Build your own Language

Why and How?

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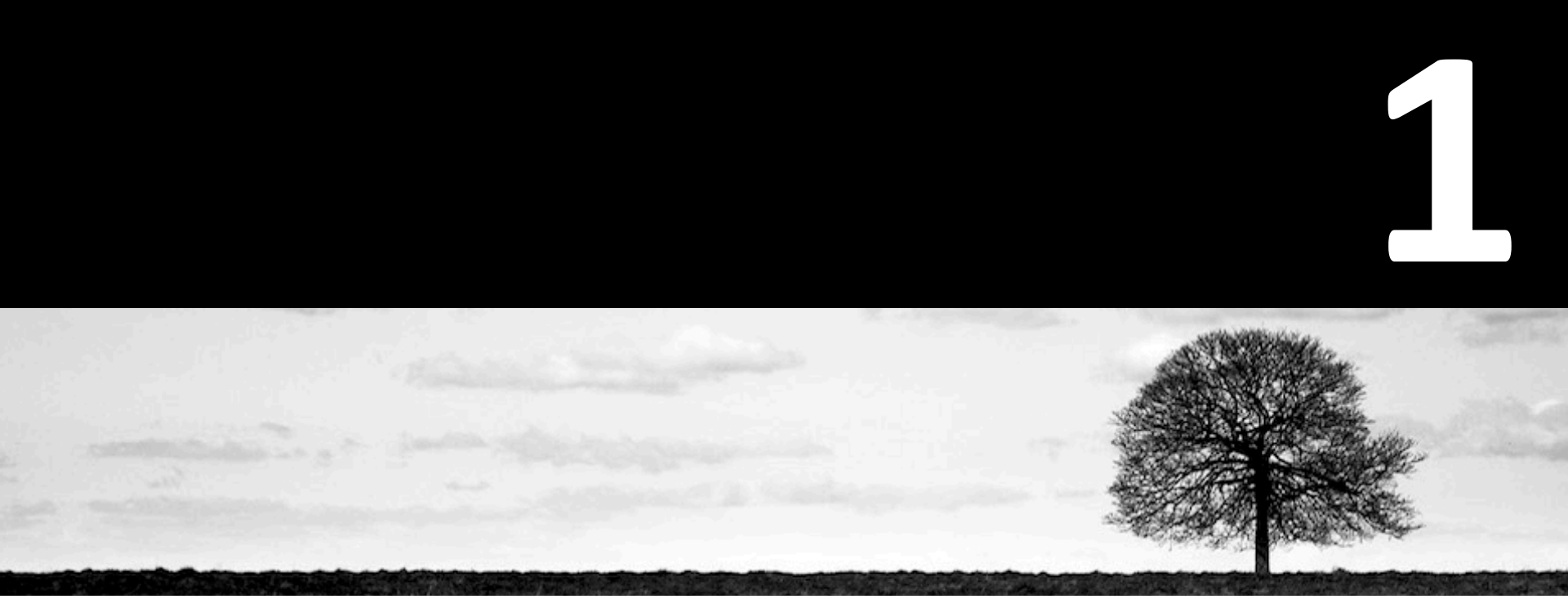
voelter { ingenieurbüro für softwaretechnologie // itemis



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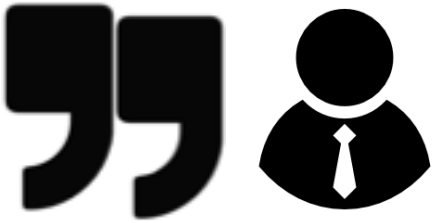
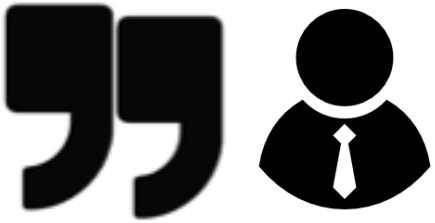
Motivation



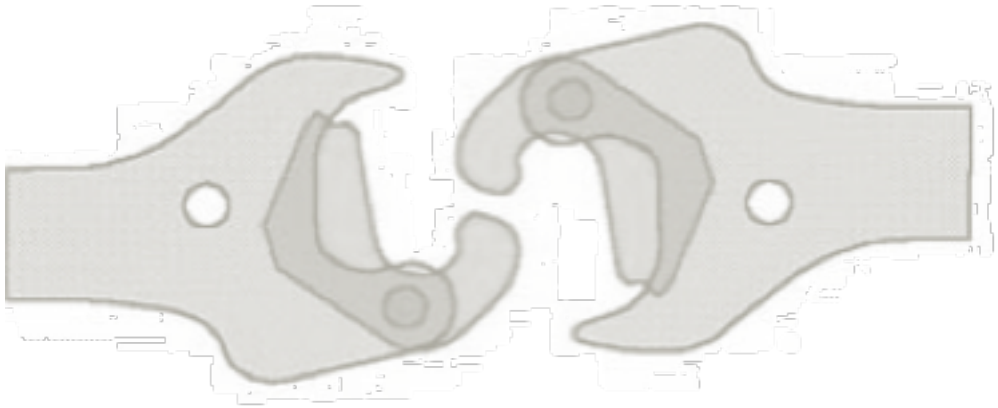
I just finished v3 of the requirements document. But I am sure it will take another two months of ping-pong with IT to get the damn thing to run.

Aargh, another half-baked requirements document. Those guys always rely on us to “debug“ it and make it work.



The IT guys have decided to port the system to mobile phones. We have to do another re-write/-understand of all the Fachlichkeit. Again!!

Well, yes, but we have to keep up with the evolving technologies and new platforms. No way around it!



Decouple Fachlichkeit and Technology!
so you can evolve both independently.

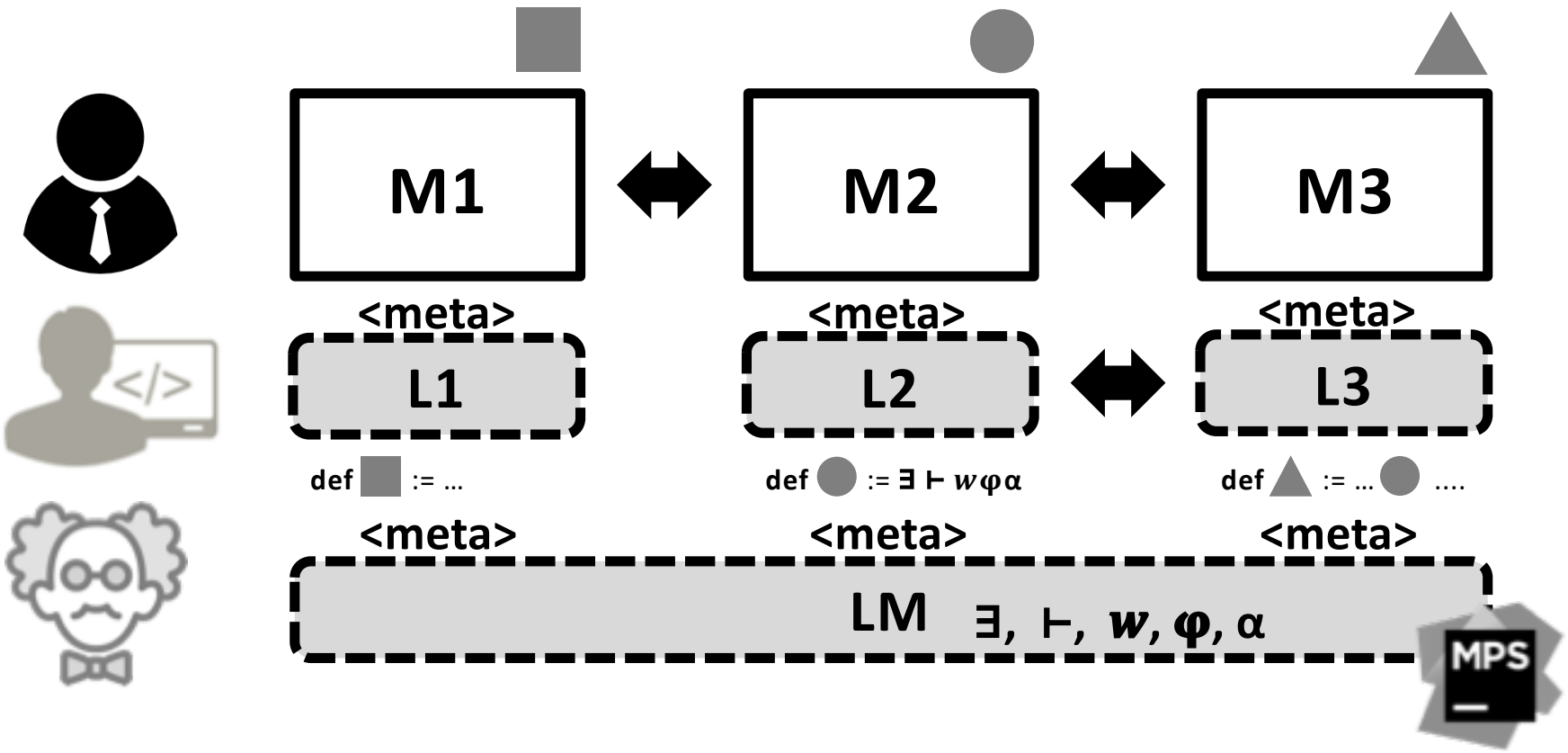
Represent Fachlickeit precisely/formally,
so you can analyze, test, simulate.

Use “friendly“ languages,
so domain experts can contribute directly.

Formal Language.
Checkable.
Understandable.

DSL

Domain Specific Language


M1
M2
M3
<meta>
L1
<meta>
L2
<meta>
L3
def ■ := ...
def ● := ∃ ⊢ wφα
def ▲ := ... ● ....
<meta>
<meta>
<meta>
LM ∃, ⊢, w, φ, α
MPS

2

Examples

Insurance Contracts

Specify/Program

Write formal code in a DSL
mixed with tables and text

Now with IDE support and e

The same notati

Funktionsmodell VKzahlbtgTF

Formale Beschreibung

```
Funktion:                VKzahlbtgTF
Enthaltende Quelldatei:  vmsctfa
Produkt-Typ:             Produkt-Typen auswählen
PK-Typ:                  PK-Typ auswählen
Status:                  Status auswählen

Parameter-Attribute:       tvk_el_ptr:  tvk_el<>  E  Beschreibung hinzufügen
                           buzbBfr:     Ganzzahl  A  Beschreibung hinzufügen
                           tech_ptr     techptr

Rückgabe-Typ:              Kommazahl

Verwendete VADM-Attribute: ...

Aufgerufene Funktionen:    VKversartTF  (tvk_ptr: tvk_el<> E; tech_ptr  techptr  ):  VERSART
```

Beschreibung

Berechnet den Zahlbeitrag auf Vertragskomponenten-Ebene zurück

Hilfsvariablen

vkzb: Kommazahl Beschreibung hinzufügen

Verarbeitungen

:pk_typ_id	Beschreibung hinzufügen	Bemerkung
PK_TYP_ID.KAPITAL_KONTO	If (:vtrk_zustand = ZUSTAND.BPFL) vkzb = :vtrk_zb End If :vtrk_zustand = ZUSTAND.BPFL	Beschreibung hinzufügen

PK_TYP_ID.LV_TARIF	If (:stamm_ptr <> NULL)
	  If (:zustand = ZUSTAND.BPFL)
	  vkzb = :vtzb
	  If (VKversartTF (tvk_el_ptr; tech_ptr) = VERSART.BUZB)
	  buzbBfr = 0
	  End If VKversartTF(tvk_el_ptr; tech_ptr) = VERSART.BUZB
	  End If :zustand = ZUSTAND.BPFL
	End If :stamm_ptr <> NULL
		Beschreibung hinzufügen

Andernfalls	Fehler (PK_TYP_NICHT_IMPLEMENTIERT)	Beschreibung hinzufügen

```
return vkzb
```

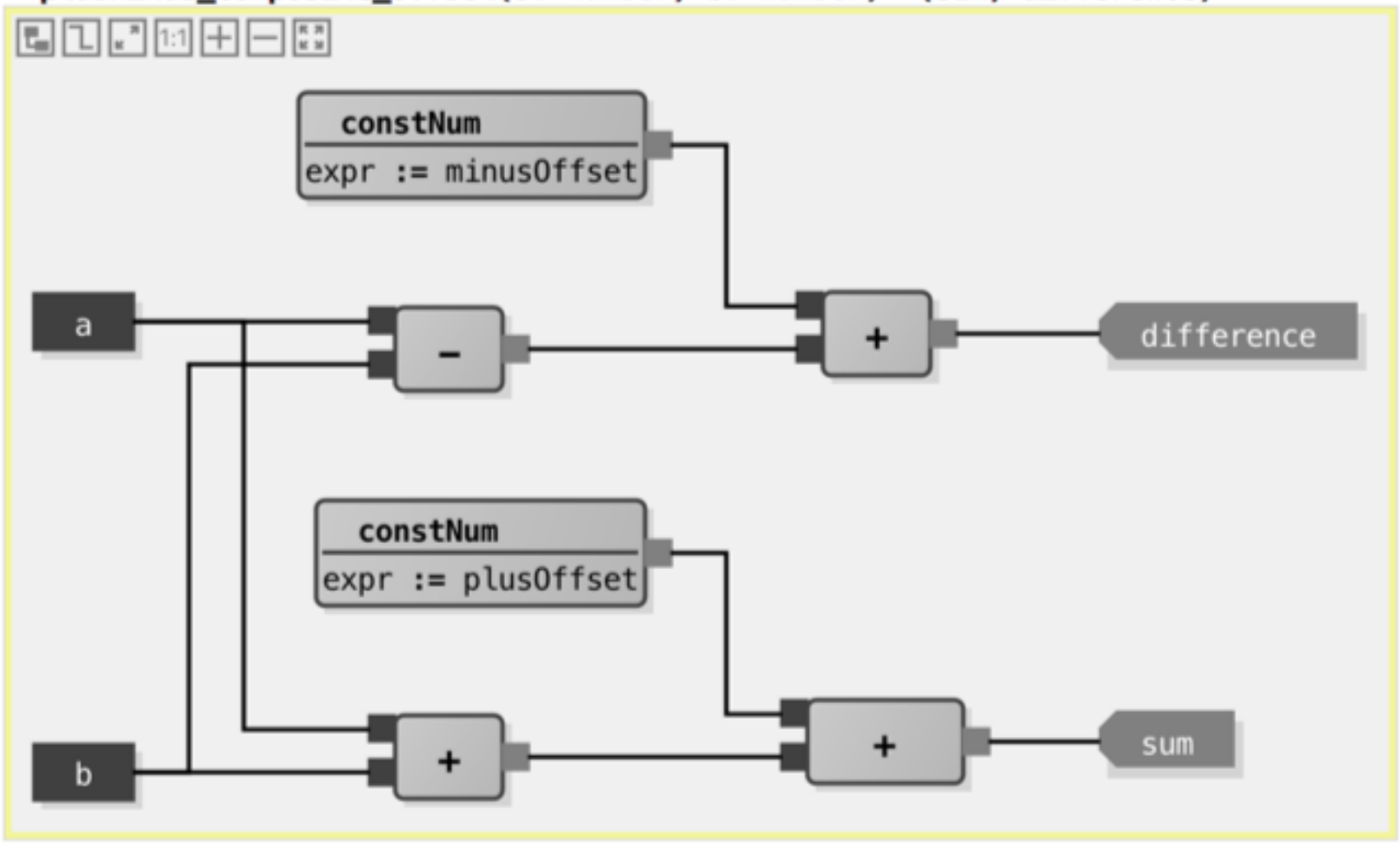
Public Benefits

Unterhaltsvorschuss

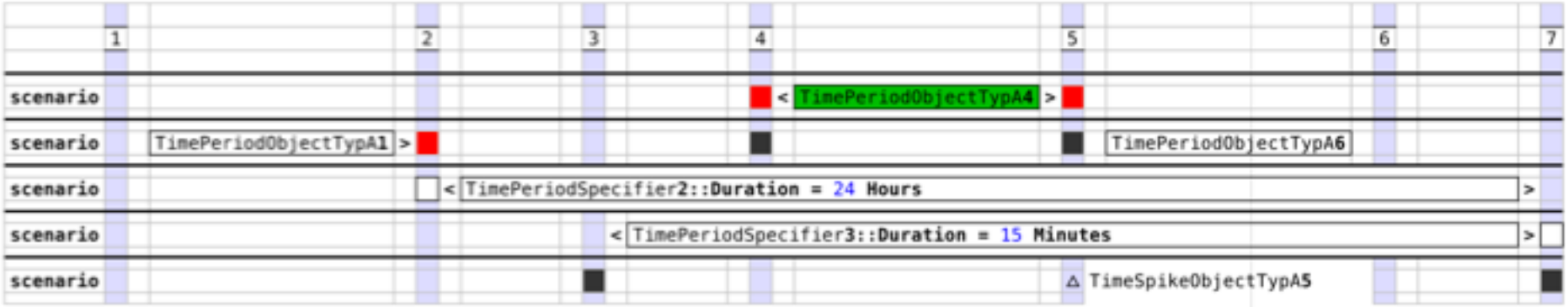
```
Zeitangabe:          laufend
Häufigkeit:          monatlich einmal
Leistungskontext:
Leistungsart:        Leer
Zählart: uvg
Anspruch Beginn: Anfang – Unbegrenzt: junger Mensch.geburtsdatum
Anspruch Ende:   01.01.1800 – 31.12.9999  : min(junger Mensch.geburtsdatum + 12 Jahre ,
                                                datum + 72 Monate – Anzahl Monate mit uvg)

Zeitraum für Berechnung: Anfang – Unbegrenzt: {standardzeitraum, standardzeitraum}
zweckgebundene Leistung: ☐
dem Grunde nach:         ☐
Zeitraumbezogene Daten
nullwerte Anzeigen : boolean = 01.01.1800      – 31.05.2016      : true
                               01.06.2016      – Unbegrenzt      : false
berechnungsart     : berechnungsarttyp = 01.01.1800 – 31.12.9999 : dreißigstel
Bezugsobjekte:
Attribute: bemerkung     : string wird validiert
           antragsdatum  : Datum
```

Data Flow Programming

```
composite block[plusOffset: number, minusOffset: number]
  plusMinus_Composite_Offset(a: number, b: number)->(sum, difference)
```



Tachograph Rules



database databaseOneAndMoreIterationsHappy

Type	Begin	End	Duration	Occurence
eTimePeriodObjectTypA	50	100	50	
eTimeSpikeObjectTypA				86000
eTimePeriodObjectTypA	86020	86030	10	

Math

```
fun midnight1(a: number, b: number, c: number) = (-b + sqrt(pow2(b) - 4 * a * c)) / (2 * a)

fun midnight2(a: number, b: number, c: number) {
  val bSquared = pow2(b)
  val sqrtPart = sqrt(bSquared - 4 * a * c)
  (-b + sqrtPart) / (2 * a)
}

fun midnight3(a: number, b: number, c: number) {
```

$$\frac{-b + \sqrt{b^2 - 4 * a * c}}{2 * a}$$

```
}
```

Insurance Math

D : Kommutationswerte

Ergebnistyp:	Laufvariable:	Parameter:
number{3}	x	i geschlecht q

$$D_x := l_x * \frac{1}{(1 + i)^x}$$

l : Lebende im Jahr x

Ergebnistyp:	Laufvariable:	Parameter:
number{0}	x	geschlecht q

l_0 := startwertLebende

$l_x := l_{x-1} * (1 - q.\mathbf{lookup}(x, \text{geschlecht}))$

Satellite Software

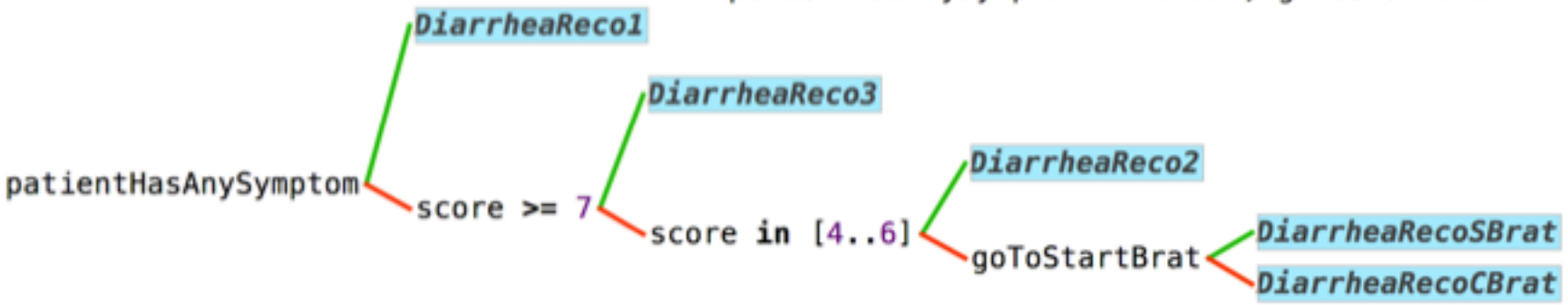
```
Activity enableTcs with Numeric Id 1 is commandable by TC(150,1)
  Short Description: enable thermal control
  Description: The thermal control heats the system if it is too cold. The switching histeresis can be configured.
  Constraints:
    0: TCSCONTR.inMode(OFF ) // switching on is possible only if the TCS is off
  In-Parameter:
    int16/°C/ upperThreshold: constrained :  <no constraint> // upper switching threshold
    int16/°C/ lowerThreshold: constrained :  lowerThreshold < upperThreshold // lower switching threshold
    component<TemperatureAcquisition> acq: constrained :  <no constraint> // acqusition component instance to use
  {
    REQUEST acq.startAcquisition ( << ... >> ) --> ( << ... >> )
      on error do nothing special
      on error abort
    UPTH = upperThreshold;
    LOTH = lowerThreshold;
    DELAY for 10 s
    TCSCONTR.setMode(ON);
    TELEMETRY (150,11)
      Description: Report switching on in a dedicated packet that reports the initial temperature.
      [initialTemp : int32/°C/ = PUS150.AVTEMP // initial temperature when starting thermal control   ]
  }

Activity disableTcs with Numeric Id 2 is commandable by TC(150,2)
  Short Description: disable thermal control
  Description:
  Constraints:
    0: TCSCONTR.inMode(ON ) // switching off is possible only if the TCS is on
  In-Parameter:
    << ... >>
  {
    TCSCONTR.setMode(OFF);
    REQUEST TACQA.stopAcquisition ( << ... >> ) --> ( << ... >> )
      on error do nothing special
    REQUEST TACQB.stopAcquisition ( << ... >> ) --> ( << ... >> )
      on error do nothing special

  }
} Component ThermalControlSystem
```

Healthcare

```
decision table BpScoreDecisionTable(sys: bpRange, dia: bpRange) =
```

		dia					
		<= 50	[51..90]	[91..95]	[96..100]	[101..109]	>= 110
sys	<= 90	1	1	3	4	5	6
	[91..140]	2	2	3	4	5	6
	[141..150]	3	3	3	4	5	6
	[151..160]	4	4	4	4	5	6
	[161..179]	5	5	5	5	5	6
	>= 180	6	6	6	6	6	6

```
decision tree DiarrheaStoolsDecisionTree(score: DiarrheaStoolsOverBaseline,
                                         patientHasAnySymptom: boolean, goToStartBrat: boolean)
```

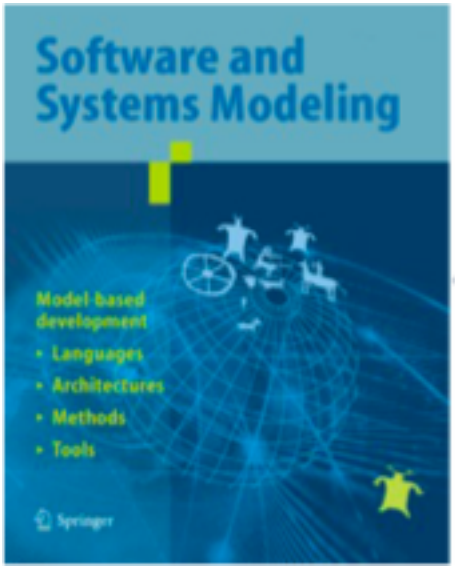



```
type temperature: number[36|42]{1}
type measuredTemp: number[35|43]{2}

val T_measured: measuredTemp = 42.22
val T_calibrated: temperature = T_measured * 0.93
```

Error: type number[32.55|39.99]{4} is not a subtype of number[36|42]{1}

Healthcare

```
PASS
function test gradeStools
  given  7  expected  3
  given  6  expected  2
  given  5  expected  2
  given  4  expected  2

PASS
function test DiarrheaStoolsDecisionTree
  given  false, 1, true, false    expected   DiarrheaUSRecoLevel1Symptom
  given  false, 9, false, false   expected   DiarrheaUSRecoGrade3

PASS
function test checkScreeningQuestion
  given   answers to DiarrheaScreeningQuestionnaire{    expected  true
            dietarySupplements: false
            medication        : true
            hospitalized      : false
          }
```



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Using language workbenches and domain-specific languages for safety-critical software development

Authors | Authors and affiliations

Markus Voelter, Bernd Kolb, Klaus Birken, Federico Tomassetti, Patrick Alff, Laurent Wiart, Andreas Wortmann, Arne Nordmann

Regular Paper
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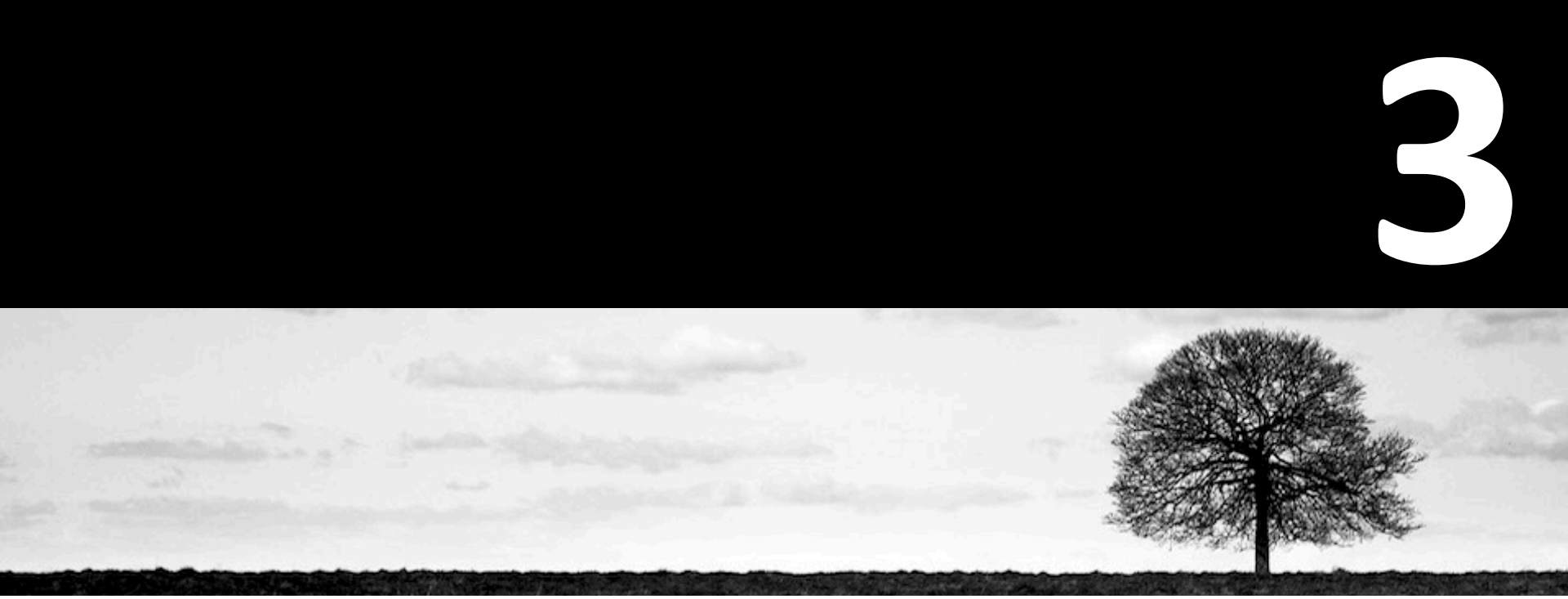
Abstract

Language workbenches support the efficient creation, integration, and use of domain-specific languages. Typically, they execute models by code generation to programming language code. This can lead to increased productivity and higher quality. However, in safety-/mission-critical environments, generated code may not be considered trustworthy, because of the lack of trust in the generation mechanisms. This makes it harder to justify the use of language workbenches in such an environment. In this paper, we demonstrate an approach to use such tools in critical environments. We argue that models created with domain-specific languages are easier to validate and that the additional risk resulting from the transformation to code can be mitigated by a suitably designed transformation and verification architecture. We validate the approach with an industrial case study from the healthcare domain. We also discuss the degree to which the approach is appropriate for critical software in space, automotive, and robotics systems.

http://voelter.de/data/pub/MPS-in-Safety-1.0.pdf



3

MPS Demo

(Meta-) Tooling

Language Workbench

Open Source, by Jetbrains

Very Powerful

Used for years by itemis and others

Vast Experience

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Language Workbench

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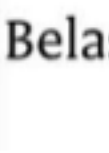
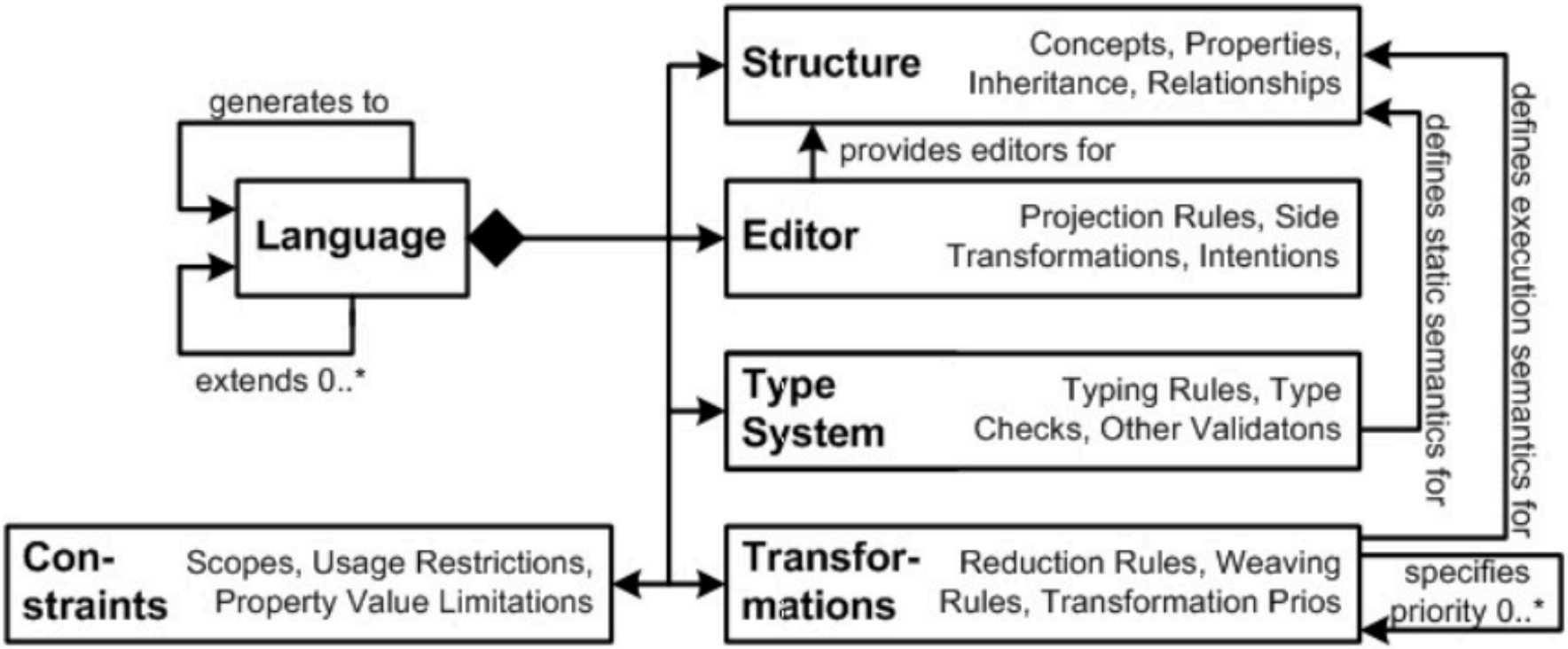
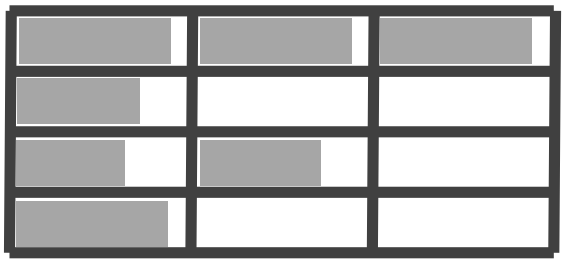


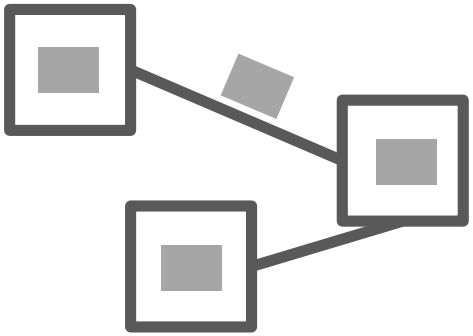
MPS: Language Toolkit



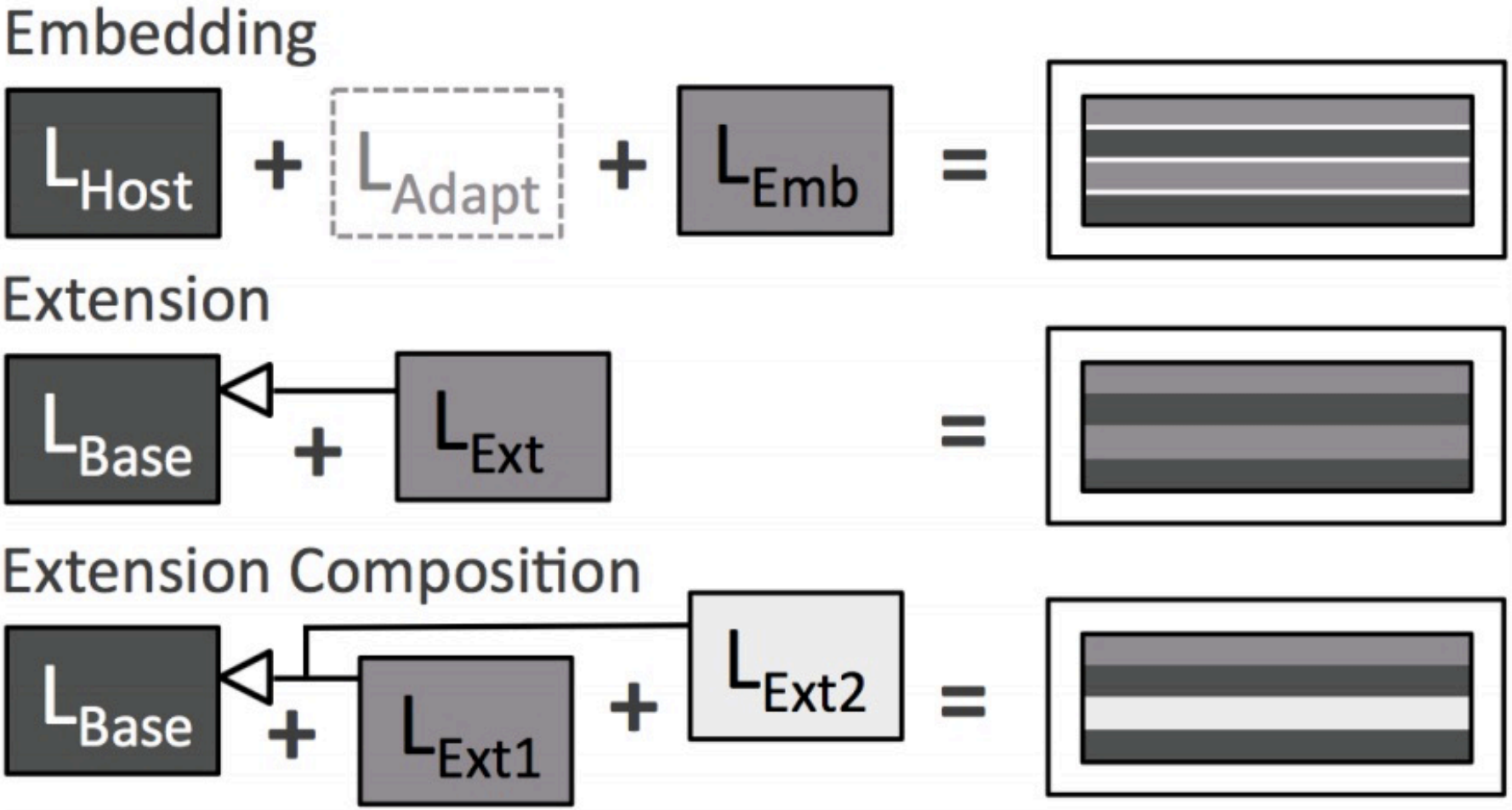
+ Refactorings, Find Usages, Syntax Coloring, Debugging, ...

MPS: Notational Freedom



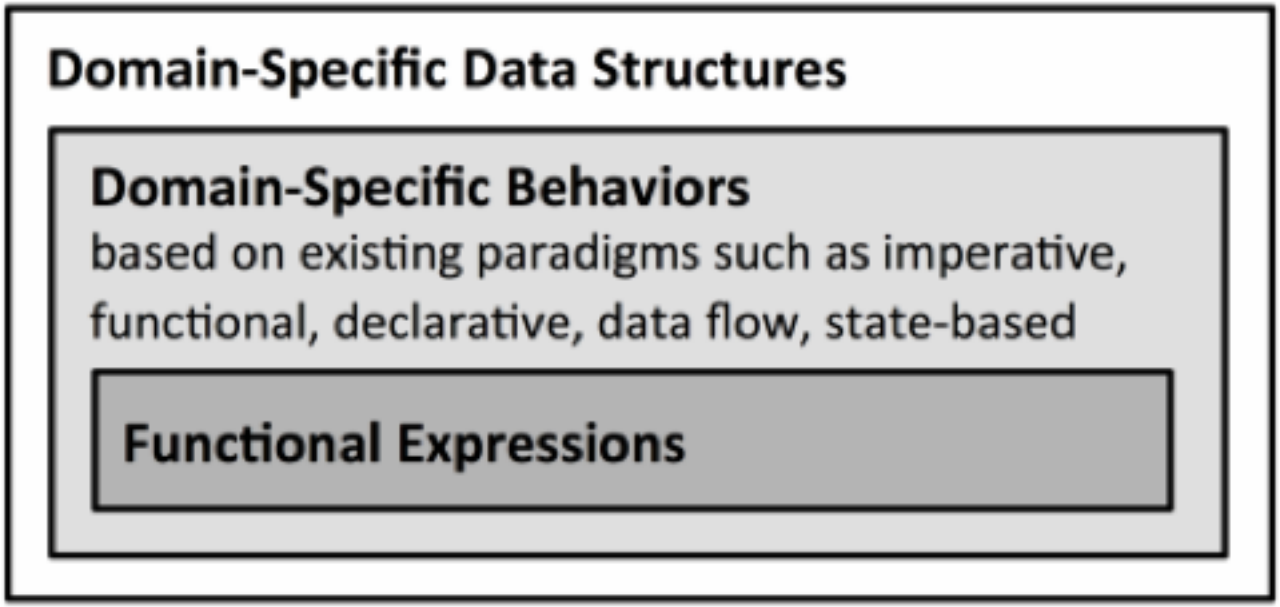


MPS: Language Composition



MPS: Language Composition

Embedding/Extending the KernelF functional language is key to DSL development productivity.



Other Language Workbenches

{s} spoofax — TU Delft

xtext — itemis/Typefox

Rascal — CWI Amsterdam

The Whole Platform — Solmi/Persiani

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Evaluating and Comparing Language Workbenches

Existing Results and Benchmarks for the Future

Sebastian Erdweg[d], Tijs van der Storm[a], Markus Völter[e], Laurence Tratt[b], Remi Bosman[f], William R. Cook[c], Albert Gerritsen[f], Angelo Hulshout[g], Steven Kelly[h], Alex Loh[c], Gabriël Konat[1], Pedro J. Molina[j], Martin Palatnik[f], Risto Pohjonen[h], Eugen Schindler[f], Klemens Schindler[f], Riccardo Solmi[1], Vlad Vergu[1], Eelco Visser[1], Kevin van der Vlist[k], Guido Wachsmuth[1], Jimi van der Woning[l]

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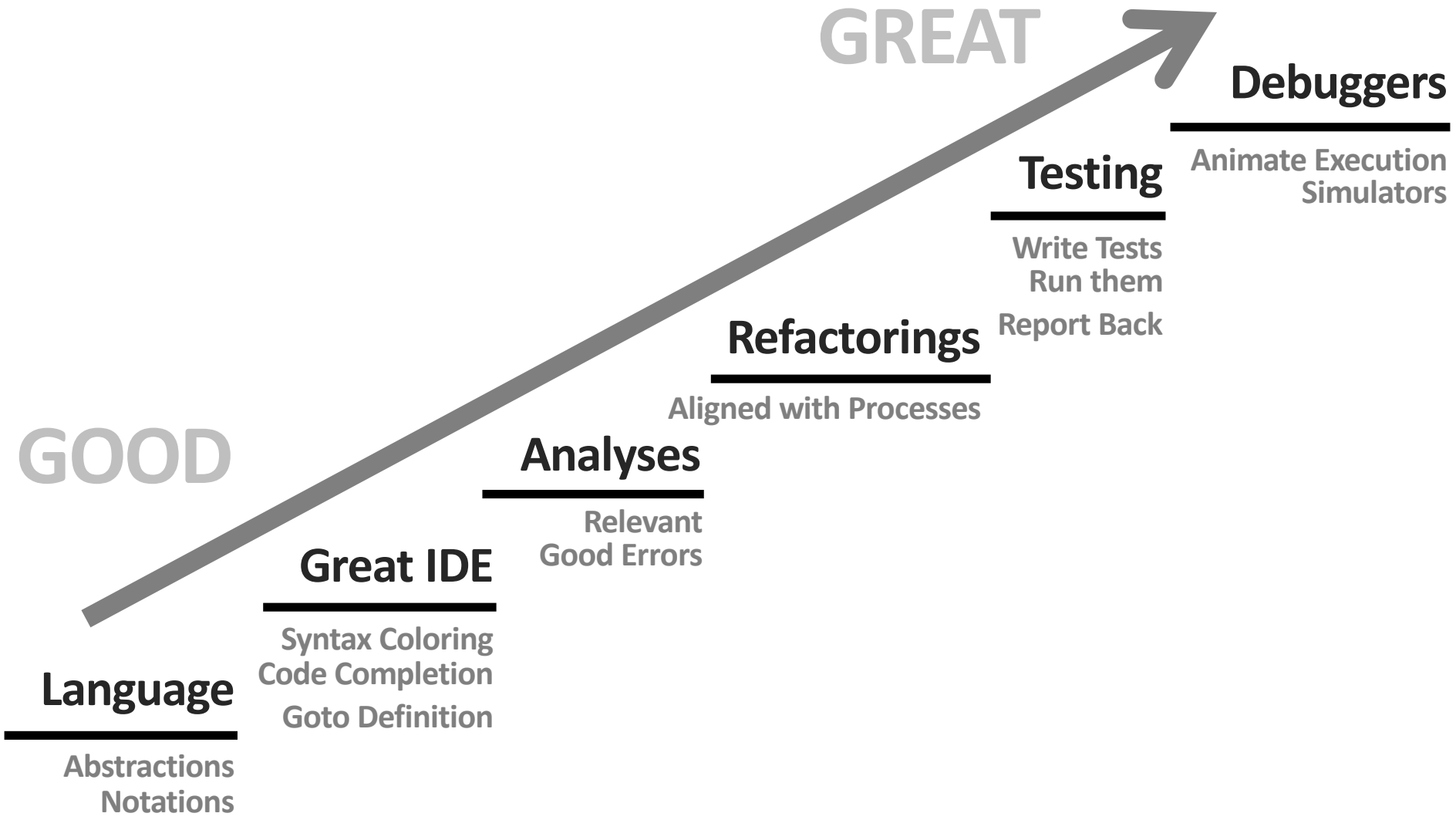
[k] *Sogyo, De Bilt, The Netherlands*
[l] *Young Colfield, Amsterdam, The Netherlands*

http://voelter.de/data/pub/LWB-ResultsAndBenchmarks.pdf

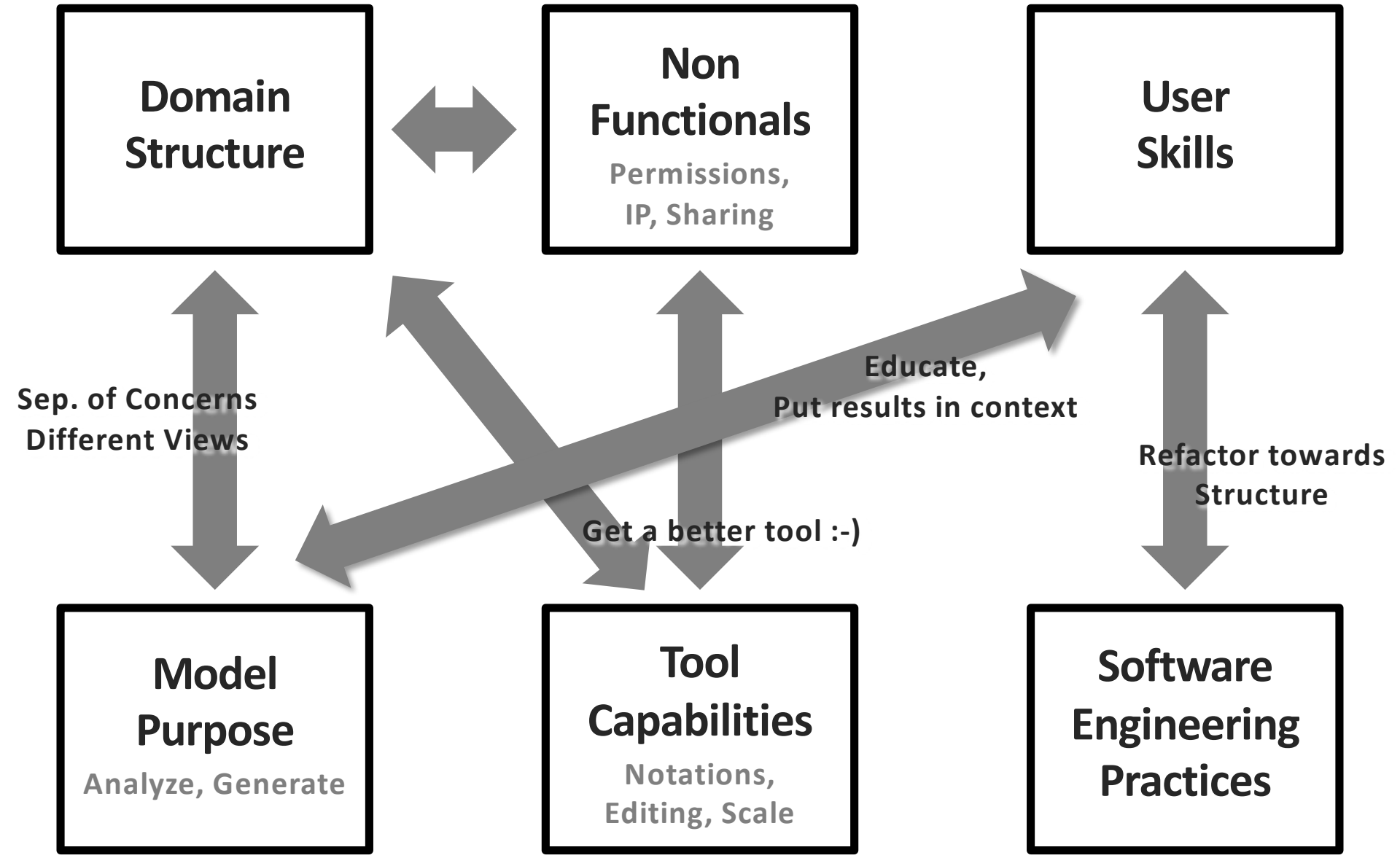
4

Lessons Learned

A Language is not Enough


GREAT
GOOD
Debuggers
Animate Execution
Simulators
Testing
Write Tests
Run them
Report Back
Refactorings
Aligned with Processes
Analyses
Relevant
Good Errors
Great IDE
Syntax Coloring
Code Completion
Goto Definition
Language
Abstractions
Notations

Influences on the Language


Domain Structure
Non Functionals
Permissions, IP, Sharing
User Skills
Sep. of Concerns
Different Views
Educate,
Put results in context
Refactor towards Structure
Get a better tool :-)
Model Purpose
Analyze, Generate
Tool Capabilities
Notations, Editing, Scale
Software Engineering Practices

Domain Structure
Non Functionals
Permissions
IP, Sharin
User Skills
Style!
Sep. of Concerns
Different Views
Refactor towards Structure
Model Purpose
Analyze, Generate
Tool Capabilities
Notations, Editing, Scale
Software Engineering Practices

How to make People precise?

Precision != Programming

Formulas, Rules
Data Structures
Tables
Values

Performance
Scalability
Robustness
Deployment

Training is required.

ProgrammingBasics

How to think like a programmer.

What is this?

This is a tutorial on how to think like a programmer, and to learn some programming along the way. It teaches you fundamental ideas and concepts present in all programming systems, from "real" programming languages over scripting languages and configuration files to domain-specific languages.

Table of Contents

Part 1: The Basics

1. Values and Expressions
2. Testing Programs
3. Types
4. Functions

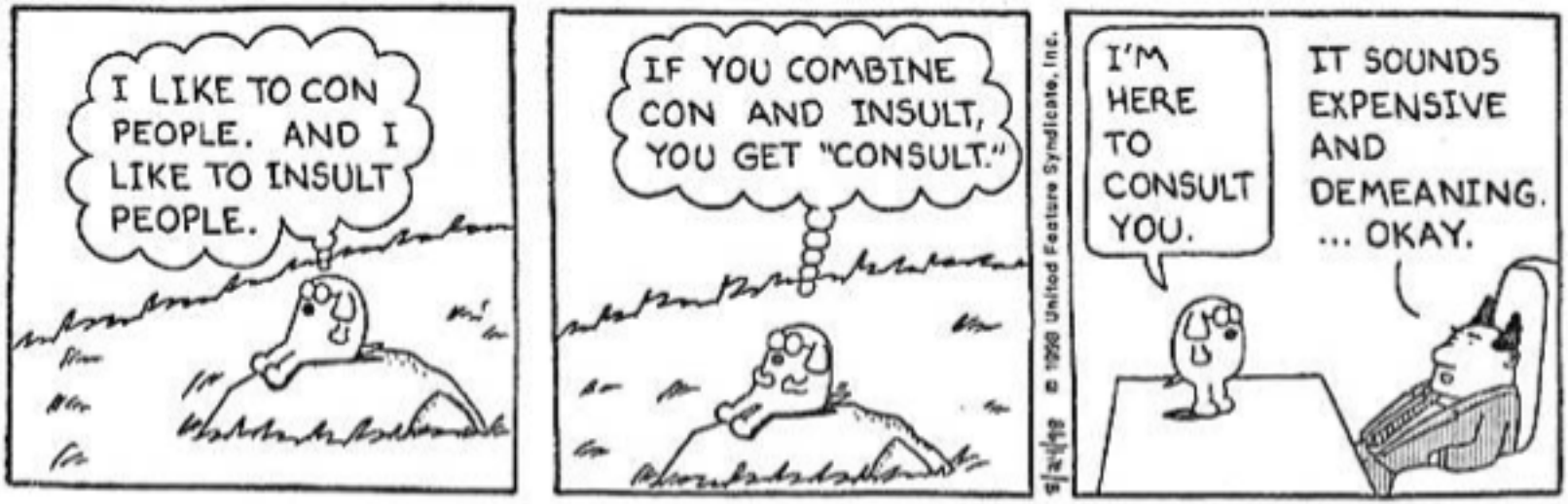
Part 2: Making Programming Us

1. Structured Values
2. Collections
3. Decisions and Calculations
4. Instantiation

Skills?

“Organizations do not have the necessary skills. True. But... AI Big Data Agile REST”

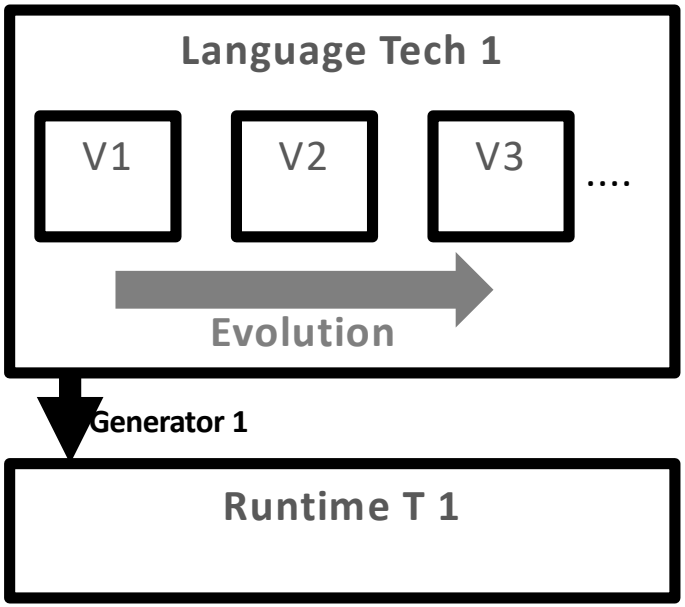
So build it. Evolve. Hire. Buy.



Is this the next legacy system?

“Today‘s software is tomorrow‘s legacy system.”

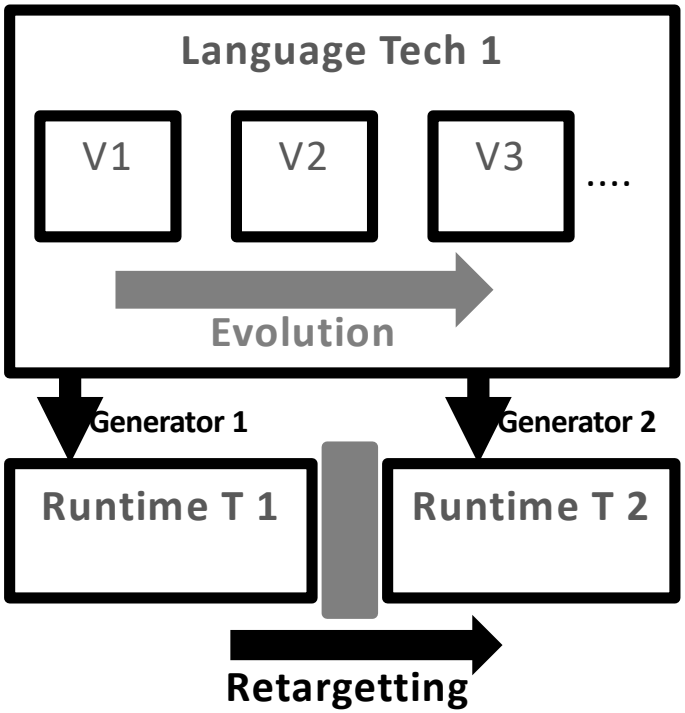
Or is it?



Existing models become incompatble with new language

⇒ **Language Versions**

Migration Scripts

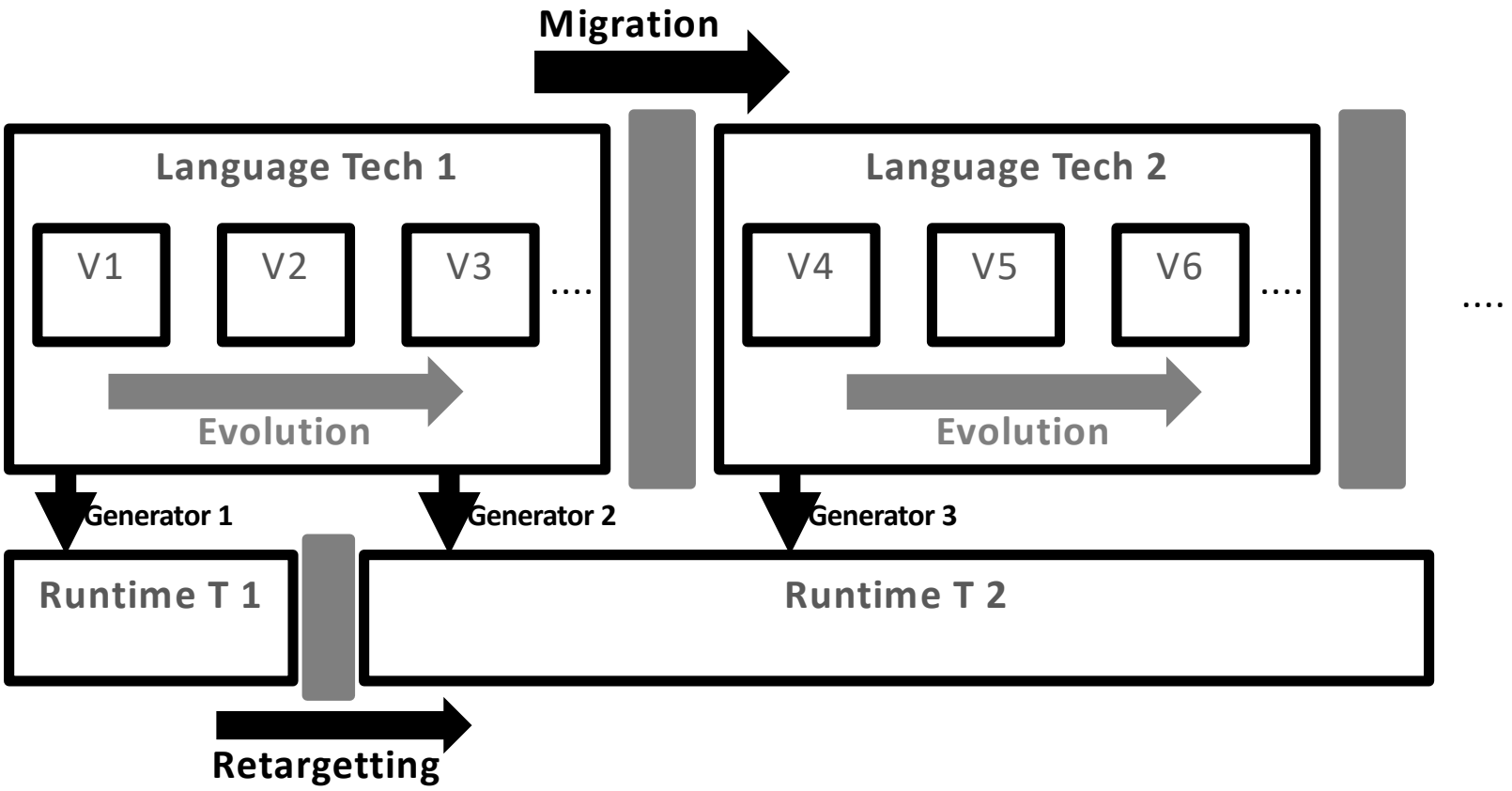


Runtime Tech outdated, uncool or slow

$\Rightarrow$ **Keep Lang Technology**

Keep Models

Build new Generator



Language Tech outdated, uncool

⇒ **Build new Tool**

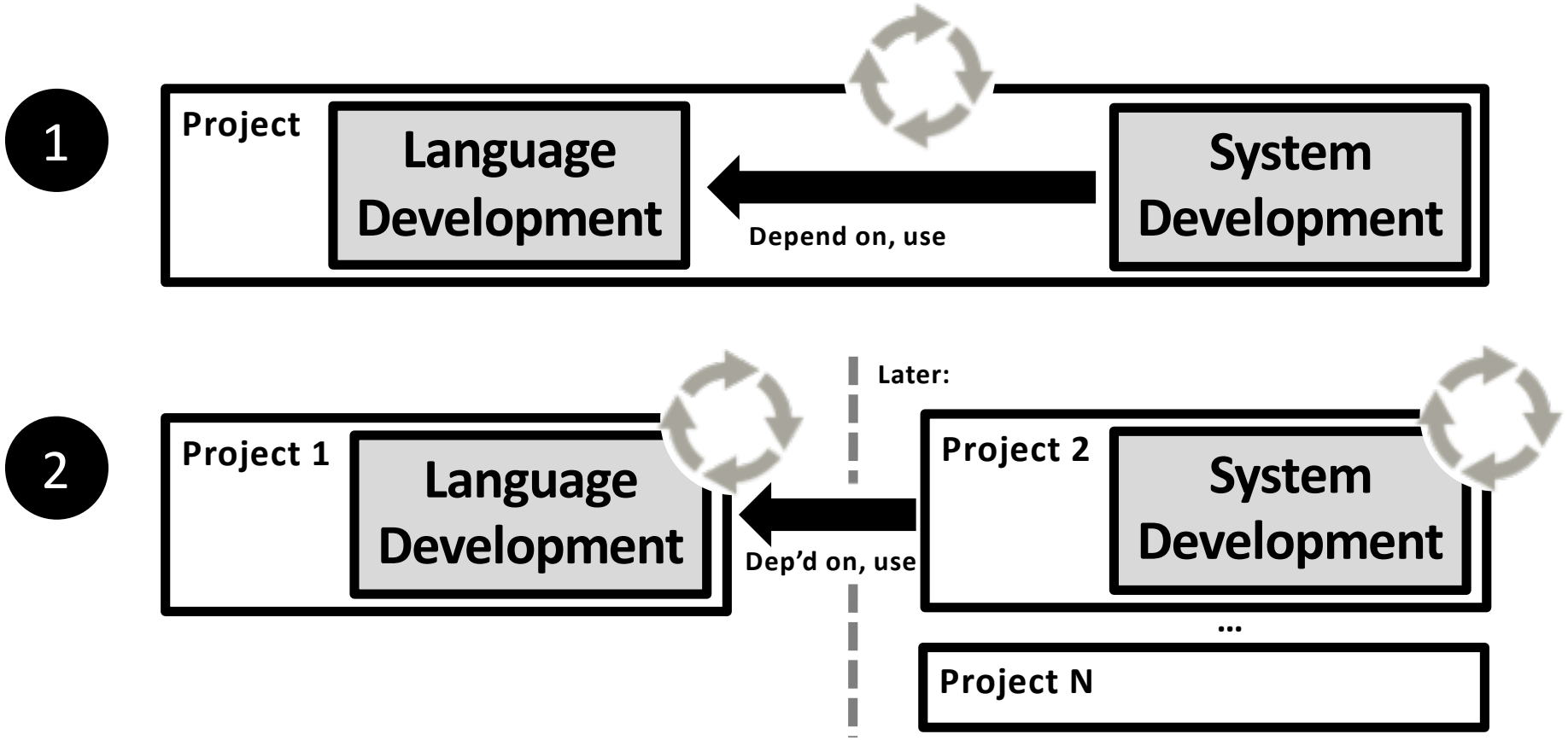
Migrate Data Feasible, because it well-defined domain semantics and free from „technology stuff“

“Today‘s software is tomorrow‘s legacy system.”

No, it is not.

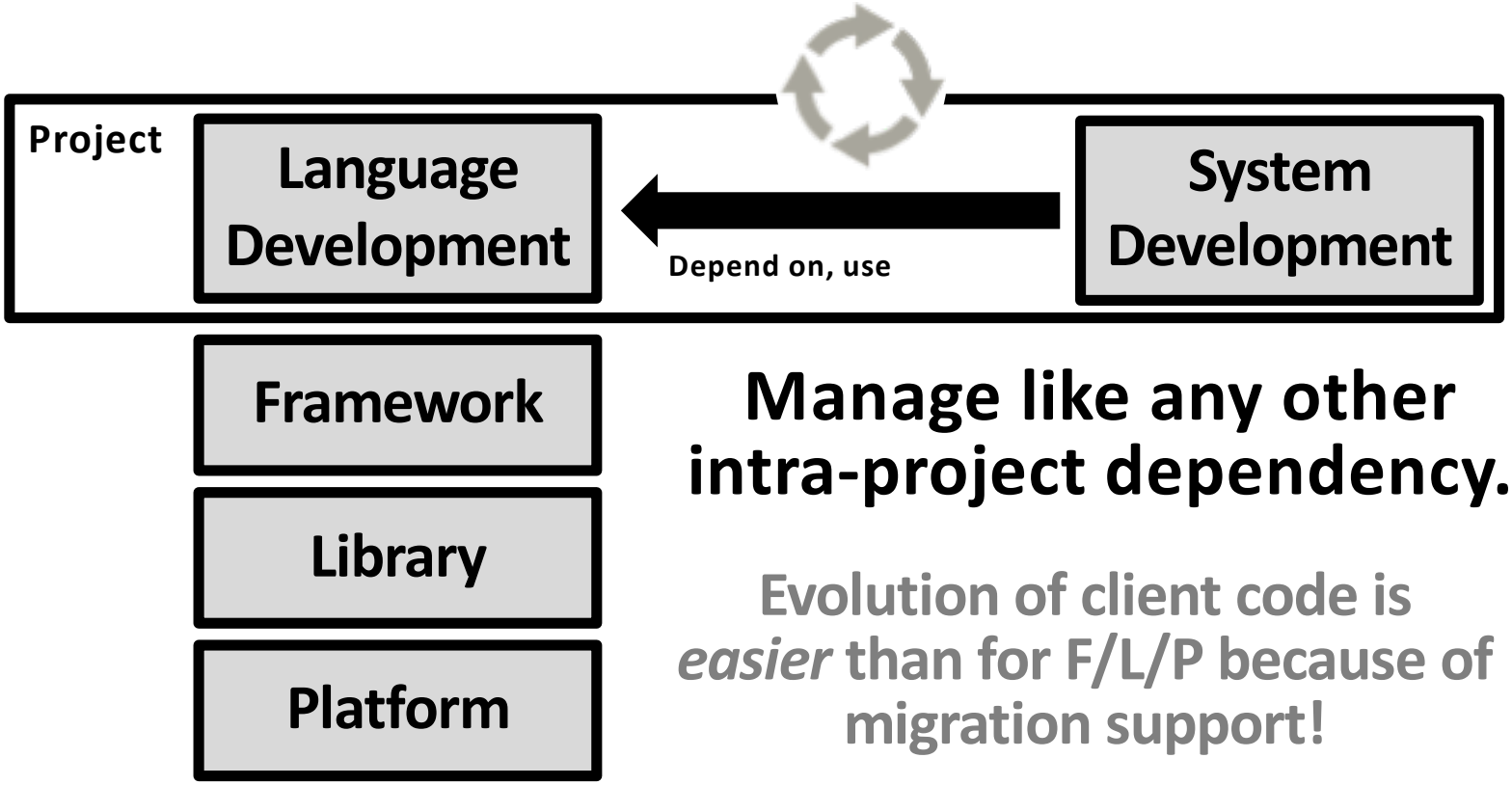
In conflict with Agile?

„MD* and Agile is in Conflict.“



„MD* and Agile is in Conflict.“

1

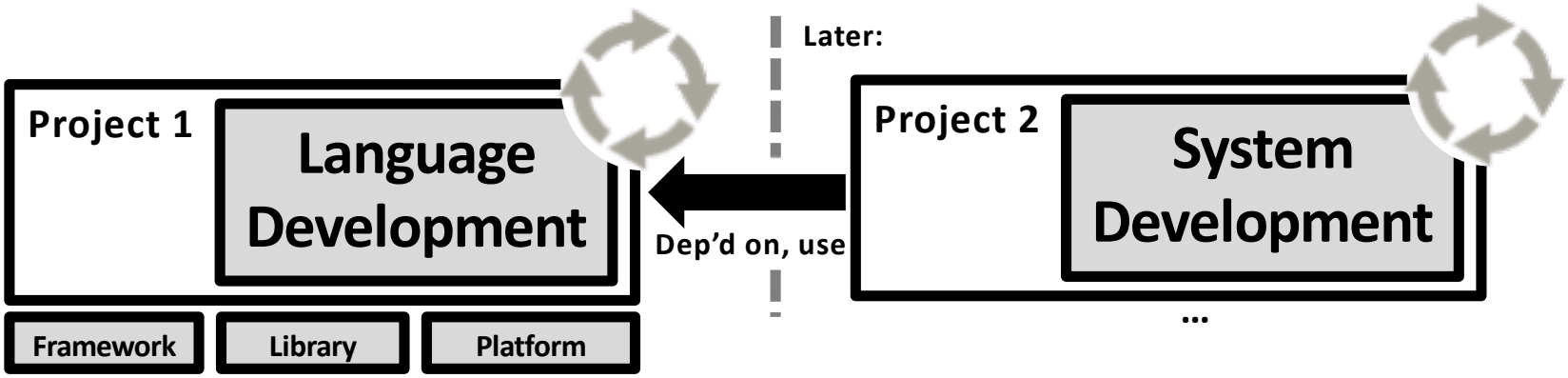


Manage like any other intra-project dependency.

Evolution of client code is *easier* than for F/L/P because of migration support!

„MD* and Agile is in Conflict.“

2



Manage like any other 3rd party depencency:

Development Roadmap
Issue Tracker
Release Notes
...

„MD* and Agile is in Conflict.“

WTF?

3

Models and DSLs are an Enabler for Agility:

Integration of Domain Experts
„Living“ Requirements
Decoupled Fachlichkeit & Technik

„MD* and Agile is in Conflict.“

4

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[Customer]

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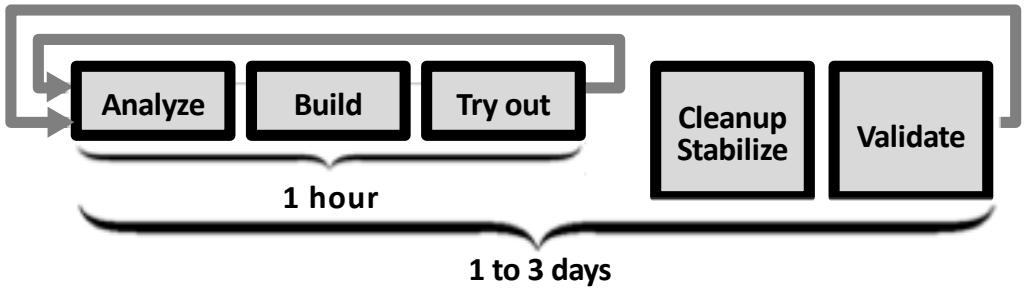

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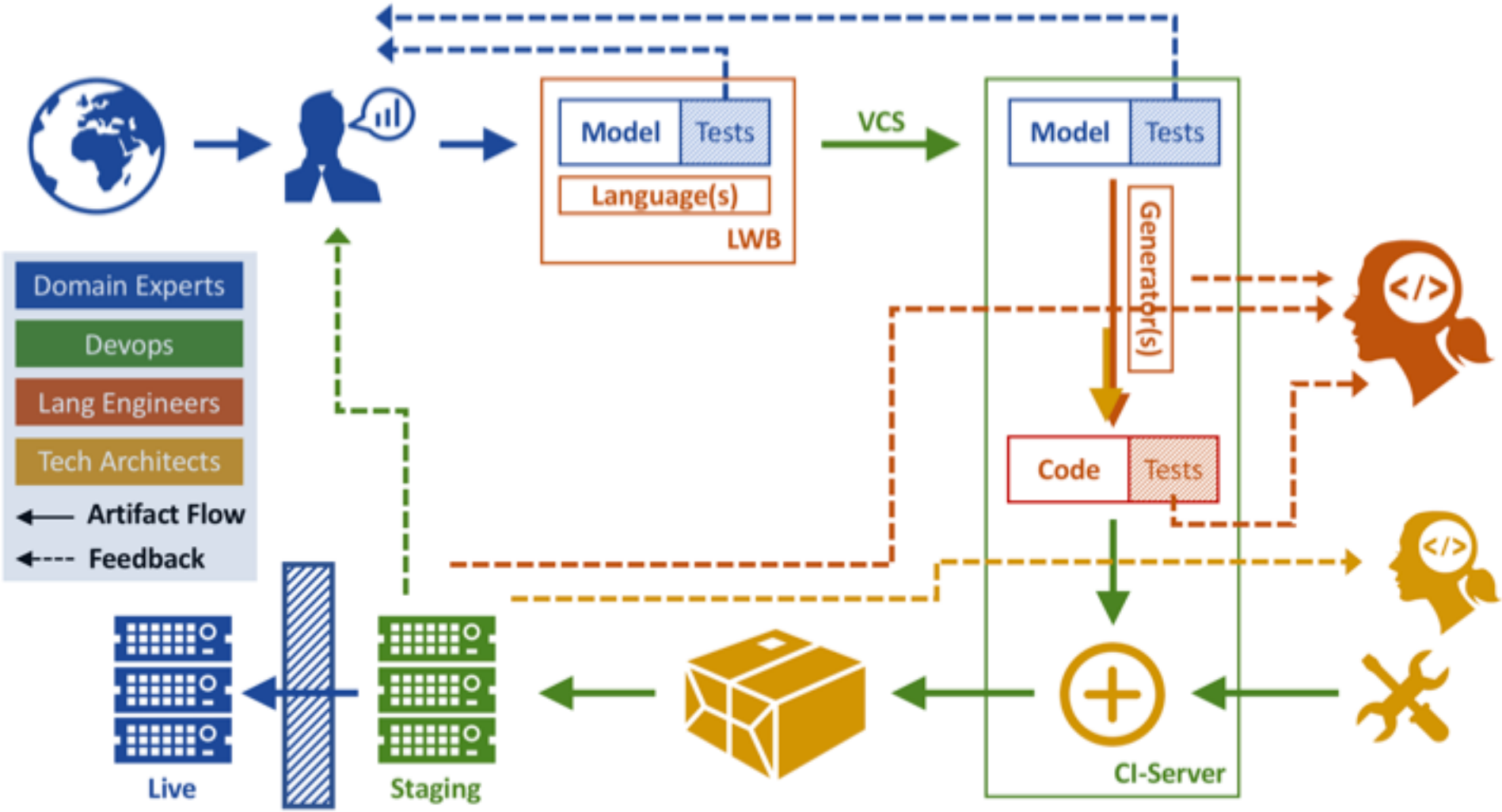
What about CI?

You integrate like any other automatable CI step.



5

Wrap Up

The Blockchain

Ethereum Fundamentals
Jana Petkanic

Developing Smart Contracts
Olivier Rikken

Let's All just Agree: Achieving Consensus in Blockchain-based Systems
Stefan Tilkov

A Language Stack for Implementing Contracts
Markus Völter

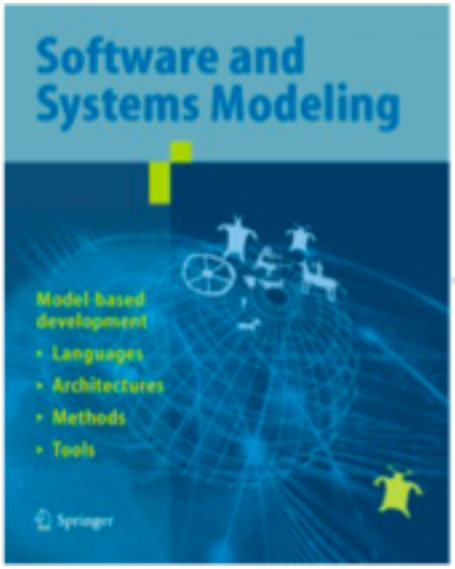
Blockchain in Healthcare
Jeroen van Megchelen

Wednesday Jun 20 15:00 – 15:50
Location: Administratiezaal

A Language Stack for Implementing Contracts

Markus Völter
Language Engineer
Website

The term Smart Contract is used for arbitrary programs that run on the distributed, trustworthy computing infrastructure provided by a blockchain. However, the sweet spot for such programs is actual contracts, i.e., long-running, collaborative processes involving several parties who may or may not trust each other. To implement such contracts effectively, we need much more than the Blockchain: contracts must be expressed in a way so that the relevant stakeholders, who are not typically programmers, can understand the them; contracts must be functionally correct, i.e., they must behave in exactly the way the stakeholders expect; and they must be protected against being gamed, for example, through sybil attacks. The trust in the execution of the contract, mostly through non-repudiability, is then provided by the blockchain. In this talk, I discuss research into how to formally model contracts, I present languages that are suitable for representing contracts in a way that is lawyer-accessible and prevents some aspects of gaming, and I discuss how such approaches lead to improved correctness through correctness-by-construction and simplified verification.



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Lessons learned from developing mbeddr: a case study in language engineering with MPS

Authors | Authors and affiliations

Markus Voelter, Bernd Kolb, Tamás Szabó, Daniel Ratiu, Arie van Deursen

Regular Paper
First Online: 09 January 2017

Abstract

Language workbenches are touted as a promising technology to engineer languages for use in a wide range of domains, from programming to science to business. However, not many real-world case studies exist that evaluate the suitability of language workbench technology for this task. This paper contains such a case study. In particular, we evaluate the development of mbeddr, a collection of integrated languages and language extensions built with the Jetbrains MPS language workbench. mbeddr consists of 81 languages, with their IDE support, 34 of them C extensions. The mbeddr languages use a wide variety of notations—textual, tabular, symbolic and graphical—and the C extensions are modular; new extensions can be added without changing the existing implementation of C. mbeddr's development has spanned 10 person-years so far, and the tool is used in practice and continues to be developed. This makes mbeddr a meaningful case study of non-trivial size and complexity. The evaluation is centered around five research questions: language modularity, notational freedom and projectional editing, mechanisms for managing complexity, performance and scalability issues and the consequences for the development process. We draw generally positive conclusions; language engineering with MPS is ready for real-world use. However, we also identify a number of areas for improvement in the state of the art in language engineering in general, and in MPS in particular.

http://voelter.de/data/pub/voelterEtAl2017-buildingMbeddr.pdf

Separation of concerns is key
to avoid the legacy trap

DSLs can isolate business logic
completely from technical concerns

DSLs can help integrate domain experts
with communication/review or even coding

Language Workbenches enable DSLs
by reducing effort to build, compose and maintain them

DSLs are not in conflict with Agile
... to the contrary, DSLs are a powerful enabler!