



Riot Games: How Enterprise Architecture Plays to Win Questions & Answers

What Riot business domains are supported by EA? How mature was the usage of Ardoq at Riot when you joined?

When I joined Riot Games, Ardoq was not being used by anyone. Before implementing Ardoq, we first defined our Enterprise Architecture (EA) operating model and metamodel, ensuring a structured approach to EA. From there, we began configuring and leveraging Ardoq to meet our specific needs.

Riot is structured into pillars, and we defined the EA operating model to be easily adaptable across all pillars of the company. Currently, Ardoq is actively supporting the pillar responsible for shared business functions domains, which includes Finance, Legal, Workplace Experience, People, Corporate Affairs, and others.

While we haven't yet achieved full coverage across all business functions they are in our roadmap for this year. Our goal is to continue scaling EA operating model and Ardoq's adoption, ensuring its value is realized across all relevant domains at Riot.

How many number of business users & IT users who are using Ardoq on a day to day basis?

We are actively leveraging Ardoq Discover, which has significantly have made easy to access to Ardoq's information for both business and IT users. Ardoq Discover simplifies navigation and visualization without requiring additional training, making it easier for business and IT users to explore and understand the data we manage.

Additionally, we have implemented surveys and broadcast capabilities to ensure that business and IT stakeholders proactively maintain accurate and up-to-date information. Those with roles as owners or managers have direct access to update relevant data, while broader validation efforts are conducted through scheduled broadcasts.

From an administration perspective, we have a core team of four/five administrators managing the Ardoq core application, responsible for configuring viewpoints, surveys, reports, and architectural references.

While exact daily active usage varies based on ongoing initiatives, the combination of Ardoq Discover, surveys, and broadcasts ensures that a broad set of business and IT users engage with Ardoq's information regularly, with a streamlined approach to maintenance and validation.

What tool are you using for diagramming?

We are trying to avoid standalone diagramming tools as much as possible. The main issue with dedicated diagramming tools is that they often lead to representations that are difficult to maintain—keeping them correct, complete, and up-to-date in an integrated and governed way becomes a challenge.

Our preferred approach is to leverage our Enterprise Architecture (EA) tool to generate blueprints of our solutions dynamically. However, when we need a quick, ad-hoc representation, we use Lucidchart.

Recently, to address a gap in business process modeling, we have started using Aris.

More important than the tool itself is the modeling notation. We use:

- BPMN for business process modeling
- ArchiMate for solution architecture
- We designed our metamodel to align as closely as possible with ArchiMate, ensuring consistency across our architecture practice.

As a primarily technology based company, how did you grow a business architecture "practice" or domain and is it centralized within your EA team or federated to your development areas?

Our Business Architecture practice is part of our EA operating model and is centralized within the EA team. Given our current focus, we primarily support shared business functions such as Finance, Legal, Workplace Experience, People, and Corporate Affairs, among others.

From the beginning, our concern was to define an operating model that could be easily adapted by other areas of the company. While a federated approach is a possibility, our intention is to maintain a distributed EA practice while ensuring alignment through a common repository and practice.

A good example of this approach is with one of our best games - League of Legends. They have begun adhering to our EA practice, initially by integrating the shared services we provide, but then expanding upon that foundation to structure their own game-specific services in a way that remains integrated with our broader EA practice.

This ensures that while different teams may extend and tailor their architectural efforts, they build upon a shared foundation, maintaining consistency and leveraging what we have already established.

You mentioned APQC as starting point instead of capability map. What were the challenges of and reasons for this approach and did you build a capability map later on anyway?

I'm afraid I wasn't entirely clear on this point. We did not use APQC instead of a capability map—rather, we leveraged APQC as a baseline to accelerate the development of our Business Capability Map. We are still using it as a reference to tailor and adapt our business capability map discovery.

The reasoning behind this approach was to speed up discussions with the business stakeholders instead of starting from scratch. While we fully recognize that business processes (APQC) and business capabilities are two different concepts, in our current level of maturity—and, to be honest, from my experience, in most organizations—APQC's structure provided a solid foundation for organizing and defining capabilities efficiently.

In our EA practice, business processes as enablers of business capabilities, alongside other enablers such as applications, technology, and data. However, we only go into modeling business process when necessary, such as when we need to analyze a process for inefficiencies, identify bottlenecks, explore reengineering opportunities, or support automation efforts.

This is honestly the first time I have heard a true simplification of enterprise architecture. Being used for a smaller company where it really helps and is not overblown. The large companies almost cannot use it due to customer driven standards such as TOGAF and DODAF etc. Zachman was intended to be simple but it really is not. What size of company do you believe this is most useful for. Not too much. Not too little. Just enough to support the intention of EA

Thank you! As a TOGAF-certified professional who has led several attempts to apply TOGAF in practice, I ultimately shaped Enterprise Architecture (EA) as a practice, avoiding unnecessary bureaucracy and non-value-added activities. I fully agree with your perspective—while Zachman provides a useful classification framework, it does not effectively address the "how-to" of executing EA in an organization.

The size of the company certainly plays a role, and in Riot's case, it was particularly helpful that there was a clear need to address specific unanswered questions and use cases. In a past experience, the driver was risk management, specifically the need to understand the extent and impact of a ransomware attack—a challenge that arose after a competitor faced a major incident.

From my experience, the best approach, regardless of company size, follows the principle of "think big, act small." Enterprise Architecture practice should always aim for quick wins and fast results—delivering visible value early on helps drive adoption and manage change, particularly cultural and organizational change, which is crucial for the success of any EA initiative.