

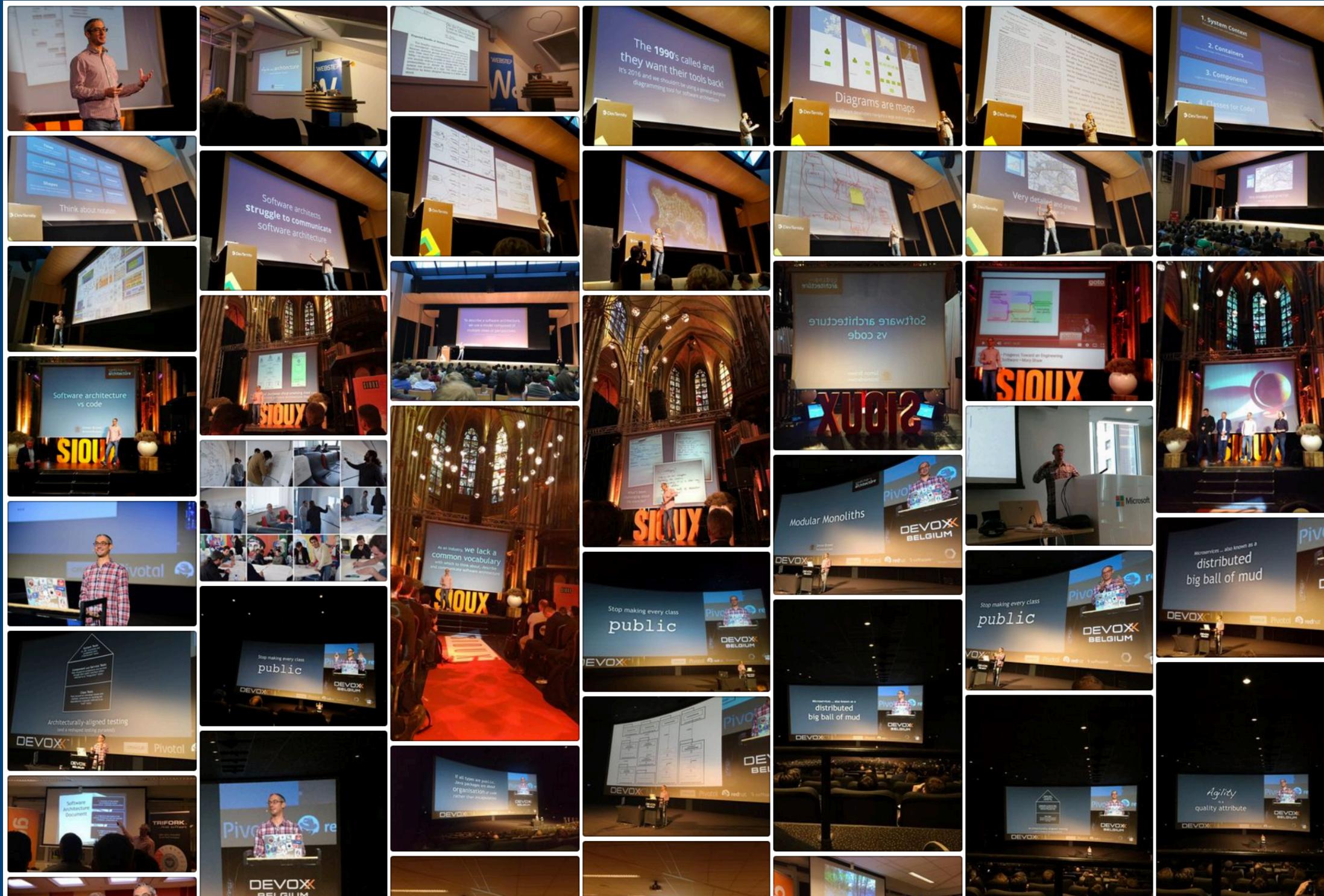
# Software documentation

## Why, what and how?

@simonbrown

# Simon Brown

I'm an independent software development consultant specialising in software architecture, and the author of "Software Architecture for Developers"; a developer-friendly guide to software architecture, technical leadership and the balance with agility. I regularly speak at software development conferences, meetups and organisations around the world; delivering keynotes, presentations, training courses and workshops.



## Software Architecture for Developers

Volume  
**1**

Technical leadership and  
the balance with agility

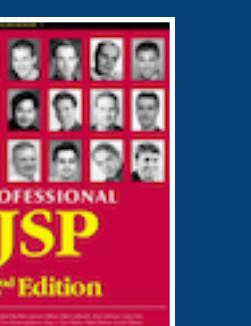
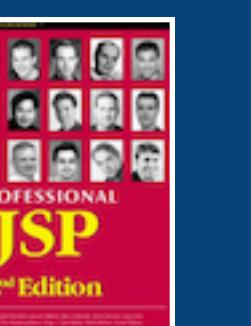
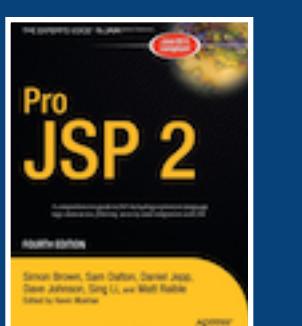
Simon Brown

## Software Architecture for Developers

Volume  
**2**

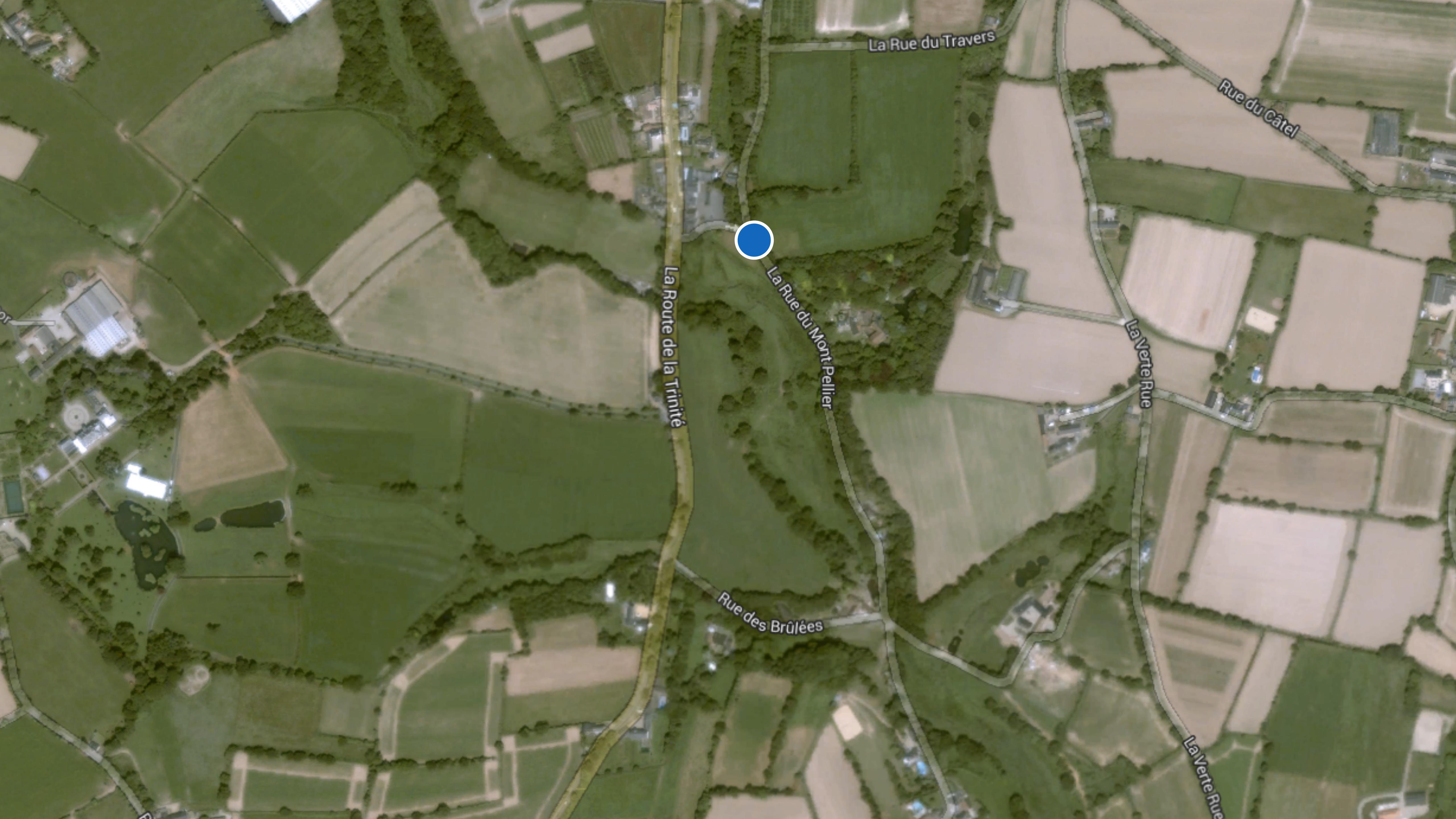
Visualise, document and explore  
your software architecture

Simon Brown



La Rive du Nord





La Rue du Travers

Rue du Câtel

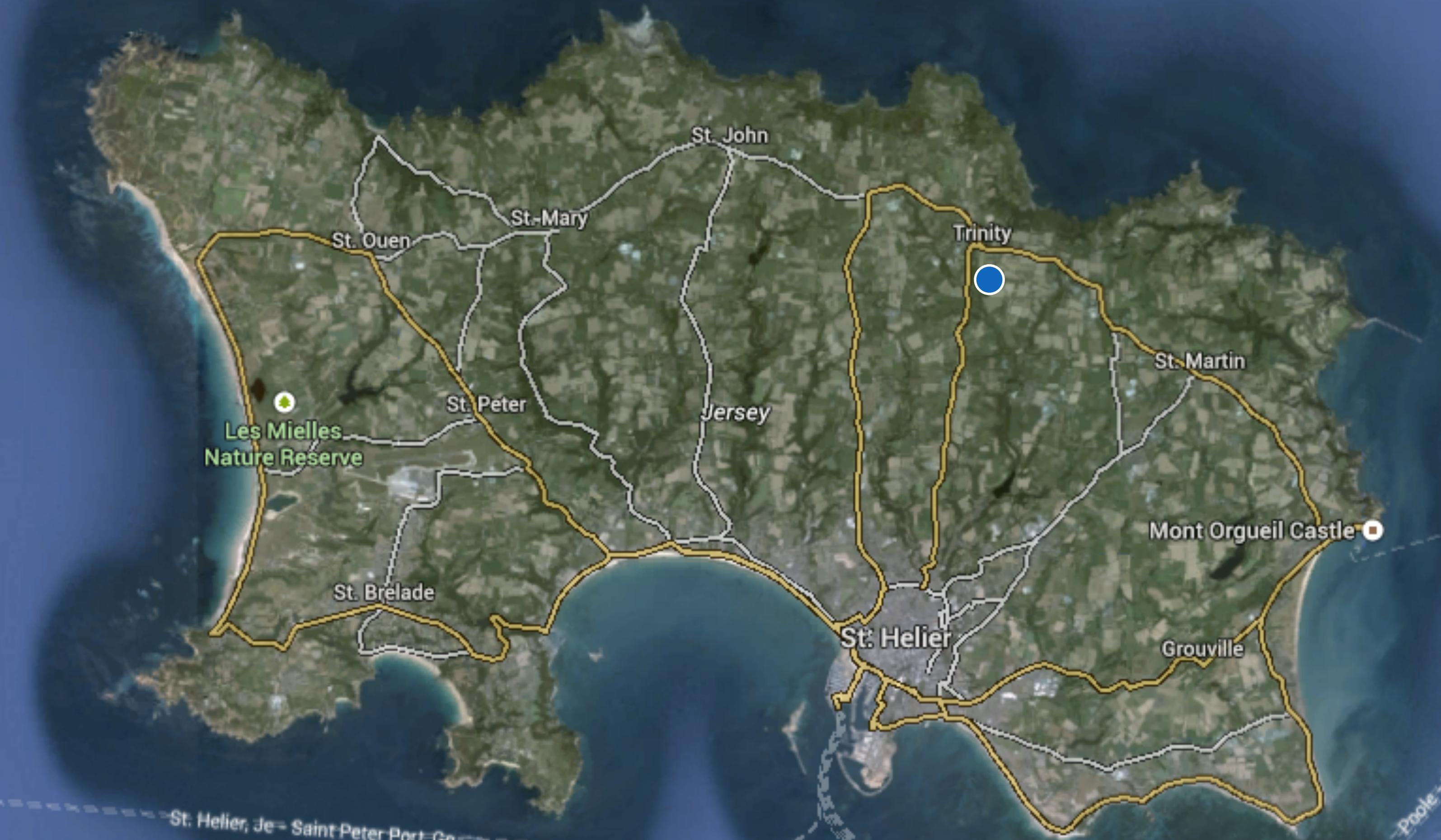
La Verte Rue

La Verte Rue

La Rue du Mont Pellié

Rue des Brûlées

La Route de la Trinité



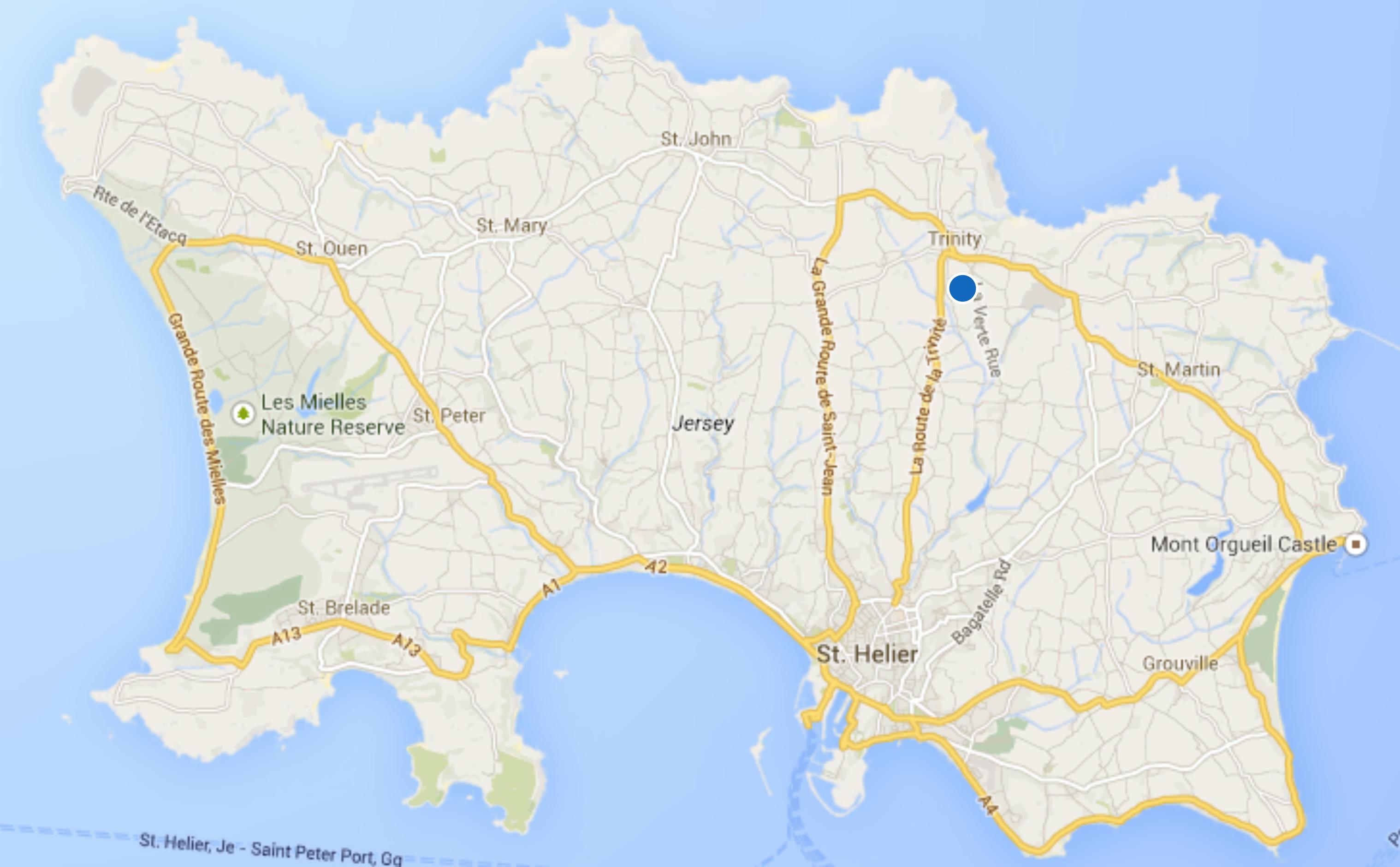
St. Malo, FR - Portsmouth, UK

St. Peter Port, Gg - Saint Helier, JE

St. Heller, JE - Saint Peter Port, Gg

Granville, FR - St. Heller, JE

Bole - Jersey (St. Heller)  
Bole - Jersey (St. Heller)  
Bole - Jersey (St. Heller)  
Bole - Jersey (St. Heller)



St. Malo, FR - Portsmouth, UK

St. Peter Port, Gg - Saint Helier, JE

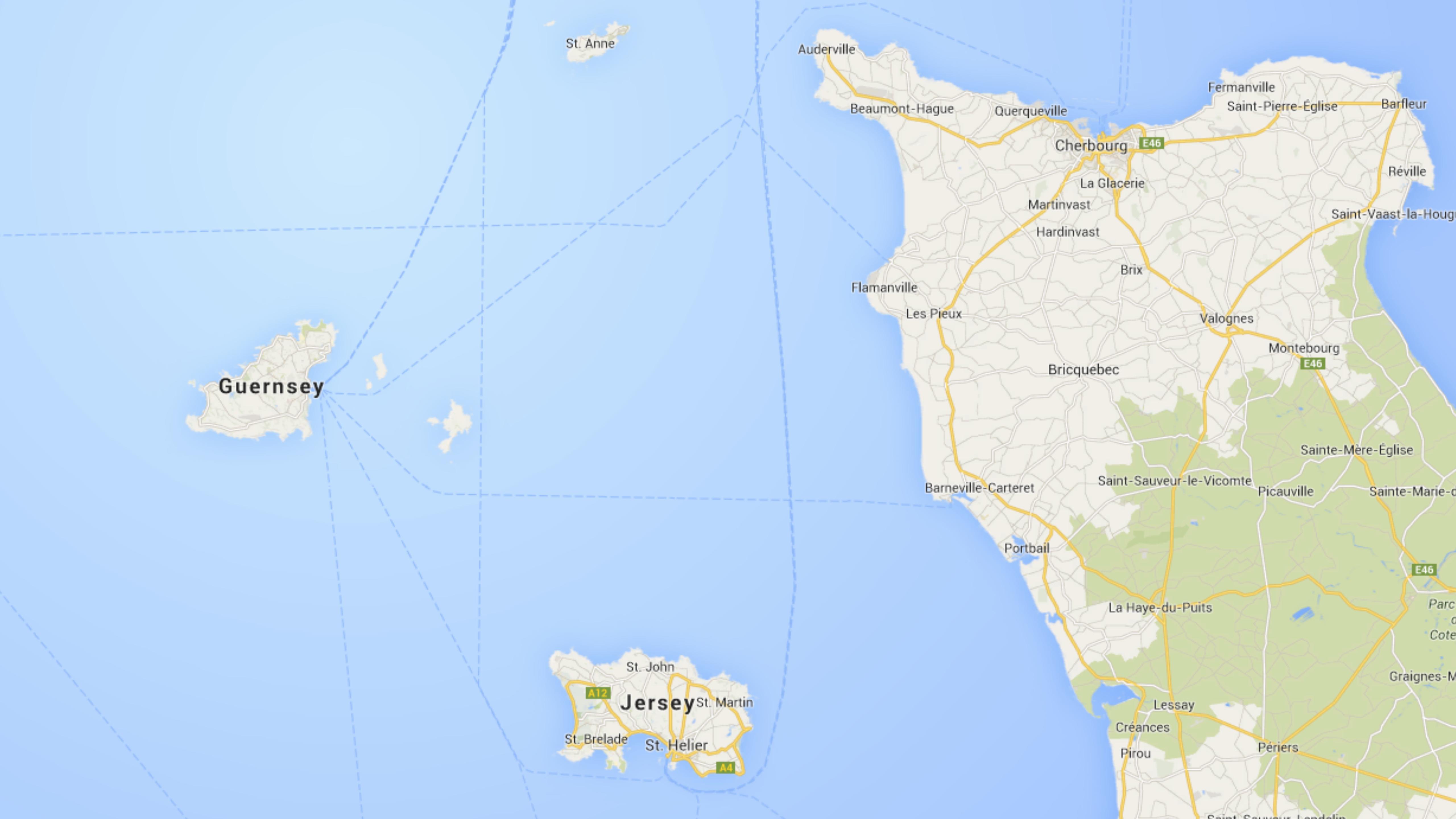
St. Helier, JE - Saint Peter Port, Gg

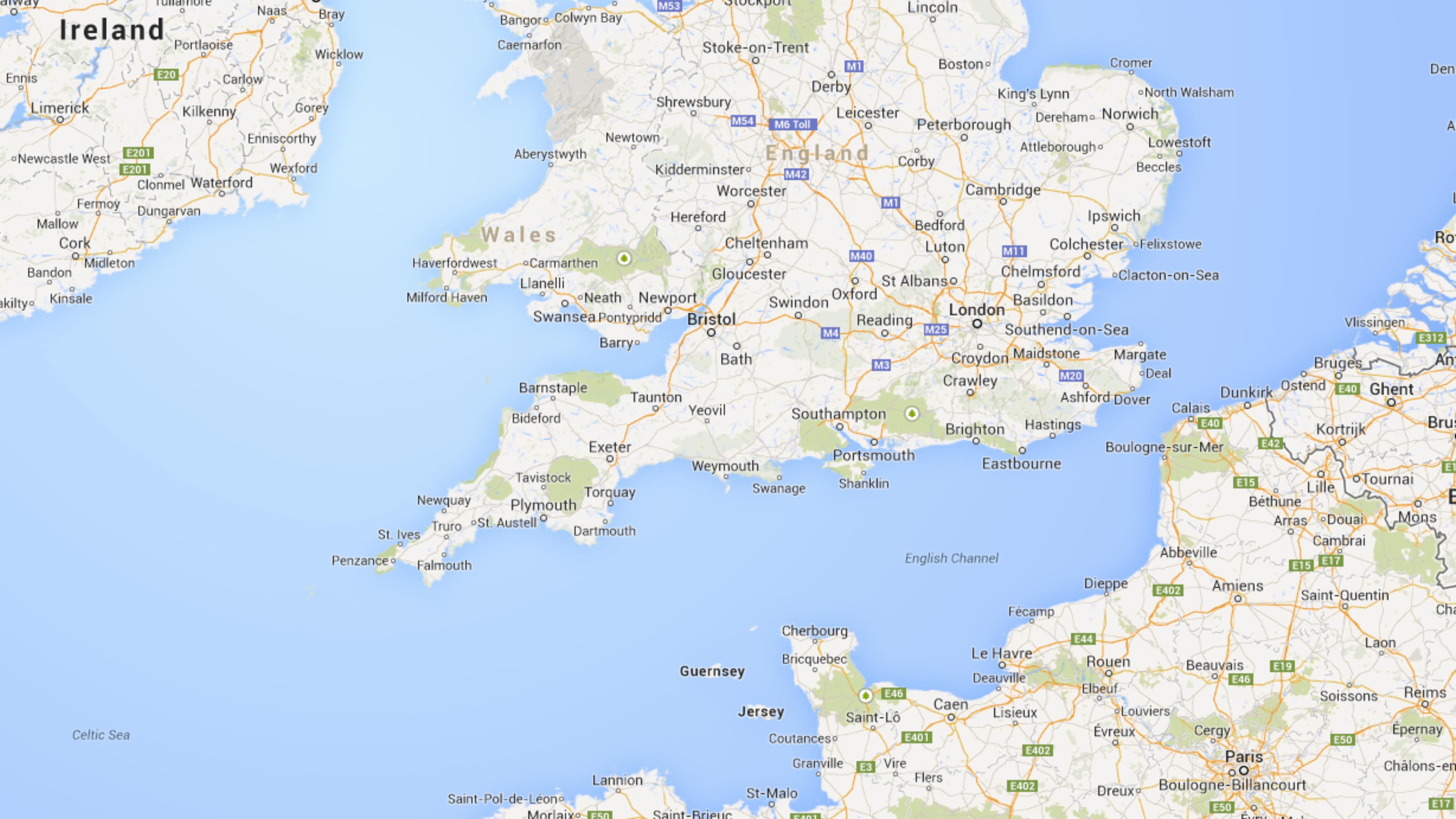
Granville, FR - St. Helier, JE

Poole - Jersey (St. Helier)

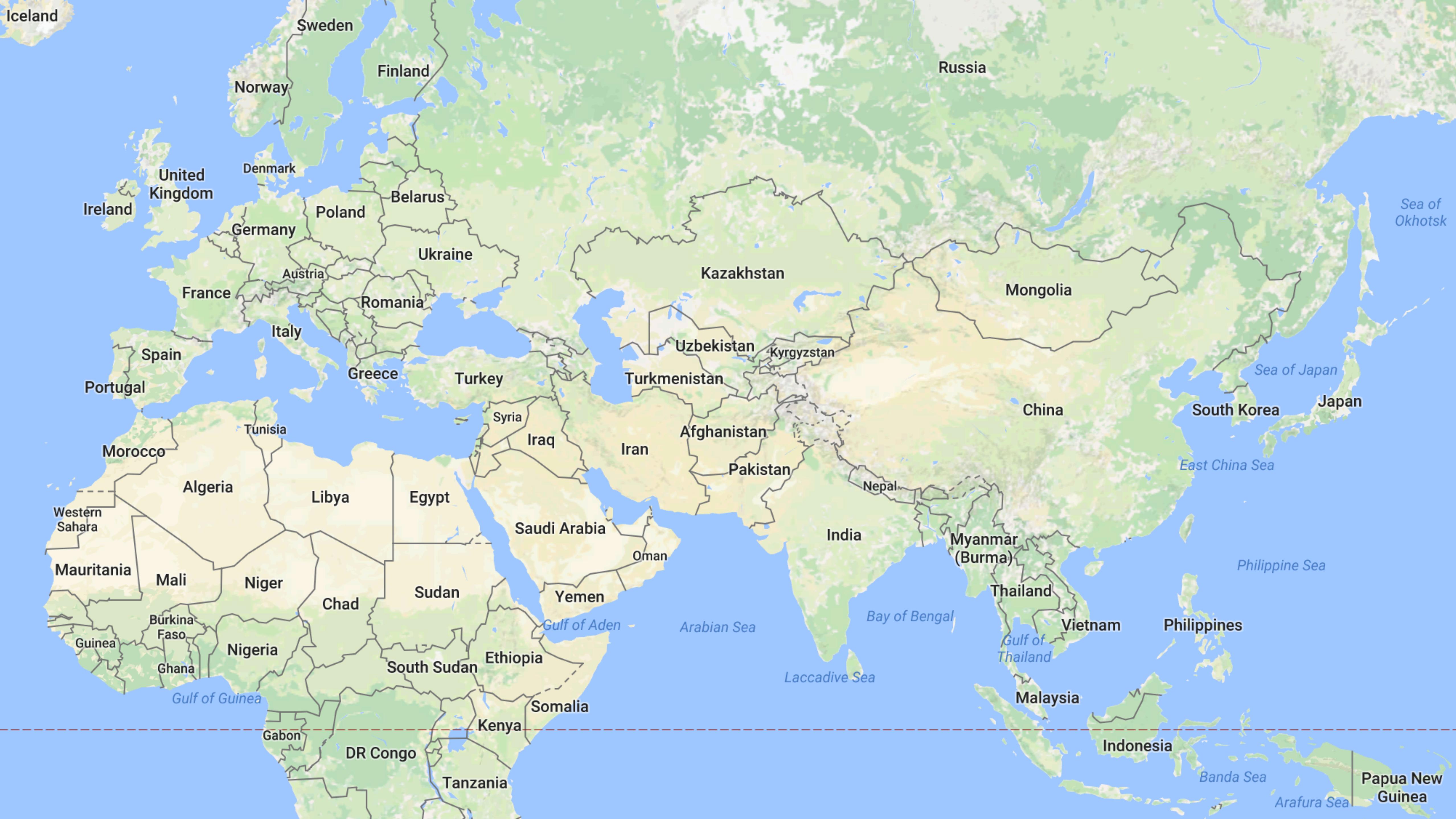
Jersey (St. Helier) - Poole

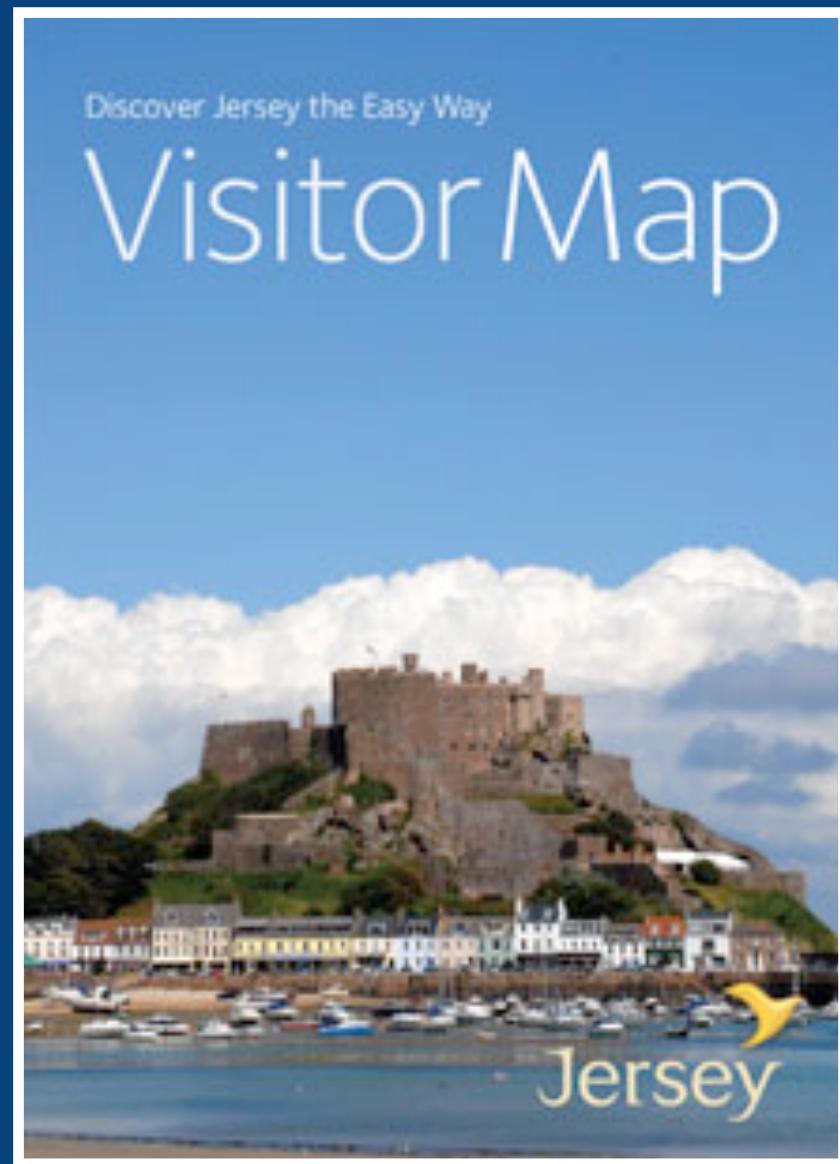
Poole - Jersey (St. Helier)





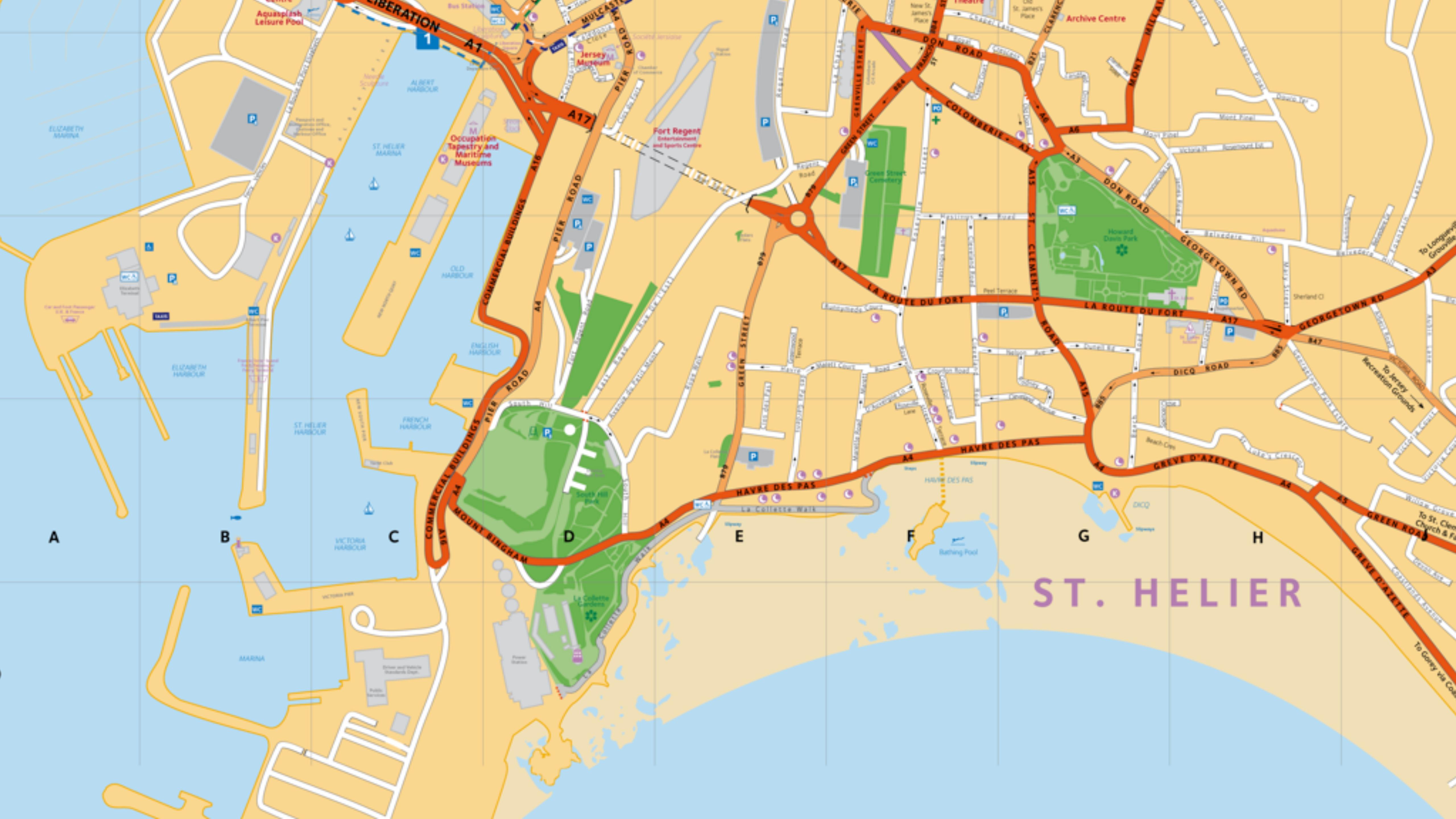


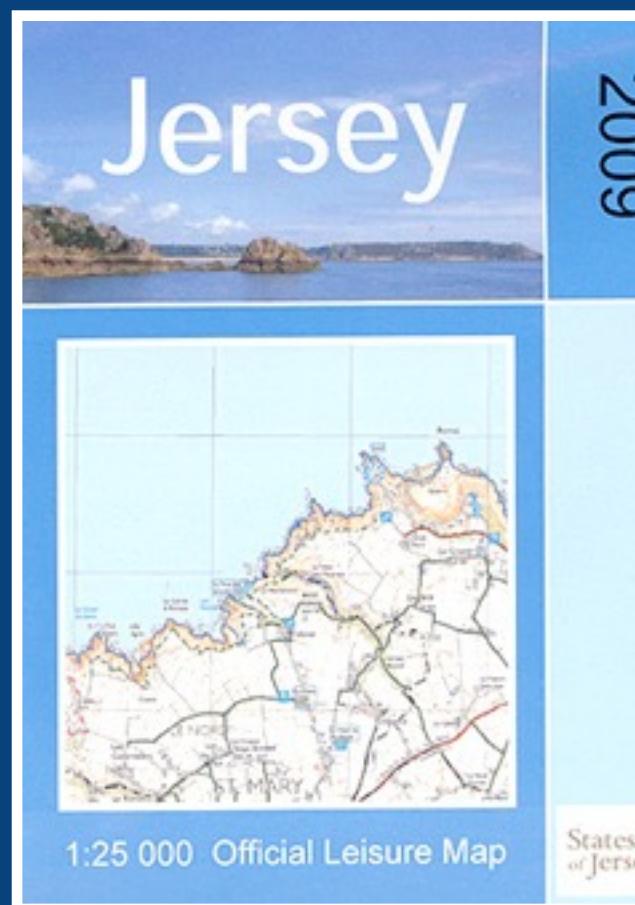




Enough detail to  
start exploring



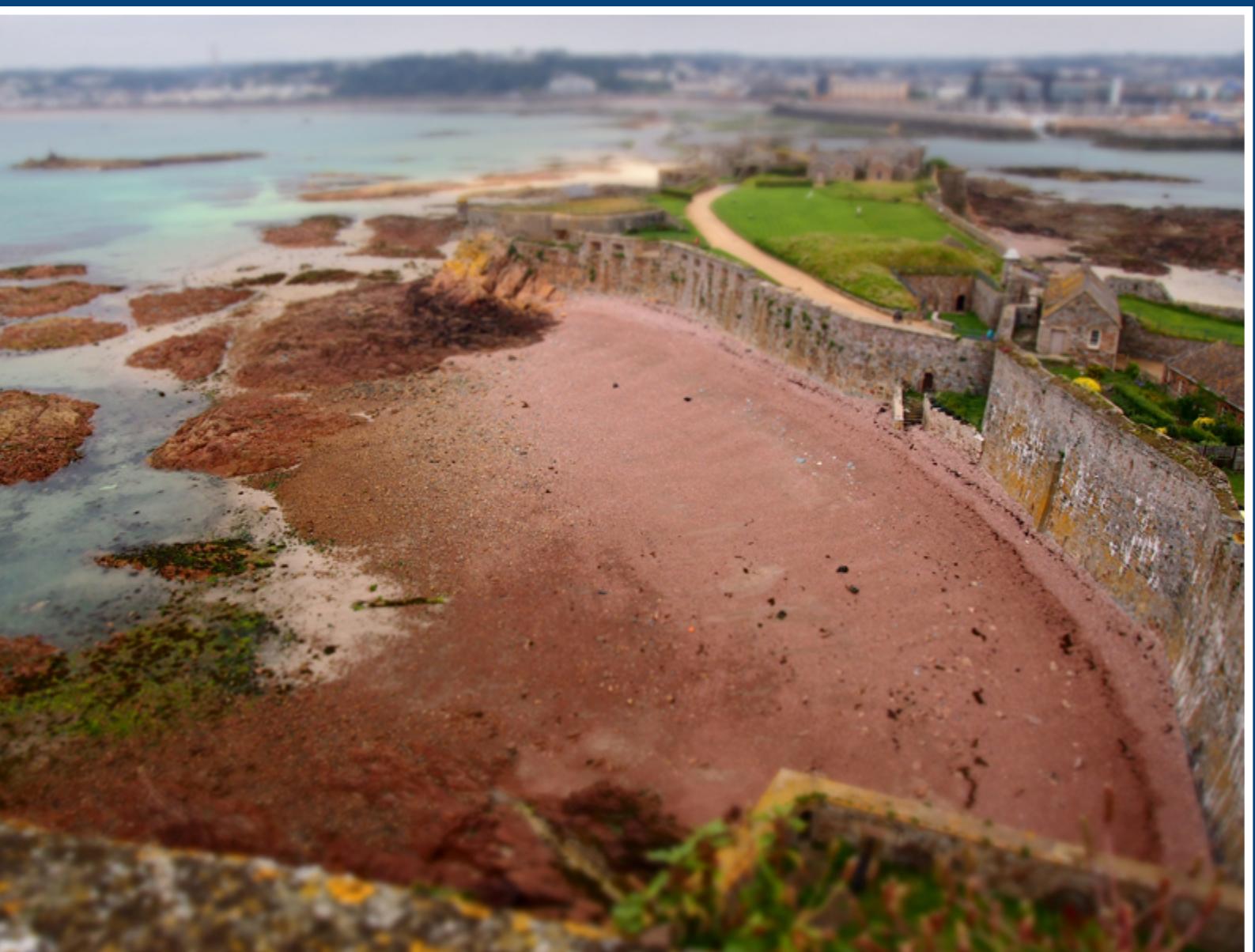




Very detailed and precise  
(terrain, buildings, etc)

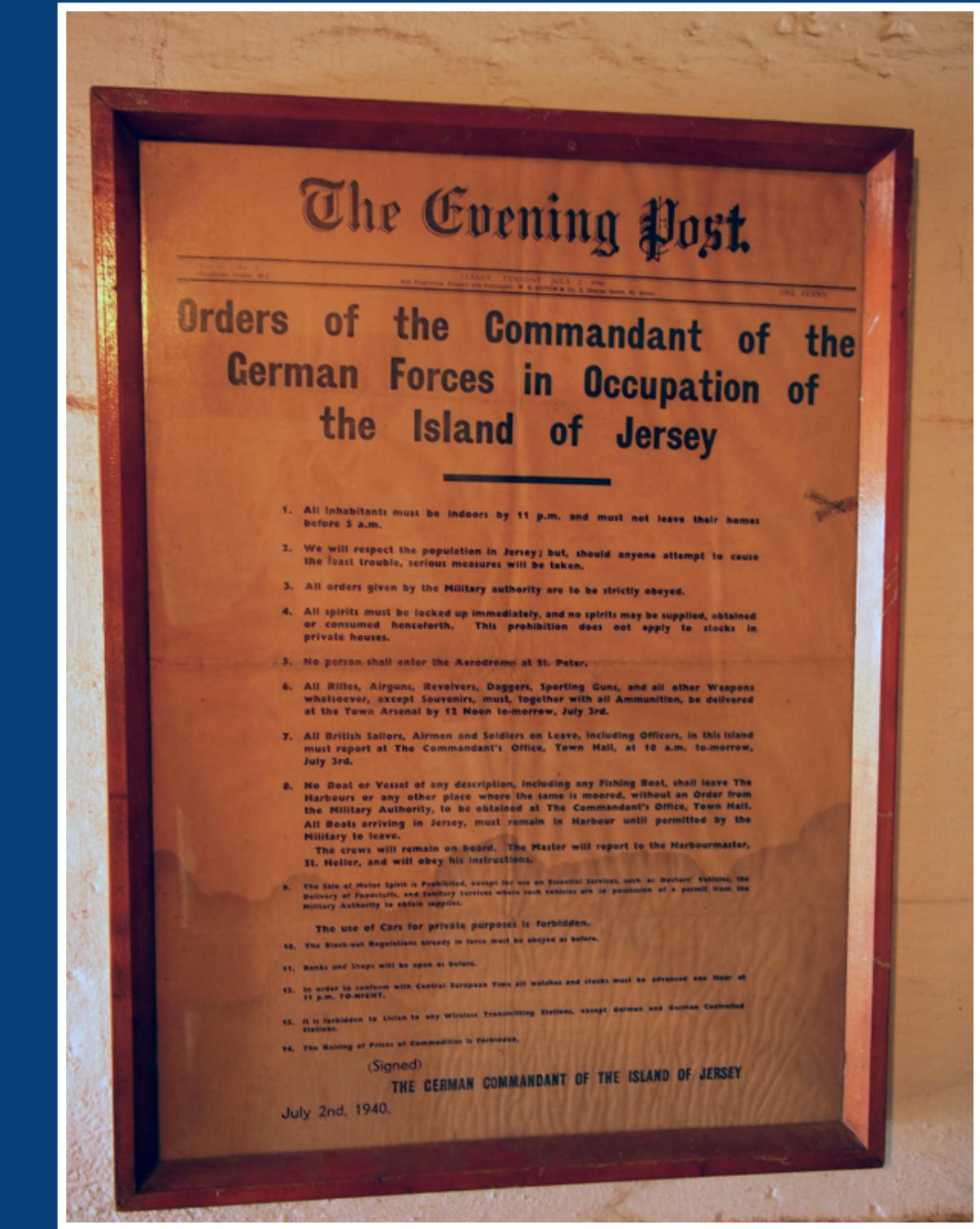
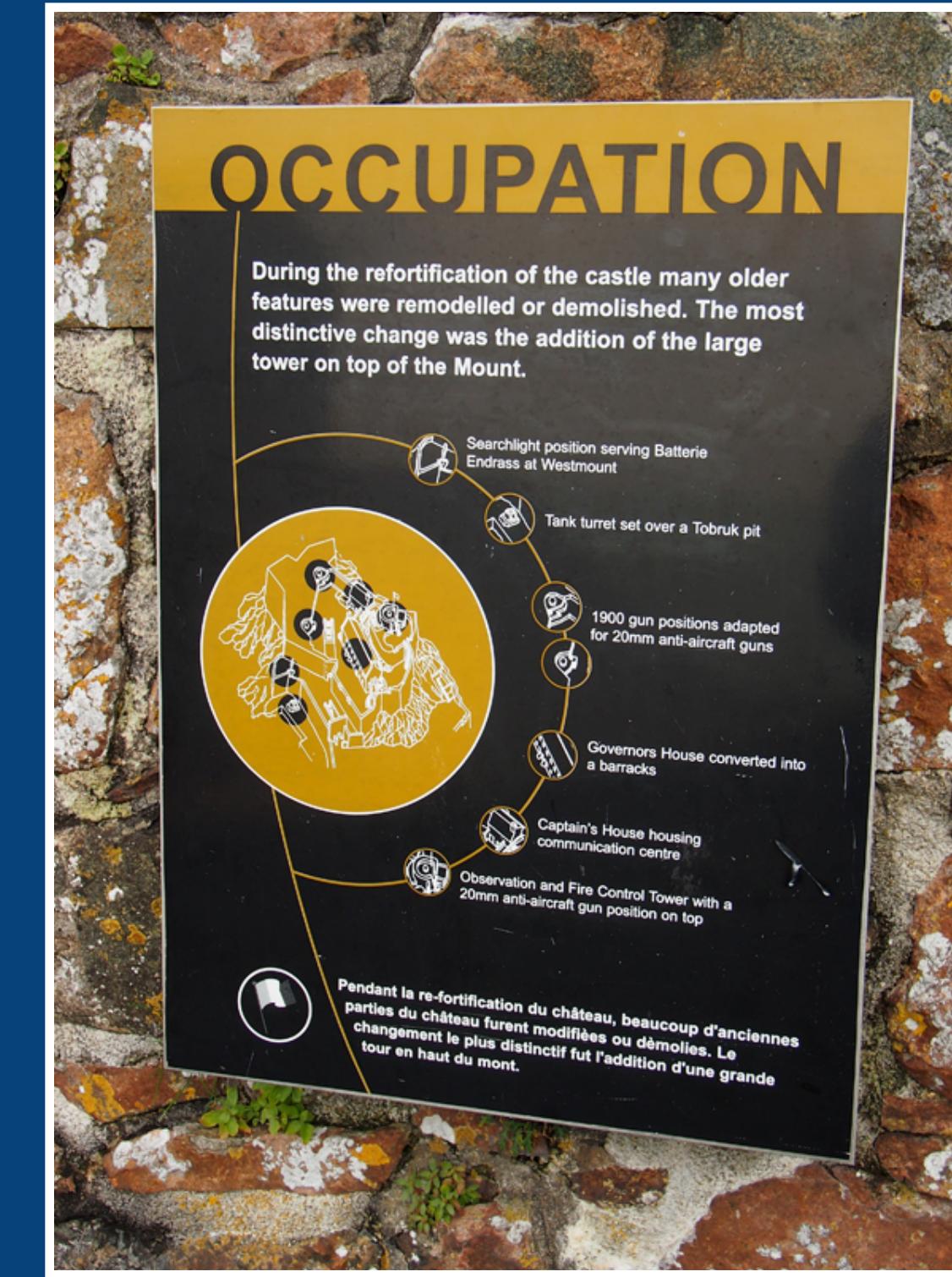
Points of  
interest

# Elizabeth Castle





# Granite and concrete?!



# History





# Travel Guidebook

(maps, points of interest, sights, itineraries,  
history, culture, practical information, etc)

Working software  
over  
comprehensive  
documentation

Manifesto for Agile Software Development

What is your current strategy  
for documenting software?

What are your goals  
for this workshop?

# Audience

# Identify the different audiences for software documentation

1. Who are they?
2. What do they want to know?

Rank the audiences you've identified  
according to how technical they are

When might you need to  
deliver documentation?

# Documentation

The code doesn't tell  
the whole story

# Software Architecture Document

Useful information  
spread across  
hundreds of pages;  
rarely read or updated



# Software Guidebook

(maps, points of interest, sights, itineraries,  
history, culture, practical information, etc)

Describe what you  
can't get from the code

Documentation should  
be constantly evolving

The scope is a single  
software system

# Context

A system context diagram, plus some  
narrative text to “set the scene”

# Functional Overview

An overview of the software system, perhaps including wireframes, UI mockups/screenshots, workflow diagrams, business process diagrams, etc

# Quality Attributes

A list of the quality attributes that  
you're aiming to satisfy

# Constraints

A list of the environmental constraints you've identified

# Principles

A list of the development and architecture principles that you want to adopt

# Software Architecture

A description of the software architecture,  
including static structure and dynamic behaviour

# Code

A description of component implementation details,  
patterns, frameworks, etc

# Data

Data models, entity relationship diagrams, security,  
volumes, archiving strategies, backup strategies, etc

# Infrastructure Architecture

A description of the infrastructure available  
to host your software system

# Deployment

The mapping of software to infrastructure

# Development Environment

A description of how a new developer gets started

# Operation and Support

An overview of how the software system operated,  
supported, monitored, etc

# Decision Log

Free format text or a collection of  
“Architecture Decision Records”

**Title** These documents have names that are short noun phrases. For example, "ADR 1: Deployment on Ruby on Rails 3.0.10" or "ADR 9: LDAP for Multitenant Integration"

**Context** This section describes the forces at play, including technological, political, social, and project local. These forces are probably in tension, and should be called out as such. The language in this section is value-neutral. It is simply describing facts.

**Decision** This section describes our response to these forces. It is stated in full sentences, with active voice. "We will ..."

**Status** A decision may be "proposed" if the project stakeholders haven't agreed with it yet, or "accepted" once it is agreed. If a later ADR changes or reverses a decision, it may be marked as "deprecated" or "superseded" with a reference to its replacement.

**Consequences** This section describes the resulting context, after applying the decision. All consequences should be listed here, not just the "positive" ones. A particular decision may have positive, negative, and neutral consequences, but all of them affect the team and project in the future.

# "Architecture Decision Record"

A short description of an architecturally significant decision

<http://thinkrelevance.com/blog/2011/11/15/documenting-architecture-decisions> (Michael Nygard)

As a noun, **design** is the named  
**structure** or behaviour of a system whose  
presence resolves ... a force on that  
system. A design thus represents one  
point in a potential decision space.

Grady Booch

All architecture is design, but  
not all design is architecture.

Grady Booch

Architecture represents the  
**significant decisions**, where significance  
is measured by **cost of change**.

Grady Booch

As architects, we define  
the significant decisions

# Architecture

Programming language  
Monolith, microservices or hybrid approach

# Design

# Implementation

Curly braces on the same or next line  
Whitespace vs tabs

1. **Introduction and goals:** Requirements, stakeholder, (top) quality goals
2. **Constraints:** Technical and organizational constraints, conventions
3. **Context and scope:** Business and technical context, external interfaces
4. **Solution strategy:** Fundamental solution decisions and ideas
5. **Building block view:** Abstractions of source code, black-/whiteboxes
6. **Runtime view:** Runtime scenarios: How do building blocks interact
7. **Deployment view:** Hardware and technical infrastructure, deployment
8. **Crosscutting concepts:** Recurring solution approaches and patterns
9. **Architecture decisions:** Important decisions
10. **Quality:** Quality tree and quality scenarios
11. **Risks and technical debt:** Known problems, risks and technical debt
12. **Glossary:** Definitions of important business and technical terms

Which sections would you  
recommend each audience  
type to read?

	Software Developers	Management / VP	Testers / QA	Operations / Support	Other architects
Context	v o v o o v o . v o v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v
Functional Overview	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v
Quality Attributes	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v
Constraints	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v
Principles	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v
Software Architecture	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v
Code	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v
Data	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v
Infrastructure Architecture	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v
Deployment	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v
Development Environment	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v
Operation / Support	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v
Usage	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v
Decision Log	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v
?	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v	v v v v v v v v v v v v

# How long?

Something I can read in 1-2 hours;  
a good starting point for exploring the code

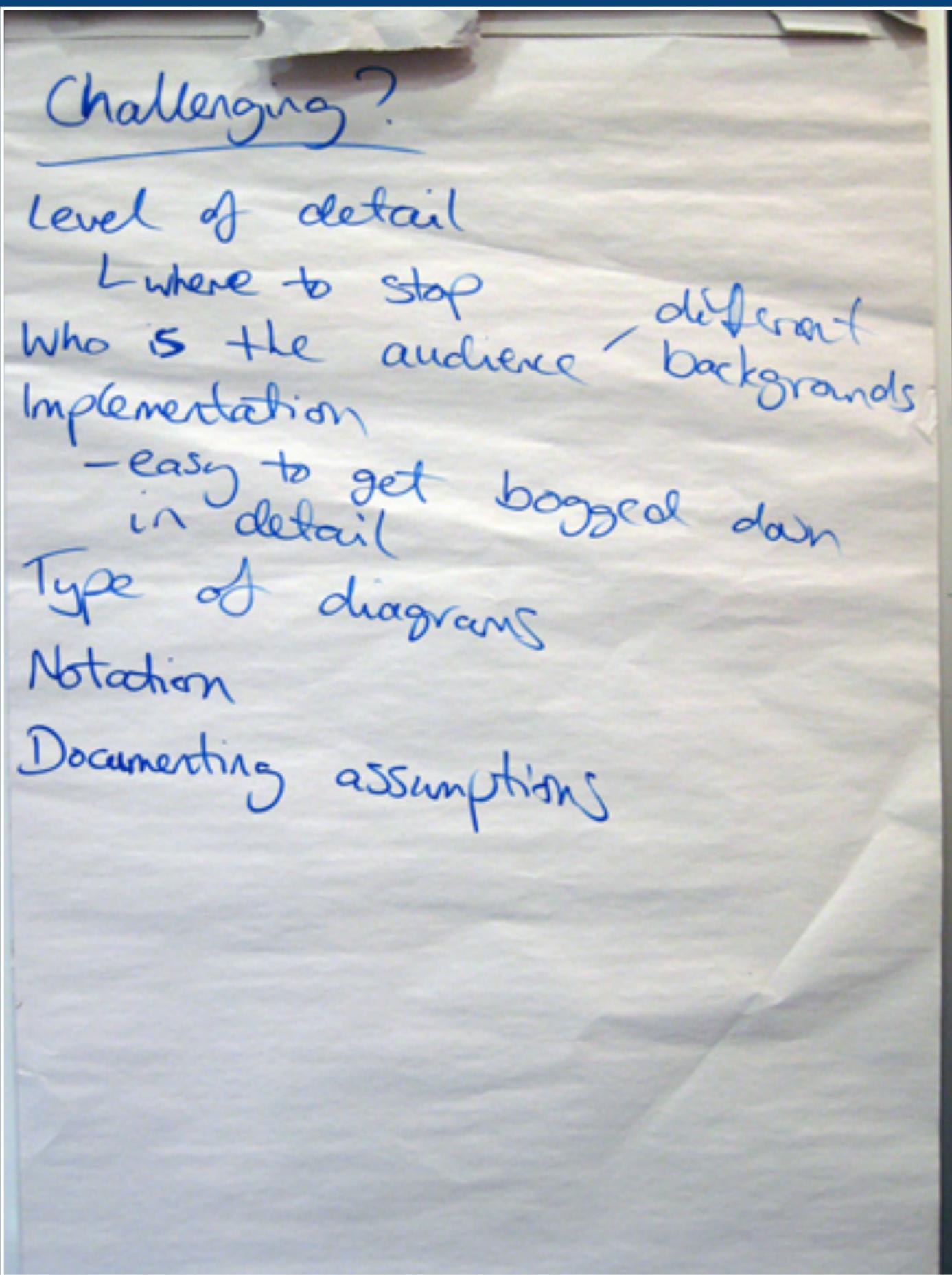
How do you keep software  
architecture documentation  
up to date?

# Diagrams

What type of diagrams could you use  
to help you document software?

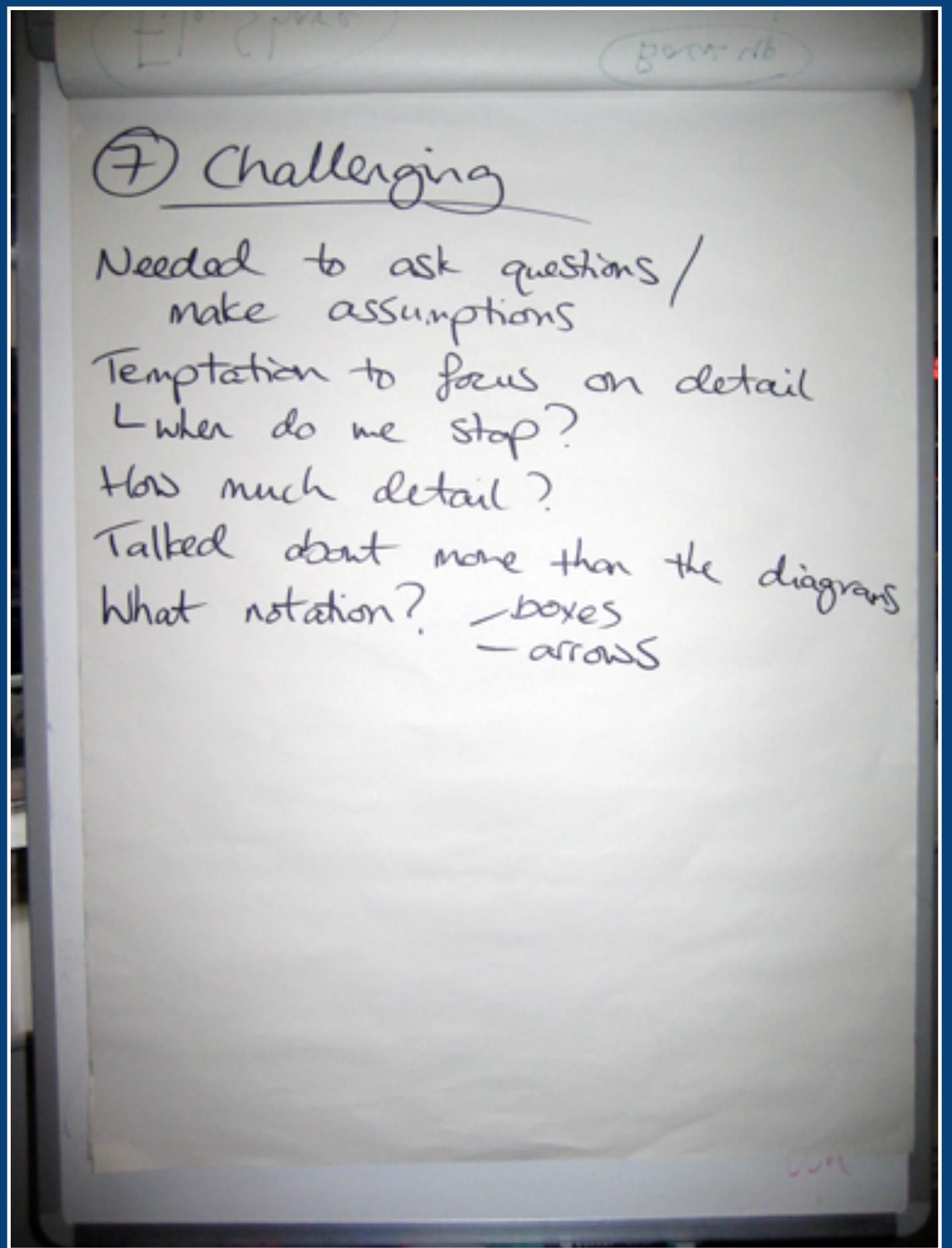
**Design a software solution for  
the “Financial Risk System”, and  
draw one or more architecture  
diagrams to describe your solution**

Did you find this exercise  
**challenging?**



## ⑩ Challenging?

- Verifying our own assumptions
- Expressing the solution
  - communicating it in a clear way
  - use of notation
  - easy to mix levels of abstraction
  - how much detail?



# Did you find this exercise challenging?

This doesn't make sense,  
but we'll explain it.

Information is likely  
still stuck in your heads

# **Swap and review your diagrams**

Focus on the diagrams rather than the solution itself;  
do you understand the notation, colour coding, symbols, etc?

1

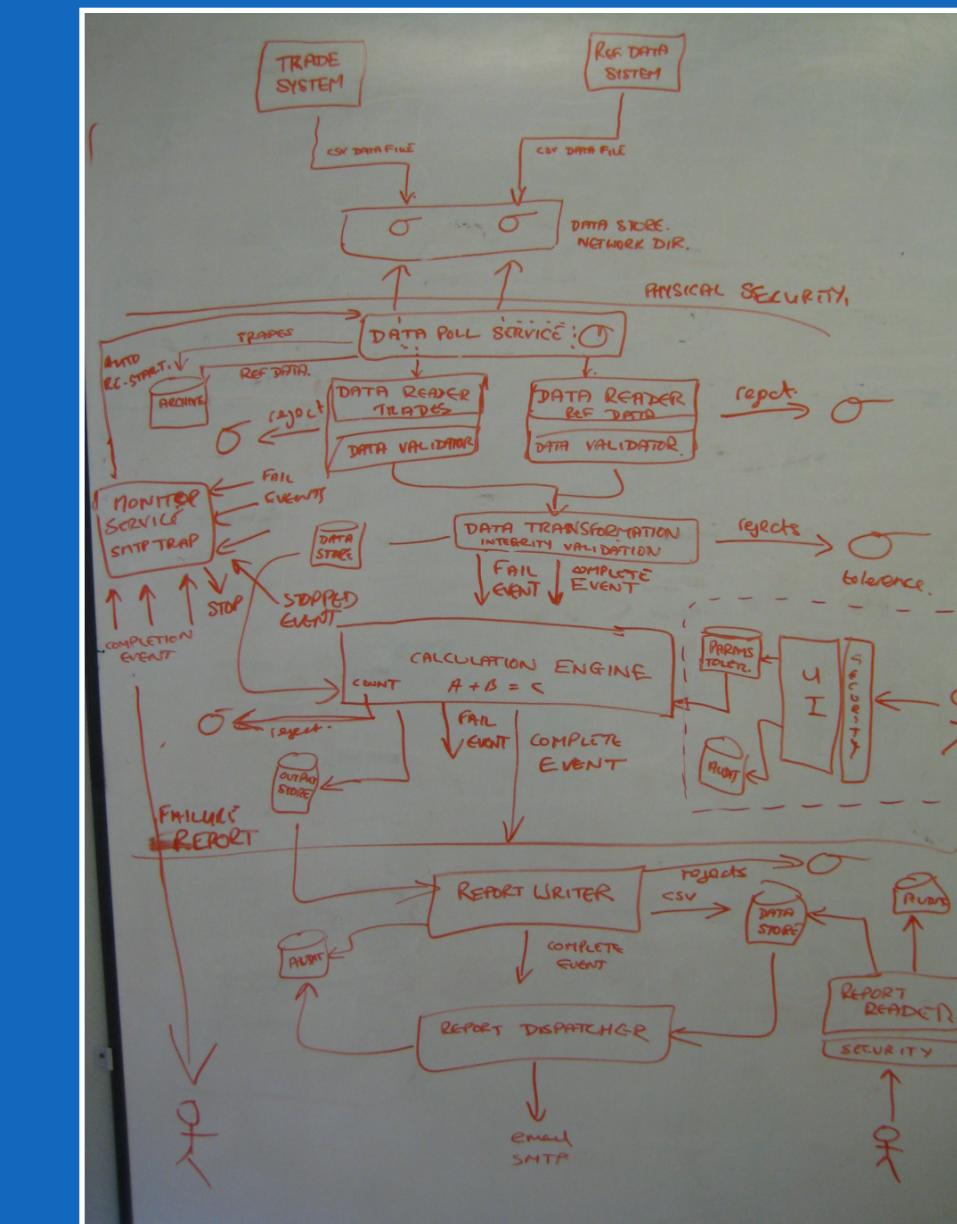
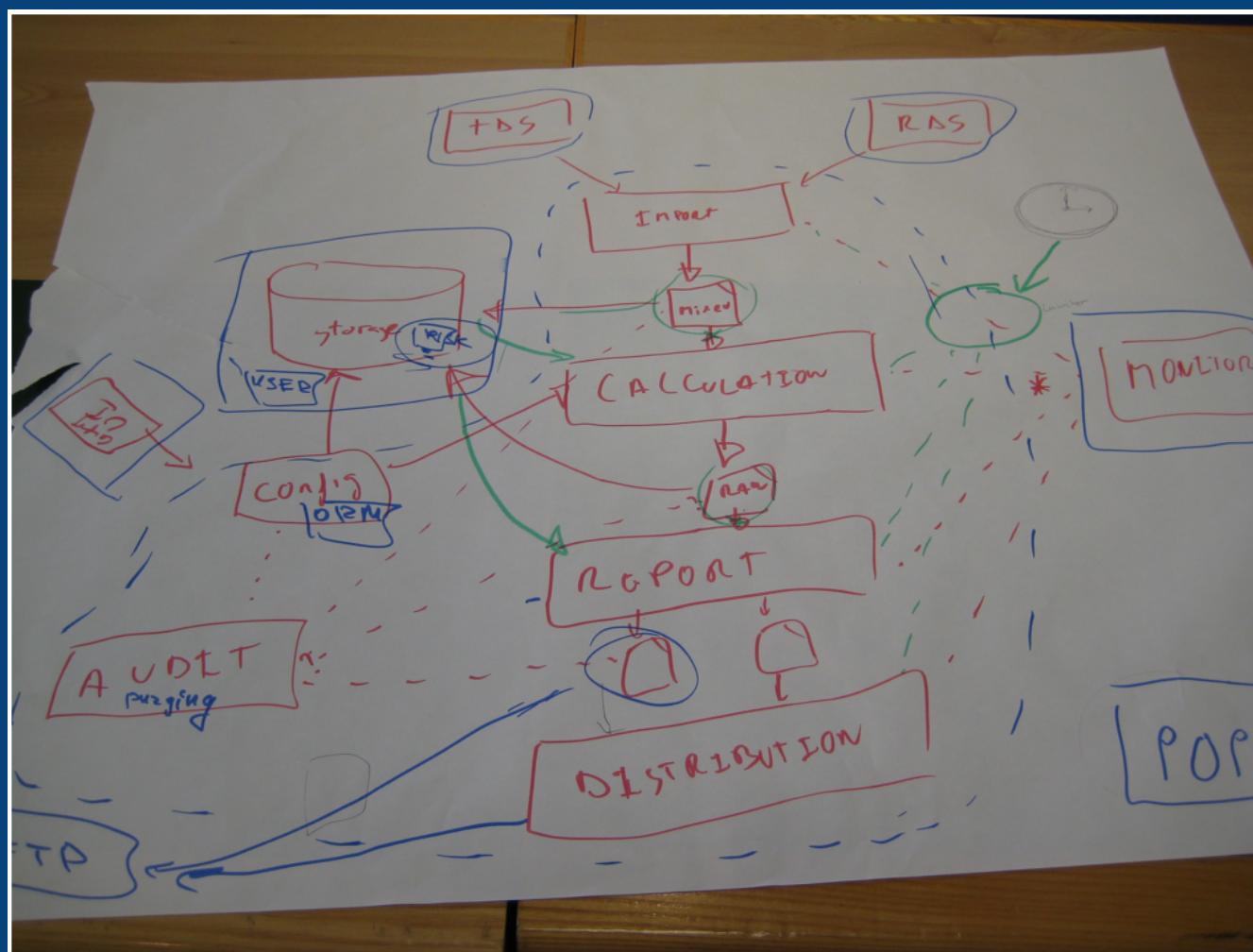
1

1

2

2

2



Documentation and diagrams should  
be able to stand on their own  
(to some extent, anyway)

what does  
color  
mean?

Objects vs  
actions

what  
shape  
mean

What's the  
DB-like  
icon?

NO ANNOTATION

ON FLOWS

SHOULD USE  
MORE  
COLORS

Post Its  
can fall  
off

MIXES  
DIFFERENT  
LEVELS OF  
DETAIL

NOT SURE OF  
TRANSITION  
BETWEEN  
DIFFERENT  
DIAGRAMS -

—  
CONFlicting  
LEVELS OF  
DETAIL IN  
PRESENTATION

→ Reasons of different colors  
What about  
the different  
arrows?

WHY ARE  
SOME LINES  
PINK?

WHAT DO  
THE SHAPE  
MEAN ?

UML IS GOOD,  
BUT NOT  
EVERYONE KNOWS  
IT

WHAT DO  
LINES RE-  
PRESENT?  
(DATA? CONTROL?  
DEP.?)

Not sure  
what this  
is

DIFFERENT  
LEVELS IN  
SAME  
DIAGRAM

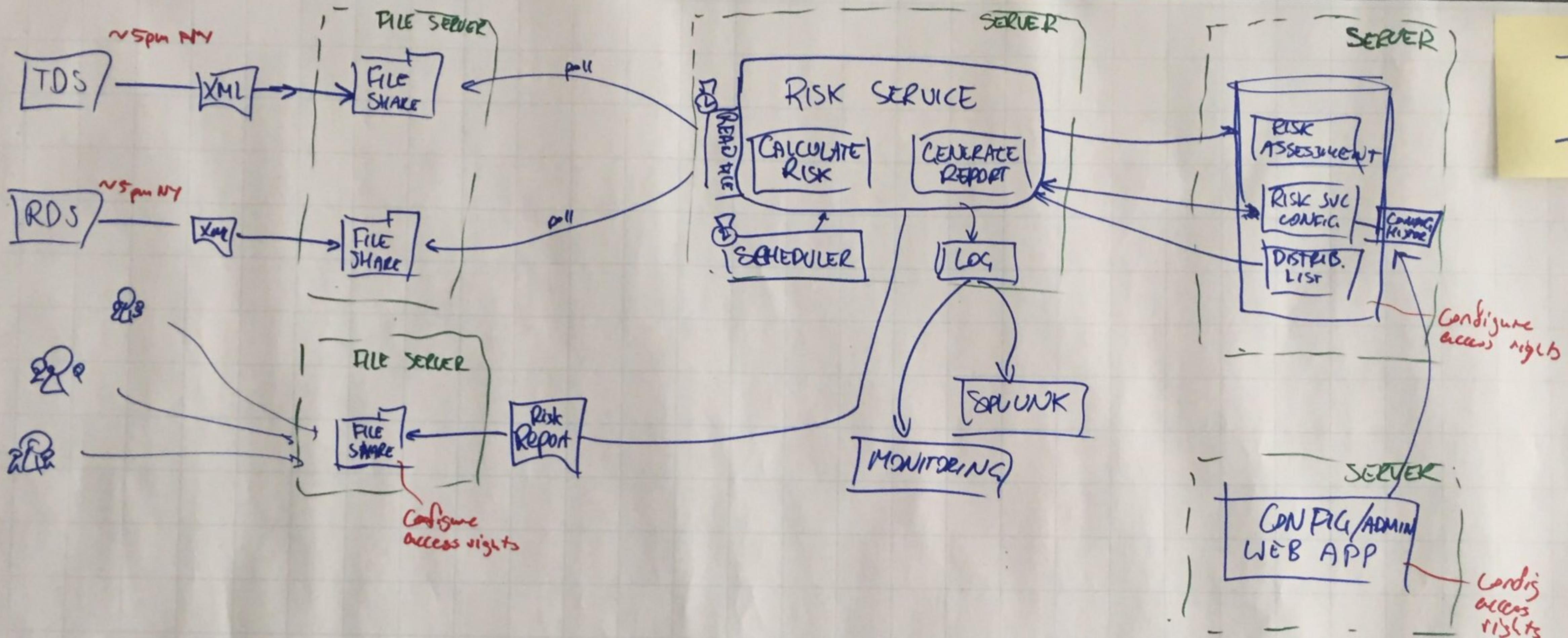
ARE THE  
ARROWS THE  
RIGHT WAY  
ROUND?

Moving fast in the same direction  
as a team requires  
**good communication**

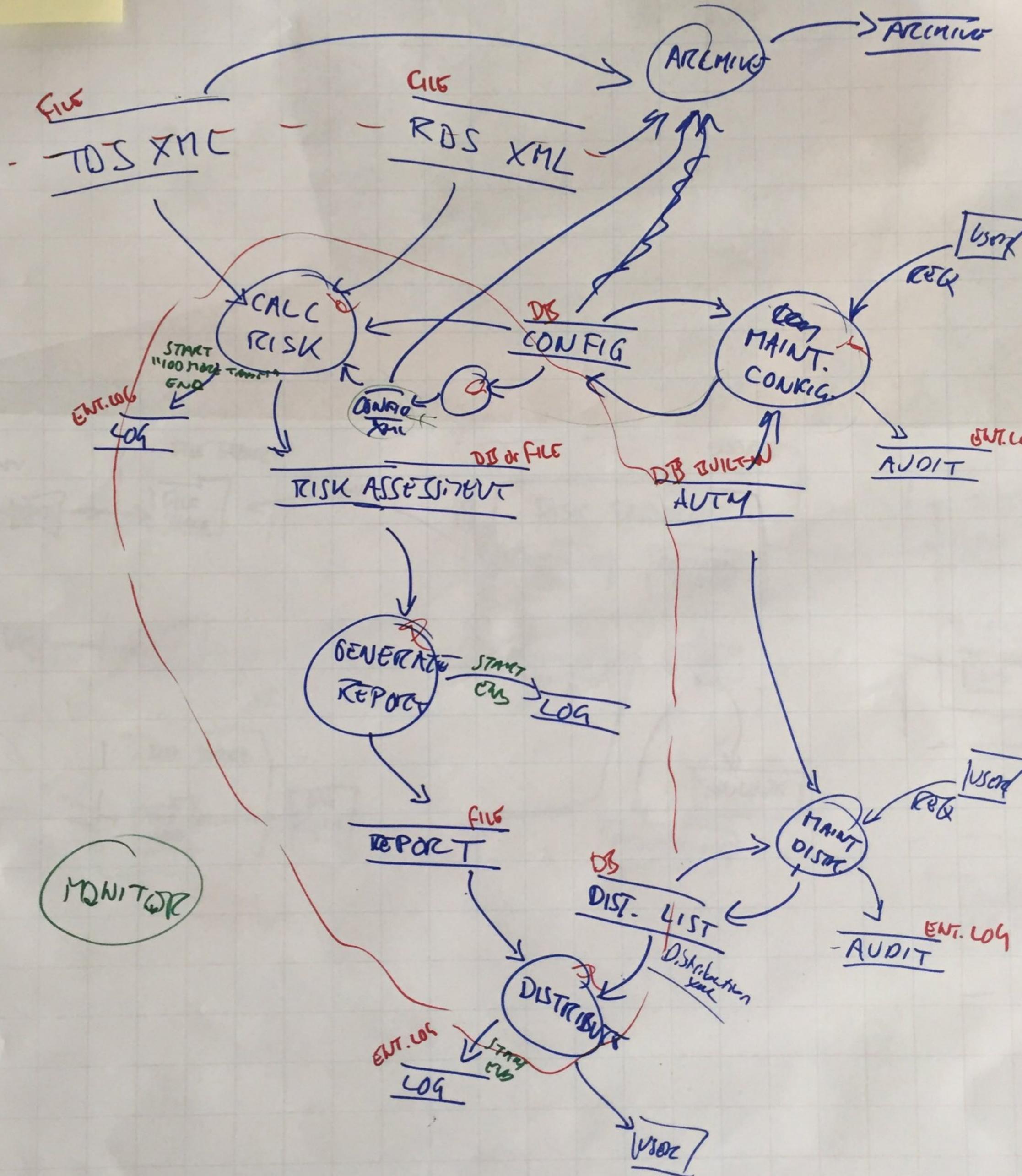
I've run this workshop  
in 25+ countries  
for 10,000+ people

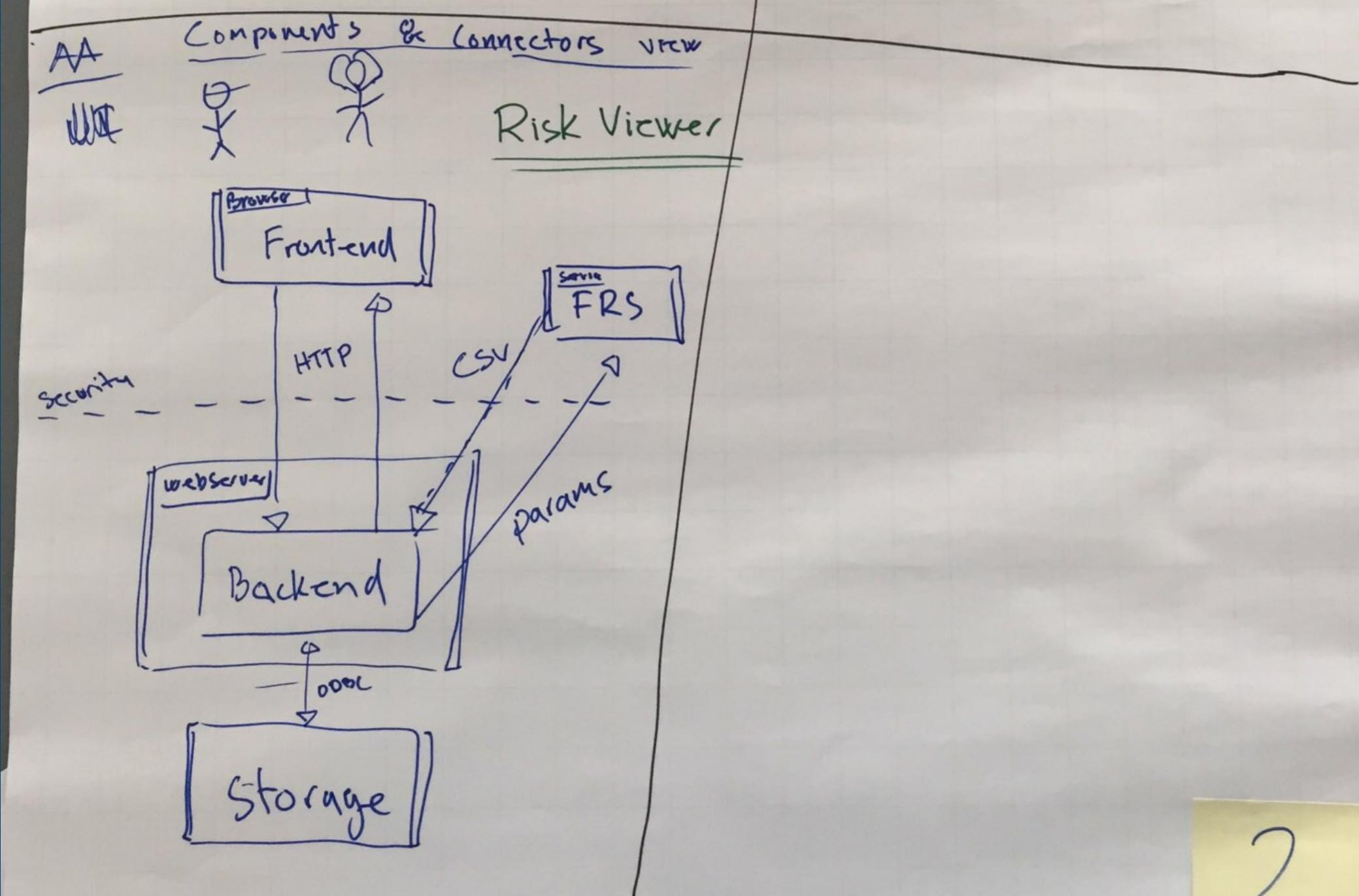
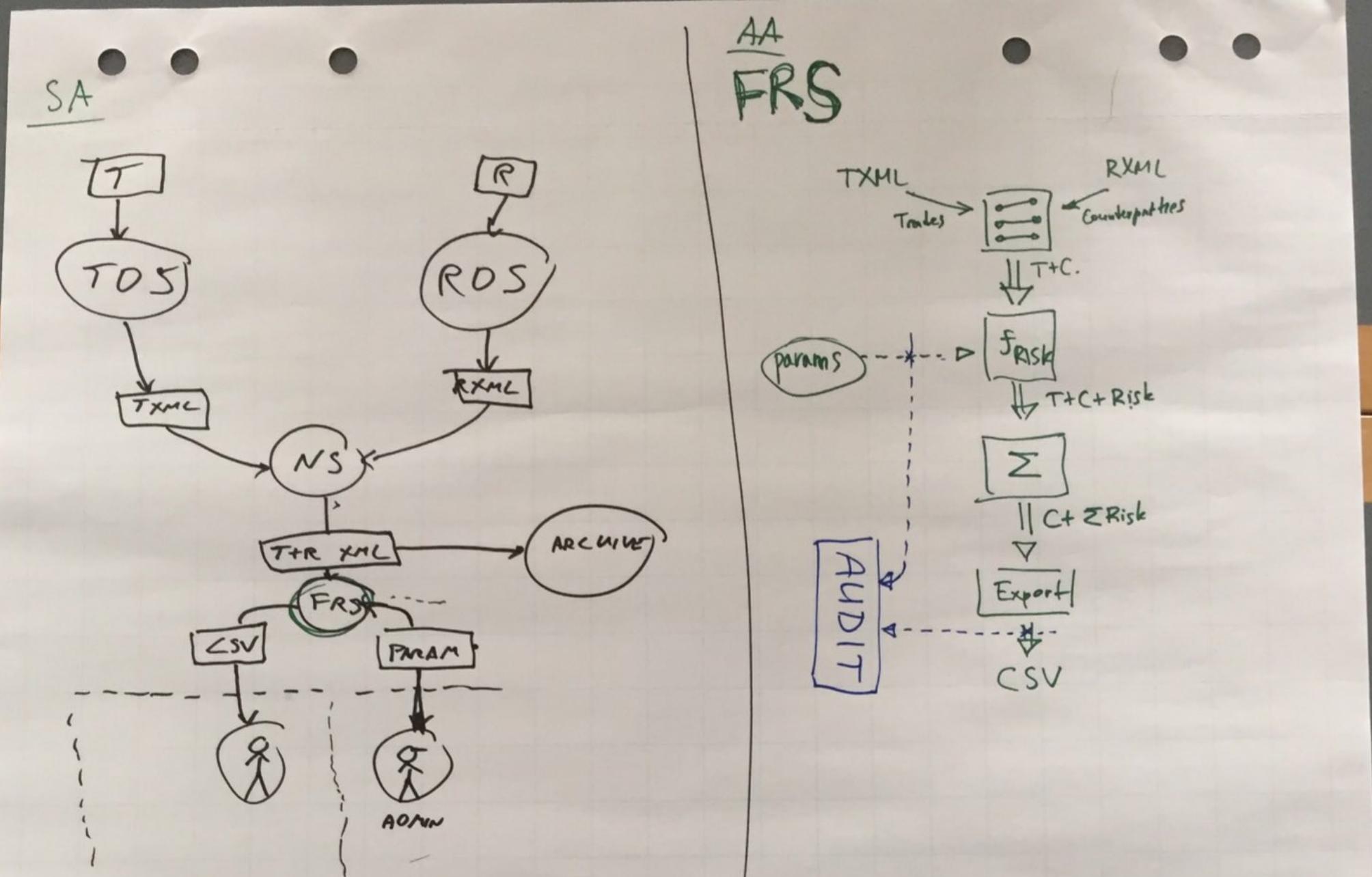


Software architects  
**struggle to communicate**  
software architecture

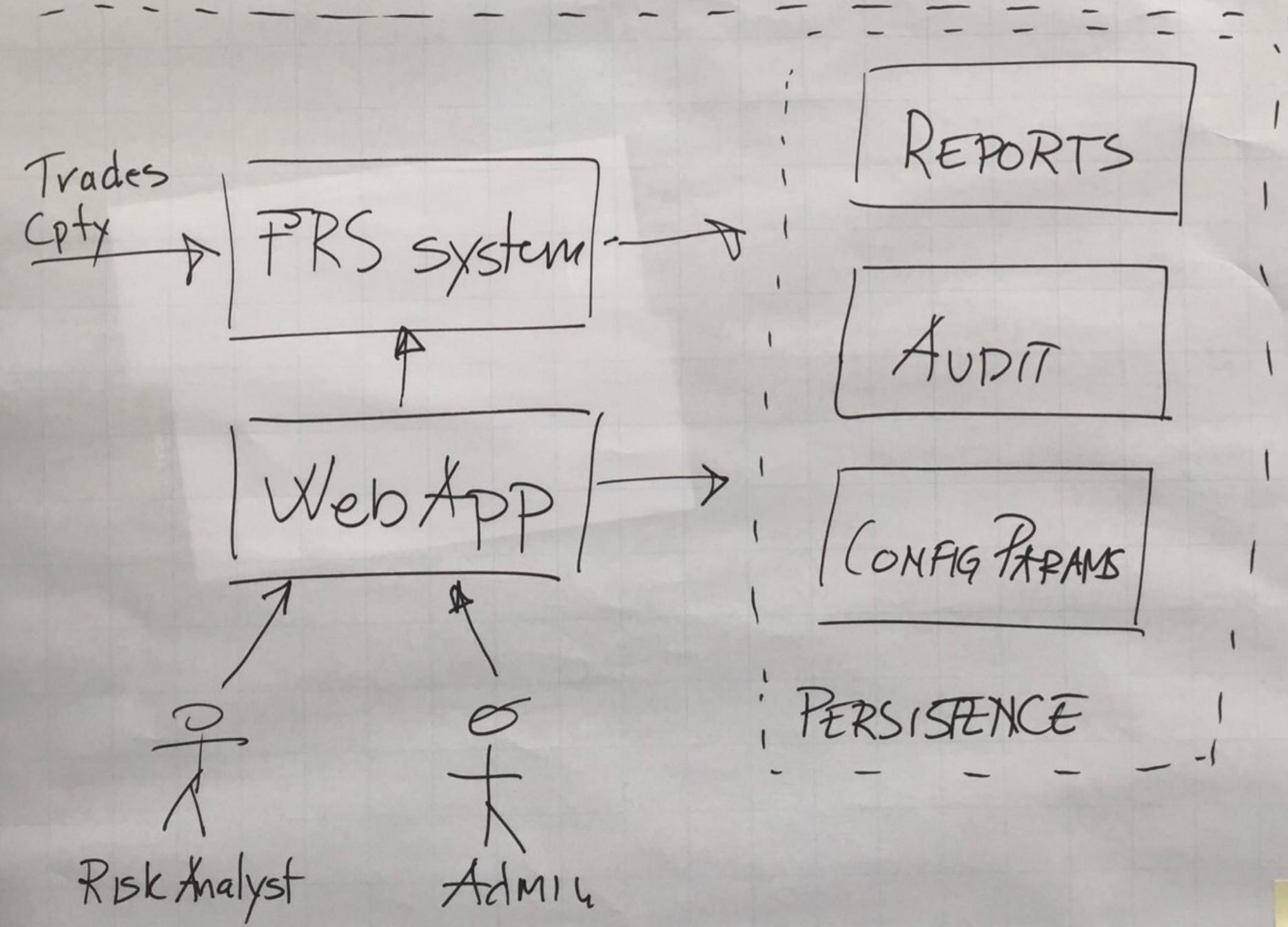
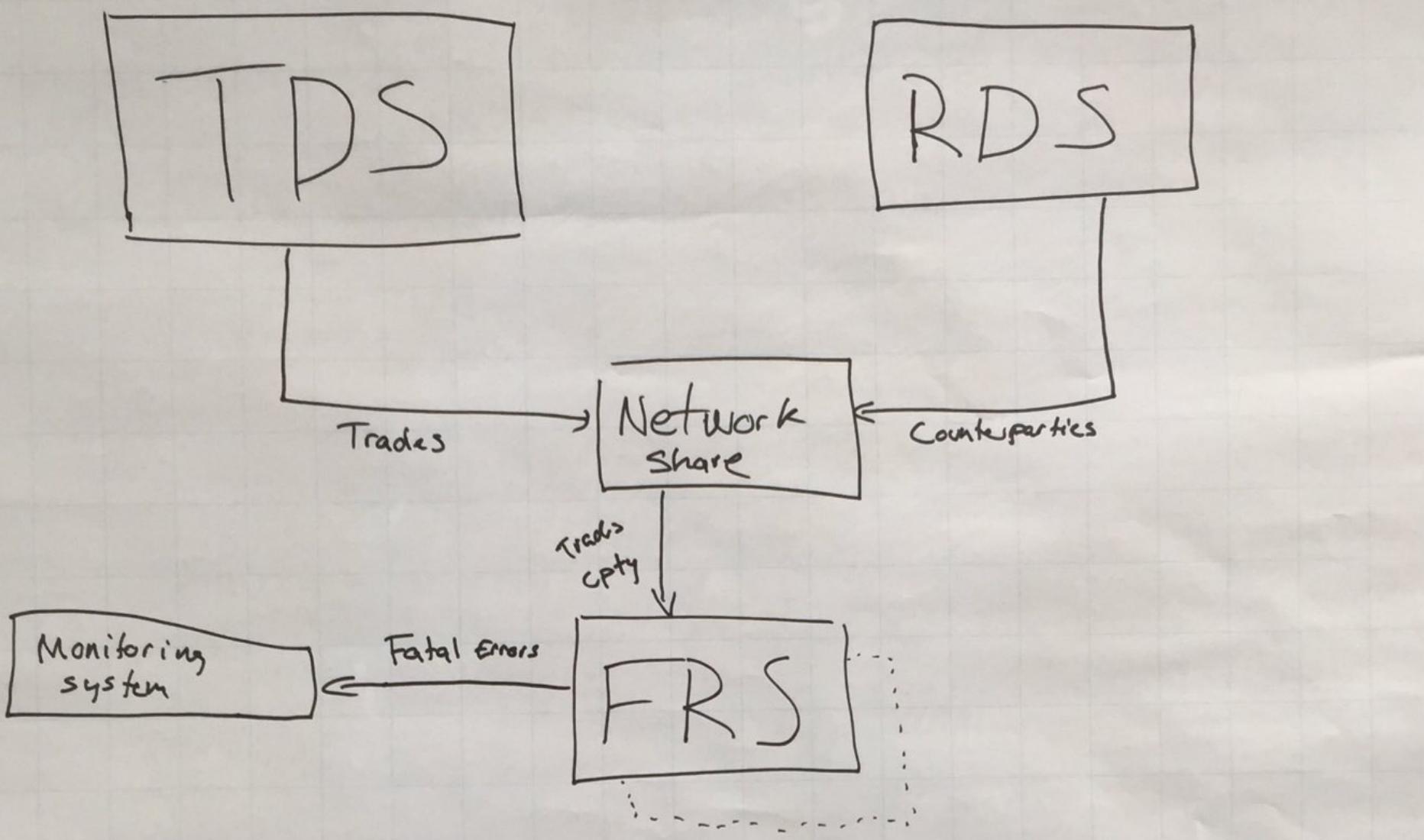


1

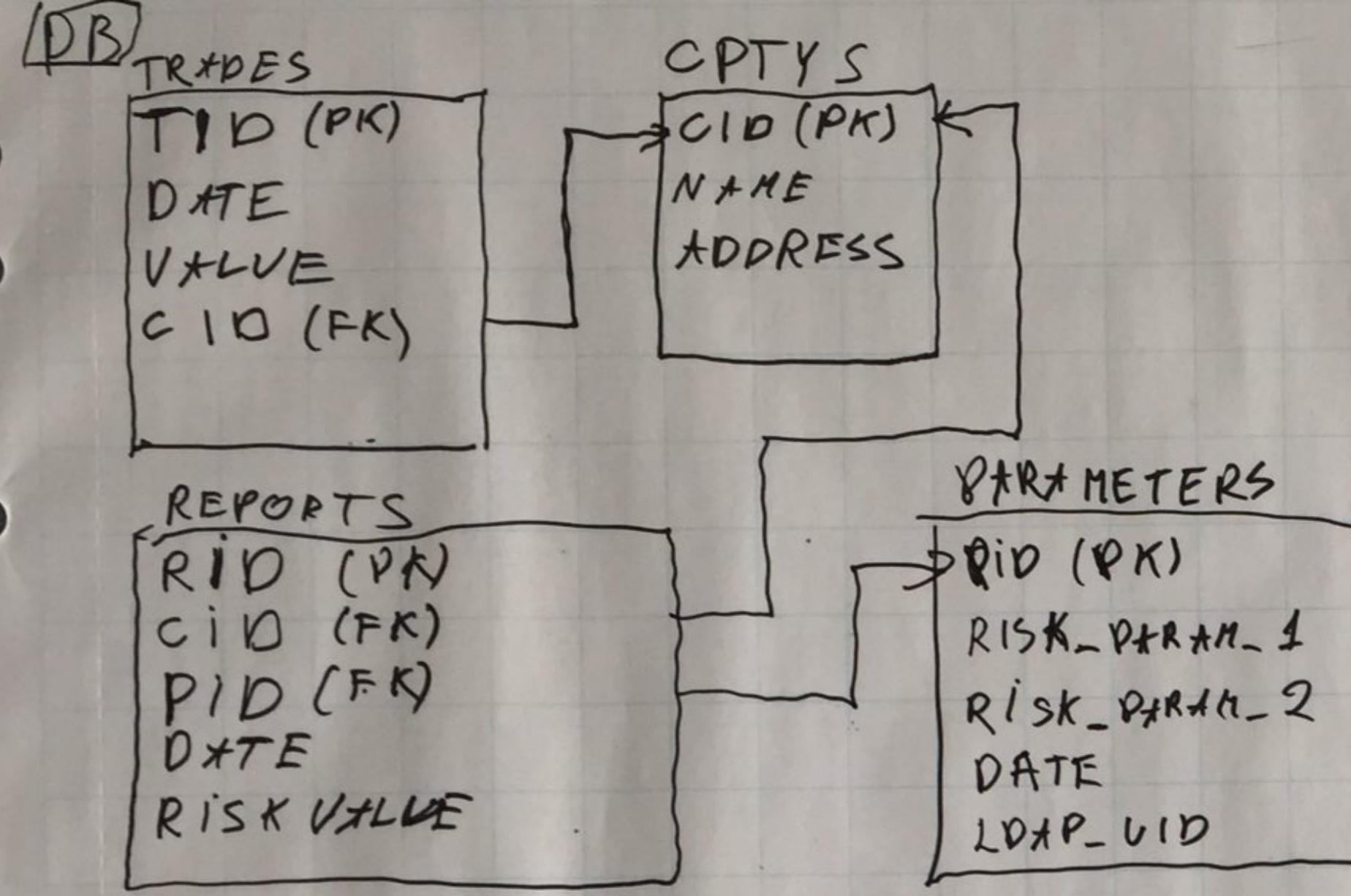




2

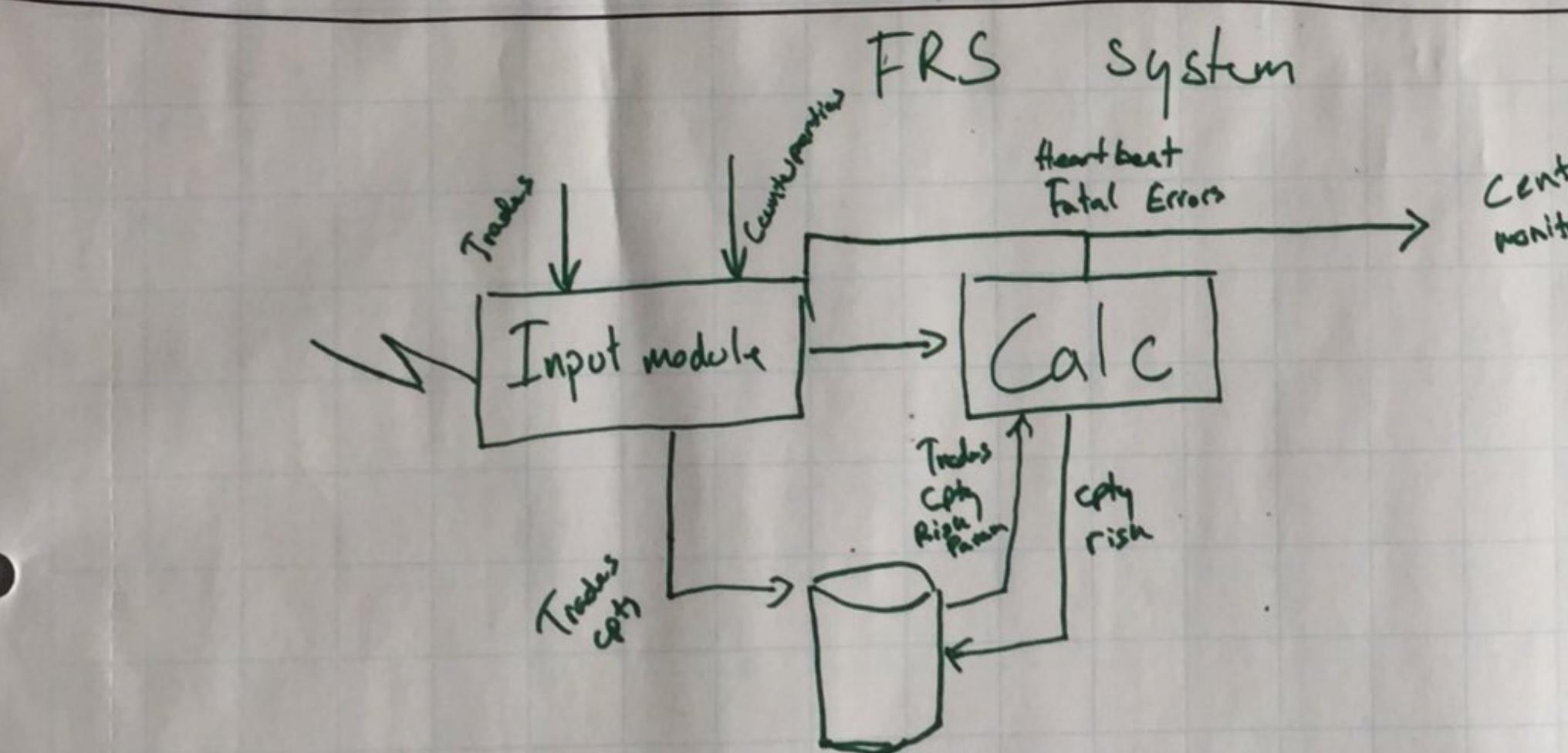
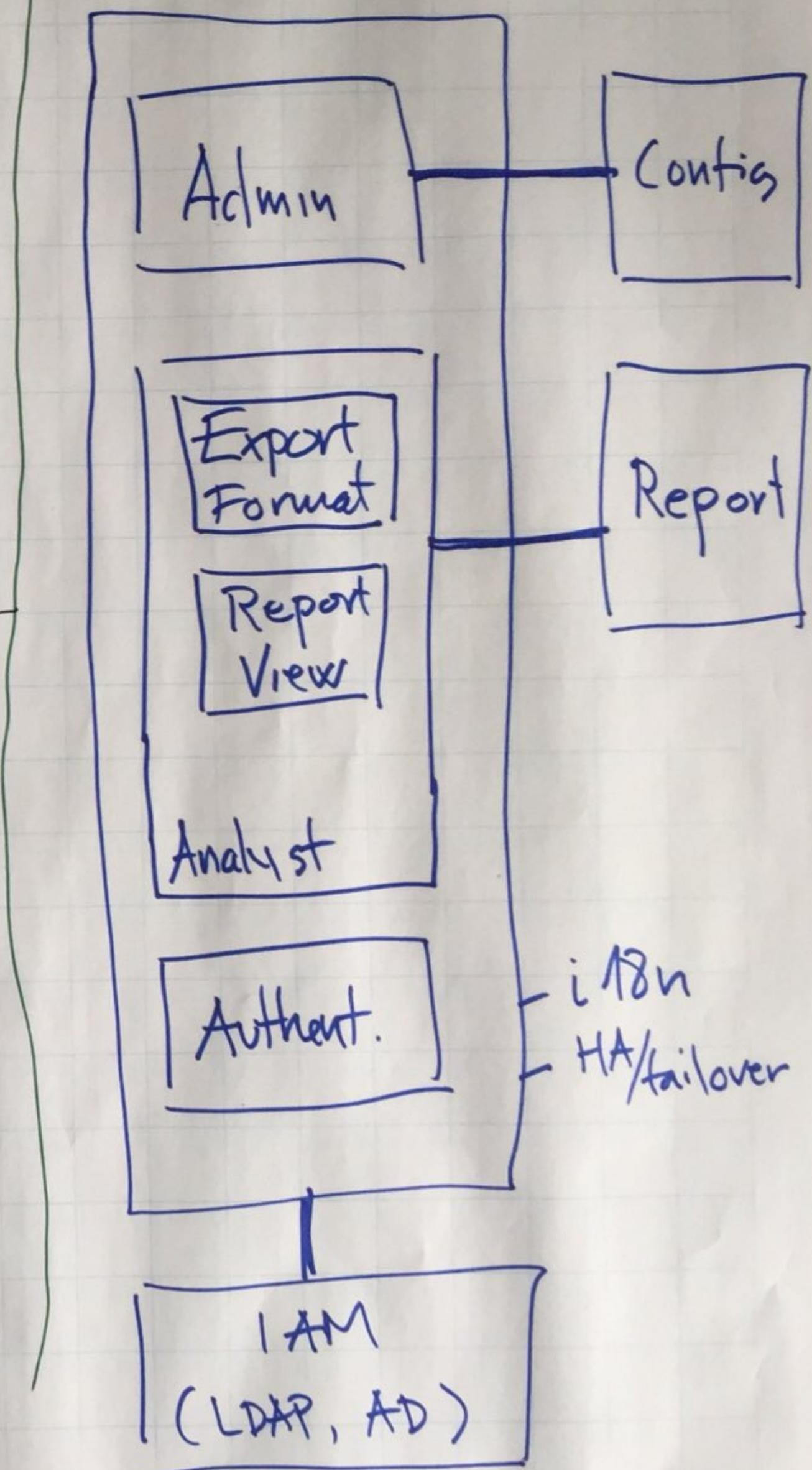


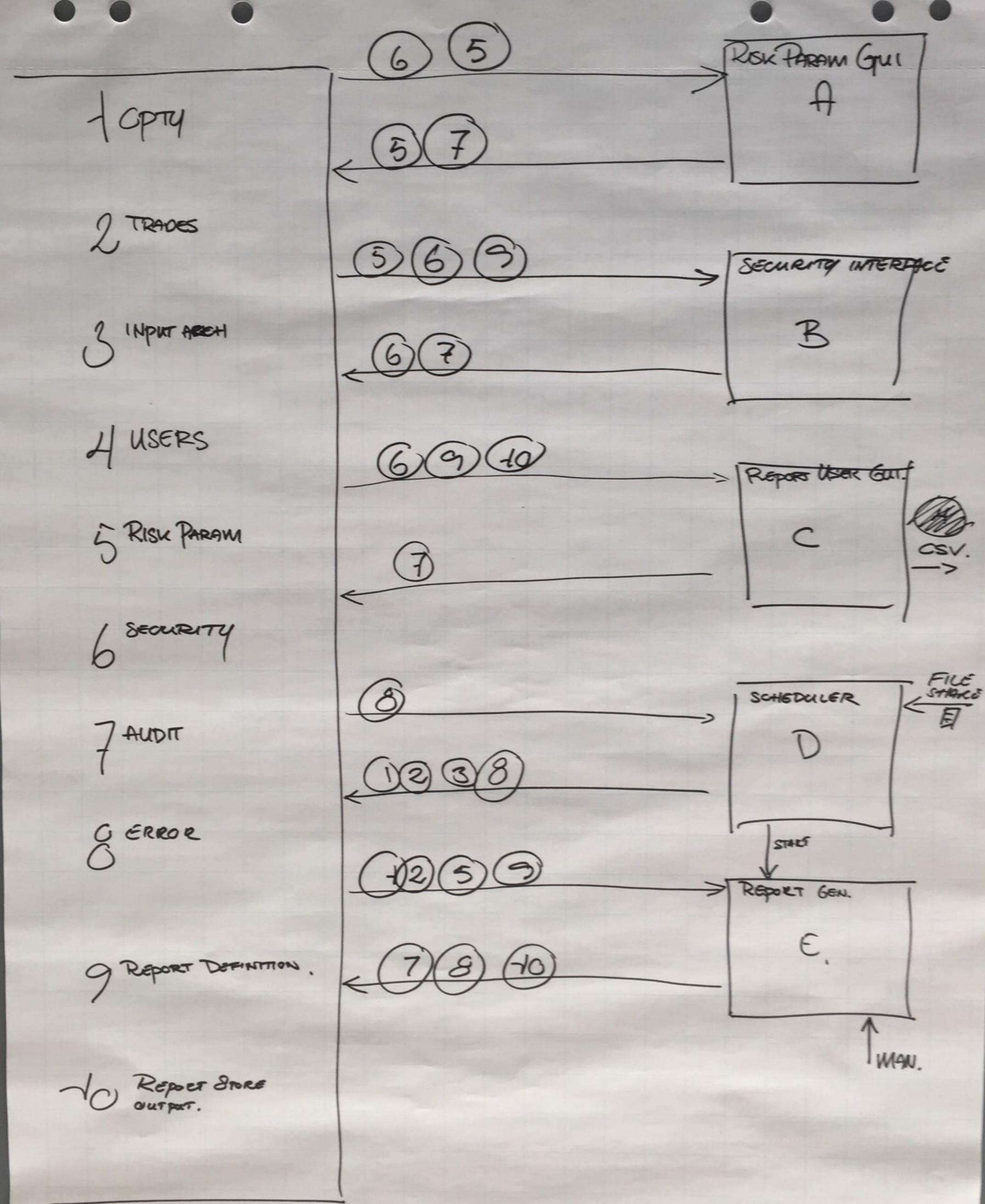
3



WebApp

3

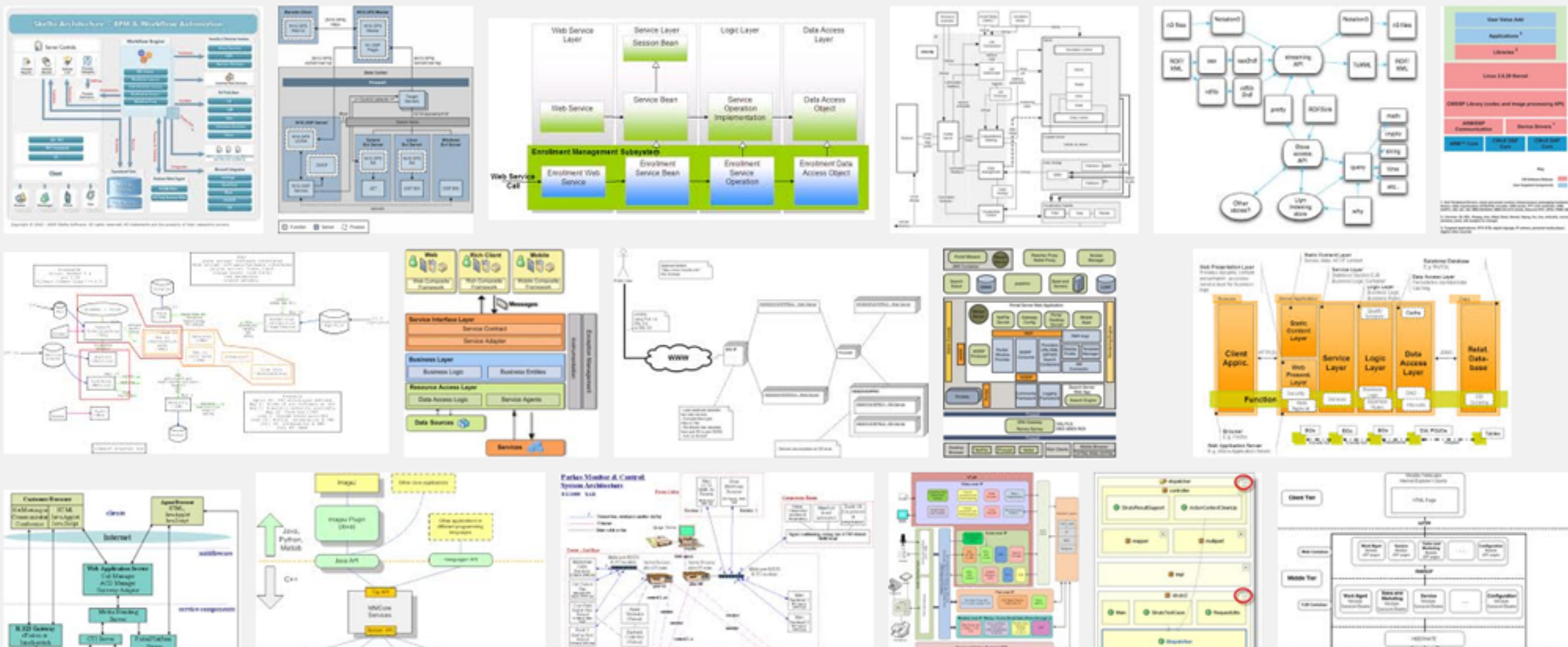


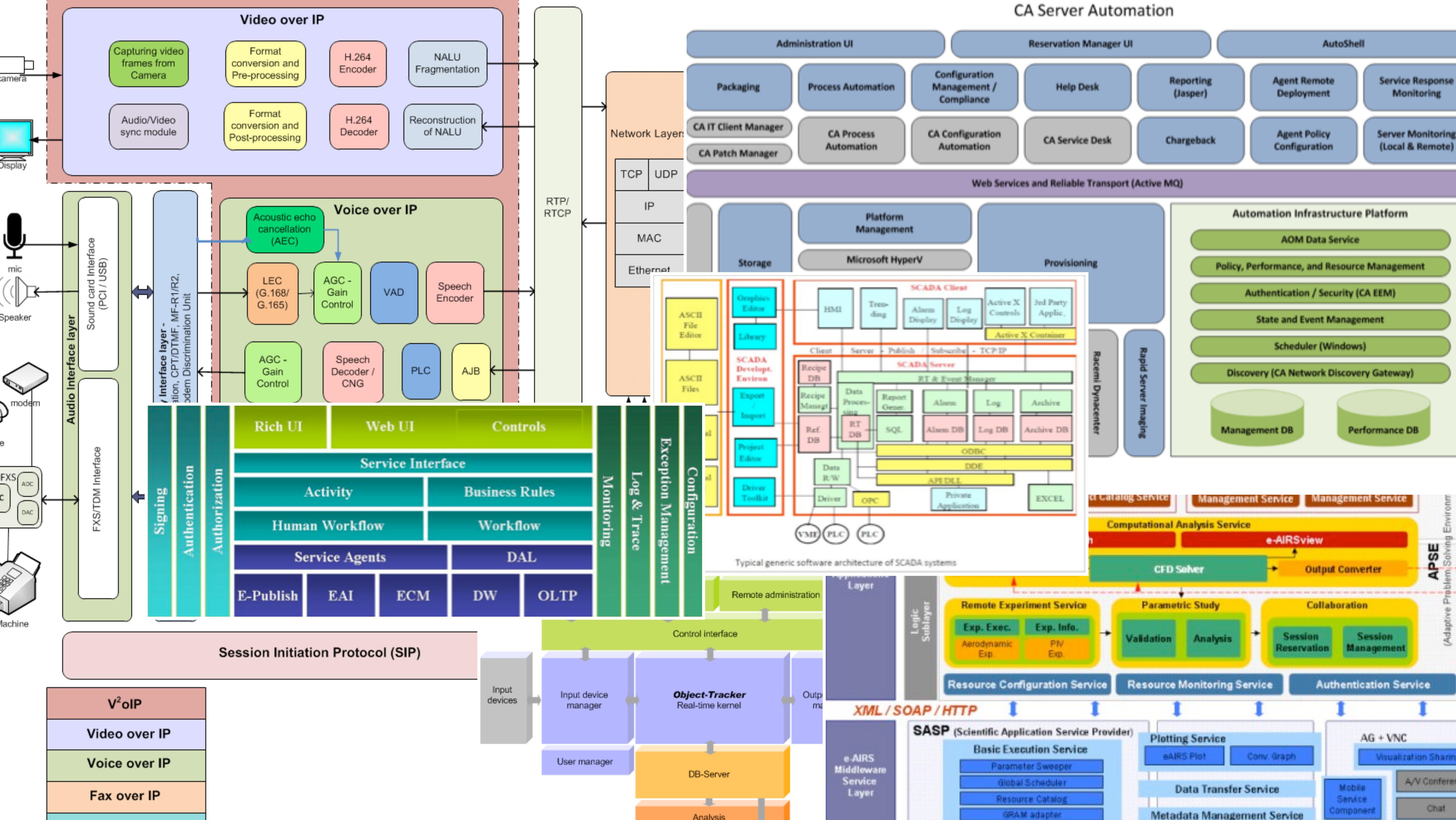


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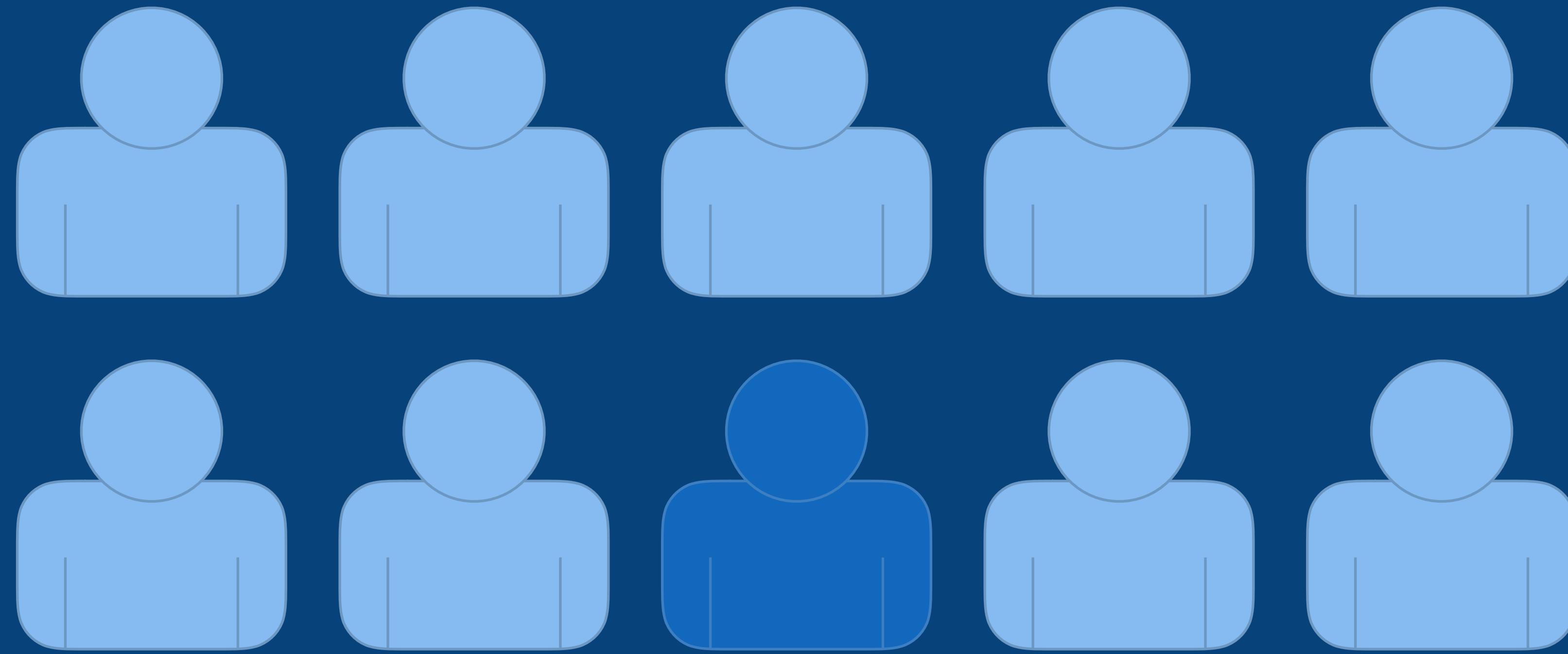
[Learn more](#)

[Got It](#)

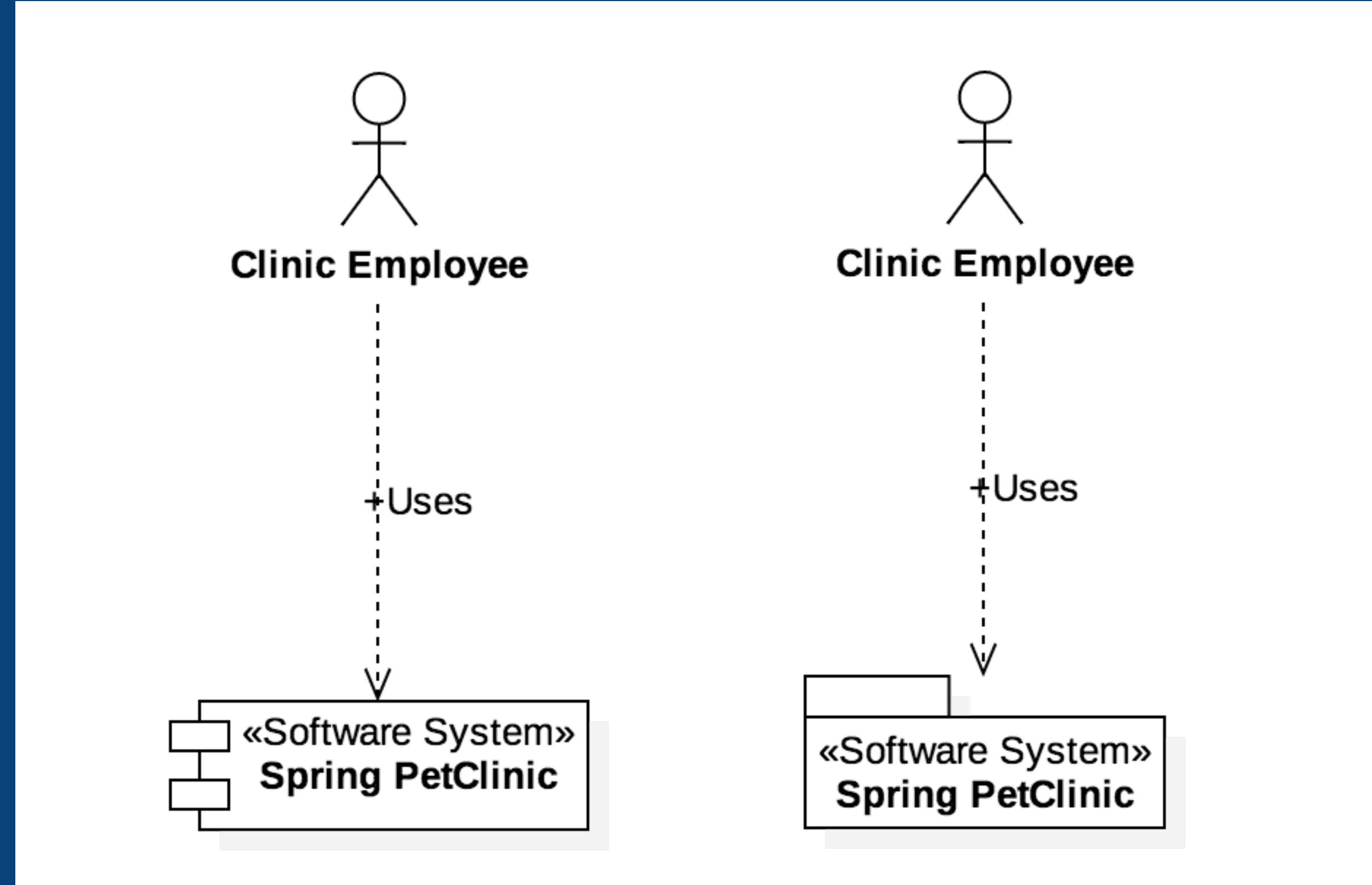




Do you use UML?



In my experience, optimistically,  
1 out of 10 people use UML

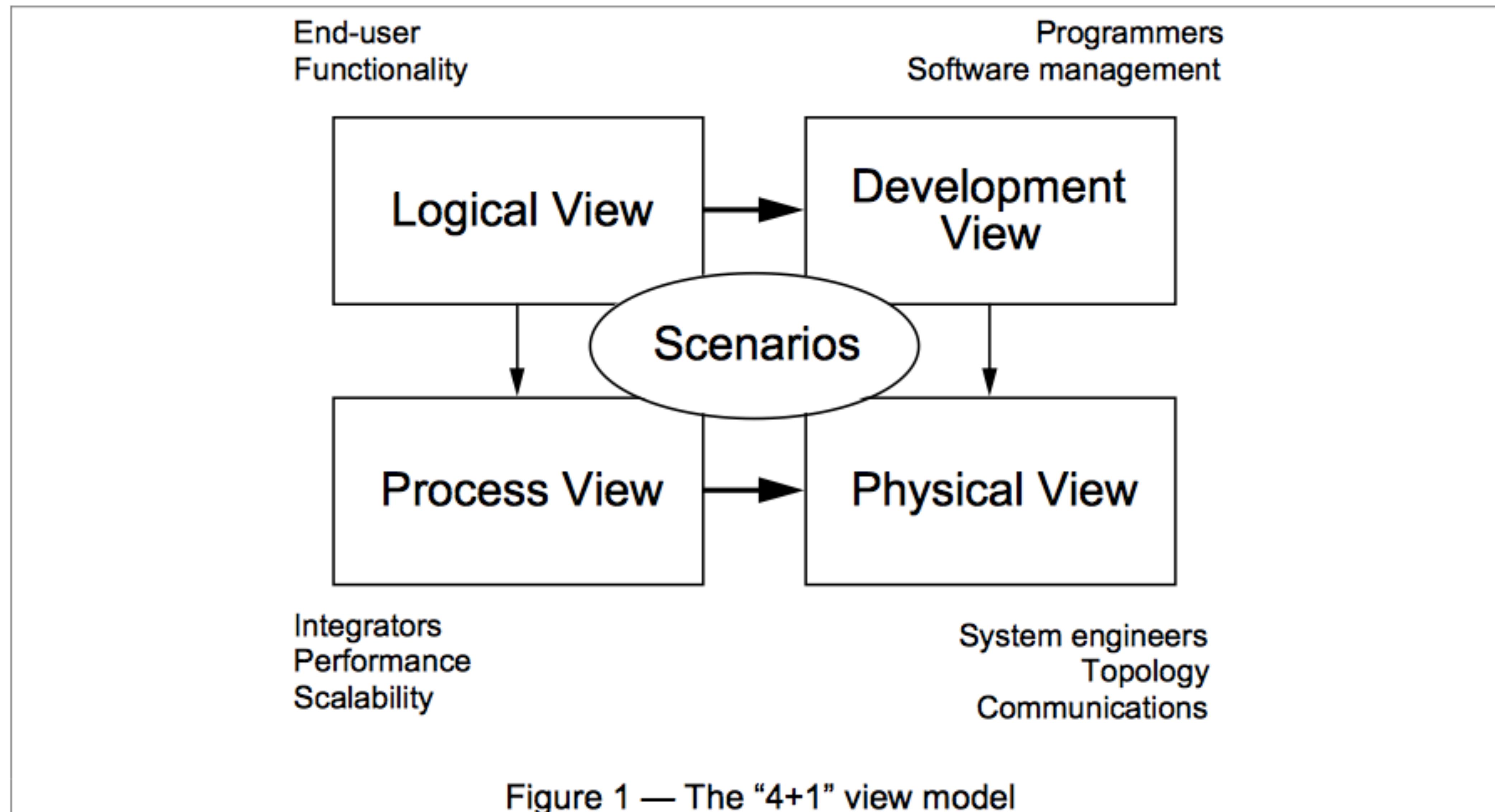


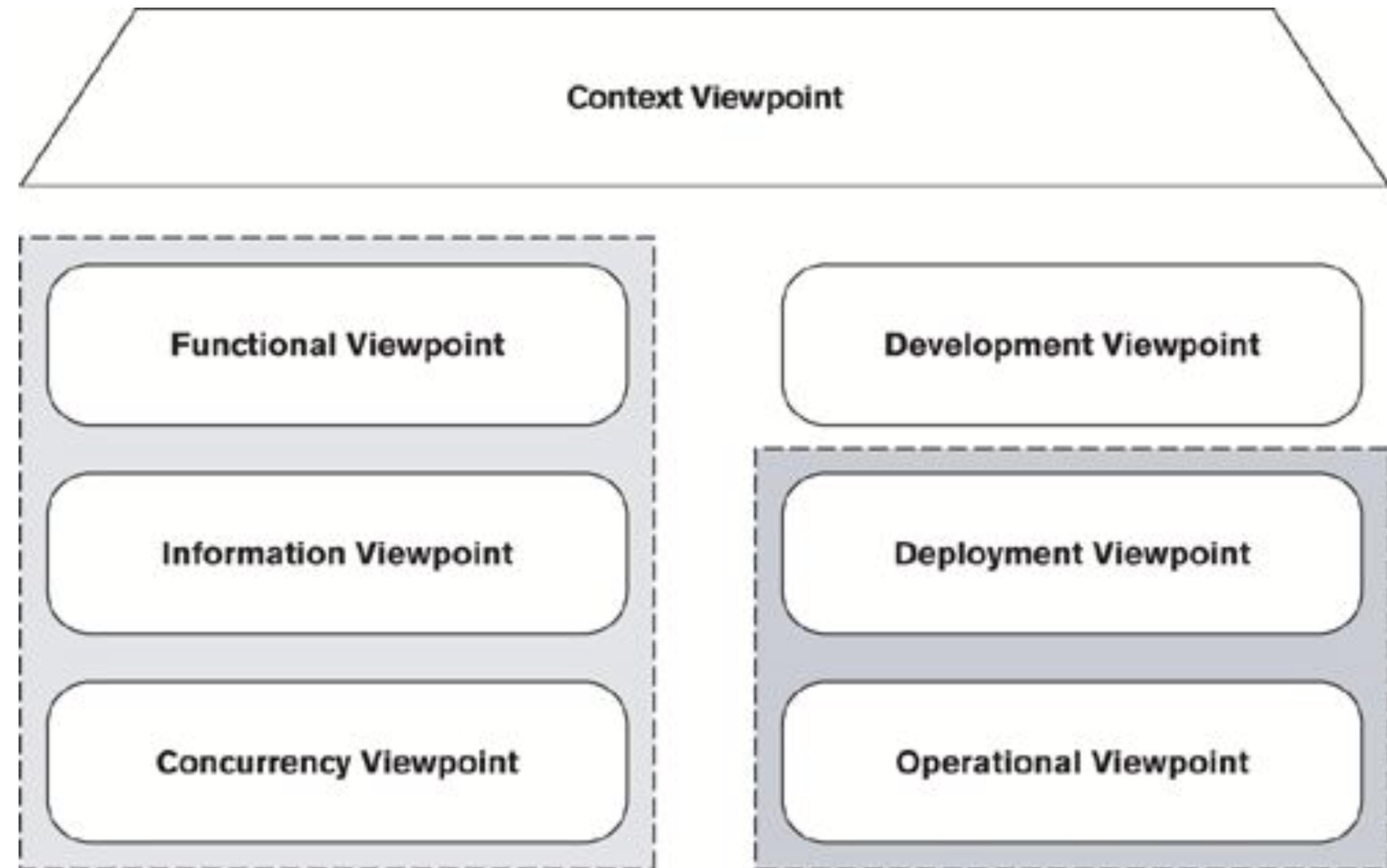
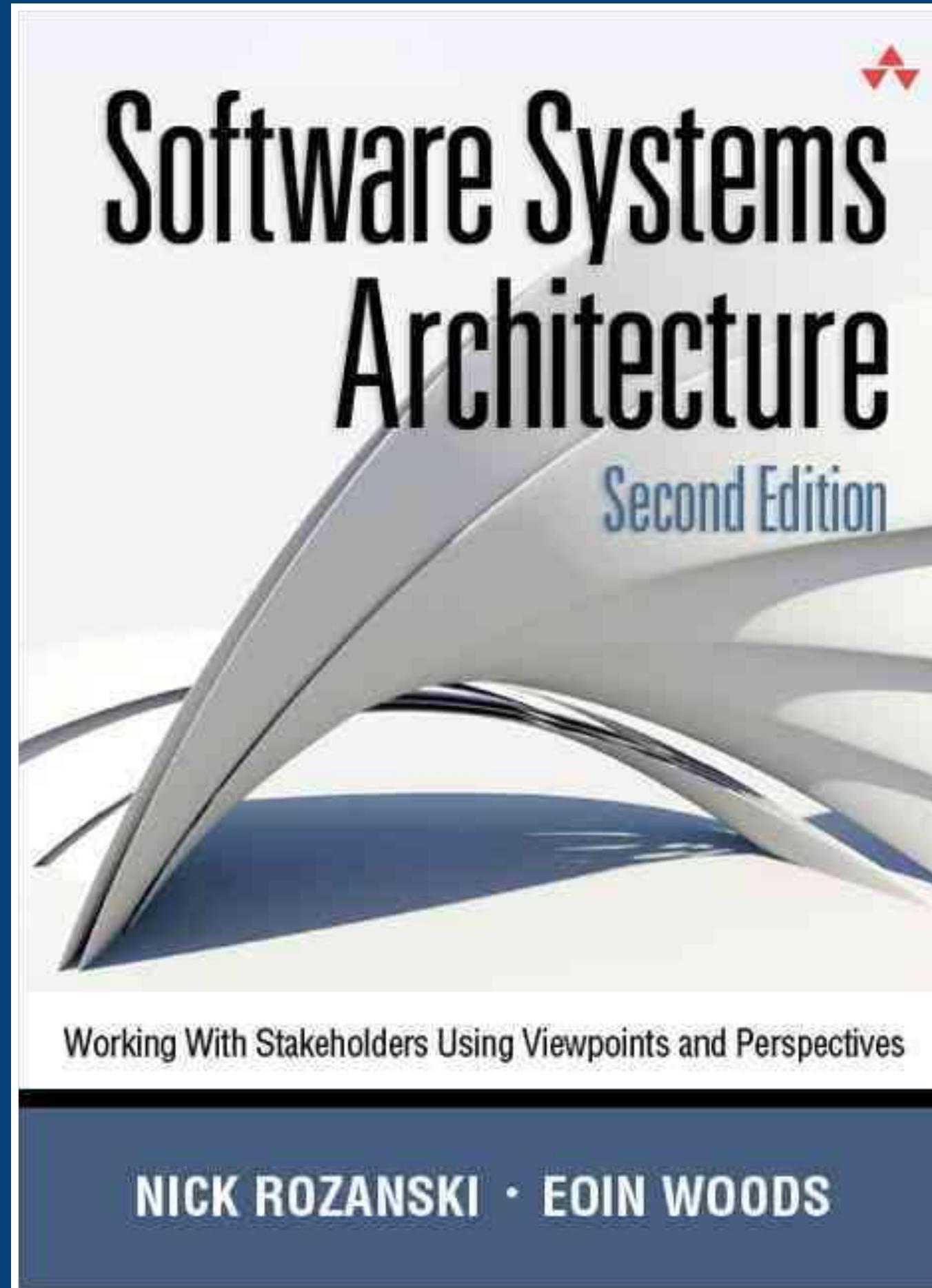
I do use UML, but not for  
software architecture

To describe a software architecture,  
we use a model composed of  
multiple views or perspectives.

Architectural Blueprints - The “4+1” View Model of Software Architecture  
Philippe Kruchten

The description of an architecture—the decisions made—can be organized around these four views, and then illustrated by a few selected *use cases*, or *scenarios* which become a fifth view. The architecture is in fact partially evolved from these scenarios as we will see later.

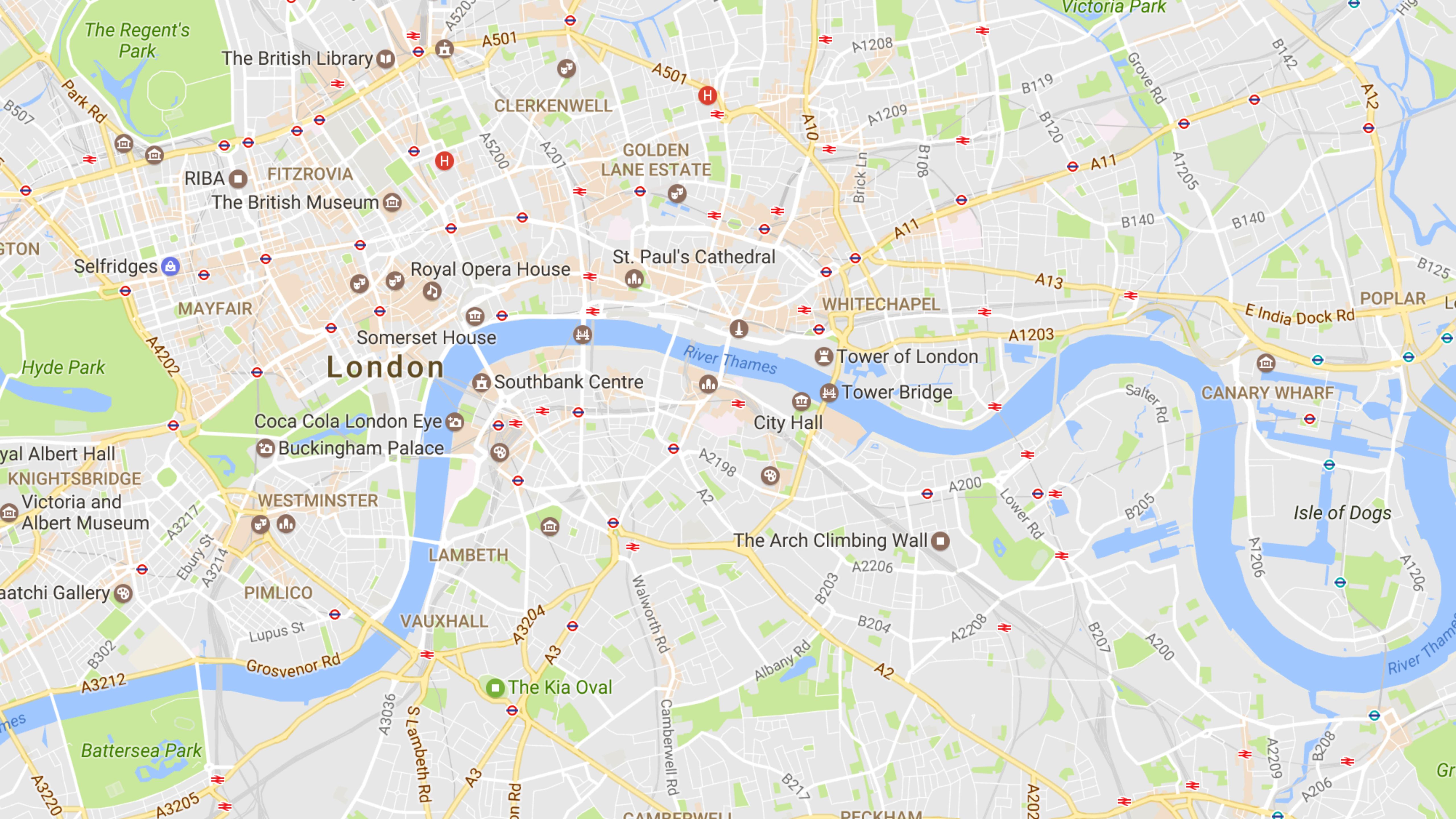


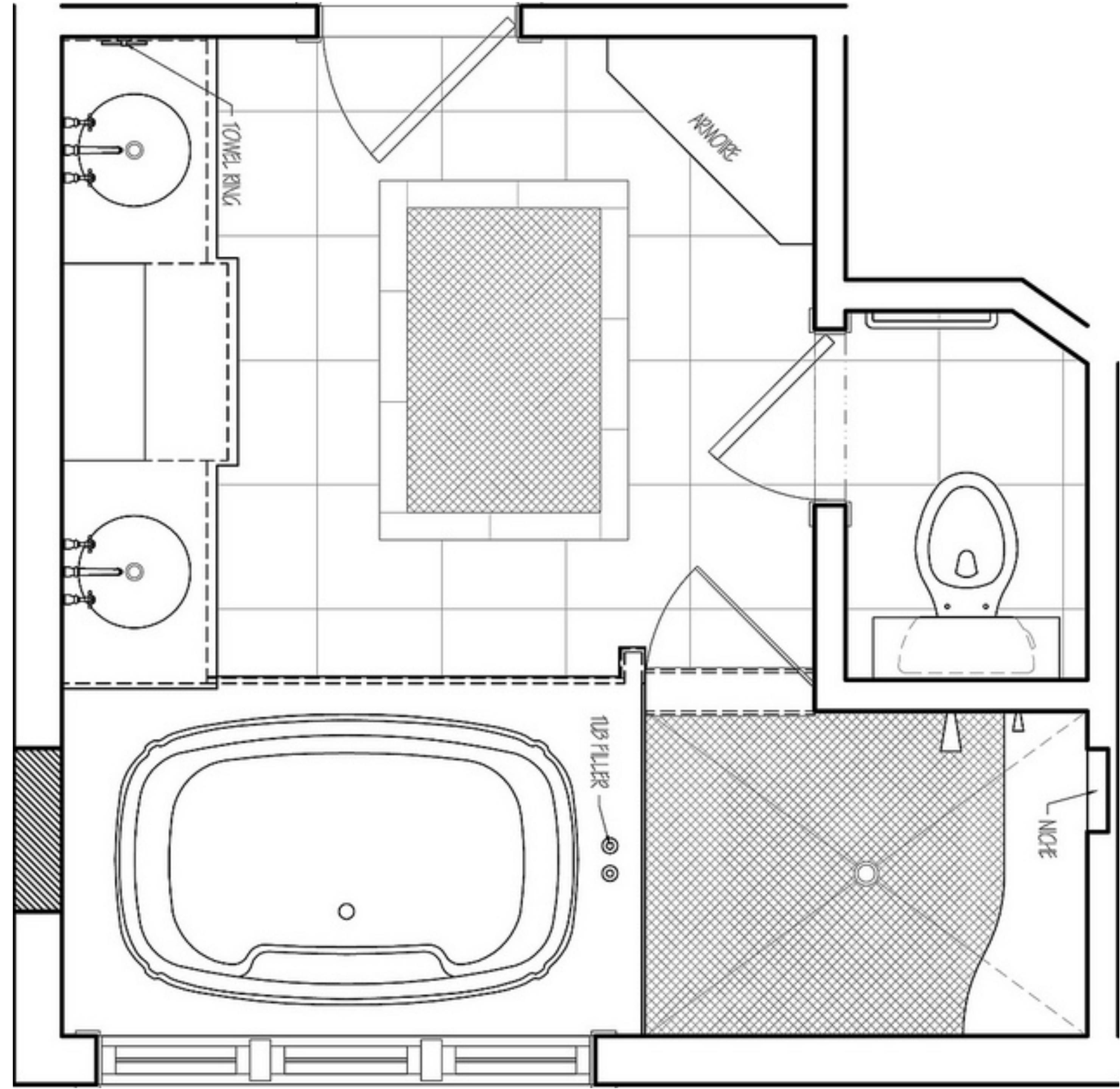


# “Viewpoints and Perspectives”

Do the architecture diagrams  
accurately reflect what you  
are going to build?

We lack a common vocabulary  
to describe software architecture





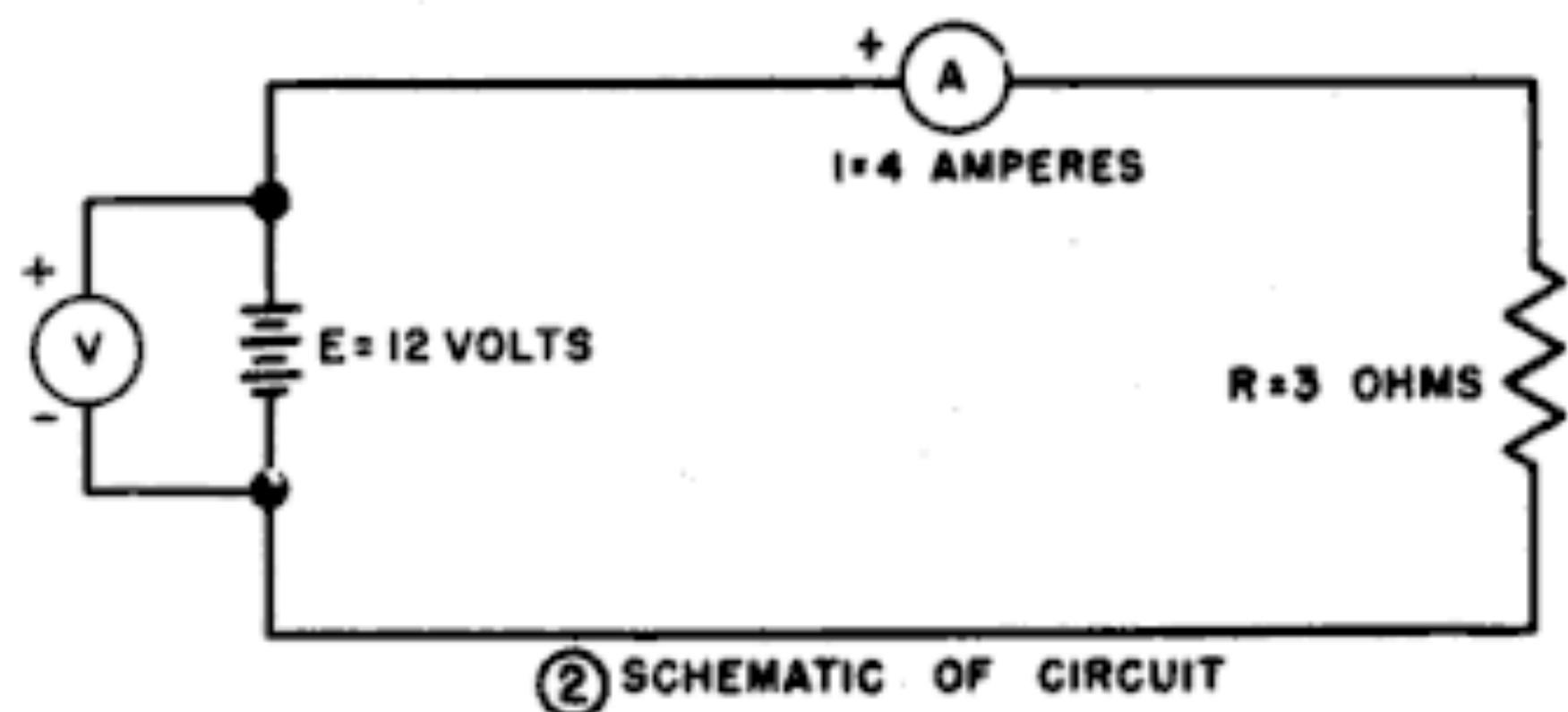
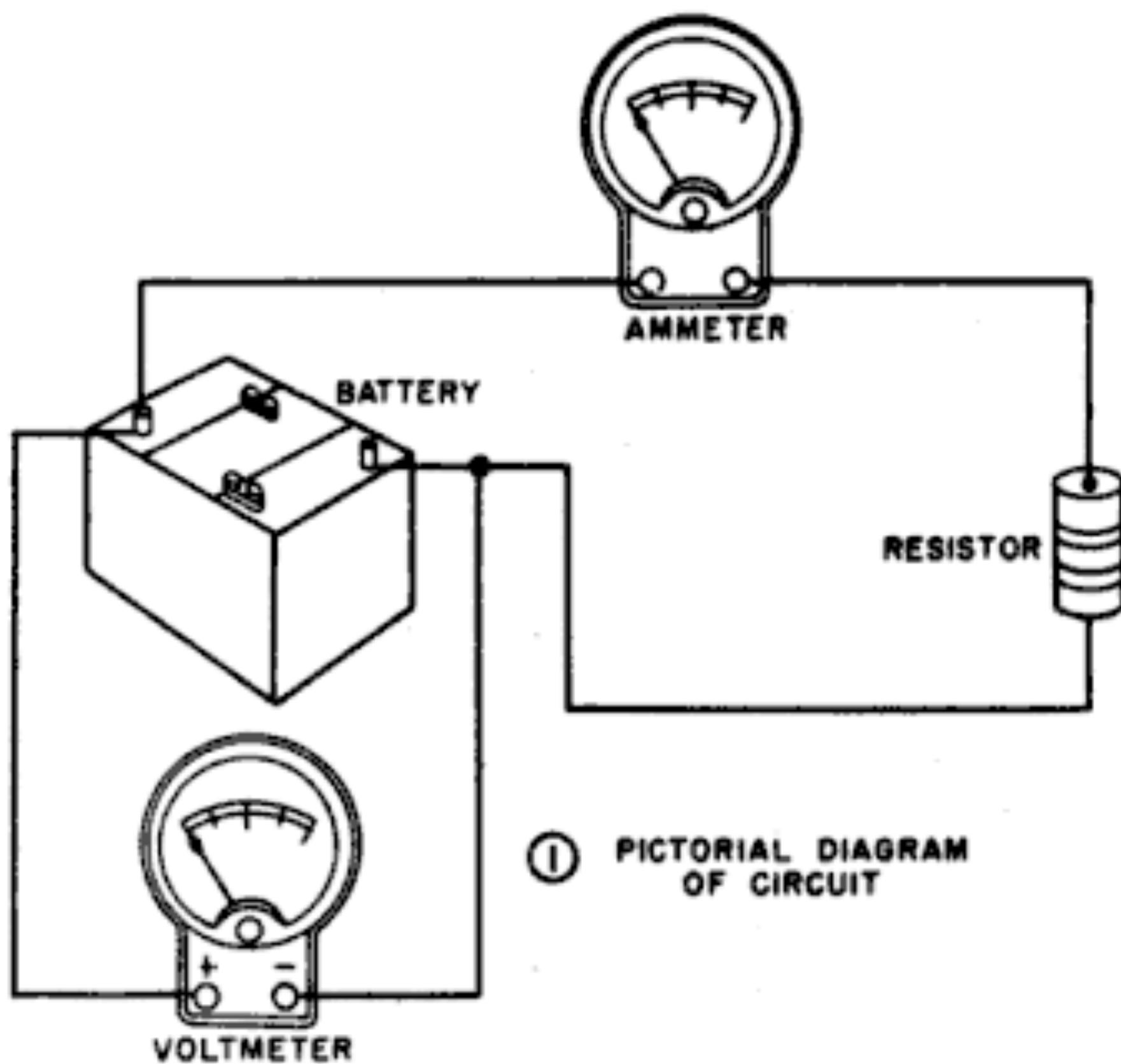
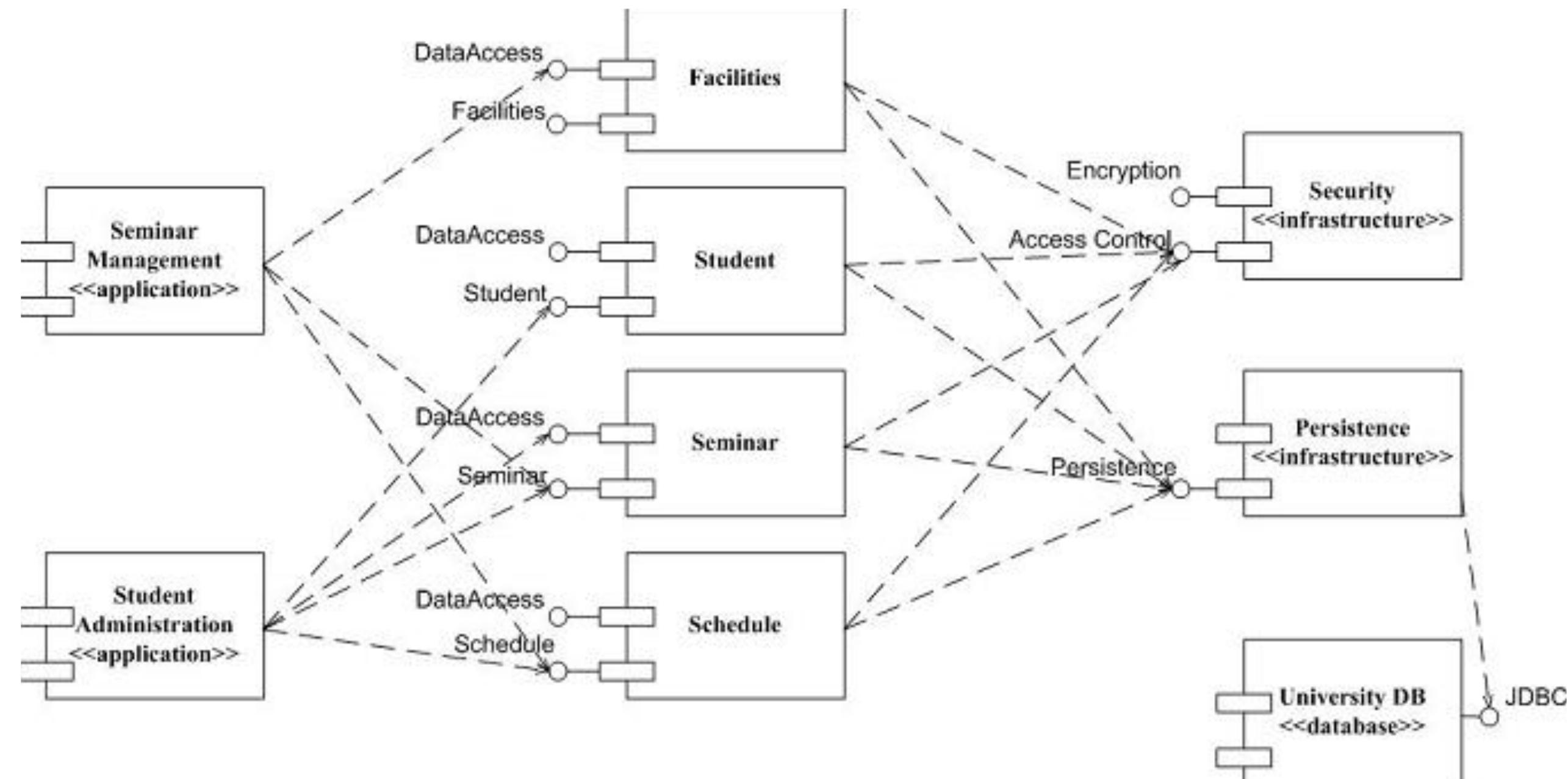
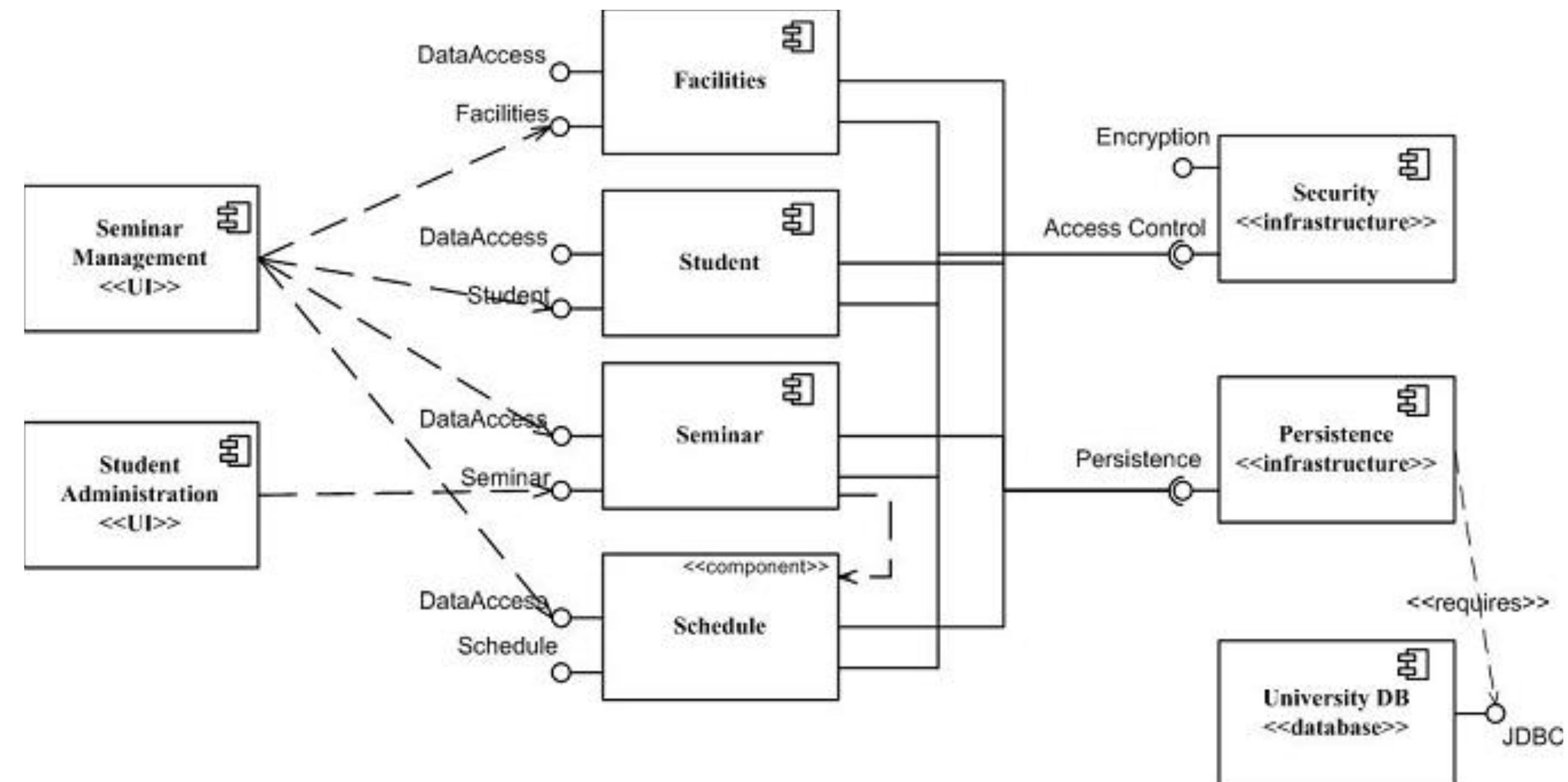


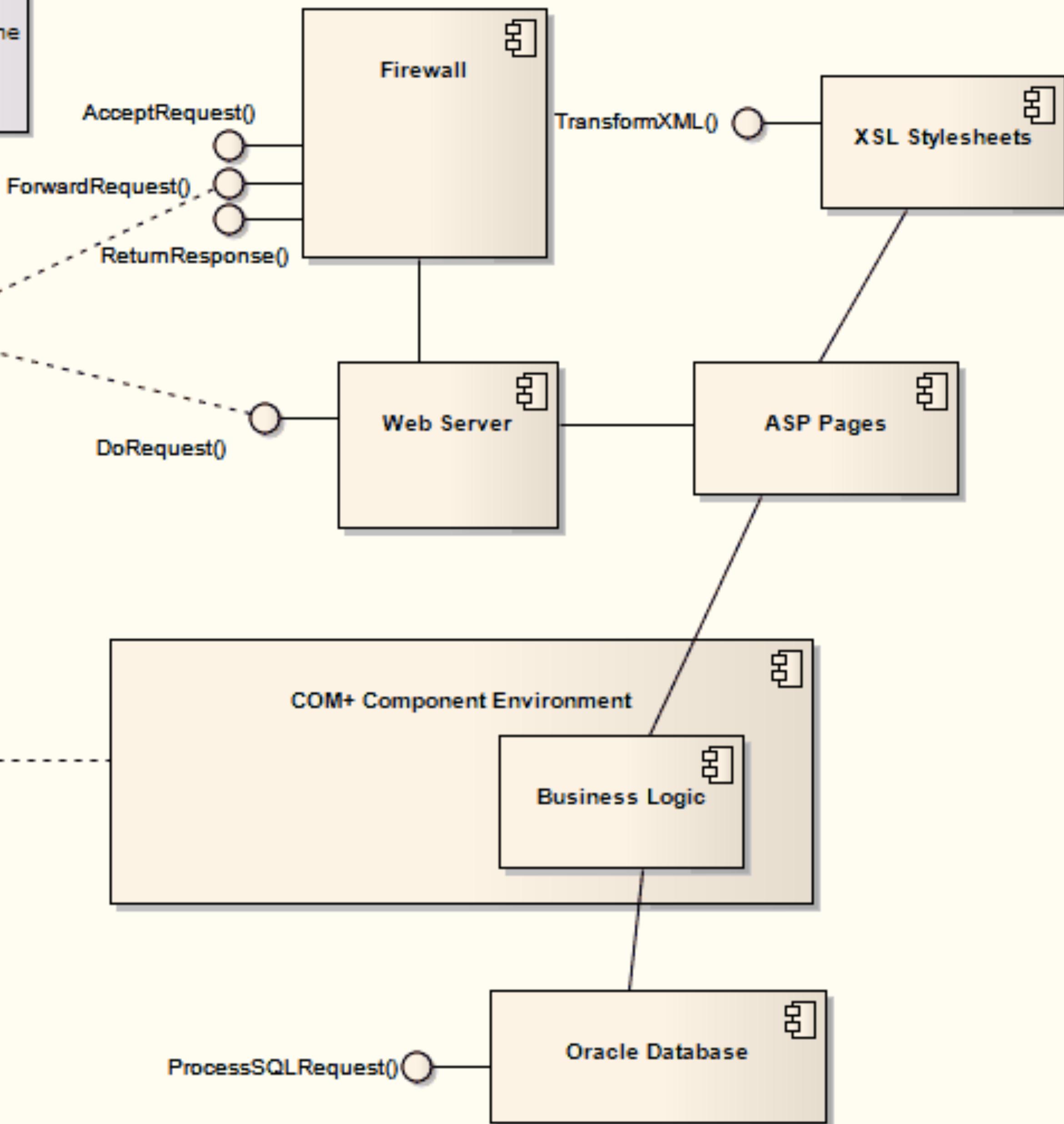
Figure 48. Diagram of a basic circuit.



The construction of low-level components into larger parts of the system are shown on the Component diagram.

Interfaces are modeled on the diagram using the Interface or Exposed Interface elements.

The collection of some components within another are modeled here.



# Software System

Web  
Application

Logging  
Component



Relational  
Database

## <sup>1</sup> component

*noun* | com·po·nent | \kəm-'pō-nənt, 'käm-, käm-'\

### Simple Definition of COMPONENT

Popularity: Top 30% of words

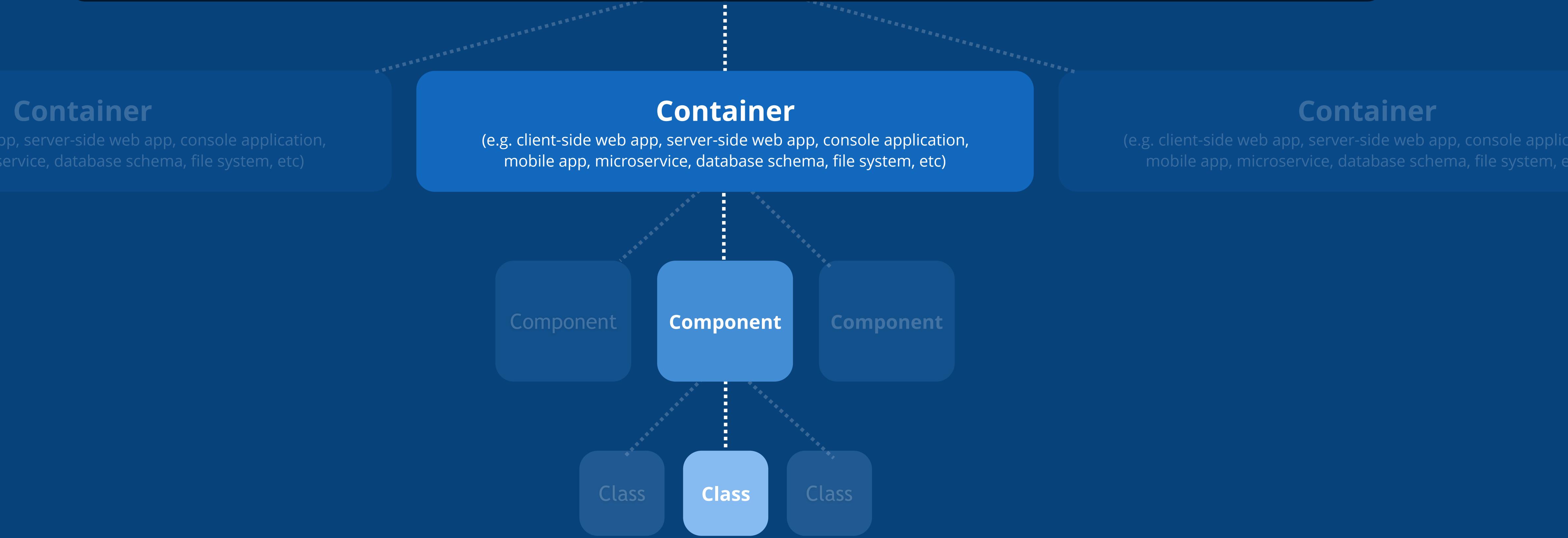
: one of the parts of something (such as a system or mixture) : an important piece of something

Source: Merriam-Webster's Learner's Dictionary

Ubiquitous  
language

A common set of abstractions  
is more important  
than a common notation

# Software System



A **software system** is made up of one or more **containers**,  
each of which contains one or more **components**,  
which in turn are implemented by one or more **classes** (or **code**).

C4

# 1. System Context

The system plus users and system dependencies.

# 2. Containers

The overall shape of the architecture and technology choices.

# 3. Components

Logical components and their interactions within a container.

# 4. Classes (or Code)

Component implementation details.

Overview first

Zoom & filter

Details on demand

## **Titles**

Short and meaningful, numbered if diagram order is important

## **Orientation**

Most important thing in the middle; be consistent across diagrams

## **Layout**

Sticky notes and index cards make a great substitute for drawn boxes, especially early on

## **Labels**

Be wary of using acronyms, especially those related to the business/domain that you work in

## **Lines**

Favour unidirectional arrows, add descriptive text to provide additional information

## **Colour**

Ensure that colour coding is made explicit; watch out for colour-blindness and black/white printers

## **Shapes**

Don't assume that people will understand what different shapes are being used for

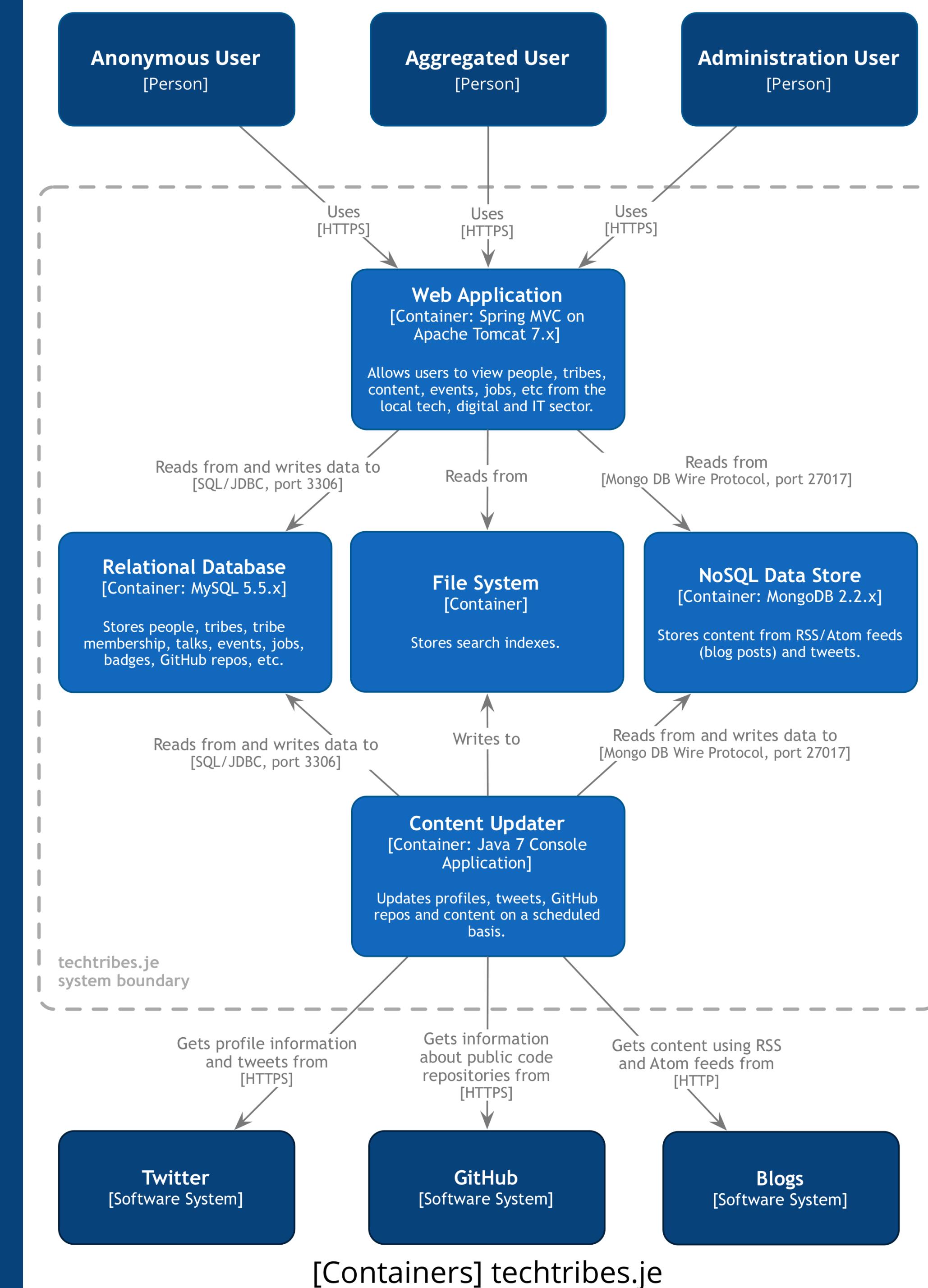
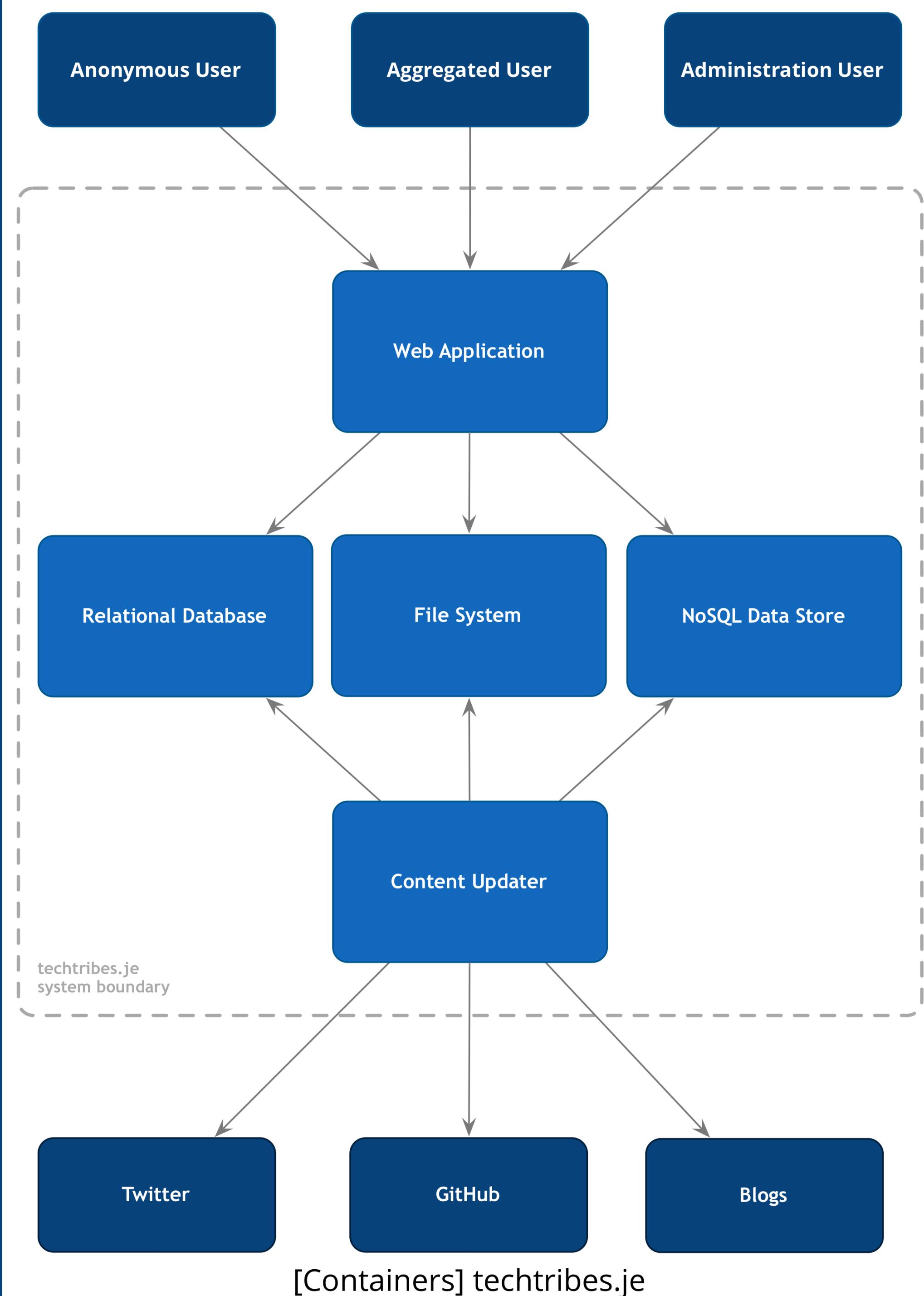
## **Keys**

Explain shapes, lines, colours, borders, acronyms, etc

## **Responsibilities**

Adding responsibilities to boxes can provide a nice "at a glance" view  
(Miller's Law; 7±2)

# Think about notation



Use shape and colour to  
complement a diagram  
that already makes sense

News Events Talks Content Tweets Code People Tribes Jobs

Find me people who know about... or Search...

Most active people Most active business tribes Most active community tribes

**News**

- C5 Alliance plans Microsoft events in Channel Islands**

Channel Island cloud provider, C5 Alliance are organising two breakfast events in both Jersey and Guernsey. The events will be held at 'The Technology for Regulatory Compliance'. The breakfast briefings are due to include demonstrations of the latest Microsoft technologies and how they can be used. The briefings will cover Microsoft CRM process driven forms, SharePoint Workflow & Collaboration and SQL Server Data Warehousing technology. C5 Alliance, who work with a number of clients, both financial and...

Posted Today
- Jersey residents set to have choice in fibre broadband**

Sure customers will soon be able to access Jersey's fibre network following the reaching of an agreement between Sure and JT. JT finalises the commercial arrangements for access to the network. The agreement means that JT has gone some way in fulfilling the second condition of the funding that was set out in the States of Jersey's funding arrangements for the network, as agreed by the Treasury Minister, Senator Philip Coumou. "This is excellent news for our broadband customers who have been extremely patient..."

Posted Yesterday
- Logistics Group taking over Jersey cloud provider**

Logistics Group, the international IT solutions and managed services provider, has announced the acquisition of Jersey iConnect Limited, a privately owned Jersey company and provider of desktop and multi-hosted infrastructure and managed services (MIS) market within the Channel Islands. Through their data facility on the island, the company serves over 1000 clients on the Islands, mainly in the financial and professional services sectors. Their main offering is a hosted desktop solution, using primarily...

Posted 18 Oct 2013

More...

**Local events**

2014 2013 2012

- Ivan Nikkhoo - Growth Funding**

The third set of Tech Tribes talks are ready to rock your world! After a very successful July event we are excited to bring you another great talk for our October talks. We have a great line up of speakers and we take great pleasure in inviting you to attend...

Postponed to 2014
- Tech Tribes Talks**

The Internet of Everything and Gigabit Jersey

The Internet of Everything. Currently, there are an estimated 10 to 15 billion "things" connected to the Internet and this is predicted to grow to 50 billion by 2020. How will this change the way our infrastructure will be used next opportunity...

Postponed to 2014
- The Internet of Everything and Gigabit Jersey**

The Internet of Everything. Currently, there are an estimated 10 to 15 billion "things" connected to the Internet and this is predicted to grow to 50 billion by 2020. How will this change the way our infrastructure will be used next opportunity...

Postponed to 2014

2014 2013 2012

**Talks by local speakers**

2014 2013 2012

- Ted talk**

With the business plan and objectives recently launched for Digital Jersey, our Session Six with Ted Ridgway Watt, will explore some of the key challenges and opportunities that small businesses are currently focused on in order to provide competitive advantage and also give provide interesting examples of how the speakers simple solutions, can change everything.

Digital Jersey Conference 2013 Presentation | 17 Oct 2013
- Agile software architecture sketches and NoUML**

Agility is about moving fast and this requires good communication. A common language is essential in order for teams to push up the same direction, but it's surprising that many agile teams struggle to effectively communicate the architecture of the software they are building. As an industry we do have the Unified Modelling Language (UML), yet most people seem to prefer simple UML-like sketches instead. The problem is that such diagrams rarely make any sense, usually need a narrative to accompany...

Digital Jersey 2013 Workshop | 11 Oct 2013
- Software architecture and the balance with agility**

The agile and software craftsmanship movements are helping to push up the quality of the software systems we produce. Together they are helping us to deliver better software faster, while still maintaining the quality of business while carefully managing time and budgetary constraints. But there's still more we can do. In this event, the impact of software architecture can help prevent many of the problems that projects face, particularly if the team seems to be more chaotic than they are self-organising. Success...

Digital Jersey 2013 Workshop | 10 Oct 2013

**Blog posts, etc**

2014 2013 2012

- OSX & Cisco IPsec VPN issues**

So for the last few days I've been trying to connect to a VPN using OSX's built-in Cisco IPsec client. Turns out it's 10.8 (Mountain Lion), this for the most part doesn't work. Neither does the legacy Cisco client. After much digging around I found the issue to be with the config on the server end but mainly due to Mountain Lion being a 64bit OS. There is a fix for older versions of OSX (using osx�t) but hardware which requires you to boot into 32bit mode...

Posted Today at 16:50
- C5 Alliance plans Microsoft events in Channel Islands**

Channel Island cloud provider, C5 Alliance are organising two breakfast events in both Jersey and Guernsey, named Leveraging Microsoft Technologies for Regulatory Compliance. The breakfast briefings are due to include demonstrations of the latest Microsoft technologies and how they can be used. The briefings will cover Microsoft CRM process driven forms, SharePoint Workflow & Collaboration and SQL Server Data Warehousing technology. C5 Alliance, who work with a number of clients, both financial and...

Posted Today at 16:00
- Increase Your Pinterest Power : Pin Using Viratag**

Three weeks in to the Pinterest experiment, and it didn't take long for me to realize I had bitten off a quite a big task. Fitting in 50 pins between other work, meetings and the day-to-day was going to be a challenge, but I did my best to make it work. Thankfully I had the app Viratag to help me manage the workflow. Viratag allows you to keep track of what pins you've pinned and find on the internet. It makes it easy to collect up a lot of content when you have the time and release it slowly so you don't flood your followers...

Posted Yesterday at 16:00
- Back to the future: Is this déjà vu? CMI Presentation**

Property 24-7 were recently invited to present at the Jersey CMI Annual event in St Helier, Jersey. Chris Clark, Managing Director was set the subject matter of "Back to the Future". Chris gave a great presentation upon McGregor's K-Y Management theories plus an updated version of the principles of management. The rest world economies are demonstrating more local companies are innovating and distributing tasks and enabling the workforce rather than traditional...

Posted Yesterday at 15:48
- Jersey residents set to have choice in fibre broadband**

Sure customers will soon be able to access Jersey's fibre network following the reaching of an agreement between Sure and JT. JT finalises the commercial arrangements for access to the network. The agreement means that JT has gone some way in fulfilling the second condition of the funding that was set out in the States of Jersey's funding arrangements for the network, as agreed by the Treasury Minister, Senator Philip Coumou. "This is excellent news for our broadband customers who have been extremely patient..."

Posted Yesterday at 08:00

More...

**Tweets**

2014 2013 2012

- And by tomorrow, nearly all of the work on my house I tweeted about will be done (lets be real, I love it when a plan comes together)**

# And by tomorrow, nearly all of the work on my house I tweeted about will be done (lets be real, I love it when a plan comes together)

Postponed to 2014
- Do you like gin, design and conserving elephants? Just so happened there is something that looks like all 3 here. May I present @dineanddrunk**

# Do you like gin, design and conserving elephants? Just so happened there is something that looks like all 3 here. May I present @dineanddrunk

Postponed to 2014
- @JerseyITGuy this is what's returned when my search term happens there is something that looks like all 3 here. May I present @dineanddrunk**

# @JerseyITGuy this is what's returned when my search term happens there is something that looks like all 3 here. May I present @dineanddrunk

Postponed to 2014
- @jonathanbp send me that black photo please**

# @jonathanbp send me that black photo please

Postponed to 2014
- Looking forward to hearing updates about the exciting future of 'The Internet of Everything' tomorrow at the abcTech 'Everything' event**

# Looking forward to hearing updates about the exciting future of 'The Internet of Everything' tomorrow at the abcTech 'Everything' event

Postponed to 2014
- Reform - abstract shapes playground tool thing... em yeah http://carpediem400.com/reform/index.html**

# Reform - abstract shapes playground tool thing... em yeah http://carpediem400.com/reform/index.html

Postponed to 2014
- RT @drcorby: I'm hoping the new Mac Pro also comes in a gold color. Gotta have everything matching, ya know.**

# RT @drcorby: I'm hoping the new Mac Pro also comes in a gold color. Gotta have everything matching, ya know.

Postponed to 2014
- @ewarpig @BootstrapJersey Reform or just send up lasers?**

# @ewarpig @BootstrapJersey Reform or just send up lasers?

Postponed to 2014
- @knight How long before USA invades??**

# @knight How long before USA invades??

Postponed to 2014
- Reform - abstract shapes playground tool thing... em yeah http://carpediem400.com/reform/index.html**

# Reform - abstract shapes playground tool thing... em yeah http://carpediem400.com/reform/index.html

Postponed to 2014
- More...**

techtribes.je is the only way to keep up to date with the IT, tech and digital sector in Jersey and Guernsey, Channel Islands

[Twitter](#) [YouTube](#) [Sign in with Twitter](#)

About techtribes.je (build 347)

# techtribes.je

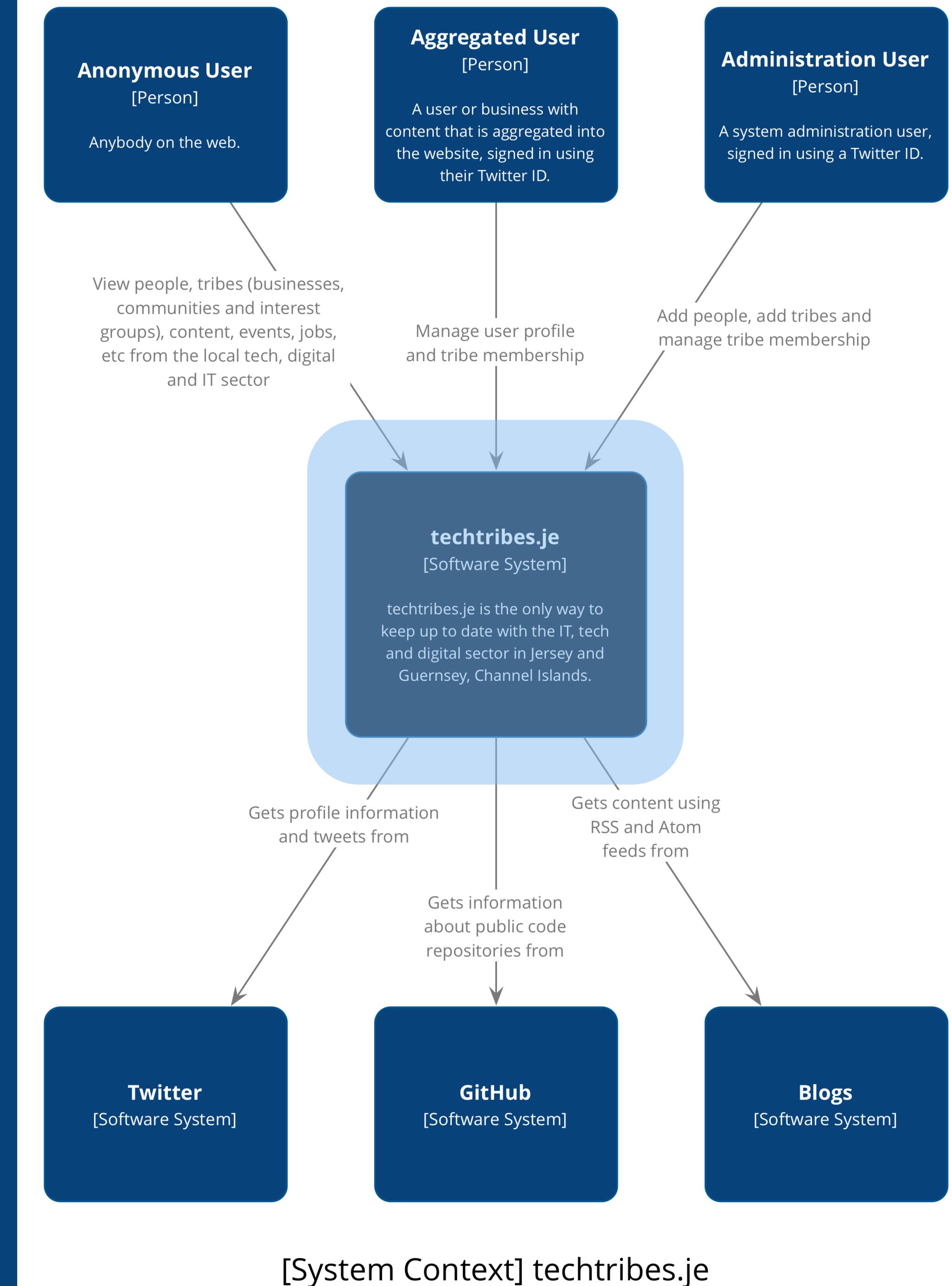
## A simple content aggregator for the local tech and digital industry

# 1. System Context diagram

## 2. Container diagram

## 3. Component diagram

## 4. Class diagram

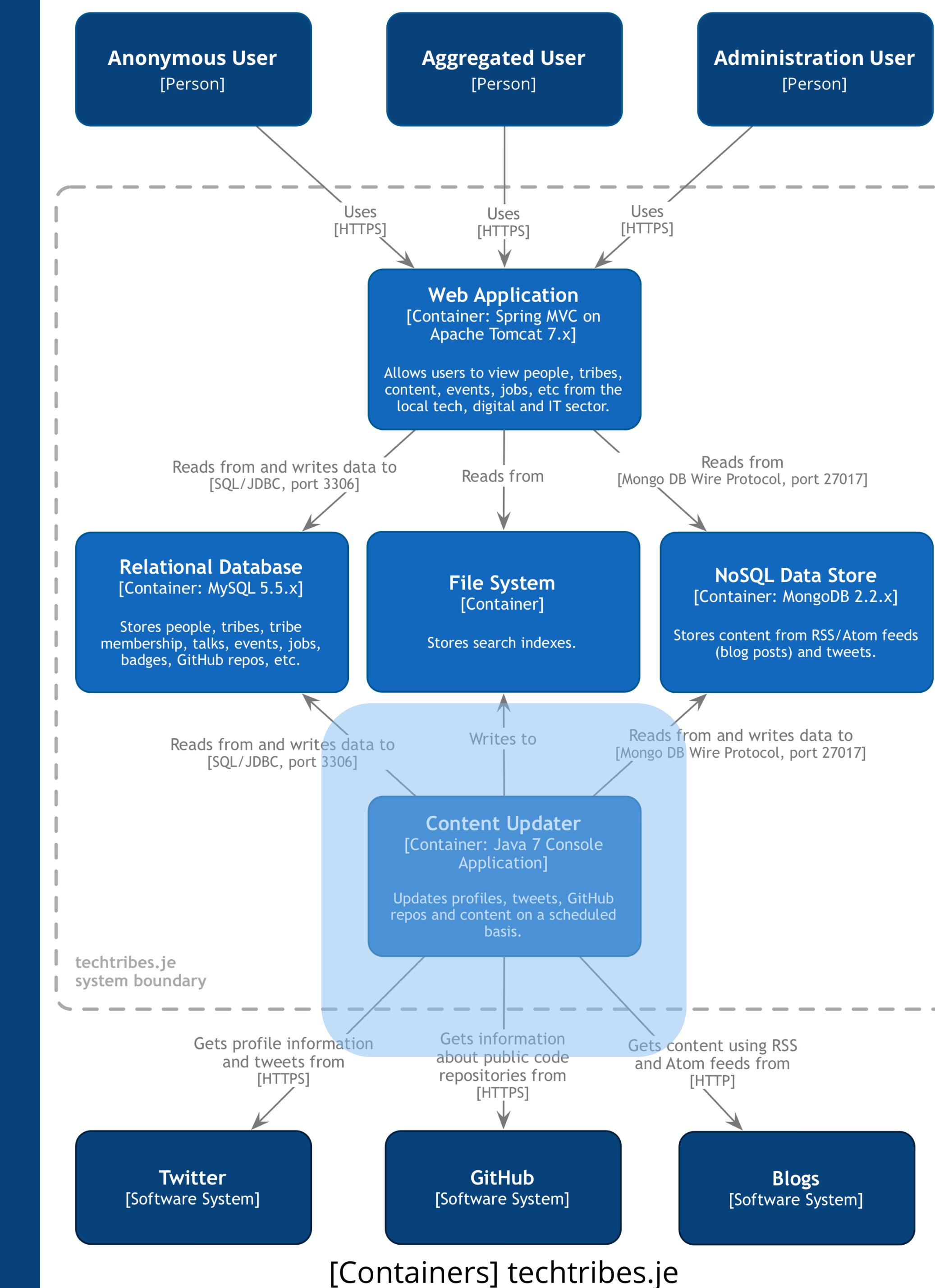


# 1. System Context diagram

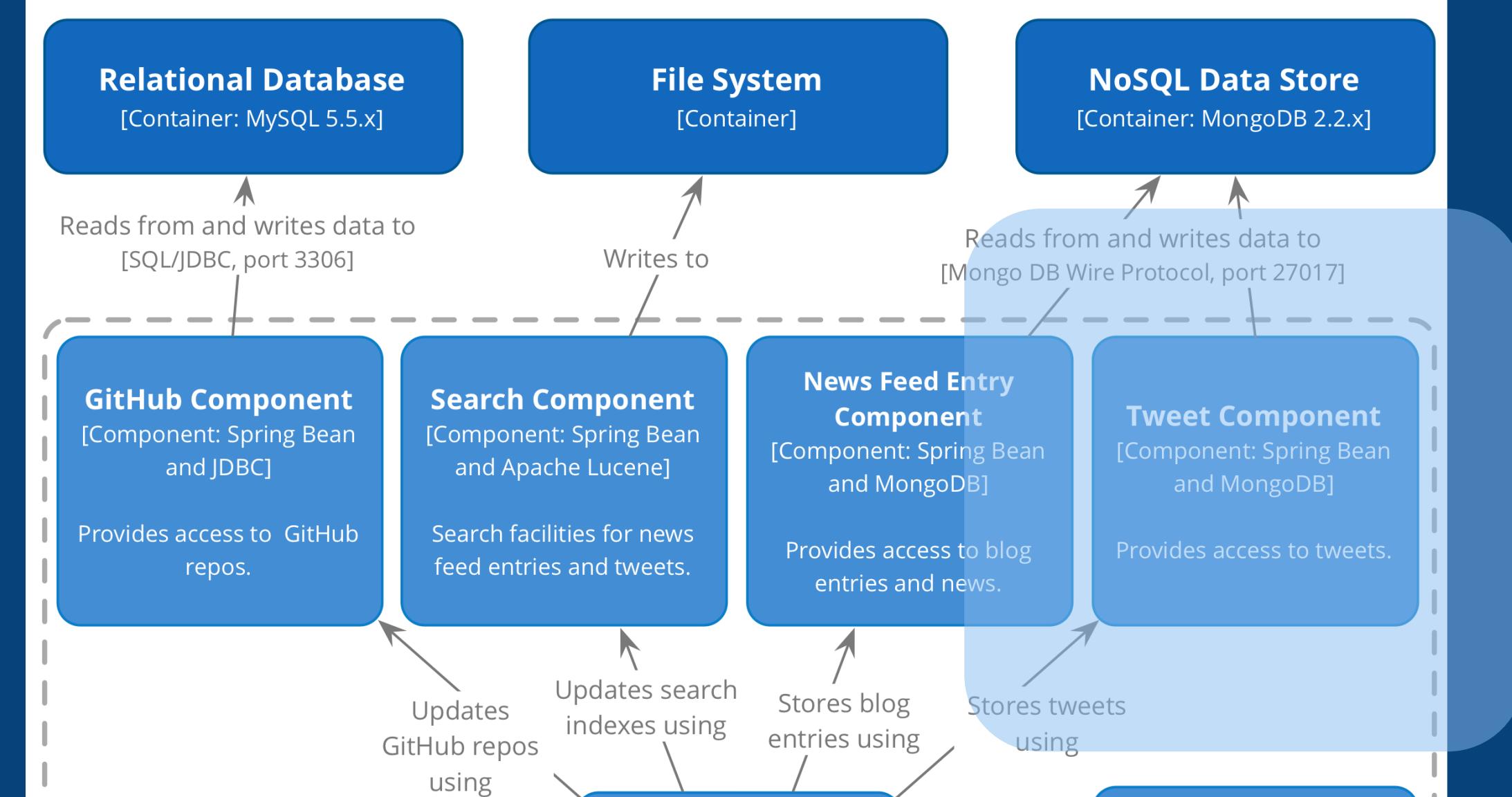
## 2. Container diagram

### 3. Component diagram

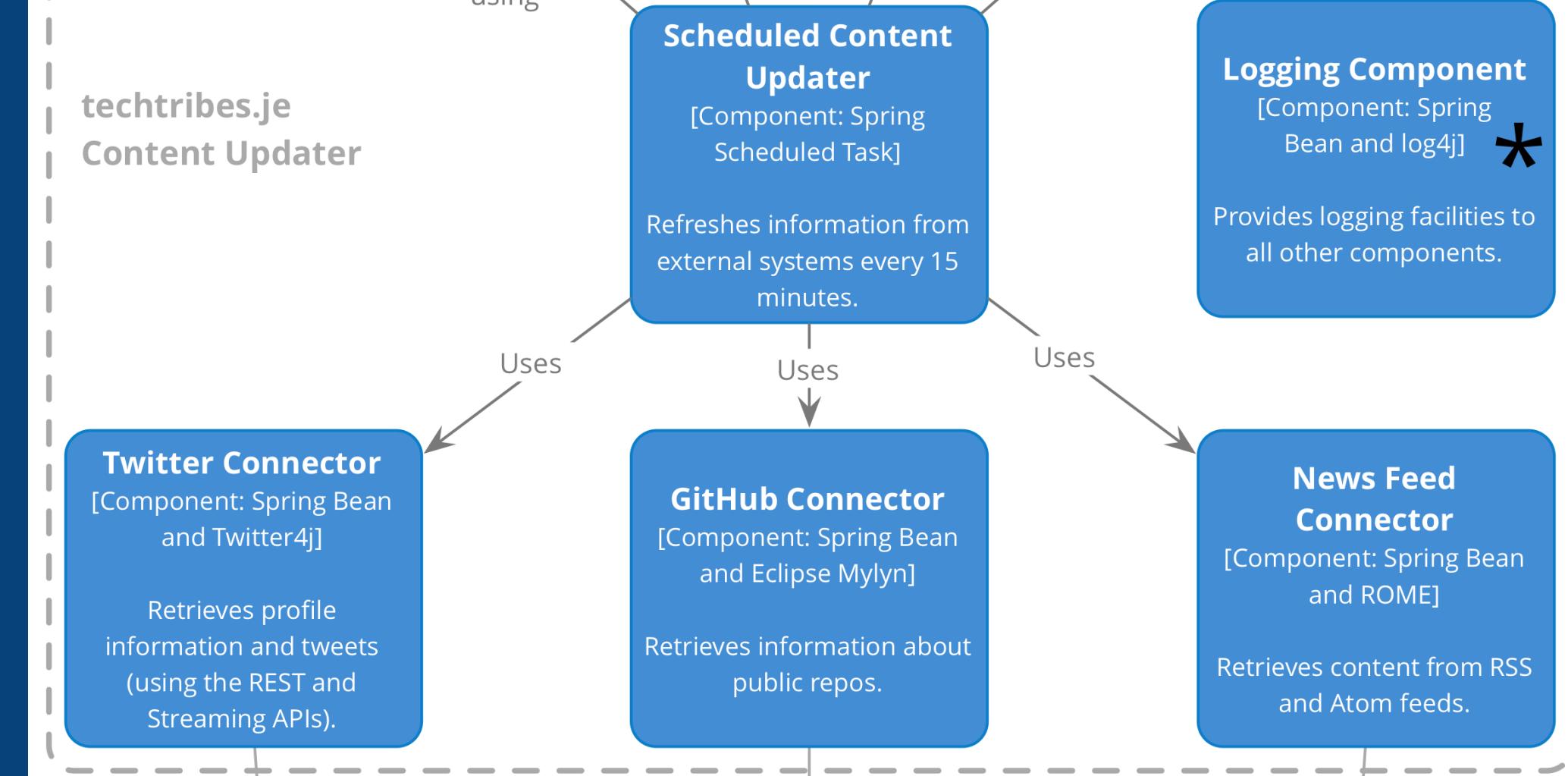
#### 4. Class diagram



# 1. System Context diagram



# 3. Component diagram



# 4. Class diagram



\* Used by all components

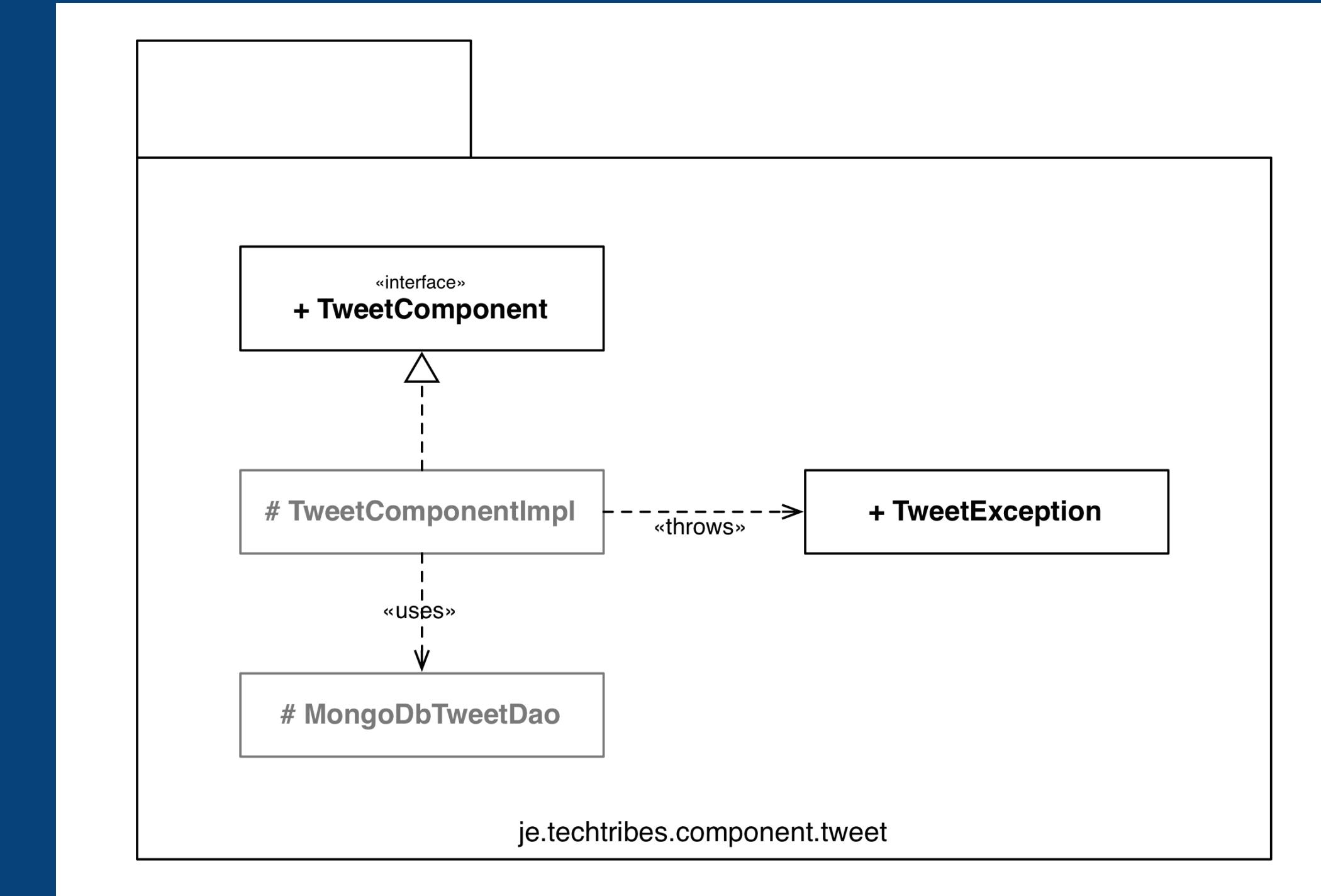
[Components] techtribes.je - Content Updater

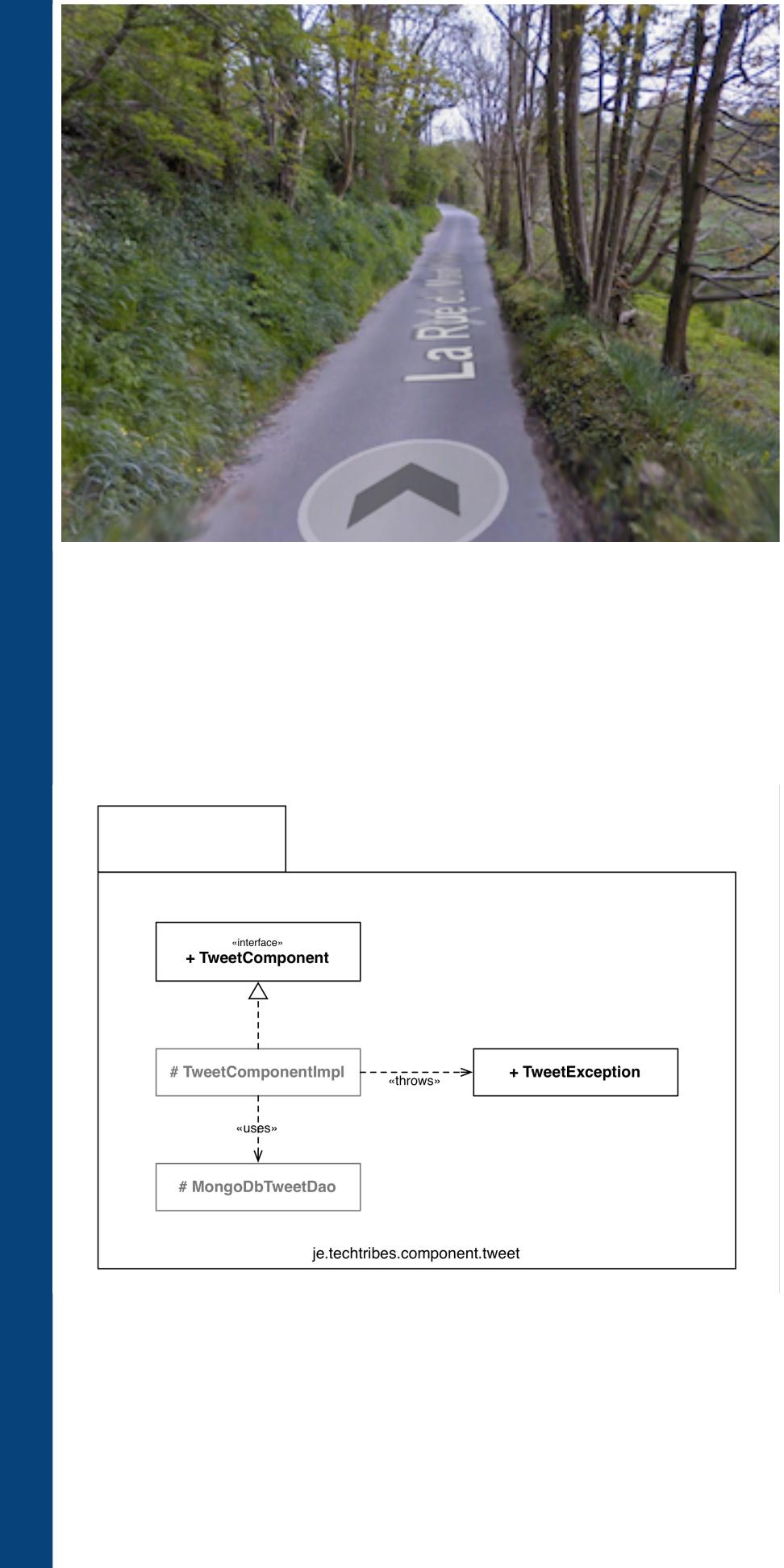
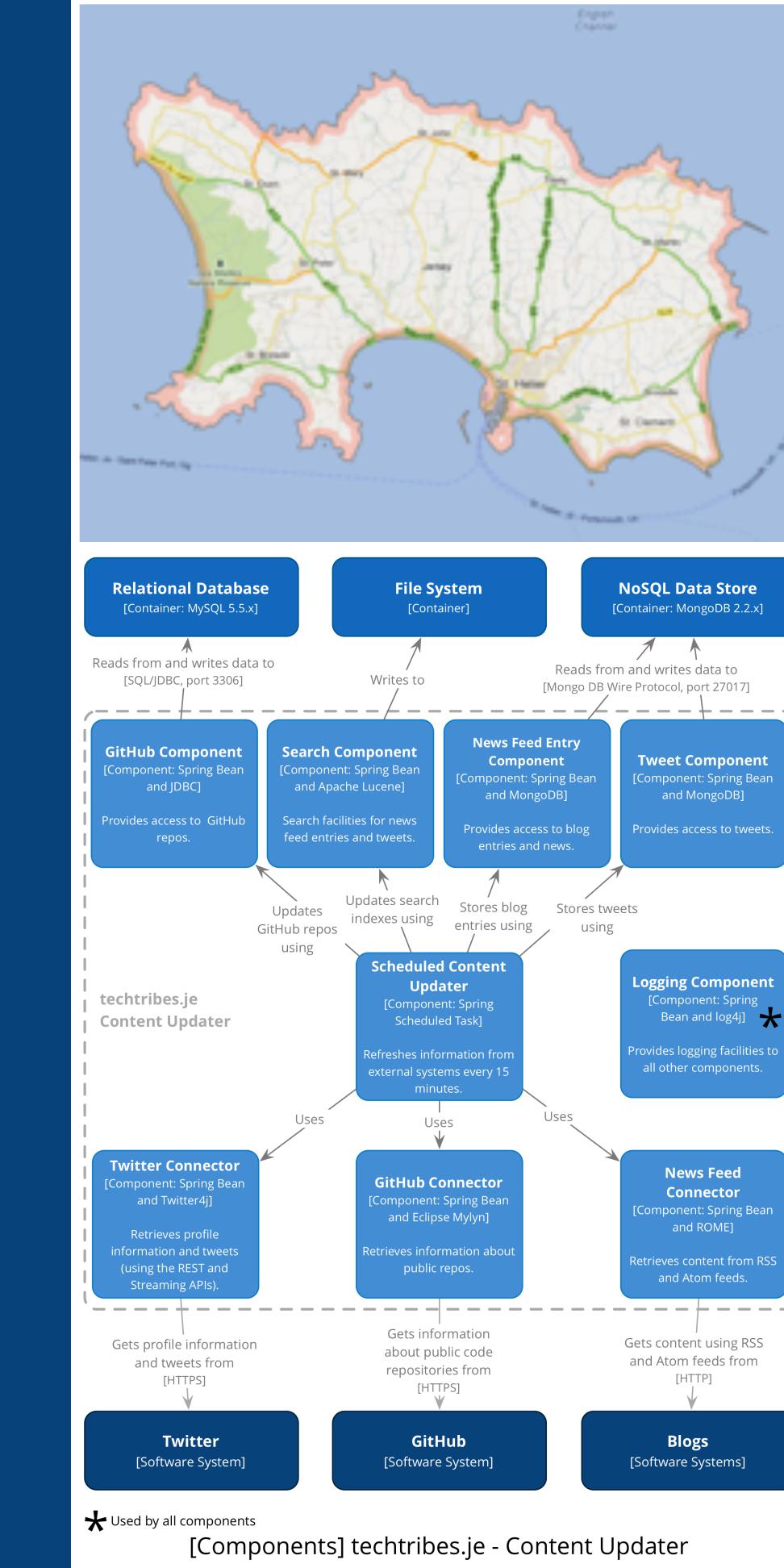
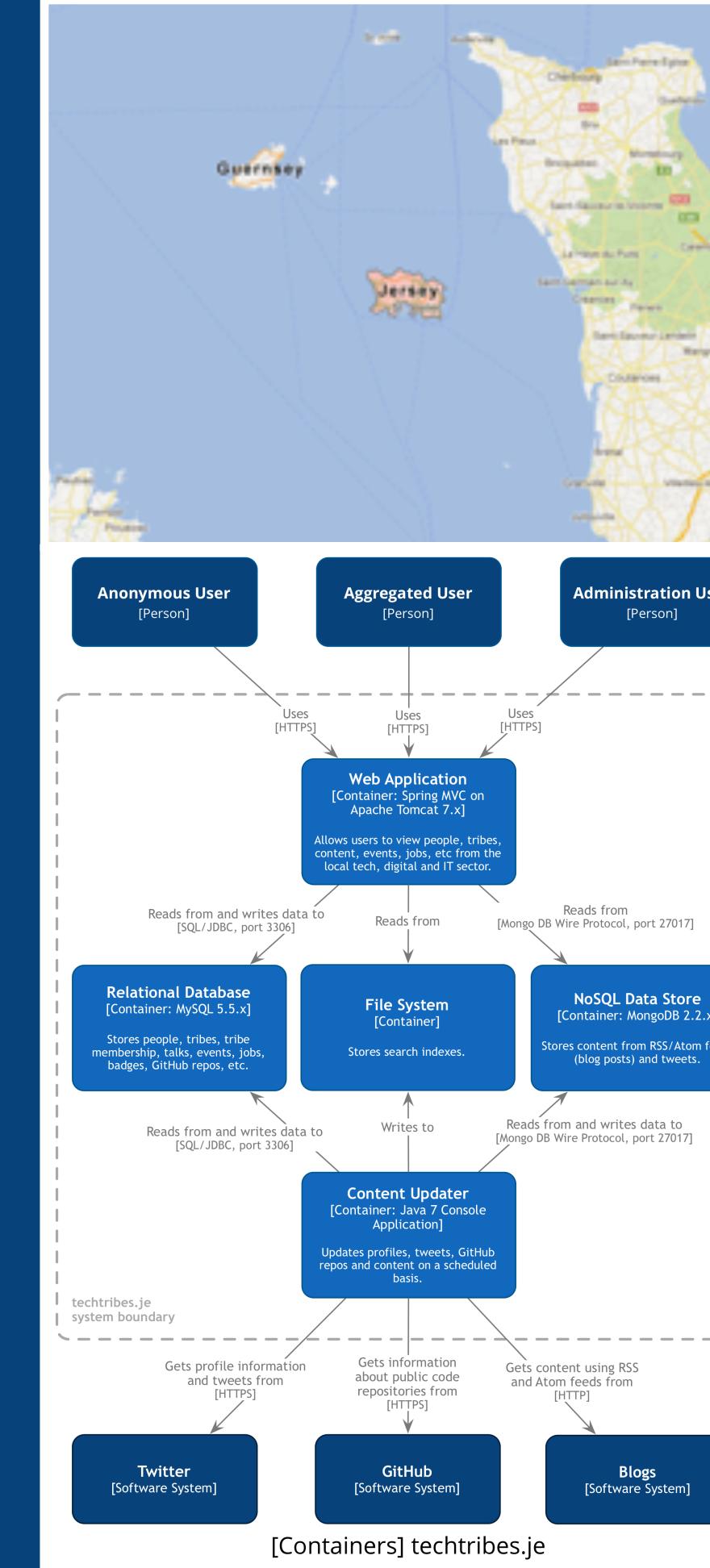
# 1. System Context diagram

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## 3. Component diagram

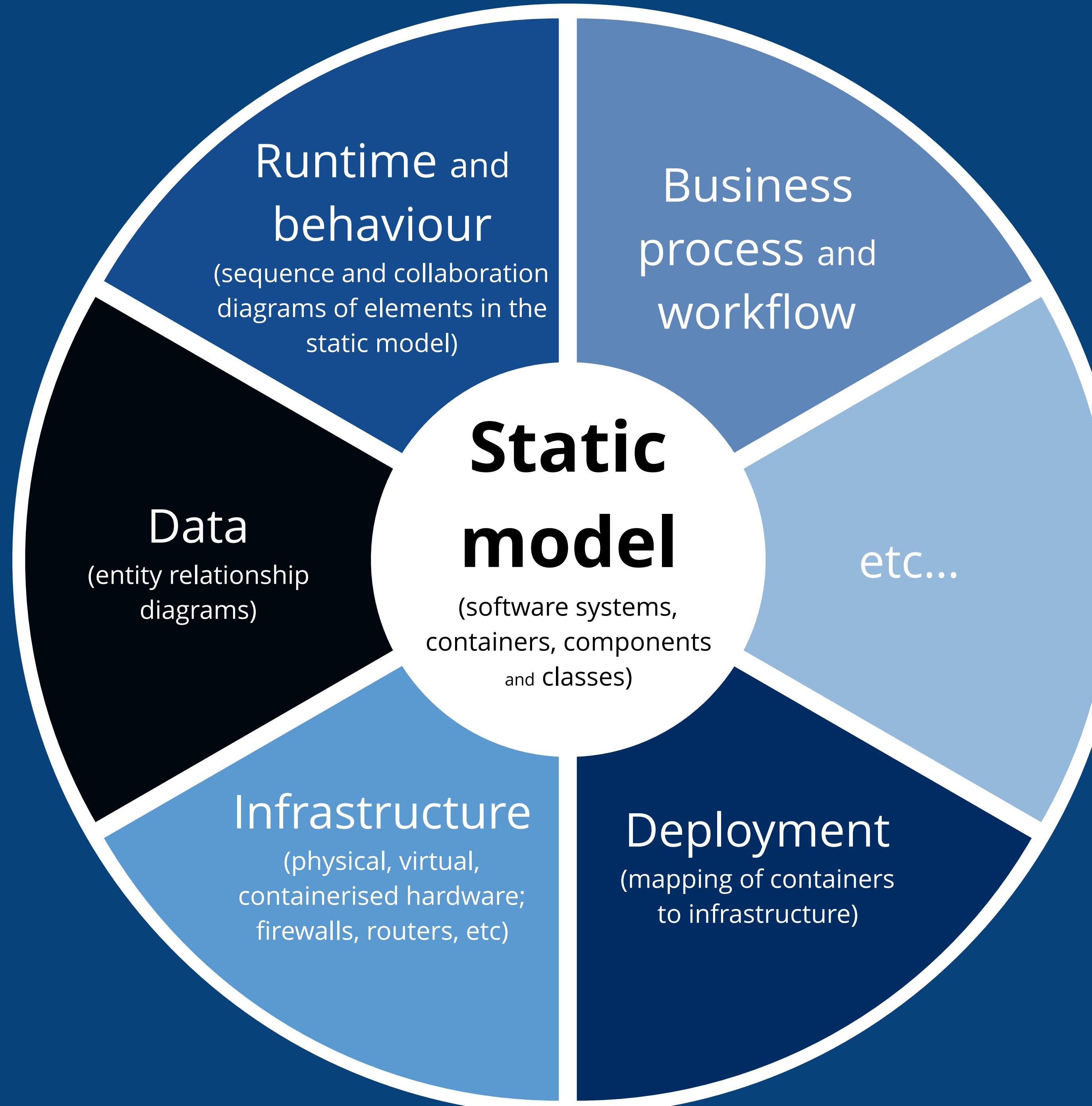
## 4. Class diagram





# Diagrams are maps

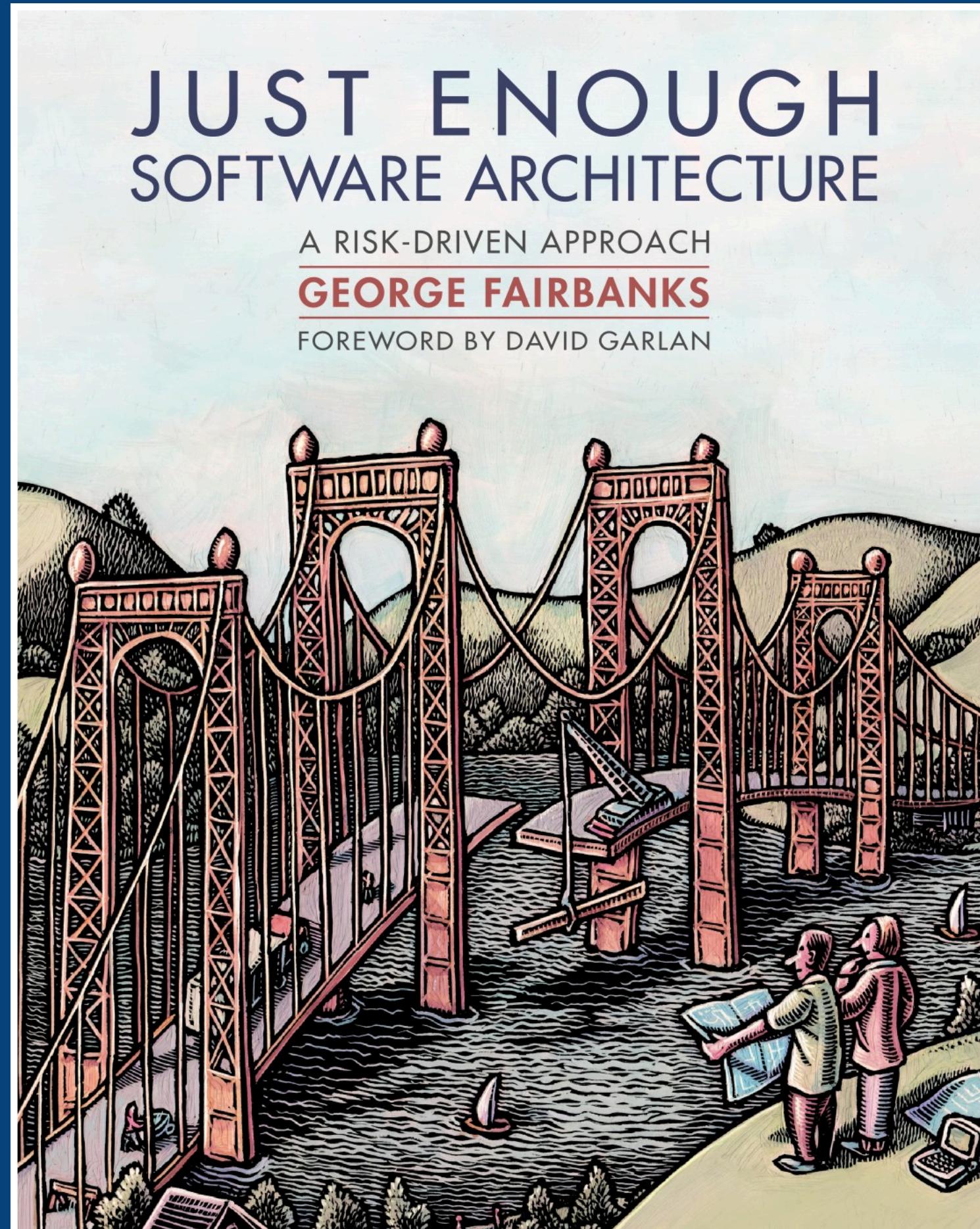
that help software developers navigate a large and/or complex codebase



A model of the  
**static structure**  
forms the basis  
for other views

Why is there a separation  
between the logical and  
development views?

Our architecture diagrams  
don't match the code.



**Model-code gap.** Your architecture models and your source code will not show the same things. The difference between them is the *model-code gap*. Your architecture models include some abstract concepts, like components, that your programming language does not, but could. Beyond that, architecture models include intensional elements, like design decisions and constraints, that cannot be expressed in procedural source code at all.

Consequently, the relationship between the architecture model and source code is complicated. It is mostly a refinement relationship, where the extensional elements in the architecture model are refined into extensional elements in source code. This is shown in Figure 10.3. However, intensional elements are not refined into corresponding elements in source code.

Upon learning about the model-code gap, your first instinct may be to avoid it. But reflecting on the origins of the gap gives little hope of a general solution in the short term: architecture models help you reason about complexity and scale because they are abstract and intensional; source code executes on machines because it is concrete and extensional.

# “model-code gap”

Software Reflexion Models:  
Bridging the Gap between Source and High-Level Models\*

Gail C. Murphy and David Notkin

Dept. of Computer Science & Engineering  
University of Washington  
Box 352350  
Seattle WA, USA 98195-2350  
[{gmurphy, notkin}@cs.washington.edu](mailto:{gmurphy, notkin}@cs.washington.edu)

## Abstract

Software engineers often use high-level models (for instance, box and arrow sketches) to reason and communicate about an existing software system. One problem with high-level models is that they are almost always inaccurate with respect to the system's source code. We have developed an approach that helps an engineer use a high-level model of the structure of an existing software system as a lens through which to see a model of that system's source code. In particular, an engineer defines a high-level model and specifies how the model maps to the source. A tool then computes a software reflexion model that shows where the engineer's high-level model agrees with and where it differs from a model of the source.

The paper provides a formal characterization of reflexion models, discusses practical aspects of the approach, and relates experiences of applying the approach and tools to a number of different systems. The illustrative example used in the paper describes the application of reflexion models to NetBSD, an implementation of Unix comprised of 250,000 lines of C code. In only a few hours, an engineer computed several reflexion models that provided him with a useful, global overview of the structure of the NetBSD virtual memory subsystem. The approach has also been applied to aid in the understanding and experimental reengineering of the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet product.

\*This research was funded in part by the NSF grant CCR-8858804 and a Canadian NSERC post-graduate scholarship.

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Kevin Sullivan

Dept. of Computer Science  
University of Virginia  
Charlottesville VA, USA 22903  
[sullivan@cs.virginia.edu](mailto:sullivan@cs.virginia.edu)

## 1 Introduction

Software engineers often think about an existing software system in terms of high-level models. Box and arrow sketches of a system, for instance, are often found on engineers' whiteboards. Although these models are commonly used, reasoning about the system in terms of such models can be dangerous because the models are almost always inaccurate with respect to the system's source.

Current reverse engineering systems derive high-level models from the source code. These derived models are useful because they are, by their very nature, accurate representations of the source. Although accurate, the models created by these reverse engineering systems may differ from the models sketched by engineers; an example of this is reported by Wong et al. [WTMS95].

We have developed an approach, illustrated in Figure 1, that enables an engineer to produce sufficiently accurate high-level models in a different way. The engineer defines a high-level model of interest, extracts a source model (such as a call graph or an inheritance hierarchy) from the source code, and defines a declarative mapping between the two models. A *software reflexion model* is then computed to determine where the engineer's high-level model does and does not agree with the source model.<sup>1</sup> An engineer interprets the reflexion model and, as necessary, modifies the input to iteratively compute additional reflexion models.

<sup>1</sup>The old English spelling differentiates our use of "reflexion" from the field of reflective computing [Smi84].

# 1 Introduction

Software engineers often think about an existing software system in terms of high-level models. Box and arrow sketches of a system, for instance, are often found on engineers' whiteboards. Although these models are commonly used, reasoning about the system in terms of such models can be dangerous because the models are almost always inaccurate with respect to the system's source.

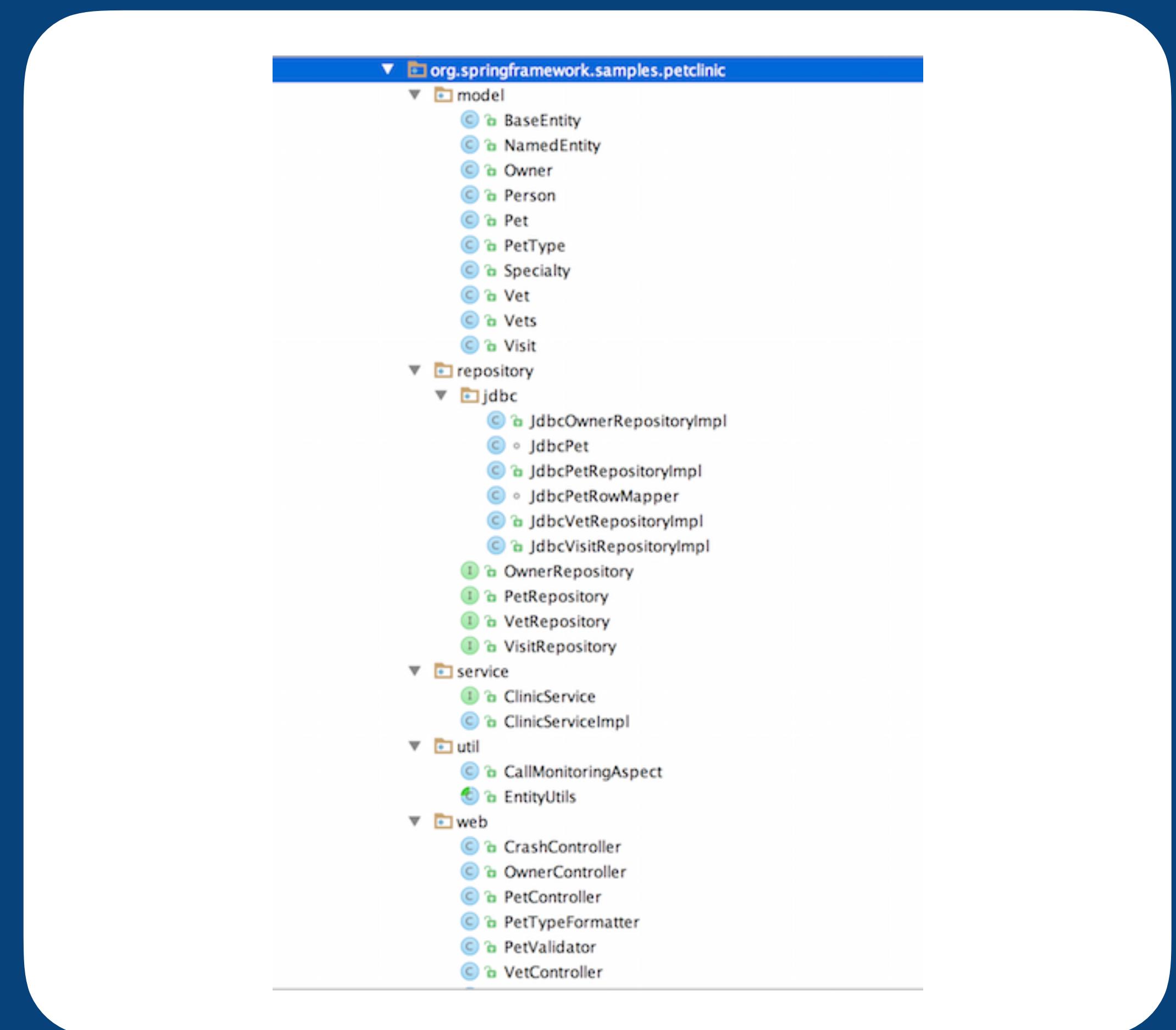
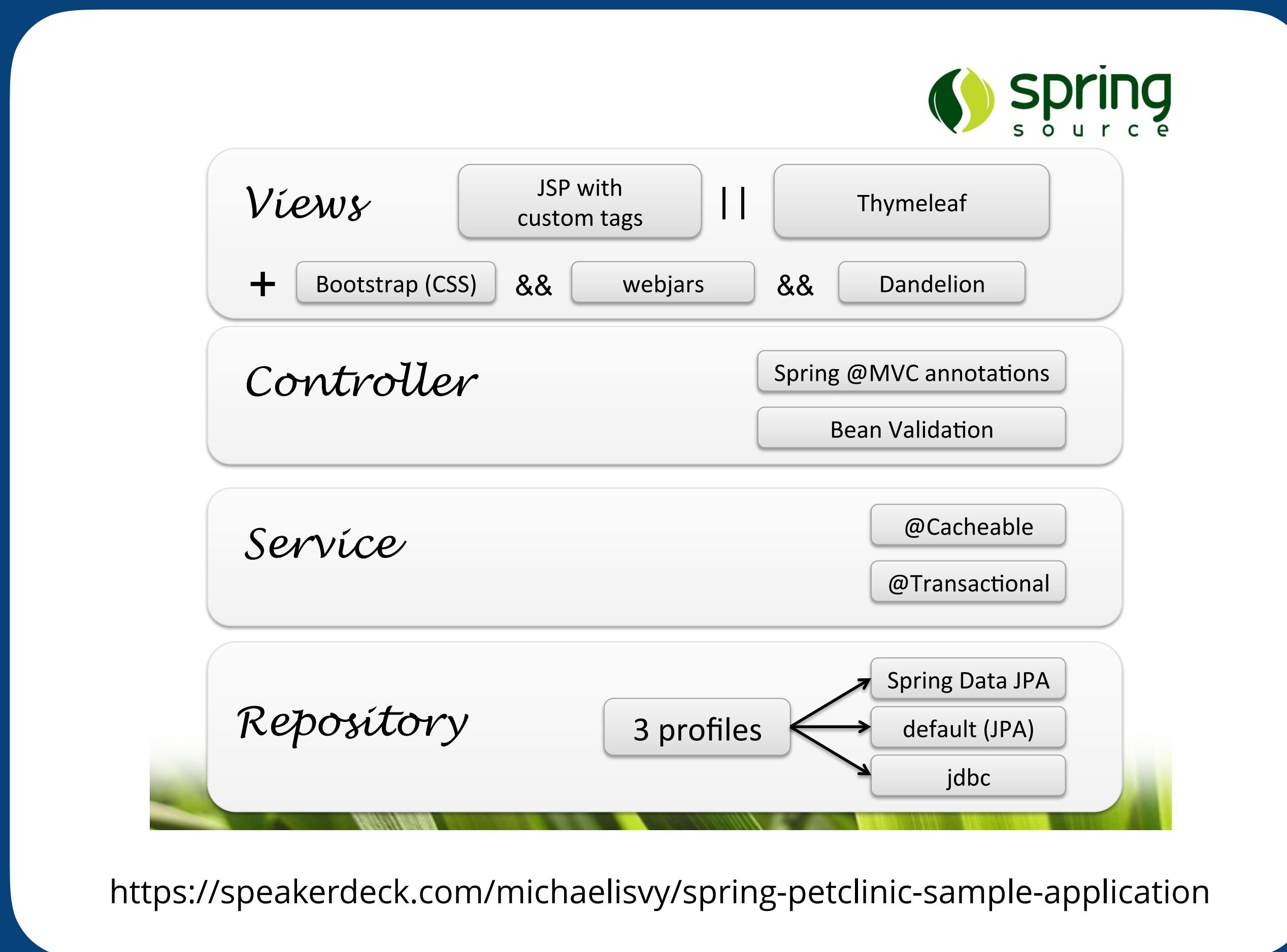
Current reverse engineering systems derive high-level models from the source code. These derived models are useful because they are, by their very nature, accurate representations of the source. Although accurate, the models created by these reverse engineering systems may differ from the models sketched by engineers; an example of this is reported by Wong et al. [WTMS95].

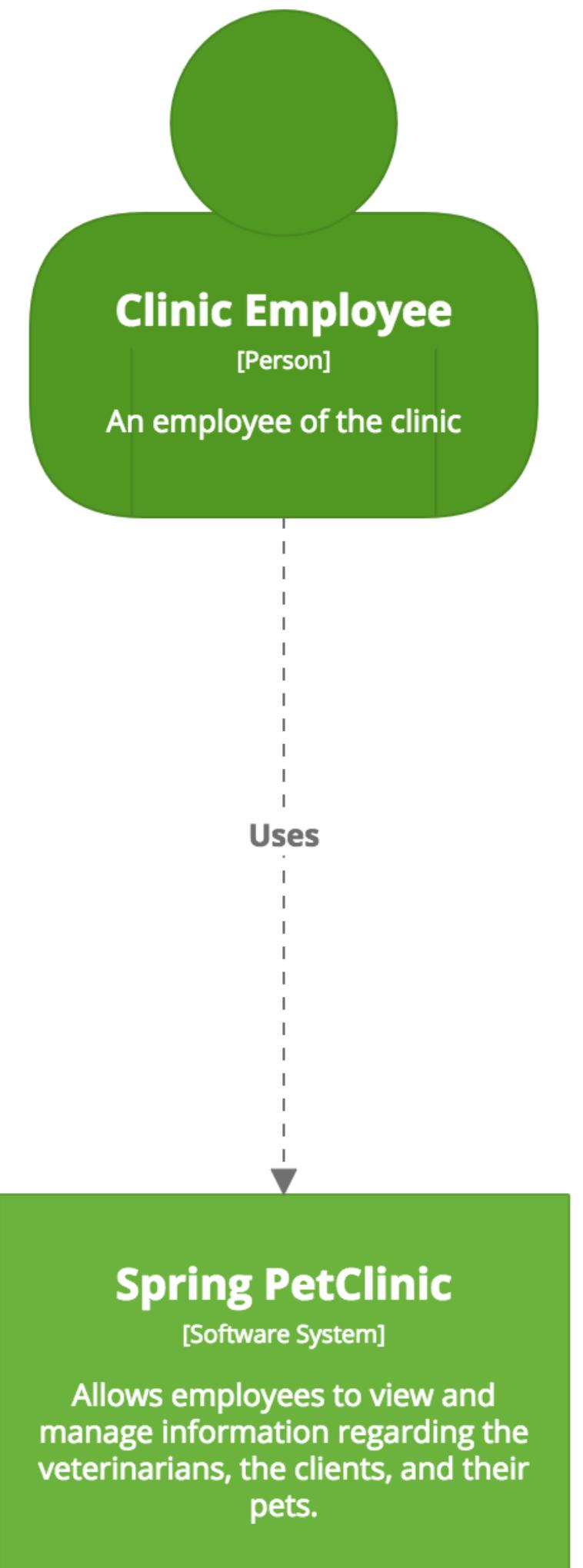
**Would you code it that way?**  
(ensure that your diagrams reflect  
your implementation intent)

# Spring PetClinic

A sample application that illustrates how to build Java web applications using the Spring MVC framework

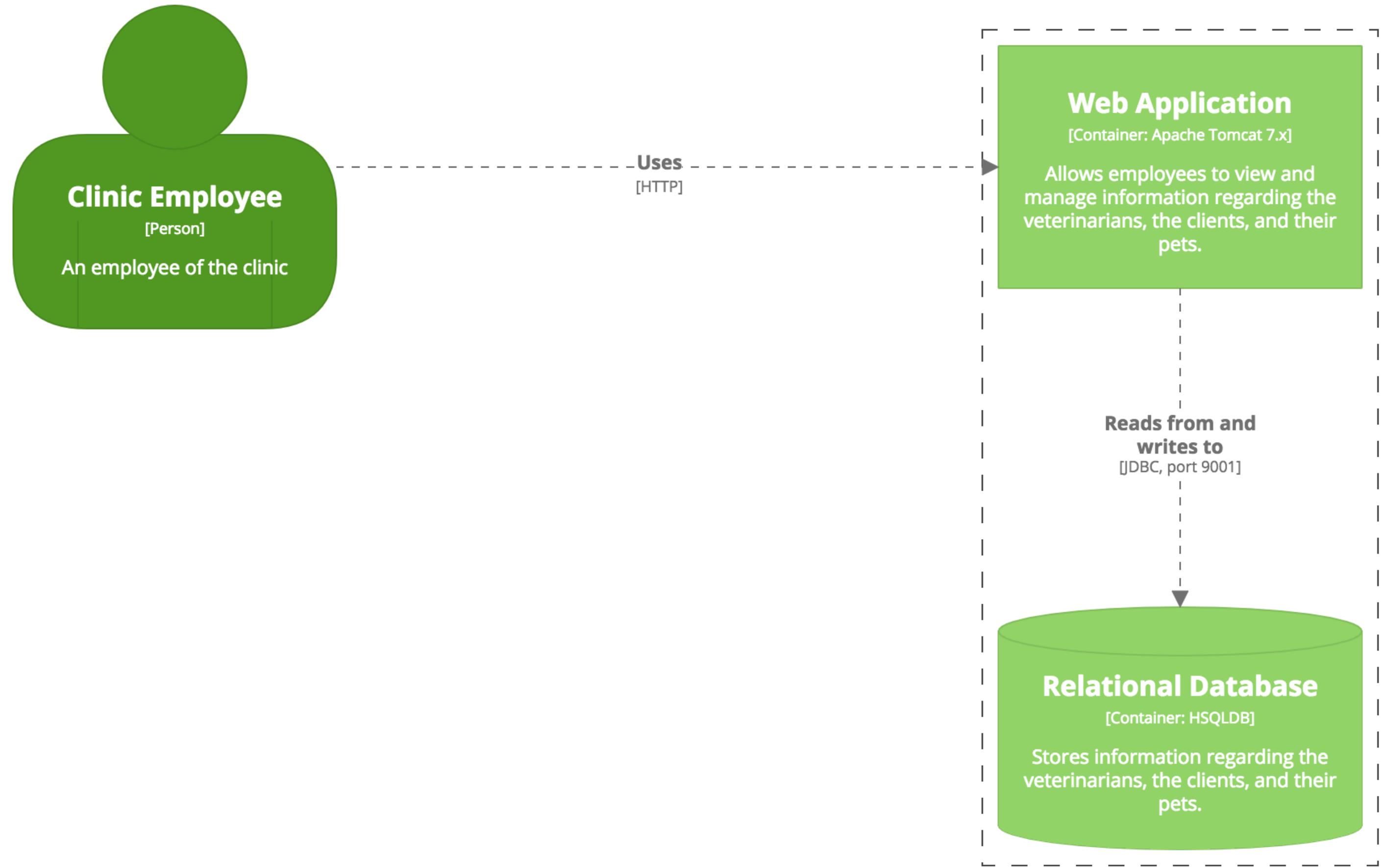
<https://github.com/spring-projects/spring-petclinic/>





## System Context diagram for Spring PetClinic

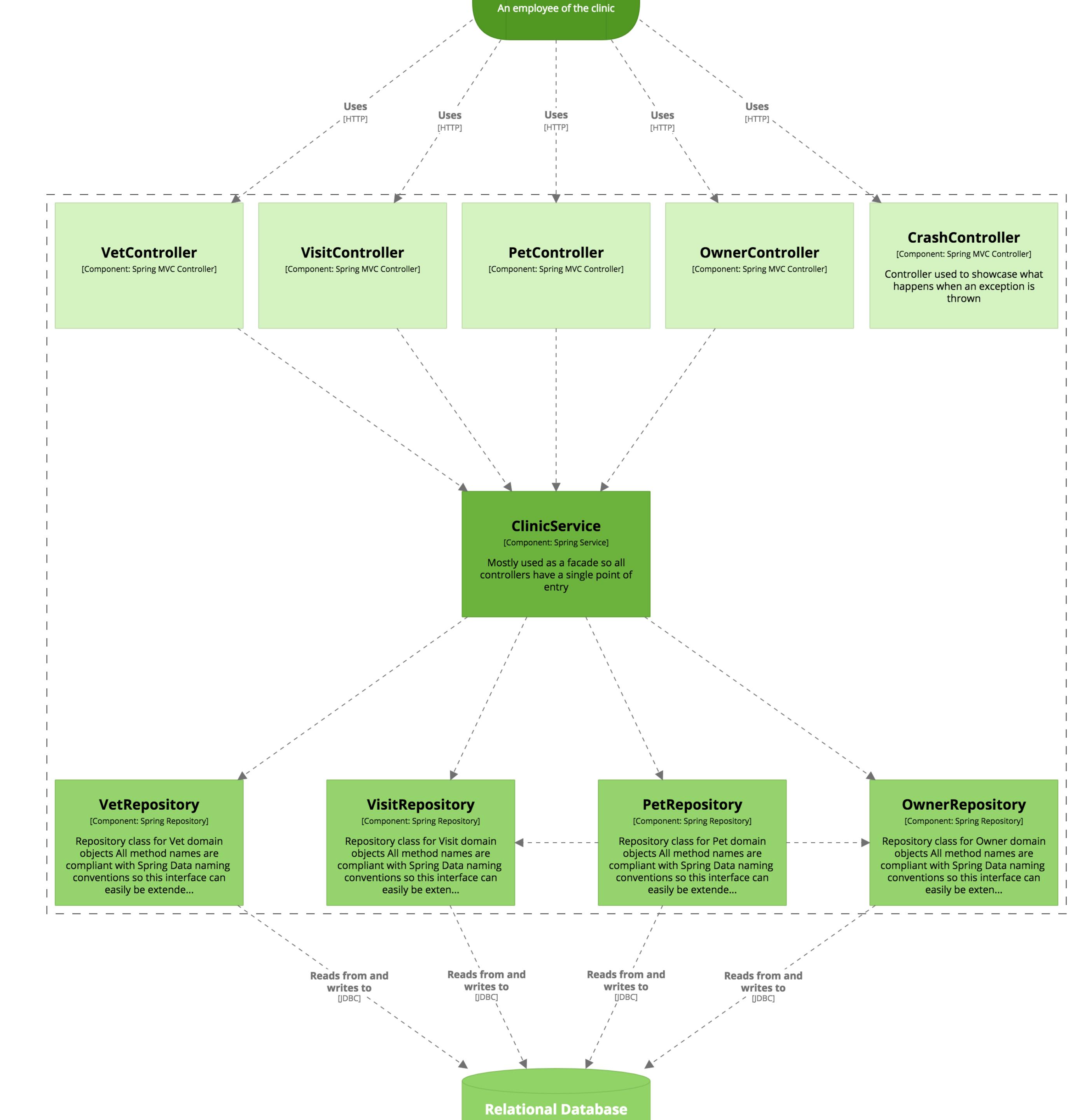
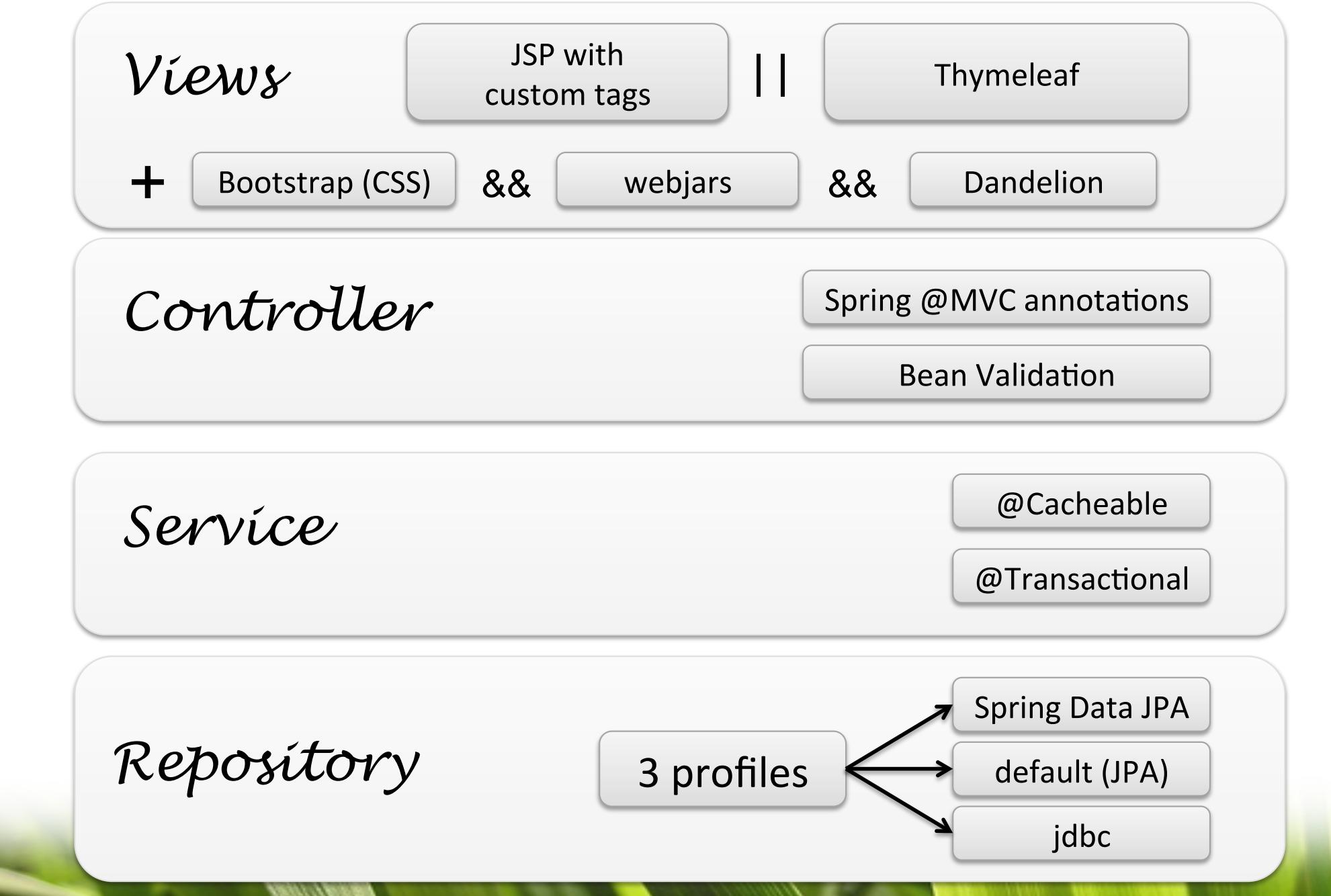
The System Context diagram for the Spring PetClinic system.  
Friday 18 November 2016 22:21 UTC

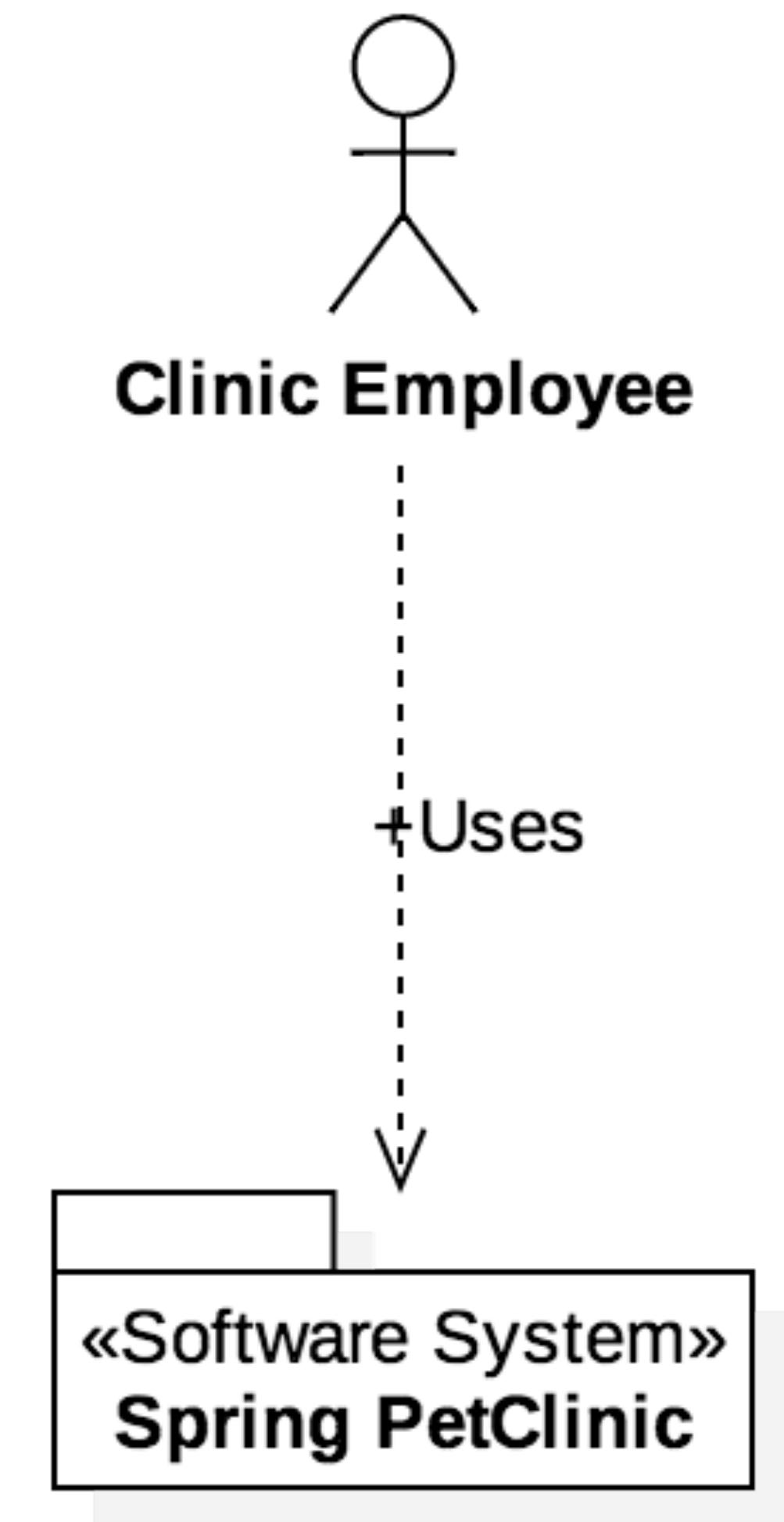
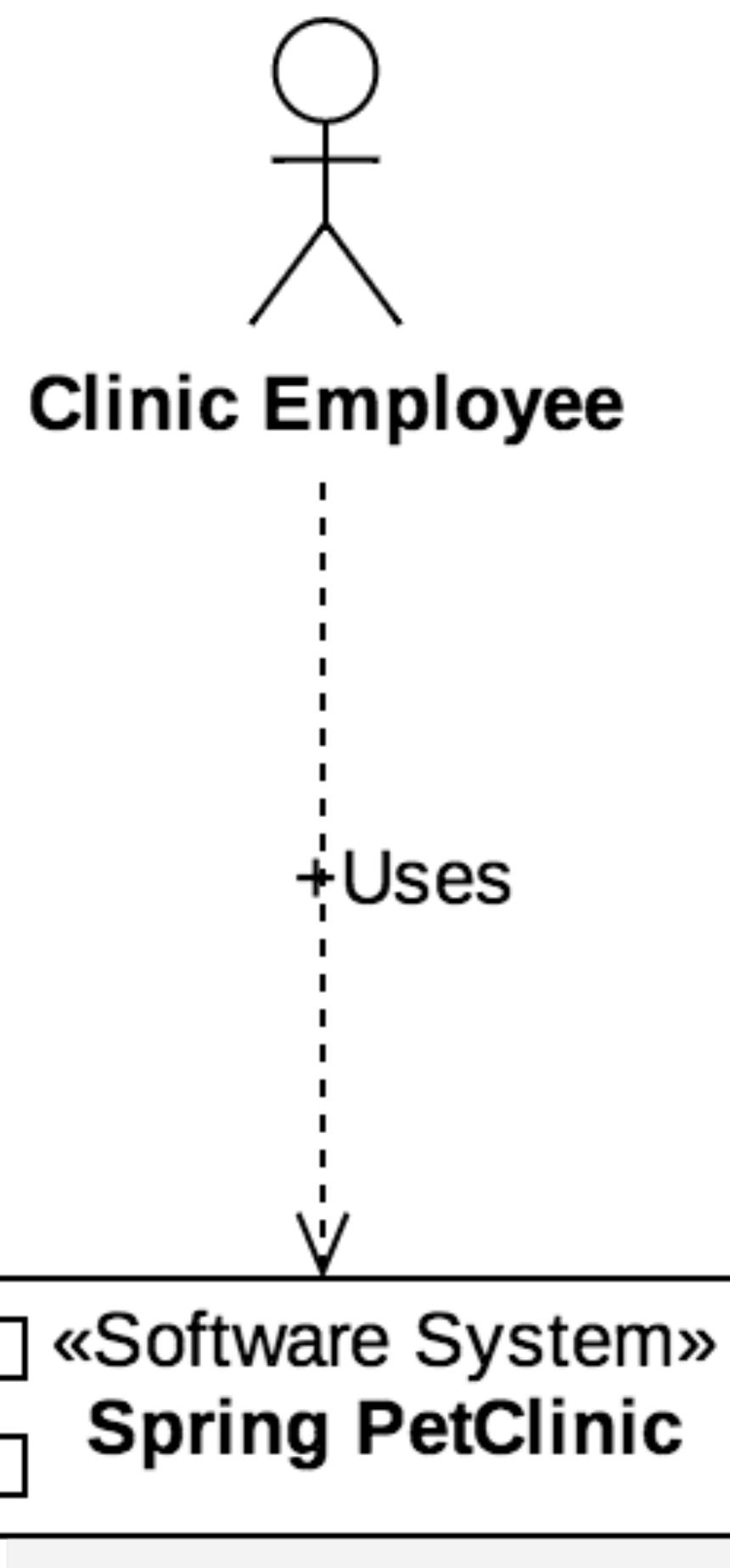


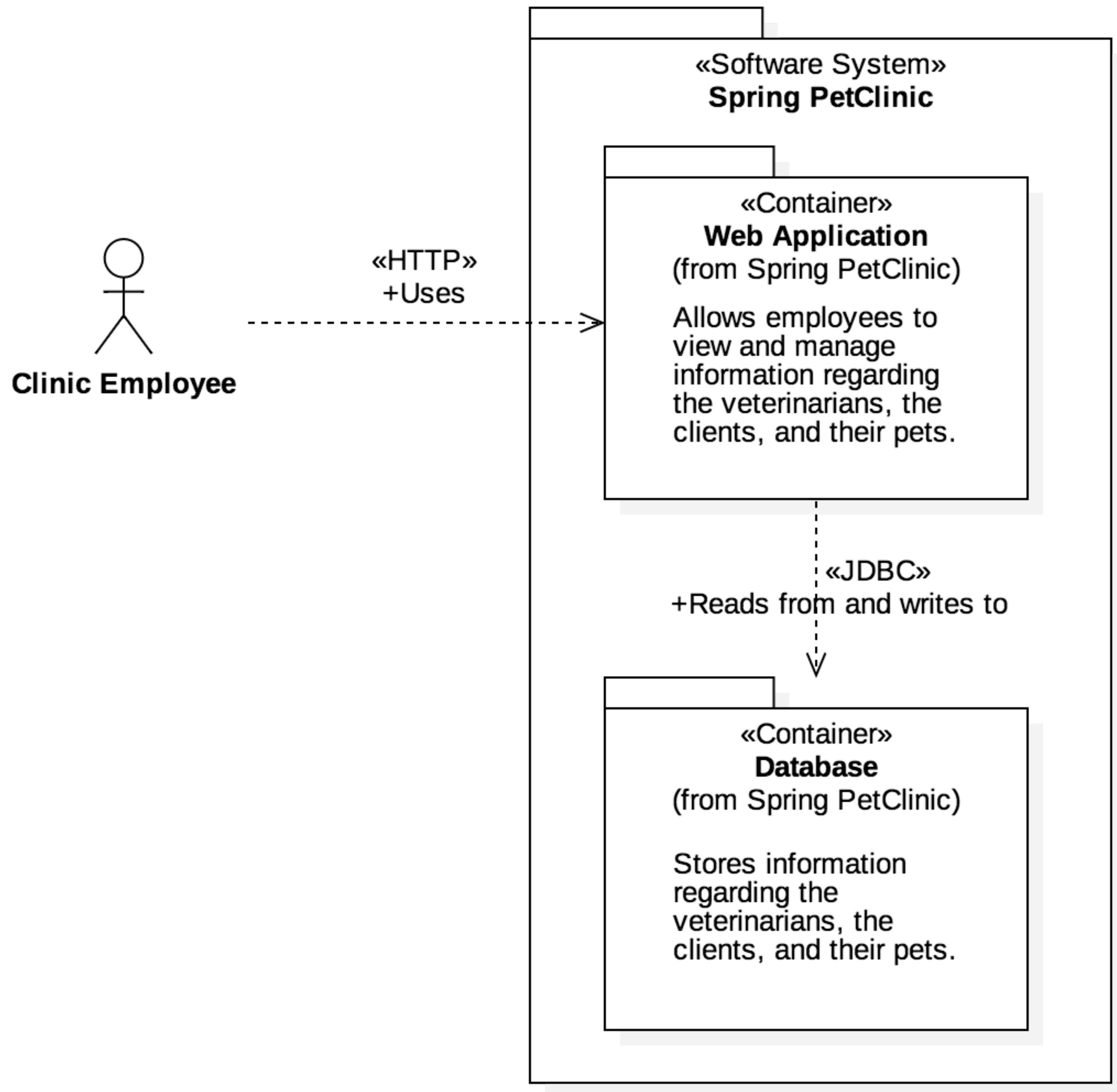
## Container diagram for Spring PetClinic

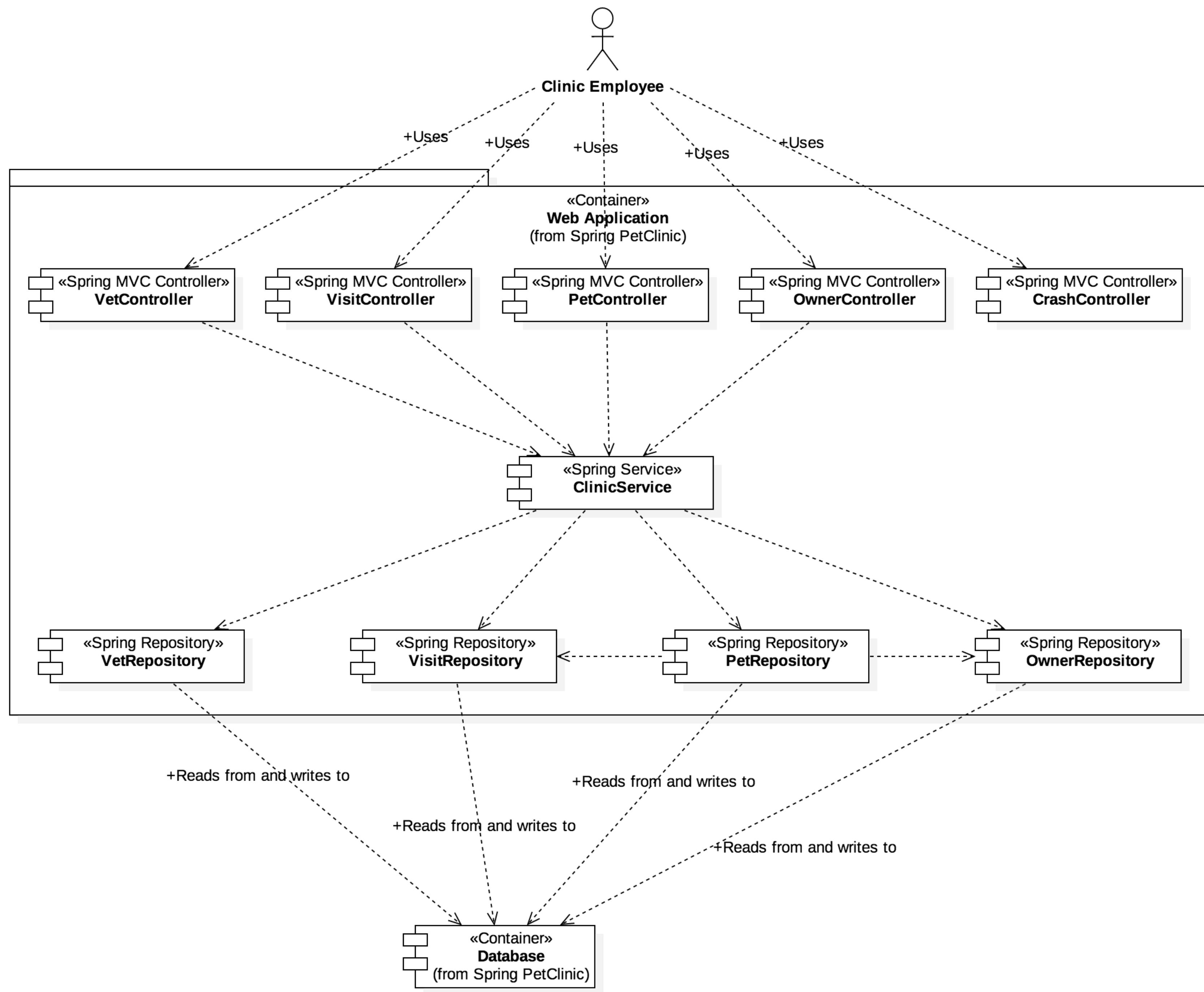
The Containers diagram for the Spring PetClinic system.

Friday 18 November 2016 22:21 UTC

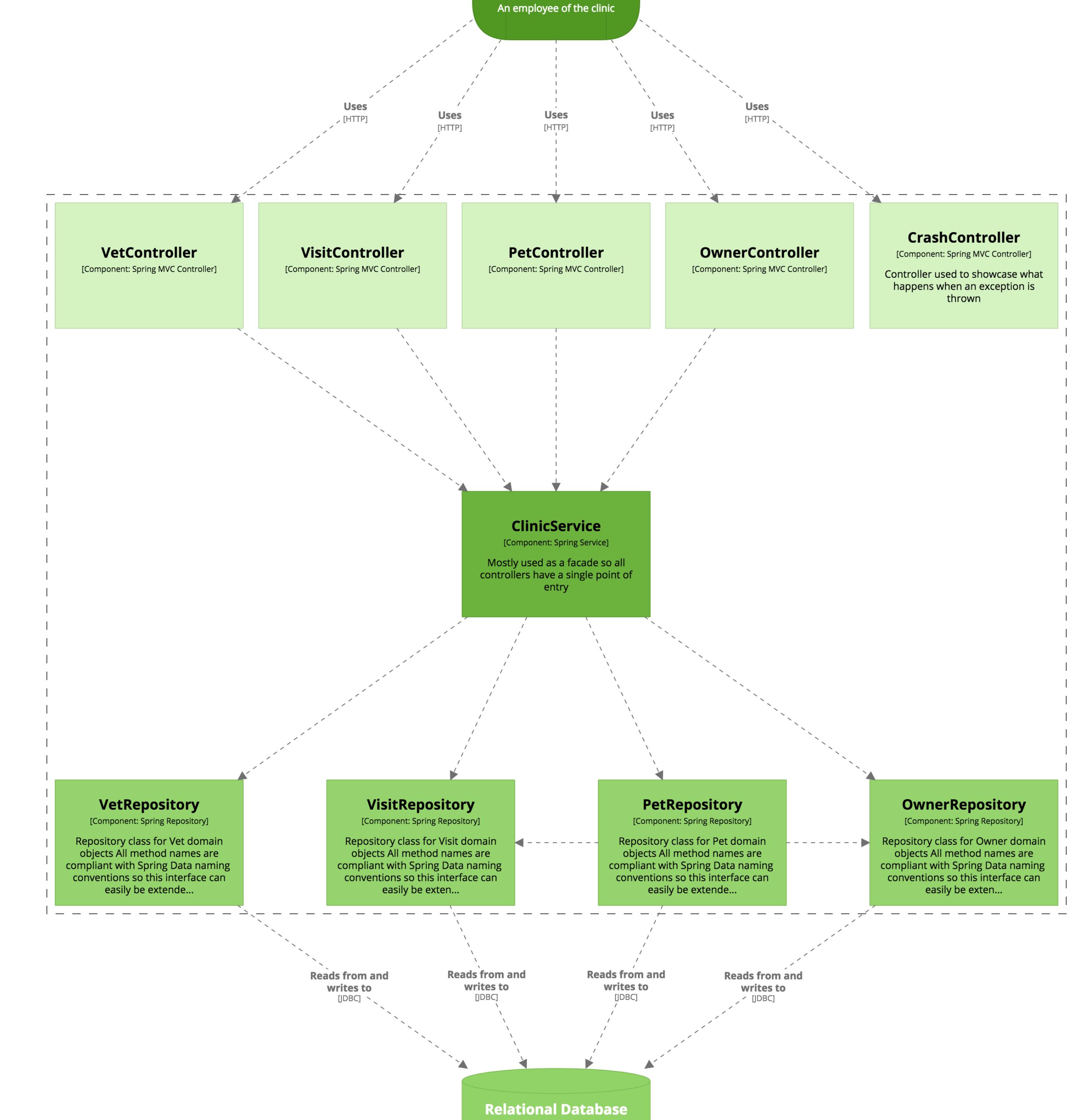
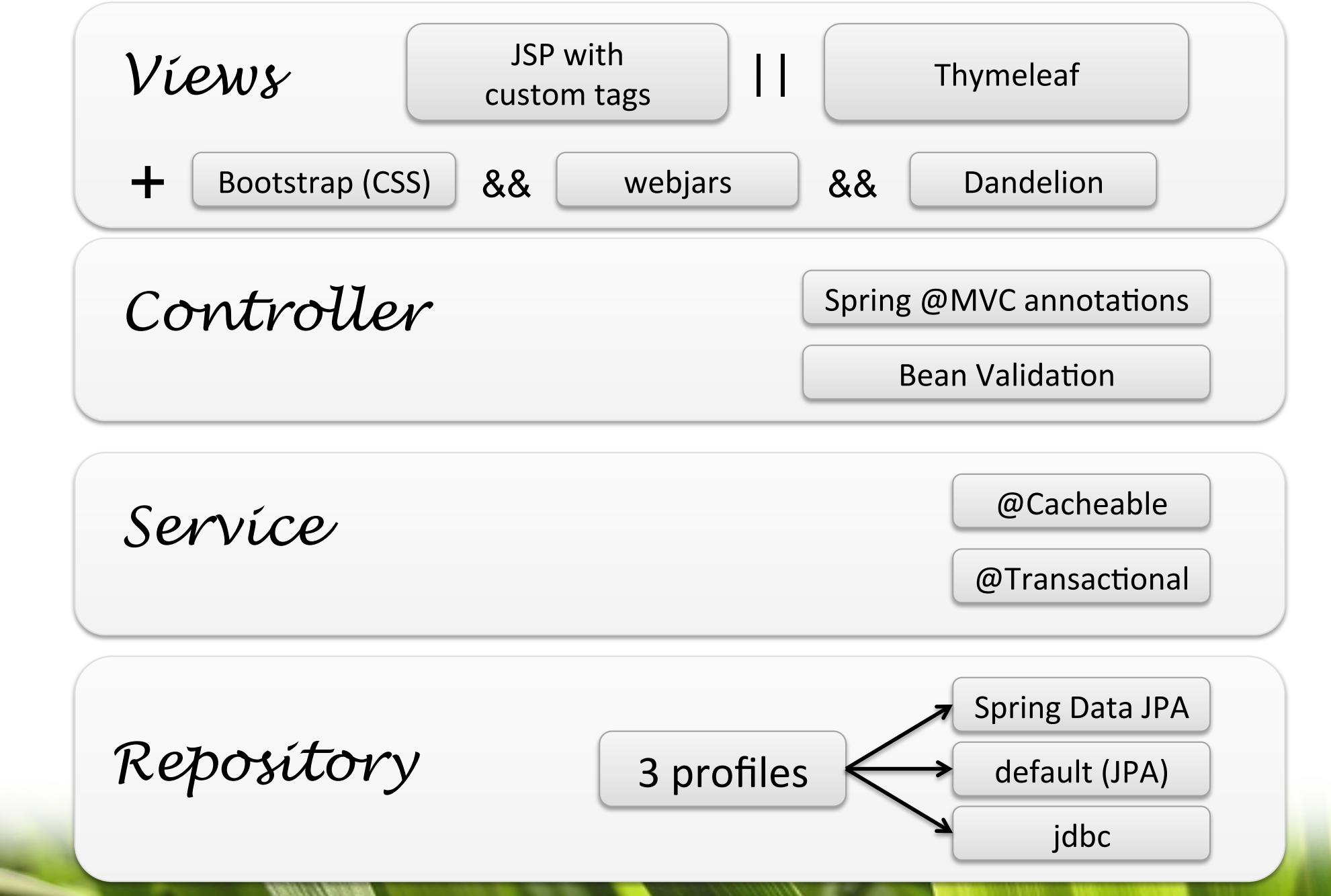




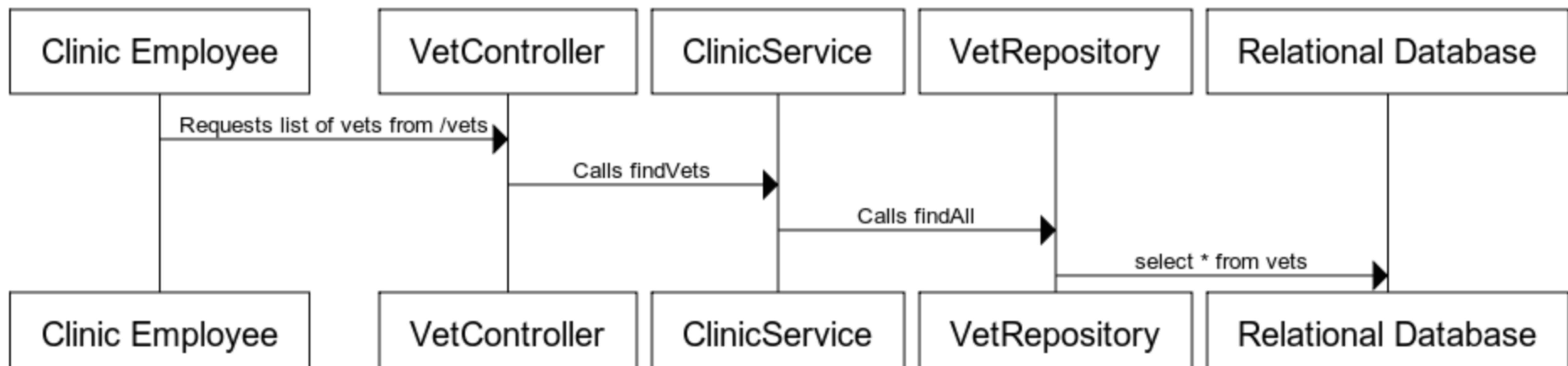


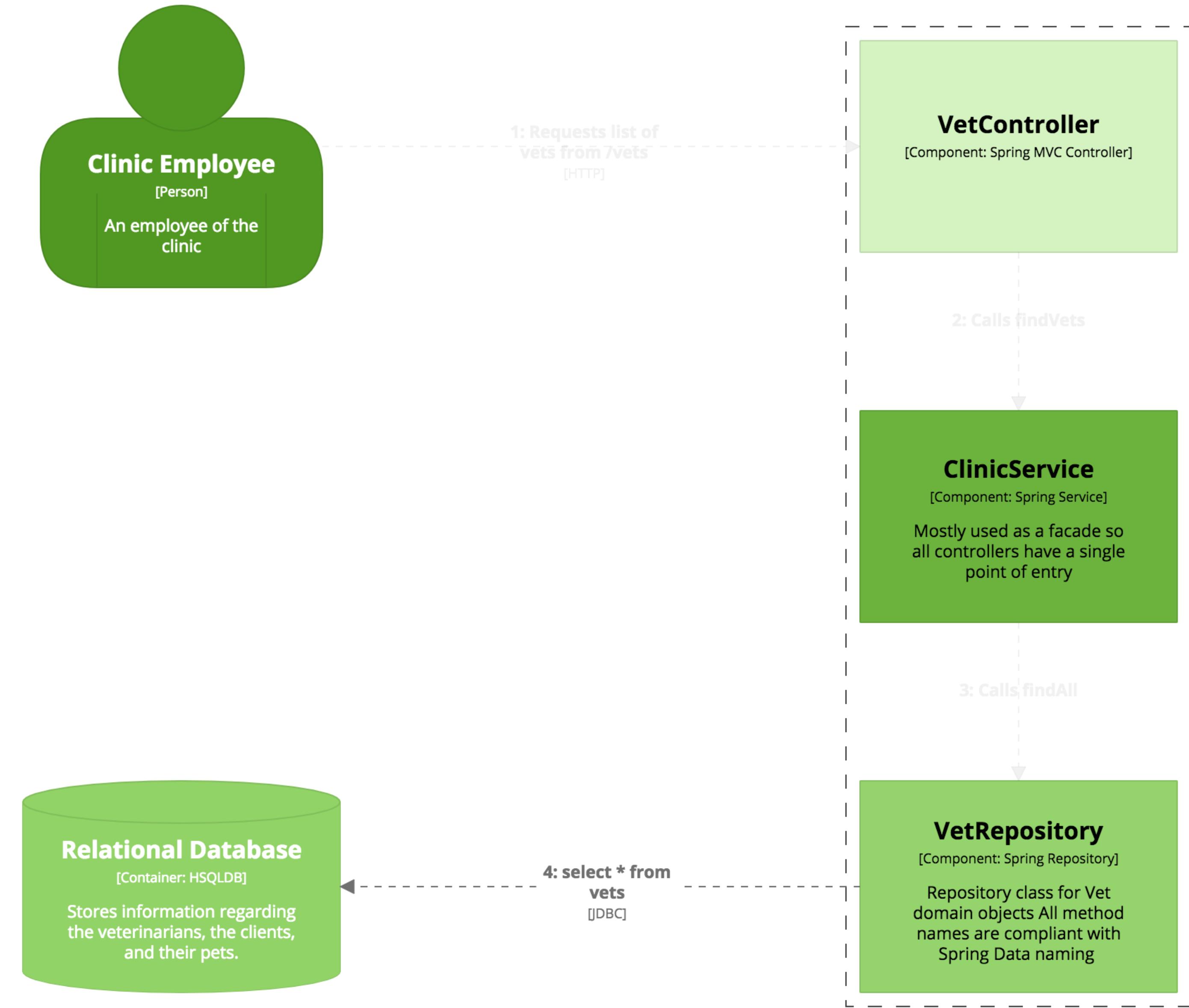


Static structure diagrams  
are very useful, but they  
don't tell the whole story



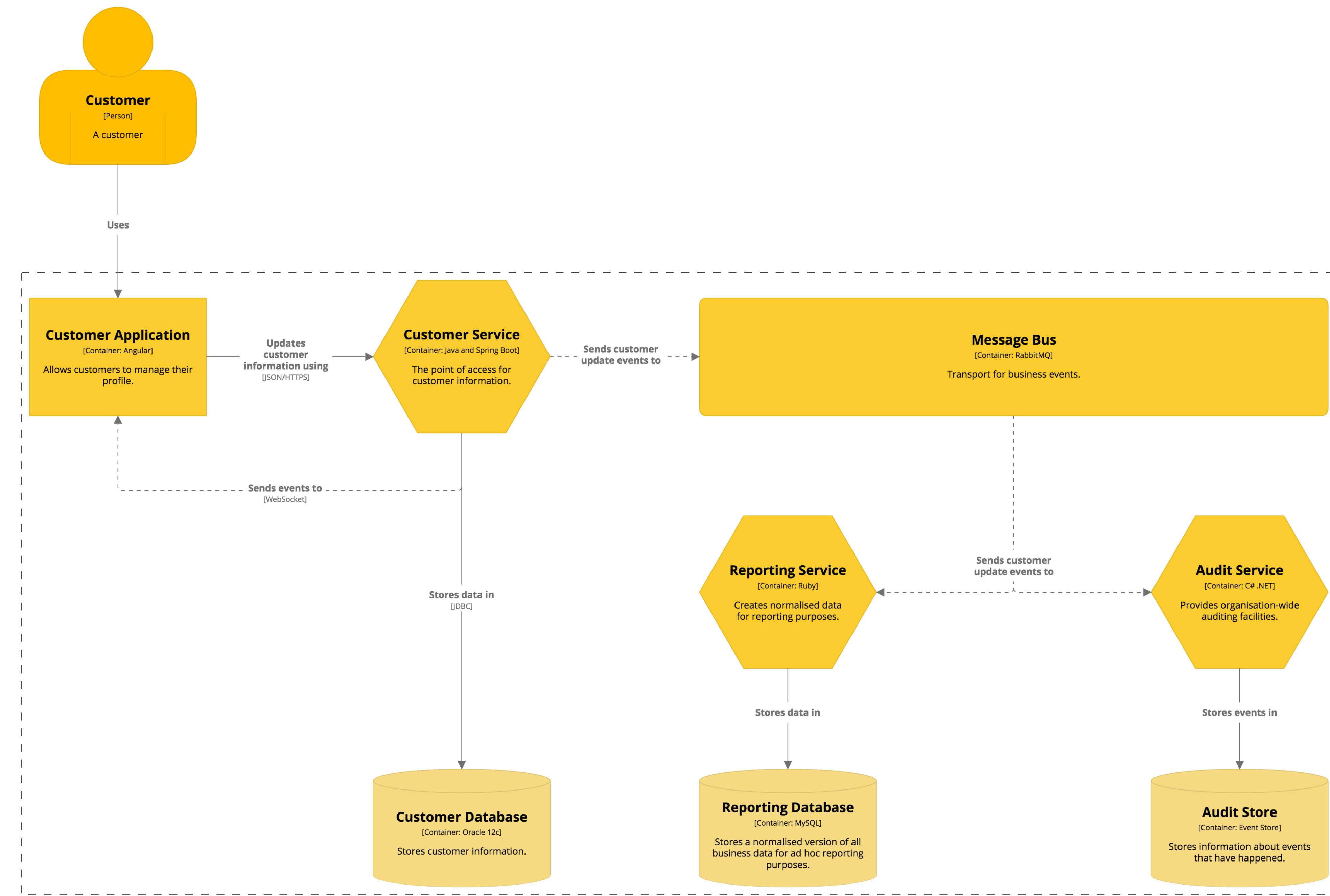
## View list of vets



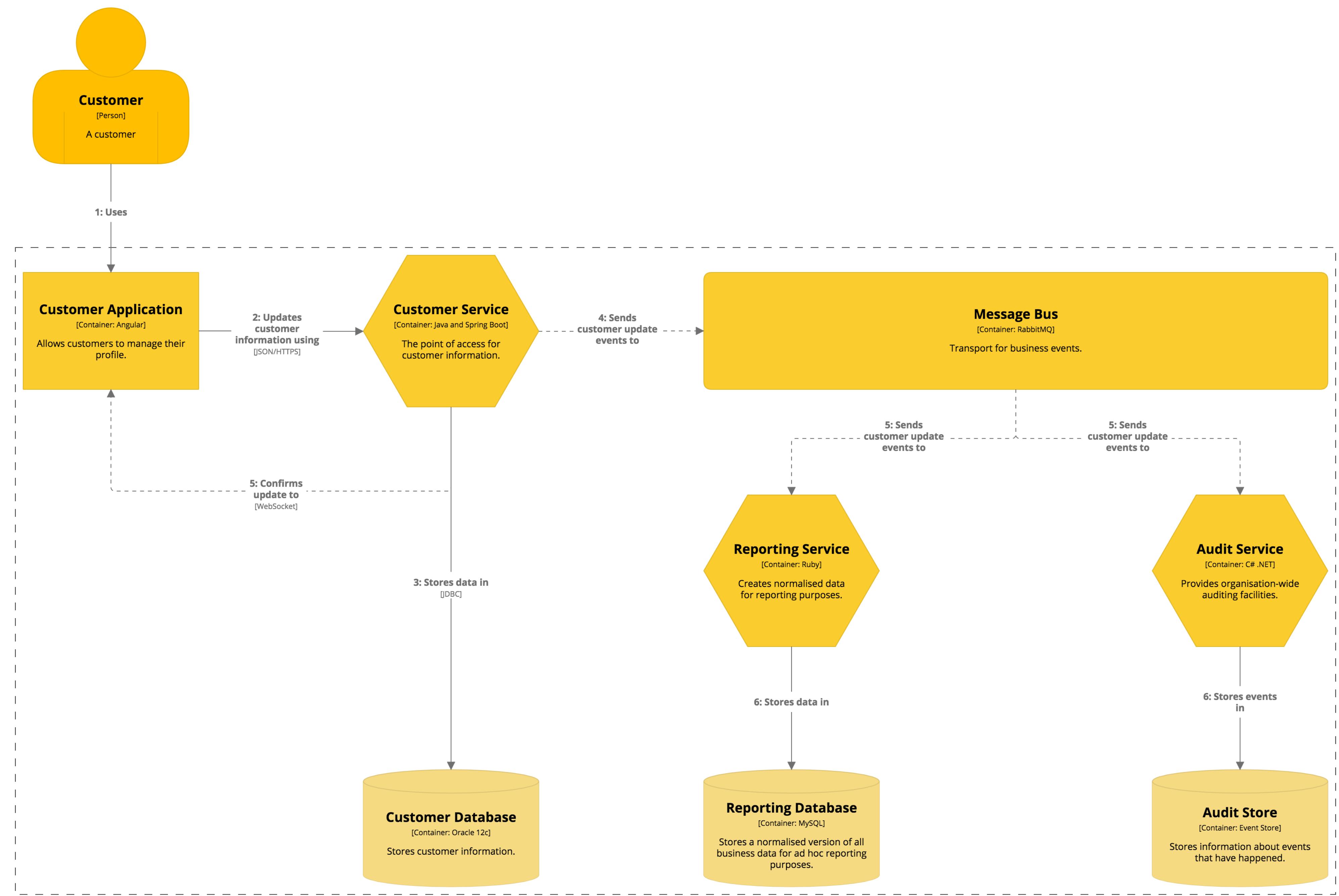


## Dynamic diagram

Shows how the "view list of vets" feature works.  
Sunday 20 November 2016 11:26 UTC



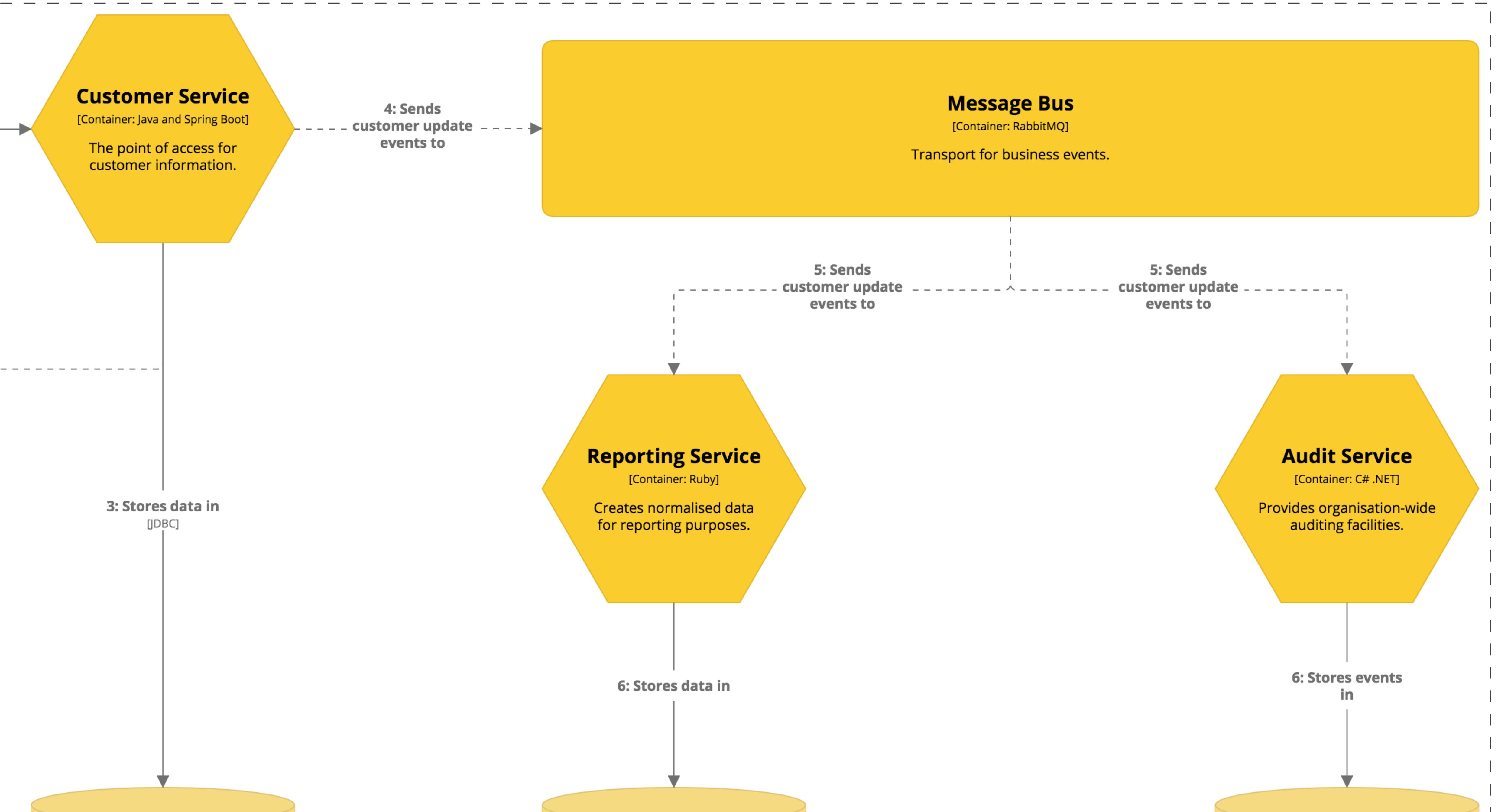
Container diagram for Customer Information System



### Dynamic diagram

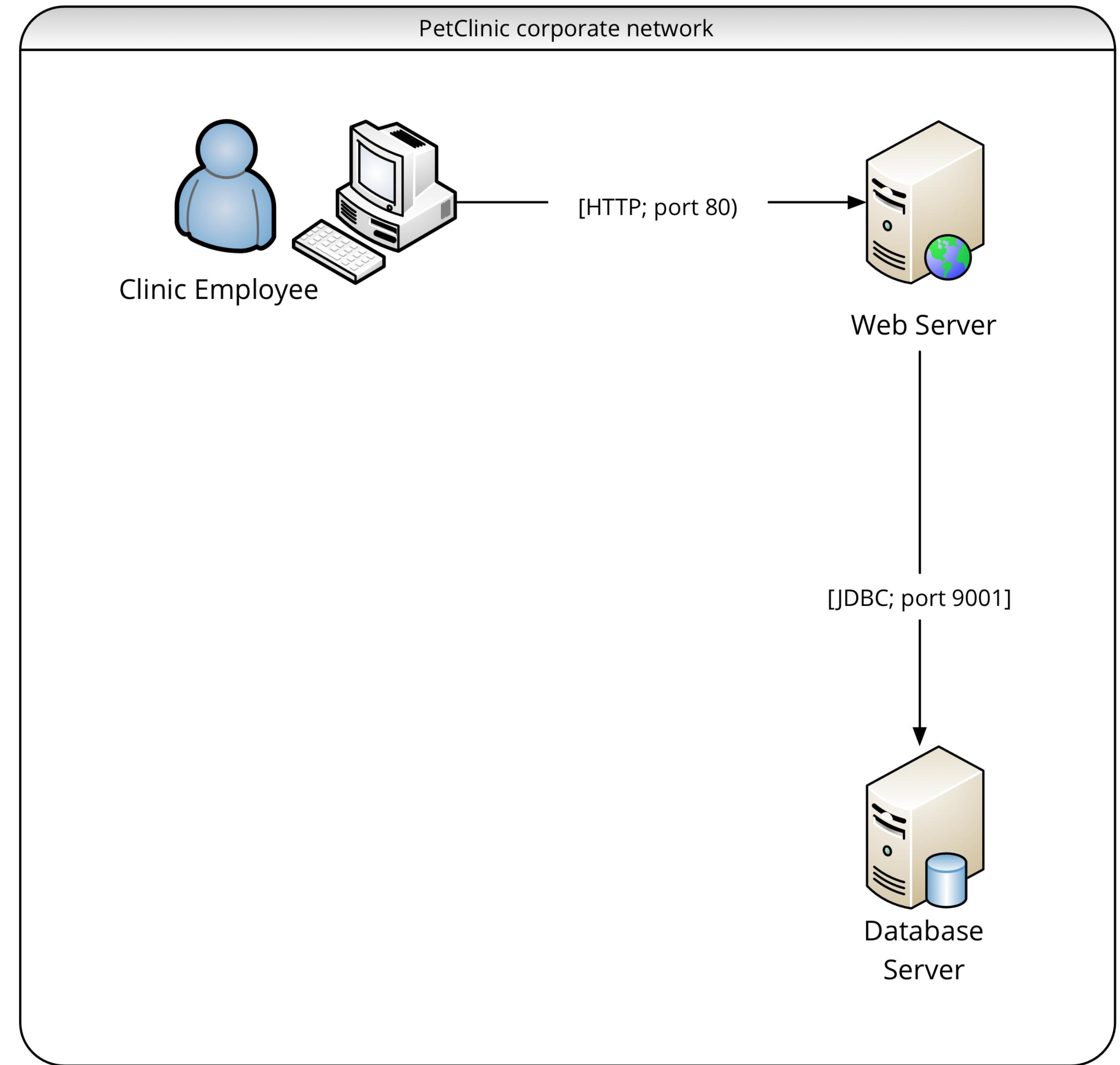
This diagram shows what happens when a customer updates their details.

Friday 04 November 2016 13:16 UTC

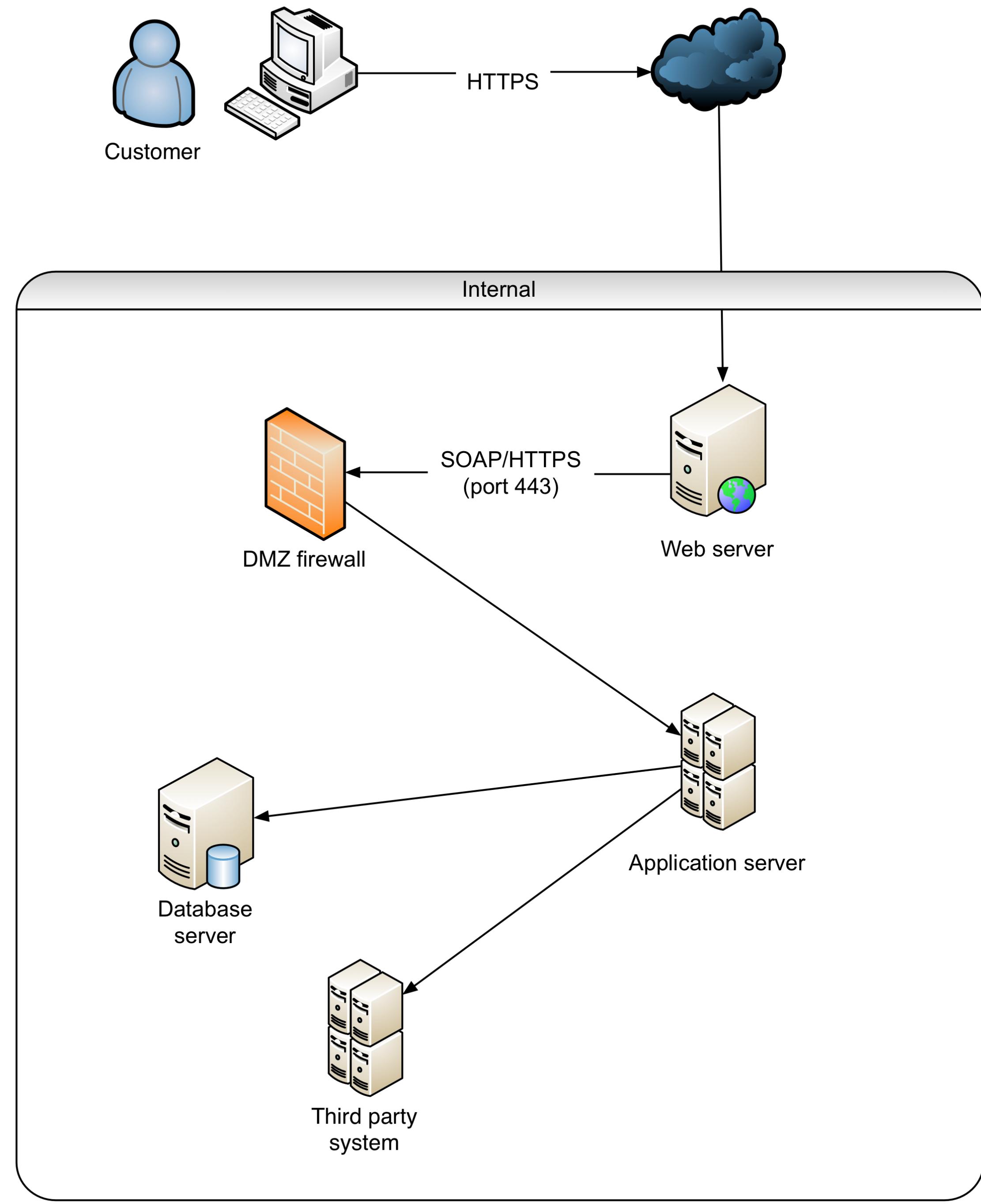


Use dynamic diagrams to describe  
patterns or complex interactions

A map of the infrastructure  
can often be useful



[Infrastructure] Spring PetClinic

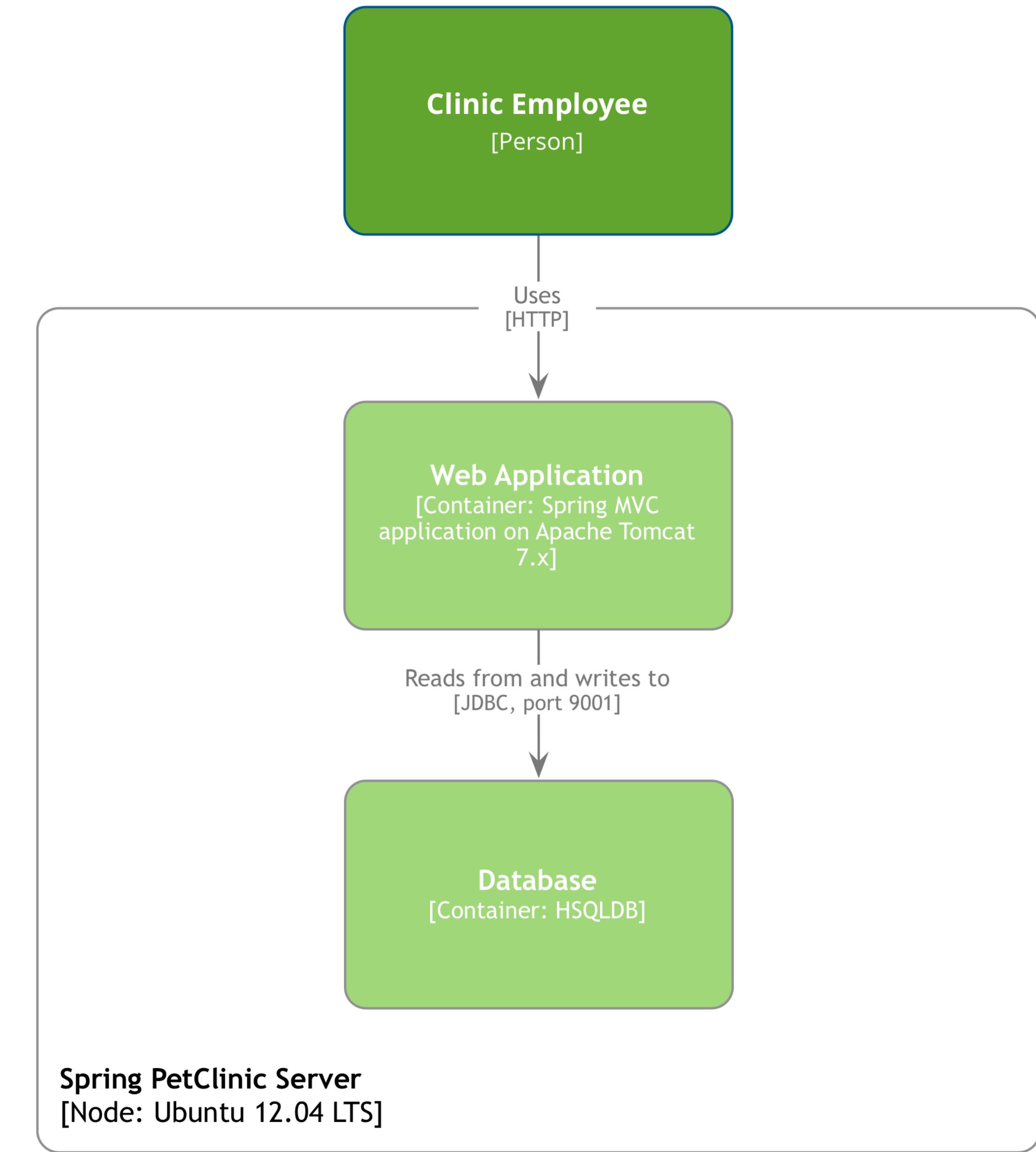


**Deployment** is about the mapping  
of containers to infrastructure

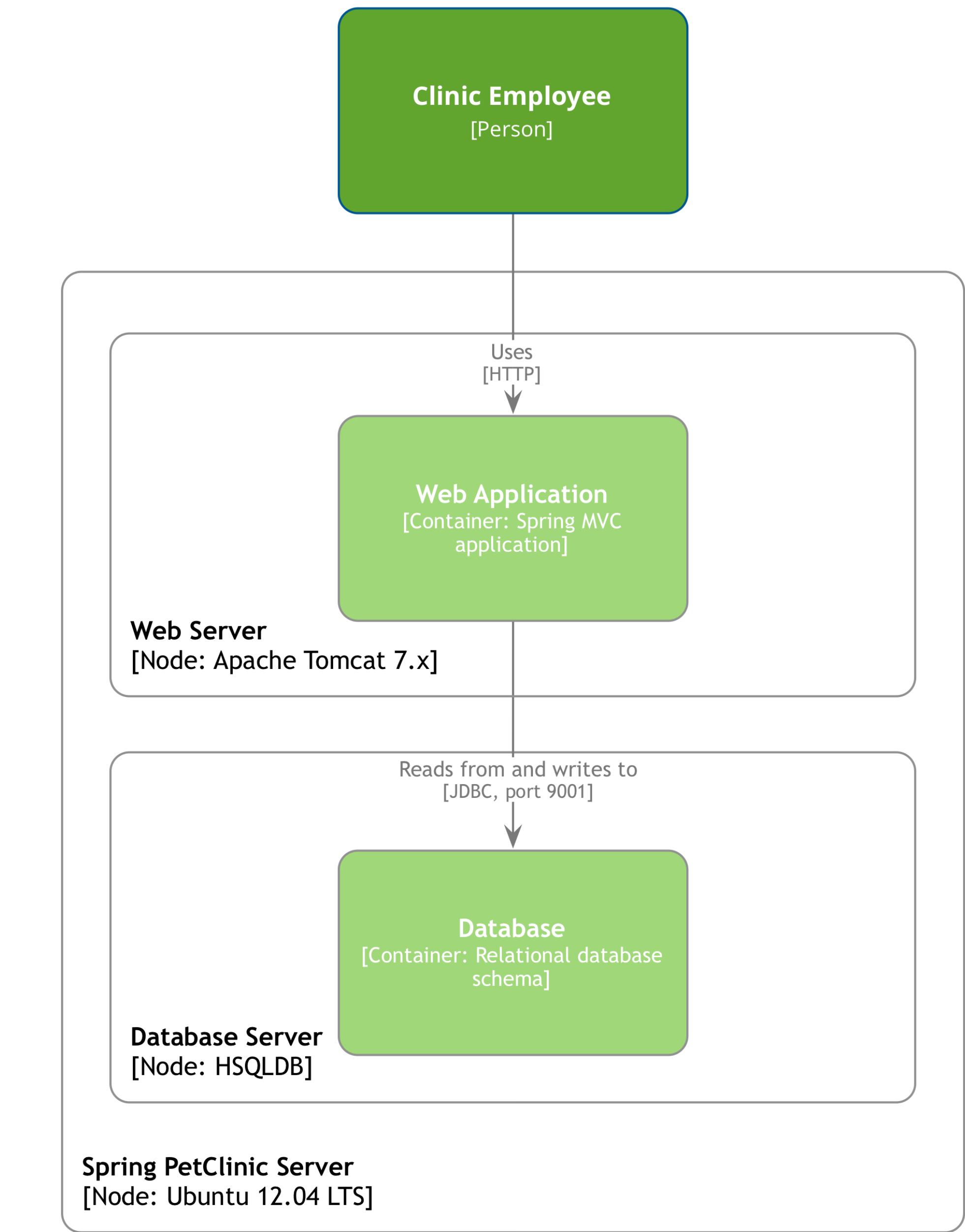
# Deployment Node

Physical infrastructure (a physical server or device),  
virtualised infrastructure (IaaS, PaaS, a virtual machine),  
containerised infrastructure (a Docker container),  
database server, Java EE web/application server,  
Microsoft IIS, etc

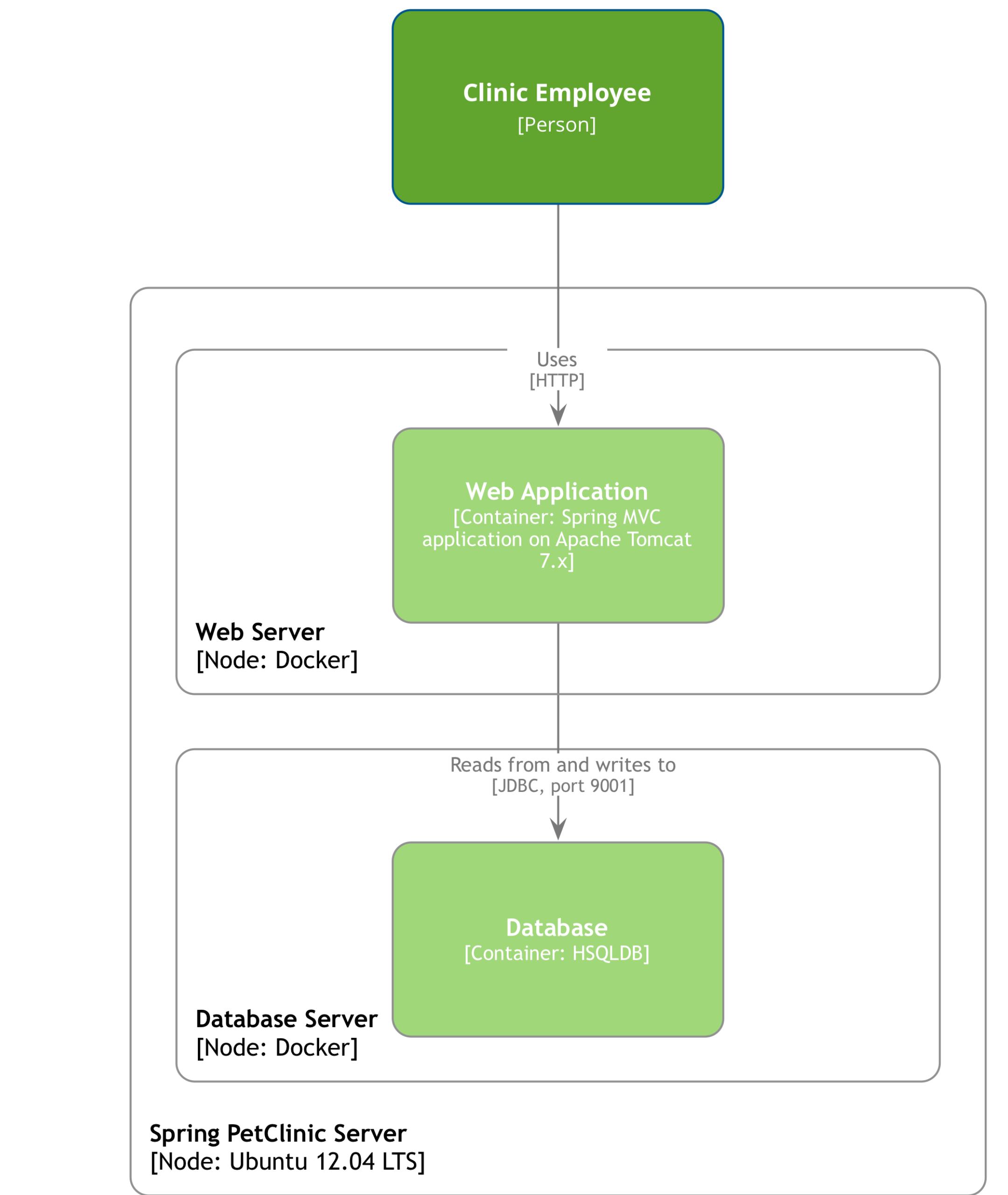
A deployment node can contain  
other deployment nodes  
or containers



[Deployment] Spring PetClinic



[Deployment] Spring PetClinic



[Deployment] Spring PetClinic

# Tooling

What tools do you  
recommend?

# Documentation format?

Microsoft Word, Microsoft SharePoint,  
Atlassian Confluence, Markdown or AsciiDoc, etc

## ► 1. System Context



## ► 2. Containers



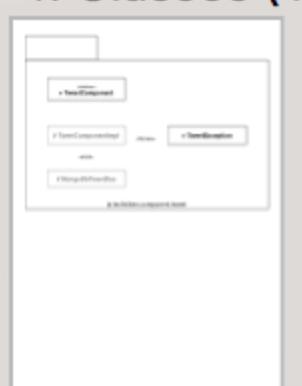
## ► 2. Containers (withou..



### ► 3. Components (Cont..)



## ► 4. Classes (TweetCo...



# Anonymous User

## Anybody on the web?

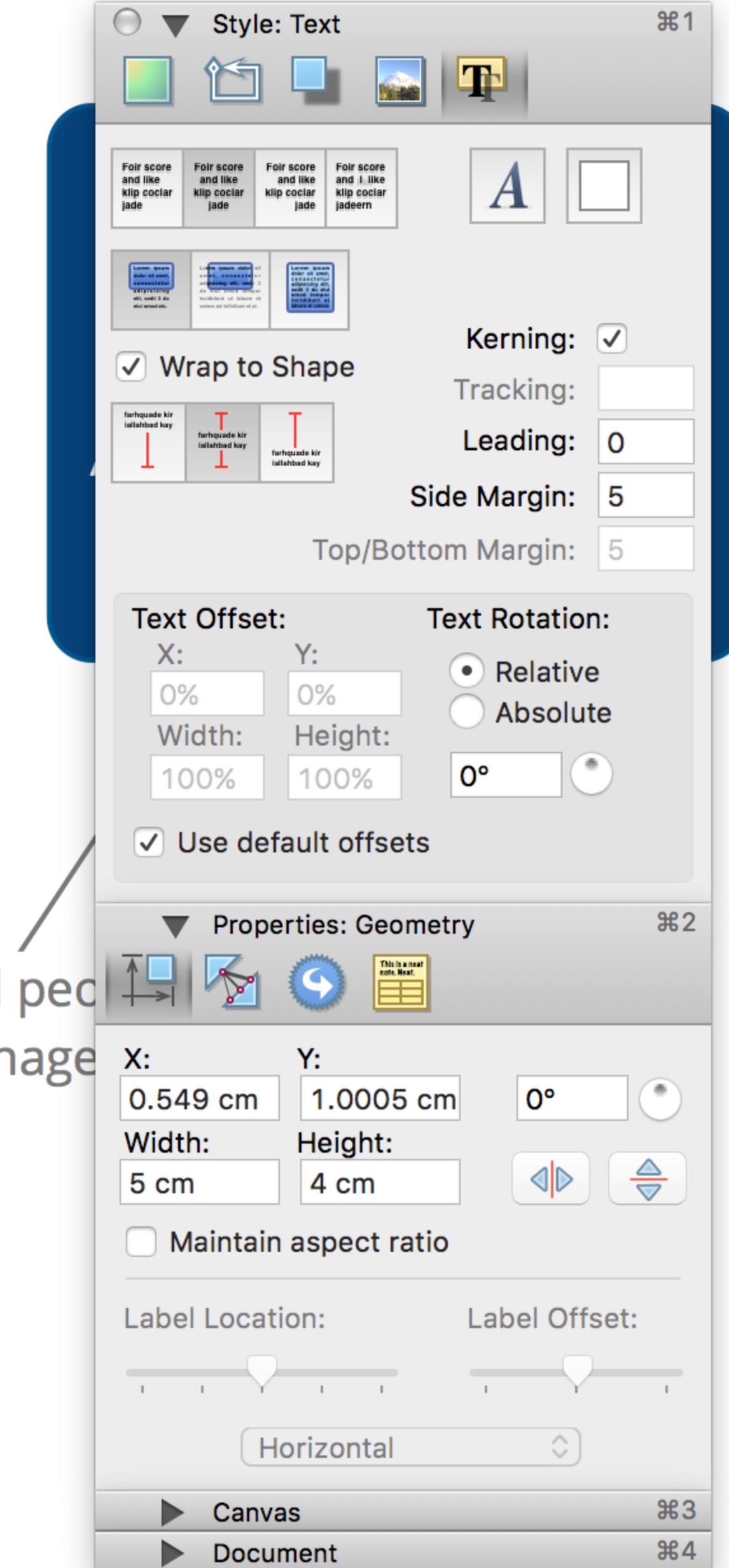
# Aggregated User [Person]

A user or business with content that is aggregated into the website, signed in using their Twitter ID.

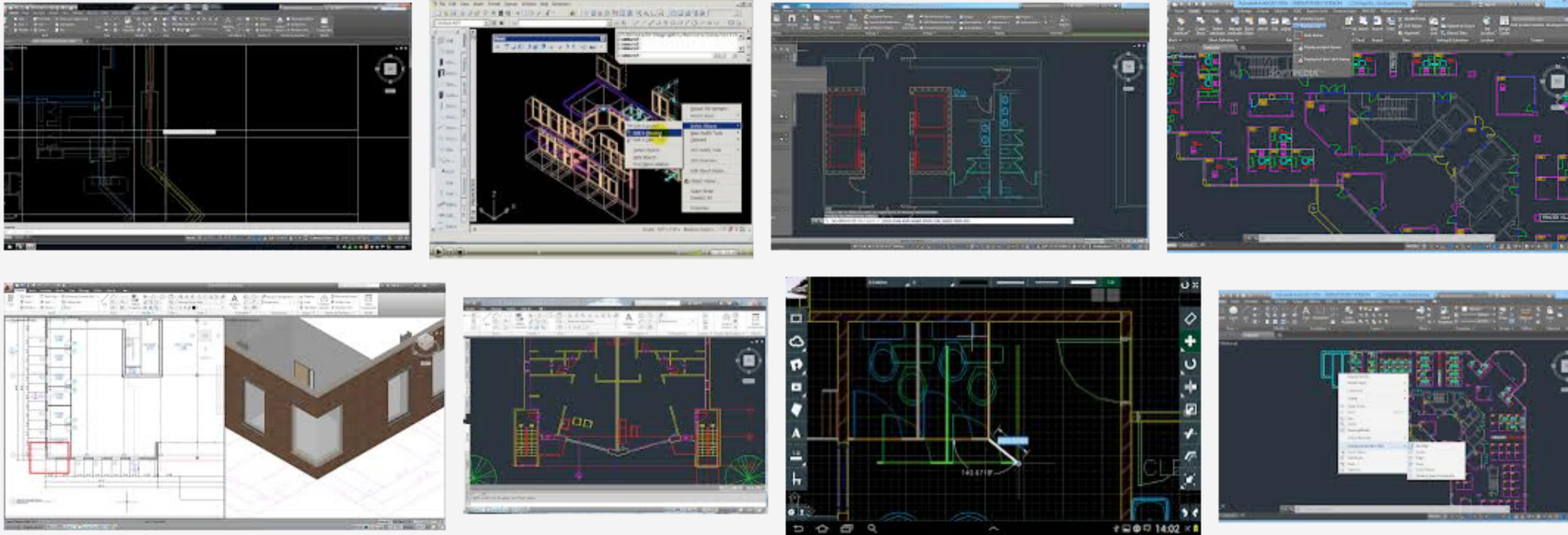
View people, tribes (businesses, communities and interest groups), content, events, jobs, etc from the local tech, digital and IT sector

## Manage user profile and tribe membership

Add per  
manag



[techtribes.jp](http://techtribes.jp)



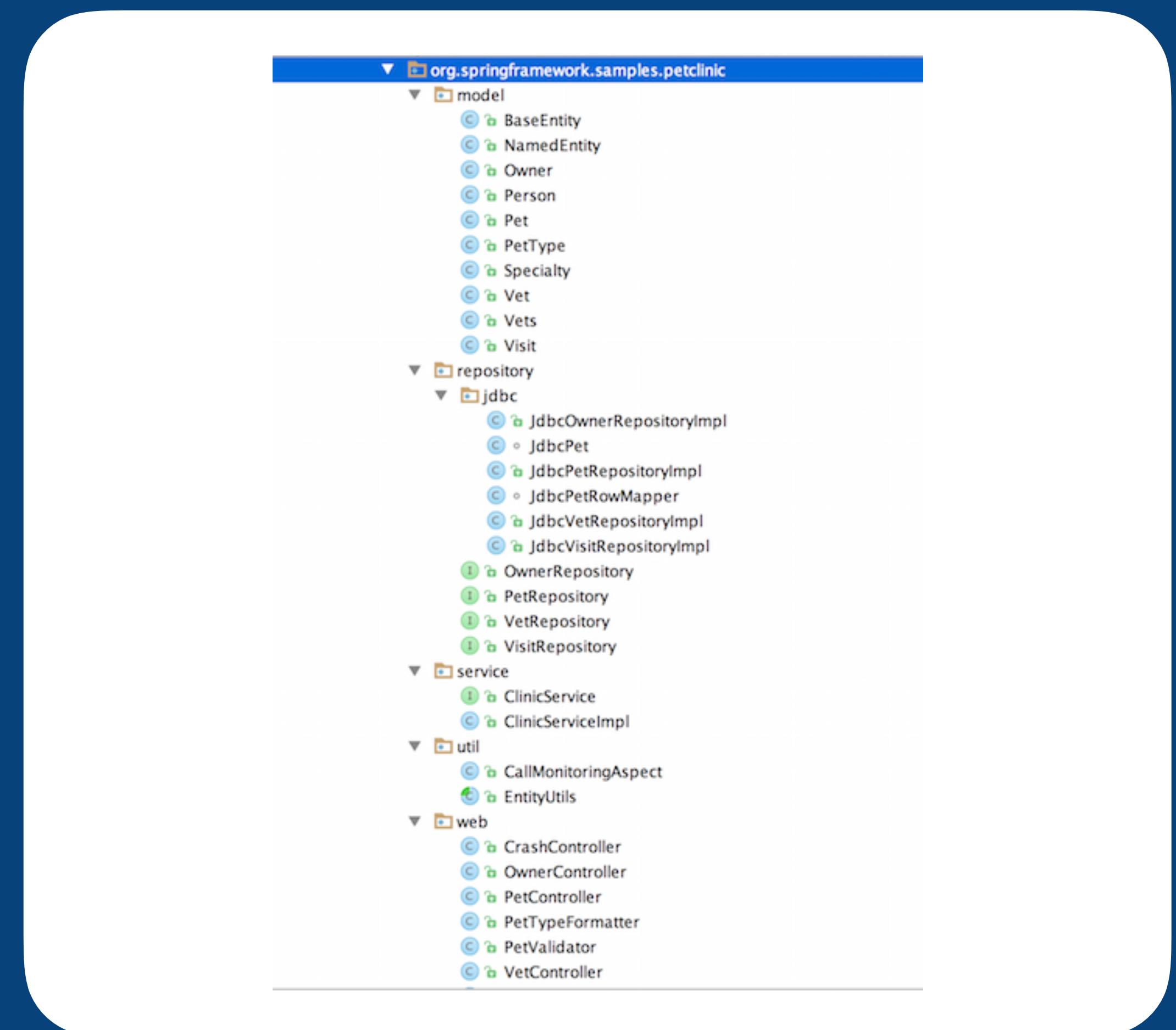
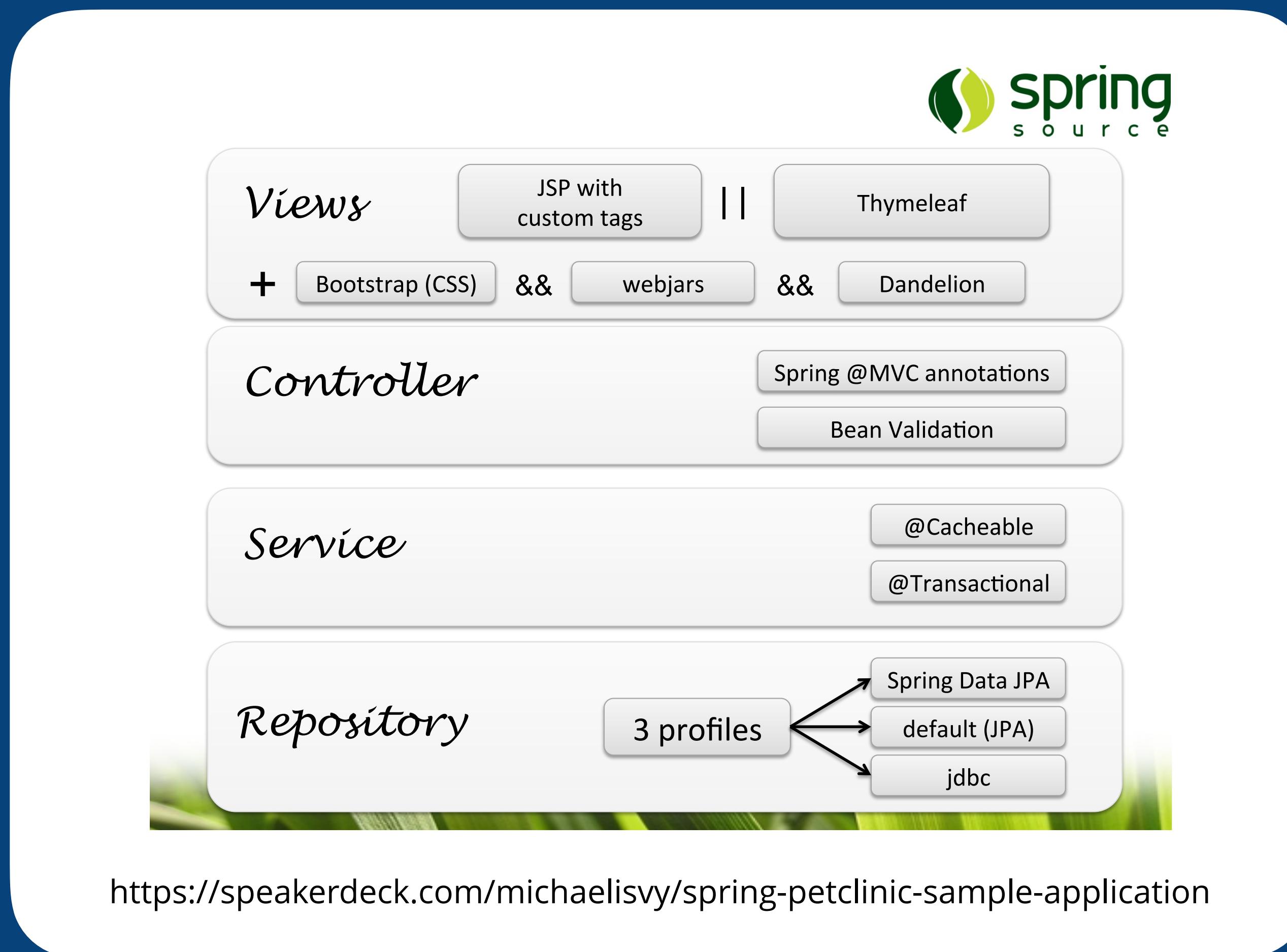
Do structural engineers and building architects  
use general purpose drawing tools?

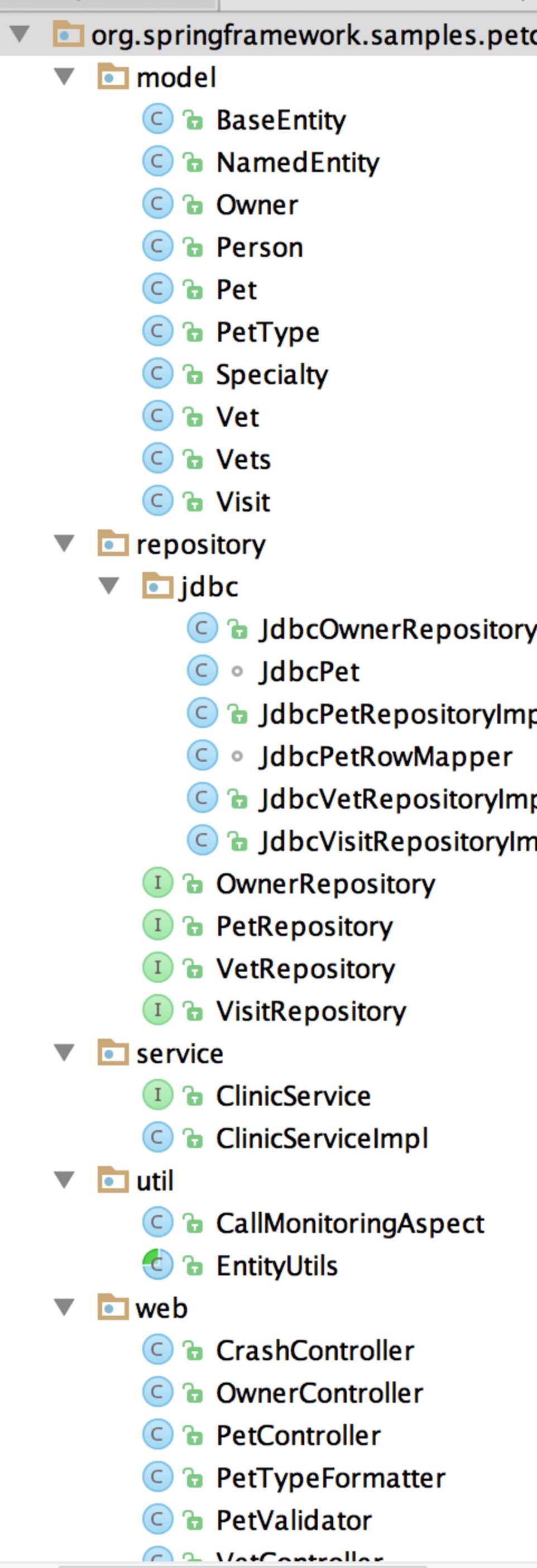
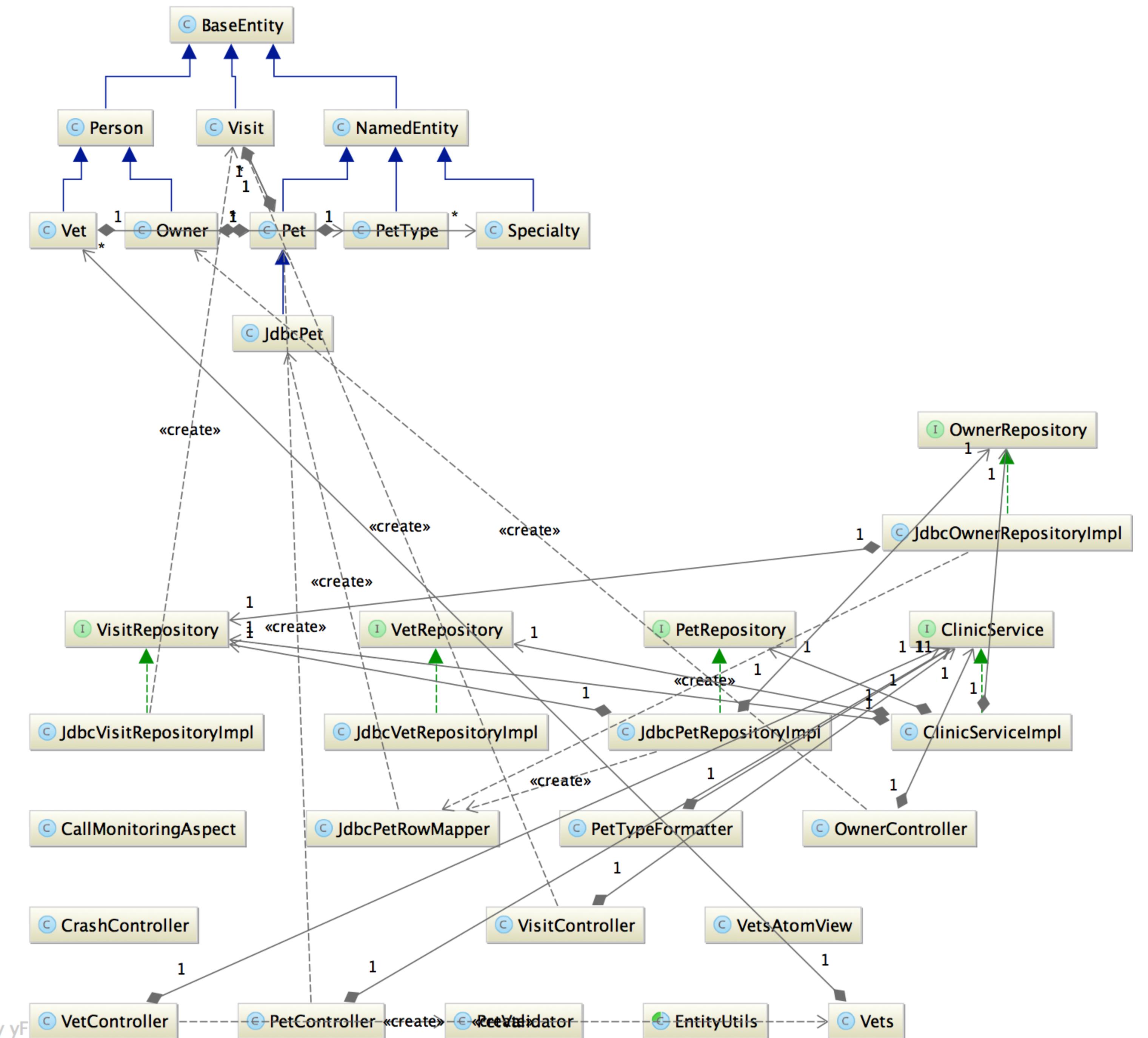
# Reverse-engineer code to diagrams?

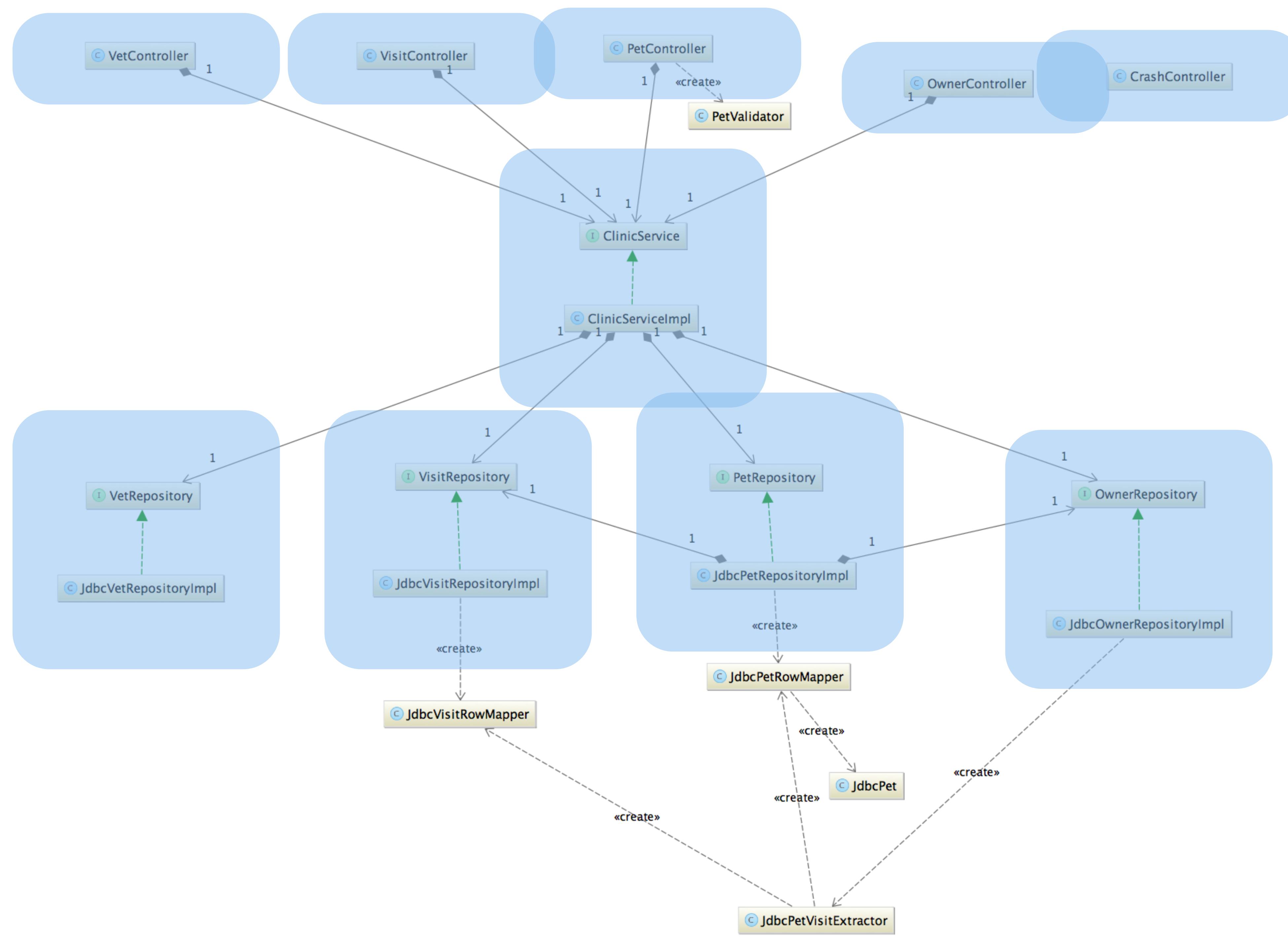
# Spring PetClinic

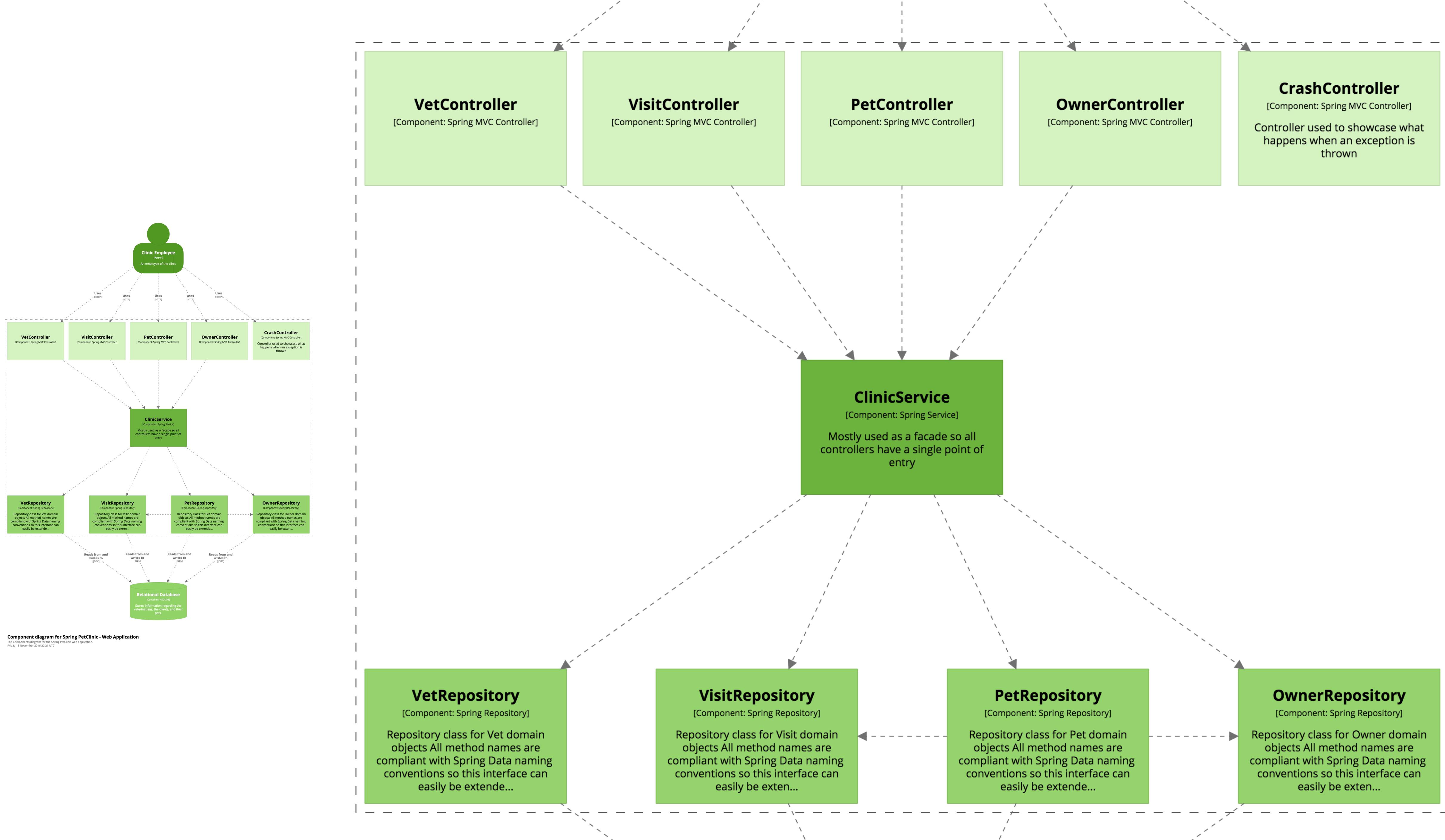
A sample application that illustrates how to build Java web applications using the Spring MVC framework

<https://github.com/spring-projects/spring-petclinic/>



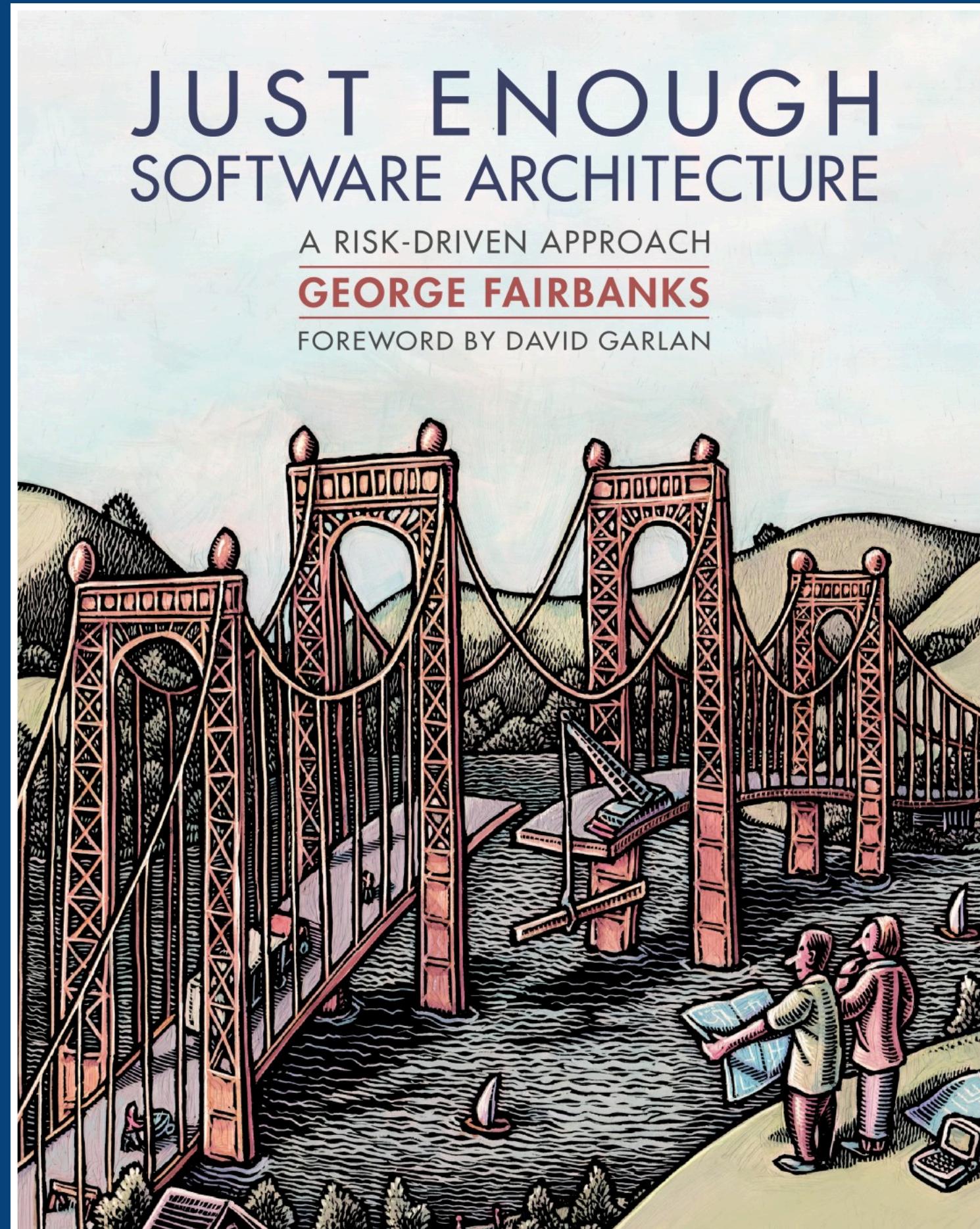






Most tools see code,  
not components

Information about  
software architecture  
doesn't exist in the code



**Model-code gap.** Your architecture models and your source code will not show the same things. The difference between them is the *model-code gap*. Your architecture models include some abstract concepts, like components, that your programming language does not, but could. Beyond that, architecture models include intensional elements, like design decisions and constraints, that cannot be expressed in procedural source code at all.

Consequently, the relationship between the architecture model and source code is complicated. It is mostly a refinement relationship, where the extensional elements in the architecture model are refined into extensional elements in source code. This is shown in Figure 10.3. However, intensional elements are not refined into corresponding elements in source code.

Upon learning about the model-code gap, your first instinct may be to avoid it. But reflecting on the origins of the gap gives little hope of a general solution in the short term: architecture models help you reason about complexity and scale because they are abstract and intensional; source code executes on machines because it is concrete and extensional.

“architecturally-evident coding style”

# Examples of architecturally-evident coding styles

Annotations/attributes (@Component, [Component], etc)

Naming conventions (\*Service)

Namespacing/packaging (com.mycompany.system.components.\*)

Maven & Gradle modules, OSGi & Java 9 modules

JavaScript module patterns, ECMAScript 6 modules,  
microservices, etc

# Executable architecture description language

Structurizr for Java and .NET



```
public static void main(String[] args) throws Exception {  
    Workspace workspace = new Workspace(  
        "Spring PetClinic",  
        "This is a C4 representation of the Spring PetClinic sample app  
        (https://github.com/spring-projects/spring-petclinic/)");  
  
    Model model = workspace.getModel();  
  
}  
}
```

```
// software systems and people
SoftwareSystem springPetClinic = model.addSoftwareSystem(
    "Spring PetClinic",
    "Allows employees to view and manage information regarding the
    veterinarians, the clients, and their pets.");
```

```
Person clinicEmployee = model.addPerson(
    "Clinic Employee", "An employee of the clinic");
```

```
clinicEmployee.uses(springPetClinic, "Uses");
```

```
// containers

Container webApplication = springPetClinic.addContainer(
    "Web Application",
    "Allows employees to view and manage information regarding the
     veterinarians, the clients, and their pets.",
    "Apache Tomcat 7.x");

Container relationalDatabase = springPetClinic.addContainer(
    "Relational Database",
    "Stores information regarding the veterinarians, the clients,
     and their pets.", "HSQLDB");

clinicEmployee.uses(webApplication,
    "Uses", "HTTP");

webApplication.uses(relationalDatabase,
    "Reads from and writes to", "JDBC, port 9001");
```

```
// components
ComponentFinder componentFinder = new ComponentFinder(
    webApplication,
    "org.springframework.samples.petclinic",
    new SpringComponentFinderStrategy(
        new ReferencedTypesSupportingTypesStrategy()
    ),
    new SourceCodeComponentFinderStrategy(
        new File(sourceRoot, "/src/main/java/"), 150));
componentFinder.findComponents();
```

```
// connect components with other model elements

webApplication.getComponents().stream()
    .filter(c -> c.getTechnology().equals(SpringComponentFinderStrategy.SPRING_MVC_CONTROLLER))
    .foreach(c -> clinicEmployee.uses(c, "Uses", "HTTP"));

webApplication.getComponents().stream()
    .filter(c -> c.getTechnology().equals(SpringComponentFinderStrategy.SPRING_REPOSITORY))
    .foreach(c -> c.uses(relationalDatabase, "Reads from and writes to", "JDBC"));
```

```
// system context, container and component views
ViewSet viewSet = workspace.getViews();

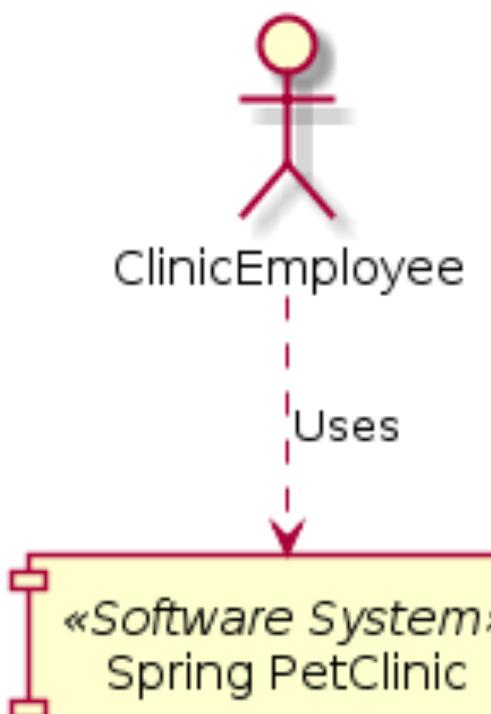
SystemContextView contextView = viewSet.createContextView(
    springPetClinic, "context", "Context view for Spring PetClinic");
contextView.addAllSoftwareSystems();
contextView.addAllPeople();

ContainerView containerView = viewSet.createContainerView(
    springPetClinic, "containers", "Container view for Spring PetClinic");
containerView.addAllPeople();
containerView.addAllSoftwareSystems();
containerView.addAllContainers();

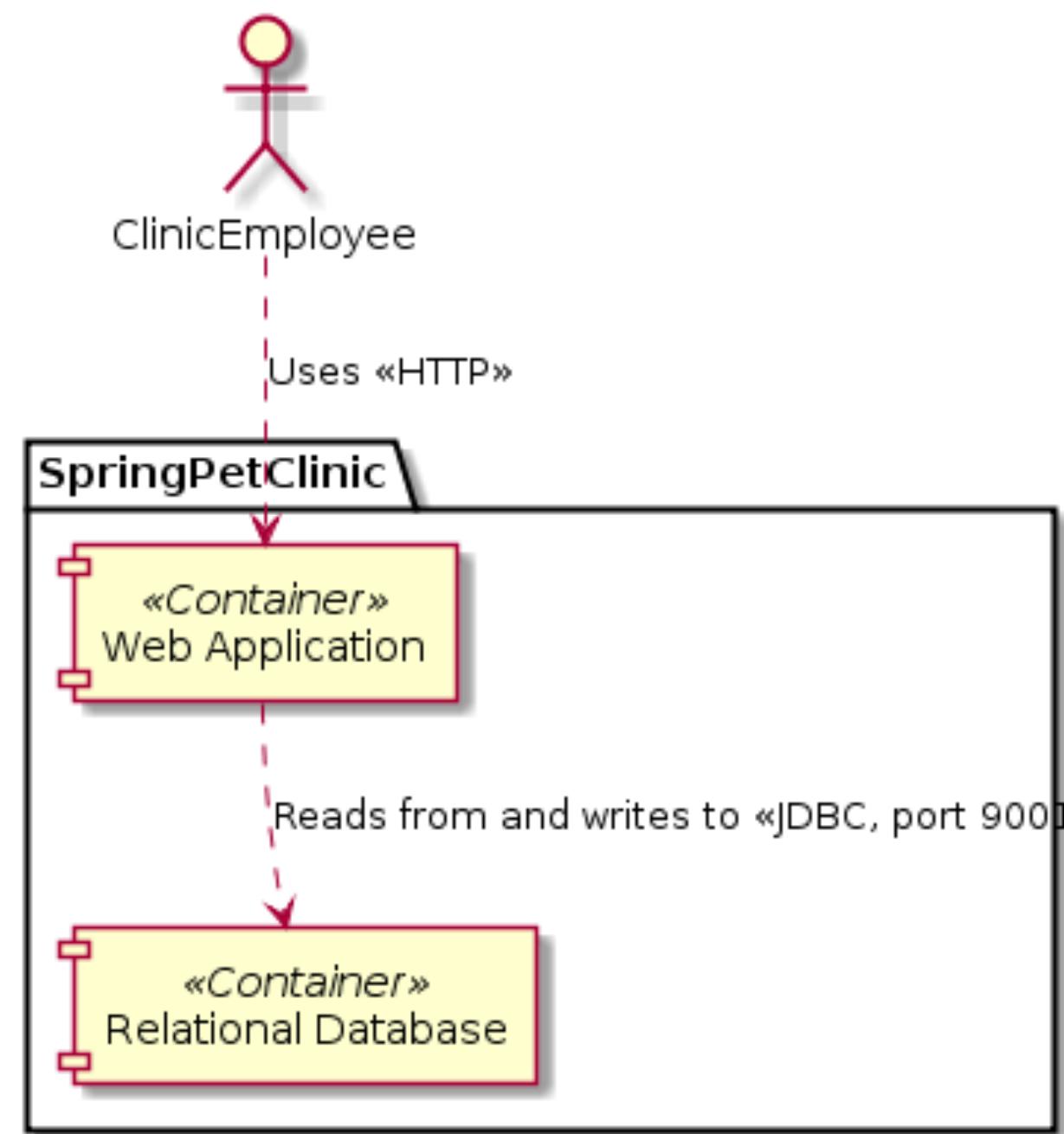
ComponentView componentView = viewSet.createComponentView(
    webApplication, "components", "Component view for the Spring PetClinic webapp.");
componentView.addAllComponents();
componentView.addAllPeople();
componentView.add(relationalDatabase);
```

You can create  
many visualisations  
from a single model

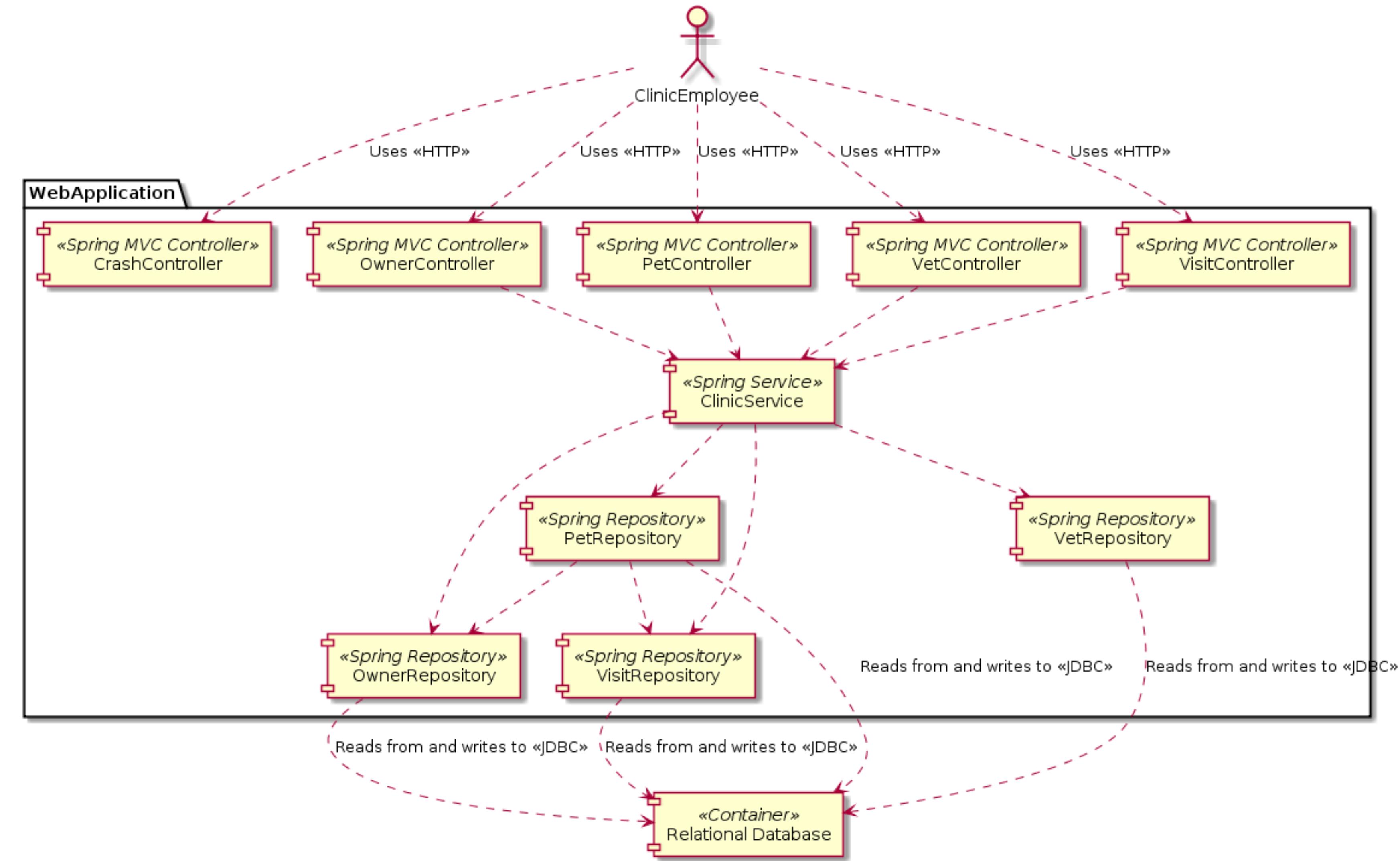
## Spring PetClinic - System Context



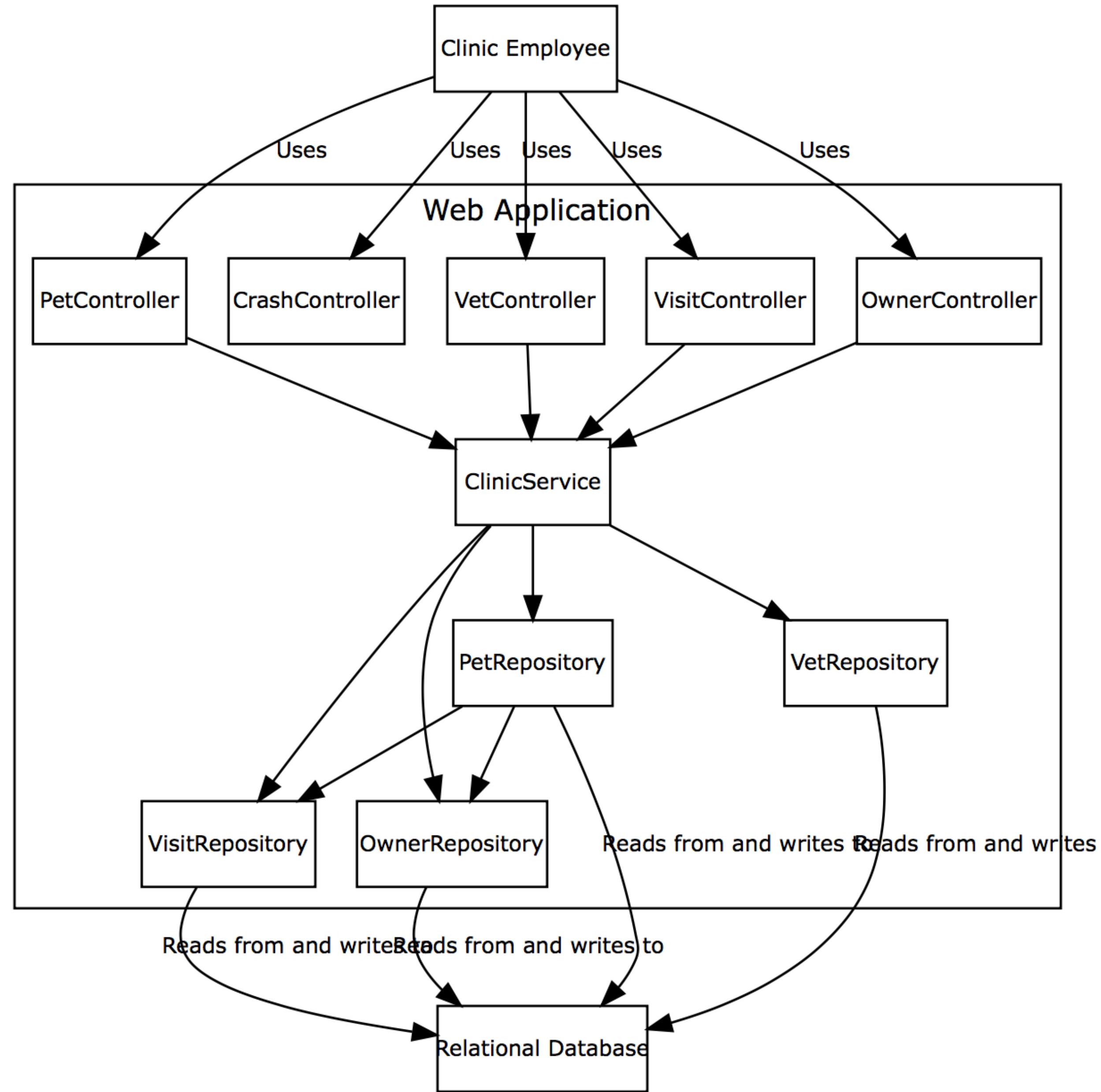
## Spring PetClinic - Containers



## Spring PetClinic - Web Application - Components



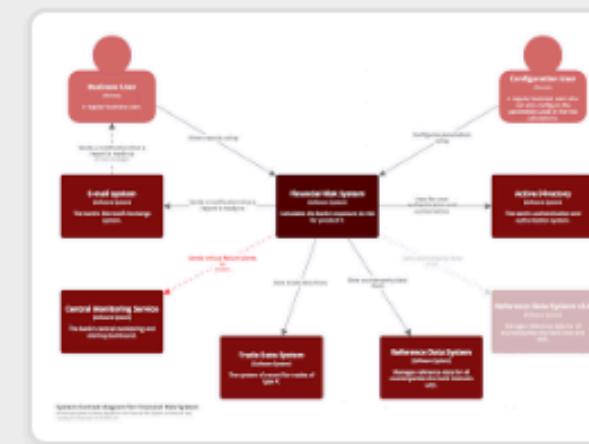
## Spring PetClinic - Web Application - Components





# Structurizr

Visualise, document and explore your software architecture



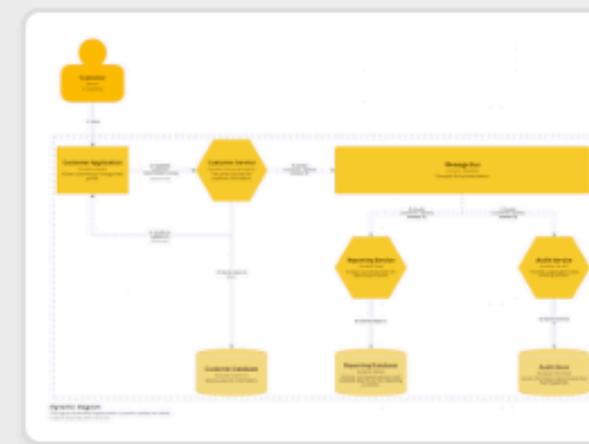
Create system context diagrams using Java code.



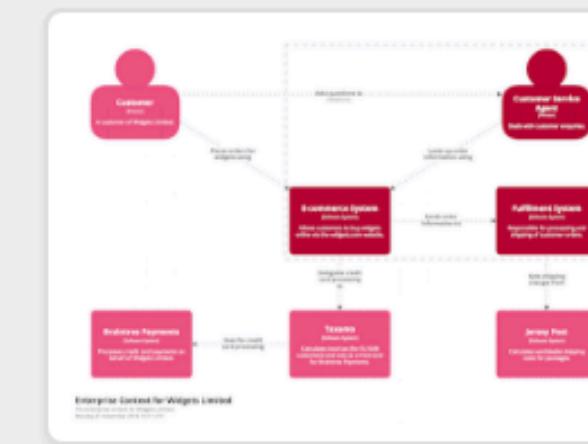
Extract components from your Java codebase, using static analysis and reflection.



Client-side encrypt your workspace for additional security ('password').



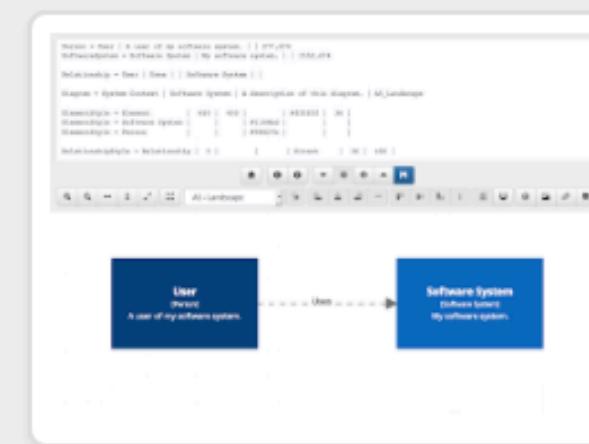
Create animated diagrams to describe dynamic behaviour.



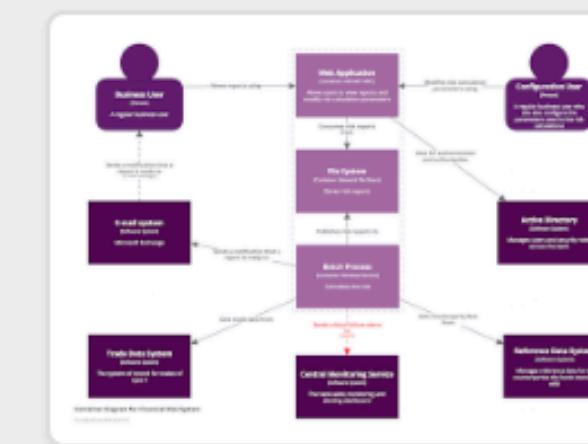
Create enterprise context diagrams using code.



Document your software with Markdown and AsciiDoc, effortlessly embed diagrams.



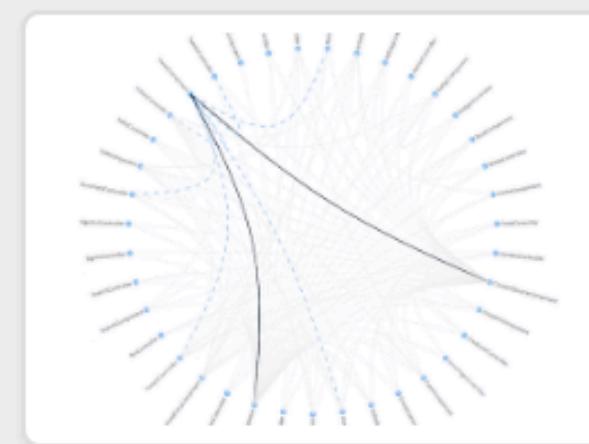
Create diagrams using text with Structurizr Express.



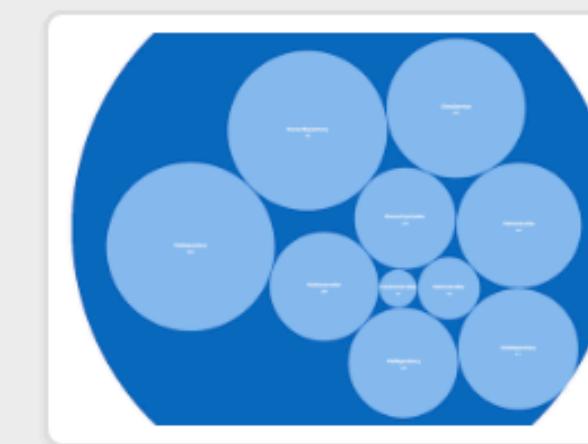
Create diagrams using C# code.



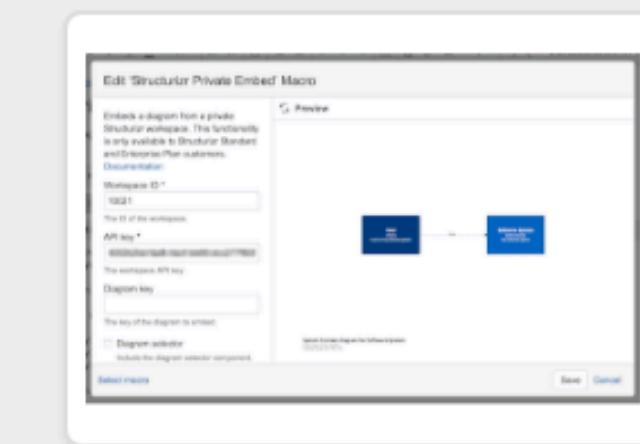
Extract components from your .NET codebase, using static analysis and reflection.



Explore inbound, outbound and cyclic dependencies between components.



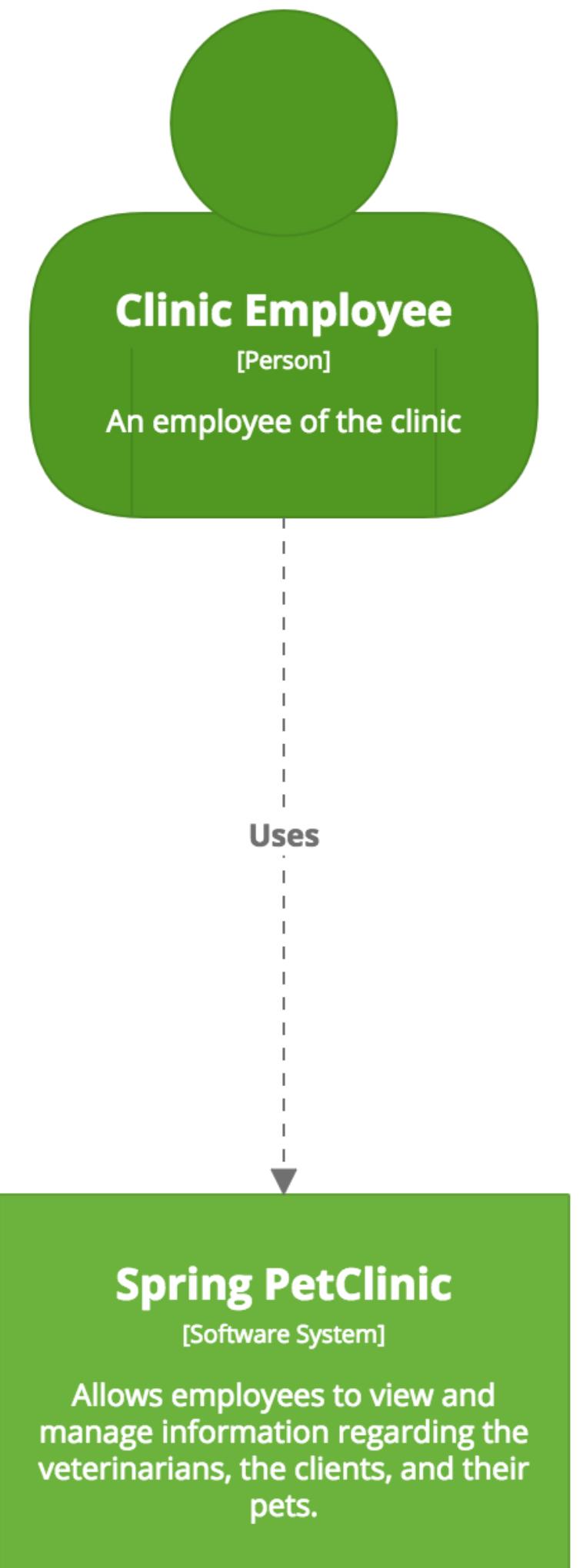
Explore component size.



Embed diagrams into Atlassian Confluence with prebuilt macros.

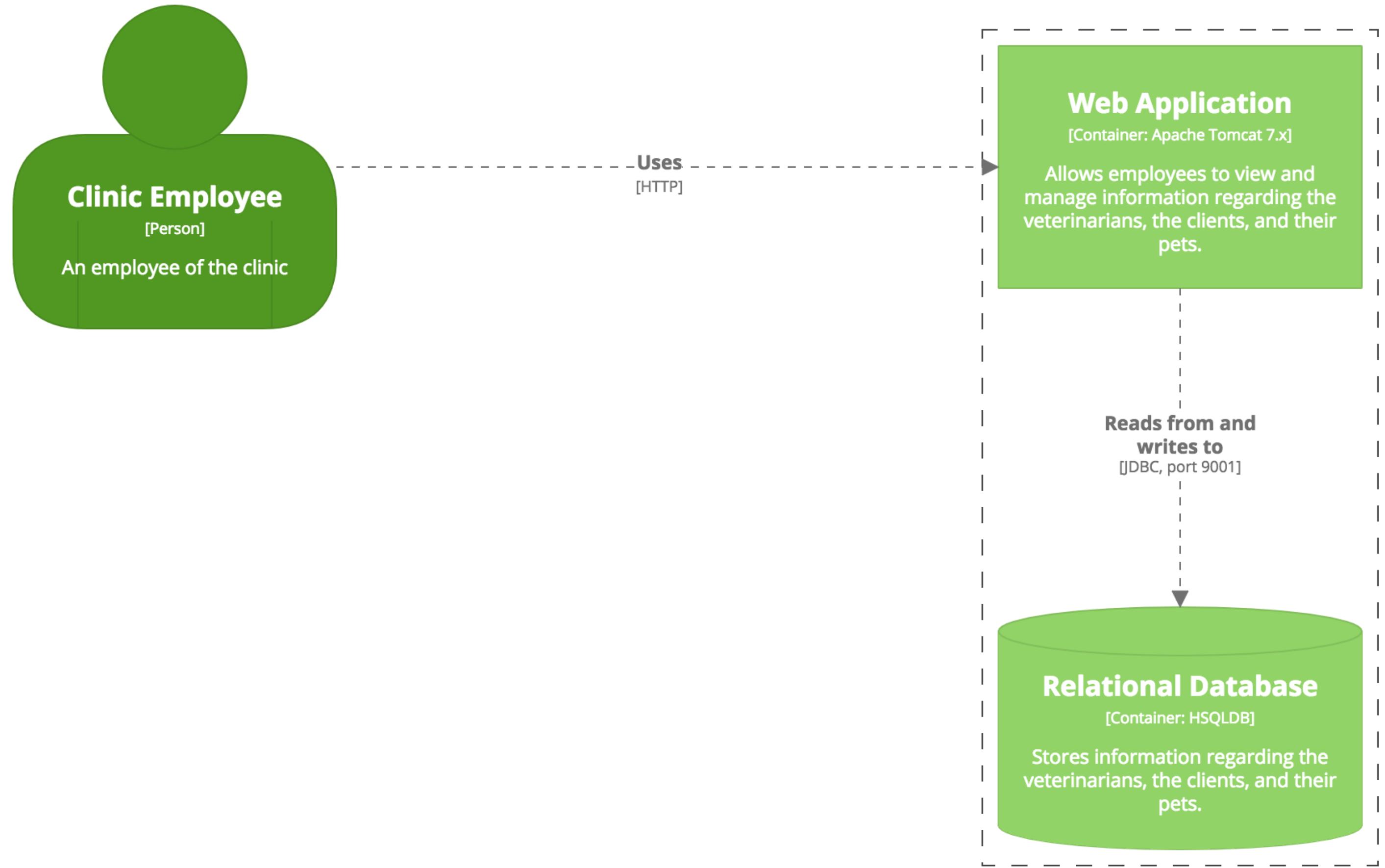
```
// upload the software architecture model to structurizr.com
StructurizrClient client = new StructurizrClient("key", "secret");
client.putWorkspace(1234, workspace);

{
  "id" : 0,
  "name" : "Spring PetClinic",
  "description" : "This is a C4 representation of the Spring PetClinic sample app (https://github.com/spring-projects/spring-petclinic/)",
  "model" : {
    "people" : [ {
      "tags" : "Element,Person",
      "id" : "2",
      "name" : "Clinic Employee",
      "description" : "An employee of the clinic",
      "relationships" : [ {
        "tags" : "Relationship,Synchronous",
        "id" : "3",
        "sourceId" : "2",
        "destinationId" : "1",
        "description" : "Uses",
        "interactionStyle" : "Synchronous"
      }, {
        "tags" : "Relationship,Synchronous",
        "id" : "6",
        "sourceId" : "2",
        "destinationId" : "4",
        "description" : "Uses",
        "technology" : "HTTP",
        "interactionStyle" : "Synchronous"
      }, {
        "tags" : "Relationship,Synchronous",
        "id" : "28",
        "sourceId" : "2",
        "destinationId" : "8",
        "description" : "Uses",
        "technology" : "HTTP",
        "interactionStyle" : "Synchronous"
      }
    }
  }
}
```



## System Context diagram for Spring PetClinic

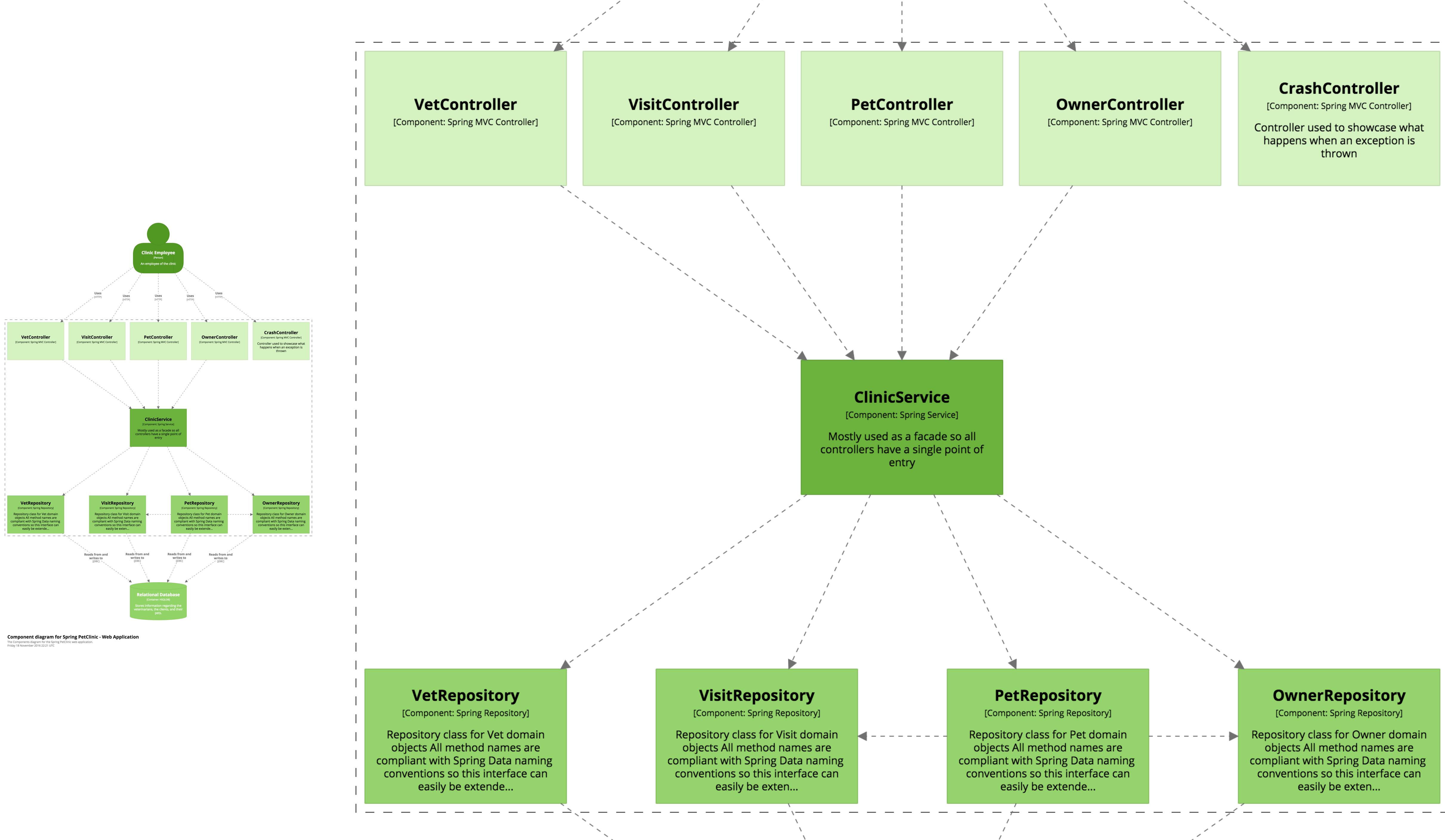
The System Context diagram for the Spring PetClinic system.  
Friday 18 November 2016 22:21 UTC



## Container diagram for Spring PetClinic

The Containers diagram for the Spring PetClinic system.

Friday 18 November 2016 22:21 UTC

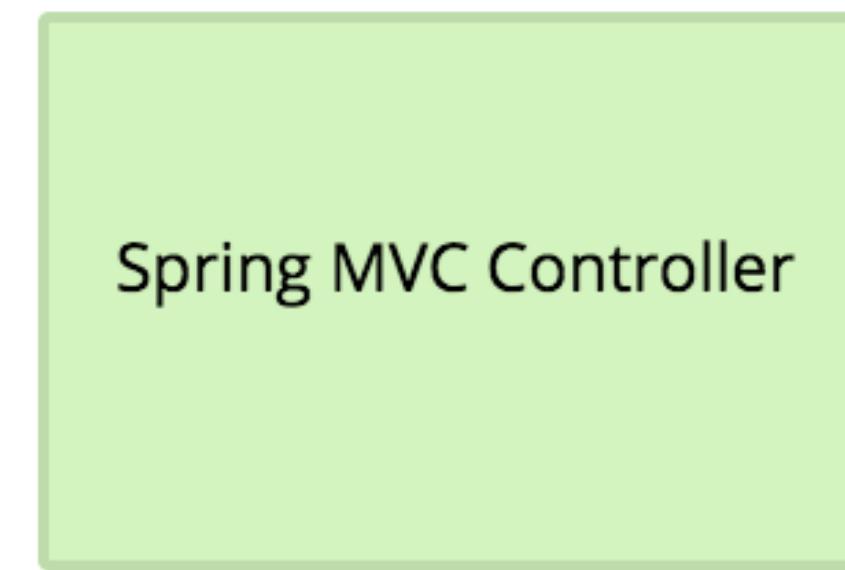


# i Diagram key

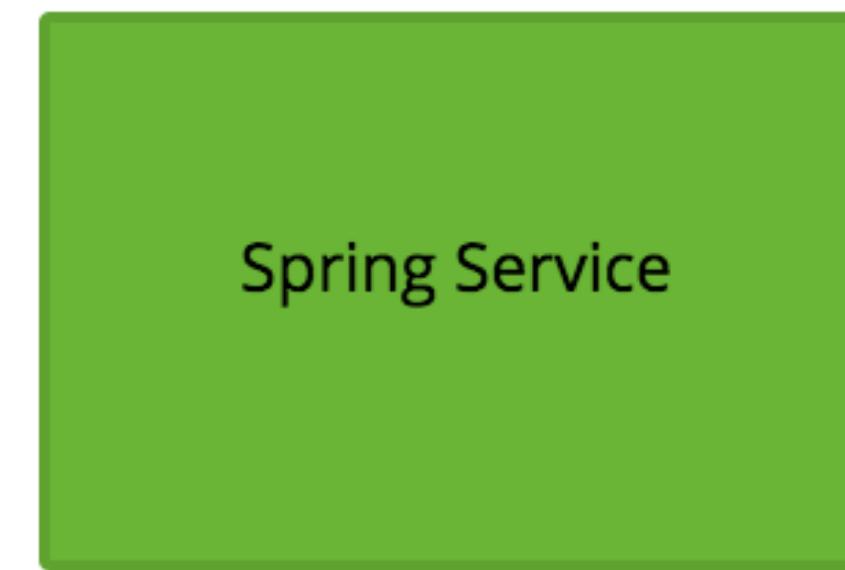
Here are the styles that have been used on this diagram.



Web Application  
[Container]



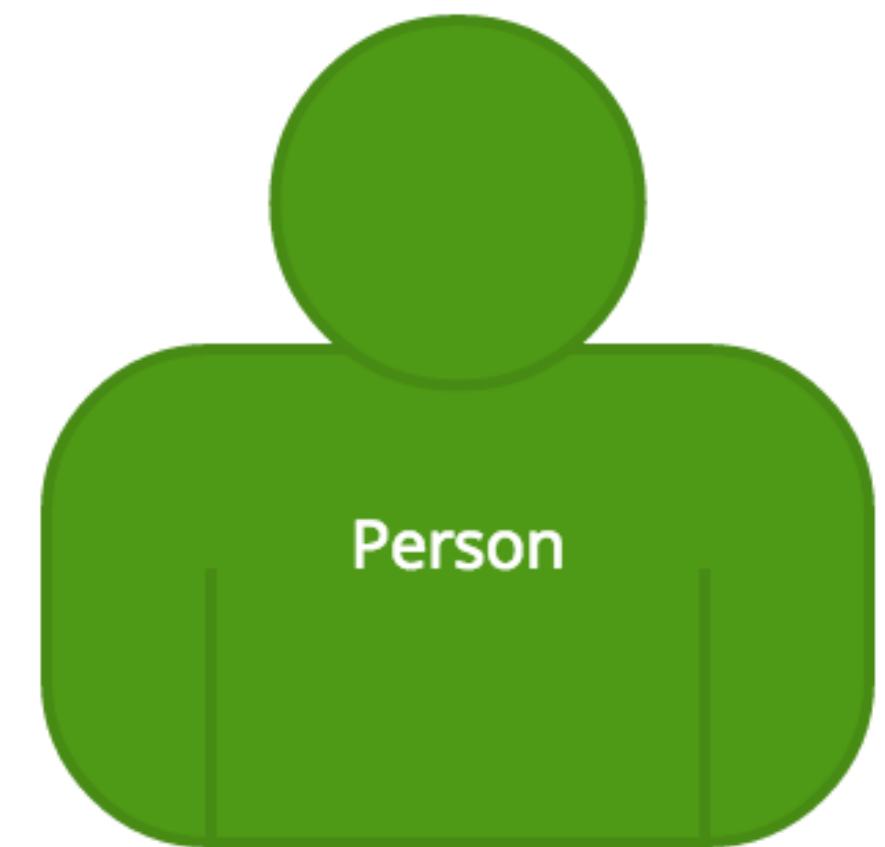
Spring MVC Controller



Spring Service



Spring Repository



Person

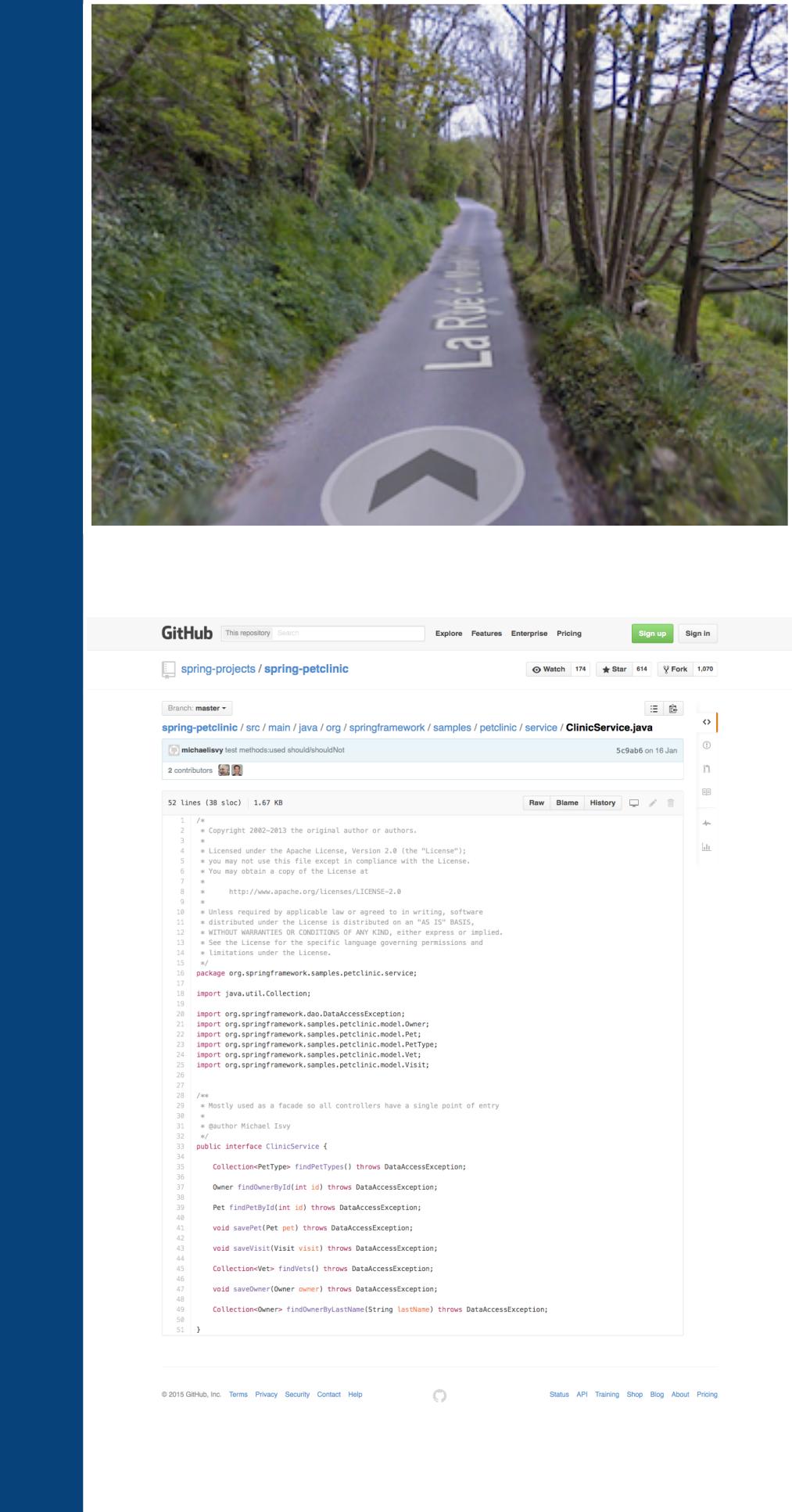
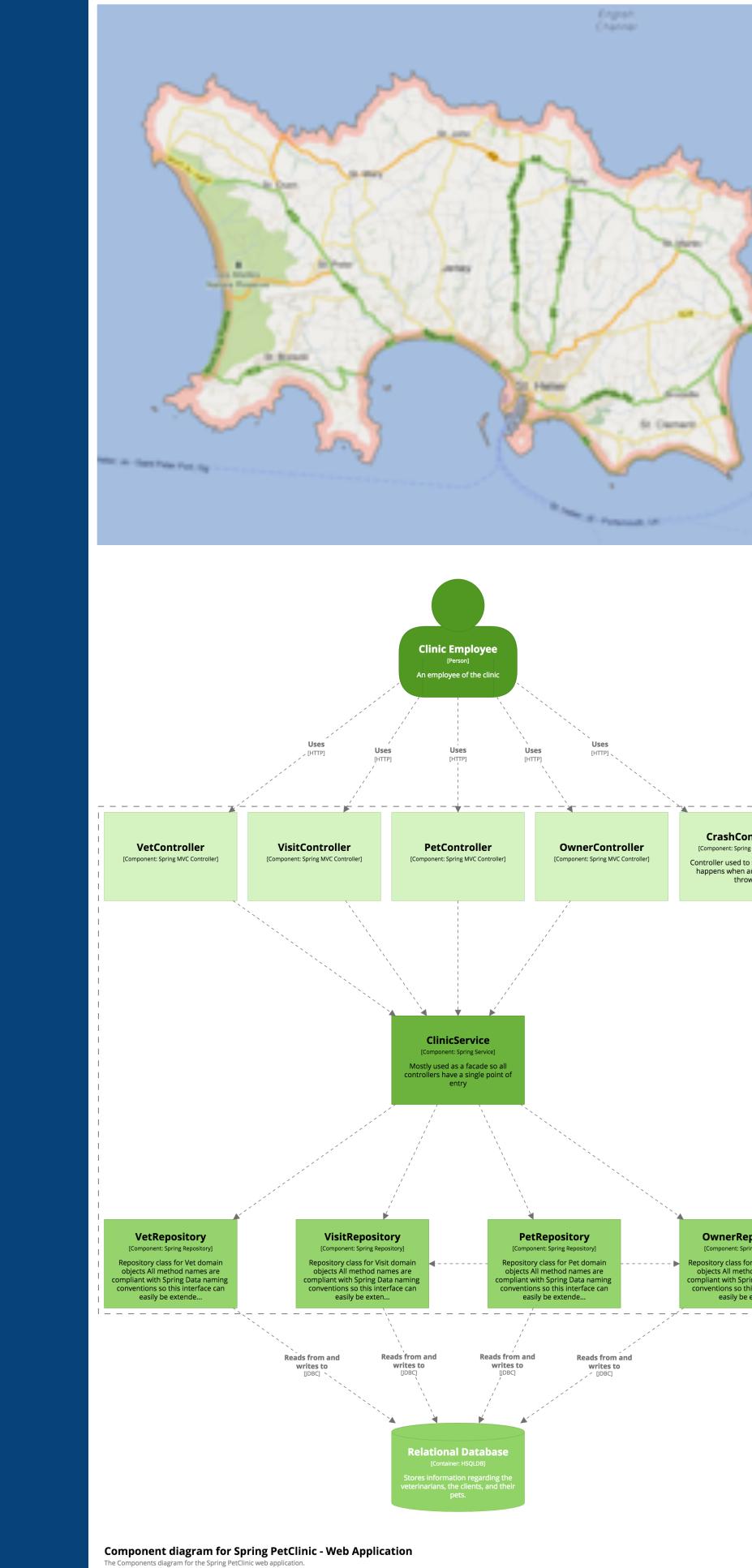
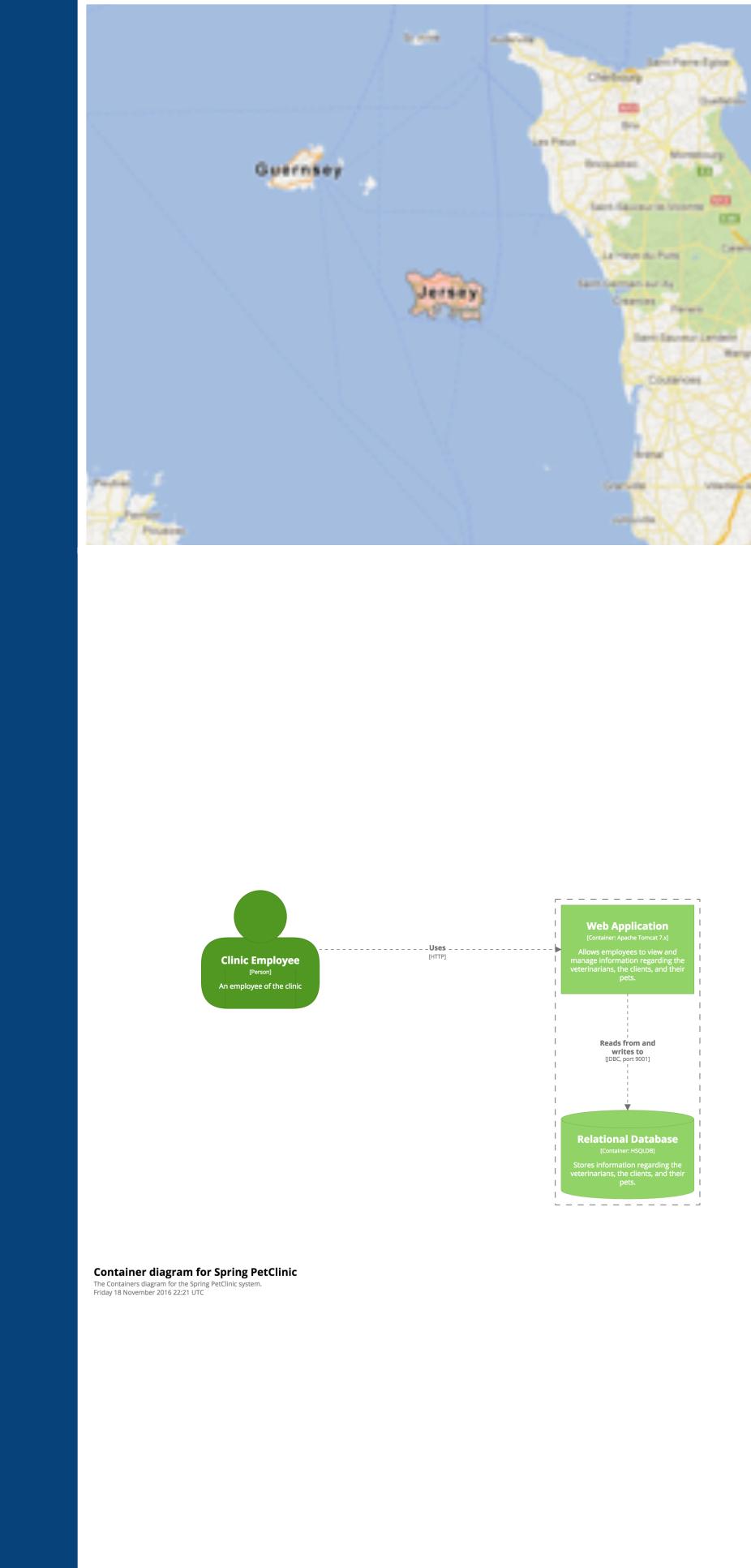
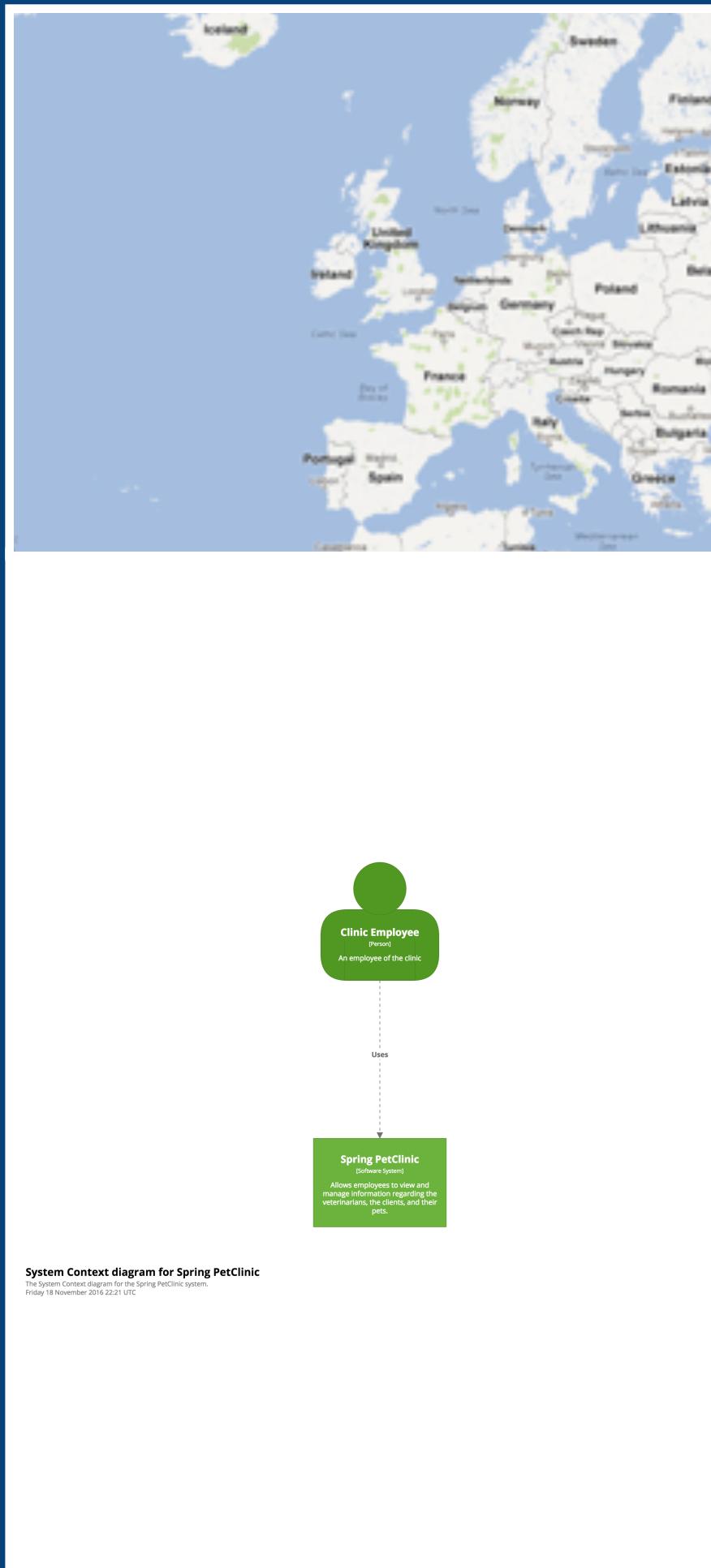


Database

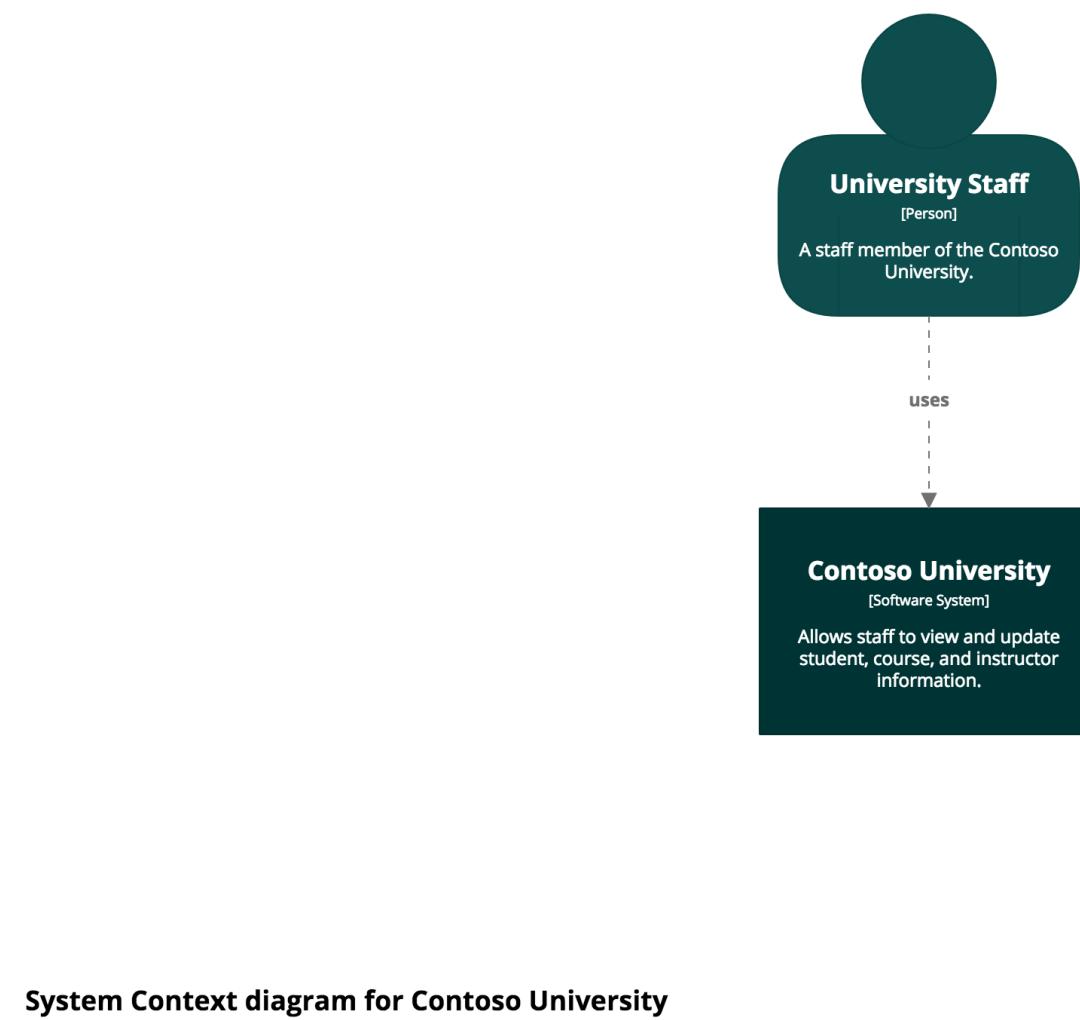


Relationship

Close

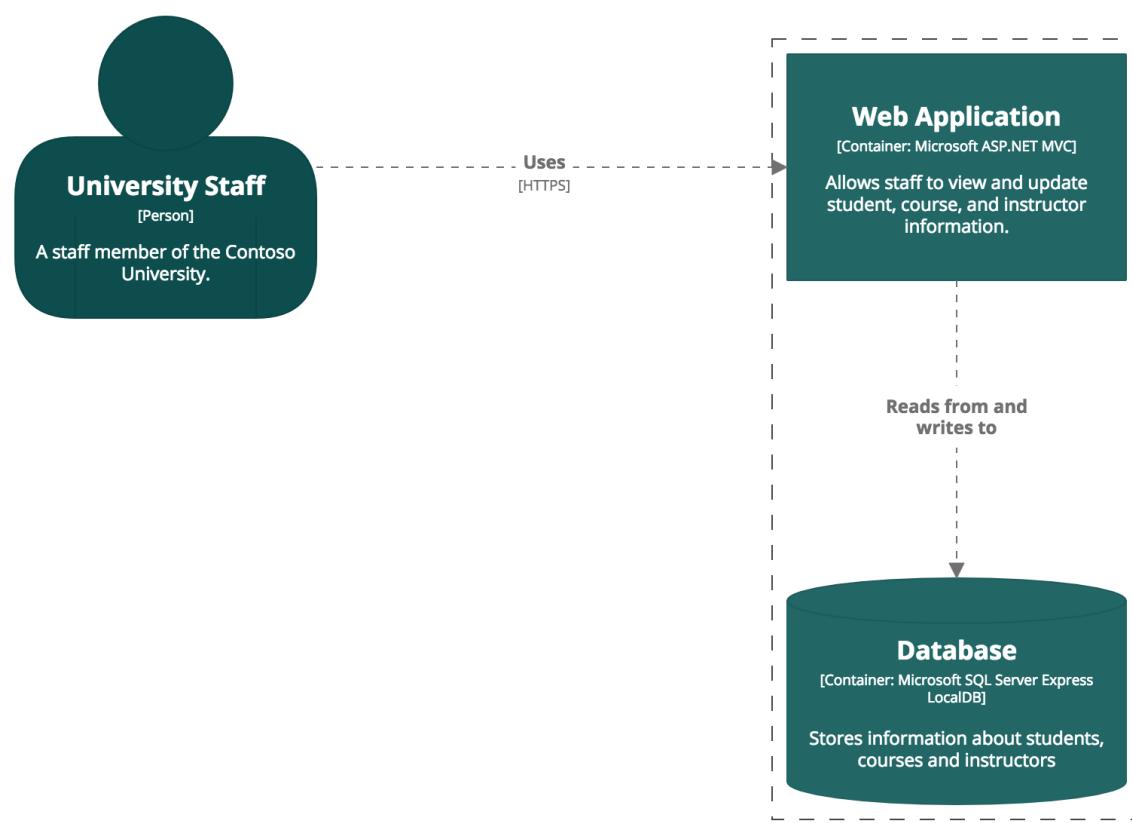


# Diagrams are maps



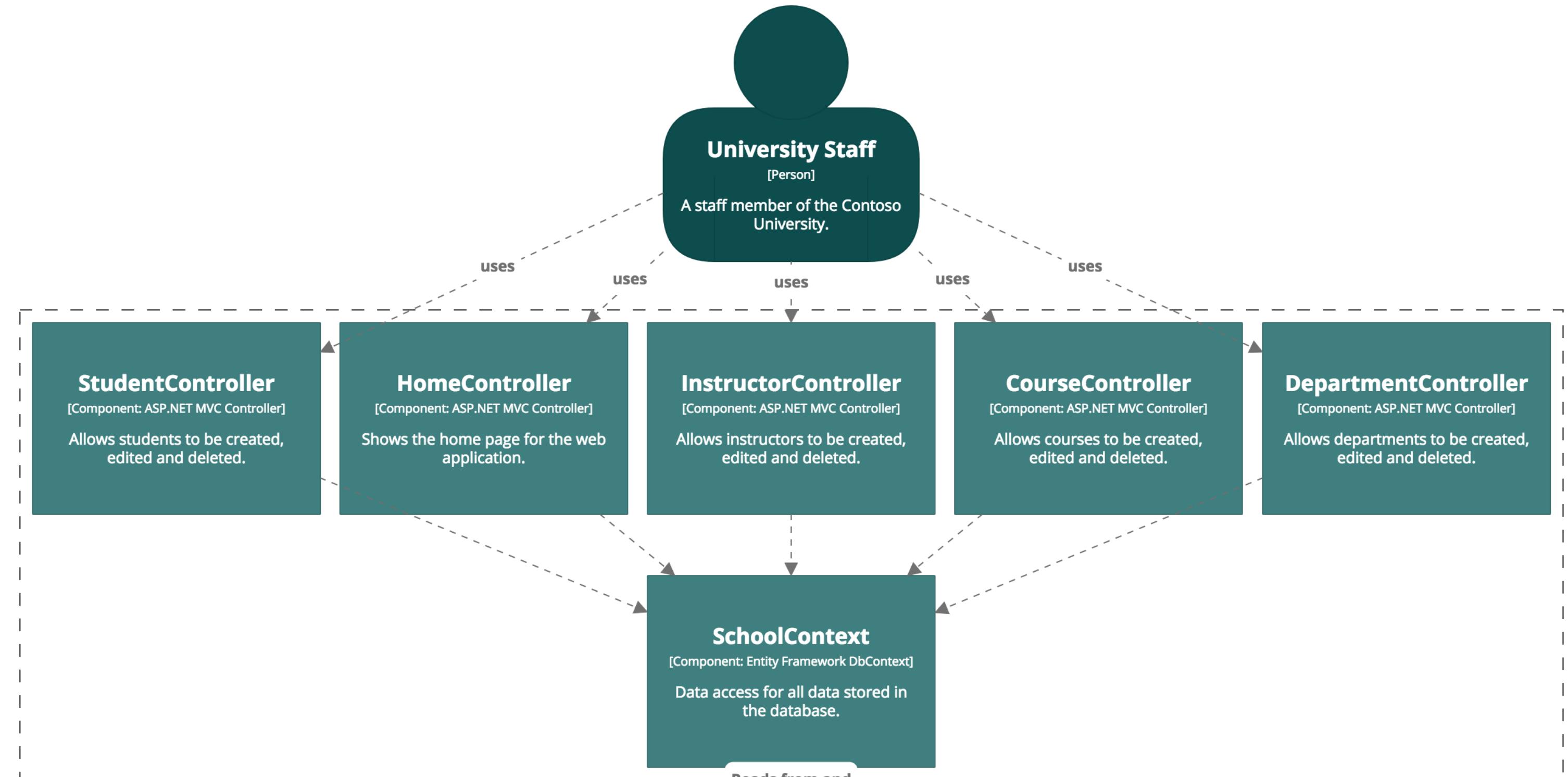
## System Context diagram for Contoso University

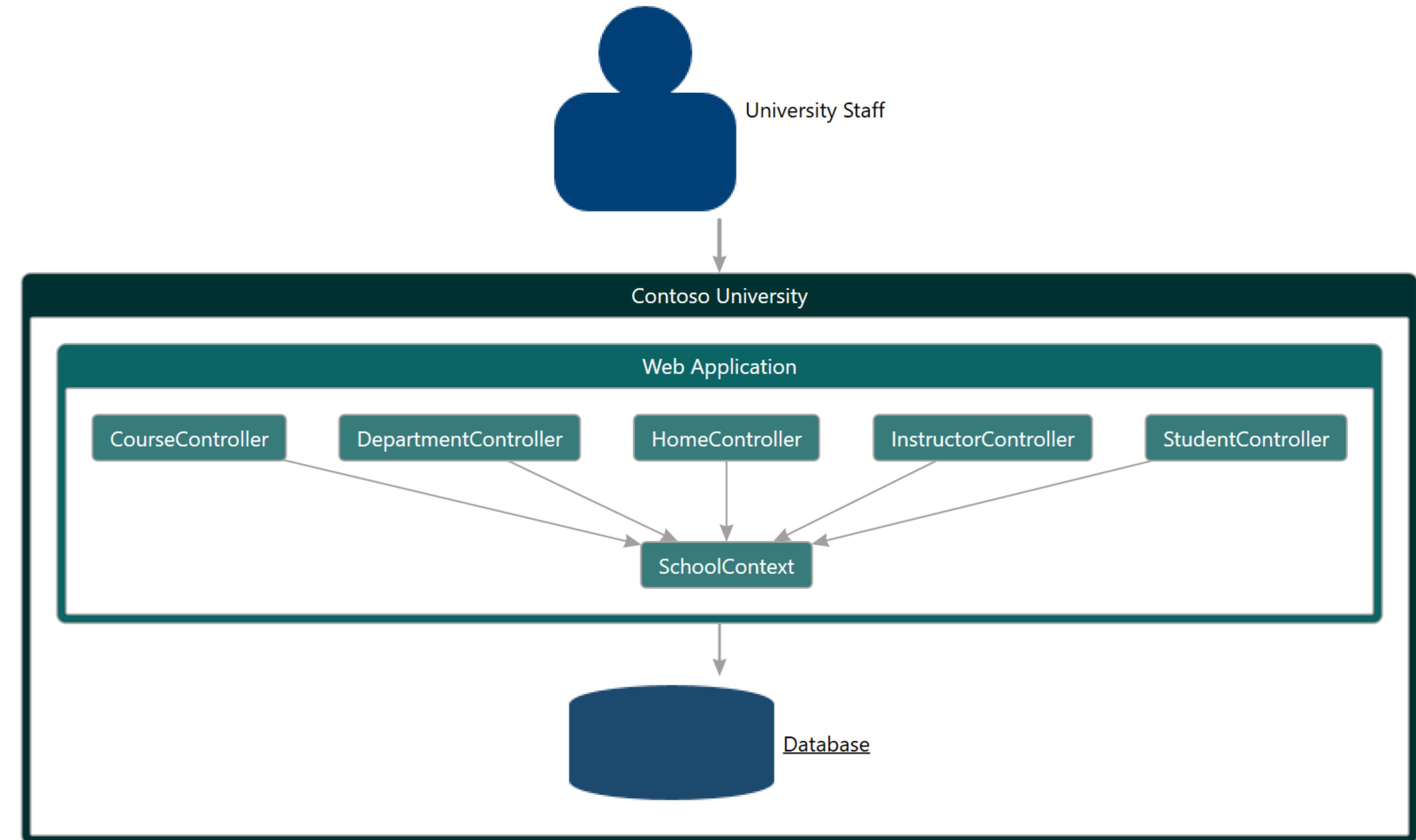
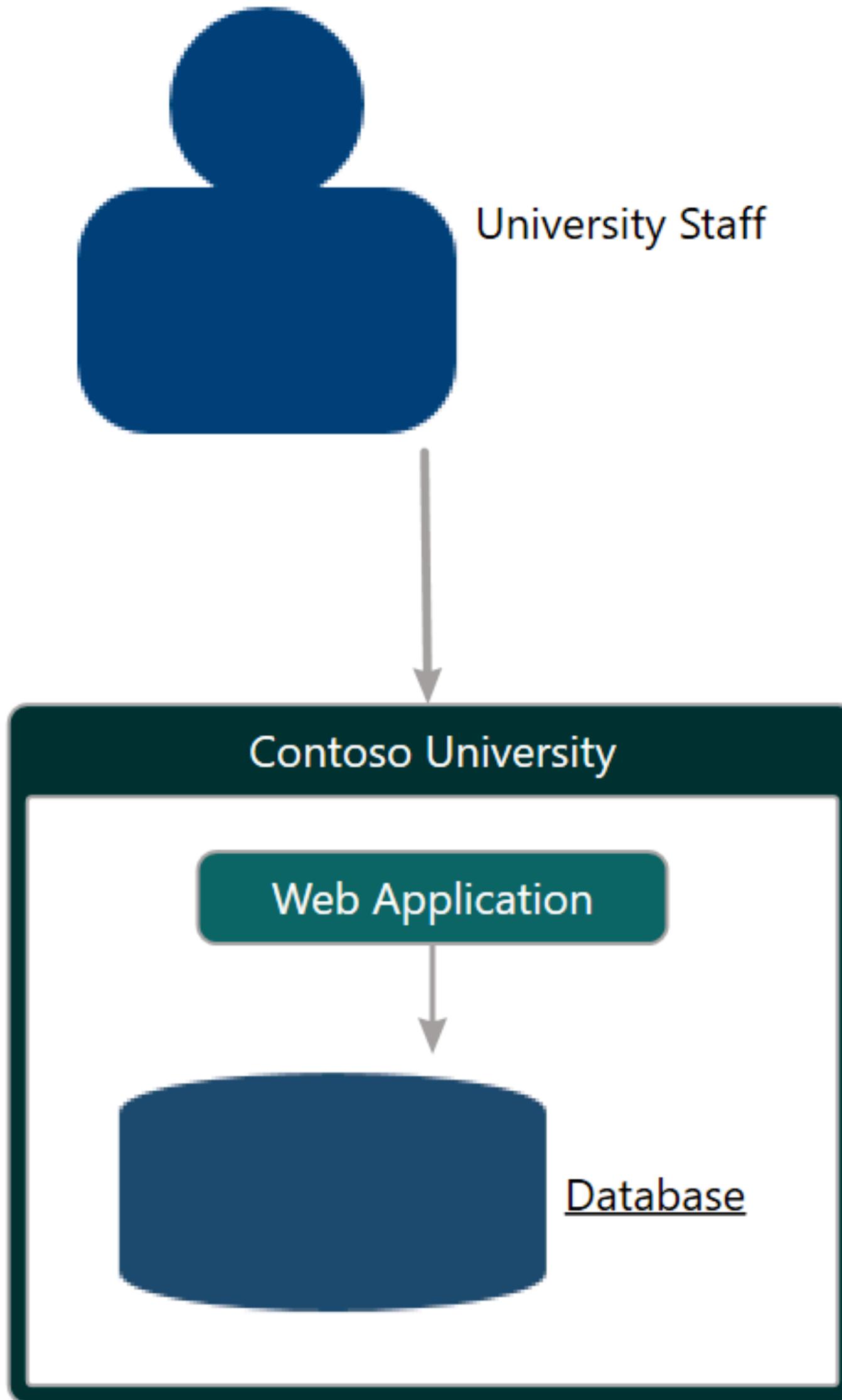
Friday 15 July 2016 11:56 UTC



**Component diagram for Contoso University - Web Application**

Friday 15 July 2016 11:56 UTC





You can also supplement your  
software architecture model  
with documentation in  
Markdown or AsciiDoc

# Structurizr API

All

1. Context

2. Containers

3. Components - API Application

4. Data

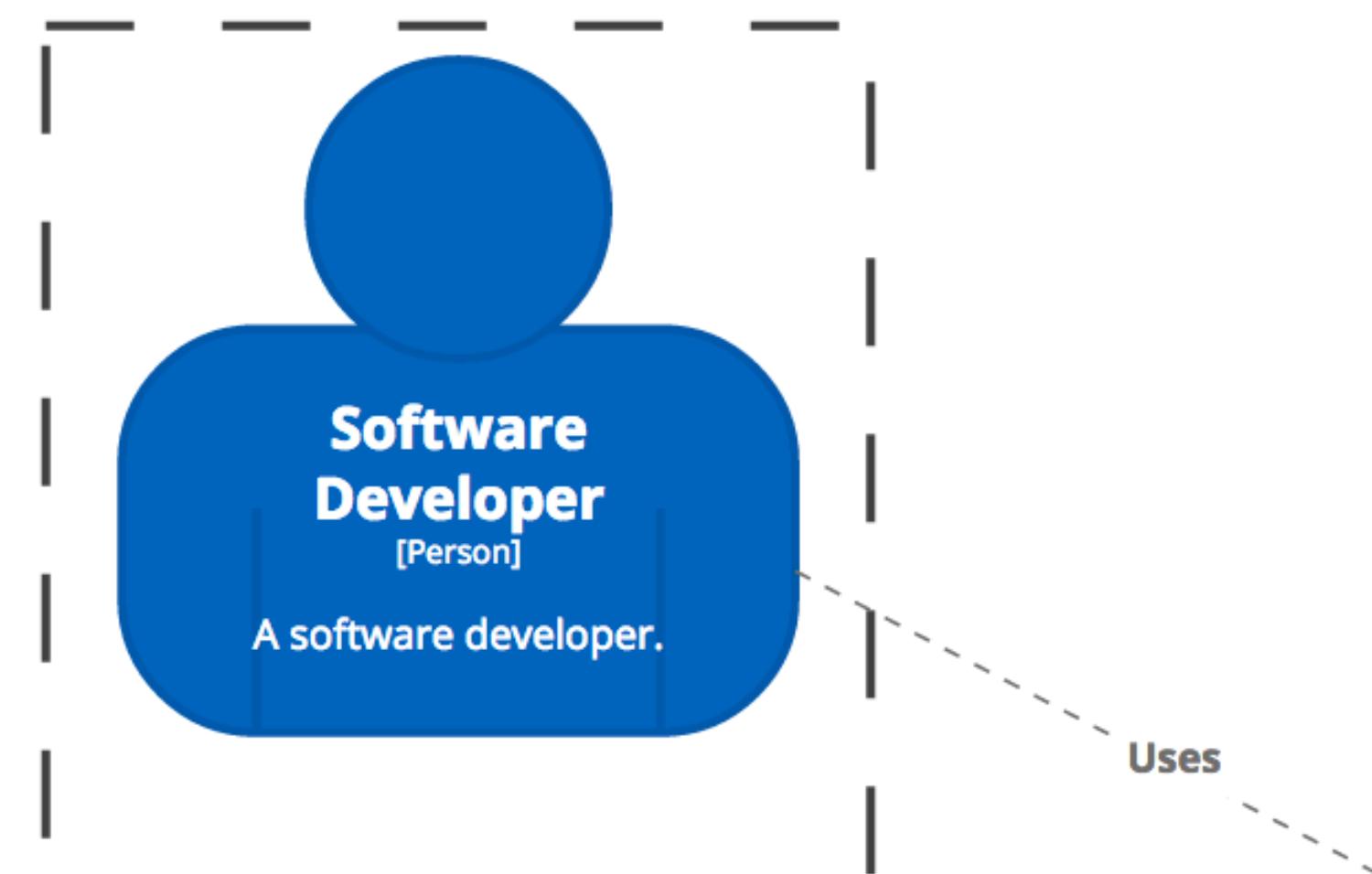
5. Deployment

6. Development Environment

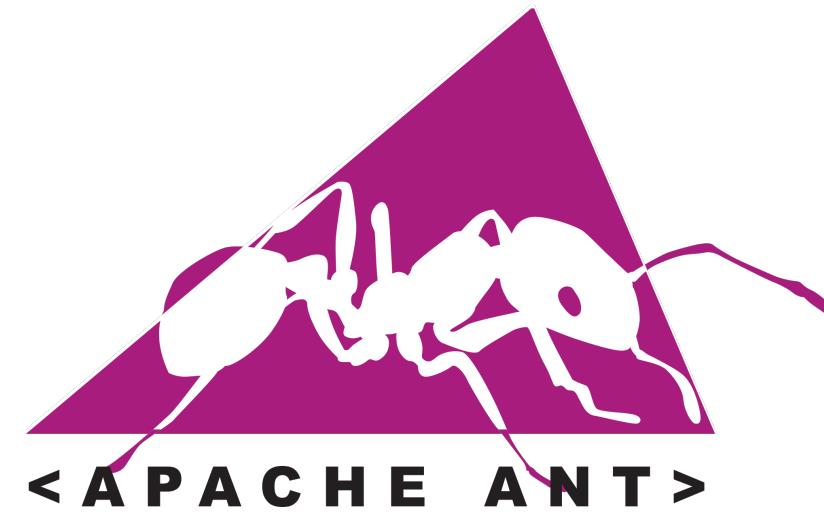
7. Usage

## 1. Context

This documentation describes a simple implementation of the Structurizr API, which is designed to be run on-premises to support Structurizr's [on-premises API feature](#). The on-premises API feature provides a way to store workspace data behind your corporate firewall, or using servers anywhere on the Internet, by hosting a local version of the Structurizr API.



 TeamCity



 gradle

*maven*



Jenkins

Integration with your  
build process keeps  
models up to date

## What do you see as the future of software architecture documentation?

**Eoin:** I hope that in the future we'll need very little software architecture documentation because we'll be able to see the architecture in the code and the running system! One of the reasons we need much of our architecture documentation today is because there's no way of representing architectural structures directly using the technologies we have at our disposal. I'd love to see our architectural constructs as first class implementation structures and then architecture documentation can evolve to capture decisions, rationale and analysis, rather than just capturing structures. On the way to this nirvana, I hope that work going on in the areas of DSLs and [ADLs](#) (architecture description languages) point the more immediate way forward, as we improve our description languages, on the way to working out how to embed the information right in the running system.

**Paulo:** The software architecture discipline is fairly new. There is a long path ahead until we get to a point where an architect creates architecture documentation that is readily understood by a developer who has never worked with that architect. The way to get there is to let new architects learn software architecture at school rather than try-and-error in the battlefield. This education includes proper ways to represent the software architecture for other people's consumption. Important initiatives in the direction of good software architecture education are: the work of Grady Booch on the handbook of software architecture and the publications and curriculum developed at the SEI.

**Grady:** There is a lot of energy being applied today with regard to architectural frameworks and methods: [TOGAF](#), [NEA](#), [DoDAF](#), [MoDAF](#), [FSAM](#), [Zachman](#), and so on. The good news is that there is a vibrant dialog going on with regard to these frameworks and methods - but I expect there will be a shakeout/simplification over time.

**Len:** The ideal development environment is one for which the documentation is available for essentially free with the push of a button. This will require an integrated development, requirements management, and project management environment. Although this will be a long time coming, it provides a worthy goal to strive for.

# Virtual Panel on Software Architecture Documentation (2009)

<http://www.infoq.com/articles/virtual-panel-arch-documentation>

The 1990's called and  
they want their tools back!

It's 2017 and we shouldn't be using a general purpose  
diagramming tool for software architecture

# Abstractions first, notation second

Ensure that your team has a ubiquitous  
language to describe software architecture

# Thank you!

simon.brown@codingthearchitecture.com

@simonbrown