HOW CAN TOGAF BE IMPROVED - **PART 1**

In an article last year, I asked you to let me know the things you thought were "wrong" in TOGAF®. In this, and a following article, I am going to address some of these concerns with tips, advice, and workarounds to minimise the weaknesses in the TOGAF documentation.
Bear in mind that it is difficult to describe something as complex as EA, especially in a way that pleases everyone. TOGAF has got its weaknesses, but it's not a bad starting point, and there are always many additional resources available through the Internet.

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The TOGAF Documentation

The issue

EA is a BIG subject that includes many tricky concepts. TOGAF attempts to describe EA in document format – so not surprisingly it uses a lot of words to do that.

Some suggestions

There are many attempts by EA practitioners to explain TOGAF in a simpler form. Taking a course (online or in a classroom) can help by getting away from the document. Good e-Learning provide a lot of additional resources aiming to explain in easier formats. Try searching on the Internet using key words to focus your question.
The nature of EA means that ultimately learning about it is going to require some effort. You can't get away from the source documentation, but you can fi nd better ways to understand the key points. Try the Orbus Software free resources!

TOGAF Isn't a Framework

Some suggestions

Although its title includes the phrase "architecture framework" (The Open Group Architecture Framework), this is not strictly correct, and can therefore be misleading to a new student.

WHATS WRONG WITH TOGAF? - **PART 1**

Some suggestions

Start by seeing TOGAF as a body or book of knowledge. Simply see it as a basic introduction to the topic of Enterprise Architecture in document format. It is reasonably well structured with its division into 6 Parts, and it covers a lot of the concepts that you will need as an enterprise architect. As you get to know more about EA you will begin to understand the important and necessary role of frameworks. See What is TOGAF Not Telling Me About Frameworks?

Too Theoretical

The issue

EA is often seen as abstract, conceptual, or theoretical. For anyone approaching EA for the first time, TOGAF can come across as too theoretical or academic.

Some suggestions

Remember that some of the components in EA are conceptual – they are ideas or concepts that do not have a physical presence. For example, software is digital, processes are intangible, and networks are complex. These characteristics - digital, intangible, complex – mean that you can't visualise or understand enterprise architecture in the same way that you easily see the features of a building to explore its building architecture. But making sense of EA concepts doesn't need to be difficult to understand.

Many of the ideas behind EA are common sense; for example, the idea of constructing an architecture by configuring a set of components or building blocks; or the idea of segmenting the architecture into several domains or sub-domains.

WHATS WRONG WITH TOGAF? - **PART 1**

The trick is to train yourself to think first at the architectural level, rather than at the solution design, implementation or operational levels. (See Levels of Architectural Understanding) This can take a bit of practice, and TOGAF doesn't provide any guidelines on how to think as an architect, but check out How to think like an architect or Architectural Thinking.
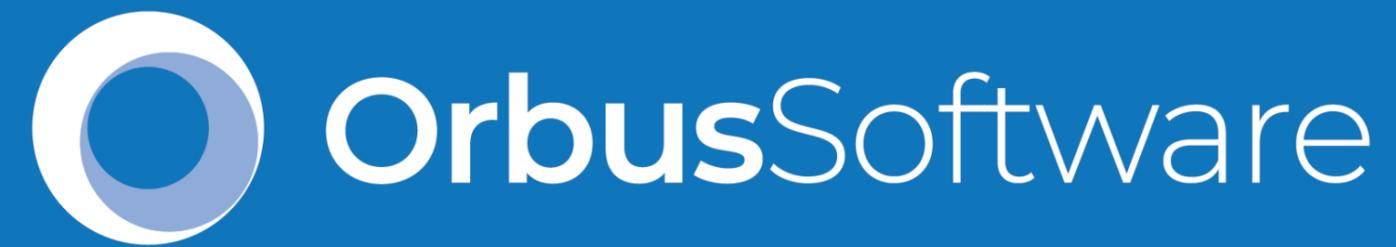
Here is one Further Point to Bear in Mind

Don't expect to learn everything about EA by taking an online or four-day course. TOGAF does a reasonable job at providing a "standard" - or at least providing a common language, defining some basic concepts, and describing the initial process and techniques to get you started. But EA is a discipline; achieving TOGAF certification is the start of a lifetime process of becoming an enterprise architect.

Once you have learned the basics with TOGAF it is time to start putting the ideas into practice through further training to take you beyond certification, studying case studies and examples, and working alongside experienced architects who can mentor and coach you.

Make sure you read the second article to get more tips and advice on how to make the most of TOGAF.

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