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Week 4 Discussion: DFDs and Object Oriented Approaches

Jered McClure

Walden University

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The Data Flow Diagram (DFD) approach is one of identifying how data moves through a system, and outlining how those processes interact with data entities to produce outputs from inputs. It is different from the Object Oriented approach in that, it focuses specifically on the processes that make up the business system, rather than the objects. In a sense, this is a great strength of DFDs. They are easy for business users to understand, as they work with processes on a daily basis, and they incorporate Use Cases. Processes are, in a very real sense, use cases (Satzinger, Jackson, & Burd, 2009, p. 208).

However, DFDs have a major hurdle; it is quite easy to overlook a data entity or process that should exist within the DFD (David & Yen, 1998). For instance, when creating high level use cases, the analyst and users focus on general interactions. When then translating those into processes, the analyst can forget to include the data entities which are the back bone of the business system. That being said, an error such as this can be overcome if the action of creating an ERD is completed, prior to beginning work on the DFD.

Reference

David, W. S., & Yen, D. C. (1998, December 28). *24.2 Data Flow Diagrams - Strengths, Weaknesses, and Limitations*. Retrieved June 26, 2012, from Holon Institute of Technology: http://www.hit.ac.il/staff/leonidm/information-systems/ch24.html

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