Cases
- Web applications allow the user to navigate through information items using their navigational structure.
- Business logic is separate from navigation

Characterizing Tasks

- User Interaction Diagrams (UIDs)
  - diagrammatic modeling technique
  - focus exclusively on the information exchange between the application and the user.
  - UIDs consider neither user interface aspects nor navigation aspects.
- UIDs support the synthesis of
  - conceptual model
  - navigation structure
  - interface elements

Proposed method

Steps

1. Designer familiarization with domain;
2. Scenario specification;
3. Use Case specification;
4. UID specification;
5. User validation;
6. Synthesis of conceptual schema.

1. Designer familiarization with Domain

- Analysis of documents and interaction with users themselves.
- Results:
  1. Identification of Classes of Users
  2. Identification of Potential Scenarios

1.1 Identification of Classes of Users

- Users are people that exchange information with the application
- Classes of Users represent users that perform the same set of tasks.
- Note: Users only discuss scenarios for tasks they perform

1.2 Scenario Identification

- A scenario describes how a task is carried out from the user's point of view.
- First scenarios are identified, and described later.

Exemple – CD Store

1.1 User classes

- Client

1.2 Potential Scenarios

- Buy a CD given its title;
- Buy a CD given a song title;
- Buy a CD given the name of a song composer;
- Buy a CD given a performer's name;
- Find information about a CD;
- Find CDs of a given genre;
- See most popular CDs;
- ...

2. Scenario specification

- Users describe scenarios for the tasks they wish to perform
- Scenarios should not focus on interface or implementation details
- Scenarios are described in natural language

Example – CD Store

- **User 2**

1. Buy a CD given a performer's name.

   I type the performers name or some prefix, and the application shows the performers that match the entered string.

   I choose the perfomer of interest, and its CD's are shown, with a picture of the CD cover.

   I select the CD I'm looking for, and it is added to my shopping cart. It would be nice to see the CD price as well.

   I can buy more than one CD by clicking on the ones I desire.

Example – CD Store

- **User 1**

1. Buy a CD given a performer's name.

   I want to buy a CD by Caetano Veloso; I type his name, and get a list of his CDs. For each CD, its year, number of tracks, availability and price are shown. It is also possible to find out more details about a CD, such as track names, track time, composer, an image of the CD cover. For some tracks it is possible to listen to an excerpt. I select the CD I want, and I can go back to see information about other CDs. To finalize my purchase, I may remove CDs from the order or add new ones. I can may confirm or cancel the order.

3. Use Case Specification

- All scenarios for the same tasks are gathered and consolidated
- A step-by-step description of the task is synthesized
- Additional information may be included
- Referral to other scenarios made when applicable

Use Case - ex: CD Store

- **Use Case 4**: Buy a CD given a performer's name.

Scenarios: 1.1 / 2.1 / 3.4 / 4.1 / 5.2 / 6.1 / 6.4

Description:

1. The user enters the name (or part of it) of the performer's name. If desired, he may also enter the year or period of the CD.
2. The system shows a list of performers matching the input. If there is only one match, a list of CDs is shown (step 4).
3. The user selects the desired performer.
4. The system shows a list of CDs of that performer. For each CD, the title, performer name, year, price, availability, cover picture , country and genre are shown.

Use Case - ex: CD Store (cont.)

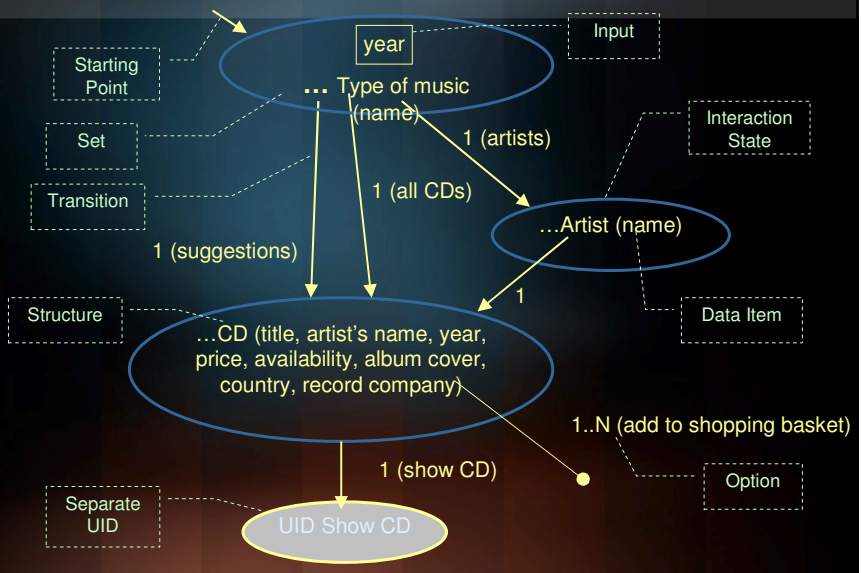
- **(Use Case 4**: Buy a CD given a performer's name.)

5. If the user desires, s/he may see the songs in the CD (use case **Show songs in CD**).
6. If the user wishes to buy one or more CDs, s/he selects the desired ones to be included in the shopping cart. (use case **Buy**).
7. Is so desired, the user may return to step 5 to select another CD by the same performer.

4. UID Specification

- One UID is specified for each Use Case.
- Graphical representation of UID.
- May be annotated with non-functional requirements and complementary information

UID Notation



UIDs - Notation

- Elipsis represent interaction between user and application
- Each elipsis shows the information exchanged between between user and application
- Arrows connecting elipsis represent procssing by the application before new information is exchanged.
- Initial interaction is signaled with sourceless arrow

Synthesis of UID - ex: CD Store

- **Use Case 4**: Buy CD given a performer's name.

The user enters the name (or part of it) of the performer's name. If desired, he may also enter the year or period of the CD.

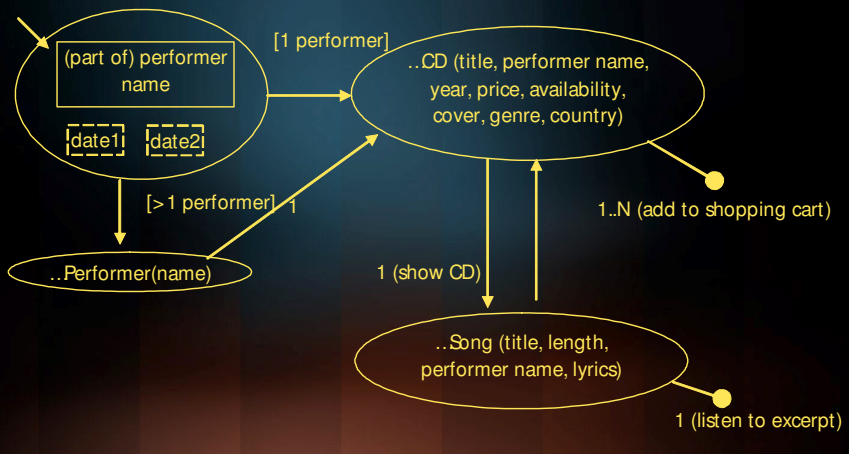
The system shows a list of CDs of that performer. For each CD, the title, performer name, year, price, availability, cover picture , country and genre are shown.

The system shows a list of performers matching the input. If there is only one match, a list of CDs is shown (step 4).

If the user desires, s/he may see the songs in the CD

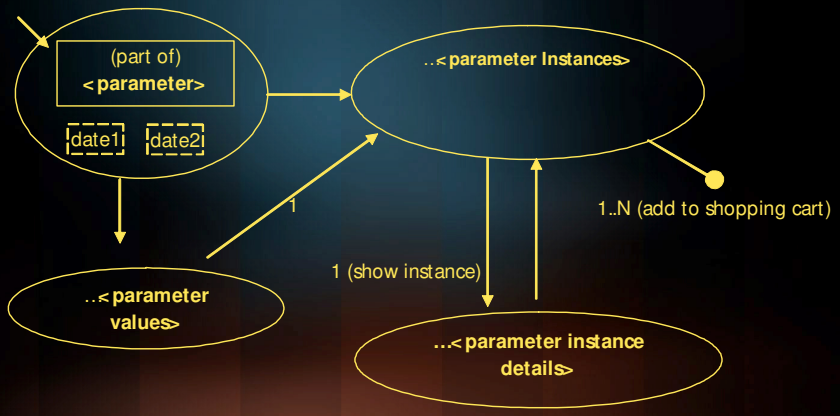
Synthesis of UID - ex: CD Store

- **Use Case 4**: Buy CD given a performer's name.



Parameterized UIDs

- **UIDs** may be parameterized.
- Validation with user use instantiated UID



5. Use Cases and UIDs Validation

- Use cases and UIDs should be validated with users
- Differences resulting from validation must be consolidated
  - May result in more UIDs
  - May remove Use Case
  - May remove user class
- Convergence of process based on resource availability
  - Time
  - Cost

Conceptual Design

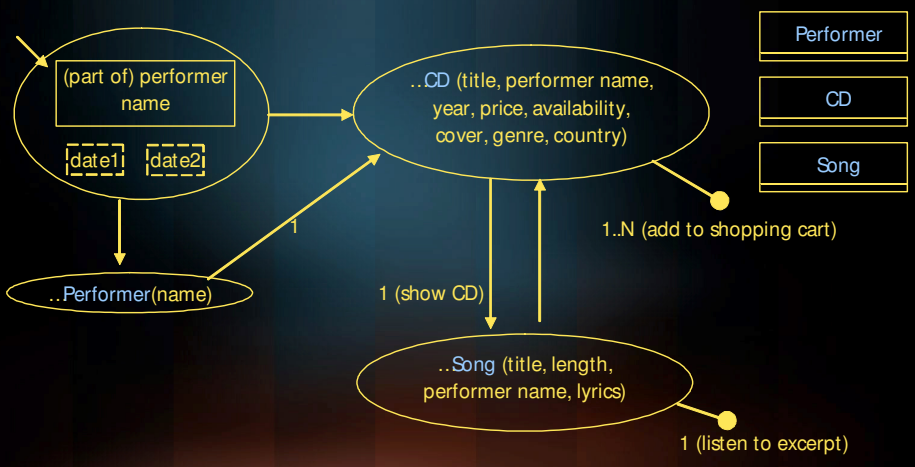
6. Synthesis of Preliminary Conceptual Schema

- A preliminary Conceptual Schema is obtained by applying guidelines
- The resulting schema must be manually complemented

Class definition

- Define a Class for each structure in the UID
- Is it assumed there is an OID attribute for each class

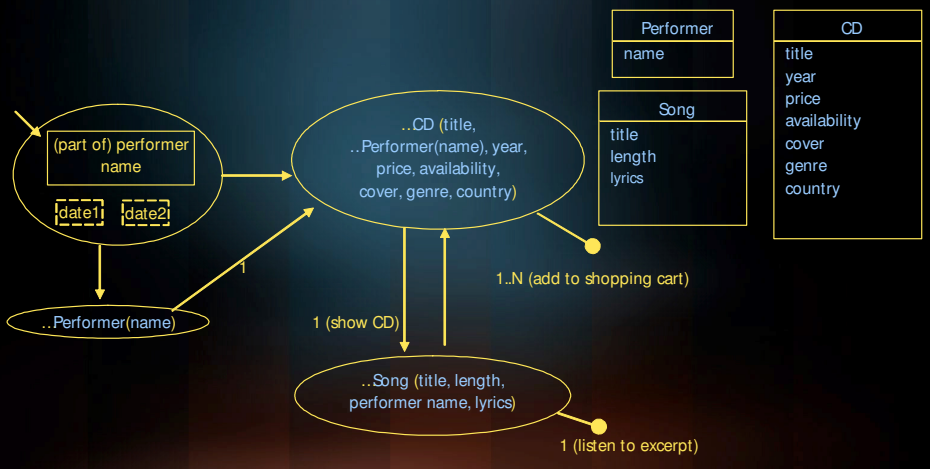
Class definition example



Attribute definitions

- Each data item becomes an attribute
- If the data item is functionally dependent on the OID of some class, but not transitively dependent on this OID,
  - the item becomes an attribute of this class
- If the data item is functionally dependent on the OID of more than one class, but not transitively dependent on them,
  - the item becomes an attribute of an association between these classes
- If the data item is not functionally dependent of any OID, or only transitively dependent of an existing OID
  - the item becomes an attribute of a new class

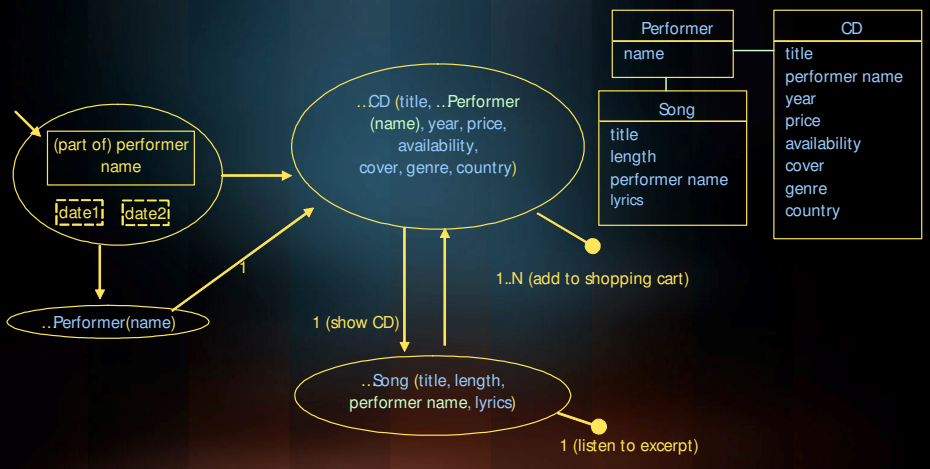
Attribute definition example



Definition of Relations

- Each attribute that appears within a structure that does not correspond to its class, there is a relation between the attribute's class and the class corresponding to the structure
- This also applies to structures within structures
- Check for semantic correctness
- Determine cardinality

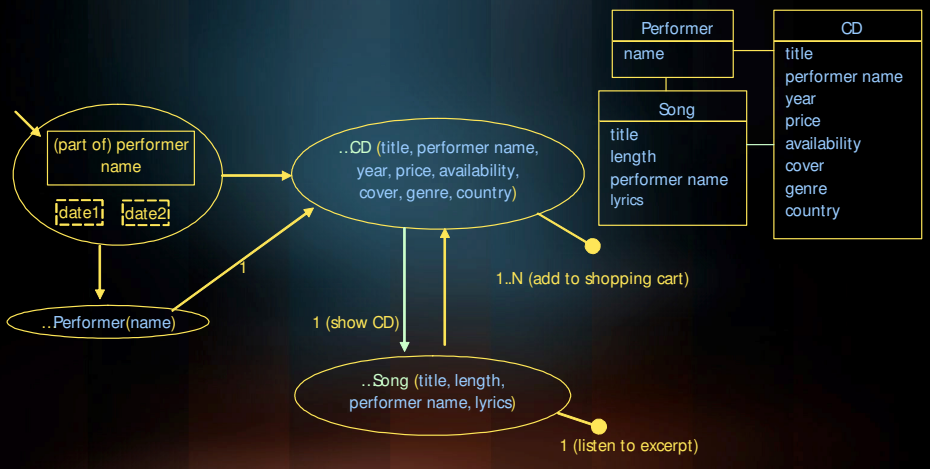
Definition of relation example



Definition of Relations

- For each interaction state transition (arrow) if the classes corresponding to the source and destination elements are different, define a relation between these classes
- Verify semantic correctness
- Determine cardinalities

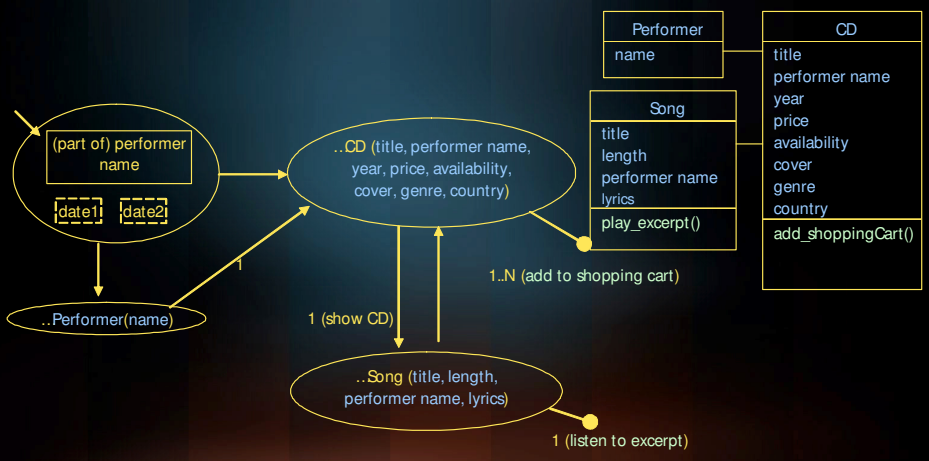
Definition of relation example



Definition of Operations

- For each option leading to an empty state, define an operation for the associated class
- Verify semantic correctness

Definition of relation example



Adjustments and Verifications

- Identify generalizations e agregations
- Define missing cardinalities
- Eliminate reduntant cycles of relations
- Check for missing attributes (incorrect Use Cases)
- If a class has been modeled as an attribute of another class, it is likely to be a terminology problem – verify class name redundancy

Navigation Design

Navigation Design

- Why Navigation?
  - important functionality whose basic semantics are known – opportunity for specialized model
- Supermarket Analogy
  - Product Kits
  - Aisles
  - Product placement

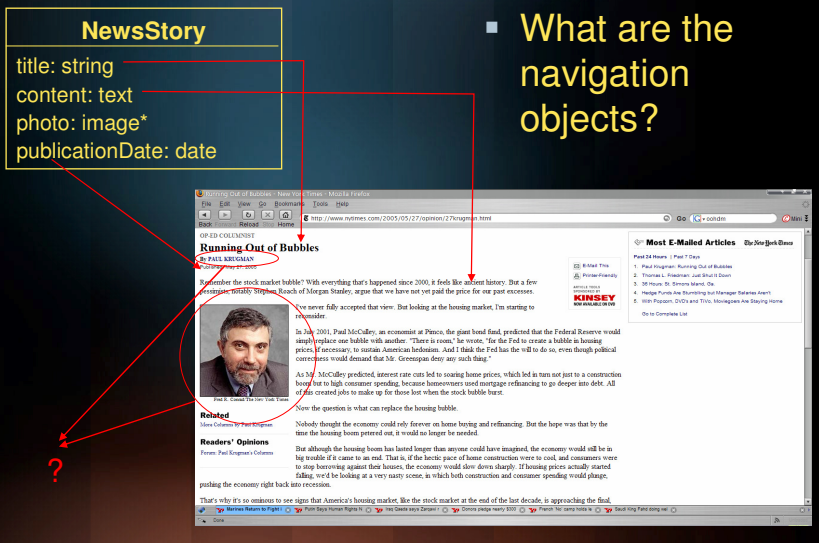
Navigation Design must define

- What structure/items will be navigated?
  - Nodes
- How will the user navigate among items?
  - Links
  - Access Structures (choice steps)
  - Contexts (Task induced grouping)
- Can navigation items be (slightly) different depending on how they are access
  - In-Context Classes

Navigation Object

- What are the navigation objects?

Navigation Objects



- What are the navigation objects?

Navigation Design (II)

- Navigation objects are *views* over conceptual objects!

CD {from c: CD}
title: string performer: p: Performer, <p.name *where* p PerformsIn c> songs: S: Song, <s.title *where* c Includes s> content: text cover: image* publicationDate: date

Navigation Design – Topology of the Navigation Space

- Node and link descriptions are too low level
- We need some abstraction analogous to the "Class" abstraction with respect to objects
- Describe sets of objects that behave analogously wrt navigation

Navigation Design - Context

- We define Navigation Contexts as sets of objects that have similar navigation properties
- Every navigation object is always accessed within a context

$$\frac{\text{Navigation Object}}{\text{Context}} \equiv \frac{\text{Object}}{\text{Class}}$$

Defining Navigation Contexts

- A context is characterized by
  - A query for selecting its elements
  - An ordering for accessing its elements
  - An optional parameter
- Depending on the query they can be
  - class based (a filter on class attributes)
  - relation based (derived from an 1-n relation)
  - both

Navigation Contexts - Class Derived

- Simple class based – Filter elements of a class :
  - "CDs whose genre is *Samba*".
  - Context = {e | P(e), e ∈ C}
- Class based group – Parameterized set of simple contexts
  - "CDs by Genre"
  - Group = {$Context_{genre}$}, $Context_{genre}$ = {c | c.genre=*genre*, c ∈ CD}.

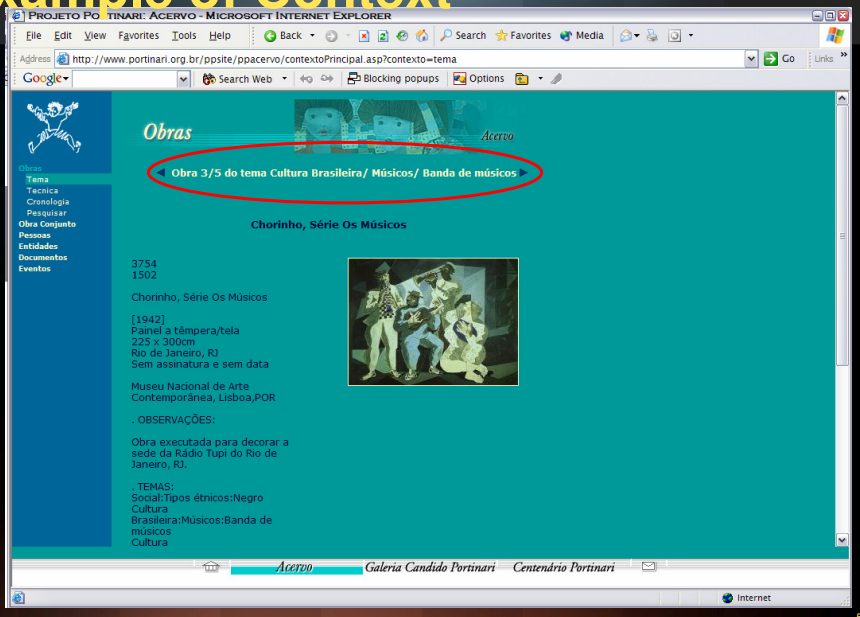
Navigation Context - Link Derived

- Link based – based on an 1-to-n relationship.
  - "All CDs by Tom Jobim"
  - Context = {p | "Tom Jobim" IsAuthorOf p, p ∈ CD}.
  - Structural links are a particular case

Navigation Context - Link Derived

- Link based group – Based on an 1-n relationship where the source instance can vary
  - "CDs by Author"
  - Group = {AuthorContext}, AuthorContext = {c | a IsAuthorOf c, p ∈ CD, a ∈ Person}

Example of Context



Navigation Design - Indexes

- Indexes are sets of links to navigation elements (nodes or other indexes)
- Each element of the index must have at least one link, and may have other attributes
- Types of Indexes
  - Context derived
  - Defined by query
  - Arbitrary

Navigational Attributes

- Navigational attributes can be
  - An index
  - An anchor to an element
  - A set

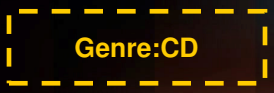
CD {from c: CD}
title: string performer: anchor(Ctx(PerformerByCD(self))) songs: Idx (SongbyCD(self)) availability:integer cover: image* publicationDate: date

Notation: Access Structures

- Simple Access Structure

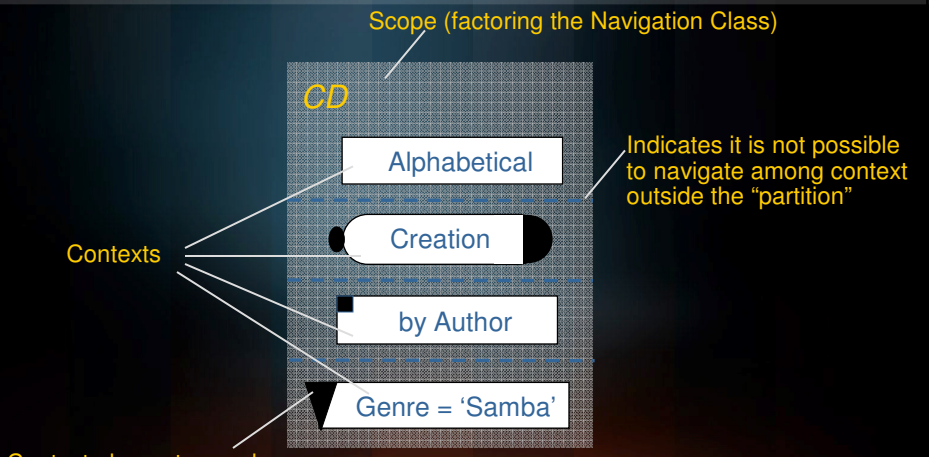
- Access structure with multiple ordering

- Dynamic Access structure – the query is defined at navigation time

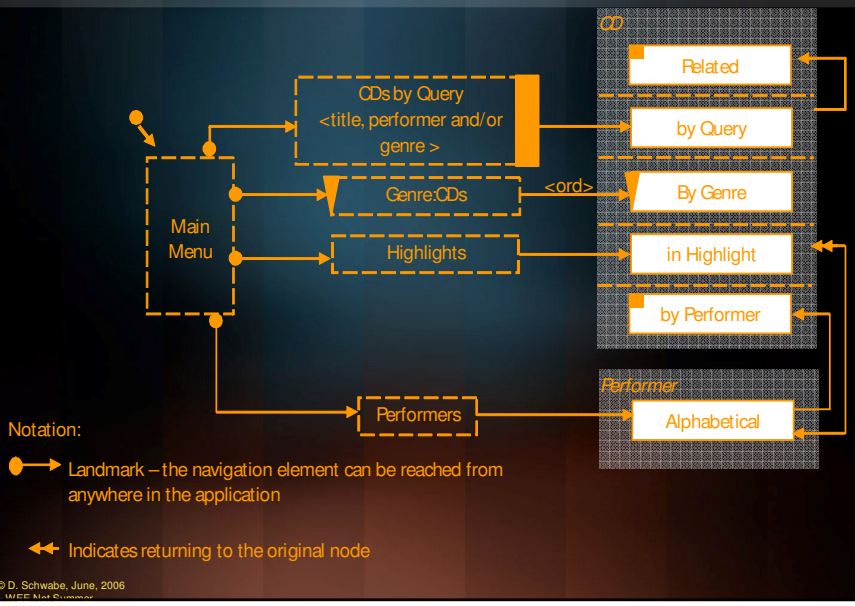


- Hierarchical access structure – Selection in one level determines the elements of the next level

Notation: Navigation Context

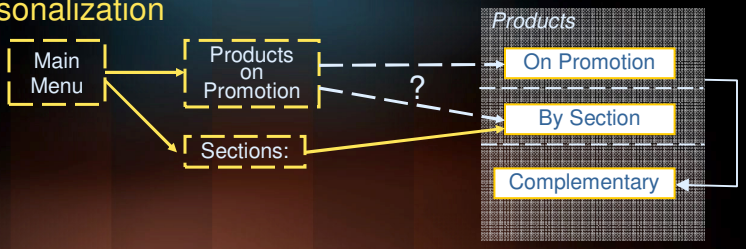


Navigation Context Schema - Example



Abstraction: Expressing Marketing Requirements

- How should navigation be for items on promotion in an e-store?
  - "Cross-sell"
  - "Loss Leaders" e "Up-sell"
  - Promotions
  - Personalization



Synthesizing Context Diagrams from UIDs

- Synthesize a partial context diagram for each task
- Unify partial context diagrams
- Complement result
- Derive Navigation Class diagram
- Derive In-Context Class diagram

Mapping UIDs to Contexts Diagrams

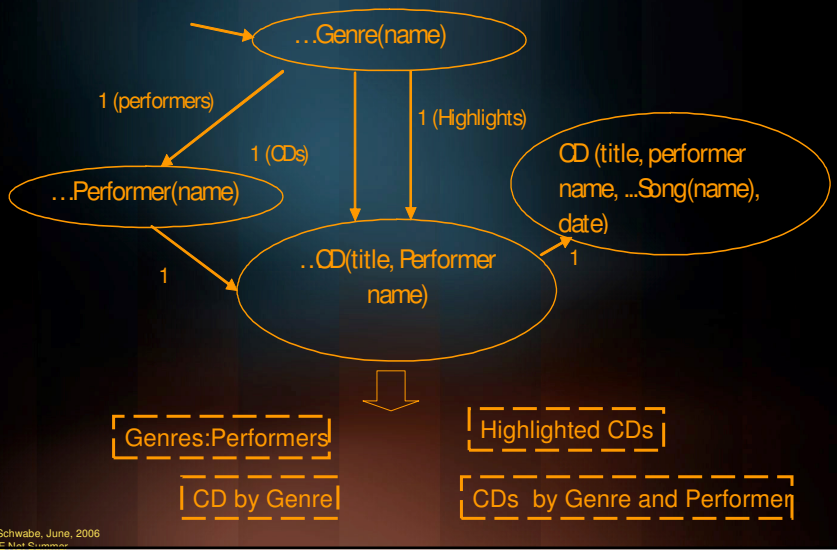
- UID structures and sets are mapped onto
  - Access structures
  - Navigation Contexts
  - Lists
- Single structures are mapped onto
  - Navigation Contexts
- UID input elements mapped onto
  - Access structures

Mapping guideline 1

- If the task requires elements to be compared, and one or more be selected by the user, the set of structures should be mapped onto an Access Structure

Applying guideline 1

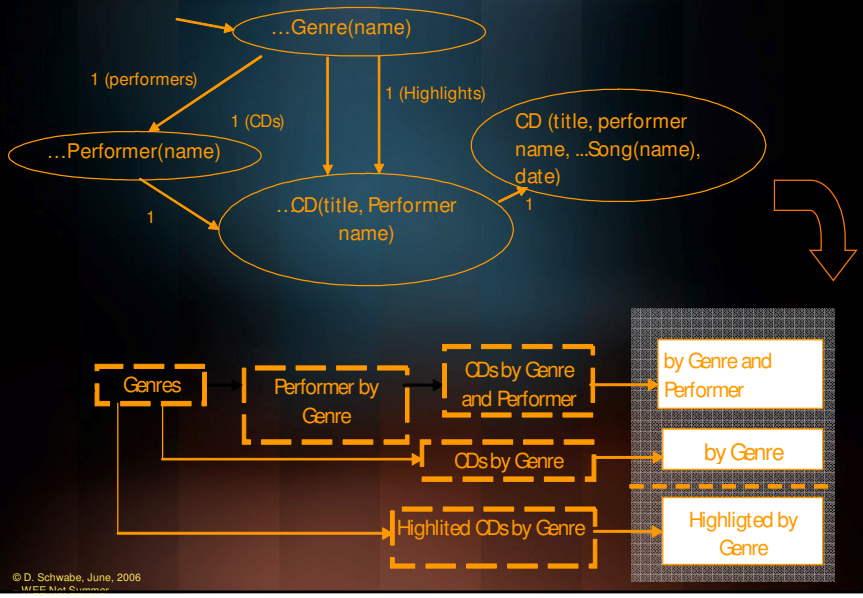
UID: Find CDs by a performer given a genre



Mapping guideline 2

- If the task requires the information about a specific element to be accessed,
  - the set of structures should be mapped onto a Navigation Context
  - define the access to the context
    - context derived access structure
    - anchor to an object in the context
  - Name the context accordingly
- Similarly for single structures

Applying guideline 2



Mapping guideline 3

- If the task does not require set elements to be compared, but they must be accessible at the same time, the set should be mapped onto a list.
  - List of song titles for CD

Mapping guideline 4

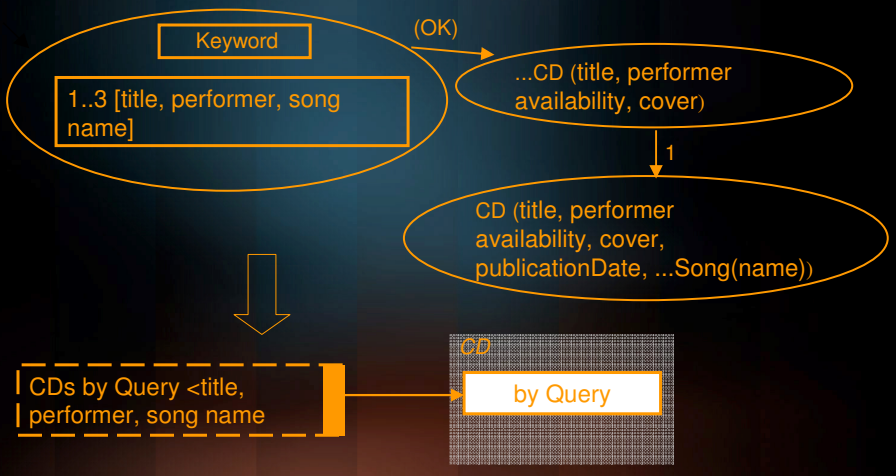
- When the task requires a search or selection to return a specific element, map the data input onto an Access Structure
- If the data input is followed by a state showing structures of the same kind, both the data entry and the state are mapped onto a single access structure

Refining the type of Access Structure

- If the user makes *arbitrary queries*
  - map the input state and resulting state into a dynamic access structure
- If the user can generate the possible input values
  - map the input state and the resulting state into a single or hierarchical access structure

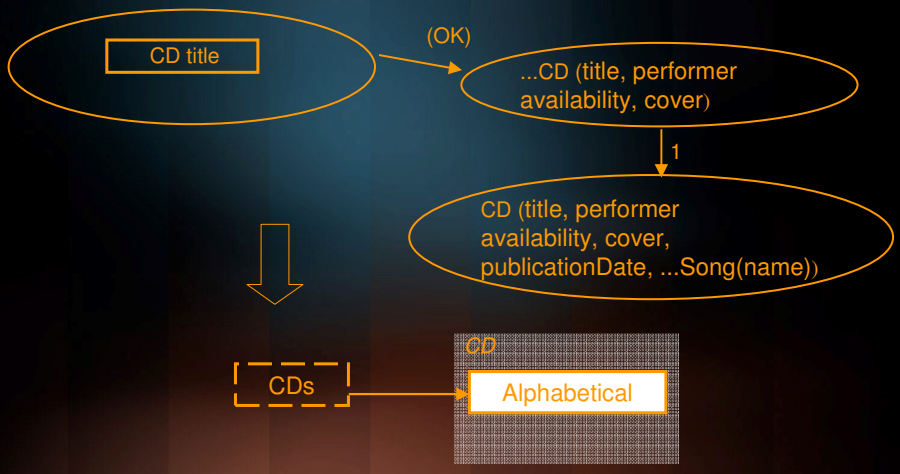
Example 1

- Arbitrary query



Example 2

- system can generate the options



Validation of Task Navigation

- Generated navigations should be validated with users
- Convergence based on resource availability
- May lead to more than one application

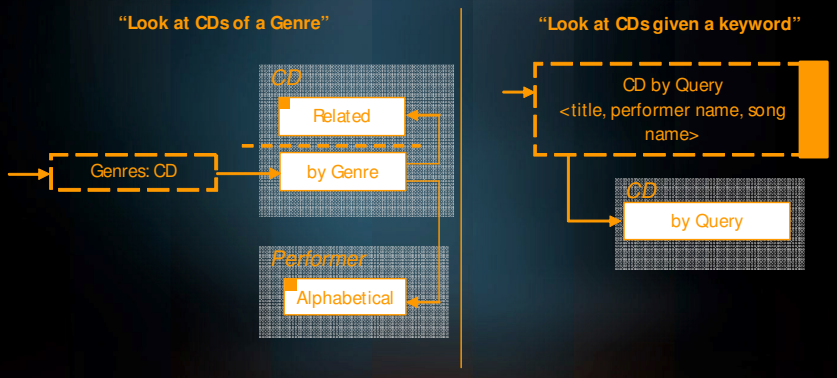
Unification of contexts

- Incrementally unify partial navigation schemas
- After each unification step
  - generate a new context schema
  - update object vision cards

Context unification

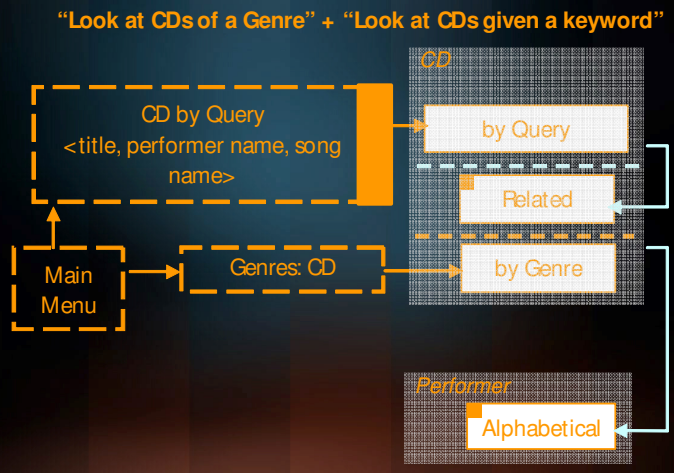
- The same class may appear in contexts in different partial schemas
  - Attempt to unify these contexts
    - Object views and permissions do not conflict
    - resulting context must support original tasks
  - If unification was successful
    - unify access paths to resulting context if possible
  - If unification was not possible
    - Attempt to generalize navigations in each single context to the other contexts
    - Attempt to add navigation between them

Context Unification - Example

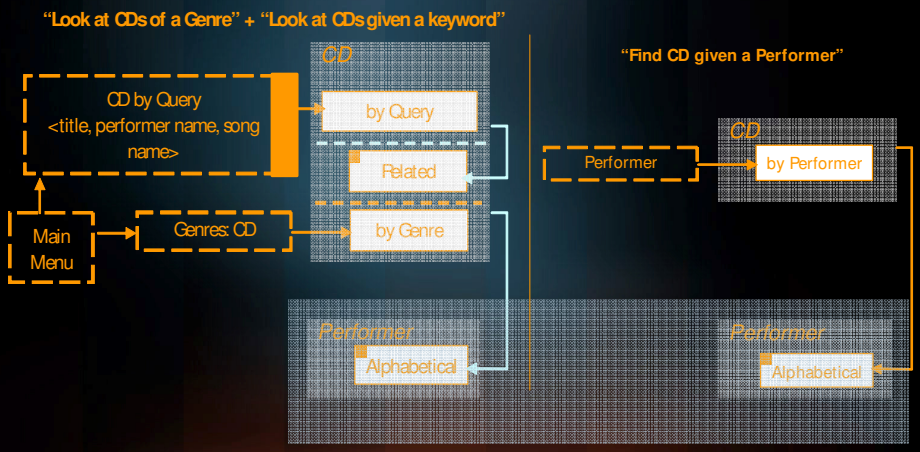


- Can we unify "CDs by Genre" and "CD by Query"?

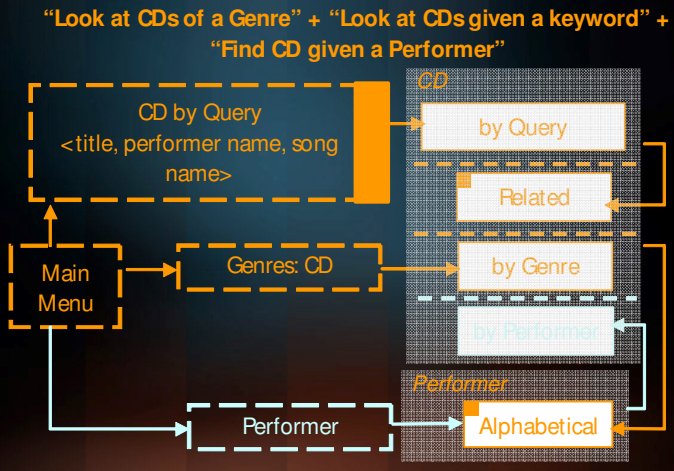
Context Unification - Example



Context Unification - Example



Context Unification - Example

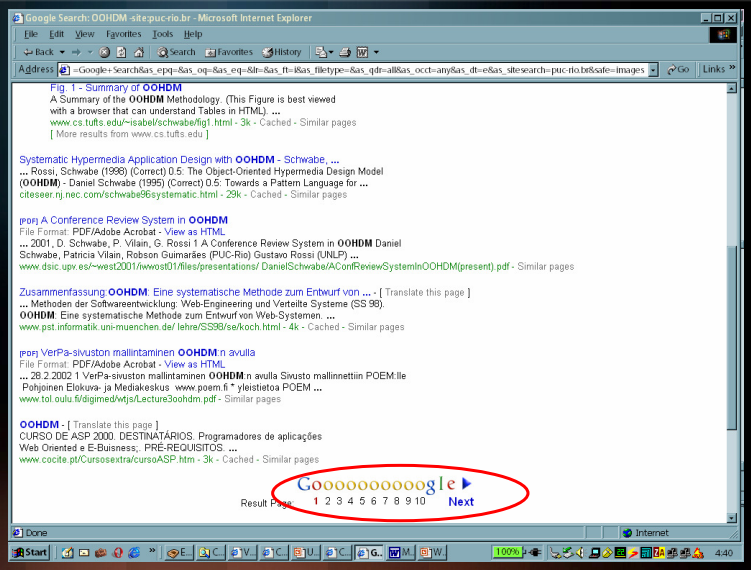


Abstract Interface Design

Interface Design

- Interface design is decoupled from navigation
  - Not everything you click is a link!
- Abstract Interface
  - Interface is composed of a set of perceivable interface objects
  - Presentation objects are mapped to navigation objects
  - Events in the interface trigger either navigation or functions (business logic)
  - Perceivable objects change as a result of event processing
- Allows independence from technology, standards, devices

Interface Operations



Proposed Approach

- Factor the interface specification in two level – abstract interface and concrete interface
- Abstract Widget Ontology
  - Describes interfaces focusing on information exchange aspects
- Concrete Widget Ontology
  - Describes concrete interface widgets commonly found in implementation environments
- Ontologies currently use OWL

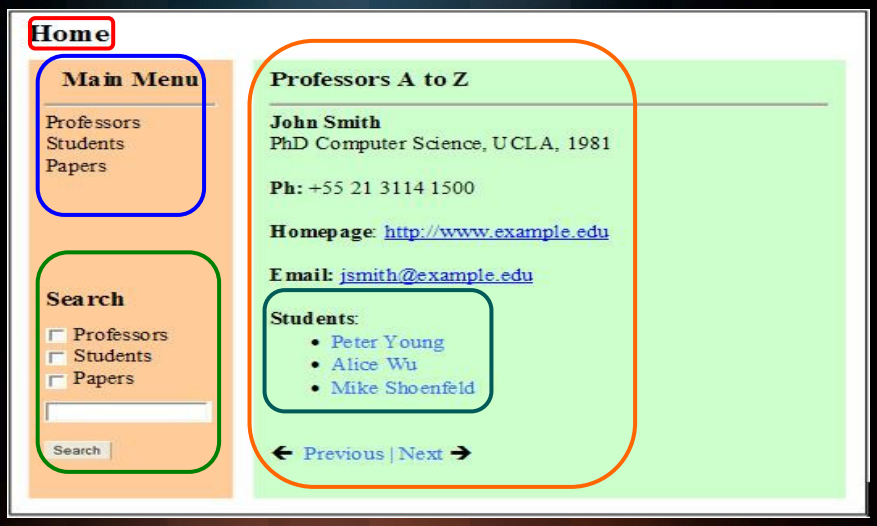
Abstract Widget Ontology

- ElementExihibitor – exihibits some kind of content
  - Label
  - Text
  - Image
- SimpleActivator – reacts to external events
  - Anchor
  - Button

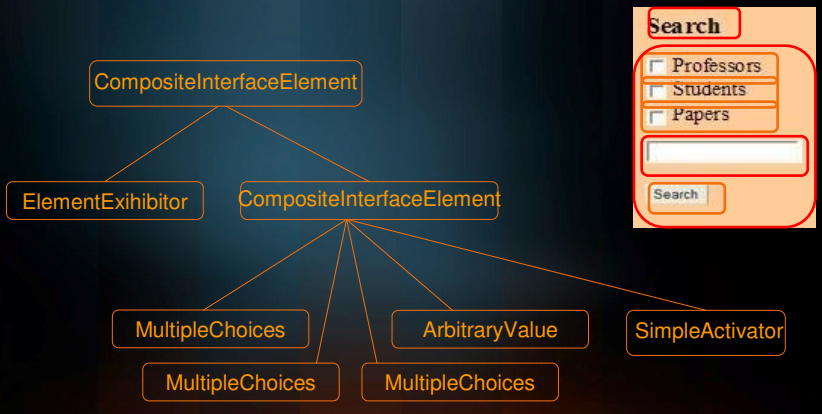
Abstract Widget Ontology

- Capturer/ArbitraryValue – is able to capture some arbitrary input value
  - Single-line text box
  - Multi-line text box
- Capturer/PredefinedOptions – the value captured is chosen from a given set
  - Radion button
  - Check box
  - Combo box

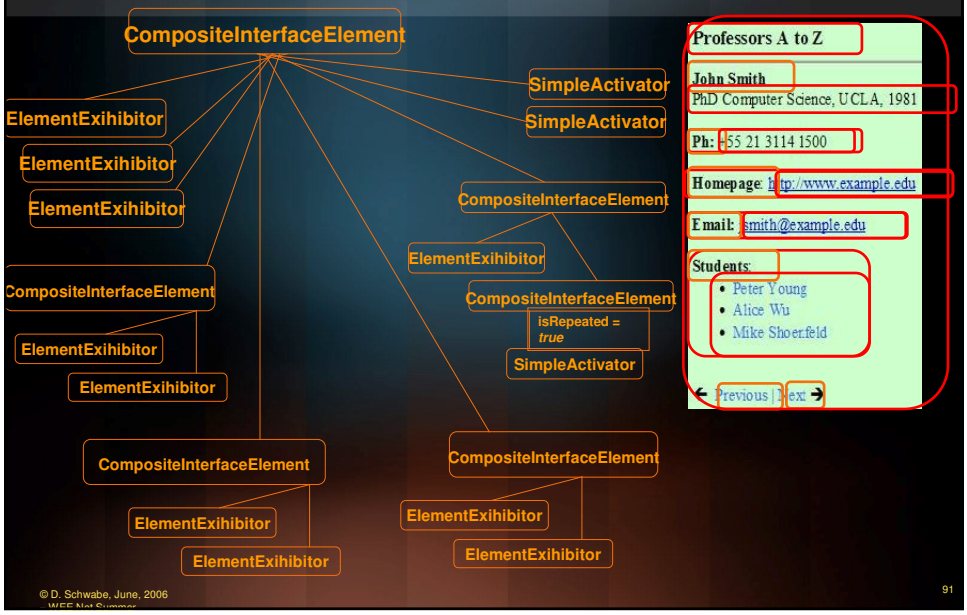
Concrete Interface Example



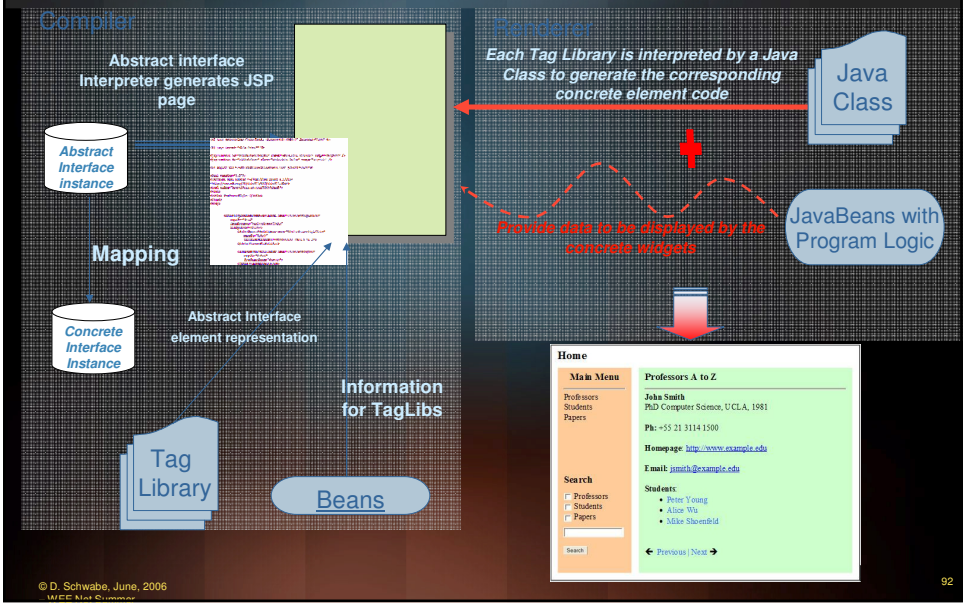
"Search" Component



"Professor Data" Element



Interface Generation Environment



DSL - Simplifying code

- Domain Specific Languages allow direct manipulation of modeled objects
- Can be achieved by dynamically extending existing programming language
- Overload primitive programming language with new, domain-related semantics

Ruby / HyperDE-DSL

Native Classes

Methods for persistence:
find, find_all, find_by_*
create, save, destroy

```
schwabe = Professor.find_by_name
                "Daniel Schwabe"
```

Link access Methods

```
hypermedia = ResearchArea.find_by_name
                "Hypermedia"
```

Link access Methods

```
schwabe.advises.each do |student|
  unless student.works_in.include?(hypermedia)
    student.works_in << hypermedia
  end
end
```

Link value assignment methods

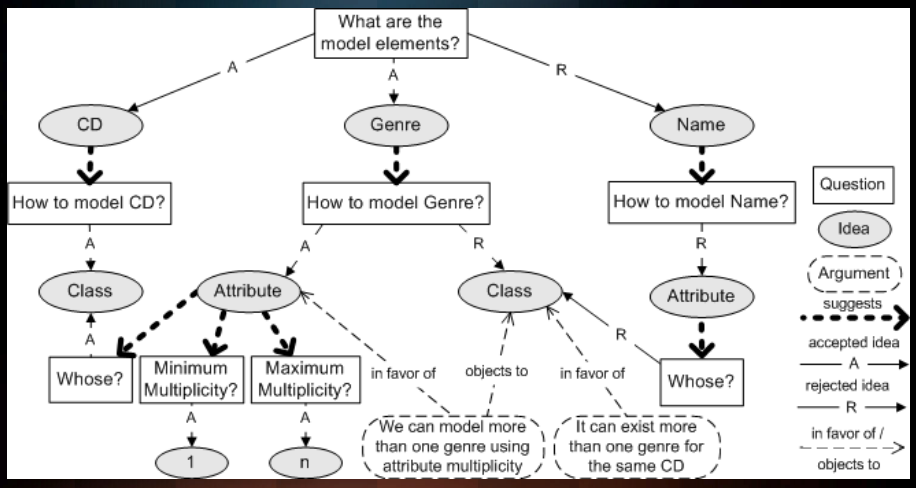
Reuse

- "In the small" reuse of components
  - code fragments
  - html fragments
- Micro-architectures
  - Design Patterns
- Full Architectures
  - Frameworks
- Design Rationale
  - Design decision structure

Design Rationale – Kuaba Ontology

- Vocabulary to represent design decision structure
  - Artifact
  - Idea
  - Argument
  - Decision
  - ...
- Support both reuse and group design
- Assumes designed artifact is described in a formal model

Kuaba - Example



Navigation Patterns

- Help to record and convey good and recurrent navigation architectures
- Can be organized in catalogues and used as "books of experience"
- Examples:
  - Landmark (to access all important sub-sites)
  - News (to indicate new products)
  - Portal (to serve as a gateway to a set of services)
  - Set-Based Navigation

Domain-specific patterns

- In some domains, it is possible to find regular structures of problem-solution pairs
- Example: In e-commerce,
  - Opportunistic Linking (for keeping the user engaged)
  - Advising (for helping the user find products he may like)
  - Explicit Process (for helping the user understand application workflows)
  - Secure Bactrack (for maintaining consistency in navigation operations)

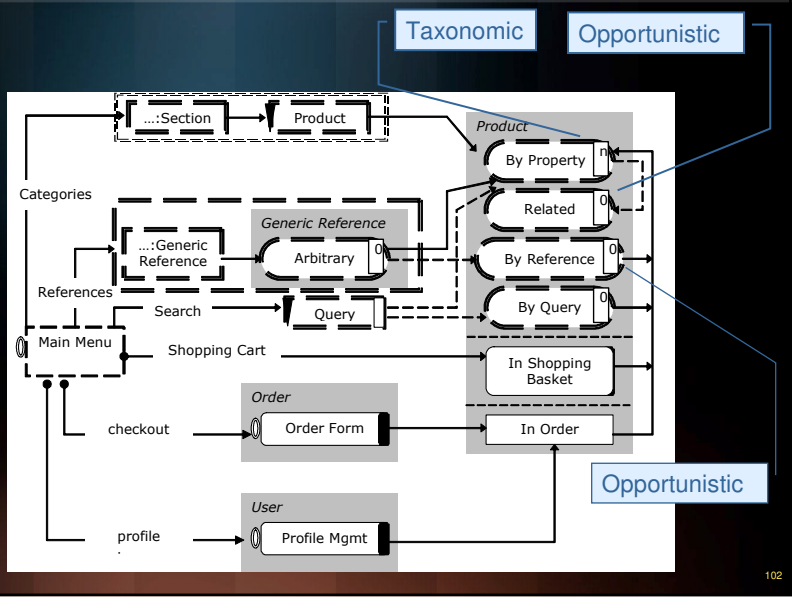
Web Frameworks

- Frameworks are skeletons of applications in a domain
- Extending the notion of framework to the Web domain:
  - Genericity in the conceptual model
  - Genericity in the navigational model (generic nodes and contexts)

OOHDM-Frame

- Uses OOHDM models and notations as a basis for defining frameworks
- A Framework is defined by a set of schemas, containing “hot spots”, and instantiation rules
  - Conceptual Class Schema
  - Navigation and InContext Class Schema
  - Context Diagram and Context Cards
- A Domain is characterized by a Conceptual Schema in OOHDM
  - The only hot spot allowed are classes that are flagged as allowing specialization during the framework instantiation

Navigation Reuse in OOHDM-Frame



Lessons Learned

- Industry still uses few methods
- Tool support
- Graphical notations can work
  - careful choices!
- Specialized vocabularies help
- Models must be used properly

Thanks! Questions?

- HyperDE
  - http://server2.tecweb.inf.puc-rio.br:8000/hyperde
- OOHDM Wiki
  - http://www.tecweb.inf.puc-rio.br/oohdm
- Authoring Course wiki
  - http://www.tecweb.inf.puc-rio.br/autoria
- My email
  - dschwabe@inf.puc-rio.br