

## WHITE PAPER

# How to Create a Custom Architecture Modeling Standard

*When implementing your EA tool, one of the earliest decisions is which standards, frameworks, and metamodels to implement. The most successful organizations build metamodels specific to their needs — and Enterprise Insight makes this straightforward.*

## COMMON METAMODEL CHOICES

- **Data Model**
- **ArchiMate**
- **TOGAF Content Metamodel**
- **BPMN**
- **UML**

## Do I Need a Metamodel?

Most organizations want to build a structured model by enforcing rules around the data in their architecture model.

One example of a commonly used rule that can only be enforced with a metamodel: an application can be composed of another application — but not of undesirable elements like a Person or a Goal.

Building an architecture repository without metamodel rules may be appealing initially, but most organizations ultimately need a metamodel sooner or later. Enterprise Insight has open support for standards, allows easy GUI-based customization, and supports loosely defined metamodels.

## Building a Custom Metamodel and Notation-based Standard

A word of caution: for most organizations, it's best to start with a predefined standard rather than starting with a blank slate. Here is how to do exactly that in four steps.

### Step 1 – Define the Object Types

This may seem uncomplicated, but with object types come definition requirements. Creating a "Capability" or "Application" type is easy — defining it formally is more complex. In practice, you will need written definitions and exemplars.

For simplicity, we will define three object types in our metamodel:

- Capability
- Process
- Application

### Step 2 – Define Attribute Types

This step starts with a basic set of attribute types and evolves to include more complex fields. Here we define three basic fields that apply to all objects:

- Description (Type = Text)
- ID (Type = Text)
- Quality (Type = High, Medium, Low)

### Step 3 – Define Relationship Types

This step is more complex than it appears. Setting up a simple set of rules early creates challenges when rules need to change later. In line with our scope, we define simple rules:

Relationship Type	From Object Type	To Object Type
Association	Any	Any
Composition	Capability	Capability
Composition	Process	Process
Composition	Application	Application

### Step 4 – Define a Notation

Without a notation, diagrammatically your object types would be indistinguishable. The notation may vary by deliverable — for example, in a BPMN diagram, a Process might take on the BPMN visual style.

Enterprise Insight supports custom shape and relationship notations, letting you define visually distinct representations for each object type in your metamodel.

## Putting the Metamodel into Context

The ultimate deliverable produced using this metamodel and notation brings together capabilities, processes, and applications in a coherent view that is immediately legible to stakeholders. Enterprise Insight renders this automatically from the metamodel and object data you define.

## Key Takeaways

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Building a proprietary metamodel is more time-consuming than adopting an existing standard, but standards typically offer heavyweight metamodels and expect the community to tailor them. With the rise of low-touch metamodels, there is growing appetite for fully custom definitions.

Enterprise Insight has a range of options to support all use cases — from full standard adoption to completely custom metamodel definitions.

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### FURTHER READING

The Open Group (2023). TOGAF Version 10 & ArchiMate 3.2 Specification. [www.opengroup.org](http://www.opengroup.org)