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ASL[®] 2

A Pocket Guide



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ASL® 2 – A Pocket Guide

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A Pocket Guide

Yvette Backer, Remko van der Pols



Colophon

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Foreword

This Pocket Guide has been updated with a summary of the latest insights in the new version of the Application Services Library, ASL 2.

Application management is currently undergoing very interesting changes. The professionalization, the componentizing of services, the integration of services, and the degrees of freedom have all grown enormously, making the profession of application management not only more complex, but also more challenging.

Despite these developments, lessons learned in the past are still valid. The core of application management hasn't changed much at all. The combination of wisdom and past experience, and the ability to adopt, and adapt to, modern developments, determines whether an application management organization will survive.

You will discover this in ASL 2. The structure of this publication is unchanged, while the changes in the content address today's challenges.

You will see this progression in the case contained in this Pocket Guide. We have taken a historical perspective by transforming the organization in the previous Pocket Guide. Six years have passed. Some best practices have been lost but are rediscovered. And new best practices are developed.

Our intention is that you will not only learn from this Pocket Guide, but also enjoy reading it.

Many thanks to the reviewers Greet Mattheus, Machteld Meijer, Frank van Outvorst, Lex Scholten and André Smulders for their contributions.

Finally, a special mention for Eilko Bronsema and Otto Strijker who both work for Wegener. They kindly provided us with insight into IT developments at a modern newspaper publisher.

Yvette Backer

Remko van der Pols †

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1

Introduction

■ 1.1 BACKGROUND

ASL 2 was introduced in 2009 as an evolutionary update of ASL, the process framework for application management. The Pocket Guide also had to be updated and this is the result. It is intended to be an accessible and simple introduction that provides insight into the theory and practice of application management and the ASL 2 framework. It is an easy-to-read yet thorough introduction to what application management comprises and what the ASL 2 framework looks like.

■ 1.2 TARGET AUDIENCE

This Pocket Guide is intended for managers, boards of directors, students, staff members and, of course, everybody who is involved with application management. Some affinity with information provisioning or IT would be handy, but this is by no means essential. We have limited our use of technical terms, and have explained those that we have used. Please let us know if we have missed anything. The most important terms are explained at the end of the book.

■ 1.3 VGK AND THE CASE

In order to make the content light and illustrative, we have used a case throughout the whole book. The case is about the IT organization ISPM, the new name for the VGK organization. This organization features in the case in the previous version of the ASL Pocket Guide. We liked the idea of introducing an historic perspective. The organization is fictitious, but of course based on real life. In appendix 1 there is a description of the case.

■ 1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

We start, after the introduction, with a chapter explaining application management. What are the main parts of application management and in which permutations can they occur? ASL 2, Application Services Library, is a process model for application management and so we also introduce ASL 2.

In chapter 3 we discuss the ASL 2 framework in detail and describe the content of the framework. In this chapter we sketch current developments that are relevant for application management and describe the challenges for the coming decades. We also suggest how you could deal with these developments.

Chapters 4-9 describe the various process clusters of ASL 2.

The book also includes some appendices. Appendix 1 contains a description of the case and appendix 2 gives some background information about the ASL BiSL Foundation. Appendix 3 provides an overview of the references and points you to additional sources. And finally, the complete framework is described in appendix 4.

2

Application management and ASL 2

■ 2.1 WHAT IS APPLICATION MANAGEMENT?

The first topic in a book about ASL 2 has got to address application management. We use Looijen's model in order to clarify the term application management. Looijen discerns three forms of IT management, three forms of tasks related to the support, maintenance and renewal of information provisioning in the broadest sense (figure 2.1). These three forms are described below:

- Business information management: realization of adequate use and renewal of the information provisioning from a business perspective;
- Application management: support, maintenance and renewal of applications (information systems);
- Infrastructure management: support, maintenance and renewal of the infrastructure.

These three forms are described further in the following paragraphs.

Infrastructure management supports, maintains and renews the infrastructure. The infrastructure comprises all of the hardware (computers, disks, displays), the communication structure (networks) and system software (such as operating systems) that are needed to

run information systems (applications). PC's, computers (servers), networks, storage etc., but also database management systems, compilers and drivers can be part of the infrastructure.

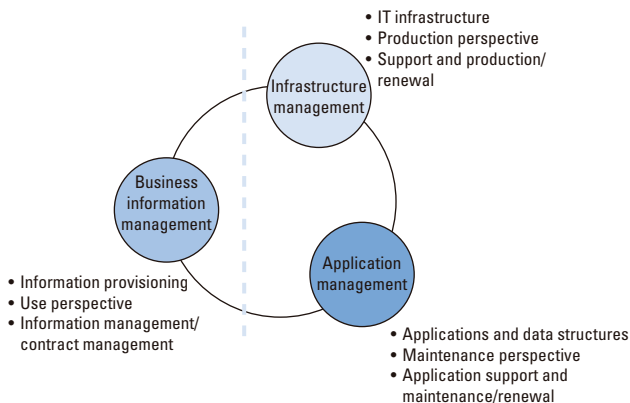


Figure 2.1 Triple management model (Looijen and Delen)

Application management concerns itself with the support and change (maintenance or integration) of applications (information systems) and data structures. This includes activities such as design of applications, coding, and testing. So this book addresses this profession and its framework: ASL 2.

Business information management covers the demand side of information technology (IT) / information provisioning. Business information management describes the user organization's responsibilities to support the use of information provisioning, and to maintain and manage information provisioning. BiSL is the framework that describes this domain.