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# State of Enterprise Architecture Survey: Results and Findings

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## Introduction

Welcome to this special edition of the Enterprise Architecture Professional Journal.

The Enterprise Architecture (EA) discipline is at a crossroads. Originally born from a need to understand the burgeoning cost and complexity of IT systems, it has changed substantially in execution and perception over its brief 30+ year history. Further complicating this evolution is the astonishing developments over that time in the prevalence and capabilities of technology adopted by organizations.

This has resulted in an increasing rate of change, with which those responsible for a company's future must continually contend. As a result, there is an increase in the potential for EA-based approaches to align business and technology strategies, cut through the hype-driven promotion by vendors, and enabling a holistic view to be formed of the enterprise's operations – including gaps and opportunities.

To meet the changing expectation of businesses, the EA discipline must also evolve. In late 2017, [EA Principals](#) and the [Enterprise Architecture Professional Journal](#) conducted a survey of EA practitioners. The intent was to establish a current state view of the practice, problems and potential future of the EA discipline, in order to better understand how the discipline is changing, and how practitioners see its relevance now and in the future.

The survey contained a series of multiple choice and free text questions, which we have analysed and summarised. This report contains the results of that analysis, and represents the data in two forms:

1. Graphical representations, including statistical analysis of content
2. Textual summarisation of long-form responses

### Acknowledgement

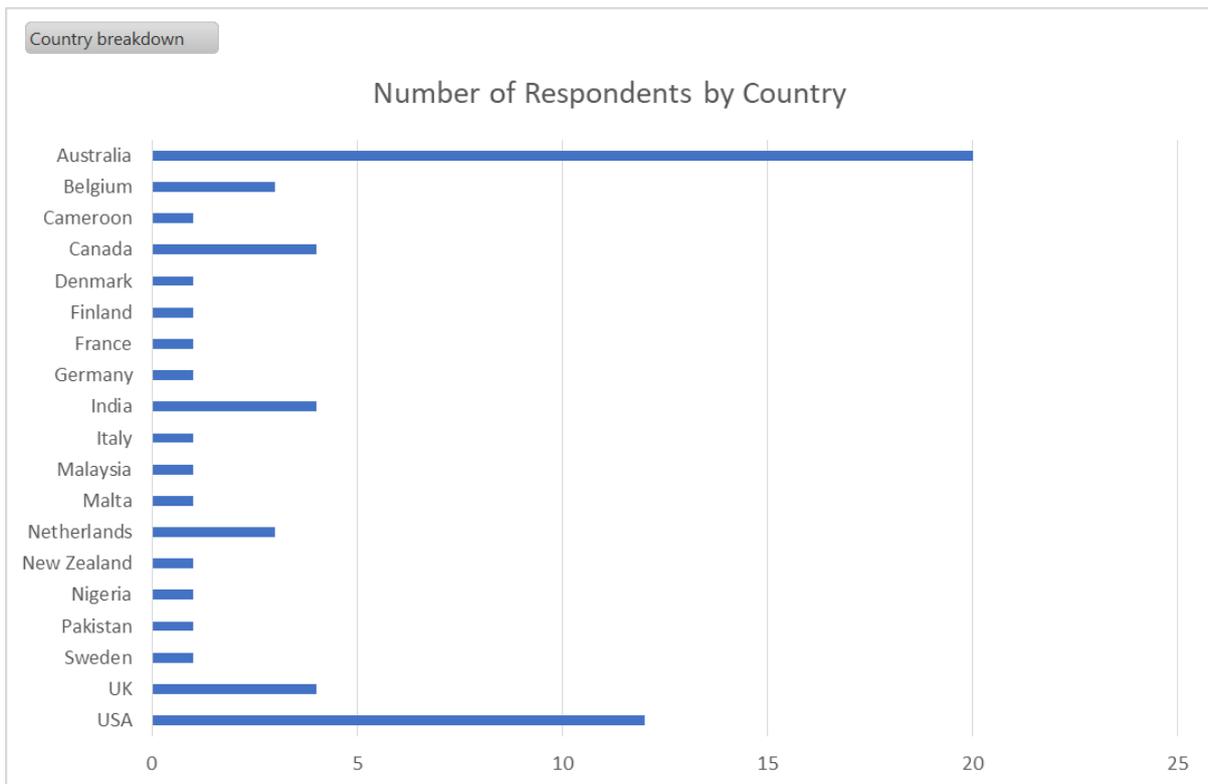
The authors of this report wish to acknowledge the efforts of the respondents. Through their efforts, we are able to gain a clearer, although still incomplete, picture of the status of today's EA discipline, and be better informed as we continue meaningful conversations regarding its future direction.

## Results

The following sections provide statistical and textual summaries of the survey responses, along with the authors' perceptions of these results.

### Geographical diversity

Practitioners in 19 countries provided survey responses, reflecting the global reach of Enterprise Architecture. Results were biased toward the locations of the authors (Australia and the U.S.A.) due to the promotional activity related to the survey, but have sufficient diversity to cover a range of cultural considerations.



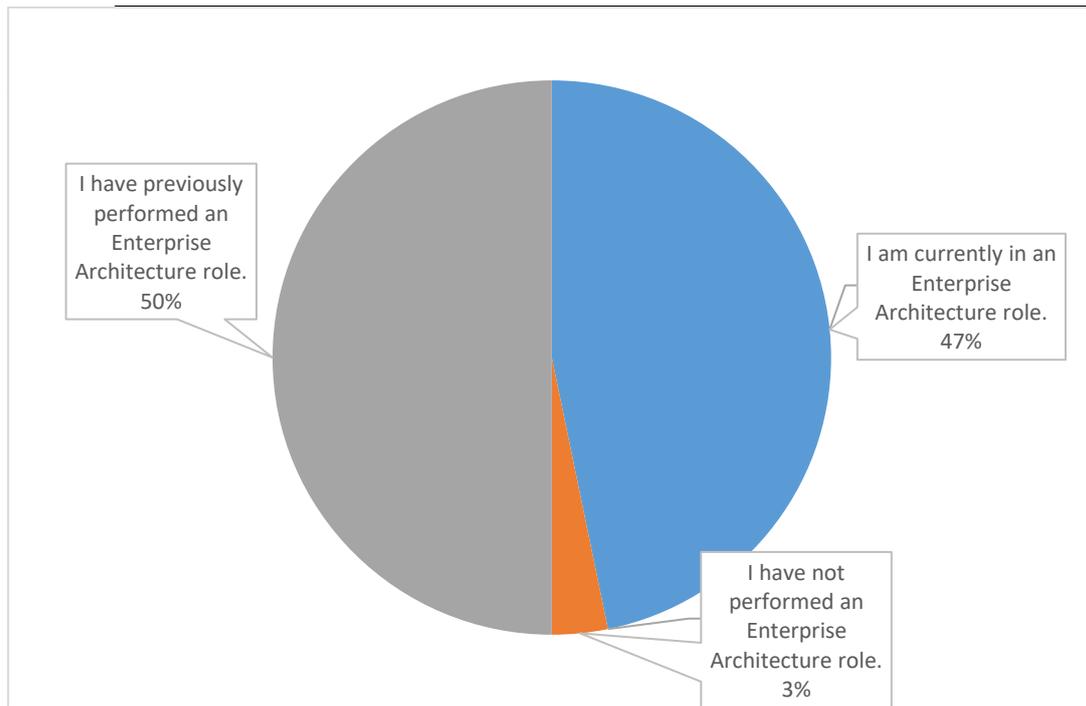
### EA Roles

Across the following three options, respondents were asked to give indications of their current and past experience with the realities of performing an Enterprise Architect role:

- I have not performed an Enterprise Architecture role
- I am currently in an Enterprise Architecture role
- I have previously performed an Enterprise Architecture role

Results show that 97% of respondents have current or past hands-on experience in Enterprise Architecture, providing assurance that survey responses come from real-world experiences and challenges.

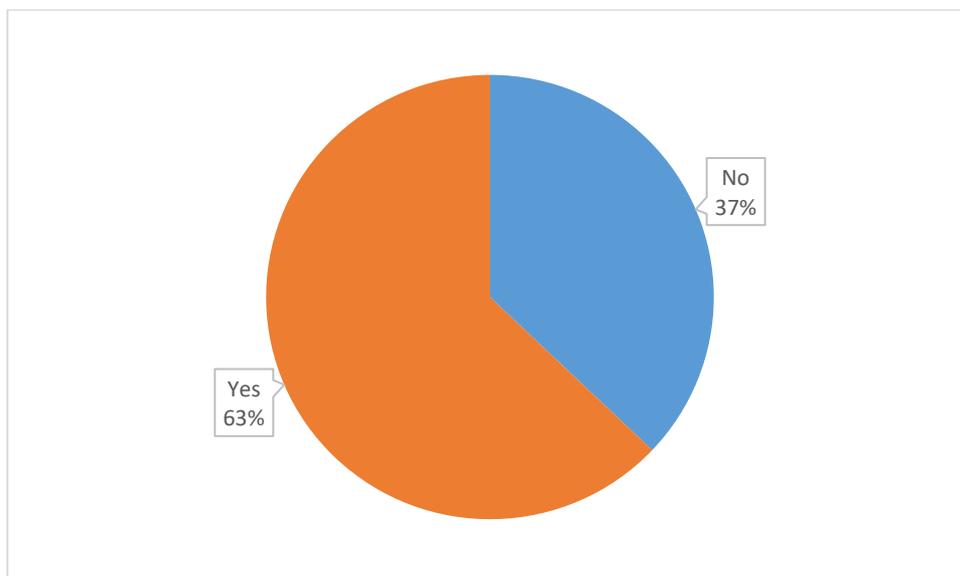
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### Certification

The subject of certification, and its value to practitioners and their employers, is a matter of ongoing debate within the global EA community. When asked if respondents have a formal certification, 1 in 3 declared that they do not.

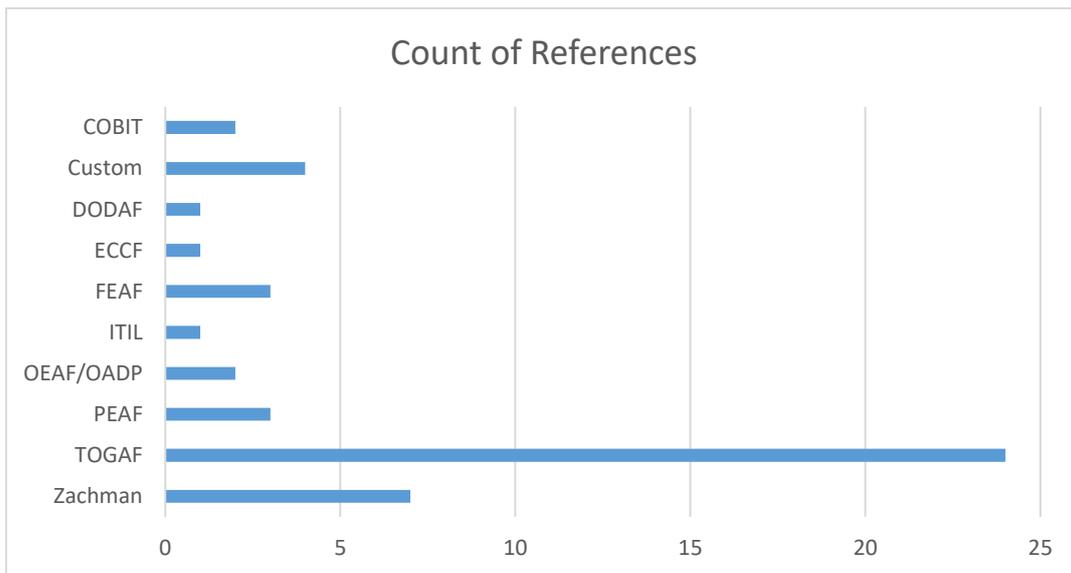
Given the previous result regarding the hands-on experience in EA roles, it appears that a lack of certification is not a barrier to entry in EA roles. Anecdotal evidence in reviewing job advertisements on online job-boards shows a high prevalence of the need for major framework certification, suggesting a disconnect between advertisers/agencies and the experience of practitioners.



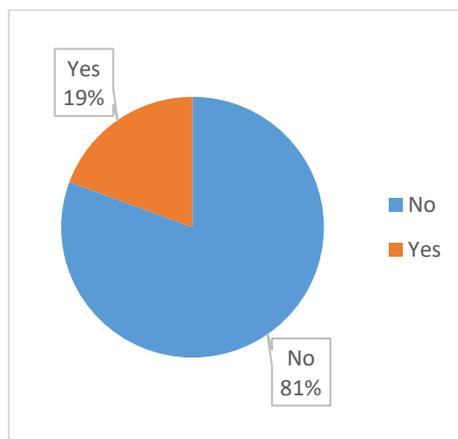
## Frameworks

The past 30 years have seen a proliferation, and subsequent consolidation, of EA frameworks. When asked what frameworks respondents had used at any point in their career, the following responses were observed.

This result accurately reflects the experience of the authors, in that The Zachman Framework<sup>TM1</sup> was prevalent in use in early years as the Enterprise Architecture discipline began, but has been superseded by TOGAF<sup>®2</sup> in most industries. This transition is backed by significant activity by The Open Group (owners of TOGAF) to promote the framework and to generate revenue through its training and certification programs. Other frameworks, particularly those aligned to specific industry segments (e.g. FEAF, DODAF, etc.), do not have an equivalent organization promoting their use.



Additionally, some respondents chose to list ArchiMate<sup>®3</sup> as a framework. While this is more accurately described as a modelling language/notation, the authors captured the following view of the percentage of references made to ArchiMate.



<sup>1</sup> The Zachman Framework is a registered trademark of Zachman International Inc.

<sup>2</sup> TOGAF is a registered trademark of The Open Group.

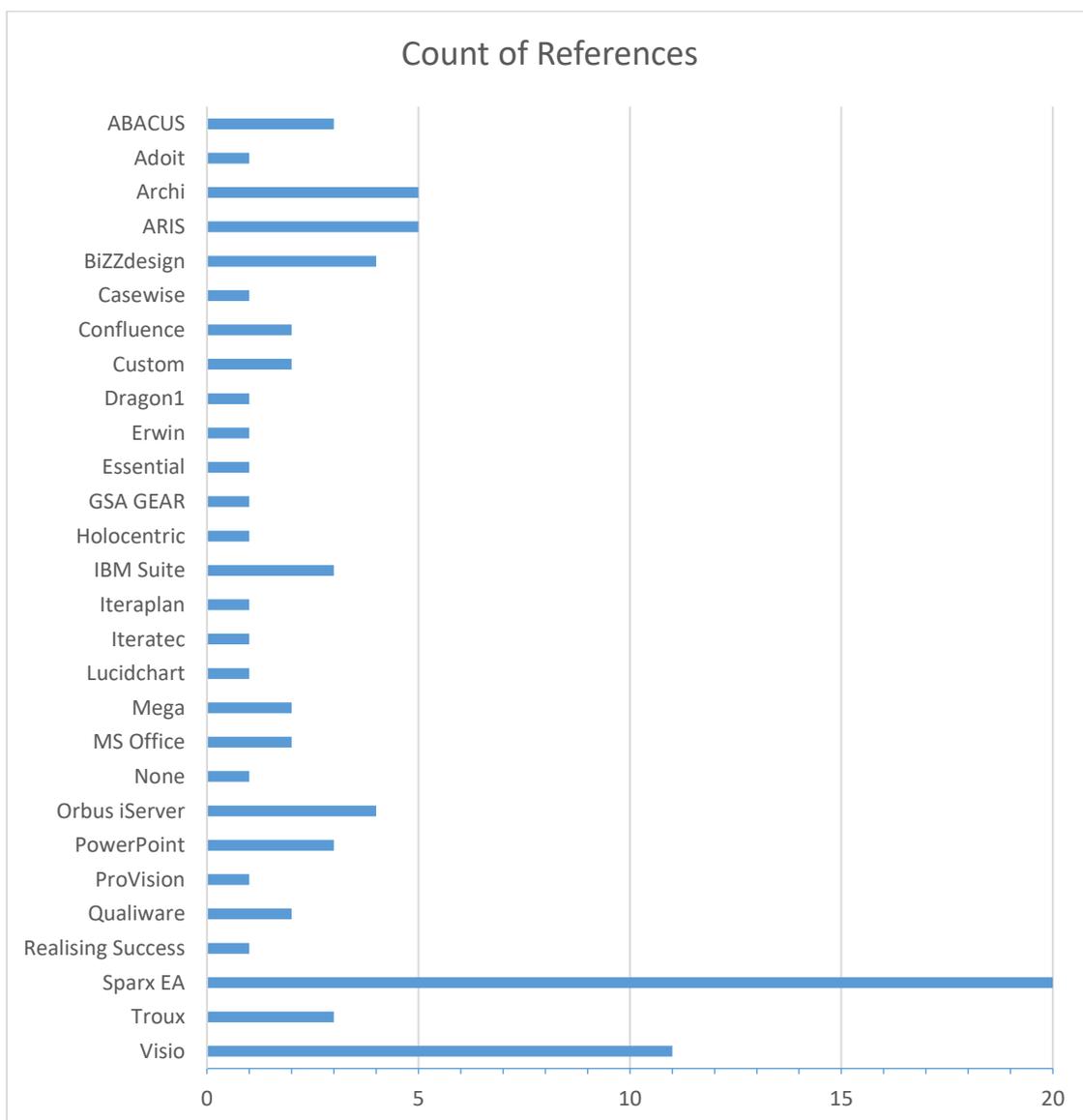
<sup>3</sup> ArchiMate is a registered trademark of The Open Group.

## Architecture Tools

A proliferation of tools has occurred over the past two decades to support Enterprise Architects in their attempts to describe current and future state descriptions of organisations, and the transition between those states. This is reflected in the size of the list shown below, which of course is still very incomplete in terms of what tools are on the marketplace.

Distribution across these toolsets is relatively consistent, with the exception of two items:

- Visio<sup>4</sup> – As a generic drawing tool, Visio has found favour with many architects due to its broad availability and familiarity.
- Sparx Enterprise Architect<sup>5</sup> – Designed as an extensible modelling tool to support a variety of technology related capabilities, Sparx Enterprise Architect has been extended to incorporate TOGAF and ArchiMate notations. It has gained widespread adoption primarily due to its very low price-point, making it attractive to a larger range of organization types and sizes.



<sup>4</sup> Visio is a registered trademark of Microsoft. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

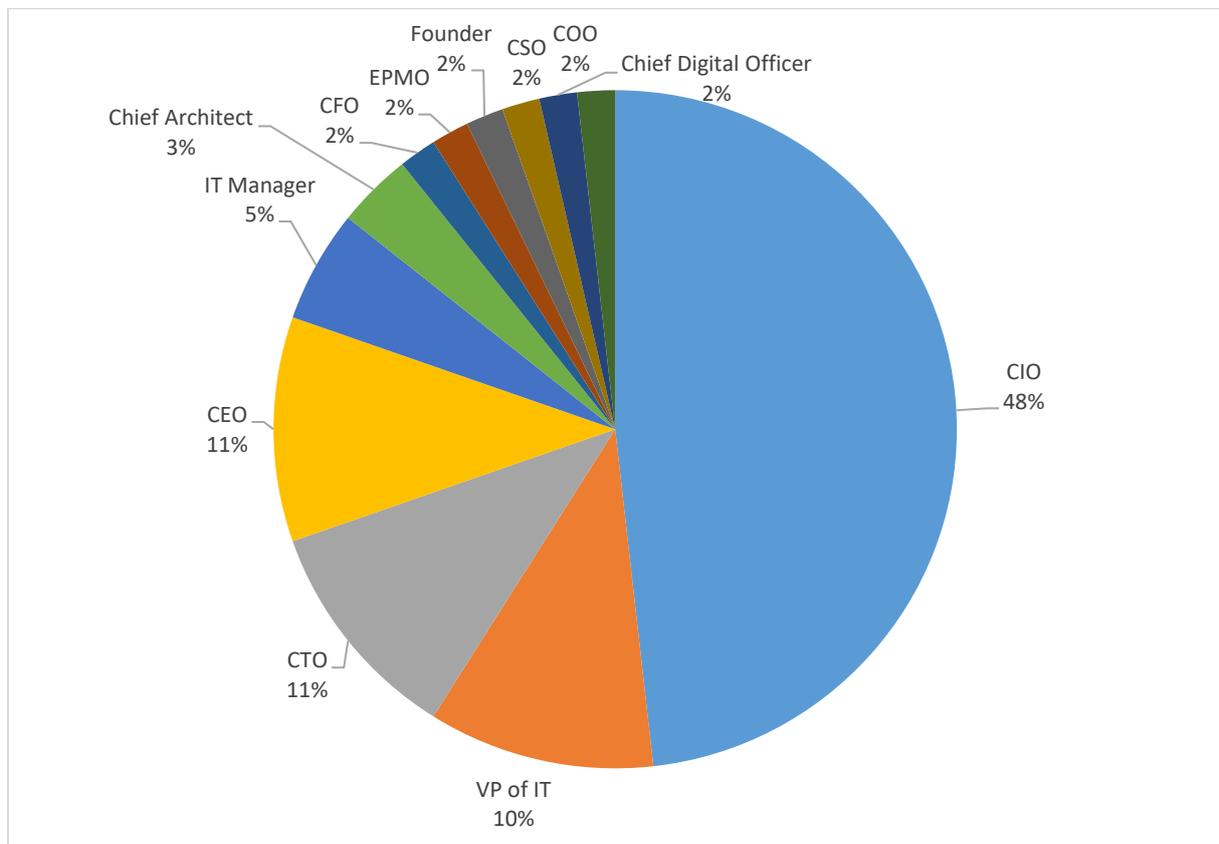
<sup>5</sup> Sparx Enterprise Architect is a registered trademark of Sparx Systems Pty Ltd.

## Reporting Lines

The subject of where an Enterprise Architect should be positioned within an organization has been a point of significant debate in online EA communities over the years. This is partially fuelled by factors including:

- Its origins in technology-related efforts
- A broad perception that its main purpose is to control technological change in an organisation
- The introduction of Business Architecture by some organizations as a distinct discipline, while also forming an integral part of EA capabilities

What can be observed from the results below is that in excess of 75% of respondents have experience reporting into IT related management positions. In contrast, only 1 in 7 responses show a reporting line that relates to the control of business strategy or operations.



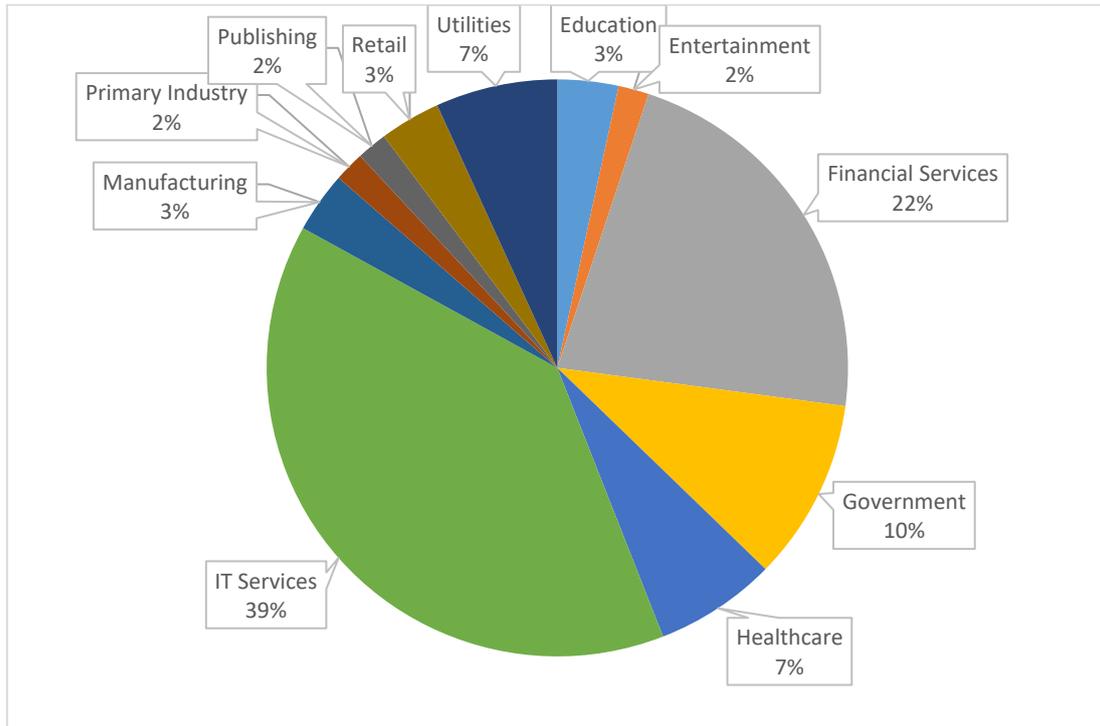
## Industries

It has long been posited that the applicability of an Enterprise Architecture function, and the transferability of an EA’s skills, across industry boundaries is somewhat universal. To gather related evidence, survey respondents were asked which industries they have participated in. The following chart highlights a broad cross-section of industries, although the numbers weren’t quite as diverse as the authors expected.

Of note is the high proportion of respondents who identified IT Services as their main industry. This highlights a historical prevalence of EA being offered as a consulting service. This concept is also expanded upon in the analysis of the long-form responses later in the report, and is likely to be masking some of the industry diversity covered by the respondents.

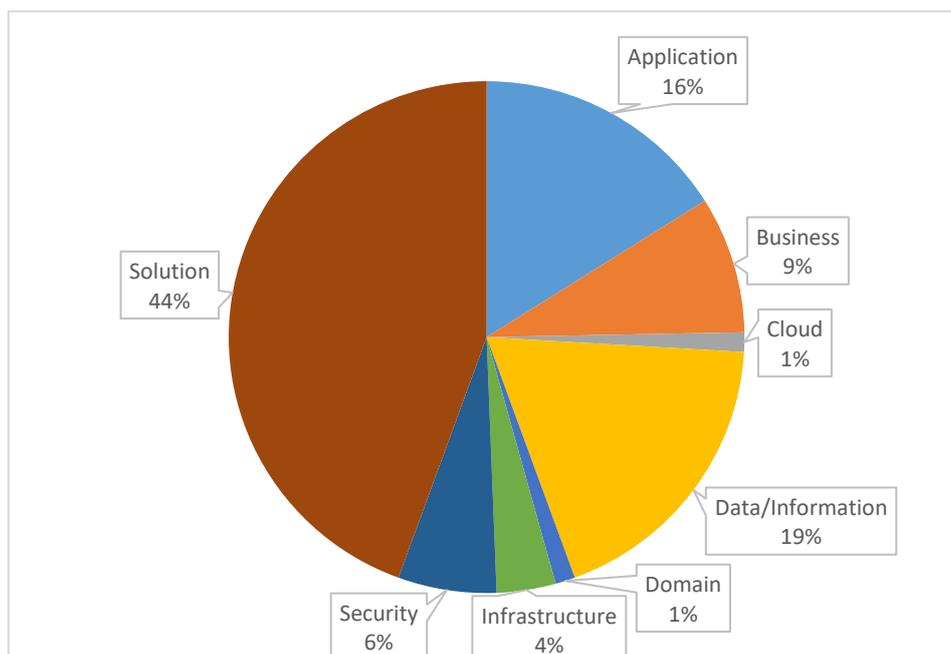
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Also of note is the high percentage of responses for the Financial Services industry, suggesting a potentially longer relationship within that industry with the EA community.



### Career Paths

The subject of career progression into Enterprise Architecture roles is a regular discussion point within EA, IT, Management Consulting, Business Analysis and related disciplines. When asked what previous architecture-related roles the respondents had performed, Solution Architecture, Information Architecture and Application Architecture occupied nearly 70% of all responses. Many respondents cited multiple areas of experiences, highlighting the multi-disciplinary aspect of the Enterprise Architect role.



## Long Form Responses

We requested a series of long form responses from respondents, too. The sections below show the questions asked, and a summary of key messages identified in reading the comments received for each.

### **Question 1 – What metrics do you use to show how Enterprise Architecture adds value to an organization?**

This question has been discussed at length in online forums, and at EA conferences the world over. The general consensus tends to point toward measuring the effect of the presence of EA capabilities and practices on key business performance measures, but other suggestions more aligned to the technical aspects of EA also abound.

In the survey, we observed a wide variety of responses -- some expected and some a little different. Here's a general overview of the key terms used.

#### **Business-related**

- Standard business metrics
- Strategy alignment
- Risk identification
- Business transformation readiness
- Availability of information
- Benefit realisation
- Time to market
- Client satisfaction
- Project savings
- Technical debt

#### **EA-related**

- Artefact re-use (both physical and virtual)
- Development of a custom in-house framework
- Awareness of the EA function, and the level of demand for its services
- Approval and dispensation rates for the architecture governance function
- Satisfaction surveys for the EA function/team
- Maturity assessment results
- Page hits on the architecture site

Also present in the responses were a number of organizations that do not have metrics for the effectiveness of the EA capability. In some cases, the reason was due to a low level of maturity, in others, the absence of metrics was simply due to a lack of desire or mandate to create them.

### **Question 2 – What do you see as the value of Enterprise Architecture?**

While somewhat related to the first question, this focuses more on the EA's perception of the value it offers, rather than the hard metrics used to assess its performance. In some ways, it represents the selling points, or the promise, of EA. Here are some of the themes emerging from responses:

- Clarity of, and alignment to, the purpose and vision of the organization
- Efficiency and coherence of change delivery

- Preparation for the onset of disruptive technology
- Big picture visualisation and communication
- Aid decision making capabilities and processes
- Regulatory alignment
- Risk minimisation
- Increased competitiveness and differentiation
- Increased competitor awareness
- Operational efficiencies
- Governance
- Support for transformation
- Reduce, or better manage, complexity
- Introduce or increase long-term and holistic thinking
- Strategy formation and/or alignment
- Improved speed to market and adaptability
- Improve internal innovation capabilities
- Alignment of business and IT
- Support funding decisions
- Improve ROI of change initiatives
- Build a foundation for strategy execution
- Increased transparency
- Assist and/or guide the organisation's planning activities

Taken in its entirety, this list represents a substantial impact to the organisation, and involvement at a strategic level. The general focus is on organisational change, and improvements to the organisation's ability to do so. Of note was the lack of specific references to technology.

### **Question 3 – As a discipline, where do you see EA heading in the future?**

Perhaps at the crux of this survey, this question, and the two that follow, attempt to capture the respondents' thoughts on where the EA discipline needs to change. As stated at the beginning of this report, there is a growing perception that EA is at a crossroads. In order to remain relevant, and to continue to grow with evolving business and social environments, the discipline must take a customer-driven view of itself, just as many EA's recommend for their organisations.

Here is a summary of some of the responses given on the perception of the future of EA:

- More business-aligned
- Advisory service to business management and strategy development
- Bridging the business and IT divide
- A catalyst and driver of technological innovation in the business and improvements to the underlying business models
- A move toward the formal professionalisation of the discipline
- Enhancing organisation resilience
- Better understanding of the overall ecosystem to bring about greater interoperability between organisations
- The future of EA is unpredictable
- Obscurity, unless it evolves
- Less ivory tower, and more guidance
- IT Strategy development

- 
- Dying, due to its high cost and low value/return
  - Simplification to enable broader adoption
  - Incorporating organisation design and disciplines such as Design Thinking
  - Becoming the guardians of change within organisations
  - Becoming an essential human decision-making capability
  - Squeezed into “best practice” systems
  - Reinvention of current practices, models, etc.
  - Less focus on “future state”, and more on “current foundational quality”
  - The business and strategic components will separate and be rebranded as another discipline

The responses appear to paint a picture of necessity for (or inevitability of) change, with some predictions suggesting that the discipline will cease to exist if it is unable to evolve quickly. This is contrasted against suggestions for development of a formal profession, which would require consolidation of the definition, function and purpose of Enterprise Architecture.

It would appear that the suggested crossroads analogy is indeed correct, with divergence likely if no coordination occurs.

#### **Question 4 – What do you see as an untapped market or unutilized implementation of Enterprise Architecture?**

Traditionally, Enterprise Architecture has been considered the domain of large public and private organisations, both from a necessity and an affordability point of view. Over the past few years, a great deal of material has been written about the concepts inherent in Enterprise Architecture, and how they might be applied to other organisation types and sizes, along with a number of industries that have typically not embraced this role. When asked about areas of hidden opportunity, respondents suggested these areas:

- Small to medium businesses of all types
- Teaching Enterprise Architecture at universities
- Focusing on emerging technologies such as AI, VR and Robotics
- Development of reference architectures that can guide software vendors when developing their offerings for enterprise use
- Move toward Enterprise Change Management, covering digital transformation and disruption
- Greater adoption in government to generate efficiencies and standardisation, including areas such as Policy Architecture
- Controlling diversification in the finance industry
- Greater partnering with Business Architects
- Developing a stronger relationship to the Scaled Agile movement
- The use of Enterprise Architecture techniques internally within the large consultancies
- Greater cross-discipline collaboration and integration
- More involvement in the social and political arenas
- Taking a broader, business ecosystem view
- Accountability architecture, including topics such as transparency
- Greater involvement in strategy formation and organisational design, along with strategy execution
- Agriculture and Primary Industry adoption
- Maintaining more awareness of day-to-day operational detail of businesses

**Question 5 – As a discipline, in what ways would you like to see Enterprise Architecture reformed?**

EA is a young discipline when compared to many with which it interacts. It continues to evolve in environments that are themselves evolving at a faster and faster pace. With this amount of change, respondents were asked what areas of focus should be applied to helping Enterprise Architecture mature and maintain relevance. Here is a summary of their responses:

- More business integration, and less of an exclusive focus on IT
- Move toward full professionalisation of the discipline, including increased awareness, image and formal education
- Integration into third party suppliers and supply chains
- Greater focus on the Living Systems interpretation
- Body of Knowledge consolidation and dissemination
- Better skills definitions and support for development of these skills
- Less focus on commercial certifications, and more on professional experience
- More strategy and initiative formation involvement rather than just governance
- More of a basis in science and data, rather than opinion and conjecture
- Focus on people, process and culture
- Better tooling and more shared content
- Stronger relationships with disciplines such as:
  - Design Thinking
  - Systems Thinking
  - Complexity Science
  - Experience Design
  - Business Strategy
  - Corporate Governance
- Remove the Architect title due to issues with understanding, possibly replacing it with Cartographer
- More internal teams and capacity, less reliance on consultancies
- Reporting line changes, such as movement from CIO to COO
- Development of a business understandable framework
- More focus on information flows
- Continuous transformation capabilities
- Recognition of the discipline as more of an art than a trade
- ISO alignment, including Risk Management

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## EAPJ Editor's Findings

### Survey result observations

It should be noted that the participation rate in the survey has been low. Despite the best efforts of those running the survey, engagement with the global EA community has been challenging. Only 61 unique respondents were identified. From a personal perspective, this is consistent with other EA community efforts I've made over the years. Most in the community believe work needs to be done to improve collaboration and professionalisation, but the vast majority do not actively participate in making that happen. More work is required in this area if we are to survive and grow.

Despite the low numbers, some interesting points have been observed:

- One third of practitioners do not have a formal certification in EA, with some comments suggesting that real-world experience is of much higher value.
- TOGAF is by far the most commonly referenced framework.
- Less than one in five respondents made reference to ArchiMate.
- When it comes to EA toolsets, Sparx Enterprise Architect seems to have a significant adoption rate, which seems likely to be related to its price point, allowing it to be adopted more easily by a larger range of organisation types.
- Visio was also a popular choice, highlighting a number of legacy issues that may be resulting in inefficient architecture practices, which in turn can result in degraded value propositions for the EA function.
- The EA function is still viewed strongly as an IT discipline, with more than 75% of respondents reporting to IT leadership positions. This is a point of strong debate within the global EA community, and one that is likely to continue.
- Almost all major industry segments have been observed, highlighting the broad applicability of the EA discipline.
- There is no single career path into an EA role, although most of are of a technical nature.
- The responsibilities of the EA are broad, with the delivery of business value and alignment to vision and strategy a common message in responses.
- There is very little consistency in the views on how to measure the value of an EA function.
- There is just as much inconsistency in the views of where the discipline should be heading (see below).

### We have a problem... (or two)

When publishing this survey in late 2017, the point was made that Enterprise Architecture, as a discipline, was at a crossroads. Having read through the responses from survey participants, I see clear evidence of a diversity of opinions of where EA should be heading.

This isn't new of course. Many attempts have been made over the past 20 years to try and bring the global community together. Organisations such as the [Enterprise Architecture Center of Excellence](#) (EACOE), [The Open Group](#), [IASA](#), the [Association of Enterprise](#)

[Architects](#)<sup>6</sup> (AEA) and the [Federation of Enterprise Architecture Professional Organizations](#) (FEAPO) have come into existence, most of whom are still very active. Despite all of this activity, fundamental issues still exist whenever a group of EA's begin to talk about the future of the discipline.

Many readers of this report will be very familiar, perhaps unfortunately, with the problems created by this lack of cohesiveness across practitioners and organisations. So much so, that it's often heard that the collective noun for Architects should be an "Argument". This seems very evident when observing the countless LinkedIn<sup>7</sup> conversations where even the most basic concepts, such as the definition of Enterprise Architecture, have resulted in hundreds of contradictory comments.

General approaches to implementation of an EA capability also seem highly varied. This is a particularly problematic issue, due to the competing needs for:

- Standardisation as part of the formalisation of the discipline (on the path to professionalisation), and
- Customisation to suit the environment where Enterprise Architecture is practiced.

Coming together to collectively decide on a path forward seems unlikely in the current environment. Identifying the driver to make this type of collaboration possible seems equally improbable.

### So where to from here?

The preceding statement sounds pessimistic, but a few points need to be made here:

- Organisations such as The Open Group, AEA, IASA and others are very actively trying to improve the situation. General practitioner involvement is recommended, as these efforts are made more effective through participation from those that live and breathe EA on a daily basis. Those reading this report should research the organisations mentioned and decide which is the most appropriate fit for their circumstances. Once done, it is highly recommended to get involved at a local level.
- Efforts are being made to improve the discipline, and to realize the broad applicability of Enterprise Architecture, but these efforts are slow, and legacy issues abound in the business community. As EA has evolved, it has made mistakes, as can be observed by the still present references to "ivory tower" architects. This must be combatted by a willingness by practitioners to continually learn about new approaches, tools and techniques. Learning from one another is essential, and a vibrant community, both local and global, are required to do so.
- This is not the first time a discipline has tried to evolve into a profession, so we have an excellent opportunity to learn from the experience of others. The evolution takes time, and effort, and we're trying to do this during an unprecedented period of rapid change. This may make the path seem even more challenging, but when considering

<sup>6</sup> Association of Enterprise Architects is a registered trademark of the Association of Enterprise Architects

<sup>7</sup> LinkedIn is a registered trademark of LinkedIn Corporation and its affiliates in the United States and/or other countries.

that Enterprise Architecture is a change-based discipline, it appears likely that we have the skills and tools need to realise our goals.

- We should be cognizant of the changes to professions being brought about by the new wave of technologies, particularly the application of AI techniques to allow component parts of many professions to be automated. EA is not immune to this change, so we should look to understand how technology can be leveraged to improve our own service delivery.
- There is a partial but significant overlap between Enterprise Architecture and Business Architecture, which is problematic. More collaboration between those looking to evolve these two disciplines is required to ensure we all benefit from the synergies available, and prevent alienation of our shared customer base.

### Editor's Summary and Conclusion

From a personal perspective, I've seen what appears to be a renewed interest in Enterprise Architecture over the past 2 to 3 years. This is undoubtedly influenced by a number of factors, including but not limited to:

- The increasing awareness by business executives of emerging technologies such as AI and Automation, coupled with a lack of understanding of how to adopt them effectively.
- Increased legislative obligations, requiring a more holistic view of an organization's information assets so as to meet governance requirements.
- A growing concern of how to create efficient business operations while continuing to leverage legacy technologies that are cost-prohibitive to replace.
- Increasing rates of disruption, and an unrelenting media, not to mention the vendor industry, telling executives that their business is next.

This increased demand provides a significant opportunity. As a global discipline, and particularly as one that sits at the very front of enterprise adoption of new and advancing technologies, EA practitioners have a chance to demonstrate substantial business value. This creates a chance to embed the Enterprise Architect as a fundamental leadership position, equivalent in importance to that of a CFO, COO or CMO, although this is unlikely to occur, given its challenges to even build compelling traction within the CIO functional area.

Interestingly, all of those C-suite positions mentioned above have an established expectation around knowledge, experience and/or accreditation. For EA's to be considered their equal, it seems reasonable to expect that business executives would need a way of ensuring that the people they place in these positions of influence also have the requisite knowledge, experience and qualifications, which is why EA moving up the organisational ladder is a long shot.

When thinking about this need from the perspective of the EA discipline's current level of maturity, it becomes apparent that new approaches are required. Here's an example of a current concern in this regard:

*When an aspiring Enterprise Architect decides that this is a path they wish to tread, they might research what is required to land that type of role. More often*

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*than not, this leads them down a path of TOGAF certification, possibly alongside a certification in ArchiMate.*

*At the end of this process, they start calling themselves a qualified Enterprise Architect. Strictly speaking, that's an accurate statement, despite the fact that they may have no more experience than as a Developer or Business Analyst.*

It should be evident to anyone that has held an EA role, that this is a potentially disastrous situation for an organisation that employs this individual, so what's to be done? Some architecture-related organizations have tried to solve this problem by creating distinctions in the recognized levels of skills and experience between architects, using peer-reviewed accreditations. Examples include the Open-CA certification by The Open Group, and the various CITA levels available through IASA.

This is a step in the right direction, but more is required. For instance, the awareness of these certifications, and what they represent, is incredibly low in the general business community. When contrasted against the understanding and awareness of a certification such as CPA in the Accounting profession, these EA qualifications pale in comparison.

It is up to us, the practitioners, to take control of our discipline, and work together to create the foundations for a profession. Here are some practical steps, which whilst tried in the past with limited and varied levels of success, must be attempted again:

- Establish a common definition and purpose.
- Define the role and its accountabilities.
- Map out a career path, involving levels of capability (e.g. entry-level through to master level), and a robust certification mechanism that reliably describes an individual's capabilities.
- Create an awareness and demand within the various industry segments in which EA has value.
- Work with educational institutions to embed the necessary learning into relevant courses.
- Create an accreditation mechanism for the above-mentioned courses.
- Form a single, representative body, made up of leaders in the field, with the responsibility to drive this work forward.
- Develop a sustainable, global, membership-based business model to ensure the future of the body that propels the EA profession forward.

For those of you who have been involved in architecture for some time, you'll recognise the signs of an ecosystem in the list above (albeit that there are many more stakeholders to be identified). You'll also see the creation of a formalised service offering. It seems apparent then, that we have, as a discipline, the tools to validate this offering, and to develop a plan to realise its creation and delivery. But do we have the type of high-level champions and requisite influence to achieve such a shift?

To borrow from the old adage that "the cobbler's children have no shoes", we need to ensure that the skills we have are put to effective use for our own good, so as to reaffirm the value we offer to our market.

Where, then, will this drive come from? The answer is unclear to me, but perhaps this can be the start of the conversation.

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## EA Principals CEO and EAPJ Founder's Findings

I think this survey has brought to light many of the issues confronting EA at present, just as it underscores that there is in fact a resurgence in interest in it and, anecdotally, an uptick in private courses globally in major organizations, public and private, to set up and mature an internal EA practice. Interestingly, many more organizations are interested in both architecture method and establishing modelling and architecture repository capabilities. Therefore, interests in both architecture frameworks and modelling/repository tools appears to be on the rise with some organisations wanting customised training that brings together these requirements.

Personally, I think all organisations can benefit from a customised approach to adopting a TOGAF-aligned framework and the standardisation that comes in an EA language, with ArchiMate being top on my list, augmented by BPMN<sup>TM8</sup> and some understanding of UML<sup>®9</sup>. However, not everyone is on board with this, as there are competing frameworks that don't want to acknowledge the foundational value that basic grounding in TOGAF brings. Similarly, there are many competing tools and some want to differentiate theirs through their metamodels. In addition, agreeing on how to best store and re-use architecture artefacts and reference models/architectures is a challenge linked also to tool decisions.

Something to watch is the growing interest in architecture within the Systems Engineering discipline. Assuming this interest continues to grow, building around Model-Based Systems Engineering, the future for EA thinking will become brighter and the chances for cross-ecosystem collaboration will improve as new platforms enabling such interaction become more prevalent, linking work from multiple disciplines, rolls, and tools.

Similarly, as noted above, there is tension between the overarching Strategic Business Architecture perspective (as promoted by Gartner), a somewhat more siloed BIZBOK<sup>®10</sup> promoted by the Business Architecture Guild, and the goal to set up a more unified understanding of EA.

Overall, it is definitely a mixed picture, though, with many organisations remembering failed EA initiatives of others or their own, while new efforts by many other organizations are still somewhat in their early stages. I'm excited about what could be possible and EAPJ will continue to work to help move the dialog forward.

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<sup>8</sup> BPMN is a trademark of Object Management Group, Inc. in the United States and/or other countries.

<sup>9</sup> UML is a registered trademark of Object Management Group, Inc. in the United States and/or other countries.

<sup>10</sup> BIZBOK is a registered trademark of the Business Architecture Guild.