



INTRO TO API DOCUMENTATION

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WHAT'S AN API WRITER?

- What's an API? ...SDK?
- What's the writer's role?
Talk like a programmer; think like a writer!
- Who is the target audience?

WHAT DO I NEED TO SUCCEED?

- Ability to write clearly about complex subjects
- Ability to anthropomorphize inanimate objects and to put the rules of the programming language above the rules of English
- Ability to write “speculative non-fiction”
- Knowledge of at least one programming language
- A few really nerdy anecdotes or jokes
- Patience!

OTHER NEED-TO-KNOWS

- XML

```
<menu id="file" value="File">
  <popup>
    <menuitem value="New" onclick="CreateNewDoc()" />
    <menuitem value="Open" onclick="OpenDoc()" />
    <menuitem value="Close" onclick="CloseDoc()" />
  </popup>
</menu>
```

- JSON

```
{"menu": {
  "id": "file",
  "value": "File",
  "popup": {
    "menuitem": [
      {"value": "New", "onclick": "CreateNewDoc()"},
      {"value": "Open", "onclick": "OpenDoc()"},
      {"value": "Close", "onclick": "CloseDoc()"}
    ]
  }
}}
```

GETTING A JOB

- Types of jobs
- Reporting structures
- The dreaded interview
- What to expect when you get there

TYPES OF JOBS

- Programming language APIs
- Database schema and use
- Web service APIs

REPORTING STRUCTURES

- Doc manager
- Engineering manager
- Product management team
- Marketing
- Accounting



INTERVIEWING

- Be prepared for technical questions
- Show a cooperative attitude

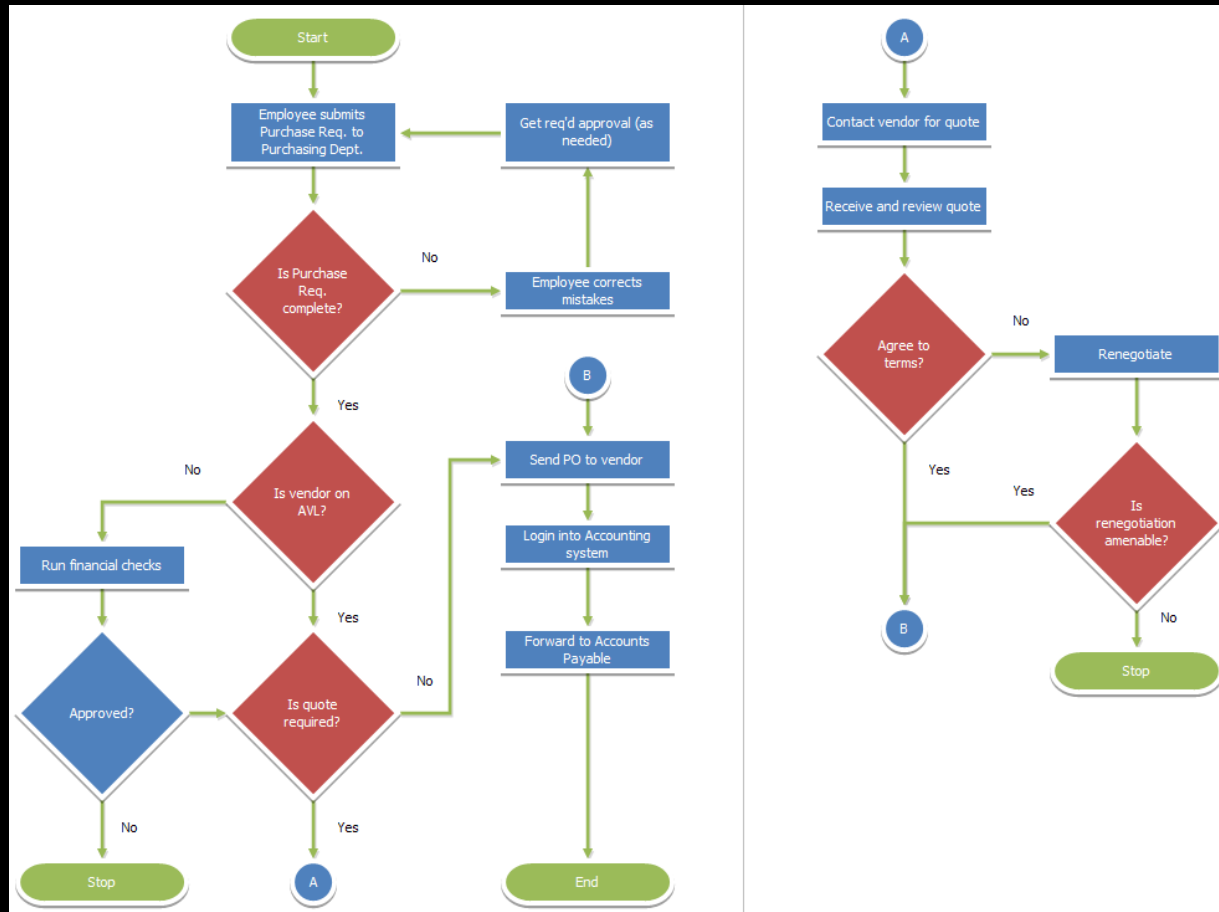
WHAT TO EXPECT

- You need to prove yourself before you get check-in privileges
- You need to mingle, fit in, make friends
 - Programmers
 - Tech support
 - Technical sales
- You must deal with programmer output
 - ESL problems
 - Quotation marks
 - White papers – outline!
- You may need to guide marketing output

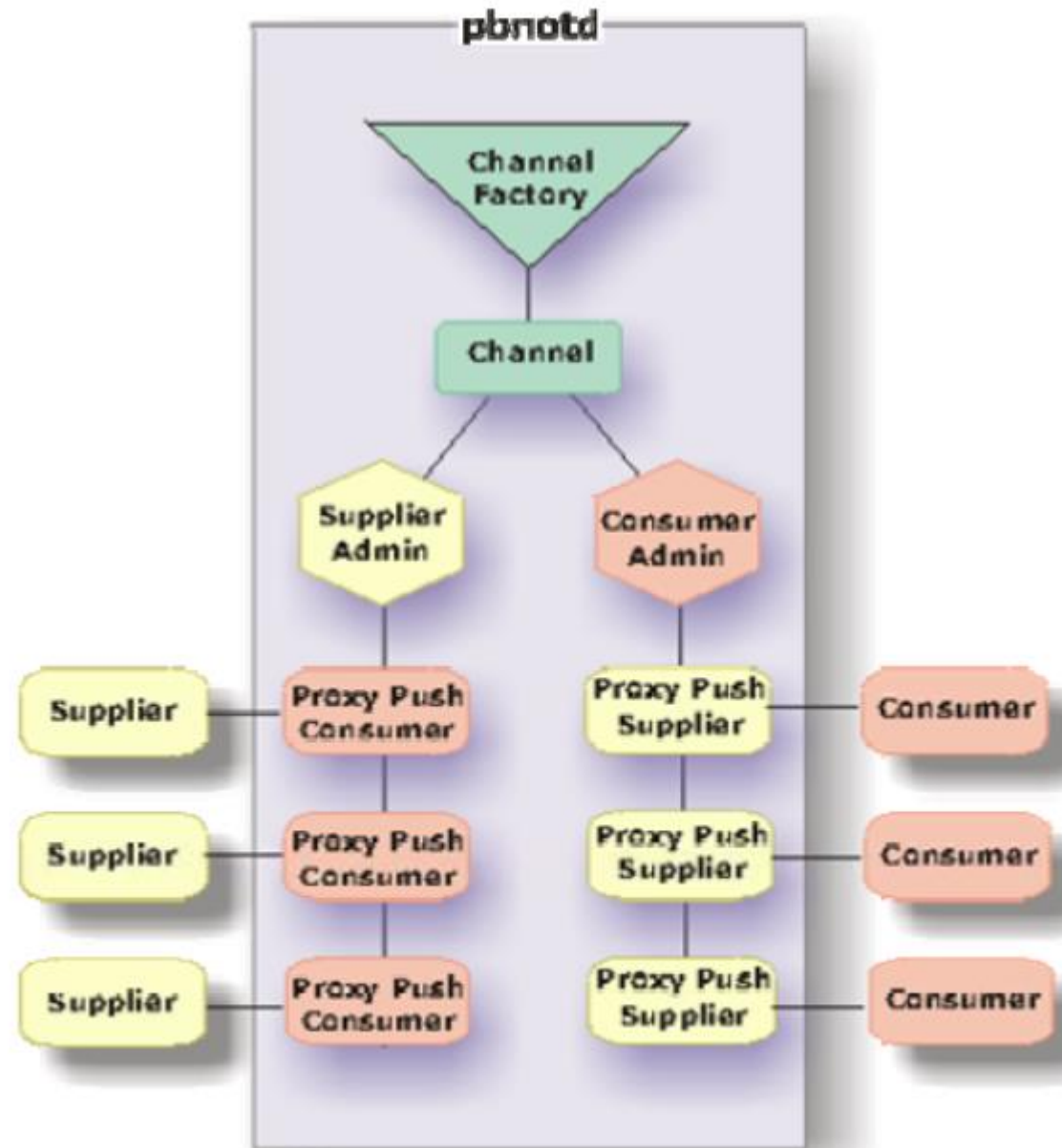
DELIVERABLES

- ReadMe files, installation guides, and other “getting started” guides
- Developer guide
- Reference
- Examples
- Diagrams

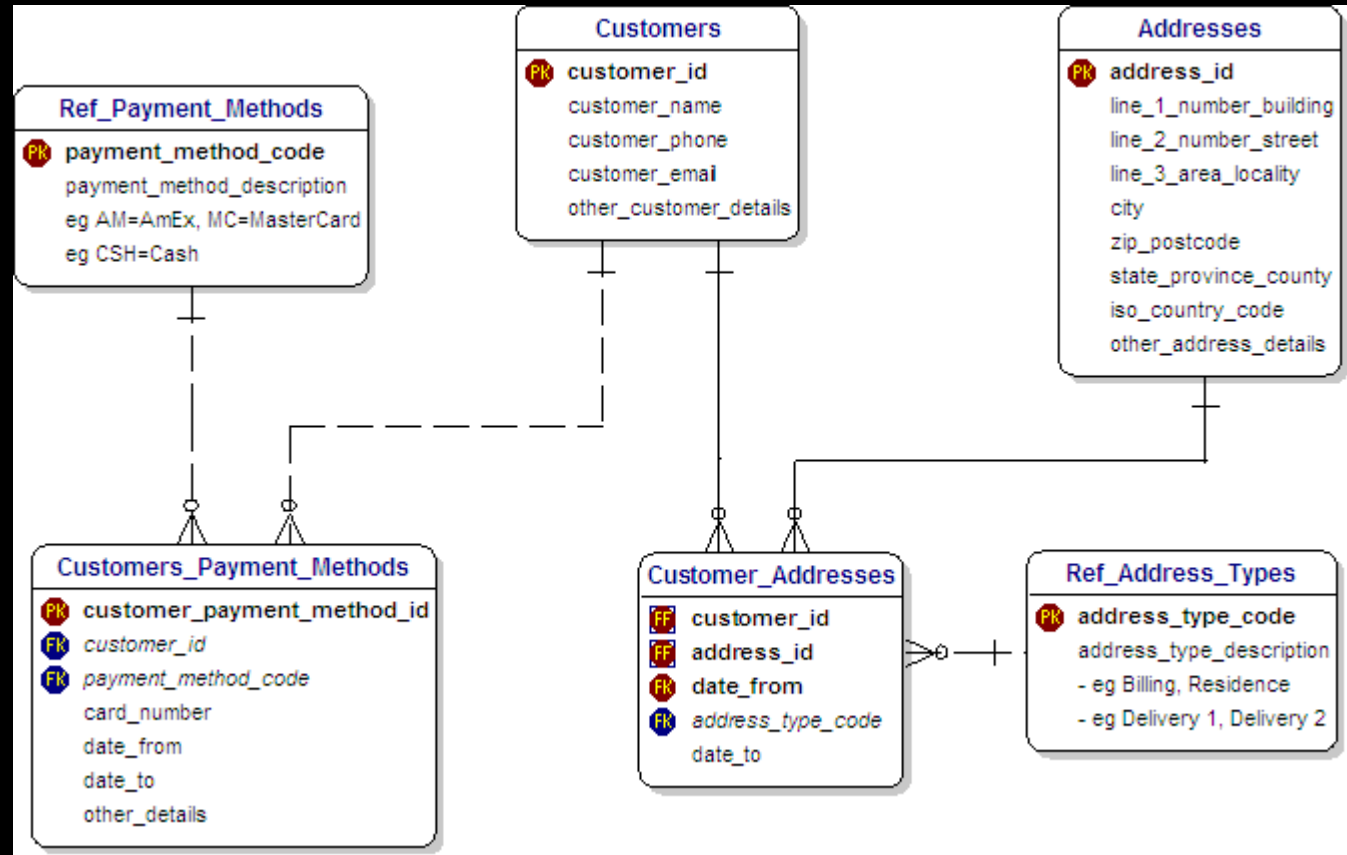
• Flowcharts for logic flow



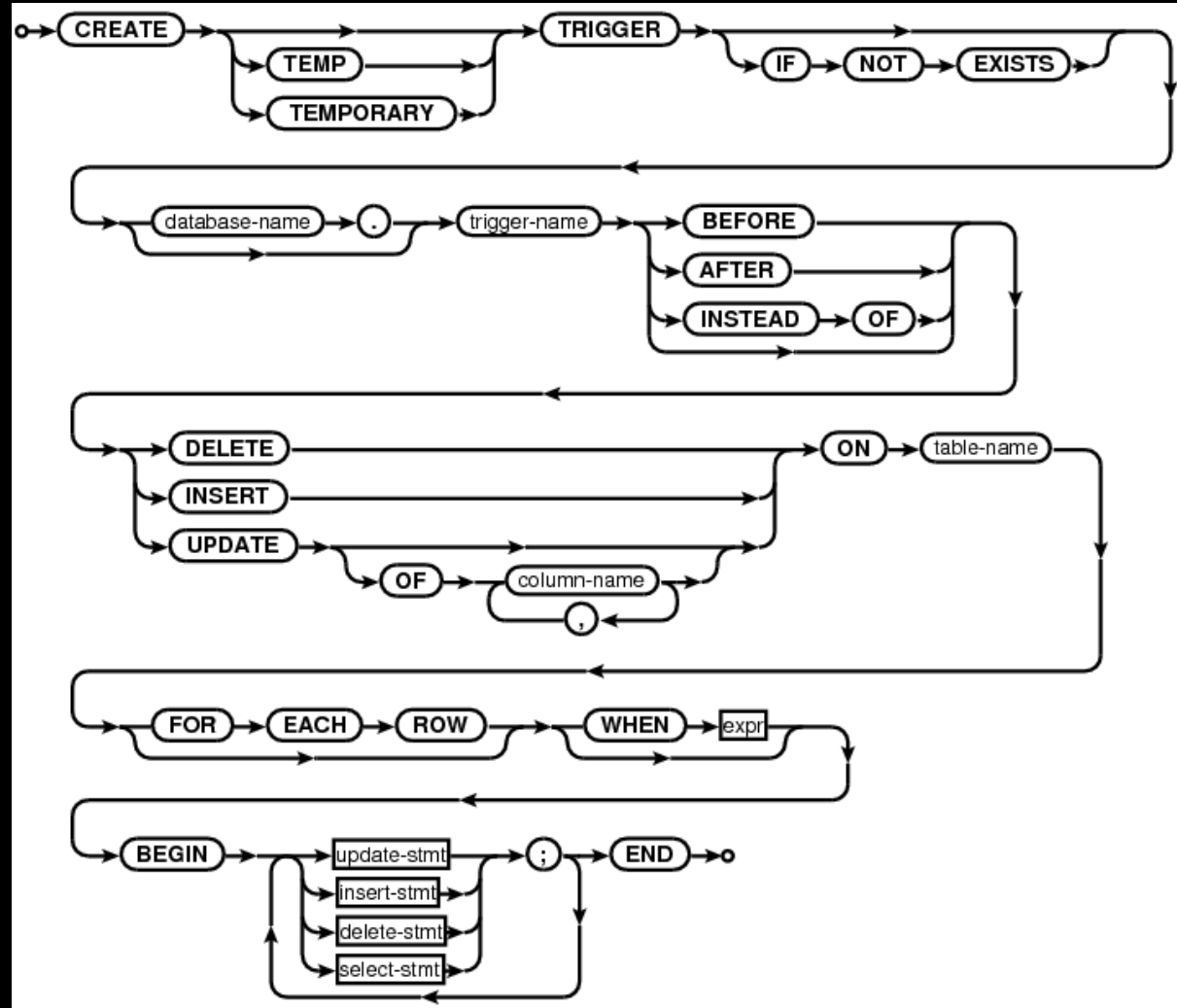
- Misc. class structure diagrams



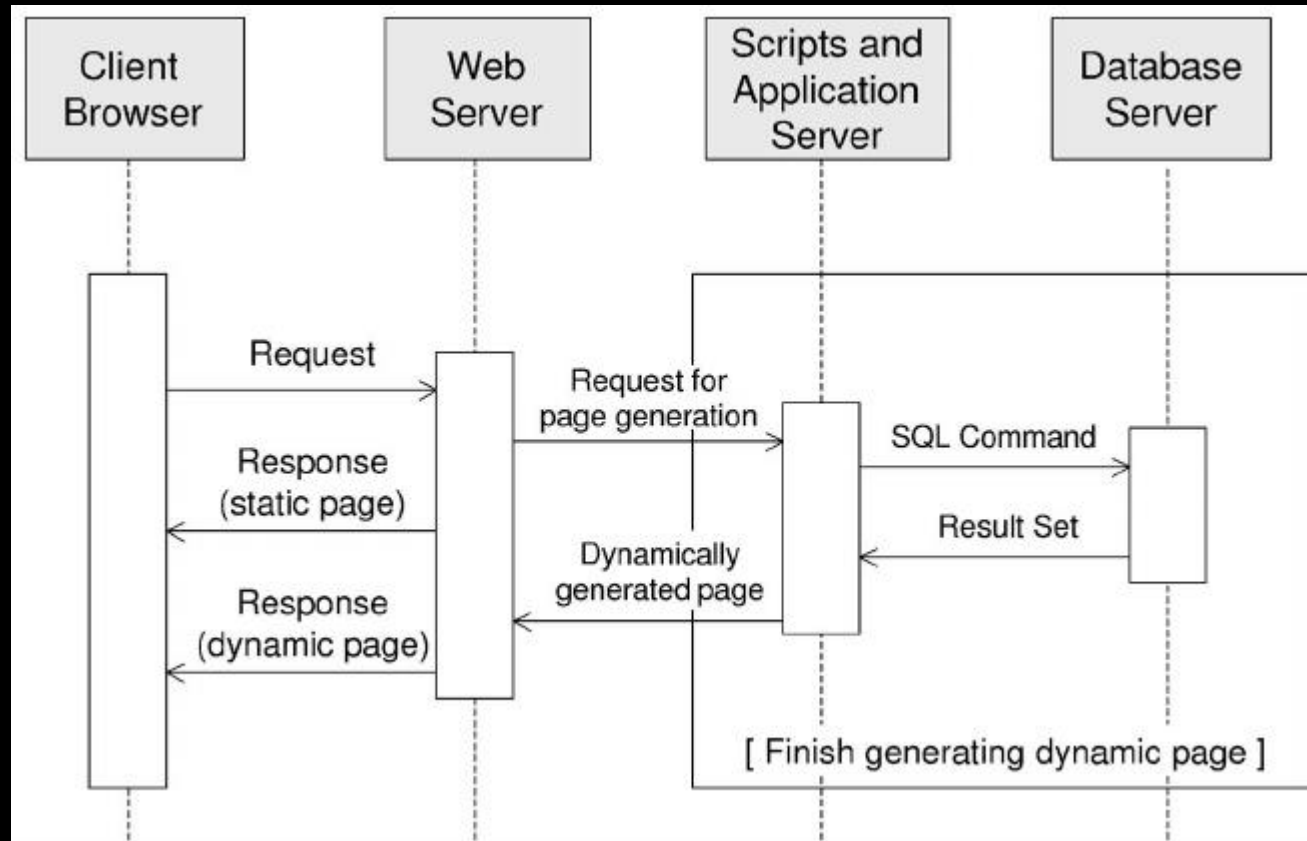
- Database schema diagrams



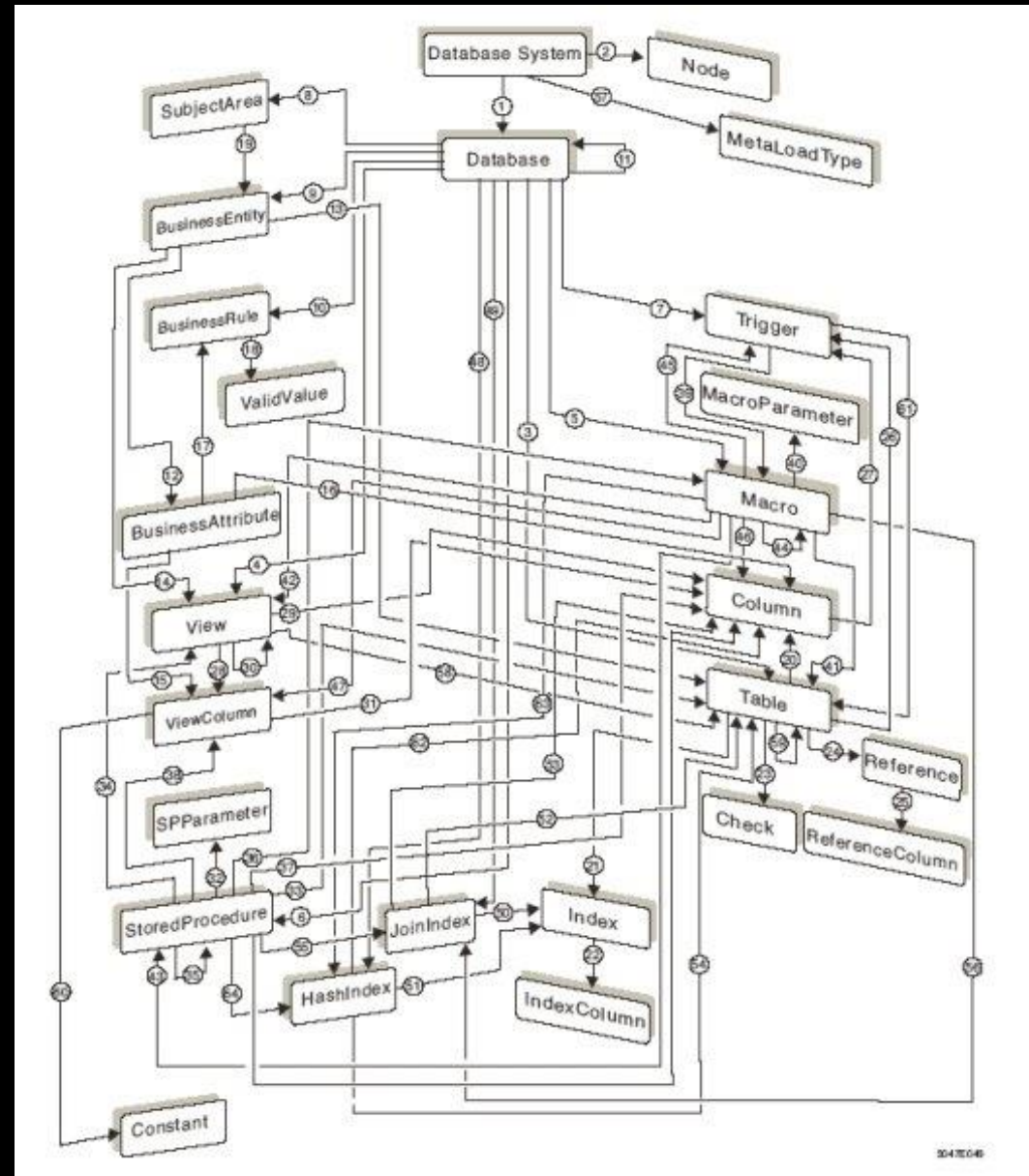
- SQL query diagrams



- Web sequence diagrams



- Keep it simple!



TOOLS OF THE TRADE

- Dev environment
 - IDE
 - Bug tracking
 - Version repository check-out access
 - Documentation generator
- Powerful text editor
 - Notepad++
 - Syn
- Good way to store and use repetitive text
- Diagramming tools



Questions?