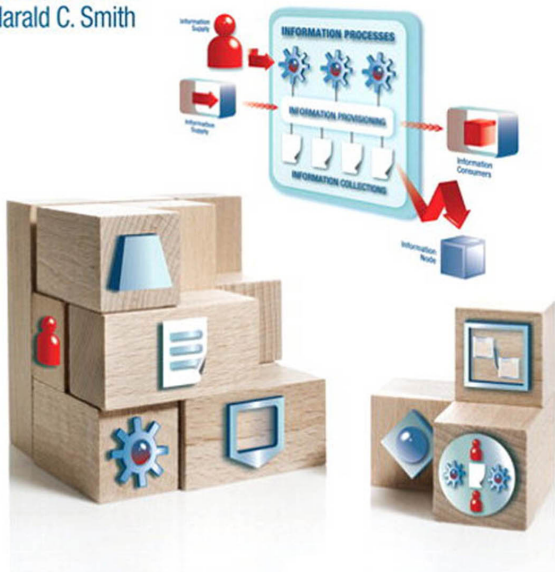


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Harald C. Smith

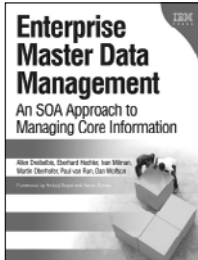


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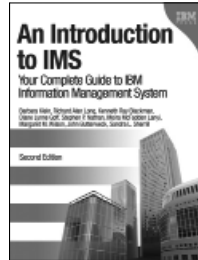
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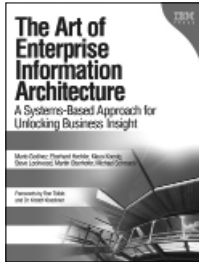
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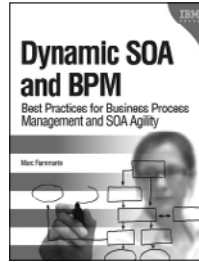
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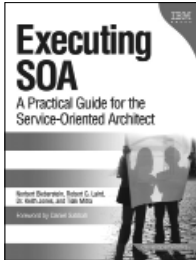
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Patterns of Information Management

Mandy Chessell
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*Some day, on the corporate balance sheet, there will be an entry which reads,
“Information”; for in most cases, the information is more valuable than the
hardware which processes it.*

—Rear Admiral Grace Hopper

*To my family and friends who have supported and encouraged
me over the years, with love:
Sarah, Jane, Ray, Terri, Ben, Ella, Ian, Kay, Keith, Dan, and Chris.*

—Mandy Chessell

*To my family: Mary, Rebecca, Cecilia, and Paul
and my parents: Clyde and Ellen
For their love and support now and over the years.*

—Harald Smith

Contents at a Glance

	Foreword by Rob High	xxi
	Preface	xxiii
	Acknowledgments	xxviii
	About the Authors	xxix
Chapter 1	Introduction	1
Chapter 2	The MCHS Trading Case Study	25
Chapter 3	People and Organizations	69
Chapter 4	Information Architecture	99
Chapter 5	Information at Rest	235
Chapter 6	Information in Motion	395
Chapter 7	Information Processing	449
Chapter 8	Information Protection	533
Chapter 9	Solutions for Information Management	577
Appendix 1	Glossary	643
Appendix 2	Summary of MCHS Trading's Systems	649
Appendix 3	Related Pattern Languages	651
Appendix 4	Bibliography	653
	Patterns Index	663
	Index	669

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1	Introduction	1
	Islands of Information	1
	Introducing MCHS Trading	2
	Improving an Organization's Information Management	4
	Patterns and Pattern Languages	7
	Basic Components in the Pattern Language	11
	Information Integration and Distribution	12
	Pattern Language Structure	15
	Summary	22
Chapter 2	The MCHS Trading Case Study	25
	Introduction	25
	Building an Information Strategy	26
	Creating Management Reports	28
	Creating a Single View of Product Details	30
	Creating a Single View of Customer Details	37
	Understanding the Status of Orders	44
	Delivering Information Quality Improvements	47
	Connecting MCHS Trading into a B2B Trading Partnership	51
	Exploiting Predictive Analytics	55
	Summary of Case Study	67
Chapter 3	People and Organizations	69
	Information Centric Organization Patterns	70
	Information Centric Organization	73
	Information Management Obligation	78
	Information Management Strategy	81
	Information Management Principle	83
	Information Governance Program	88
	Information User Patterns	91
	Information User	92
	Variations of the Information User Pattern	95
	Summary	97
Chapter 4	Information Architecture	99
	Information Element Patterns	100
	Information Element	101
	Entity-Level Information Elements	106
	Information Asset	107
	Information Activity	110
	Information Event	113

Information Processing Variables	114
Information Summary	117
Message-Level Information Elements	119
Information Payload	119
Attribute-Level Information Elements	122
Information Link	123
Information Metric	124
Information Code	126
Summary of Information Elements	129
Information Identification Patterns	129
Information Identification	130
Defining Which Information to Manage and How	133
Subject Area Definition	134
Valid Values Definition	136
Information Configuration	139
Defining How Information Is Structured	141
Information Model	141
Information Schema	143
Locating the Right Information to Use	145
Information Location	146
Semantic Tagging	148
Semantic Mapping	150
Different Reports About Information	153
Information Values Report	154
Information Values Profile	156
Information Lineage	159
Summary of Information Identification	161
Information Provisioning Patterns	161
Information Provisioning	163
Localized Provisioning	166
User Private Provisioning	167
Application Private Provisioning	169
Process-Level Provisioning	171
Daisy Chain Provisioning	172
Service-Level Provisioning	177
User Shared Provisioning	178
Service Oriented Provisioning	179
Linked Information Provisioning	182
Cache Provisioning	184
Collection-Level Provisioning	185
Snap Shot Provisioning	186
Mirroring Provisioning	189
Peer Provisioning	193
Event-Based Provisioning	196

Recovery Provisioning	197
Summary of Information Provisioning	199
Information Supply Chain Patterns	199
Information Supply Chain	200
Variations of the Information Supply Chain Pattern	209
Cascading Information Supply Chain	211
Hub Interchange Information Supply Chain	215
Single View Information Supply Chain	219
Consolidating Information Supply Chain	223
Hierarchical Information Supply Chain	225
Peer Exchange Information Supply Chain	230
Summary of Information Supply Chains	232
Summary	232

Chapter 5 Information at Rest 235

Information Service Patterns	236
Information Service	238
Information Service Implementation Patterns	243
Local Information Service	243
Remote Information Service	246
Triggering Information Service	250
Summary of Information Services	253
Information Collection Patterns	253
Information Collection	254
Location of Information	259
Physical Information Collection	260
Virtual Information Collection	263
Usage of an Information Collection	266
Master Usage	267
Reference Usage	271
Hybrid Usage	274
Sandbox Usage	277
Scope of an Information Collection	279
Complete Scope	280
Local Scope	282
Transient Scope	284
Coverage of an Information Collection	285
Complete Coverage	285
Core Coverage	286
Extended Coverage	286
Local Coverage	287
Summary of Information Collections	287
Information Entry Patterns	288
Information Entry	289

Identifying Information Using the Information Key	292
Information Key	295
Local Key	297
Recycled Key	300
Natural Key	302
Mirror Key	305
Aggregate Key	307
Caller's Key	310
Stable Key	312
Structures for an Information Entry	316
Locking for an Information Entry	317
Specialized Operations for an Information Entry	317
Summary of Information Entries	318
Information Node Patterns	319
Information Node	320
Business Information Nodes	324
Application Node	326
Information Content Node	330
Search Node	332
Information Store	334
Information Mart	337
Information Cube	340
Integration Nodes	343
Information Broker	343
Queue Manager	349
Staging Area	353
Look-Up Table Node	356
Event Correlation Node	358
Operational Data Stores and Hubs	360
Information Mirror Store	361
Information Event Store	364
Operational Status Store	366
Information Asset Hub	368
Information Activity Hub	372
Big Data Information Processing Nodes	376
Information Warehouse	377
Streaming Analytics Node	380
Map-Reduce Node	382
Analysis Information Nodes	385
Information Analysis Node	386
Information Mining Store	389
Summary of Information Nodes	393
Summary	394

Chapter 6	Information in Motion	395
Information Request Patterns		396
Information Request		396
Variations of the Information Request Pattern		398
Summary of Information Requests		401
Information Flow Patterns		401
Information Flow		403
Routing Information Flows		406
Staged Routing		407
Partitioned Routing		410
Buffered Routing		413
Filtered Routing		416
Summarized Routing		418
Consolidating Information Flows		420
Synchronized Consolidation		421
Filtered Consolidation		424
Ordered Consolidation		427
Independent Consolidation		429
Distributing Information Flows		432
Synchronized Distribution		433
Partitioned Distribution		436
Ordered Distribution		439
Independent Distribution		441
Broadcast Distribution		444
Summary of Information Flow Patterns		446
Summary		447
Chapter 7	Information Processing	449
Information Trigger Patterns		450
Information Trigger		450
Variations of the Information Trigger Pattern		453
Manual Information Trigger		453
Scheduled Information Trigger		455
Information Service Trigger		458
Information Change Trigger		460
External Sensor Trigger		462
Summary of Information Triggers		465
Information Process Patterns		465
Information Process		466
Business Processes		469
Bespoke Application Process		471
Packaged Application Process		472
Agile Business Process		474

State Driven Process	476
Collaborative Editing Process	479
Information Reporting Process	481
Quality Information Processes	483
Information Profile Tracking Process	484
Clerical Review Process	487
Information Remediation Process	489
Information Validation Process	491
Information Matching Process	493
Information Ever-Greening Process	496
Information Archiving Process	497
Provisioning Information Processes	499
Information Replication Process	500
Information Deployment Process	502
Information Relocation Process	505
Information Federation Process	507
Information Queuing Process	509
Information Broadcasting Process	511
Information Summarizing Process	513
Information Scavenging Process	515
Analytics Processes	517
Information Pattern Discovery Process	518
Information Decision Definition Process	521
Information Pattern Detecting Process	523
Search Processes	525
IT Service Management Processes	526
Operational Health Monitoring Process	527
Information Node Management Process	528
Scheduling Process	530
Summary of Information Processes	531
Summary	532

Chapter 8 Information Protection 533

Information Reengineering Step Patterns	534
Information Reengineering Step	534
Specialist Information Reengineering Steps	538
Restructure Data	539
Standardize Data	542
Enrich Data	545
Classify Data	546
Check Data	548
Correct Data	550
Link Entries	553

Merge Entries	556
Separate Entries	558
Derive Value	560
Derive Relationship	562
Smooth Data	563
Sample Data	565
Information Guard Patterns	566
Information Guard	567
Variations of the Information Guard Pattern	570
Information Probe Patterns	572
Information Probe	572
Variations of the Information Probe Pattern	575
Summary	576

Chapter 9 Solutions for Information Management 577

Information Solution Patterns	578
Information Solution	578
Patterns for Changing Information Nodes	582
New Information Node	583
Information Node Upgrade	587
Patterns for Integrating Information Nodes	590
Distributed Activity Status	590
Semantic Integration	593
Partner Collaboration	597
Patterns for Master Data Management	599
Shared Master	601
Centralized Master	604
Information Registry	607
Golden Reference	610
Synchronized Masters	613
Patterns for Big Data and Warehouses	618
Historical System of Record	619
Workload Offload	624
Patterns for Business Intelligence and Analytics	626
Performance Reporting	626
Operational Analytics	628
Next Best Action	630
Patterns for Information Protection	633
Managed Archive	634
Information Access Audit	636
Information Monitoring	638
Summary of Information Solutions	642
Final Thoughts	642

Appendix 1	Glossary	643
Appendix 2	Summary of MCHS Trading’s Systems	649
Appendix 3	Related Pattern Languages	651
Appendix 4	Bibliography	653
	Information Centric Organization	653
	Enterprise Architecture	653
	Enterprise Application Architecture	654
	Service-Oriented Architecture and Web Services	655
	Information Architecture	655
	Data Models	655
	Metadata Management	656
	Information Warehouse	657
	Information Integration	657
	Information Quality	658
	Master Data Management	659
	Big Data	659
	Analytics and Reporting	660
	Information Security and Privacy	660
	Information Life-Cycle Management	661
Patterns	Index	663
Index		669

Foreword by Rob High

In the early history of humans—when we were barely distinguishable from other animals—we protected ourselves with the construction of shelters made from branches, leaves, and mud. To suggest that these structures had architecture is being generous. But to the extent that their architectural style could be discerned at all, at best you could argue their architecture was forged from necessity and practicality. Dried mud helped keep the leaves secured and leakproof. Branches provide strength across broad spans. Leaves knitted everything together. Eons of experience and mistakes drove practices—often varying substantially from one region to another based on the available materials and climate conditions of each region. Form strictly followed function. No one, at that time, ever stopped to draw out their shelter design—critiquing it for its style and propitiousness.

Likewise, the early years of information systems implementation were driven out of necessity—leveraging the materials and practices that were available to us. Barely discernable architectures were more derived than prescribed. But, as with our ancestral laborers, we found the need to build more sophisticated and ever-larger answers to our problems. And, as before, we discovered that with a little planning, engineering, and standardized construction techniques, we could handle the task more easily. We could adapt to new functions, and we could apply form and aesthetics to the things we constructed. The results are not only more pleasing, but they are more reliable, more efficient, more economical, and more adaptable to changing conditions. There is not only derived architecture, but we can employ architecture to coerce solutions to better meet our needs.

At the heart of architecture are patterns that shape and style the materials we work with and the techniques that inform the practices of pattern adoption. Patterns form the building blocks of construction. Techniques tell us how best to select and assemble those building blocks to achieve the results we are seeking.

The idea of using patterns and techniques in the construction of information management is exactly what this book is about. Information patterns form the basis of a whole new architectural approach to systems design that, like its analog in the construction industry, is essential to assuring durability, usability, flexibility, and utility of IT solutions. The patterns presented here

are not hypothetical, but rather have been forged from decades of experience in the field. They capture the bittersweet results of literally thousands of person-years of effort—trying different approaches, abandoning the ones that failed, refining the ones that showed promise, latching on to the ones that proved to work well, and promoting the ones that exceeded expectations.

The language of information patterns is a formalism of expression. It standardizes an approach to representing ideas that enables clarity and precision of communication. It allows us to exchange a common understanding of those ideas and to manipulate those ideas to create even bigger, more profound ideas. And although the basic ideas captured in the language are not new, the ability to express those ideas in a formal language is both novel and profoundly innovative. It makes it possible to unleash the value of information patterns, and build even greater value more effectively.

As the former chief architect of IBM®’s SOA Foundation, I have long advocated the use of architecture for ensuring the utility of information systems solutions. These information patterns build on the traditions of Service Oriented Architecture (SOA) and, more important, fill a critical gap in SOA by addressing the correlation between services and information in our IT solutions. In keeping with the SOA tradition, these patterns are not just the raw materials of construction for IT developers, but are essential to aligning the objectives of IT and business—driving the form of the system to both enable the business to respond quickly to changing business conditions and to even compel the business to motivate changes that will gain it a competitive advantage in its marketplace.

The use of information patterns is imperative for modern information system design. This book is a must-read and I strongly encourage you to apply these techniques in your practices.

Rob High
IBM Fellow
CTO, IBM Watson™
Former chief architect, SOA Foundation

Preface

About This Book

Information is the heart of any organization's operation. It defines who is involved, what activities are taking place, and the assets being brought to bear to create its goods and services. Managing information takes a multidisciplinary approach because it pervades every aspect of the organization's life. We must consider where information comes from; consider how it is distributed, protected, governed, and monitored; as well as ensure it is used appropriately at its destination.

From a technical point of view, a myriad of technologies have emerged to tackle different aspects of information management. There is the Service Oriented Architecture (SOA) technology that makes information available to remote systems; databases and files systems to store information; messaging technology that sends notifications between systems; extract, transform, load (ETL) technology for moving and transforming large quantities of information; federated queries; big data technologies; replication technology; data quality and metadata tools; distributed security technology; analytics; archiving processes; and many more. For the architect, the choice of technology is overwhelming and there is a strong temptation to just stick with the technology we know well. The result is that our designs can become unbalanced, with too much focus on one dimension of the problem.

This book contains architecture patterns that characterize the typical information issues associated with distributed systems. They demonstrate how the seemingly competing technologies for information management, SOA, and business process management can be blended to create an effective, interconnected, and ordered IT landscape, making it both manageable and efficient.

The patterns are built around a supply chain metaphor. Information is supplied to the organization, processed, moved around, processed some more, and then output as some form of information product, such as a report or dashboard. Through this analogy, we cover how an organization can manage its information to support its operation effectively, balancing quality, availability, breadth, precision, and timeliness with cost.

Information is not a physical asset, of course, so our notion of an “information supply chain” must extend the physical manufacturing and distribution supply chain metaphor with the recognition that information rarely moves from point to point as a discrete, whole unit. It is constantly being copied, transformed, renamed, partitioned, merged, updated, and deleted. More subtly, there are multiple versions of the “truth.” People’s interpretation and assumptions around the information they work with are highly contextual, and so when information is shared, it must be transformed to match the expectations and context of the new consumers before they will trust it to support their business.

Patterns of Information Management explains how information is transformed, enriched, reconciled, and redistributed along the information supply chain. The aim is to shape the way systems are integrated to create an orderly flow of information that can be reused and synchronized at key points in the processing.

A pattern-based approach is powerful because the resulting system behavior is determined by the way technologies are combined; the design choices are heavily affected by nonfunctional requirements, such as the amount of information, the arrival rates of new values, the level of quality that can be assumed, and the processing required to make the information useful. The patterns link together into a pattern language that spans from the holistic system level views for enterprise architects down to the design patterns of integration developers. The resulting pattern language enables the architect to make reasoned decisions about the applicability of each alternative approach and the inherent consequences of the choice.

Intended Audience

Patterns of Information Management is intended for enterprise architects, information architects, and solution architects who are responsible for defining how information systems should be linked together in order to synchronize, manage, and share information. Students and practitioners alike will find that the patterns create a framework in which to organize their existing experience and broaden their knowledge.

How to Use This Book

This book is principally a reference book. Chapters 1 and 2, “Introduction” and “The MCHS Trading Case Study,” respectively, set the scene, explaining how the pattern language is structured and walking through some examples. It is recommended that you read both of these chapters before using the patterns.

The remaining chapters contain the pattern definitions themselves. These chapters can be used to deepen your knowledge of the topic or as a pattern reference during a particular project. Because there are so many patterns, it is not possible, or necessary, to learn all of the patterns before starting to use them in a project. The patterns are organized into small, related groups that focus on a particular aspect of information management. We suggest that you start with a pattern

group that is particularly relevant to your work. Study the pattern descriptions, paying attention to the differentiating aspects of each pattern, and map them to your project.

The content can be used in various ways:

- The pattern names define a vocabulary to discuss issues and technology options related to information architecture, governance, and management. The pattern names become the nouns and verbs of your design discussions, enabling you to characterize and choose between the options available.
- The pattern icons can be used in whiteboarding sessions and for documenting design decisions in reference architectures and solution specifications.
- The pattern descriptions provide design guidance for specific information supply chains and solutions.
- The pattern language provides a foundation for setting architectural standards and reference architectures. An organization can select the patterns it wants to support and develop reference implementations for them.
- The pattern language provides material for education and training in information architecture.

As you become familiar with one group of patterns, you can turn your attention to another—iteratively growing your knowledge. The consistency built into the pattern language will accelerate your learning process and very quickly you will become proficient in a significant working set of patterns.

Structure of the Book

Patterns of Information Management is divided into the following chapters:

Chapter 1, “Introduction”

Chapter 1 is an introduction to the topic of information management and the challenges that architects face. It explains what a pattern is, the conventions we use in documenting a pattern, and how patterns are linked together to form a pattern language.

Chapter 2, “The MCHS Trading Case Study”

Chapter 2 uses a case study involving a fictitious company called MCHS Trading to illustrate how the patterns of information management can be used in a project setting. These projects cover defining an information strategy; introducing a data warehouse and management reporting; introducing master data management hubs for operational master data; improving how information is governed, monitored, and managed; exchanging information with external parties; and using predictive analytics.

Chapter 3, “People and Organizations”

Chapter 3 is the first of the pattern definition chapters. It covers patterns relating to the way an organization is operating because this has a major impact on the way that information is managed. It describes the following pattern groups:

- Information centric organizations
- Information users

These patterns help in the definition of your information strategy and information governance program.

Chapter 4, “Information Architecture”

Chapter 4 covers the nature of information and how to think about its structure, meaning, and organization. This includes patterns that describe the different life-cycle patterns of information, models, metadata, information supply chains, and the solutions you may implement to improve the management of information. It includes the following pattern groups:

- Information elements
- Information identification
- Information provisioning
- Information supply chains

These patterns help you understand and plan the overall flow of information through your organization’s systems.

Chapter 5, “Information at Rest”

Chapter 5 contains pattern descriptions describing how information is accessed and stored. This includes descriptions of the different types of servers that support information management. The pattern groups in this chapter are as follows:

- Information services
- Information collections
- Information entries
- Information nodes

These patterns help to shape your thinking when deploying new capability into the IT environment, such as a new application, master data management hub, data warehouse, analytics, or reporting platform.

Chapter 6, “Information in Motion”

Chapter 6 documents the patterns for moving information between servers, including services, information routing, filtering, consolidation, and distribution. It contains the following pattern groups:

- Information requests
- Information flows

These patterns focus on how information is moved between the information nodes to satisfy the needs of their information processes.

Chapter 7, “Information Processing”

Chapter 7 describes the different types of processing that is performed on information and how it is triggered. The processes include business, movement, transformation, quality management, search, and analytics processes. It contains these pattern groups:

- Information triggers
- Information processes

These patterns help you categorize and select how information should be processed and maintained.

Chapter 8, “Information Protection”

Chapter 8 covers the patterns for protecting information, including validating, transforming, enriching, and correcting information; security; and monitoring. It includes three pattern groups:

- Information reengineering steps
- Information guards
- Information probes

Once you have your information supply chains mapped out, these patterns help you design how the information can be protected end to end.

Chapter 9, “Solutions for Information Management”

Chapter 9 covers the information solution pattern group. These patterns describe a selection of information projects that improve the information management of an organization’s information systems. Solutions incorporate a set of patterns focused on addressing particular information problems, though always in context with existing information landscapes so they must integrate with, enhance, or incorporate existing systems and information.

Appendices

The appendices include a glossary of technical terms and technology types that are mapped to the relevant patterns.

What Is Not Covered

This is a design pattern language and so does not recommend specific technologies and products. It aims to describe classes of technology, where they should be used, and the consequences of using them. This book is also intended to be an overview of the information management landscape. It does not include implementation details, particularly where there is plenty of literature covering these details. Finally, there are references to information governance in the patterns. Information governance is a supporting discipline for information management that involves business controls, procedures, and related technology. It is beyond the scope of this book to cover these aspects properly.

Further Information

There is an IBM developerWorks® community for the *Patterns of Information Management* where additional details, examples, and discussions are being posted. To join, visit: <https://www.ibm.com/developerworks/community/groups/community/PoIM>

This community provides you with an opportunity to ask questions about the patterns and suggest improvements.

Acknowledgments

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IBM has provided us with an environment where we have been able to develop and share the material with experts from many companies, industries, and software disciplines, drawing on their years of experience delivering complex projects and systems. As a result, we received valuable feedback from many subject matter experts, including Dan Wolfson, Dougal Watt, Steve Lockwood, Kyle Brown, Loretta Mahon Smith, Mike McRoberts, Rob High, Martin Wildberger, Richard Hedges, Stephanie Hazlewood, Patrick Dantressangle, Mukesh Mohania, Ivan Milman, Lena Woolf, David Radley, Larry Yusuf, Susan Visser, Sarah Tee, Herb Berger, Prasad Vempati, Keith Enhagen, Eleomara Goncalves, and Rickey Tang.

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FREng CEng FBCS

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Outside of IBM, Mandy is a fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering and a visiting professor at the University of Sheffield, UK. In 2001, she was the first woman to be awarded a Silver Medal by the Royal Academy of Engineering, and in 2000, she was one of the "TR100" young innovators identified by MIT's *Technology Review* magazine. In 2006, she won a British Female Innovators and Inventors Network (BFIIN) "Building Capability" award for her work developing innovative people and the BlackBerry "2006 Best Woman in Technology - Corporate Sector" award. More recently, she was granted an honorary fellowship of the Institution for Engineering Designers (IED) and she won the "2012 everywoman Innovator of the Year."

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“Designing an integration landscape with IBM InfoSphere Foundation Tools and Information Server” [part 1], and “Best practices for IBM InfoSphere Blueprint Director” [parts 1 and 2]. For the IBM InfoSphere Information Server documentation, Harald contributed to the “IBM InfoSphere Information Analyzer Methodology and Best Practices Guide” and “IBM InfoSphere Information Server Integration Scenario Guide”; he has also contributed to three IBM Redbooks®.

Introduction

In software engineering, we are taught that abstraction, modularity, and information hiding are useful approaches when breaking down a set of requirements into manageable chunks for implementation. This book makes use of these principles to tackle the synchronization of information between IT systems.

Islands of Information

Most organizations use specialized IT systems called applications to run their operations. Each application supports a particular aspect of the business, either for the whole organization or a group within it. There may be applications for order taking, for billing, for distribution of goods, for management of employee data, and many more.

An application will store the information it is processing in a persistent store for later reference. This information store is often a private resource for the application. Over time, this store contains important details about the people with whom the organization is interacting, what assets they use, how, when, and why.

A healthy organization will develop and grow—and this change drives changes into its applications, affecting their function and scope. It can also lead to duplication of function:

- When two organizations merge, they can end up with at least two applications for each function.
- When a new product line or channel to market is introduced, an organization may choose to introduce a new application to support it, to avoid the possibility of disrupting the established business or to implement it faster.
- Multinational organizations find they need separate applications for different countries, or trading regions, to handle local customs and regulations.

Careful management and constant rationalization may reduce the number of applications so there is little or no overlap in function. However, an application is a complex mix of software and hardware. It takes considerable engineering effort to develop it, and so once the investment is made, an application is expected to have a long life (5–15 years). Ripping it out and replacing it can be expensive and difficult and so an organization may choose to maintain multiple applications for the same function.

When there are two applications covering the same function, information about that function is split between the two applications and is typically stored in a different format. Even when all applications support unique functions, there is still an overlap in the information that they hold. This is the information that describes the core interests of the organization, such as customers, suppliers, products, contracts, payments, assets, employees, and many more.

Over time, the private information stores of an organization's applications become islands of duplicated and inconsistent information. This affects the efficiency of an organization and its ability to operate in a cost-effective, flexible, and coherent unit.

This book seeks to address the challenge of effective information management. How does an organization improve its management of information, working with the applications it already operates, to ensure it knows what its assets are, what it is working on, what commitments it has agreed to, how well it is performing, and how it can improve its operation?

Introducing MCHS Trading

MCHS trading is a fictitious trading company used in this book to illustrate different approaches to information management. MCHS Trading sells goods through four channels: on the Internet, via mail order, via a call center, and through physical shops. Due to differences in requirements, orders are taken by three different applications: E-shop for the Internet orders, Mail-shop for mail order and the call center, and the Stores application to support the needs of the physical stores. These applications were introduced incrementally as MCHS Trading opened the new channels to its customers.

Orders are fulfilled and money is collected through the Shipping and Invoicing applications, respectively. The E-shop, Mail-shop, and Stores applications send the order details to the Shipping application, which in turn forwards them on to the Invoicing applications as soon as an order is dispatched. This is illustrated in Figure 1.1.

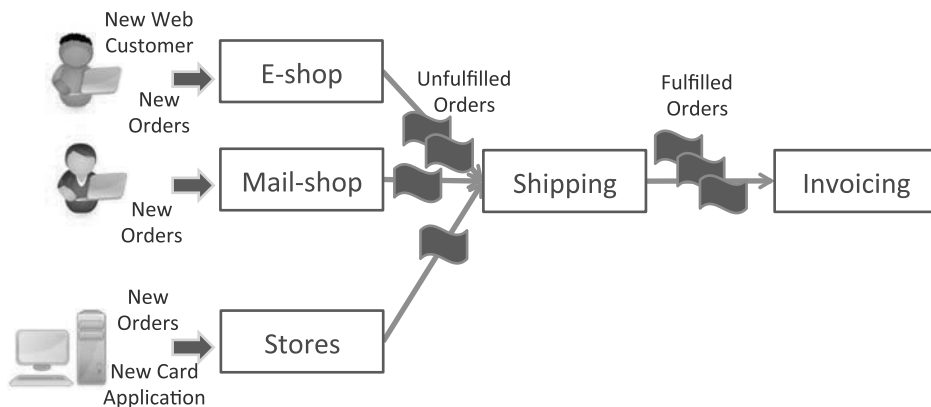


Figure 1.1 MCHS Trading's order-processing systems.

From a functional point of view, this is a rational separation of concerns. Each application has a clearly delineated set of responsibilities and the process works—customers get the goods they ordered and the correct money is collected in exchange for the goods.

However, when the information stores are added to the picture (see Figure 1.2), you can see that the details about customers, products, and orders are replicated across the systems. Why? Because this information is core to MCHS Trading’s business and so every application needs it in some form or another.

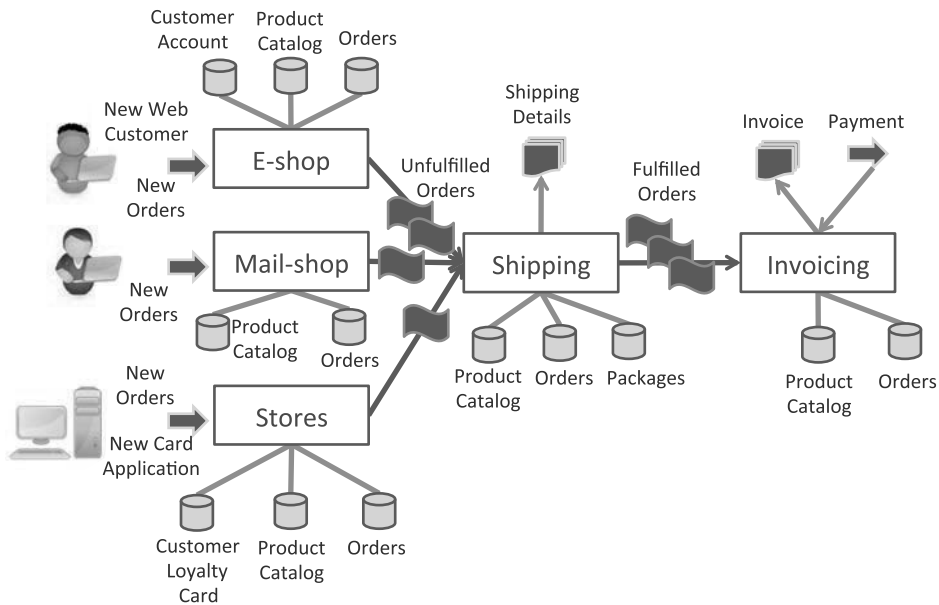


Figure 1.2 Information stores supporting order processing.

Failing to synchronize this information effectively leads to inflexibility and inefficiencies in the organization that can have an impact both internally and externally.

Consider an individual customer, Alistair Steiff. He has registered for a loyalty card, which is handled by the Stores application, and he also uses the E-shop and the mail order channel from time to time. The E-shop keeps a record of Alistair in the form of a customer account. This is different from the loyalty card account. The Mail-shop application takes Alistair’s details with each order. It has no capability to maintain his details for the next time he orders something through that channel, which Alistair finds a little annoying.

Alistair experienced another issue when he moved to a new address. Although he updated his address in his E-shop account, MCHS Trading kept sending his loyalty card statements to his old address. He tried phoning MCHS Trading’s call center but they could not help because they

were only set up to take new orders. He had to write a letter to MCHS Trading to get the loyalty card address updated.

Within MCHS Trading, there is also frustration with the current systems. It is difficult to understand the buying patterns of its customers:

- To understand which new products would be of interest to an individual
- To understand how an individual interacts across each of MCHS Trading's sales channels

There are two issues here. First, the applications only store information that is relevant to their operation—so it is hard to see the complete picture when the details are spread among the applications. Second, applications are designed to reflect the current operational state of their work. They may keep historical data, but not in the form that is conducive to analysis of trends and anomalies.

This lack of insight is inhibiting MCHS Trading's ability to grow and there is a need to introduce new management reporting capability to understand how the business is really performing.

Improving an Organization's Information Management

The problems that MCHS Trading is experiencing are typical for many organizations. Information is distributed across multiple applications for operational efficiency, leaving the information duplicated, fragmented, and often inconsistent. As a result, the organization cannot act in a coordinated manner:

- They find it hard to get an overall picture of how well the organization is performing. This requires a consolidated view of their business activity, showing the current position, along with a historical perspective for comparison. For example, MCHS Trading would want to understand how many customers it has, what types of products its customers are interested in buying, how this is changing over time, how efficient the delivery process is, who its best suppliers are, and much more if it is to maintain its market leadership position.
- The quality of information varies from application to application. This means different parts of the organization are operating on different facts that could lead to different decisions being made for the same situation.
- The internal fragmentation of the information is often exposed outside of the organization, creating poor customer service or missed opportunities. This was Alistair Steiff's experience when he tried to change his address—he had to ensure it was updated in each application—using a different process for each one.

- External regulators are skeptical that the organization's reported results are accurate when ad hoc processes are used to create them because it is difficult to explain where the information came from and how the results were calculated.
- Information is not retained for the required amount of time—or too much information is retained for too long. Either case can inhibit the ability to find the right information in a timely manner.
- Failures in the mechanisms that move information around can corrupt the integrity of the organization's information. These failures may be errors in the information itself, which means it cannot be transferred, or errors in the implementation of the mechanism, or a failure to initiate some processing in time, resulting in missing information. These failures may not be detected for some time and can be extremely difficult to resolve.

An organization needs to maintain a strong core of information to run the business. This requires a focus on how key information is created, processed, and stored within its IT systems:

- They must *optimize where information is located relative to the workload* that is using it—ensuring copies are taken in a thoughtful way and these copies are supported with mechanisms to maintain or remove them as new information becomes available.
- *Related information should be correlated together* to create a complete picture of the organization's activities.
- *Obsolete information must be removed* to save storage and reduce the processing effort. Vital historical information needs to be retained.
- *Information must be protected* from inappropriate use, restored after a failure, and, despite the fact that most organizations have their silos and cliques, *the right information needs to be exchanged and presented to the right people at the right time*.

This is hard to achieve. Technology is often focused on providing function to the business rather than managing information. Specialist information management technology helps, but it has to be blended with the existing infrastructure. The blending process creates emergent properties.

Emergent properties are those characteristics that “appear” when components are combined together in a particular configuration—rather than being inherent properties of any one of the components. This is similar to the behavior of colors when you mix them together. If you combine blue and yellow, you get the color green. Green is an emergent property because it is not present in either the blue or the yellow—and only emerges when they are combined.

When we combine technology together, we also get emergent properties. These emergent properties may be additive, or they may override some of the components' original capabilities.

Consider two applications sited on opposite coasts of the United States. The application on the East Coast needs to regularly send information to the West Coast application. However due to the different time zones in which they operate, there is a 3-hour period of its operation when the

West Coast application is not available. It is not possible to extend the period of operation of the West Coast application—and the East Coast application is not capable of buffering the information until the West Coast application comes online.

The solution is to provide a new database that is available whenever either application is online (see Figure 1.3). The East Coast application writes information into the database. The West Coast application processes the information in the database when it becomes available.

This is a common integration approach. The database in the middle is acting as a staging area. Its effect in the integration is to expand the time window that information can be transferred between the two applications. It may also improve the resiliency of the integration because the East Coast application is no longer affected by the occasional outages of the West Coast application. However, the downside is that when both applications are available, the staging area slows down the transfer of information between the two applications because there is a small delay between the East Coast application writing the information and the West Coast application picking it up. The time it takes to transfer information between two systems is called the latency of the information transfer.

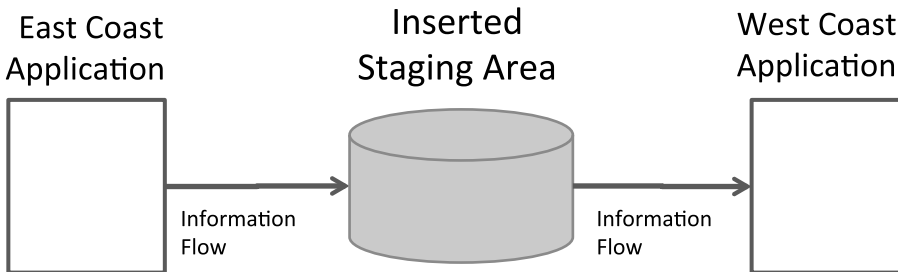


Figure 1.3 Using a staging area between two applications.

The increased availability, latency, and resilience are all emergent properties of the integration. In general, the emergent properties relate to non-functional characteristics that may not be evident until the integration is in production. This is why architects like to use tried and tested approaches where the emergent properties are well understood.

This book describes how the flow of information between applications and other systems should be designed, calling out the emergent properties as they occur.

The aim is to shape the placement of workload and information stores within the IT systems to create an orderly flow of information that guarantees the quality of the results. The material is presented as a set of connected software design patterns, called a pattern language.

Patterns and Pattern Languages

A software design pattern defines a proven approach to solving a problem. The solution described in the pattern is typically a set of components that are interacting in a particular configuration. The pattern explains why this approach works, its associated trade-offs, and resulting benefits and liabilities. It also links to other patterns that may:

- Provide an alternative approach
- Provide a complementary capability
- Describe an approach to implementing a component that is named in the pattern's solution

This linking together of related patterns creates what we call a pattern language.

Every pattern in this pattern language has a name that summarizes the solution it represents in a succinct manner. For example, there is a pattern called **INFORMATION COLLECTION** that describes a collection of related information. Notice that the pattern name is written using the small capitals formatting. This formatting convention is used wherever the pattern is first referenced in a section. The name of a pattern can act as shorthand for the solution during design discussions.

Choosing the terminology for the pattern names has been a challenge because the pattern language covers multiple architectural disciplines. Where possible, we have used industry standard names for the concepts and components exposed in the pattern language. However, we have found it necessary to introduce new terminology whenever there is conflicting nomenclature, or no obvious name exists.

Every pattern has an icon that can be used as a visual reminder of the pattern, particularly when whiteboarding and documenting solutions. The information collection icon is shown in Figure 1.4.

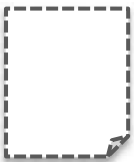


Figure 1.4 Icon for the information collection pattern.

The patterns are built on a common component model. This means that a pattern can be used as a component in the solution described by another pattern. When this occurs, the icon of the pattern is used in the solution diagram of the consuming pattern. For example, Figure 1.5

shows the solution for the staging area introduced in the previous section. It is built from a variety of pattern icons.

The meaning of the icons in the diagram, and the details of the patterns behind them, will become familiar to you as you work with the pattern language. The purpose here is to illustrate how the icon of one pattern, the information collection in this case, can be used in the solutions of other patterns.

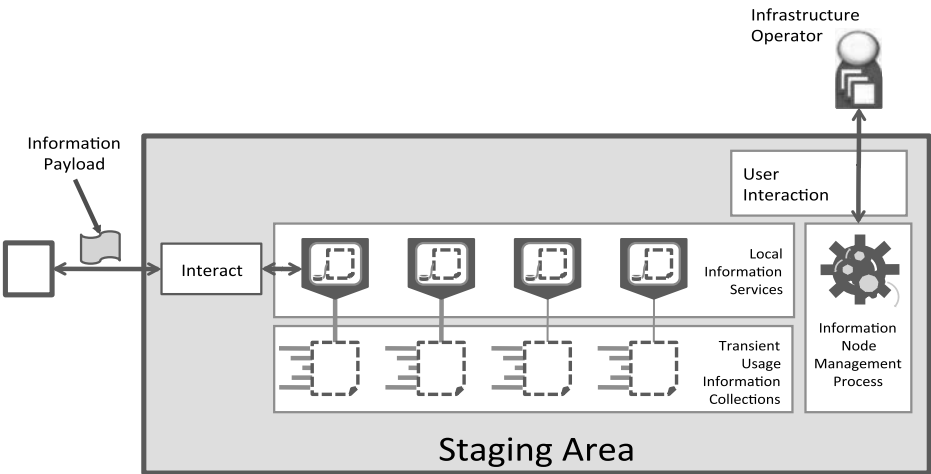


Figure 1.5 The solution diagram for a staging area showing the use of the information collection icon.

Each of the patterns of information management can be used independently. However, the real value of a pattern language is the ability to compare and contrast different approaches to resolving a situation.

The patterns of information management that are relevant to a particular situation are collected together in a pattern group. Each pattern group has a lead pattern that describes the core principles and capabilities of the group. The pattern group is named after the lead pattern. The other patterns in the pattern group enhance one or more characteristics of the lead pattern to support a more specialized situation.

You may have noticed that in Figure 1.5, the information collection icon appears slightly modified in the solution diagram with five lines coming out of the left side (as shown in Figure 1.6). The modification to the information collection icon denotes that the staging area uses specialized information collections described by the **TRANSIENT SCOPE** pattern.

The modified icon visually represents that there is a relationship between the information collection and transient usage patterns. They are, in fact, from the same pattern group along with other patterns called **LOCAL SCOPE** and **COMPLETE SCOPE**.

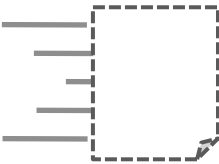


Figure 1.6 Icon for the transient scope pattern.

To make it easy to compare and contrast the patterns in a group, each group of patterns begins with a table of pattern summaries, called patlets. A patlet shows a pattern’s icon, name, short problem statement, and summary of the solution. The aim of the patlets is to help you quickly discover and navigate to the pattern you need. Table 1.1 shows the patlet for the **INFORMATION COLLECTION** pattern, which is the lead pattern in its group.

Table 1.1 Sample Pattern Summary for Information Collection

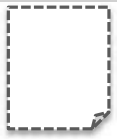
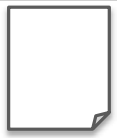
Icon	Pattern Name	Problem	Solution
	INFORMATION COLLECTION	Information must be organized so it can be located, accessed, protected, and maintained at a level that is consistent with its value to the organization.	Group related information together into a logical collection and implement information services to access and maintain this information.

Table 1.2 shows the related scope patterns from the same group. Notice that the icons are all variations of the information collection icon.

Table 1.2 Patlet Table for the Scope Patterns in the Information Collection Group

Icon	Pattern Name	Problem	Solution
	COMPLETE SCOPE	An information process needs to perform an activity once for each instance of a particular subject area (such as a customer, product, order, invoice, shipment, etc.) that occurs within the information supply chain.	The information process needs to use an information collection that stores a single information entry for each instance of the subject area that occurs within the information supply chain. Such an information collection is said to have a complete scope.

Icon	Pattern Name	Problem	Solution
	LOCAL SCOPE	The implementations of the information processes hosted within an information node assume they are in complete control of changes to the information they use.	Provide information collections within the information node for the sole use of its information processes. These information collections will then only have information entries that are created by the locally hosted information processes. These types of information collections are said to have a local scope.
	TRANSIENT SCOPE	An information node needs to provide temporary storage for information entries that are being continuously added and removed by the information processes.	Create an information collection to temporarily store the information entries in the information node. From time to time, the information entries stored in this information collection will change, and so we say this collection has transient scope.

The detailed pattern descriptions follow the patlet tables. Many different styles and heading structures have been successfully used to describe software patterns. We have chosen to use one of the formats recommended by The Open Group Architecture Framework (TOGAF®)¹ with the following subsections:

- **Context**—The situation where it is appropriate to consider using the pattern
- **Problem**—A description of the problem that this pattern solves
- **Example**—An example of the problem
- **Forces**—The factors that make this problem hard to solve
- **Solution**—A description of solution components and how they are assembled together
- **Consequences**—The benefits and liabilities of using the solution
- **Example Resolved**—How the example described is resolved using the pattern
- **Known Uses**—References to well-known technologies and approaches that support the pattern
- **Related Patterns**—Links to other relevant patterns in the pattern language

1. <http://www.togaf.info>

These sections provide a way to bring together a variety of information into a well-formed structure that summarizes the essence of the pattern. Together, they enable you to make reasoned choices of approach for the solution you are building.

Basic Components in the Pattern Language

A good place to start learning about the *Patterns of Information Management* is a pattern called **INFORMATION PROVISIONING**. This describes how five basic components interact to receive, process, and produce information.

Figure 1.7 comes from the information provisioning pattern description and shows the components and how they interact. All of these relationships are many-to-many.

Notice that the information collection pattern introduced previously is shown as a component in the information provisioning pattern along with some additional patterns: **INFORMATION USER**, **INFORMATION TRIGGER**, **INFORMATION PROCESS**, and **INFORMATION SERVICE**.

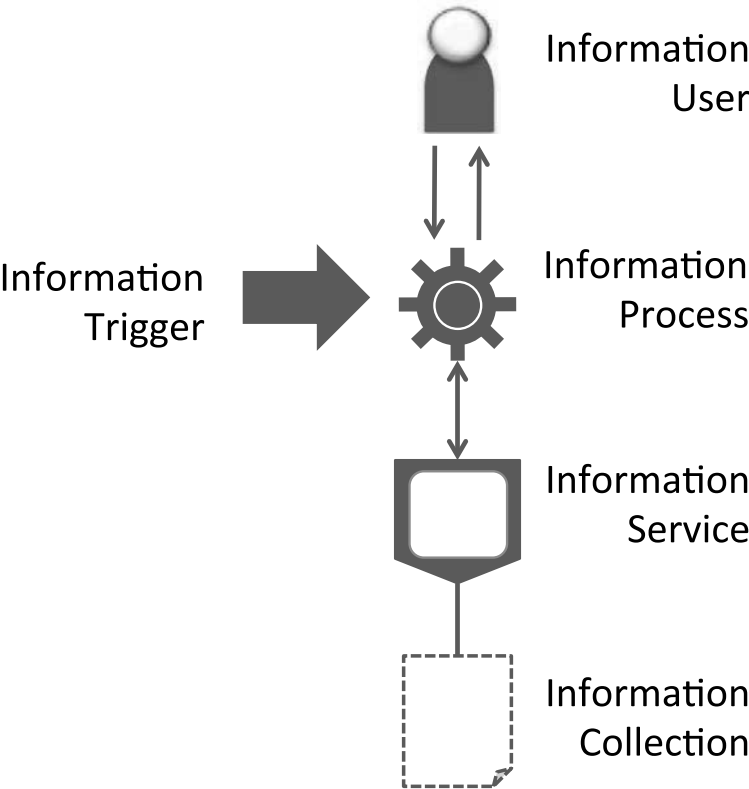


Figure 1.7 Five basic components for processing information.

The information user is a person working with the organization's information. This person may be an employee or someone outside the organization such as a customer or a supplier. Each kind of information user has his or her own requirements for the kinds of information needed, where, and when. The information user is both a consumer of existing information and a contributor of new information. The information user works with user interfaces that are controlled by information processes.

The information processes perform the automated processing of the organization. There are many different kinds of information processes—but, collectively, they are the mechanisms by which information is received, transformed, and produced in some form or another.

An information trigger starts an information process. This may be the result of an information user request, a scheduler, an event being detected, or the need for more information. The information trigger passes the information process some context information that describes why it is being started. The information process augments this context information with information from the information users and other information known to the organization.

An information process accesses any additional information it needs through well-defined interfaces called information services. An information service provides a specialized view of the information that the information process needs. It is able to locate the requested information from a variety of sources and transform it into a format suitable for the requesting information process. An information service retrieves stored information from information collections.

The information collection manages a collection of related information. Typically, the contents of an information collection relate to the same subject area. However, an information collection may contain information that was collected from the same activity, such as the results of an experiment, from the same source, such as readings from a sensor, or from the same time period, such as social media extracted for a specific period of time.

The information provisioning pattern is a lead pattern of a pattern group. It recognizes that the information a person sees through a user interface is different from the way it is stored and shows the layering of components used to manage the mapping. The rest of the pattern group describes how information is provisioned when multiple systems are involved.

Information Integration and Distribution

As already discussed, an organization will have many applications and other kinds of IT systems. Each of these systems will host their own information processes, information services, and information collections.

We use the **INFORMATION NODE** pattern to represent the general concept of a system. You may want to think of this as a physical computer, or server. However, with the increasing use of virtual systems and cloud provisioning, the notion of physical hardware being tied to a particular system is becoming less common. So an information node is simply an identifiable “system” that the organization runs.

The information node is the lead pattern in a large information group that describes different types of systems. The application is represented by a pattern from the group called **APPLICATION NODE**. The **STAGING AREA** pattern is also in the same group.

The information node provides an execution environment for the information processes, information services, and information collections. Calls between these components can occur totally within the information node. However, it is also possible for information processes to access information from different information nodes. This capability is provided a specialist pattern within the information service pattern group called **REMOTE INFORMATION SERVICE**.

Figure 1.8 illustrates this mechanism. The remote information service uses an **INFORMATION REQUEST** pattern to retrieve information from an information collection located in another information node. The information request pattern consists of two message flows: one from the remote information service to the information node that hosts the information to request the information, and another flowing in the opposite direction to return the requested information.

The information node that receives the request for information routes it to an appropriate information service to extract the information and return a response. In Figure 1.8, this is shown as a **LOCAL INFORMATION SERVICE**—that is, one that uses information collections from the same information node—but it could be another remote information service.

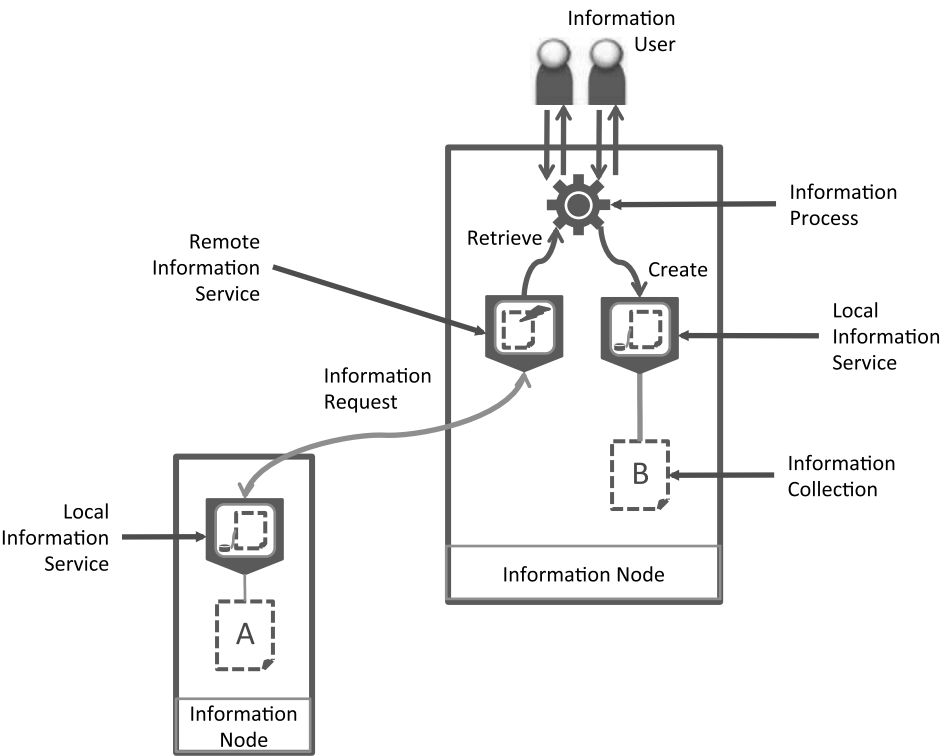


Figure 1.8 Accessing information from a different information node.

The information request pattern retrieves information from its original location on demand. This means both the calling and the called information node must be available at the same time. When information must be copied from one information collection to another—for example, for performance or availability reasons—the information flow pattern is used instead. This introduces another kind of information node called an **INFORMATION BROKER** that calls remote information services to extract information from one or more information collections, transform it, and store it in other information collections. The effect is that information flows between the information nodes in what we call an information supply chain.

Figure 1.9 illustrates this flow of information. The numbers on the diagram refer to these notes:

1. Here, an information process calls a remote information service to retrieve information from information collection A. Under the covers, the remote information collection uses an information request to contact the information node where information collection A is located.
2. The information process then works with some information users to update the information and store the results in information collection B.
3. Information collection B stores the information in a new entry in the information collection.
4. An information broker now starts an information process to extract the information from information collection B and transform it and save it as a new entry in information collection C.
5. Another information process starts to retrieve the information from information collection C.
6. This process may make changes to the information and update it in information collection C.

This example illustrates how multiple copies of information are created—and also how these copies quickly become slightly different from one another. The differences could be as follows:

- **Superficial**—Such as a reformatting
- **Enriching**—Where additional information is added to the original information
- **Localized**—Where updates made are only relevant to the location where they are made
- **Managed**—Where the best source of information (called the authoritative source) is well known at all times
- **Conflicting**—Where it is hard to know which information collection is the best to use or retrieve the latest information from as changes are coming in to each of the copies in an unpredictable way

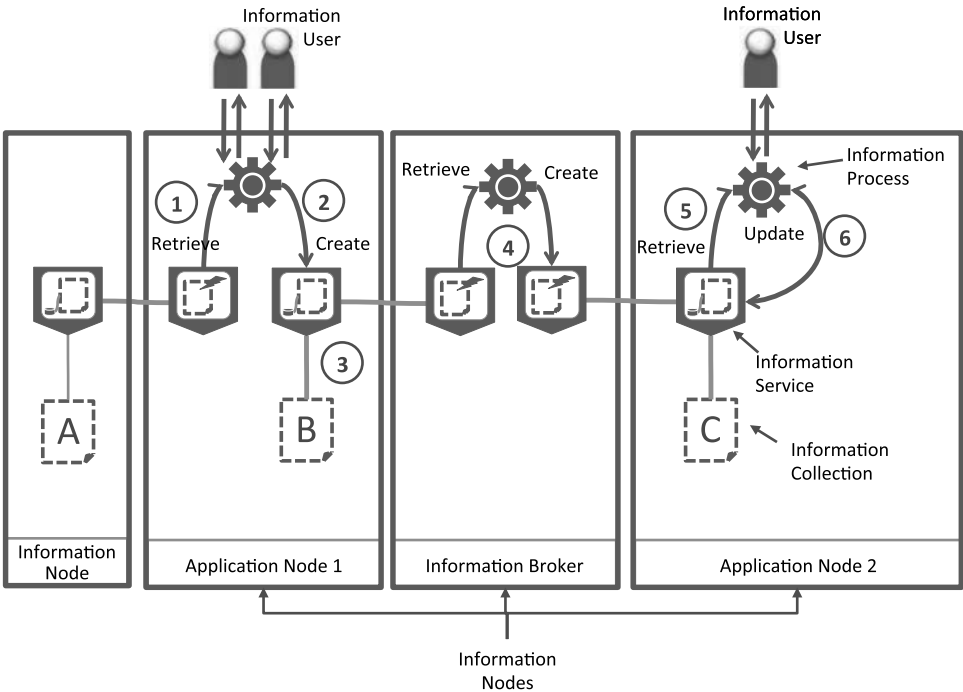


Figure 1.9 Flowing information between systems.

A well-defined information supply chain should avoid having information collections with conflicting differences in them. We aim to minimize the number of copies. Where copies are made, each should have a clear purpose and guidelines on when it should be used. Copies should be synchronized when updates are made, and where differences are unavoidable, there should be at least one copy that is known to have all of the latest information in it.

The **INFORMATION SUPPLY CHAIN** pattern is the lead pattern in a pattern group that describes different patterns of information movement between the information collections and how to synchronize the information to avoid conflicting differences. Designing information supply chains is a key challenge for both information architects and solution architects.

Pattern Language Structure

The pattern groups introduced in the previous sections show the breadth of factors an architect needs to consider to achieve a clean, correct, and flexible information design. At the top of the pyramid, you see the organization and the people who work within it. They drive the information strategy. The organization is supported by the information architecture, which is implemented by the information management components. This structure is summarized in Figure 1.10.

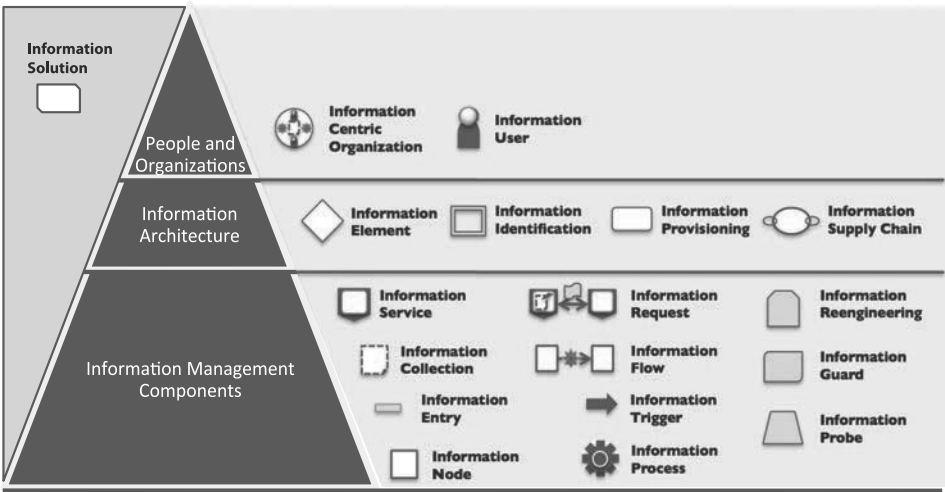


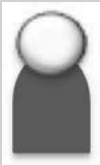
Figure 1.10 Structure of the pattern language for information management.

Chapter 2, “The MCHS Trading Case Study,” contains the case study, introducing the patterns through different projects at MCHS Trading. The remaining chapters contain the pattern descriptions and are organized according to the structure in **Figure 1.10**.

Chapter 3, “People and Organizations,” has the patterns for the organization and its people (see Table 1.3). These patterns include the information strategy, policy setting, and information governance.

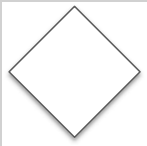
Table 1.3 Pattern Groups in Chapter 3

Lead Pattern Name and Icon	Lead Pattern Problem Statement	Lead Pattern Solution Summary	Start Here When...
INFORMATION CENTRIC ORGANIZATION 	An organization needs to make good use of its information to achieve its goals.	Make the management of information a strategic priority. Develop systems and practices that nurture and exploit information to maximum effect.	You are thinking about the holistic approach that your organization should take to information management.

Lead Pattern Name and Icon	Lead Pattern Problem Statement	Lead Pattern Solution Summary	Start Here When...
INFORMATION USER 	Individuals need access to the organization’s information to perform their work.	Classify the people connected with the organization according to their information needs and skills. Then provide user interfaces and reports through which they can access the information as appropriate.	You want to define what types of user roles should be supported by a new information solution.

Information architects develop an understanding of the information needs of an organization and propose best practices for how it should be structured, stored, and managed. Solution architects are responsible for developing IT-based solutions to business problems. These solutions are dependent on information and so the solution architect relies on the information architecture created by the information architect when developing a new solution. Both the information architect and the solution architect use information architecture patterns in their work. These are described in the pattern groups shown in Table 1.4, and are described in more detail in Chapter 4.

Table 1.4 Pattern Groups in Chapter 4

Lead Pattern Name and Icon	Lead Pattern Problem Statement	Lead Pattern Solution Summary	Start Here When...
INFORMATION ELEMENT 	An organization is looking for the best approach to manage the many kinds of information it has.	Group together related information attributes that follow the same life cycle and manage them appropriately.	You are new to information management and want to familiarize yourself with the types of information an organization has, and how it is managed.
INFORMATION IDENTIFICATION 	An organization does not know what types of information it has, where it is located, how it is managed, and who is responsible for it.	Investigate and document the information requirements and existing support available to the organization.	You want to catalog the information you have and any new requirements. The resulting information is often called metadata.

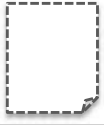
Lead Pattern Name and Icon	Lead Pattern Problem Statement	Lead Pattern Solution Summary	Start Here When...
INFORMATION PROVISIONING 	An information process needs information to perform its work.	Information is supplied to the process when it starts, through its user interfaces and through stored information.	You are considering how to provide information to an information process or information user.
INFORMATION SUPPLY CHAIN 	An organization needs to process information in order to fulfill its purpose. How is the flow of information coordinated throughout the organization's people and systems?	Design and manage well-defined flows of information that start from the points where the information is collected for the organization and links the flows to the places where key consumers receive the information they need.	You are designing how a particular type of information should flow between your systems.

Chapter 5, “Information at Rest,” covers the way information is processed within an IT system (see Table 1.5). In this pattern language, a system is called an information node and there is a related pattern group devoted to the various types of systems.

Stored information is accessed through information services that locate the required information and format for the consumer. Information collections are logical groupings of stored information. Often the information is organized consistently within the collection. Approaches for identifying, structuring, locking, and storing information within an information collection are covered in the information entry pattern group.

Table 1.5 Pattern Groups in Chapter 5

Lead Pattern Name and Icon	Lead Pattern Problem Statement	Lead Pattern Solution Summary	Start Here When...
INFORMATION SERVICE 	Some information processes need the same information, but may require it to be formatted differently.	Define well-defined interfaces to the information that meet the needs of particular consuming information processes to enable them to create, retrieve, and maintain just the information they need.	You need to decide how an information process will access the information it needs.

Lead Pattern Name and Icon	Lead Pattern Problem Statement	Lead Pattern Solution Summary	Start Here When...
INFORMATION COLLECTION 	Information must be organized so it can be located, accessed, protected, and maintained at a level that is consistent with its value to the organization.	Group related information together into a logical collection and implement information services to access and maintain this information.	You need to classify how the existing stores of information are used or decide how new information should be grouped and stored.
INFORMATION ENTRY 	An instance of a type of information needs to be stored in an information collection.	Structure the information collection so that it is made up of a set of information entries. Each information entry stores a single instance of the subject area. Provide capability to manage and iterate over a collection of these archetypal instances.	You are designing how information should be managed within an information collection.
INFORMATION NODE 	What is the appropriate IT infrastructure to host information collections and information processes?	Related information processes and information collections should be hosted together in a server.	You are selecting the type of system to host information and its related processing.

Chapter 6, “Information in Motion,” covers the information flow and information request pattern groups for moving information between information nodes (see Table 1.6).

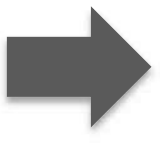
Table 1.6 Pattern Groups in Chapter 6

Lead Pattern Name and Icon	Lead Pattern Problem Statement	Lead Pattern Solution Summary	Start Here When...
INFORMATION REQUEST 	An information process needs to work with information located on a remote information node.	Open a communication link with the remote information node and synchronously exchange the information and associated commands using an agreed protocol.	You want to understand the data that flows between two communicating information nodes.

Lead Pattern Name and Icon	Lead Pattern Problem Statement	Lead Pattern Solution Summary	Start Here When...
INFORMATION FLOW 	How do you implement the movement of information between two information nodes?	Use an information trigger to start an information process to control the movement of information. This information process is responsible for extracting the required information from the appropriate sources, reengineering it, and delivering it to the destination information nodes.	You are designing information integration jobs to move information between different systems.

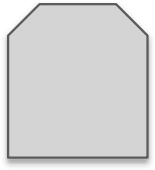
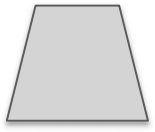
Chapter 7, “Information Processing,” covers the different kinds of information processes, along with the information triggers that start them, which are found in a typical organization’s IT systems (see Table 1.7).

Table 1.7 Pattern Groups in Chapter 7

Lead Pattern Name and Icon	Lead Pattern Problem Statement	Lead Pattern Solution Summary	Start Here When...
INFORMATION TRIGGER 	An information process must be started when a particular event occurs.	When the event is detected, trigger a mechanism that is able to request the initiation of the process on an appropriate information node.	You are considering how to start an information process. This information process may be providing a new business function or moving information between information collections.
INFORMATION PROCESS 	An organization has to process information to support one of its activities.	Formally define and implement the processing for that activity in an information node. Ensure this information node has access to the information it needs.	You want to understand existing processing and or design new processing of information.

Another key concern for organizations with valuable information is how to protect it so it retains its quality and it is not misused or stolen. This is covered in Chapter 8, “Information Protection,” (see Table 1.8).

Table 1.8 Pattern Groups in Chapter 8

Lead Pattern Name and Icon	Lead Pattern Problem Statement	Lead Pattern Solution Summary	Start Here When...
INFORMATION REENGINEERING STEP 	An information process is not able to consume the information it needs, as currently exists.	Insert capability to transform the information so it is consumable by the information process.	You need to understand how information can be transformed to meet new requirements.
INFORMATION GUARD 	The organization's information needs to be protected from inappropriate use and theft.	Insert mechanisms into the information supply chain to verify that the right people are only using information for authorized purposes.	You need to consider the alternatives for the security and privacy of your information.
INFORMATION PROBE 	The operation of an information supply chain needs to be monitored to ensure it is working properly.	Insert probes into key points in the information supply chain to gather measurements for further analysis.	You need to plan how information management should be monitored.

The protection of information is something that must be designed holistically, considering the welfare of key information at all stages of its lifetime. It is then implemented through the deployment of small components throughout the systems, where each is responsible for protecting an aspect of the information. The patterns of information management break down the aspects of information protection into three pattern groups:

- **INFORMATION REENGINEERING STEP**—These patterns focus on maintaining the quality and format of information.
- **INFORMATION GUARD**—These patterns ensure authorized people and processes are using information for authorized purposes.
- **INFORMATION PROBE**—These patterns are used to monitor the use and movement of information. With these patterns, it is possible to detect issues in the management of information and correct it.

The information protection patterns are used as processing steps in both the information process and information service pattern groups where they transform, protect, or monitor information as it enters the organization; when it is stored; when it is sent between systems; when it is retrieved, updated, and eventually archived and deleted. Individually, they protect a single point in the processing—collectively, they protect the organization’s information throughout its entire life cycle.

The final pattern group in Chapter 9, “Solutions for Information Management,” covers solutions that tackle different aspects of how information management can be improved. They use the pattern groups described previously as components (see Table 1.9).

Table 1.9 Pattern Groups in Chapter 9

Lead Pattern Name and Icon	Lead Pattern Problem Statement	Lead Pattern Solution Summary	Start Here When...
INFORMATION SOLUTION 	An organization recognizes there is a missing capability or a major issue with the way it manages an aspect of its information.	Create a project, or series of projects, to transform the way the information is managed by the organization’s people and information systems.	You want to plan changes to your information systems to improve information management.

Summary

This chapter introduced some of the information management challenges an organization faces. Their applications provide the information processes that drive the business. These processes need access to a variety of information to perform their function. This information is distributed and duplicated among the applications and the challenge is to keep this information synchronized while ensuring it is available and suitably structured for all of the organization’s needs.

This chapter also introduced the patterns of information management. The patterns of information management are a collection of software design patterns that describe best practices for blending software components together to manage the typical information management challenges that organizations face. These patterns each have a succinct name and icon for use in design discussions. Each pattern also has a tabulated short description called a patlet and a full description that explains when to use it, how it works, and the consequences of using it.

Throughout the pattern language, this book uses a fictitious company called MCHS Trading to illustrate the use of the patterns. The patterns are also grouped together around particular information management topics called pattern groups. Each pattern group has a lead pattern that describes the basic mechanism at work and the rest of the patterns in the group are variations of this basic pattern.

The first lead pattern for a pattern group that was introduced was information provisioning. This explained the layers of components used to provide information to the organization. We then went on to explain how the pattern language is structured and where each of the pattern groups are located in the book.

Now that you have seen the pattern groups in the pattern language, you can choose to navigate directly to the patterns of interest. Alternatively, Chapter 2 describes how MCHS Trading used the patterns to transform its information systems through a series of projects.

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Index

A

- access auditing probe pattern, 575
- accessing stored information, 16
- ACMNM field, information values profile pattern, 158
- ACTID field, information values profile pattern, 158
- ACXDT field, information values profile pattern, 158
- adding customer details, 41
- aggregate key pattern, 294, 307-309
- agile business process pattern, 177, 470, 474-476
- agile business processes, 44
- analysis information nodes, 385-386
 - information analysis node pattern, 386-389
- information decision definition process pattern, 521-523
- information mining store pattern, 389
- information pattern detecting processes pattern, 523-525
- analytics process patterns, 517
 - information pattern discovery process pattern, 518-520
- anonymize data pattern, 571
- anonymizing, 568
- application node, 64
- application node pattern, 324-329, 599
- application private provisioning pattern, 166, 169-171
- applications, 1-2
- archiving process, 193
- archiving process pattern, 324
- attribute-level information elements, 122
 - information code pattern, 126-128
 - information link pattern, 123-124
 - information metric pattern, 124-126
- authentication, 568
- authorization, 568

B

- B2B trading partnerships, 51-55
- batch information request pattern, 399

- bespoke application process pattern, 470-472
- big data and warehouse patterns, information solution patterns, 618
 - historical system of record pattern, 619-624
 - workload offload pattern, 624-626
- big data information processing, 376
 - information warehouse pattern, 377-379
 - map-reduce node pattern, 382-385
 - streaming analytics node pattern, 380-382
- broadcast distribution pattern, 433, 444-446
- buffered routing pattern, 407, 413-415
- business analyst pattern, 97
- business information nodes, 324
 - application node pattern, 326-329
 - information content node pattern, 330-332
 - information cube pattern, 340-342

- information mart pattern, 337-340
- information store pattern, 334-337
 - search node pattern, 332-334
- business intelligence and analytics patterns, information solution patterns, 626
 - next best action pattern, 630-633
 - operational analytics pattern, 628-629
 - performance reporting pattern, 626-628
- business processes pattern, 469-470
 - agile business process pattern, 474-476
 - bespoke application process pattern, 471-472
 - collaborative editing process pattern, 479-481
 - information reporting processes pattern, 481-483
 - packaged application process pattern, 472-474
 - state driven process, 476-479

C

- cache provisioning pattern, 178, 183-185
- caller's key pattern, 294, 310-312
- canonical-based payload pattern, 121
- cascading information supply chain pattern, 210-215
- centralized master, 215
- centralized master pattern, 36, 599, 604-606
- changing customer details, 42
- changing information nodes, information solution patterns, 582-583
 - information node upgrade pattern, 587-589
 - new information node pattern, 582-587

- check data pattern, 139, 539, 548-550
- classifications, product details, 33-34
- classify data pattern, 539, 546-548
- clerical review process pattern, 484, 487-489
- collaborative editing process, 33
- collaborative editing process pattern, 372, 470, 479-481
- collection control pattern, 571
- collection-level provisioning, 162, 185-186
 - event-based provisioning pattern, 196-197
 - mirroring provisioning pattern, 189-193
 - peer provisioning pattern, 193-195
 - recovery provisioning pattern, 197-198
 - snapshot provisioning pattern, 186-188
- complete coverage pattern, 33, 285
- complete scope, 8, 10, 32
- complete scope pattern, 279-282
- concentrating information supply chain pattern, 209
- consequences
 - aggregate key pattern, 308
 - agile business process pattern, 475
 - application node pattern, 328-329
 - application private provisioning pattern, 170
 - bespoke application process pattern, 472
 - broadcast distribution pattern, 445
 - buffered routing pattern, 415
 - cache provisioning pattern, 185
 - caller's key pattern, 311

- cascading information supply chain pattern, 213
- centralized master pattern, 606
- check data pattern, 549
- classify data pattern, 547-548
- clerical review process pattern, 488
- collaborative editing process pattern, 480
- complete scope pattern, 282
- consolidating information supply chain pattern, 224
- correct data pattern, 550
- daisy chain provisioning pattern, 176
- derive relationship pattern, 563
- derive value pattern, 561
- distributed activity status pattern, 591
- enrich data pattern, 545-546
- event correlation node pattern, 359
- event-based provisioning pattern, 196
- external sensor trigger pattern, 464
- filtered consolidation pattern, 425-426
- filtered routing pattern, 417
- golden reference pattern, 612
- hierarchical information supply chain pattern, 227
- historical system of record pattern, 622
- hub interchange information supply chain pattern, 217-218
- hybrid usage pattern, 276
- independent consolidation pattern, 431
- independent distribution pattern, 442-443
- information access audit pattern, 637
- information activity hub pattern, 375

- information activity pattern, 111
- information analysis node pattern, 386-389
- information archiving process pattern, 498
- information asset hub pattern, 371
- information asset pattern, 109
- information broadcasting process pattern, 512
- information brokers pattern, 347
- information centric organization pattern, 75
- information change trigger pattern, 462
- information code pattern, 127
- information collection pattern, 257
- information configuration pattern, 140
- information content node pattern, 332
- information cube pattern, 341-342
- information decision definition process pattern, 522
- information deployment process pattern, 503
- information element patterns, 104
- information entry patterns, 291
- information event pattern, 114
- information event store pattern, 365
- information ever-greening process pattern, 497
- information federation process pattern, 508
- information flow pattern, 404-405
- information governance program pattern, 90
- information guard pattern, 569
- information identification patterns, 132
- information key pattern, 296
- information lineage pattern, 160
- information link pattern, 123-124
- information location pattern, 147
- information management obligation pattern, 79
- information management principle pattern, 85
- information management strategy pattern, 82-83
- information mart pattern, 339
- information matching process pattern, 495
- information metric pattern, 125
- information mining store pattern, 391
- information mirror store pattern, 363
- information model pattern, 142
- information monitoring pattern, 640-641
- information node management process pattern, 529
- information node patterns, 323
- information node upgrade pattern, 588-589
- information pattern detecting processes pattern, 524
- information pattern discovery process pattern, 519-520
- information payload pattern, 120-121
- information probe patterns, 573
- information process pattern, 469
- information processing variables pattern, 115
- information profile tracking processes pattern, 486
- information provisioning patterns, 165
- information queueing process pattern, 510
- information reengineering steps pattern, 536
- information registry pattern, 609
- information relocation process pattern, 506
- information remediation process pattern, 490
- information replication process pattern, 501-502
- information reporting processes pattern, 482
- information request pattern, 398
- information scavenging process pattern, 516
- information schema pattern, 144
- information service patterns, 241
- information service trigger pattern, 460
- information solution patterns, 581
- information store pattern, 336-337
- information streaming process pattern, 380-382
- information summarizing process pattern, 514-515
- information summary pattern, 118
- information supply chain patterns, 206
- information trigger patterns, 452
- information user pattern, 93-94
- information validation process pattern, 492-493

- information values profile pattern, 156-158
- information values report pattern, 155
- information warehouse pattern, 378-379
- link entries pattern, 555
- linked information provisioning pattern, 183
- local information service patterns, 245
- local key patterns, 299
- local scope pattern, 283
- look-up table node pattern, 357
- managed archive pattern, 635
- manual information trigger pattern, 455
- map-reduce node pattern, 384
- master usage pattern, 270
- merge entries pattern, 557
- mirroring provisioning pattern, 191
- natural key pattern, 304
- new information node pattern, 586
- next best action pattern, 632
- operational analytics pattern, 629
- operational health monitoring process pattern, 528
- operational status store pattern, 366-367
- ordered consolidation pattern, 428
- ordered distribution pattern, 440-441
- packaged application process pattern, 473
- partitioned distribution pattern, 437
- partitioned routing pattern, 411
- partner collaboration pattern, 598
- peer exchange information supply chain, 231-232
- peer provisioning pattern, 194
- performance reporting pattern, 627
- physical information collection pattern, 262
- queue manager pattern, 351-352
- recovery provisioning pattern, 198
- recycled key patterns, 302
- reference usage pattern, 272
- remote information service patterns, 249
- restructure data pattern, 540-541
- sample data pattern, 566
- sandbox usage pattern, 278
- scheduled information trigger pattern, 457
- scheduling process pattern, 531
- search node pattern, 334
- semantic integration pattern, 596
- semantic mapping pattern, 152
- semantic tagging pattern, 149
- separate entries pattern, 559
- service oriented provisioning pattern, 181
- shared master pattern, 603
- single view information supply chain pattern, 221-222
- smooth data pattern, 564
- snapshot provisioning pattern, 188
- stable key pattern, 314
- staged routing pattern, 408
- staging area pattern, 354-355
- standardize data pattern, 543-544
- state driven process, 477
- streaming analytics node pattern, 381-382
- subject area definition pattern, 135
- summarized routing pattern, 419
- synchronized consolidation pattern, 423
- synchronized distribution pattern, 434-435
- synchronized masters pattern, 616
- transient scope pattern, 285
- triggering information service pattern, 251-252
- user private provisioning pattern, 168
- user shared provisioning pattern, 179
- valid values definition pattern, 138
- virtual information collection pattern, 265
- workload offload pattern, 625
- consolidating information flows, 66
- consolidating information flows pattern, 420
 - filtered consolidation pattern, 424-427
- independent consolidation pattern, 429-432
- ordered consolidation pattern, 427-429
- synchronized consolidation pattern, 421-424
- consolidating information supply chain pattern, 223-225
- context
 - aggregate key pattern, 307
 - agile business process pattern, 474
 - application node pattern, 326
 - application private provisioning pattern, 169
 - bespoke application process pattern, 471
 - broadcast distribution pattern, 444
 - buffered routing pattern, 413
 - cache provisioning pattern, 184

- caller's key pattern, 310
- cascading information supply chain pattern, 211
- centralized master pattern, 604
- check data pattern, 548
- classify data pattern, 546
- clerical review process pattern, 487
- collaborative editing process pattern, 479
- complete scope pattern, 279
- consolidating information supply chain pattern, 223
- correct data pattern, 550
- daisy chain provisioning pattern, 172
- derive relationship pattern, 562
- derive value pattern, 560
- distributed activity status pattern, 590
- enrich data pattern, 545
- event correlation node pattern, 358
- event-based provisioning pattern, 196
- external sensor trigger pattern, 462
- filtered consolidation pattern, 424
- filtered routing pattern, 416
- golden reference pattern, 610
- hierarchical information supply chain pattern, 225
- historical system of record pattern, 619
- hub interchange information supply chain pattern, 215
- hybrid usage pattern, 274
- independent consolidation pattern, 429
- independent distribution pattern, 441
- information access audit pattern, 636
- information activity hub pattern, 372
- information activity pattern, 110
- information analysis node pattern, 386
- information archiving process pattern, 497
- information asset hub pattern, 368
- information asset pattern, 106
- information broadcasting process pattern, 511
- information brokers pattern, 343
- information change trigger pattern, 460
- information code pattern, 126
- information collection pattern, 254
- information configuration pattern, 139
- information content node pattern, 330
- information cube pattern, 340
- information decision definition process pattern, 521
- information deployment process pattern, 502
- information element patterns, 101
- information entry patterns, 289
- information event pattern, 113
- information event store pattern, 364
- information ever-greening process pattern, 496
- information federation process pattern, 507
- information flow pattern, 403
- information governance program pattern, 88
- information guard pattern, 567
- information identification patterns, 129-130
- information key pattern, 295
- information lineage pattern, 159
- information link pattern, 123
- information location pattern, 145
- information management obligation pattern, 78
- information management principle pattern, 83
- information management strategy pattern, 81
- information mart pattern, 337
- information matching process pattern, 493
- information metric pattern, 124
- information mining store pattern, 389
- information mirror store pattern, 360
- information model pattern, 141
- information monitoring pattern, 638
- information node management process pattern, 528
- information node patterns, 320
- information node upgrade pattern, 587
- information pattern detecting processes pattern, 523
- information pattern discovery process pattern, 518
- information payload pattern, 119
- information probe patterns, 572
- information process pattern, 466
- information processing variables pattern, 114
- information profile tracking processes pattern, 483

- information provisioning
 - patterns, 163
- information queueing process
 - pattern, 509
- information reengineering
 - steps pattern, 534
- information registry pattern, 607
- information relocation
 - process pattern, 505
- information remediation
 - process pattern, 489
- information replication
 - process pattern, 499
- information reporting
 - processes pattern, 481
- information request pattern, 396
- information scavenging
 - process pattern, 515
- information schema pattern, 143
- information service patterns, 238
- information service trigger
 - pattern, 458
- information solution patterns, 578
- information store pattern, 334
- information streaming
 - process pattern, 380-382
- information summarizing
 - process pattern, 513
- information summary pattern, 117
- information supply chain
 - patterns, 200
- information trigger patterns, 450
- information user pattern, 92
- information validation
 - process pattern, 491
- information values profile
 - pattern, 156
- information values report
 - pattern, 153
- information warehouse
 - pattern, 377
- link entries pattern, 553
- linked information
 - provisioning pattern, 182
- local information service
 - patterns, 243
- local key patterns, 297
- local scope pattern, 282
- look-up table node pattern, 356
- managed archive pattern, 634
- manual information trigger
 - pattern, 453
- map-reduce node pattern, 382
- master usage pattern, 267
- merge entries pattern, 556
- mirror key pattern, 305-306
- mirroring provisioning
 - pattern, 189
- natural key pattern, 302-303
- new information node
 - pattern, 582
- next best action pattern, 630
- operational analytics pattern, 628
- operational health monitoring
 - process pattern, 527
- operational status store
 - pattern, 366
- ordered consolidation pattern, 427
- ordered distribution pattern, 439
- packaged application process
 - pattern, 472
- partitioned distribution
 - pattern, 436
- partitioned routing pattern, 410
- partner collaboration pattern, 597
- peer exchange information
 - supply chain, 230
- peer provisioning pattern, 193
- performance reporting
 - pattern, 626
- physical information
 - collection pattern, 259
- queue manager pattern, 349
- recovery provisioning
 - pattern, 197
- recycled key patterns, 300
- reference usage pattern, 271
- remote information service
 - patterns, 246
- restructure data pattern, 538
- sample data pattern, 565
- sandbox usage pattern, 277
- scheduled information trigger
 - pattern, 455
- scheduling process pattern, 530
- search node pattern, 332
- semantic integration pattern, 593
- semantic mapping pattern, 150
- semantic tagging pattern, 148
- separate entries pattern, 558
- service oriented provisioning
 - pattern, 179
- shared master pattern, 601
- single view information
 - supply chain pattern, 219
- smooth data pattern, 563
- snapshot provisioning
 - pattern, 186
- stable key pattern, 312
- staged routing pattern, 406
- staging area pattern, 353
- standardize data pattern, 542
- state driven process, 476
- streaming analytics node
 - pattern, 380
- subject area definition
 - pattern, 134
- summarized routing pattern, 418
- synchronized consolidation
 - pattern, 421
- synchronized distribution
 - pattern, 432

- synchronized masters pattern, 613
- transient scope pattern, 284
- triggering information service pattern, 250
- user private provisioning pattern, 167
- user shared provisioning pattern, 177
- valid values definition pattern, 136
- virtual information collection pattern, 263
- workload offload pattern, 624
- copies of information,
 - differences, 14
- core coverage, 33
- core coverage pattern, 286-285
- correct data pattern, 50, 539, 550-552
- coverage patterns
 - complete coverage pattern, 285
 - core coverage pattern, 285-286
 - extended coverage pattern, 285-286
 - local coverage pattern, 287
- create information request pattern, 398
- customer details, 103
 - adding, 41
 - changing, 42
 - creating, 41
 - creating single view of, 37-42
 - deleting, 42-43
 - E-Shop, 37
 - sources of, 38
 - Stores, 37
 - updating, 42-43
- customer details, merging into Reporting Hub, 39
- Customer Hub, 40-41
 - information supply chains, 208
- Customer-Care application, 44
- customers, MCHS trading, 3-4

D

- daisy chain provisioning pattern, 112, 172-177, 250, 253
- data dictionaries, subject area definition pattern, 136
- data quality analyst pattern, 97
- data scientist pattern, 97
- data stewards, 150
- data-centric access pattern, 571
- deferred update pattern, 318
- delete information request pattern, 398
- deleting customer details, 42-43
- derive relationship pattern, 539, 562-563
- derive value pattern, 539, 560-562
- differences, copies of information, 14
- distributed activity status pattern, 177, 590-593
- distributed locking pattern, 317
- distributing information flows pattern, 432-433
 - broadcast distribution pattern, 444-446
 - independent distribution pattern, 441-444
 - ordered distribution pattern, 439-441
 - partitioned distribution pattern, 436-439
 - synchronized distribution pattern, 432-435
- dynamic structure pattern, 316

E

- EDI (Electronic Data Interchange), 53
- Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), 53
- emergent properties, 5
- encrypt data pattern, 571
- encryption, 569
- enrich data pattern, 50, 539, 545-546

- entity-level information elements, 106-107
 - information activity pattern, 110-112
 - information asset pattern, 106-110
 - information event pattern, 113-114
 - information processing variables pattern, 114-116
 - information summary pattern, 117-119
- entry uniqueness probe pattern, 575
- entry-level structure pattern, 316
- environment probe pattern, 575
- E-Shop
 - customer details, 37
 - information, 50
- event correlation node pattern, 343, 358-360, 382
- event information request pattern, 399
- event-based provisioning pattern, 185, 196-197
- ever-greening process pattern, 51
- examples
 - aggregate key pattern, 307
 - agile business process pattern, 474
 - application node pattern, 326
 - application private provisioning pattern, 169
 - bespoke application process pattern, 471
 - broadcast distribution pattern, 444
 - buffered routing pattern, 413
 - cache provisioning pattern, 184
 - caller's key pattern, 310
 - cascading information supply chain pattern, 211
 - centralized master pattern, 604
 - check data pattern, 548-549
 - classify data pattern, 546-547

- clerical review process pattern, 487
- collaborative editing process pattern, 479
- complete scope pattern, 279
- consolidating information supply chain pattern, 223
- correct data pattern, 550-551
- daisy chain provisioning pattern, 173
- derive relationship pattern, 562
- derive value pattern, 560
- distributed activity status pattern, 590
- enrich data pattern, 545
- event correlation node pattern, 359
- event-based provisioning pattern, 196
- external sensor trigger pattern, 463
- filtered consolidation pattern, 424
- filtered routing pattern, 416
- golden reference pattern, 610
- hierarchical information supply chain pattern, 226
- historical system of record pattern, 619
- hub interchange information supply chain pattern, 215
- hybrid usage pattern, 275
- independent consolidation pattern, 430
- independent distribution pattern, 442
- information access audit pattern, 636
- information activity hub pattern, 373
- information activity pattern, 110
- information analysis node pattern, 387
- information archiving process pattern, 498
- information asset hub pattern, 368
- information asset pattern, 106
- information broadcasting process pattern, 511
- information brokers pattern, 344
- information centric organization pattern, 73
- information change trigger pattern, 461
- information code pattern, 126
- information collection pattern, 254
- information configuration pattern, 139
- information content node pattern, 330
- information cube pattern, 340
- information decision definition process pattern, 521
- information deployment process pattern, 502
- information element patterns, 101
- information entry patterns, 289
- information event pattern, 113
- information event store pattern, 364
- information ever-greening process pattern, 496
- information federation process pattern, 507
- information flow pattern, 403
- information governance program pattern, 88
- information guard pattern, 567
- information identification patterns, 130
- information key pattern, 295
- information lineage pattern, 159
- information link pattern, 123
- information location pattern, 145
- information management obligation pattern, 78
- information management principle pattern, 84
- information management strategy pattern, 81
- information mart pattern, 337
- information matching process pattern, 494
- information metric pattern, 125
- information mining store pattern, 390
- information mirror store pattern, 360-362
- information model pattern, 141
- information monitoring pattern, 638
- information node management process pattern, 529
- information node patterns, 321
- information node upgrade pattern, 587
- information pattern detecting processes pattern, 523
- information pattern discovery process pattern, 518
- information payload pattern, 120
- information probe patterns, 572
- information process pattern, 466
- information processing variables pattern, 115
- information profile tracking processes pattern, 485
- information provisioning patterns, 163
- information queueing process pattern, 509

- information reengineering
 - steps pattern, 535
- information registry pattern, 607
- information relocation
 - process pattern, 505
- information remediation
 - process pattern, 489
- information replication
 - process pattern, 501
- information reporting
 - processes pattern, 481
- information request pattern, 396
- information scavenging
 - process pattern, 516
- information schema pattern, 143
- information service patterns, 238
- information service trigger pattern, 458
- information solution patterns, 579
- information store pattern, 335
- information streaming
 - process pattern, 380-382
- information summarizing
 - process pattern, 514
- information summary pattern, 117
- information supply chain
 - patterns, 200
- information trigger patterns, 450
- information user pattern, 92
- information validation
 - process pattern, 492
- information values profile
 - pattern, 156
- information values report
 - pattern, 153
- information warehouse
 - pattern, 377
- link entries pattern, 553
- linked information
 - provisioning pattern, 182-183
- local information service
 - patterns, 244
- local key patterns, 297
- local scope pattern, 283
- look-up table node pattern, 356
- managed archive pattern, 634
- manual information trigger pattern, 454
- map-reduce node pattern, 383
- master usage pattern, 268
- merge entries pattern, 556
- mirror key pattern, 306
- mirroring provisioning
 - pattern, 189
- natural key pattern, 303
- new information node
 - pattern, 582
- next best action pattern, 630
- operational analytics pattern, 628
- operational health monitoring
 - process pattern, 527
- operational status store
 - pattern, 366
- ordered consolidation pattern, 427
- ordered distribution pattern, 439
- packaged application process
 - pattern, 472
- partitioned distribution
 - pattern, 436
- partitioned routing pattern, 410
- partner collaboration pattern, 598
- peer exchange information
 - supply chain, 230
- peer provisioning pattern, 193
- performance reporting
 - pattern, 627
- physical information
 - collection pattern, 259
- queue manager pattern, 349
- recovery provisioning
 - pattern, 197
- recycled key patterns, 300
- reference usage pattern, 271
- remote information service
 - patterns, 247
- restructure data pattern, 540
- sample data pattern, 565
- sandbox usage pattern, 277
- scheduled information trigger
 - pattern, 456
- scheduling process pattern, 530
- search node pattern, 333
- semantic integration pattern, 594
- semantic mapping pattern, 151
- semantic tagging pattern, 148
- separate entries pattern, 559
- service oriented provisioning
 - pattern, 180
- shared master pattern, 601
- single view information
 - supply chain pattern, 219
- smooth data pattern, 564
- snapshot provisioning
 - pattern, 187
- stable key pattern, 313
- staged routing pattern, 406
- staging area pattern, 353
- standardize data pattern, 542
- state driven process, 476
- streaming analytics node
 - pattern, 380
- subject area definition
 - pattern, 134
- summarized routing pattern, 418
- synchronized consolidation
 - pattern, 421
- synchronized distribution
 - pattern, 432
- synchronized masters pattern, 614
- transient scope pattern, 284
- triggering information service
 - pattern, 250
- user private provisioning
 - pattern, 167

- user shared provisioning pattern, 177
- valid values definition pattern, 137
- virtual information collection pattern, 264
- workload offload pattern, 624
- examples resolved
 - aggregate key pattern, 309
 - agile business process pattern, 475-476
 - application node pattern, 329
 - application private provisioning pattern, 171
 - bespoke application process pattern, 472
 - broadcast distribution pattern, 446
 - buffered routing pattern, 415
 - cache provisioning pattern, 185
 - caller's key pattern, 311
 - cascading information supply chain pattern, 213-214
 - centralized master pattern, 606
 - check data pattern, 549-550
 - classify data pattern, 548
 - clerical review process pattern, 488-489
 - collaborative editing process pattern, 480
 - complete scope pattern, 281
 - consolidating information supply chain pattern, 224
 - correct data pattern, 552
 - daisy chain provisioning pattern, 176-177
 - derive relationship pattern, 563
 - derive value pattern, 561
 - distributed activity status pattern, 592
 - enrich data pattern, 546
 - event correlation node pattern, 359
 - event-based provisioning pattern, 197
 - external sensor trigger pattern, 464
 - filtered consolidation pattern, 426
 - filtered routing pattern, 417
 - golden reference pattern, 612
 - hierarchical information supply chain pattern, 228
 - historical system of record pattern, 623
 - hub interchange information supply chain pattern, 218
 - hybrid usage pattern, 276
 - independent distribution pattern, 443
 - information access audit pattern, 637
 - information activity hub pattern, 375
 - information activity pattern, 112
 - information analysis node pattern, 389
 - information archiving process pattern, 498
 - information asset hub pattern, 371
 - information asset pattern, 109-110
 - information broadcasting process pattern, 512
 - information brokers pattern, 347-348
 - information centric organization pattern, 75-77
 - information change trigger pattern, 462
 - information code pattern, 127
 - information collection pattern, 257
 - information configuration pattern, 140
 - information content node pattern, 332
 - information cube pattern, 342
 - information decision definition process pattern, 522
 - information deployment process pattern, 504
 - information element patterns, 104
 - information entry patterns, 291
 - information event pattern, 114
 - information event store pattern, 365
 - information ever-greening process pattern, 497
 - information federation process pattern, 508
 - information flow pattern, 405
 - information governance program pattern, 90
 - information guard pattern, 569
 - information identification patterns, 132-133
 - information key pattern, 296
 - information lineage pattern, 160
 - information link pattern, 124
 - information location pattern, 147
 - information management obligation pattern, 80
 - information management principle pattern, 85-88
 - information management strategy pattern, 83
 - information mart pattern, 340
 - information matching process pattern, 495
 - information metric pattern, 126
 - information mining store pattern, 392
 - information mirror store pattern, 363
 - information model pattern, 142
 - information monitoring pattern, 641

- information node
 - management process pattern, 529
- information node patterns, 324
- information node upgrade pattern, 589
- information pattern detecting processes pattern, 524
- information pattern discovery process pattern, 520
- information payload pattern, 121-122
- information probe patterns, 573
- information process pattern, 469
- information processing variables pattern, 116
- information profile tracking processes pattern, 486
- information provisioning patterns, 165
- information queueing process pattern, 510
- information reengineering steps pattern, 536-537
- information registry pattern, 609
- information relocation process pattern, 506
- information remediation process pattern, 491
- information replication process pattern, 502
- information reporting processes pattern, 482-483
- information request pattern, 398
- information scavenging process pattern, 516
- information schema pattern, 145
- information service patterns, 241-242
- information service trigger pattern, 460
- information solution patterns, 581-582
- information store pattern, 337
- information streaming process pattern, 380-382
- information summarizing process pattern, 513-515
- information summary pattern, 118
- information supply chain patterns, 207-208
- information trigger patterns, 452
- information user pattern, 94
- information validation process pattern, 493
- information values profile pattern, 157-158
- information values report pattern, 155
- information warehouse pattern, 379
- link entries pattern, 555
- linked information provisioning pattern, 183
- local information service patterns, 246
- local key patterns, 299
- local scope pattern, 283
- look-up table node pattern, 357-358
- managed archive pattern, 635
- manual information trigger pattern, 455
- map-reduce node pattern, 384-385
- master usage pattern, 269
- merge entries pattern, 557
- mirror key pattern, 307
- mirroring provisioning pattern, 192
- natural key pattern, 305
- new information node pattern, 586
- next best action pattern, 632
- operational analytics pattern, 629
- operational health monitoring process pattern, 528
- operational status store pattern, 367
- ordered consolidation pattern, 429
- ordered distribution pattern, 441
- packaged application process pattern, 473
- partitioned distribution pattern, 438
- partitioned routing pattern, 411-412
- partner collaboration pattern, 598-599
- peer exchange information supply chain, 232
- peer provisioning pattern, 195
- performance reporting pattern, 628
- physical information collection pattern, 262
- queue manager pattern, 352
- recovery provisioning pattern, 198
- recycled key patterns, 302
- reference usage pattern, 273
- remote information service patterns, 249
- restructure data pattern, 541
- sample data pattern, 566
- sandbox usage pattern, 278
- scheduled information trigger pattern, 457
- scheduling process pattern, 531
- search node pattern, 334
- semantic integration pattern, 597
- semantic mapping pattern, 152-153
- semantic tagging pattern, 149-150
- separate entries pattern, 558-560
- service oriented provisioning pattern, 182

- shared master pattern, 603
- single view information
 - supply chain pattern, 222
- smooth data pattern, 564-565
- snapshot provisioning
 - pattern, 188
- stable key pattern, 314-315
- staged routing pattern, 409
- staging area pattern, 355
- standardize data pattern, 544
- state driven process, 478-479
- streaming analytics node
 - pattern, 382
- subject area definition
 - pattern, 135
- summarized routing pattern, 420
- synchronized consolidation
 - pattern, 423
- synchronized distribution
 - pattern, 434
- synchronized masters pattern, 616
- transient scope pattern, 284
- triggering information service
 - pattern, 252
- user private provisioning
 - pattern, 168
- user shared provisioning
 - pattern, 179
- valid values definition
 - pattern, 138
- virtual information collection
 - pattern, 265
- workload offload pattern, 625
- extended coverage pattern, 33, 285-286
- external sensor trigger pattern, 453, 462-465

F

- filtered consolidation flow, 66
- filtered consolidation pattern, 420, 424-427
- filtered routing flow, 65
- filtered routing pattern, 407, 416-418

- flow of information, information
 - nodes, 14-15
- forces
 - aggregate key pattern, 307-308
 - agile business process
 - pattern, 474
 - application node pattern, 326
 - application private
 - provisioning pattern, 169
 - bespoke application process
 - pattern, 471
 - broadcast distribution pattern, 444
 - buffered routing pattern, 413
 - cache provisioning pattern, 184
 - caller's key pattern, 310
 - cascading information supply
 - chain pattern, 211
 - centralized master pattern, 604-605
 - check data pattern, 549
 - classify data pattern, 547
 - clerical review process
 - pattern, 487-488
 - collaborative editing process
 - pattern, 479-480
 - complete scope pattern, 281
 - consolidating information
 - supply chain pattern, 223
 - correct data pattern, 551
 - daisy chain provisioning
 - pattern, 173
 - derive relationship pattern, 562
 - derive value pattern, 561
 - distributed activity status
 - pattern, 591
 - enrich data pattern, 545
 - event correlation node
 - pattern, 359
 - event-based provisioning
 - pattern, 196
 - external sensor trigger
 - pattern, 463

- filtered consolidation pattern, 424-425
- filtered routing pattern, 416
- golden reference pattern, 610-611
- hierarchical information
 - supply chain pattern, 226
- historical system of record
 - pattern, 620
- hub interchange information
 - supply chain pattern, 215-216
- hybrid usage pattern, 275
- independent consolidation
 - pattern, 430
- independent distribution
 - pattern, 442
- information access audit
 - pattern, 636-637
- information activity hub
 - pattern, 373
- information activity pattern, 110
- information analysis node
 - pattern, 387
- information archiving process
 - pattern, 498
- information asset hub pattern, 368-369
- information asset pattern, 108
- information broadcasting
 - process pattern, 511
- information brokers pattern, 344
- information centric
 - organization pattern, 73-74
- information change trigger
 - pattern, 461
- information code pattern, 127
- information collection
 - pattern, 255
- information configuration
 - pattern, 139
- information content node
 - pattern, 330
- information cube pattern, 340-341

- information decision
 - definition process pattern, 521
- information deployment
 - process pattern, 503
- information element patterns, 101
- information entry patterns, 289-290
- information event pattern, 113
- information event store pattern, 364
- information ever-greening
 - process pattern, 496
- information federation
 - process pattern, 507
- information flow pattern, 403
- information governance
 - program pattern, 88-89
- information guard pattern, 567-568
- information identification patterns, 131
- information key pattern, 295-297
- information lineage pattern, 159
- information link pattern, 123
- information location pattern, 145
- information management
 - obligation pattern, 78-79
- information management
 - principle pattern, 84
- information management
 - strategy pattern, 81-82
- information mart pattern, 338
- information matching process pattern, 494
- information metric pattern, 125
- information mining store pattern, 390
- information mirror store pattern, 362
- information model pattern, 141-142
- information monitoring
 - pattern, 638-639
- information node
 - management process pattern, 529
- information node patterns, 321
- information node upgrade pattern, 587-588
- information pattern detecting
 - processes pattern, 523
- information pattern discovery
 - process pattern, 519
- information payload pattern, 120
- information probe patterns, 573
- information process pattern, 466
- information processing
 - variables pattern, 115
- information profile tracking
 - processes pattern, 485
- information provisioning patterns, 163
- information queueing process pattern, 509
- information reengineering
 - steps pattern, 535
- information registry pattern, 607-608
- information relocation
 - process pattern, 505
- information remediation
 - process pattern, 490
- information replication
 - process pattern, 501
- information reporting
 - processes pattern, 481-482
- information request pattern, 396-397
- information scavenging
 - process pattern, 516
- information schema pattern, 144
- information service patterns, 239
- information service trigger
 - pattern, 458
- information solution patterns, 579-580
- information store pattern, 335
- information streaming
 - process pattern, 380-382
- information summarizing
 - process pattern, 514
- information summary pattern, 117
- information supply chain patterns, 200-202
- information trigger patterns, 450
- information user pattern, 92-74
- information validation
 - process pattern, 492
- information values profile pattern, 157
- information values report pattern, 153
- information warehouse
 - pattern, 377-378
- link entries pattern, 553
- linked information
 - provisioning pattern, 182-183
- local information service patterns, 244
- local key patterns, 298
- local scope pattern, 283
- look-up table node pattern, 357
- managed archive pattern, 634
- manual information trigger pattern, 454
- map-reduce node pattern, 383
- master usage pattern, 268
- merge entries pattern, 557
- mirror key pattern, 306
- mirroring provisioning pattern, 189
- natural key pattern, 303
- new information node pattern, 582-584

next best action pattern, 630
 operational analytics pattern, 628
 operational health monitoring process pattern, 527
 operational status store pattern, 366
 ordered consolidation pattern, 427
 ordered distribution pattern, 439
 packaged application process pattern, 473
 partitioned distribution pattern, 436
 partitioned routing pattern, 410
 partner collaboration pattern, 598
 peer exchange information supply chain, 230
 peer provisioning pattern, 193-194
 performance reporting pattern, 627
 physical information collection pattern, 259-261
 queue manager pattern, 349
 recovery provisioning pattern, 197
 recycled key patterns, 300-301
 reference usage pattern, 271
 remote information service patterns, 247
 restructure data pattern, 540
 sample data pattern, 565
 sandbox usage pattern, 277
 scheduled information trigger pattern, 456
 scheduling process pattern, 530
 search node pattern, 333
 semantic integration pattern, 594-595
 semantic mapping pattern, 151

semantic tagging pattern, 149
 separate entries pattern, 559
 service oriented provisioning pattern, 180
 shared master pattern, 601-602
 single view information supply chain pattern, 220
 smooth data pattern, 564
 snapshot provisioning pattern, 187
 stable key pattern, 313
 staged routing pattern, 406
 staging area pattern, 353
 standardize data pattern, 542-543
 state driven process, 476-477
 streaming analytics node pattern, 380
 subject area definition pattern, 135
 summarized routing pattern, 418
 synchronized consolidation pattern, 422
 synchronized distribution pattern, 432
 synchronized masters pattern, 614
 transient scope pattern, 284
 triggering information service pattern, 250-251
 user private provisioning pattern, 168
 user shared provisioning pattern, 177-179
 valid values definition pattern, 137
 virtual information collection pattern, 264
 workload offload pattern, 624
 function-centric access pattern, 571

G

glossaries, subject area definition pattern, 136
 golden reference pattern, 40, 599, 610-613

H

hard-coded behavior, information configuration pattern, 139
 hierarchical information supply chain pattern, 209, 225-229
 historical system of record pattern, 29, 119, 618-624
 historical values pattern, 318
 hub interchange information supply chain pattern, 195, 209, 215-219
 hybrid usage, 45, 63
 hybrid usage pattern, 198, 229, 266, 274-277

I

icons, information collection icon, 7
 identity propagation pattern, 571
 identity verification pattern, 95, 571
 improving information management, 4-6
 independent consolidation pattern, 420, 429-432
 independent distribution pattern, 433, 441-444
 information access audit pattern, 633, 636-638
 information activity hub, 46, 112
 information activity hub pattern, 361, 372-376, 591
 information activity pattern, 45, 102, 107, 110-112, 116, 468
 information analysis node, 64
 information analysis node pattern, 386-389, 392, 626
 information architecture, 99

- information archiving process pattern, 484, 497-499
- information asset hub, 40, 109
- information asset hub pattern, 219, 223, 312, 315, 361, 368-372
- information asset pattern, 37, 102, 106-110, 372, 468
- information assets, 30
- information at rest patterns, 235
 - coverage patterns, 285-287
 - information collection pattern, 253-259
 - information entry patterns, 288-292, 316
 - information key patterns, 292-297
 - information service implementation patterns, 243
 - information service patterns, 236-243
 - location of information, 259
 - scope of information collection, 279-280
 - usage of information collection, 266
- information auditor pattern, 97
- information broadcasting process, 194
- information broadcasting process pattern, 500, 511-513
- information broker pattern, 14, 36
- information brokers, 53
- information brokers pattern, 128, 183, 250, 343-348, 599
- information centric organization pattern, 17, 70-78, 133
 - information governance program pattern, 70, 88-91
- information management obligation pattern, 78-81
- information management principle pattern, 70, 83-88
- information management strategy pattern, 70, 81-83
- information change trigger, 177
- information change trigger pattern, 36, 453, 460-462
- information code pattern, 103, 122, 126-128
- information codes, 128
- information collection, 12, 266
- information collection icon, 7
- information collection pattern, 9, 19, 109, 185, 188, 192, 195, 235, 253-259
 - summary, 287
- information collection usage pattern
 - hybrid usage pattern, 274-277
 - master usage pattern, 267-270
 - reference usage pattern, 271-274
 - sandbox usage pattern, 277-279
- information collections, 62, 129, 204
- information configuration pattern, 133, 139-140
- information content node pattern, 324, 330-332
- information crawling process pattern, 525
- information cube pattern, 324, 340-342
- information decision definition process pattern, 517, 521-523
- information decision definition processes, 62
- information decision model, 61
- information deployment process, 50
- information deployment process pattern, 500, 502-505
- information editing process pattern, 470
- information element pattern, 10
- information element patterns, 99-106, 129, 259
- information elements, 62, 103
- information entries, 109, 177, 495
 - summary, 317-319
- information entry key patterns, locking, 317
- information entry pattern, 19
- information entry patterns, 235, 259, 288-292, 316
 - specialized operations, 317-319
- information event pattern, 102, 107, 113-114
- information event store pattern, 114, 361, 364-366
- information ever-greening process pattern, 484, 496-497
- information federation process pattern, 223, 500, 507-509
- information flow pattern, 20, 29, 36, 112, 165, 188, 192, 195, 283, 395
 - routing information flows pattern, 406-407
 - summarized routing pattern, 446
- information flow patterns, 401-406
- information flow probe pattern, 575
- information flows, 29
 - consolidating, 66
- information governance program pattern, 70, 88-91, 133
- information governor pattern, 97
- information guard pattern, 21, 95, 203, 566-571
- information guards, 533
- information identification patterns, 18, 49, 91, 99, 129-133, 161, 165, 188, 192, 195, 405, 582, 587
 - information configuration pattern, 133, 139-140
 - reports, 154
 - information lineage pattern, 159-161
 - information values profile pattern, 156-158
 - information values report, 153-156

- subject area definition pattern, 133-136
 - valid values definition pattern, 133, 136-139
- information in motion patterns, 395
 - information flow pattern, 401-406
 - information request pattern, 396-398
- information indexing process pattern, 525
- information key pattern, 292-297
 - aggregate key pattern, 307-309
 - caller's key pattern, 310-312
 - local key patterns, 297-300
 - mirror key pattern, 305-307
 - natural key pattern, 302-305
 - recycled key patterns, 300-302
 - stable key pattern, 312-315
- information keys pattern, 124
- information lineage pattern, 153-154, 158-161
- information link pattern, 103, 105, 122-124
- information location pattern, 136, 145-148, 158
- information location resources, 132
- information management, improving, 4-6
- information management obligation pattern, 70, 78-81
- information management principle pattern, 70, 83-89
- information management strategy pattern, 70, 81-83
- information mart pattern, 324, 337-340
- information matching process pattern, 484, 493-495
- information metric pattern, 103, 122, 124-126
- information mining store, 64, 386
 - information mining store pattern, 389
- information mirror store pattern, 360-364
 - information model pattern, 106, 132, 136, 141-143
 - information monitoring pattern, 225, 633, 638-642
 - information monitoring process, 51
 - information node management process pattern, 526, 528-530
 - information node patterns, 12-13, 19, 235, 259, 319-324, 587
 - analysis information nodes, 385-386
 - information analysis node pattern, 386-389
 - information mining store pattern, 389
 - big data information processing, 376
 - information warehouse pattern, 377-379
 - map-reduce node pattern, 382-385
 - streaming analytics node pattern, 380-382
- integration nodes, 343
 - event correlation node pattern, 358-360
 - information brokers pattern, 343-348
 - look-up table node pattern, 356-358
 - queue manager pattern, 349-353
 - staging area pattern, 353-356
- operational data stores and hubs, 360-361
 - information activity hub pattern, 372-376
 - information asset hub pattern, 368-372
 - information event store pattern, 364-366
 - information mirror store pattern, 360-364
 - operation status store pattern, 366-368
 - summary, 393
 - information node upgrade pattern, 506, 587-589
 - information nodes, 12-13, 109, 112, 195
 - flow of information, 14-15
 - information activity hub, 46
 - information owners, 49, 97
 - information owners pattern, 89
 - information pattern detecting process pattern, 517
 - information pattern detecting processes pattern, 126, 523-525
 - information pattern detection process, 61-62
 - information pattern discovery process pattern, 517-520
 - information payload pattern, 103, 112, 119-122, 177
 - supplementary patterns, 121
 - information principle pattern, 158
 - information probe pattern, 21, 570
 - information probe patterns, 197, 203, 533, 572-575
 - information probes pattern, 95
 - information process pattern, 16, 93-95, 112, 116, 465-469
 - business processes pattern, 469-470
 - information processes, 12
 - information processes pattern, 140, 449, 531-532
 - information processing patterns, 449
 - information trigger patterns, 450-452
 - information processing variables pattern, 102-103, 107, 112, 114-116
 - information profile tracking process, 49, 51, 59

- information profile tracking
 - processes pattern, 483-486
- information protection, 21, 533
- information protection patterns, 633
 - information access audit pattern, 636-638
 - information monitoring pattern, 638-642
 - managed archive pattern, 634-636
- information provisioning pattern, 12, 18, 64
- information provisioning patterns, 99, 161-165, 199, 324, 405, 468
- information quality processes, 49
- information queueing process pattern, 356, 500, 509-511
- information reengineering, 157
- information reengineering steps, 21, 50, 188
- information reengineering steps pattern, 21, 533-538
- information registry pattern, 599, 607-609
- information relocation process pattern, 500, 505-506
- information remediation process pattern, 484, 486, 489-491
- information replication process, 406
- information replication process pattern, 499-502
- information reporting processes, 28, 48
- information reporting processes pattern, 126, 156, 481-483
- information request pattern, 13, 20, 112, 122, 395-398
 - batch information request pattern, 399
 - create information request pattern, 398
 - delete information request pattern, 398
 - event information request pattern, 399
- initiate process information request, 399
- retrieve collection
 - information request pattern, 400
- retrieve cursor information request, 400
- retrieve one information request, 400
- run process information request, 399
- summary, 401
- update information request pattern, 398
- information scavenging process pattern, 500, 515-517
- information schema pattern, 106, 141, 143-145
- information search process pattern, 525
- information service
 - implementation patterns, 243
 - local information service patterns, 243-246
 - remote information service patterns, 246-250
 - triggering information service pattern, 250-253
- information service pattern, 19
- information service patterns, 182, 235-243, 253
- information service trigger pattern, 453, 455, 458-460
- information services, 164, 217, 236-243
- information solution pattern, 22, 27
- information solution patterns, 578-582
 - big data and warehouse patterns, 618
 - historical system of record pattern, 619-624
 - workload offload pattern, 624-626
- business intelligence and analytics patterns, 626
- next best action pattern, 630-633
- operational analytics pattern, 628-629
- performance reporting pattern, 626-628
- changing information nodes, 582-583
 - information node upgrade pattern, 587-589
 - new information node pattern, 582-587
- information protection. *See* information protection patterns
- integrating information nodes, 590
 - distributed activity status pattern, 590-593
 - partner collaboration pattern, 597-599
 - semantic integration pattern, 593-597
- summary, 642
- information solutions, 577-578
 - partner collaboration pattern, 55
- information stewards, 89
- information stewards pattern, 97
- information store pattern, 324, 334-337
- information strategy, 61
 - building an information strategy, 26-28
- information streaming process pattern, 380-382
- information summarizing process pattern, 119, 500, 513-515
- information summary pattern, 103, 107, 117-119
- information supply chain pattern, 15, 18, 91
- information supply chain patterns, 99, 188, 199-209, 232, 283
 - cascading information supply chain pattern, 211-215

- consolidating information
 - supply chain pattern, 223-225
- hierarchical information
 - supply chain pattern, 225-229
- hub interchange information
 - supply chain pattern, 215-219
- peer exchange information
 - supply chain, 230-232
- single view information
 - supply chain pattern, 219-223
- information supply chains, 56
 - information collections, 204-206
 - parts of, 203-204
- information trigger pattern, 16, 449
- information trigger patterns, 192, 195, 450-453
 - external sensor trigger pattern, 462-465
 - information change trigger pattern, 460-462
 - information service trigger pattern, 458-460
 - manual information trigger pattern, 453-455
 - scheduled information trigger pattern, 455-457
 - summary, 465
- information triggers, 12, 35, 114, 164, 177
 - operational analytics, 59
- information usage collection patterns, 266
- information user pattern, 17, 91-95
 - business analyst pattern, 97
 - data quality analyst pattern, 97
 - data scientist pattern, 97
 - information auditor pattern, 97
 - information governor pattern, 97

- information owners pattern, 97
- information stewards pattern, 97
- information worker pattern, 97
- infrastructure operator pattern, 97
- information users, 12, 48, 188
- information validation process pattern, 484, 491-493
- information values profile pattern, 132, 139, 150, 153-154, 156-158
- information values profiles, 51
- information values report, 154
- information values report pattern, 153-156
- information warehouse pattern, 29, 376-379
- information warehouses, 379
- information warehouses pattern, 156
- information worker pattern, 97
- information workers, 325, 483
- infrastructure operator pattern, 97
- initiate process information request, 399
- integrating information nodes, information solution patterns, 590
 - distributed activity status pattern, 590-593
- partner collaboration pattern, 597-599
- semantic integration pattern, 593-597
- integration nodes, 343
 - event correlation node pattern, 358-360
 - information brokers pattern, 343-348
 - information node patterns, 343
 - look-up table node pattern, 356-358

- queue manager pattern, 349-353
- staging area pattern, 353-356
- interaction analysis pattern, 571
- IT service management processes, 526

K

known uses

- aggregate key pattern, 309
- agile business process pattern, 476
- application node pattern, 329
- application private provisioning pattern, 171
- bespoke application process pattern, 472
- broadcast distribution pattern, 446
- buffered routing pattern, 415
- cache provisioning pattern, 185
- caller's key pattern, 312
- cascading information supply chain pattern, 215
- centralized master pattern, 606
- check data pattern, 550
- classify data pattern, 548
- clerical review process pattern, 489
- collaborative editing process pattern, 481
- complete scope pattern, 282
- consolidating information supply chain pattern, 225
- correct data pattern, 552
- daisy chain provisioning pattern, 177
- derive relationship pattern, 563
- derive value pattern, 561
- distributed activity status pattern, 593
- enrich data pattern, 546
- event correlation node pattern, 360

- event-based provisioning pattern, 197
- external sensor trigger pattern, 464
- filtered consolidation pattern, 426
- filtered routing pattern, 417
- golden reference pattern, 613
- hierarchical information
 - supply chain pattern, 229
- historical system of record pattern, 623
- hub interchange information
 - supply chain pattern, 219
- hybrid usage pattern, 276
- independent consolidation pattern, 431-437
- independent distribution pattern, 443
- information access audit pattern, 637
- information activity hub pattern, 376
- information activity pattern, 112
- information analysis node pattern, 389
- information archiving process pattern, 499
- information asset hub pattern, 372
- information asset pattern, 109
- information broadcasting
 - process pattern, 513
- information brokers pattern, 348
- information centric
 - organization pattern, 77
- information change trigger pattern, 462
- information code pattern, 128
- information collection pattern, 258
- information configuration pattern, 140
- information content node pattern, 332
- information cube pattern, 342
- information decision
 - definition process pattern, 522
- information deployment
 - process pattern, 504
- information element patterns, 105-106
- information entry patterns, 291
- information event pattern, 114
- information event store pattern, 365-367
- information ever-greening
 - process pattern, 497
- information fed, 508
- information flow pattern, 405
- information governance
 - program pattern, 91
- information guard pattern, 570
- information identification patterns, 133
- information key pattern, 297
- information lineage pattern, 160-161
- information link pattern, 124
- information location pattern, 147-148
- information management
 - obligation pattern, 80-81
- information management
 - principle pattern, 88
- information management
 - strategy pattern, 83
- information mart pattern, 340
- information matching process pattern, 495
- information metric pattern, 126
- information mining store pattern, 392
- information mirror store pattern, 363
- information model pattern, 143
- information monitoring
 - pattern, 641
- information node
 - management process pattern, 530
- information node patterns, 324
- information node upgrade pattern, 589
- information pattern detecting
 - processes pattern, 524
- information pattern discovery
 - process pattern, 520
- information payload pattern, 122
- information probe patterns, 574
- information process pattern, 469
- information processing
 - variables pattern, 116
- information profile tracking
 - processes pattern, 486
- information provisioning patterns, 165
- information queueing process pattern, 511
- information reengineering
 - steps pattern, 537
- information relocation
 - process pattern, 506
- information remediation
 - process pattern, 491
- information replication
 - process pattern, 502
- information reporting
 - processes pattern, 483
- information request pattern, 398
- information scavenging
 - process pattern, 517
- information schema pattern, 145
- information service patterns, 242
- information service trigger pattern, 460

- information solution patterns, 582
 - information store pattern, 337
 - information streaming
 - process pattern, 380-382
 - information summary pattern, 119
 - information supply chain patterns, 209
 - information trigger patterns, 452
 - information user pattern, 95
 - information validation
 - process pattern, 493
 - information values profile pattern, 158
 - information values report pattern, 155-156
 - information warehouse pattern, 379
 - link entries pattern, 556
 - linked information
 - provisioning pattern, 183
 - local information service patterns, 246
 - local key patterns, 300
 - local scope pattern, 283
 - look-up table node pattern, 358
 - managed archive pattern, 635
 - manual information trigger pattern, 455
 - map-reduce node pattern, 385
 - master usage pattern, 270
 - merge entries pattern, 558
 - mirror key pattern, 307
 - mirroring provisioning pattern, 192
 - natural key pattern, 305
 - new information node pattern, 586
 - next best action pattern, 632
 - operational analytics pattern, 629
 - operational health monitoring
 - process pattern, 528
 - operational status store pattern, 367
 - ordered consolidation pattern, 429
 - ordered distribution pattern, 441
 - packaged application process pattern, 474
 - partitioned distribution pattern, 438
 - partitioned routing pattern, 412
 - partner collaboration pattern, 599
 - peer exchange information supply chain, 232
 - peer provisioning pattern, 195
 - performance reporting pattern, 628
 - physical information
 - collection pattern, 262-263
 - queue manager pattern, 352-353
 - recovery provisioning pattern, 198
 - recycled key patterns, 302
 - reference usage pattern, 274
 - remote information service patterns, 249-250
 - restructure data pattern, 541
 - sample data pattern, 566
 - sandbox usage pattern, 279
 - scheduled information trigger pattern, 457
 - scheduling process pattern, 531
 - search node pattern, 334
 - semantic integration pattern, 597
 - semantic mapping pattern, 153
 - semantic tagging pattern, 150
 - separate entries pattern, 560
 - service oriented provisioning pattern, 182
 - shared master pattern, 603
 - single view information supply chain pattern, 222
 - smooth data pattern, 565
 - snapshot provisioning pattern, 188
 - stable key pattern, 315
 - staged routing pattern, 409
 - staging area pattern, 355
 - standardize data pattern, 544
 - state driven process, 479
 - streaming analytics node pattern, 382
 - subject area definition pattern, 136
 - summarized routing pattern, 420
 - synchronized consolidation pattern, 423
 - synchronized distribution pattern, 435
 - synchronized masters pattern, 618
 - transient scope pattern, 285
 - triggering information service pattern, 252
 - user private provisioning pattern, 168
 - user shared provisioning pattern, 179
 - valid values definition pattern, 138
 - virtual information collection pattern, 265
 - workload offload pattern, 625
- L**
- latency of the information transfer, 6
 - lifecycle states pattern, 318
 - link entries pattern, 539, 553-556
 - linked information provisioning pattern, 178, 182-183, 332
 - local coverage pattern, 33, 287
 - local information service patterns, 243-246
 - local key patterns, 293, 297-300
 - local locking pattern, 317
 - local provisioning pattern, 263
 - local scope, 8, 10, 32

- local scope pattern, 280, 282-284
- localized provisioning, 162, 166-167
 - application private provisioning pattern, 169-171
 - user private provisioning pattern, 167-169
- location of information, 259
 - physical information collection pattern, 259-263
 - virtual information collection pattern, 263-266
- location of order details, 45
- locking information entry key patterns, 317
- look-up table node pattern, 343, 356-358
- lookup tables pattern, 128

M

- Mail-Shop, 41
- managed archive pattern, 624, 633-636
- management reports, creating, 28-30
- manual information trigger pattern, 453-455
- map-reduce node pattern, 376, 382-385
- mask data pattern, 571
- masking, 568
- master data, 105
- master data management patterns, 599-601
 - centralized master pattern, 604-606
 - golden reference pattern, 610-613
 - information registry pattern, 607-609
 - shared master pattern, 601-603
 - synchronized masters pattern, 613-618
- master usage, 31

- master usage pattern, 198, 266-270
- MCHS Trading, 2-4, 26
 - B2B trading partnerships, 51-55
 - building an information strategy, 26-28
 - creating a single view of customer details, 37-42
 - creating a single view of product details, 30-37
 - creating management reports, 28-30
 - customers, 3-4
- delivering information quality improvements, 47-51
 - predictive analytics, 55-66
 - understanding status of orders, 44-34
- merge entries pattern, 539, 556-558
- merging customer details into Reporting Hub, 39
- message-level information elements, information payload pattern, 119-122
- metadata collection, 150
- mirror key pattern, 293, 305-307
- mirror provisioning, 217
- mirroring provisioning, 33-35, 64, 190-191
- mirroring provisioning pattern, 185, 189-193, 362
- M-Shop, 41

N

- naming conventions, patterns, 7
- natural key pattern, 293, 302-305
- new information node pattern, 582-587
- New Order, information processing variables pattern, 116
- next best action pattern, 626, 630-633

O

- ontologies, subject area definition pattern, 136
- Open Services for Lifecycle and Collaboration (OSLC), 124
- operation status store pattern, 366-368
- operational analytics, 58
- operational analytics pattern, 626, 628-629
- operational data stores and hubs, 360-361
 - information activity hub pattern, 372-376
 - information asset hub pattern, 368-372
 - information event store pattern, 364-366
 - information mirror store pattern, 360-364
 - operation status store pattern, 366-368
- operational health monitoring process pattern, 324, 526-528
- operational health probe pattern, 575
- operational management information process patterns, 526
 - information node management process pattern, 528-530
 - operational health monitoring process pattern, 527-528
 - scheduling process pattern, 530-531
- operational status store pattern, 219, 361
- optimistic locking pattern, 317
- order details, location of, 45
- order information, 112
- ordered consolidation pattern, 420, 427-429
- ordered distribution pattern, 433, 439-441
- orders, status of, 34-44

Order-Tracking, 46-47, 375
 OSLC (Open Services for
 Lifecycle and Collaboration),
 124

P

packaged application process,
 61, 64
 packaged application process
 pattern, 470, 472-474
 partition distribution, 36
 partitioned distribution pattern,
 433, 436-439
 partitioned routing pattern, 407,
 410-412
 partner collaboration pattern, 55,
 590, 597-599
 pattern groups, 7
 pattern languages, 7
 components of, 11-12
 structure, 15
 patterns, 7-11
 access auditing probe pattern,
 575
 aggregate key pattern, 294,
 307-309
 agile business process pattern,
 177, 470, 474-476
 analytics process patterns,
 517
 anonymize data pattern, 571
 application node pattern, 324,
 326-329, 599
 application private
 provisioning pattern, 166,
 169-171
 archiving process pattern, 324
 batch information request
 pattern, 399
 bespoke application process
 pattern, 470-472
 broadcast distribution pattern,
 433, 444-446
 buffered routing pattern,
 413-415
 business analyst pattern, 97

business intelligence and
 analytics patterns, 626
 business processes pattern,
 469-470
 cache provisioning pattern,
 178, 183-185
 caller's key pattern, 294,
 310-312
 canonical-based payload
 pattern, 121
 cascading information supply
 chain pattern, 209
 centralized master pattern, 36,
 215, 599, 604-606
 check data pattern, 139, 539,
 548-550
 classify data pattern, 539,
 546-548
 clerical review process
 pattern, 484, 487-489
 collaborative editing process
 pattern, 372, 470, 479-481
 collection control pattern, 571
 complete coverage pattern,
 33, 285
 complete scope, 10, 32
 complete scope pattern, 280
 concentrating information
 supply chain pattern, 209
 consolidating information
 flows pattern, 420
 consolidating information
 supply chain pattern,
 223-225
 core coverage pattern, 33,
 285-286
 correct data pattern, 539,
 550-552
 create information request
 pattern, 398
 daisy chain provisioning
 pattern, 112, 172-177, 250,
 253
 data quality analyst pattern,
 97
 data scientist pattern, 97

data-centric access pattern,
 571
 deferred update pattern, 318
 delete information request
 pattern, 398
 derive relationship pattern,
 539, 562-563
 derive value pattern, 539,
 560-562
 distributed activity status
 pattern, 177, 590-593
 distributed locking pattern,
 317
 distributing information flows
 pattern, 432-433
 dynamic structure pattern,
 316
 encrypt data pattern, 571
 enrich data pattern, 545-546
 entry uniqueness probe
 pattern, 575
 entry-level structure pattern,
 316
 environment probe pattern,
 575
 event correlation node
 pattern, 343, 358-360, 382
 event information request
 pattern, 399
 event-based provisioning
 pattern, 185, 196-197
 extended coverage pattern,
 33, 285-286
 external sensor trigger
 pattern, 453, 462-465
 filtered consolidation pattern,
 420, 424-427
 filtered routing pattern,
 416-418
 function-centric access
 pattern, 571
 golden reference pattern, 599,
 610-613
 hierarchical information
 supply chain pattern, 209,
 225-229

historical system of record pattern, 119, 618-624
historical values pattern, 318
hub interchange information supply chain pattern, 195, 209
hybrid usage pattern, 198, 229, 266, 274-277
identity propagation pattern, 571
identity verification pattern, 95, 571
independent consolidation pattern, 420, 429-432
independent distribution pattern, 433, 441-444
information access audit pattern, 633, 636-638
information activity hub, 112
information activity hub pattern, 361, 372-376
information activity pattern, 45, 102, 107, 110-112, 116, 468
information analysis node pattern, 386-389, 626
information archiving process pattern, 497-499
information asset hub, 109
information asset hub pattern, 219, 223, 315, 361, 368-372
information asset pattern, 102, 106-110, 468
information at rest patterns, 235
information auditor pattern, 97
information broadcasting process pattern, 511-513
information brokers pattern, 128, 183, 250, 343-348, 599
information centric organization pattern, 17, 70-78, 133
information change trigger pattern, 453, 460-462
information code pattern, 103, 122, 126-128

information collection pattern, 19, 109, 192, 195, 235
information configuration pattern, 133, 139-140
information content node pattern, 324
information crawling process pattern, 525
information cube pattern, 324, 340-342
information decision definition process pattern, 517, 521-523
information deployment process pattern, 500, 502-505
information editing process pattern, 470
information element pattern, 10
information element patterns, 99, 100, 101-106, 259
information entries, 109
information entry pattern, 19
information entry patterns, 235, 288-292, 317
 specialized operations, 317-319
information event pattern, 102, 107, 113-114
information event store pattern, 114, 361, 364-366
information ever-greening process pattern, 484, 496-497
information federation process pattern, 223, 500, 507-509
information flow pattern, 20, 112, 192, 195, 283, 395
information flow probe pattern, 575
information governance program pattern, 70, 88-91, 133
information governor pattern, 97

information guard pattern, 21, 95, 203, 566-571
information identification, 99
information identification patterns, 18, 49, 129-133, 316, 582, 587
information indexing process pattern, 525
information keys pattern, 124, 292-297
information lineage pattern, 153-154, 159-161
information link pattern, 103, 122-124
information location pattern, 136, 145-148, 158
information management obligation pattern, 70, 78-81
information management principle pattern, 70, 83-88
information management strategy pattern, 70, 81-83
information mart pattern, 324, 337-340
information matching process pattern, 484, 493-495
information metric pattern, 103, 122, 124-126
information mining store, 386
information mining store pattern, 389
information mirror store pattern, 360-364
information model pattern, 106, 132, 136, 141-143
information monitoring pattern, 225, 633, 638-642
information node, 109, 112
information node management process pattern, 526, 528-530
information node patterns, 12-13, 19, 235, 259, 319-324, 587
information node upgrade pattern, 506, 587-589
information owners pattern, 97

- information pattern detecting
 - processes pattern, 126, 517, 523-525
- information pattern discovery
 - process pattern, 517-520
- information payload pattern, 103, 112, 119-122
- information principle pattern, 158
- information probe pattern, 21, 570
- information probe patterns, 197, 203, 572-575
- information processes pattern, 16, 112, 116, 140, 449, 465-469, 531-532
- information processing
 - patterns, 449
- information processing variables
 - pattern, 102-103, 107, 112, 114-116
 - information profile tracking
 - processes pattern, 483-486
- information protection
 - patterns, 633
- information provisioning
 - patterns, 18, 99, 161-165, 468
- information queueing process
 - pattern, 356, 500, 509-511
- information reengineering
 - steps pattern, 21, 534-538
- information registry pattern, 599, 607-609
- information relocation
 - process pattern, 500, 505-506
- information remediation
 - process pattern, 486, 489-491
- information replication
 - process pattern, 499-502
- information reporting
 - processes pattern, 126, 156, 481-483
- information request pattern, 13, 20, 112, 122, 395-398
- information scavenging
 - process pattern, 500, 515-517
- information schema pattern, 106, 141, 143-145
- information search process
 - pattern, 525
- information service patterns, 19, 182, 235
- information service trigger
 - pattern, 453, 458-460
- information solution patterns, 22, 27, 578-582
 - integrating information
 - nodes, 590
- information stewards pattern, 97
- information store pattern, 324, 334-337
- information streaming
 - process pattern, 380-382
- information summarizing
 - process pattern, 119, 500, 513-515
- information summary pattern, 103, 107, 117-119
- information supply chain
 - patterns, 15, 18, 99, 199-209, 283
- information trigger patterns, 16, 192, 195, 449, 450-452
- information usage collection
 - patterns, 266
- information user pattern, 17, 91-95
- information validation
 - process pattern, 484, 491-493
- information values profile
 - pattern, 132, 139, 150, 153-154, 156-158
- information values report
 - pattern, 153-156
- information warehouse
 - pattern, 376-379
- information warehouses
 - pattern, 156
- infrastructure operator
 - pattern, 97
- initiate process information
 - request, 399
- interaction analysis pattern, 571
- lifecycle states pattern, 318
- link entries pattern, 539, 553-556
- linked information
 - provisioning pattern, 182-183
- local coverage pattern, 33, 287
- local information service
 - patterns, 243
- local key patterns, 293, 297-300
- local locking pattern, 317
- local provisioning pattern, 263
- local scope pattern, 10, 32, 280, 282-284
- look-up table node pattern, 343, 356-358
- lookup tables pattern, 128
- managed archive pattern, 624, 633-636
- manual information trigger
 - pattern, 453-455
- map-reduce node pattern, 376, 382-385
- mask data pattern, 571
- master data management
 - patterns, 599-601
- master usage pattern, 198, 266-270
- merge entries pattern, 539, 556-558
- mirror key pattern, 293, 305-307
- mirroring provisioning
 - pattern, 185, 189-193, 362
- naming conventions, 7
- natural key pattern, 293, 302-305

- new information node
 - pattern, 582-587
- next best action pattern, 626, 630-633
- operation status store pattern, 366-368
- operational analytics pattern, 626, 628-629
- operational health monitoring process pattern, 324, 526-528
- operational health probe pattern, 575
- operational status store pattern, 219, 361
- optimistic locking pattern, 317
- ordered consolidation pattern, 420, 427-429
- ordered distribution pattern, 433, 439-441
- packaged application process pattern, 470, 472-474
- partitioned distribution pattern, 433
- partitioned routing pattern, 407, 410-412
- partner collaboration pattern, 590, 597-599
- peer exchange information supply chain, 209, 230-232
- peer provisioning pattern, 185, 193-195, 217, 232
- performance reporting pattern, 483, 624, 626-628
- physical information collection pattern, 260
- physical security zone pattern, 571
- profiling rule probe pattern, 575
- provenance pattern, 318
- provisioning information process patterns, 499-517
- proxy pattern, 318
- queue manager pattern, 343, 349-353
- recovery provisioning pattern, 185, 197-198
- recycled key patterns, 293, 300-302
- reengineering information step pattern, 139
- reference usage pattern, 266, 271-274
- relationships pattern, 318
- remote information service patterns, 243, 452
- restructure data pattern, 538-542
- retrieve collection information request pattern, 400
- retrieve cursor information request, 400
- retrieve one information request, 400
- roll up information supply chain pattern, 126
- routing information flows pattern, 406-407
- run process information request, 399
- sample data pattern, 539, 565-566
- sample data probe pattern, 575
- sandbox usage pattern, 266, 277-279
- scheduled information trigger pattern, 453, 455-457
- scheduling process pattern, 324, 526, 530-531
- search node pattern, 324, 332-334
- search processes pattern, 525-526
- semantic integration pattern, 136, 265-266, 590, 593-597
- semantic mapping pattern, 122, 124, 146, 150-153, 158, 283
- semantic tagging pattern, 132, 146, 148-150, 153, 158
- separate entries pattern, 539, 558-560
- separation of duties pattern, 571
- service oriented provisioning pattern, 179-182
- shared master pattern, 599, 601-603
- single view information supply chain pattern, 209, 219-223, 266
- smooth data pattern, 539, 563-565
- snapshot provisioning, 171
- snapshot provisioning pattern, 185-188, 279, 362
- soft delete pattern, 318
- source-specific payload pattern, 121
- specialist information reengineering steps pattern, 538-539
- stable key pattern, 294, 312-315
- staged routing pattern, 407
- staging area pattern, 12, 343, 353-356
- standardize data pattern, 539, 542-545
- state driven process, 114, 476-479
- state driven process pattern, 470
- static structure pattern, 316
- streaming analytics node pattern, 376, 465
- subject area definition pattern, 27, 106, 132-136, 149, 156, 158
- subject area probe pattern, 575
- summarized routing pattern, 418-420
- synchronized consolidation pattern, 420-424
- synchronized distribution pattern, 432-435

- synchronized masters pattern, 195, 599, 613-618
- tagged media structure, 316
- target-specific payload pattern, 121
- transient scope pattern, 8-10, 33, 280, 284-285
- triggered information service pattern, 266
- triggering information service pattern, 223, 250-253
- trusted node pattern, 571
- unique entries pattern, 318
- update information request pattern, 398
- user private provisioning pattern, 166-169
- user shared provisioning pattern, 169, 177-179
- valid values definition pattern, 133, 136-139
- virtual information collection pattern, 253, 260, 263-266
- workload offload pattern, 460, 618, 624-626
- peer exchange information supply chain, 209, 230-232
- peer provisioning pattern, 185, 193-195, 217, 232
- performance reporting pattern, 483, 624, 626-628
- physical information collection pattern, 260, 259-263
- physical security zone pattern, 571
- predictive analytics, 55-66
- problems
 - aggregate key pattern, 307
 - agile business process pattern, 474
 - application node pattern, 326
 - application private provisioning pattern, 169
 - bespoke application process pattern, 471
 - broadcast distribution pattern, 444
 - buffered routing pattern, 413
 - cache provisioning pattern, 184
 - caller's key pattern, 310
 - cascading information supply chain pattern, 211
 - centralized master pattern, 604
 - check data pattern, 548
 - classify data pattern, 546
 - clerical review process pattern, 487
 - collaborative editing process pattern, 479
 - complete scope pattern, 279
 - consolidating information supply chain pattern, 223
 - correct data pattern, 550
 - daisy chain provisioning pattern, 173
 - derive relationship pattern, 562
 - derive value pattern, 560
 - distributed activity status pattern, 590
 - enrich data pattern, 545
 - event correlation node pattern, 358
 - event-based provisioning pattern, 196
 - external sensor trigger pattern, 463
 - filtered consolidation pattern, 424
 - filtered routing pattern, 416
 - golden reference pattern, 610
 - hierarchical information supply chain pattern, 226
 - historical system of record pattern, 619
 - hub interchange information supply chain pattern, 215
 - hybrid usage pattern, 275
 - independent consolidation pattern, 430
 - independent distribution pattern, 441
 - information access audit pattern, 636
 - information activity hub pattern, 373
 - information activity pattern, 110
 - information analysis node pattern, 386
 - information archiving process pattern, 497
 - information asset hub pattern, 368
 - information asset pattern, 106
 - information broadcasting process pattern, 511
 - information brokers pattern, 344
 - information centric organization pattern, 73
 - information change trigger pattern, 461
 - information code pattern, 126
 - information collection pattern, 254
 - information configuration pattern, 139
 - information content node pattern, 330
 - information cube pattern, 340
 - information decision definition process pattern, 521
 - information deployment process pattern, 502
 - information element patterns, 101
 - information entry patterns, 289
 - information event pattern, 113
 - information event store pattern, 364
 - information ever-greening process pattern, 496
 - information federation process pattern, 507
 - information flow pattern, 403

- information governance
 - program pattern, 88
- information guard pattern, 567
- information identification patterns, 130
- information key pattern, 295
- information lineage pattern, 159
- information link pattern, 123
- information location pattern, 145
- information management
 - obligation pattern, 78
- information management principle pattern, 84
- information management strategy pattern, 81
- information mart pattern, 337
- information matching process pattern, 493
- information metric pattern, 125
- information mining store pattern, 389
- information mirror store pattern, 360
- information model pattern, 141
- information monitoring pattern, 638
- information node
 - management process pattern, 528
- information node patterns, 320
- information node upgrade pattern, 587
- information pattern detecting processes pattern, 523
- information pattern discovery process pattern, 518
- information payload pattern, 119
- information probe patterns, 572
- information process pattern, 466
- information processing
 - variables pattern, 114
- information profile tracking processes pattern, 483
- information provisioning patterns, 163
- information queueing process pattern, 509
- information reengineering steps pattern, 535
- information registry pattern, 607
- information relocation process pattern, 505
- information remediation process pattern, 489
- information replication process pattern, 499
- information reporting processes pattern, 481
- information request pattern, 396
- information scavenging process pattern, 515
- information schema pattern, 143
- information service patterns, 238
- information service trigger pattern, 458
- information solution patterns, 579
- information store pattern, 334-335
- information streaming process pattern, 380-382
- information summarizing process pattern, 514
- information summary pattern, 117
- information supply chain patterns, 200
- information trigger patterns, 450
- information user pattern, 92
- information validation process pattern, 491
- information values profile pattern, 156
- information values report pattern, 153
- information warehouse pattern, 377
- link entries pattern, 553
- linked information
 - provisioning pattern, 182
- local information service patterns, 244
- local key patterns, 297
- local scope pattern, 282
- look-up table node pattern, 356
- managed archive pattern, 634
- manual information trigger pattern, 453
- map-reduce node pattern, 383
- master usage pattern, 268
- merge entries pattern, 556
- mirror key pattern, 305
- mirroring provisioning pattern, 189
- natural key pattern, 303
- new information node pattern, 582
- next best action pattern, 630
- operational analytics pattern, 628
- operational health monitoring process pattern, 527
- operational status store pattern, 366
- ordered consolidation pattern, 427
- ordered distribution pattern, 439
- packaged application process pattern, 472
- partitioned distribution pattern, 436
- partitioned routing pattern, 410
- partner collaboration pattern, 598
- peer exchange information supply chain, 230

- peer provisioning pattern, 193
- performance reporting pattern, 626
- physical information
 - collection pattern, 259
- queue manager pattern, 349
- recovery provisioning pattern, 197
- recycled key patterns, 300
- reference usage pattern, 271
- remote information, 246-247
- restructure data pattern, 540
- sample data pattern, 565
- sandbox usage pattern, 277
- scheduled information trigger pattern, 455
- scheduling process pattern, 530
- search node pattern, 332
- semantic integration pattern, 593
- semantic mapping pattern, 151
- semantic tagging pattern, 148
- separate entries pattern, 558
- service oriented provisioning pattern, 180
- shared master pattern, 601
- single view information
 - supply chain pattern, 219
- smooth data pattern, 563
- snapshot provisioning pattern, 186
- stable key pattern, 313
- staged routing pattern, 406
- staging area pattern, 353
- standardize data pattern, 542
- state driven process, 476
- streaming analytics node pattern, 380
- subject area definition pattern, 134
- summarized routing pattern, 418
- synchronized consolidation pattern, 421

- synchronized distribution pattern, 432
- synchronized masters pattern, 614
- transient scope pattern, 284
- triggering information service pattern, 250
- user private provisioning pattern, 167
- user shared provisioning pattern, 177
- valid values definition pattern, 137
- virtual information collection pattern, 263-264
- workload offload pattern, 624
- process-level provisioning, 162, 171-172
 - daisy chain provisioning pattern, 172-177
- product details, 30
 - classifications, 33-34
 - creating a single view, 30-37
- Product Hub, 33, 271
- product inventory management, 55
- profiling rule probe pattern, 575
- properties, emergent properties, 5
- protecting information, 21
- provenance pattern, 318
- provisioning information process patterns, 499-517
 - information broadcasting process pattern, 511-513
 - information deployment process pattern, 502-505
 - information federation process pattern, 507-509
 - information queueing process pattern, 509-511
 - information relocation process pattern, 505-506
 - information replication process pattern, 499-502
 - information scavenging process pattern, 515-517

- information streaming process pattern, 380-382
- information summarizing process pattern, 513-515
- proxy pattern, 318

Q

- quality improvements, 47-51
- quality information processes pattern, 483-484
 - clerical review process pattern, 487-489
- information archiving process pattern, 497-499
- information ever-greening process pattern, 496-497
- information matching process pattern, 493-495
- information profile tracking processes pattern, 483-486
- information remediation process pattern, 489-491
- information validation process pattern, 491-493
- queue manager pattern, 177, 194, 343, 349-353, 511

R

- recovery provisioning pattern, 185, 197-198
- recycled key patterns, 293, 300-302
- reengineering information step pattern, 139
- reference usage, 62-63
- reference usage pattern, 266, 271-274
- relationships pattern, 318
- remote information service, 177
- remote information service pattern, 13
- remote information service patterns, 243, 246-250, 253, 452
- remote information services, 40

- remote retrieval
 - retrieve collection
 - information request pattern, 400
 - retrieve cursor information request, 400
 - retrieve one information request, 400
- reordering process, 59-60
- reordering stock, 59-60
- Reporting Hub, 271, 340
 - merging customer details, 39
- reports
 - information identification patterns, 154
 - information lineage
 - pattern, 159-161
 - information values profile pattern, 156-158
 - information values report, 153-156
 - management reports, 28-30
- restructure data pattern, 50, 538-542
- retrieve collection information request pattern, 400
- retrieve cursor information request, 400
- retrieve one information request, 400
- roll up information supply chain pattern, 126
- routing information flows
 - pattern, 406-407
 - buffered routing pattern, 413-415
 - filtered routing pattern, 416-418
 - partitioned routing pattern, 410-412
 - staged routing pattern, 406-409
 - summarized routing pattern, 418-420
- run process information request, 399

S

- sample data pattern, 539, 565-566
- sample data probe pattern, 575
- sandbox usage, 64
- sandbox usage pattern, 266, 277-279
- scheduled information trigger pattern, 453, 455-457
- scheduling process pattern, 324, 526, 530-531
- search node pattern, 324, 332-334
- search processes pattern, 525-526
- security
 - authentication, 568
 - authorization, 568
- semantic integration pattern, 124, 136, 265-266, 590, 593-597
- semantic mapping pattern, 122, 146, 150-153, 158, 283
- semantic tagging pattern, 132, 146, 148-150, 153, 158
- separate entries pattern, 50, 539, 558-560
- separation of duties pattern, 571
- service oriented provisioning, 40
- service oriented provisioning pattern, 178-182
- service-level provisioning, 162, 177-178
 - cache provisioning pattern, 184-185
 - linked information provisioning pattern, 182-183
 - service oriented provisioning pattern, 179-182
 - user shared provisioning pattern, 177-179
- shared master pattern, 599, 601-603
- single view information supply chain pattern, 209, 219-223, 266
- smooth data pattern, 539, 563-565
- snapshot provisioning, 171
- snapshot provisioning pattern, 185-188, 279, 362
- soft delete pattern, 318
- solutions
 - aggregate key pattern, 308
 - agile business process pattern, 475
 - application node pattern, 326-328
 - application private provisioning pattern, 169
 - bespoke application process pattern, 471-472
 - broadcast distribution pattern, 444
 - buffered routing pattern, 413-414
 - cache provisioning pattern, 184
 - caller's key pattern, 310
 - cascading information supply chain pattern, 211-212
 - centralized master pattern, 605-606
 - check data pattern, 549
 - classify data pattern, 547
 - clerical review process pattern, 488
 - collaborative editing process pattern, 480
 - complete scope pattern, 281
 - consolidating information supply chain pattern, 223
 - correct data pattern, 551
 - daisy chain provisioning pattern, 173-176
 - derive relationship pattern, 562
 - derive value pattern, 561
 - distributed activity status pattern, 591
 - enrich data pattern, 545
 - event correlation node pattern, 359

- event-based provisioning pattern, 196
- external sensor trigger pattern, 463
- filtered consolidation pattern, 425
- filtered routing pattern, 416
- golden reference pattern, 611-612
- hierarchical information
 - supply chain pattern, 226
- historical system of record pattern, 620-622
- hub interchange information
 - supply chain pattern, 216-217
- hybrid usage pattern, 275
- independent consolidation pattern, 430
- independent distribution pattern, 442
- information access audit pattern, 637
- information activity hub pattern, 373-375
- information activity pattern, 111
- information analysis node pattern, 387-388
- information archiving process pattern, 498
- information asset hub pattern, 369-370
- information asset pattern, 108-109
- information broadcasting
 - process pattern, 511-512
- information brokers pattern, 344-347
- information centric
 - organization pattern, 74-75
- information change trigger pattern, 461
- information code pattern, 127
- information collection pattern, 255-257
- information configuration pattern, 139-140
- information content node pattern, 330-331
- information cube pattern, 341
- information decision
 - definition process pattern, 521
- information deployment
 - process pattern, 503
- information element patterns, 102-104
- information entry patterns, 290
- information event pattern, 113
- information event store pattern, 364
- information ever-greening
 - process pattern, 496
- information federation
 - process pattern, 507-508
- information flow pattern, 403-404
- information governance
 - program pattern, 89-90
- information guard pattern, 568-569
- information identification patterns, 131-132
- information key pattern, 295
- information lineage pattern, 159
- information link pattern, 123
- information location pattern, 145
- information management
 - obligation pattern, 79-80
- information management
 - principle pattern, 84-85
- information management
 - strategy pattern, 82
- information mart pattern, 338-339
- information matching process pattern, 494
- information metric pattern, 125
- information mining store pattern, 390-391
- information mirror store pattern, 362
- information model pattern, 142
- information monitoring
 - pattern, 639-640
- information node
 - management process pattern, 529
- information node patterns, 321-323
- information node upgrade pattern, 588
- information pattern detecting
 - processes pattern, 523
- information pattern discovery
 - process pattern, 519
- information payload pattern, 120
- information probe patterns, 573
- information process pattern, 467-468
- information processing
 - variables pattern, 115
- information profile tracking
 - processes pattern, 485
- information provisioning
 - patterns, 163-165
- information queueing process pattern, 510
- information reengineering
 - steps pattern, 535
- information registry pattern, 608-609
- information relocation
 - process pattern, 505-506
- information remediation
 - process pattern, 490
- information replication
 - process pattern, 500
- information reporting
 - processes pattern, 482

- information request pattern, 397
- information scavenging process pattern, 516
- information schema pattern, 144
- information service patterns, 239-241
- information service trigger pattern, 458-459
- information solution patterns, 580-581
- information store pattern, 335-336
- information streaming process pattern, 380-382
- information summarizing process pattern, 514
- information summary pattern, 117
- information supply chain patterns, 202-206
- information trigger patterns, 450
- information user pattern, 93-94
- information validation process pattern, 492
- information values profile pattern, 157
- information values report pattern, 155
- information warehouse pattern, 378
- link entries pattern, 553-554
- linked information provisioning pattern, 183
- local information service patterns, 244
- local key patterns, 298
- local scope pattern, 283
- look-up table node pattern, 357
- managed archive pattern, 634-635
- manual information trigger pattern, 454
- map-reduce node pattern, 383
- master usage pattern, 268
- merge entries pattern, 557
- mirror key pattern, 306
- mirroring provisioning pattern, 189-191
- natural key pattern, 303
- new information node pattern, 584-586
- next best action pattern, 630-632
- operational analytics pattern, 629
- operational health monitoring process pattern, 527
- operational status store pattern, 366
- ordered consolidation pattern, 427
- ordered distribution pattern, 439
- packaged application process pattern, 473
- partitioned distribution pattern, 436
- partitioned routing pattern, 410
- partner collaboration pattern, 598
- peer exchange information supply chain, 230
- peer provisioning pattern, 194
- performance reporting pattern, 627
- physical information collection pattern, 261
- queue manager pattern, 349-351
- recovery provisioning pattern, 198
- recycled key patterns, 301
- reference usage pattern, 271-272
- remote information service patterns, 248
- restructure data pattern, 540
- sample data pattern, 566
- sandbox usage pattern, 277-278
- scheduled information trigger pattern, 456-457
- scheduling process pattern, 530
- search node pattern, 333
- semantic integration pattern, 595
- semantic mapping pattern, 151
- semantic tagging pattern, 149
- separate entries pattern, 559
- service oriented provisioning pattern, 180
- shared master pattern, 602-603
- single view information supply chain pattern, 220-221
- smooth data pattern, 564
- snapshot provisioning pattern, 187
- stable key pattern, 313
- staged routing pattern, 406-408
- staging area pattern, 353-354
- standardize data pattern, 543
- state driven process, 477
- streaming analytics node pattern, 380-381
- subject area definition pattern, 135
- summarized routing pattern, 418
- synchronized consolidation pattern, 422
- synchronized distribution pattern, 432
- synchronized masters pattern, 615-616
- transient scope pattern, 284
- triggering information service pattern, 251
- user private provisioning pattern, 168

- user shared provisioning pattern, 179
- valid values definition pattern, 137-138
- virtual information collection pattern, 264-265
- workload offload pattern, 624
- source-specific payload pattern, 121
- specialist information
 - reengineering steps pattern, 538-539
 - check data pattern, 548-550
 - classify data pattern, 546-548
 - correct data pattern, 550-552
 - derive relationship pattern, 562-563
 - derive value pattern, 560-562
 - enrich data pattern, 545-546
 - link entries pattern, 553-556
 - merge entries pattern, 556-558
 - restructure data pattern, 538-542
 - sample data pattern, 565-566
 - separate entries pattern, 558-560
 - smooth data pattern, 563-565
 - standardize data pattern, 542-545
- specialized operations, information entry patterns, 317-319
- stable key pattern, 294, 312-315
- staged routing flow, 65
- staged routing pattern, 407
- staging, 6
- staging area, 183
- staging area pattern, 12, 343, 353-356
- standardize data pattern, 539, 542-545
- state driven process, 114, 476-479
- state driven process pattern, 470
- static structure pattern, 316
- status of orders, 34-44

- stored information, accessing, 16
- Stores, customer details, 37
- streaming analytics node pattern, 376, 380-382, 385, 465
- subject area definition pattern, 27, 33, 83, 106, 132-136, 149, 153, 156, 158
- subject area probe pattern, 575
- summarized routing pattern, 407, 418-420
- supplementary patterns, information payload pattern, 121
- Supplier-net, 54-55
- suppliers, interacting with, 52-53
- supply chains, 199-209
- synchronized consolidation pattern, 420-424
- synchronized distribution pattern, 432-435
- synchronized master pattern, 42
- synchronized masters pattern, 195, 599, 613-618

T

- tagged media structure, 179, 316
- target-specific payload pattern, 121
- taxonomies, subject area definition pattern, 136
- The Open Group Architecture Framework (TOGAF), 10
- TOGAF (The Open Group Architecture Framework), 10
- transient scope pattern, 8-10, 33, 280, 284-285
- triggered information service pattern, 266
- triggering information service pattern, 223, 243, 250-253
- trusted node pattern, 571
- types of information models, 143

U

- unique entries pattern, 318
- update information request pattern, 398
- updating customer details, 42-43
- user private provisioning pattern, 166-169
- user shared provisioning pattern, 169, 177-179

V

- valid values definition pattern, 33, 133, 136-139
- validate data pattern, 50
- validation of behavior, information configuration pattern, 139
- virtual information collection pattern, 253, 260, 263-266

W-X-Y-Z

- workload offload pattern, 460, 618, 624-626