

Radical Simplification through Polyglot and Poly-paradigm Programming

Dean Wampler
dean@objectmentor.com
Object Mentor, Inc.



Polyglot:

many languages

Poly-paradigm:

many modularity
paradigms

Why a talk on PPP?

- It reflects some industry trends,
- which reflect some real problems,
- where our *monocultures* are letting us down.

Today's applications:

- Are *networked*,
- Have graphical and “service” *interfaces*,
- *Persist* information,
- Must be *resilient* and *secure*,
- Must *scale*,
- ... and must do all that by *next Friday*.

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*Mono-
paradigm:*

*Object-Oriented
Programming:*

**right for all
problems?**

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Monolingual

Is one *language*
best for all domains?

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Symptoms of Monocultures

- *Why is there so much **XML** in my **Java**?*
- *Why do I have **similar persistence code** scattered all over my code base?*
- *I can't **scale** my application by a factor of 1000!*
- *My application isn't **extensible** enough!*
- *I can't **respond** quickly enough when **requirements change**!*

```
switch (elementItem)
```

```
{
```

```
case "header1:SearchBox" :
```

```
{
```

```
    __doPostBack('header1:goSearch','');
```

```
    break;
```

```
}
```

```
case "Text1":
```

```
{
```

```
    window.event.returnValue=false;
```

```
    window.event.cancel = true;
```

```
    document.forms[0].elements[n+1].focus();
```

```
    break;
```

```
} ...
```

Pervasive IT problem:

Too much code!

thedailywtf.com

Solutions

The symptoms reflect
common root *problems*
with *similar solutions*.

I need
extensibility and *agility*.

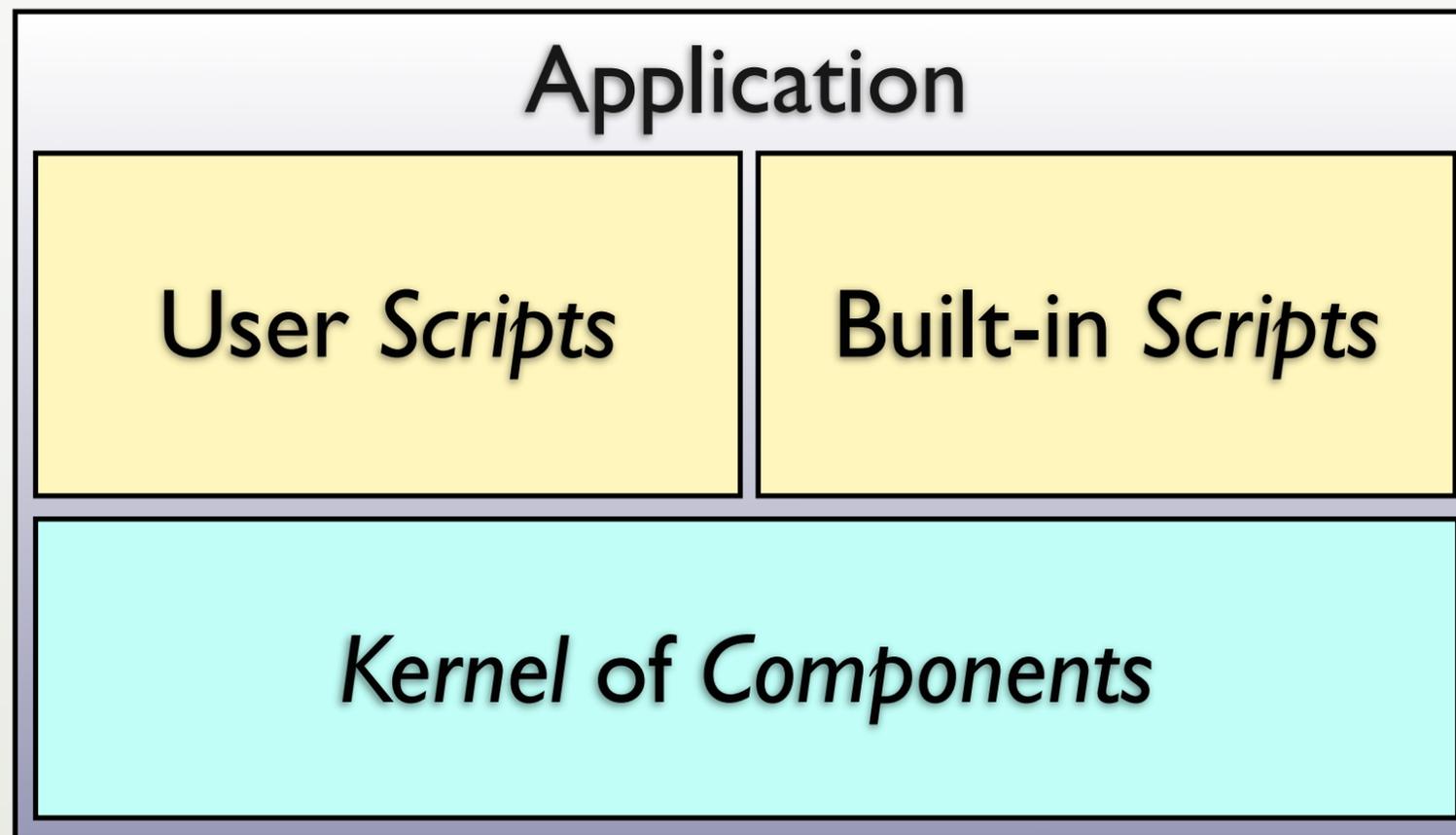
Specific problem #1

twitter.com/photos/arrrika

Symptoms

- *Features* take *too long* to implement.
- We can't *react* fast enough to *change*.
- Users want to *customize* the system *themselves*.

Solution



(C Components) + (Lisp scripts) = Emacs

Components + Scripts

=

Applications

see *John Ousterhout, IEEE Computer, March '98*

Kernel Components

- Written in a *statically-typed language*.
 - C, C++, Java, C#, ...
- *Compiled* for speed, efficiency.
- Access *OS services*, 3rd-party *libraries*.
- Lower developer *productivity*.

Scripts

- Written in a *dynamically-typed language*.
 - Ruby, Python, JavaScript, Lua, Perl, Tcl, ...
- *Interpreted* for extensibility and agility.
 - Runtime *performance* is less important.
- **Glue** together components.
- Higher developer *productivity*.

To be clear about typing,

- *Static typing* → checking at *compile time*.
- *Dynamic typing* → checking at *run time*.

In practice,
the *boundaries* between
components and scripts
are not so *distinct*...

Ola Bini's *Three Layers*

- *Domain* layer
 - *Internal* and *External* DSLs.
- *Dynamic* layer
 - e.g., JRuby and most application code
- *Stable* layer
 - JVM + generic libraries

Other Examples

- *UNIX/Linux + shells.*
 - Also *find, make, grep, ...*
 - Have their own *DSL's*.
- *Tektronix Oscilloscopes: C + Smalltalk.*

Other Examples

- *Adobe Lightroom*: C++ + Lua.
 - 40-50% written in Lua.
- *NRAO Telescopes*: C + Python.
- *Google Android*: Linux+libraries (C) + Java.

XML in Java

Why not *replace* XML
with *JavaScript*, *Groovy*
or *JRuby??*

De facto “scripting language” in Java.

Not an optimal choice:

- All data.
- No behavior (to speak of...).
- Verbose.

```
<view-state id="displayResults" view="/searchResults.jsp">
  <render-actions>
    <bean-action bean="phonebook" method="search">
      <method-arguments>
        <argument expression="searchCriteria"/>
      </method-arguments>
      <method-result name="results" scope="flash"/>
    </bean-action>
  </render-actions>
  <transition on="select" to="browseDetails"/>
  <transition on="newSearch" to="enterCriteria"/>
</view-state>
</flow>
```

SpringSource just

acquired G2One

(Groovy and Grails).

Will they switch to

Groovy for configuration?

Property-based Programming

```
/* Prototype JavaScript framework, version 1.6.0.
 * (c) 2005-2007 Sam Stephenson
 *
 * Prototype is freely distributable under the terms of an MIT-style license.
 * For details, see the Prototype web site: http://www.prototypejs.org
 *
 * -----*/

var Prototype = {
  Version: '1.6.0',
  Browser: {
    IE: !!window.attachEvent && !window.opera,
    Opera: !!window.opera,
    WebKit: navigator.userAgent.indexOf('AppleWebKit/') > -1,
    Gecko: navigator.userAgent.indexOf('Gecko') > -1 && navigator.userAgent.indexOf('KHTML') == -1,
    MobileSafari: !!navigator.userAgent.match(/Apple.*Mobile.*Safari/)
  },
  BrowserFeatures: {
    XPath: !!document.evaluate,
    ElementExtensions: !!window.HTMLElement,
    SpecificElementExtensions:
      document.createElement('div').__proto__ &&
      document.createElement('div').__proto__ !==
  }
};
```

- Excellent for *malleable* objects.

- See Steve Yegge's blog

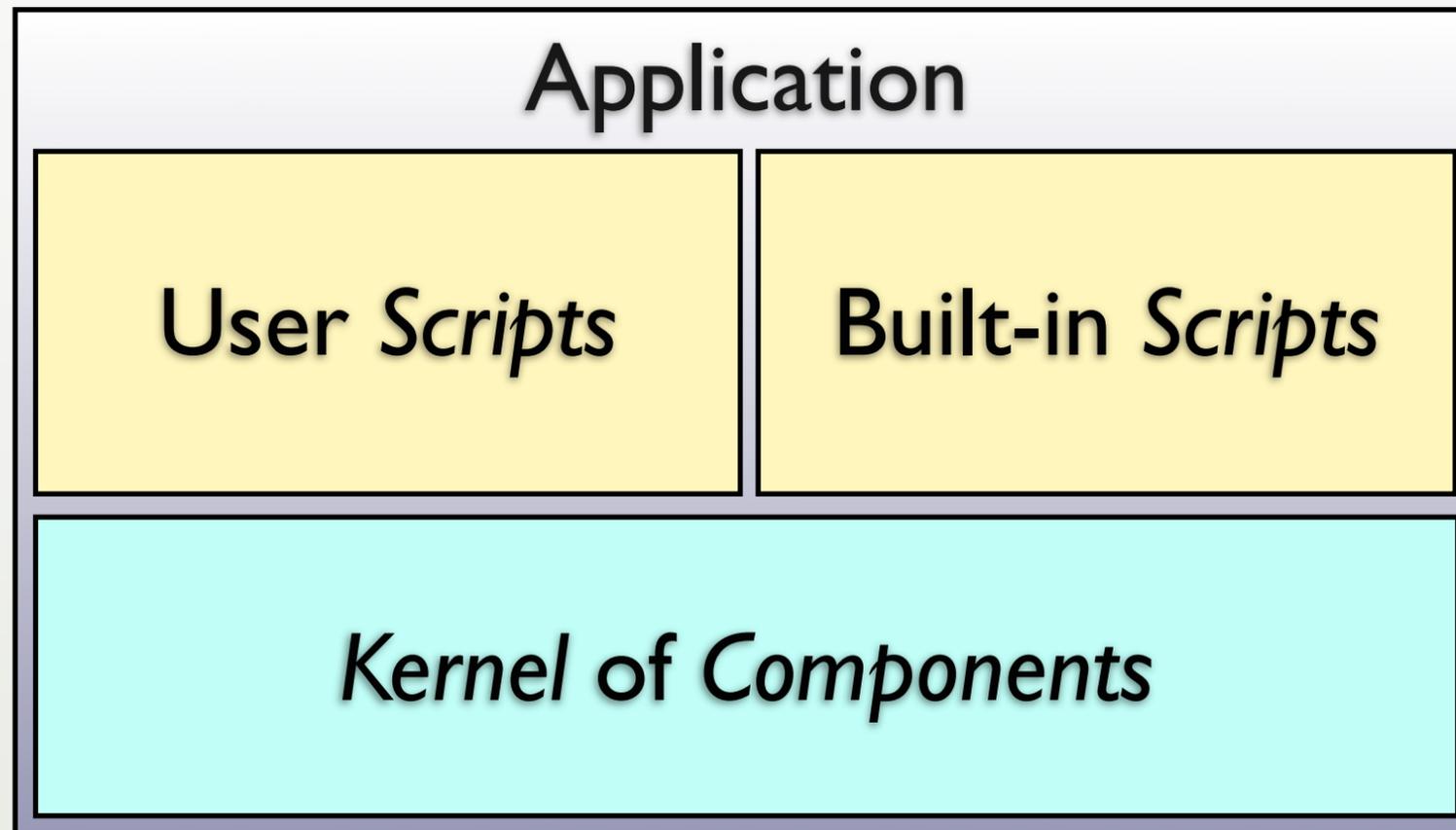
- <http://steve-yegge.blogspot.com/2008/10/universal-design-pattern.html>

- JavaScript, Lua, Self, ...

Multilingual VM's

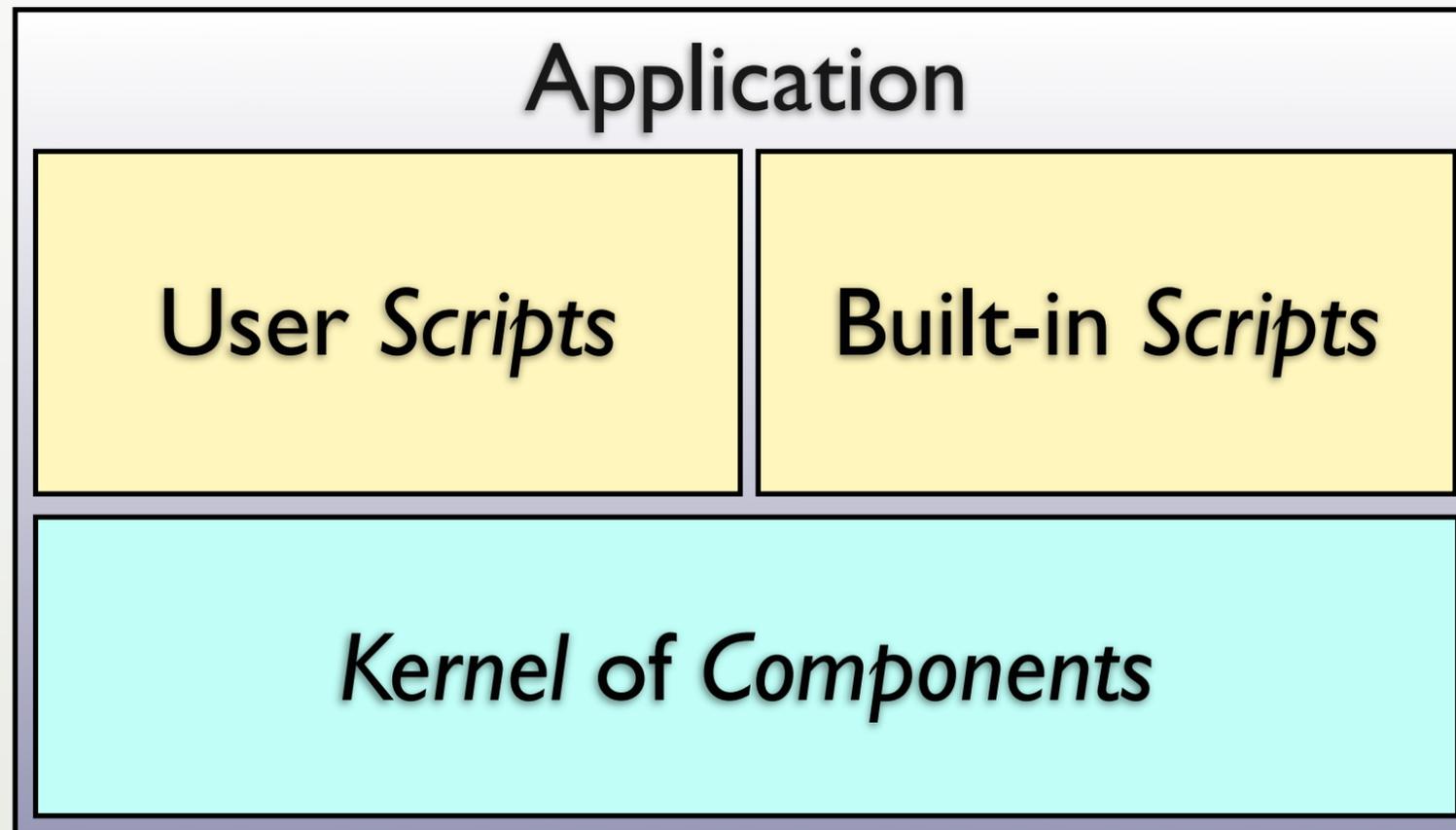
- *Jython, JRuby, Groovy, Scala.*
 - On the *JVM.*
 - Ruby on Rails on JRuby (*Oracle Mix*).
- *Dynamic Language Runtime (DLR).*
 - Ruby, Python, ... on the *.NET CLR.*

Benefits



- Optimize *performance* where it matters.
- Optimize *productivity*, *extensibility* and *agility* everywhere else.

Benefits

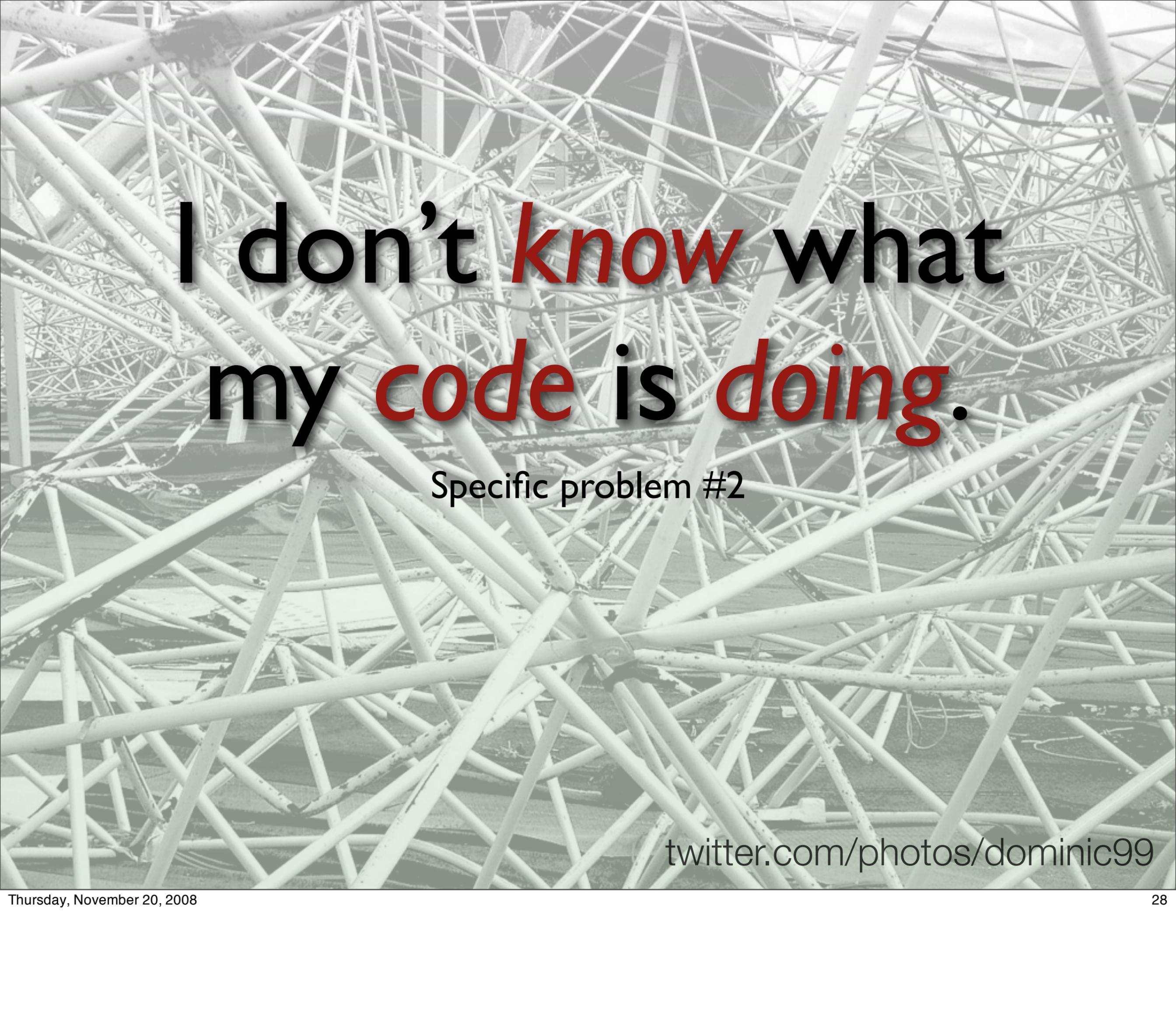


An *underutilized*
architecture!

Parting Thought...

Cell phone makers are
drowning in C++.

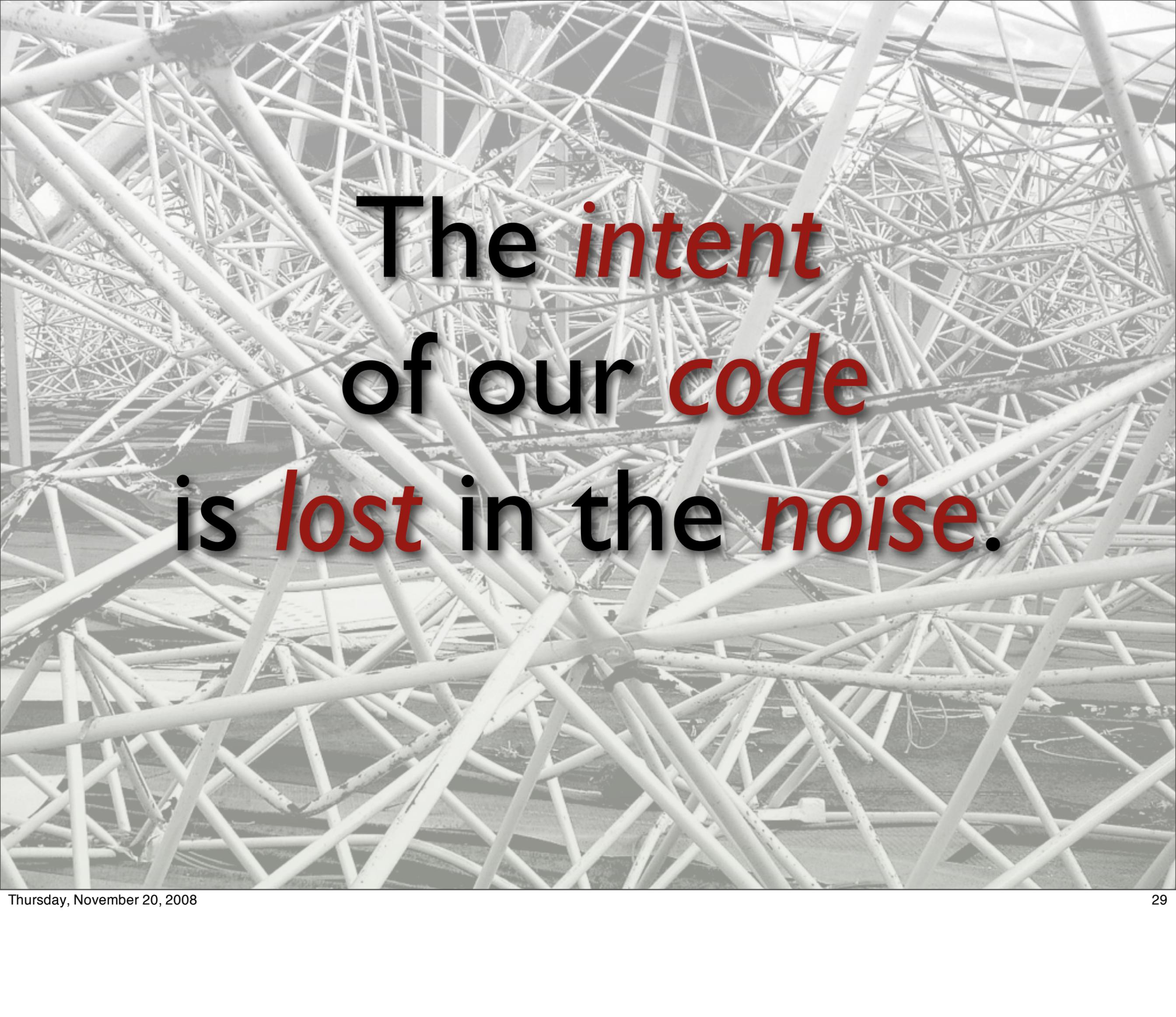
(Why *iPhone* and *Android*
are interesting.)



I don't *know* what
my *code* is *doing*.

Specific problem #2

twitter.com/photos/dominic99



The *intent*
of our *code*
is *lost* in the *noise*.

Symptoms

- The *Business logic* doesn't *jump out* at me when I *read* the code.
- The system *breaks* when we *change* it.
- Translating *requirements* to *code* is *error prone*.

Solution #1

Write
less code.

Profound statement.

Less Code

- Means *problems* are *smaller*:
 - Maintenance
 - Duplication (DRY)
 - Testing
 - Performance
 - *etc.*

How to Write Less Code

- Root out *duplication*.
- Use *economical* designs.
 - *Functional vs. Object-Oriented?*
- Use *economical* languages.

Solution #2

Separate
implementation details
from *business logic*.

Domain Specific Languages

*Make the code read like
“structured” domain prose.*

Example DSL

```
internal {  
  case extension  
    when 100...200  
      callee = User.find_by_extension extension  
      unless callee.busy? then dial callee  
      else  
        voicemail extension  
  
        when 111 then join 111  
  
        when 888  
          play weather_report( 'Dallas, Texas' )  
  
        when 999  
          play %w(a-connect-charge-of 22  
            cents-per-minute will-apply)  
          sleep 2.seconds  
          play 'just-kidding-not-upset'  
          check_voicemail  
  
      end  
    }  
}
```

Adhearsion

=

Ruby DSL

+

Asterisk

+

Jabber/XMPP

+

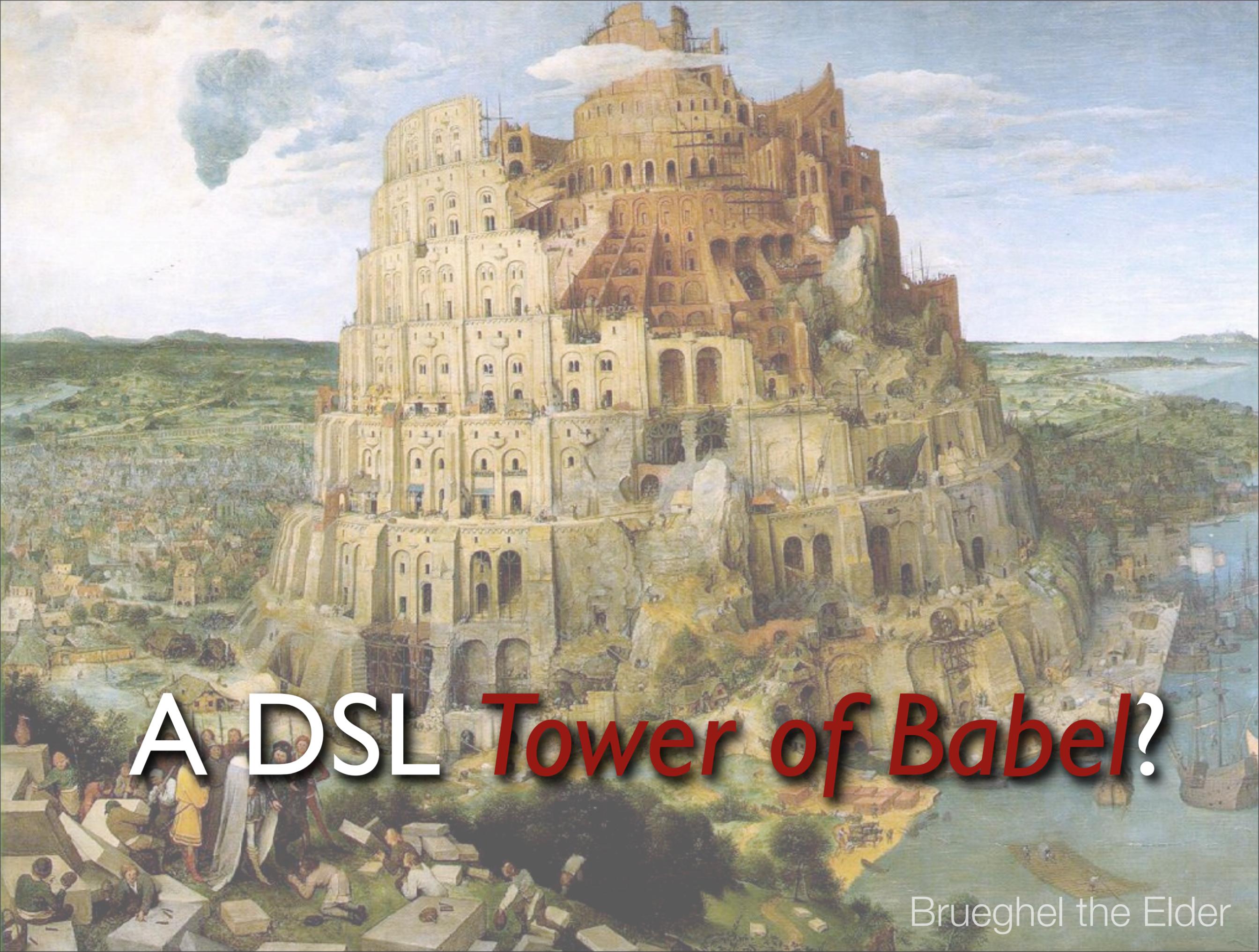
...

DSL Advantages

- When code *looks* like domain prose,
 - It is easier to understand by *everyone*,
 - It is easier to *align* with the *requirements*,
 - It is more *succinct*.

DSL Disadvantages

- DSL's are *hard* to *design*, *test* and *debug*.
- Some people are *bad* API designers,
 - They will be even *worse* DSL designers!



A DSL *Tower of Babel?*

Brueghel the Elder

Parting Thought...

*Perfection is achieved,
not when there is nothing left to add,
but when there is nothing left to remove.*

-- Antoine de Saint-Exupery

Parting Thought #2...

*Everything should be made as **simple**
as possible, but not **simpler**.*

-- Albert Einstein

Corollary:

*Entia non sunt multiplicanda
praeter necessitatem.*

*(Entities must not be
multiplied beyond necessity.)*

-- Occam's Razor

Corollary:

*Entia non sunt multiplicanda
praeter necessitatem.*

*(All other things being **equal**,
the **simplest solution** is the **best**.)*

-- Occam's Razor



We have
code duplication
everywhere.

Specific problem #3

twitter.com/photos/maxblack

Symptoms

- *Persistence logic* is embedded in *every* “domain” class.
- Error handling and logging is *inconsistent*.

Cross-Cutting Concerns.

Solution

Aspect-Oriented Programming

Removing Duplication

- In order, use:
 - *Object* or *functional* decomposition.
 - *DSL's*.
 - *Aspects*.

An Example...

```
class BankAccount
  attr_reader :balance

  def credit(amount)
    @balance += amount
  end

  def debit(amount)
    @balance -= amount
  end

  ...
end
```

Clean Code

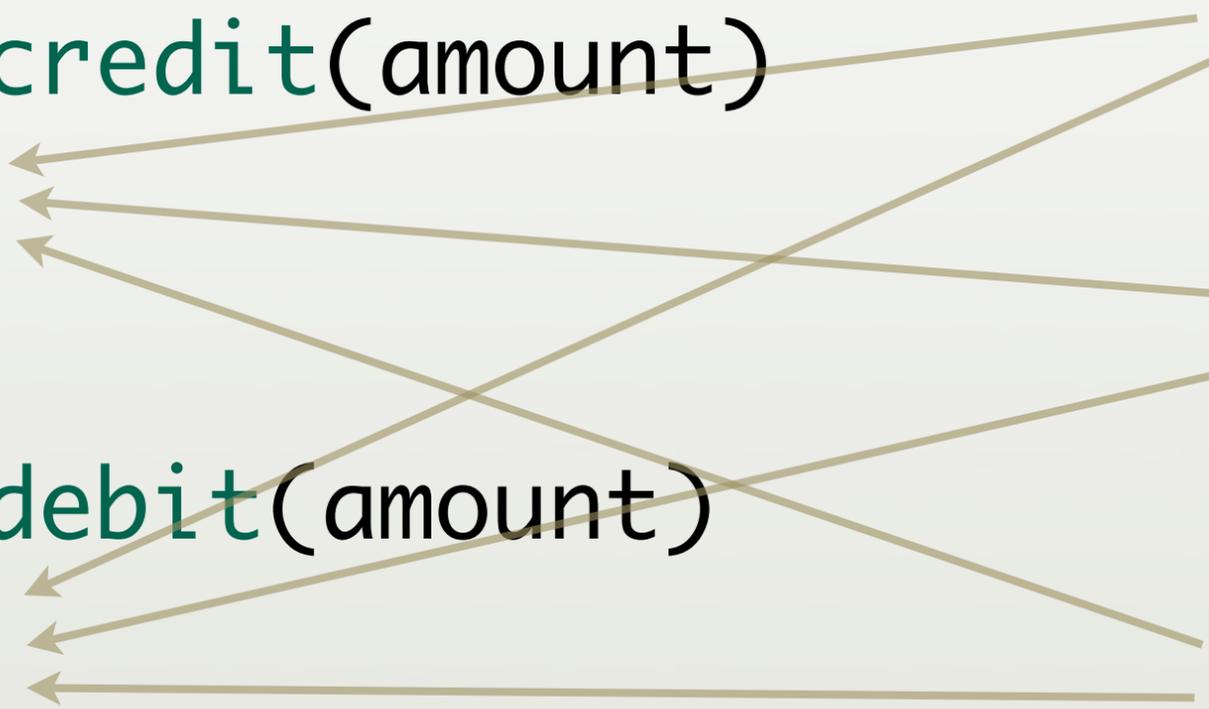
But, real applications need:

```
def BankAccount
  attr_reader :balance
  def credit(amount)
    ...
  end
  def debit(amount)
    ...
  end
end
```

Transactions

Persistence

Security

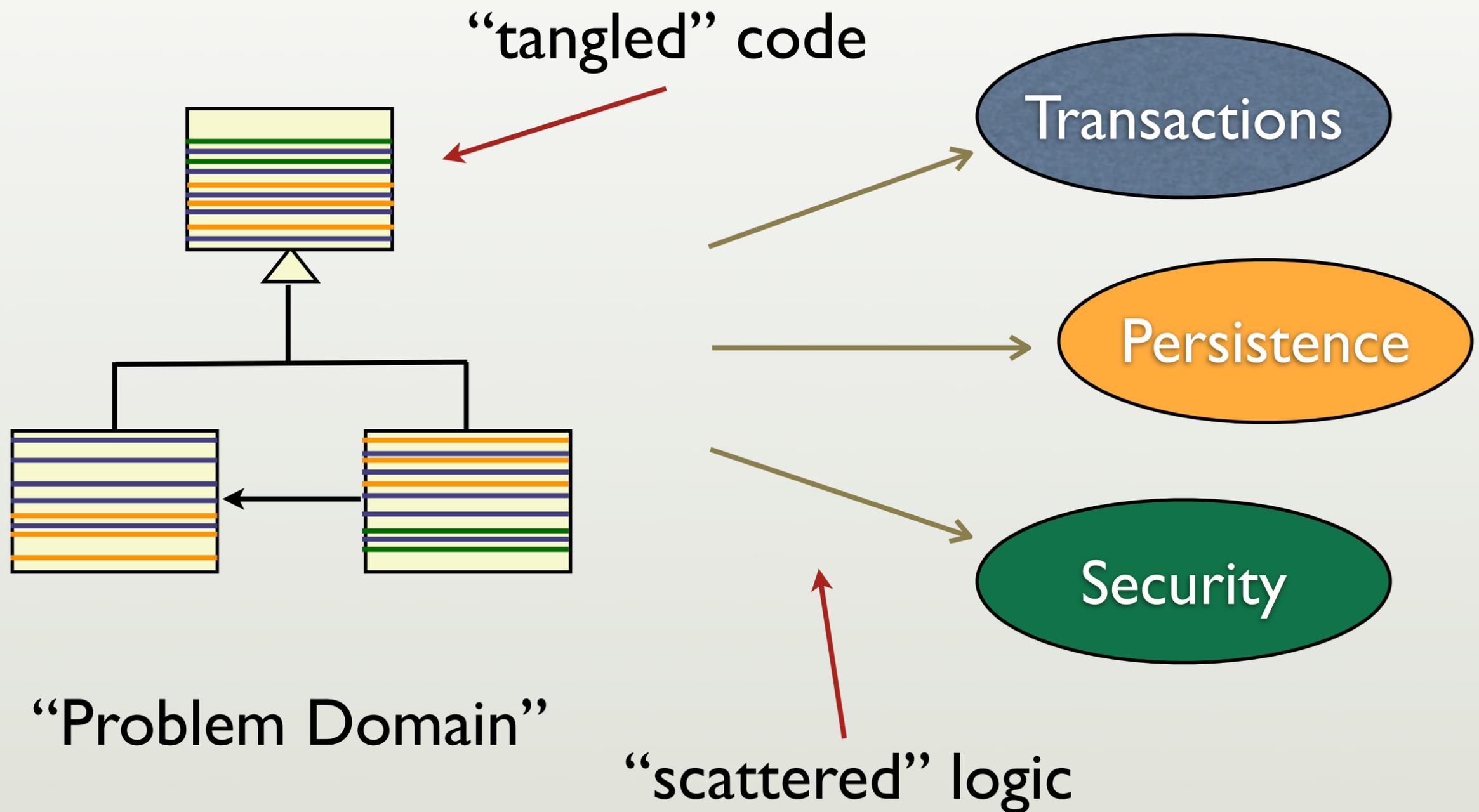


So credit becomes...

```
def credit(amount)
  raise “...” if unauthorized()
  save_balance = @balance
  begin
    begin_transaction()
    @balance += amount
    persist_balance(@balance)
  end
  ...
end
```

```
...
rescue => error
  log(error)
  @balance = saved_balance
ensure
  end_transaction()
end
end
```

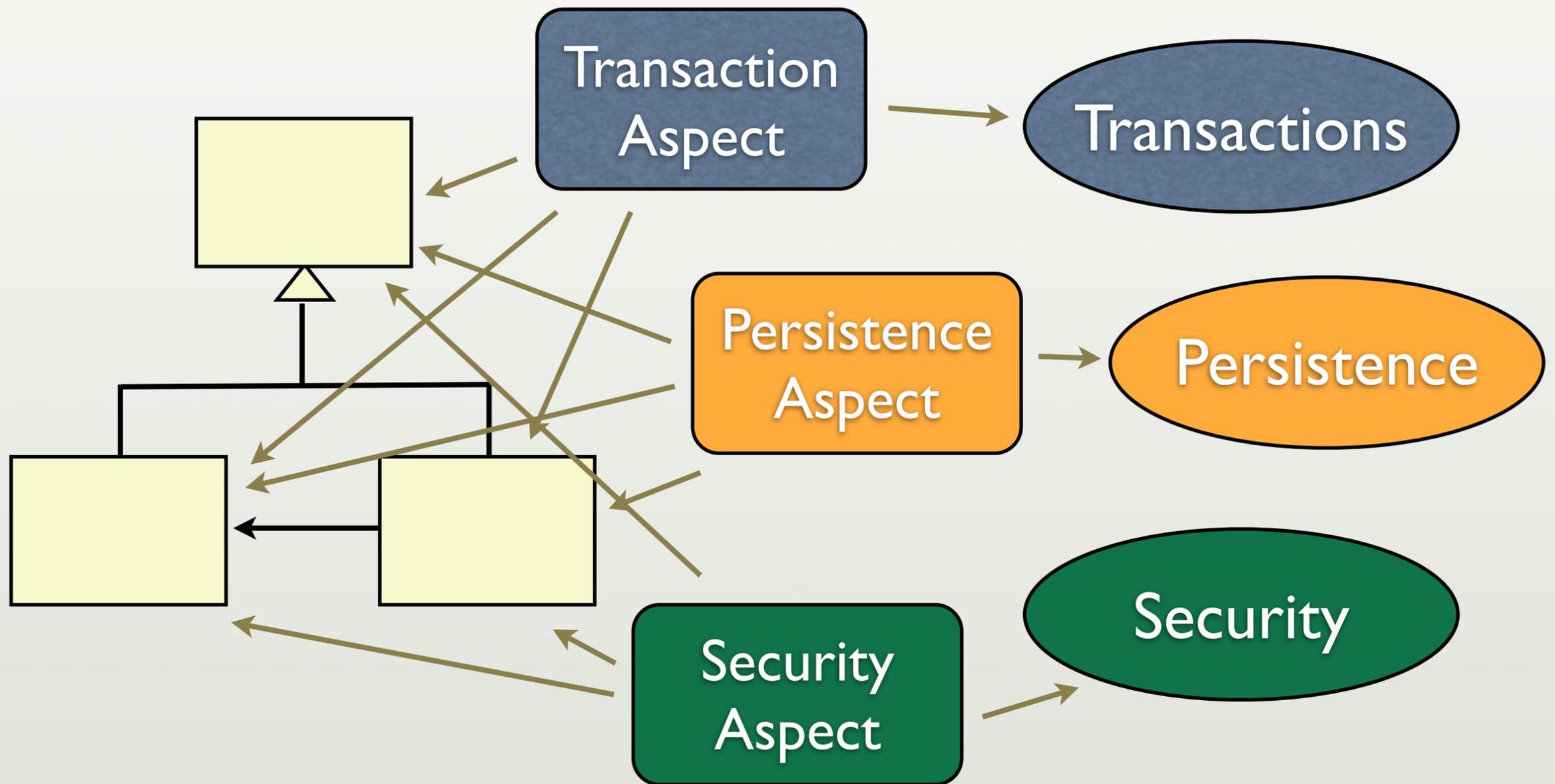
We're mixing *multiple domains*, with fine-grained *intersections*.



Objects alone **don't**
prevent *tangling*.

Aspect-Oriented
Programming:
restore *modularity* for
cross-cutting concerns.

Aspects restore *modularity* by encapsulating the *intersections*.



If you have used
Spring, you have
probably used
aspects.

Aspect-Oriented Tools

- Java
 - AspectJ
 - Spring AOP
 - JBoss AOP
- Ruby
 - *shameless plug*
↓
● Aquarium
 - Facets
 - AspectR

I would like to write...

Before returning the *balance*, read the current *value* from the database.

After setting the *balance*, write the current *value* to the database.

Before accessing the *BankAccount*, authenticate and authorize the *user*.

I would like to write...

Before returning the *balance*, read the current *value* from the database.

After setting the *balance*, write the current *value* to the database.

Before accessing the *BankAccount*, authenticate and authorize the *user*.

Aquarium

```
require 'aquarium'  
class BankAccount  
  ...  
  after :writing => :balance \  
    do |context, account, *args|  
    persist_balance account  
  end  
  ...
```

reopen class

add new behavior

aquarium.rubyforge.org

Back to *clean code*

```
def credit(amount)
  @balance += amount
end
```

Parting Thought...

Metaprogramming can be used for some *aspect-like* functionality.

DSL's can solve some *CCC*.
(We'll come back to that.)



Our application must be
available 24 x 7 and
highly *concurrent.*

Specific problem #4

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Symptoms

- Only *one* of our developers really *knows* how to write *thread-safe* code.
- The system *freezes* every few *weeks* or so.

Solution

Functional Programming

Functional Programming

- Works like *mathematical functions*.

Fibonacci Numbers:

$$F(n) = F(n-1) + F(n-2)$$

where: $F(1) = 1$ and $F(2) = 1$

Functional Programming

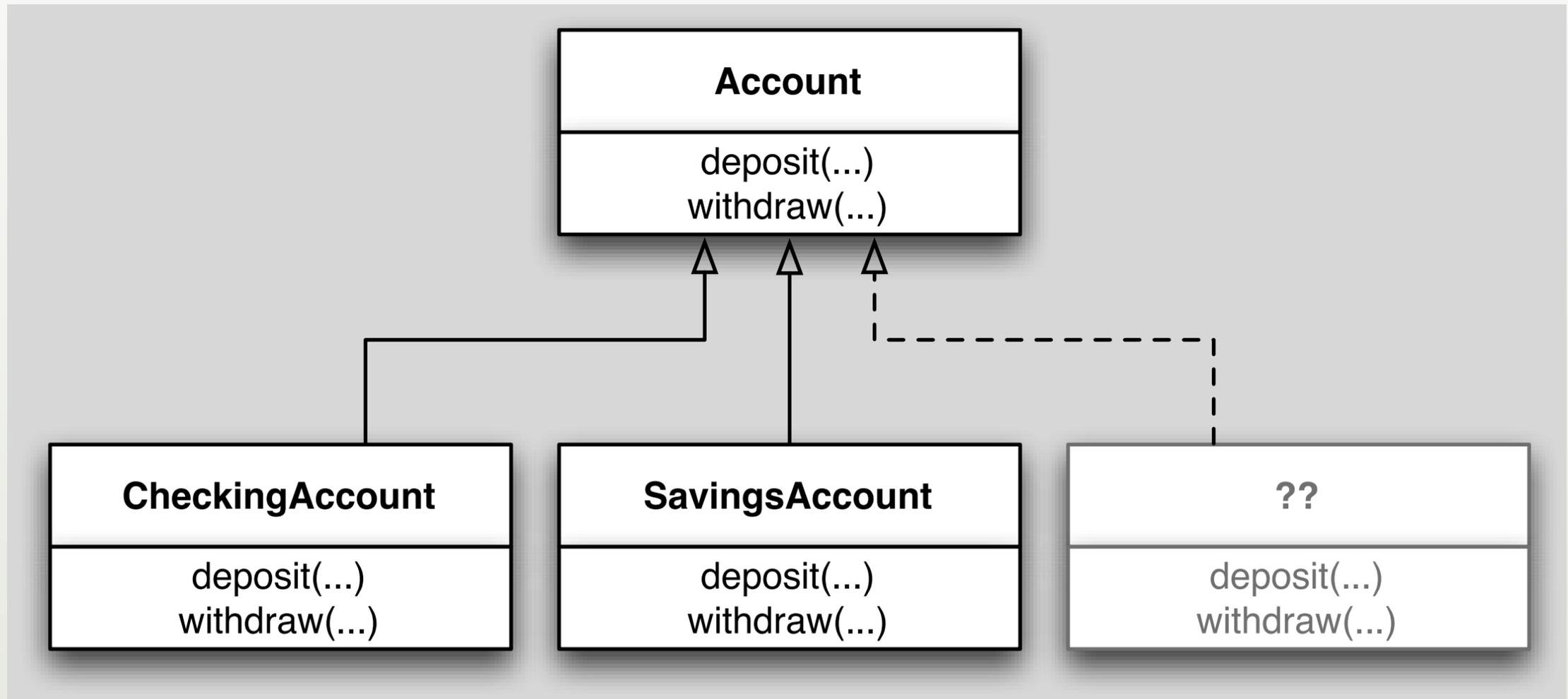
```
y = sin(x)
```

- Variables are assigned *once*.
- Functions are *side-effect free*.
 - They don't alter *state*.

Functional Programming Makes *Concurrency Easier*

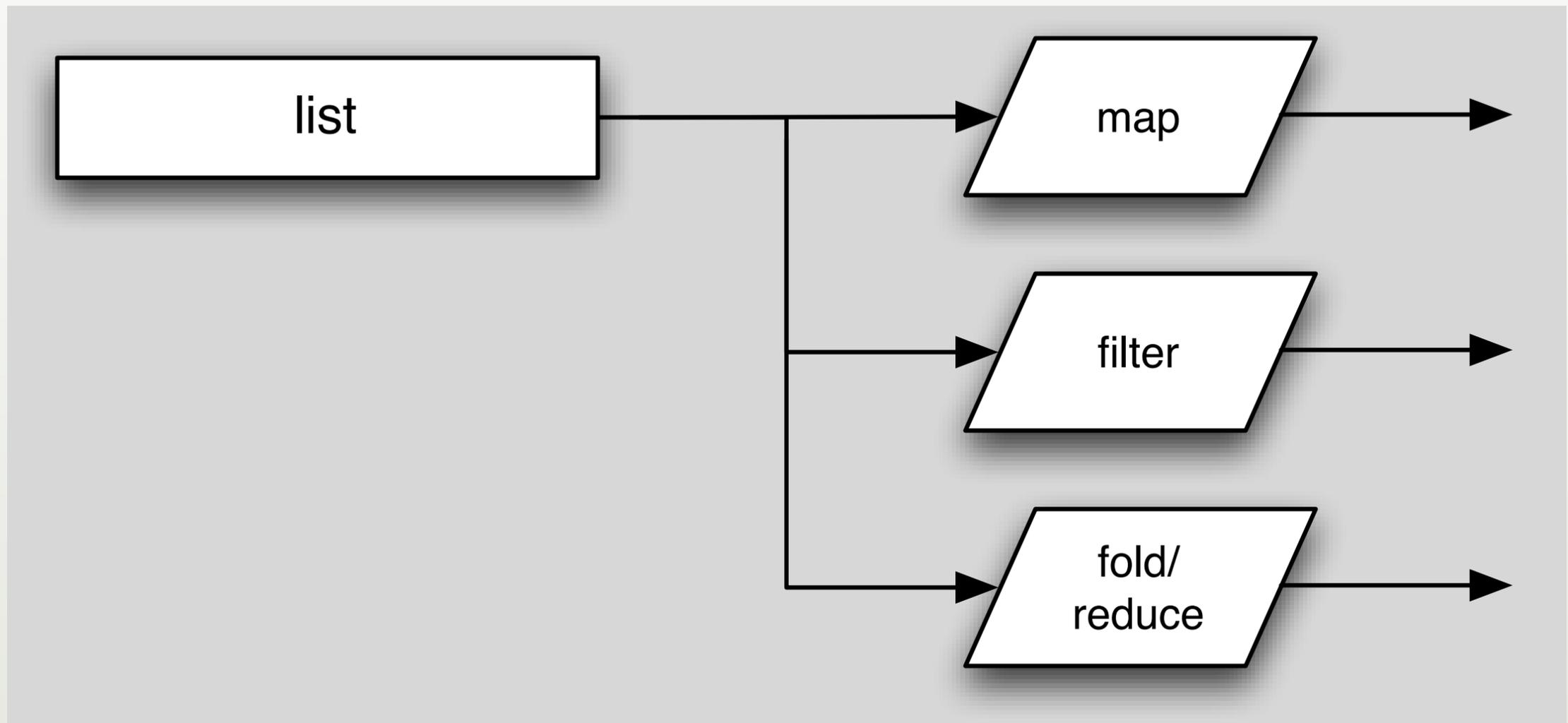
- *Nothing* to *synchronize*.
- Hence *no* locks, semaphores, mutexes...

Which fits your needs?



Object Oriented

Which fits your needs?



Functional



What if you're doing
cloud computing?

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Declarative rather than *imperative.*

$$F(n) = F(n-1) + F(n-2)$$

where: $F(1) = 1$ and $F(2) = 1$

... and so are DSL's.

```
class Customer < ActiveRecord::Base
  has_many :accounts
  validates_uniqueness_of :name,
    :on => :create,
    :message => 'Evil twin!'
end
```

A Few Functional Languages

Haskell

```
module Main where
```

```
-- Function f returns the n'th Fibonacci number.
```

```
-- It uses binary recursion.
```

```
f n | n <= 2 = 1
```

```
    | n > 2 = f (n-1) + f (n-2)
```

```
-- Print the Fibonacci number F(8)
```

```
main = print(show (f 8))
```

Erlang

- Ericsson Functional Language.
- For distributed, reliable, *soft* real-time, *highly* concurrent systems.
- Used in telecom switches.
 - *9-9's reliability* for AXD30 I switch.

Erlang

- No *mutable variables* and *side effects*.
- All IPC is optimized *message passing*.
- *Very* lightweight and fast *processes*.
 - Lighter than most OS threads.

Scala

- Hybrid: *object* and *functional*.
- Targets the *JVM*.
- Interoperates with *Java*.
- “*Endorsed*” by *James Gosling* at JavaOne.
- Could be a popular *replacement* for Java.

shameless plug

Functional Languages in Production

- *Erlang*
 - Jabber/XMPP server *ejabberd*.
 - Amazon's *Simple DB*.
 - Yahoo's *del.icio.us*.

Functional Languages in Production

- *OCaml*
 - Jane Street Capital
- *Scala*
 - Twitter

Parting Thought...

Is a *hybrid object-functional* language better than using an *object* language with a *functional* language??

e.g., *Scala* vs. *Java* + *Erlang*??

Recap:

Simplification through
Polyglot and *Poly-paradigm*
Programming (PPP)

Disadvantages of PPP

- *N* tool chains, languages, libraries, “ecosystems”, ...
- *Impedance mismatch* between tools.
 - Different *meta-models*.
 - *Overhead* of calls between languages.

Advantages of PPP

- Can use the *best tool* for a *particular job*.
- Can *minimize* the *amount* of code required.
- Can keep code *closer* to the domain.
- Encourages *thinking* about *architectures*.
 - *E.g.*, *decoupling* between “components”.

Everything *old* is *new* again.

- *Functional Programming Comes of Age.*
 - Dr. Dobbs, **1994**
- *Scripting: Higher Level Programming for the 21st Century.*
 - *IEEE Computer*, **1998**
- *In Praise of Scripting: Real Programming Pragmatism.*
 - *IEEE Computer*, **2008**

Why go *mainstream* now?

- *Rapidly increasing* pace of development,
 - Scripting with dynamic languages?
- *Pervasive concurrency* (e.g., *Multicore CPUs*)
 - Functional programming?
- *Cross-cutting concerns*
 - Aspect-oriented programming?

Common Threads

- *Less* code is *more*.
- Keep the code *close* to the *domain*: DSL's.
- Be *declarative* rather than *imperative*.
- *Minimize* side effects and mutable data.

Thank You!

- dean@objectmentor.com
- Watch for my *Scala* book.
- <http://blog.objectmentor.com>
- <http://polyglotprogramming.com/papers>

