

UML

UML (Unified Modeling Language) is a standard language for specifying, visualizing, constructing, and documenting the artifacts of software systems. UML was created by the Object Management Group (OMG) and UML 1.0 specification draft was proposed to the OMG in January 1997. It was initially started to capture the behavior of complex software and non-software system and now it has become an OMG standard. This tutorial gives a complete understanding on UML.

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UML was created by the Object Management Group (OMG) and UML 1.0 specification draft was proposed to the OMG in January 1997.

OMG is continuously making efforts to create a truly industry standard.

- UML stands for **Unified Modeling Language**.
- UML is different from the other common programming languages such as C++, Java, COBOL, etc.
- UML is a pictorial language used to make software blueprints.
- UML can be described as a general purpose visual modeling language to visualize, specify, construct, and document software system.
- Although UML is generally used to model software systems, it is not limited within this boundary. It is also used to model non-software systems as well. For example, the process flow in a manufacturing unit, etc.

UML is not a programming language but tools can be used to generate code in various languages using UML diagrams. UML has a direct relation with object

oriented analysis and design. After some standardization, UML has become an OMG standard.

Goals of UML

A picture is worth a thousand words, this idiom absolutely fits describing UML. Object-oriented concepts were introduced much earlier than UML. At that point of time, there were no standard methodologies to organize and consolidate the object-oriented development. It was then that UML came into picture.

There are a number of goals for developing UML but the most important is to define some general purpose modeling language, which all modelers can use and it also needs to be made simple to understand and use.

UML diagrams are not only made for developers but also for business users, common people, and anybody interested to understand the system. The system can be a software or non-software system. Thus it must be clear that UML is not a development method rather it accompanies with processes to make it a successful system.

In conclusion, the goal of UML can be defined as a simple modeling mechanism to model all possible practical systems in today's complex environment.

A Conceptual Model of UML

To understand the conceptual model of UML, first we need to clarify what is a conceptual model? and why a conceptual model is required?

- A conceptual model can be defined as a model which is made of concepts and their relationships.

- A conceptual model is the first step before drawing a UML diagram. It helps to understand the entities in the real world and how they interact with each other.

As UML describes the real-time systems, it is very important to make a conceptual model and then proceed gradually. The conceptual model of UML can be mastered by learning the following three major elements –

- UML building blocks
- Rules to connect the building blocks
- Common mechanisms of UML

Object-Oriented Concepts

UML can be described as the successor of object-oriented (OO) analysis and design.

An object contains both data and methods that control the data. The data represents the state of the object. A class describes an object and they also form a hierarchy to model the real-world system. The hierarchy is represented as inheritance and the classes can also be associated in different ways as per the requirement.

Objects are the real-world entities that exist around us and the basic concepts such as abstraction, encapsulation, inheritance, and polymorphism all can be represented using UML.

UML is powerful enough to represent all the concepts that exist in object-oriented analysis and design. UML diagrams are representation of object-oriented concepts only. Thus, before learning UML, it becomes important to understand OO concept in detail.

Following are some fundamental concepts of the object-oriented world –

- **Objects** – Objects represent an entity and the basic building block.
- **Class** – Class is the blue print of an object.
- **Abstraction** – Abstraction represents the behavior of an real world entity.
- **Encapsulation** – Encapsulation is the mechanism of binding the data together and hiding them from the outside world.
- **Inheritance** – Inheritance is the mechanism of making new classes from existing ones.
- **Polymorphism** – It defines the mechanism to exists in different forms.

OO Analysis and Design

OO can be defined as an investigation and to be more specific, it is the investigation of objects. Design means collaboration of identified objects.

Thus, it is important to understand the OO analysis and design concepts. The most important purpose of OO analysis is to identify objects of a system to be designed. This analysis is also done for an existing system. Now an efficient analysis is only possible when we are able to start thinking in a way where objects can be identified. After identifying the objects, their relationships are identified and finally the design is produced.

The purpose of OO analysis and design can described as –

- Identifying the objects of a system.
- Identifying their relationships.
- Making a design, which can be converted to executables using OO languages.

There are three basic steps where the OO concepts are applied and implemented. The steps can be defined as

OO Analysis → OO Design → OO implementation using OO languages

The above three points can be described in detail as –

- During OO analysis, the most important purpose is to identify objects and describe them in a proper way. If these objects are identified efficiently, then the next job of design is easy. The objects should be identified with responsibilities. Responsibilities are the functions performed by the object. Each and every object has some type of responsibilities to be performed. When these responsibilities are collaborated, the purpose of the system is fulfilled.
- The second phase is OO design. During this phase, emphasis is placed on the requirements and their fulfilment. In this stage, the objects are collaborated according to their intended association. After the association is complete, the design is also complete.
- The third phase is OO implementation. In this phase, the design is implemented using OO languages such as Java, C++, etc.

Role of UML in OO Design

UML is a modeling language used to model software and non-software systems. Although UML is used for non-software systems, the emphasis is on modeling OO software applications. Most of the UML diagrams discussed so far are used to model different aspects such as static, dynamic, etc. Now whatever be the aspect, the artifacts are nothing but objects.

If we look into class diagram, object diagram, collaboration diagram, interaction diagrams all would basically be designed based on the objects.

Hence, the relation between OO design and UML is very important to understand. The OO design is transformed into UML diagrams according to the requirement. Before understanding the UML in detail, the OO concept should be learned properly. Once the OO analysis and design is done, the next step is very easy. The input from OO analysis and design is the input to UML diagrams.

The Unified Modeling Language (UML) Concepts and Diagrams

The UML approach is well worth investigating and understanding, due to its wide acceptance and usage. UML provides a standardized set of tools to document the analysis and design of a software system. The UML toolset includes diagrams that allow people to visualize the construction of an object-oriented system, similar to the way a set of blueprints allows people to visualize the construction of a building. Whether you are working independently or with a large systems development team, the documentation that you create with UML provides an effective means of communication between the development team and the business team on a project.

UML consists of things, relationships, and diagrams, as shown in the table illustration below. The first components, or primary elements, of UML are called things. You may prefer another word, such as object, but in UML they are called things. Structural things are most common. Structural things are classes, interfaces, use cases, and many other elements that provide a way to create models. Structural things allow the user to describe relationships. Behavioral things describe how things work. Examples of behavioral things are interactions and state machines. Group things are used to define boundaries. An example of a group thing is a package. Finally, we have annotational things, so that we can add notes to the diagrams.

UML Category	UML Elements	UML Elements
Things	Structural Things	Classes
		Interfaces
	Collaborations	
	Use Cases	
	Active Classes	
	Components	
	Nodes	
	Behavioral Things	Interactions
		State Machines
	Grouping Things	Packages
	Annotational	Things Notes
Relationships	Structural Relationships	Dependencies
		Aggregations
		Associations
		Generalizations
	Behavioral Relationships	Communicates
		Includes

UML Category	UML Elements	UML Elements
		Extends Generalizes
Diagrams	Structural Diagrams	Class Diagrams Component Diagrams Deployment Diagrams
	Behavioral Diagrams	Use Case Diagrams Sequence Diagrams Communication Diagrams Statechart Diagrams Activity Diagrams

Relationships are the glue that holds the things together. It is useful to think of relationships in two ways. Structural relationships are used to tie the things together in the structural diagrams. Structural relationships include dependencies, aggregations, associations, and generalizations. Structural relationships show inheritance, for example. Behavioral relationships are used in the behavioral diagrams. The four basic types of behavioral relationships are communicates, includes, extends, and generalizes.

There are two main types of diagrams in UML: structural diagrams and behavioral diagrams. Structural diagrams are used, for example, to describe the relationships between classes. They include class diagrams, object diagrams, component diagrams, and deployment diagrams. Behavioral diagrams, on the

other hand, can be used to describe the interaction between people (called actors in UML) and the thing we refer to as a use case, or how the actors use the system. Behavioral diagrams include use case diagrams, sequence diagrams, communication diagrams, statechart diagrams, and activity diagrams.

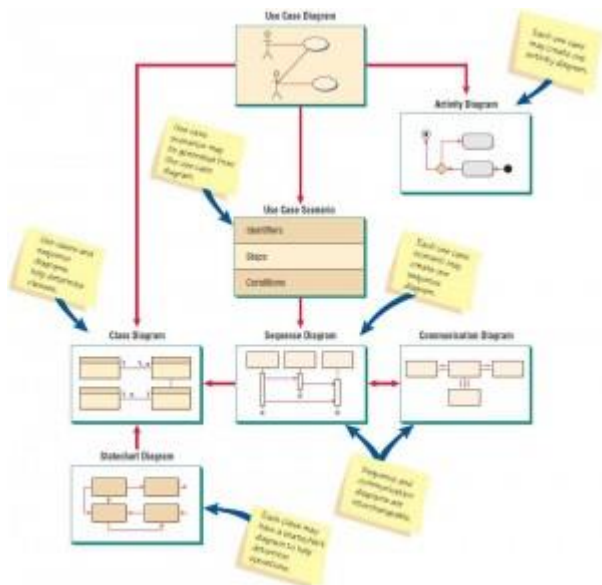
In the remainder of this chapter, we first discuss use case modeling, the basis for all UML techniques. Next, we look at how a use case is used to derive activities, sequences, and classes—the most commonly used UML diagrams. Because entire books are dedicated to the syntax and usage of UML (the actual UML specification document is over 800 pages long), we provide only a brief summary of the most valuable and commonly used aspects of UML.

The six most commonly used UML diagrams are:

1. A use case diagram, describing how the system is used. Analysts start with a use case diagram.
2. A use case scenario (although technically it is not a diagram). This scenario is a verbal articulation of exceptions to the main behavior described by the primary use case.
3. An activity diagram, illustrating the overall flow of activities. Each use case may create one activity diagram.
4. Sequence diagrams, showing the sequence of activities and class relationships. Each use case may create one or more sequence diagrams. An alternative to a sequence diagram is a communication diagram, which contains the same information but emphasizes communication instead of timing.
5. Class diagrams, showing the classes and relationships. Sequence diagrams are used (along with CRC cards) to determine classes. An offshoot of a class diagram is a gen/spec diagram (which stands for generalization/specialization).

- Statechart diagrams, showing the state transitions. Each class may create a statechart diagram, which is useful for determining class methods.

How these diagrams relate to one another is illustrated in Figure 10.5. We will discuss each of these diagrams in the following sections.



An overall view of UML diagrams showing how each diagram leads to the development of other UML diagrams.

UML - Use Case Diagrams

To model a system, the most important aspect is to capture the dynamic behavior. Dynamic behavior means the behavior of the system when it is running/operating.

Only static behavior is not sufficient to model a system rather dynamic behavior is more important than static behavior. In UML, there are five diagrams available to model the dynamic nature and use case diagram is one of them. Now as we have to discuss that the use case diagram is dynamic in

nature, there should be some internal or external factors for making the interaction.

These internal and external agents are known as actors. Use case diagrams consists of actors, use cases and their relationships. The diagram is used to model the system/subsystem of an application. A single use case diagram captures a particular functionality of a system.

Hence to model the entire system, a number of use case diagrams are used.

Purpose of Use Case Diagrams

The purpose of use case diagram is to capture the dynamic aspect of a system. However, this definition is too generic to describe the purpose, as other four diagrams (activity, sequence, collaboration, and Statechart) also have the same purpose. We will look into some specific purpose, which will distinguish it from other four diagrams.

Use case diagrams are used to gather the requirements of a system including internal and external influences. These requirements are mostly design requirements. Hence, when a system is analyzed to gather its functionalities, use cases are prepared and actors are identified.

When the initial task is complete, use case diagrams are modelled to present the outside view.

In brief, the purposes of use case diagrams can be said to be as follows –

- Used to gather the requirements of a system.
- Used to get an outside view of a system.
- Identify the external and internal factors influencing the system.
- Show the interaction among the requirements are actors.

How to Draw a Use Case Diagram?

Use case diagrams are considered for high level requirement analysis of a system. When the requirements of a system are analyzed, the functionalities are captured in use cases.

We can say that use cases are nothing but the system functionalities written in an organized manner. The second thing which is relevant to use cases are the actors. Actors can be defined as something that interacts with the system.

Actors can be a human user, some internal applications, or may be some external applications. When we are planning to draw a use case diagram, we should have the following items identified.

- Functionalities to be represented as use case
- Actors
- Relationships among the use cases and actors.

Use case diagrams are drawn to capture the functional requirements of a system. After identifying the above items, we have to use the following guidelines to draw an efficient use case diagram

- The name of a use case is very important. The name should be chosen in such a way so that it can identify the functionalities performed.
- Give a suitable name for actors.
- Show relationships and dependencies clearly in the diagram.
- Do not try to include all types of relationships, as the main purpose of the diagram is to identify the requirements.
- Use notes whenever required to clarify some important points.

Following is a sample use case diagram representing the order management system. Hence, if we look into the diagram then we will find three use

cases (**Order, SpecialOrder, and NormalOrder**) and one actor which is the customer.

The SpecialOrder and NormalOrder use cases are extended from *Order* use case. Hence, they have extended relationship. Another important point is to identify the system boundary, which is shown in the picture. The actor Customer lies outside the system as it is an external user of the system.

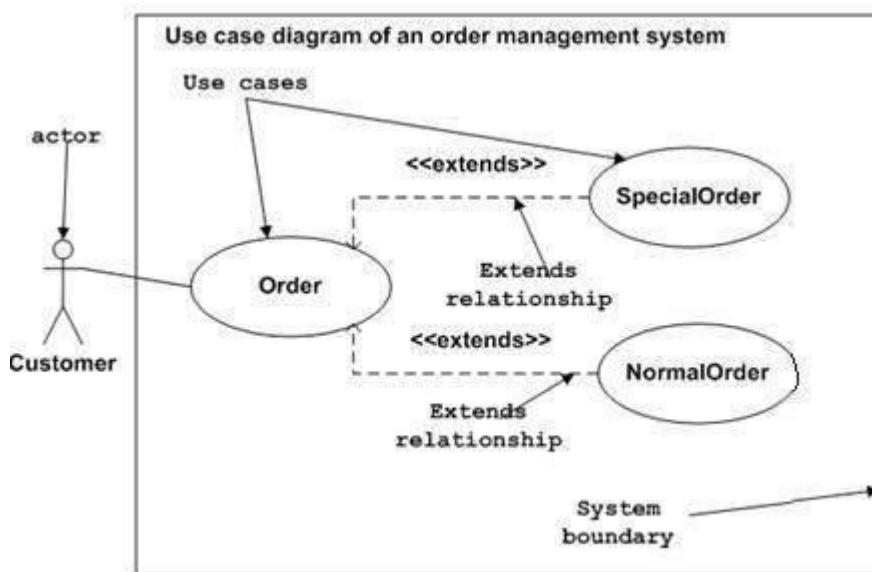


Figure: Sample Use Case diagram

Where to Use a Use Case Diagram?

As we have already discussed there are five diagrams in UML to model the dynamic view of a system. Now each and every model has some specific purpose to use. Actually these specific purposes are different angles of a running system.

To understand the dynamics of a system, we need to use different types of diagrams. Use case diagram is one of them and its specific purpose is to gather system requirements and actors.

Use case diagrams specify the events of a system and their flows. But use case diagram never describes how they are implemented. Use case diagram can be

imagined as a black box where only the input, output, and the function of the black box is known.

These diagrams are used at a very high level of design. This high level design is refined again and again to get a complete and practical picture of the system. A well-structured use case also describes the pre-condition, post condition, and exceptions. These extra elements are used to make test cases when performing the testing.

Although use case is not a good candidate for forward and reverse engineering, still they are used in a slightly different way to make forward and reverse engineering. The same is true for reverse engineering. Use case diagram is used differently to make it suitable for reverse engineering.

In forward engineering, use case diagrams are used to make test cases and in reverse engineering use cases are used to prepare the requirement details from the existing application.

Use case diagrams can be used for –

- Requirement analysis and high level design.
- Model the context of a system.
- Reverse engineering.
- Forward engineering.

UML - Class Diagram

Class diagram is a static diagram. It represents the static view of an application. Class diagram is not only used for visualizing, describing, and documenting

different aspects of a system but also for constructing executable code of the software application.

Class diagram describes the attributes and operations of a class and also the constraints imposed on the system. The class diagrams are widely used in the modeling of object-oriented systems because they are the only UML diagrams, which can be mapped directly with object-oriented languages.

Class diagram shows a collection of classes, interfaces, associations, collaborations, and constraints. It is also known as a structural diagram.

Purpose of Class Diagrams

The purpose of class diagram is to model the static view of an application. Class diagrams are the only diagrams which can be directly mapped with object-oriented languages and thus widely used at the time of construction.

UML diagrams like activity diagram, sequence diagram can only give the sequence flow of the application, however class diagram is a bit different. It is the most popular UML diagram in the coder community.

The purpose of the class diagram can be summarized as –

- Analysis and design of the static view of an application.
- Describe responsibilities of a system.
- Base for component and deployment diagrams.
- Forward and reverse engineering.

How to Draw a Class Diagram?

Class diagrams are the most popular UML diagrams used for construction of software applications. It is very important to learn the drawing procedure of class diagram.

Class diagrams have a lot of properties to consider while drawing but here the diagram will be considered from a top level view.

Class diagram is basically a graphical representation of the static view of the system and represents different aspects of the application. A collection of class diagrams represent the whole system.

The following points should be remembered while drawing a class diagram –

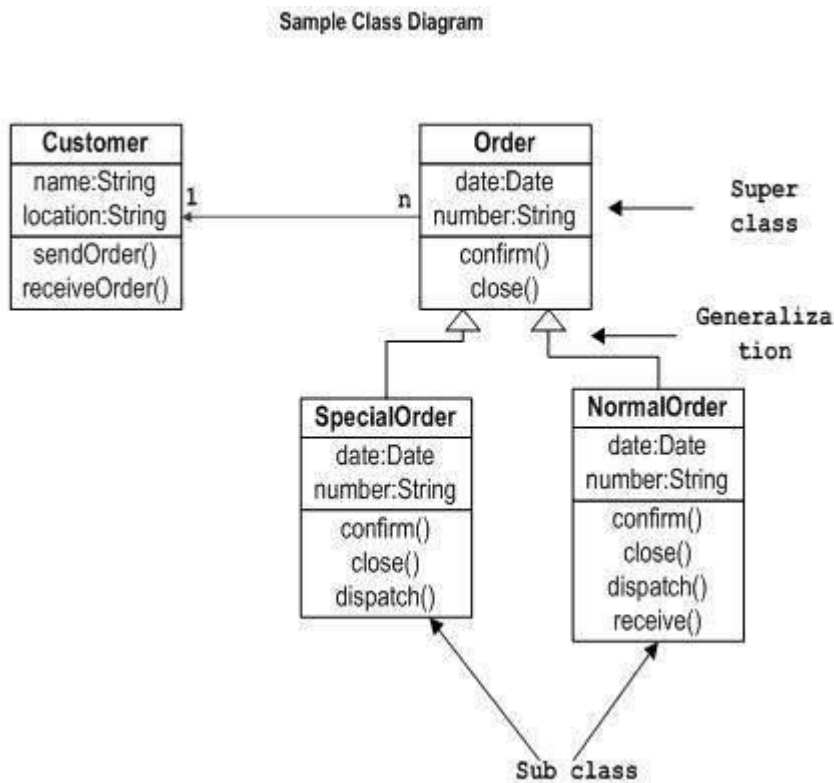
- The name of the class diagram should be meaningful to describe the aspect of the system.
- Each element and their relationships should be identified in advance.
- Responsibility (attributes and methods) of each class should be clearly identified
- For each class, minimum number of properties should be specified, as unnecessary properties will make the diagram complicated.
- Use notes whenever required to describe some aspect of the diagram. At the end of the drawing it should be understandable to the developer/coder.
- Finally, before making the final version, the diagram should be drawn on plain paper and reworked as many times as possible to make it correct.

The following diagram is an example of an Order System of an application. It describes a particular aspect of the entire application.

- First of all, Order and Customer are identified as the two elements of the system. They have a one-to-many relationship because a customer can have multiple orders.
- Order class is an abstract class and it has two concrete classes (inheritance relationship) SpecialOrder and NormalOrder.

- The two inherited classes have all the properties as the Order class. In addition, they have additional functions like dispatch () and receive ().

The following class diagram has been drawn considering all the points mentioned above.



Where to Use Class Diagrams?

Class diagram is a static diagram and it is used to model the static view of a system. The static view describes the vocabulary of the system.

Class diagram is also considered as the foundation for component and deployment diagrams. Class diagrams are not only used to visualize the static view of the system but they are also used to construct the executable code for forward and reverse engineering of any system.

Generally, UML diagrams are not directly mapped with any object-oriented programming languages but the class diagram is an exception.

Class diagram clearly shows the mapping with object-oriented languages such as Java, C++, etc. From practical experience, class diagram is generally used for construction purpose.

In a nutshell it can be said, class diagrams are used for –

- Describing the static view of the system.
- Showing the collaboration among the elements of the static view.
- Describing the functionalities performed by the system.
- Construction of software applications using object oriented languages.

UML - Interaction Diagrams

From the term Interaction, it is clear that the diagram is used to describe some type of interactions among the different elements in the model. This interaction is a part of dynamic behavior of the system.

This interactive behavior is represented in UML by two diagrams known as **Sequence diagram** and **Collaboration diagram**. The basic purpose of both the diagrams are similar.

Sequence diagram emphasizes on time sequence of messages and collaboration diagram emphasizes on the structural organization of the objects that send and receive messages.

Purpose of Interaction Diagrams

The purpose of interaction diagrams is to visualize the interactive behavior of the system. Visualizing the interaction is a difficult task. Hence, the solution is to use different types of models to capture the different aspects of the interaction.

Sequence and collaboration diagrams are used to capture the dynamic nature but from a different angle.

The purpose of interaction diagram is –

- To capture the dynamic behaviour of a system.
- To describe the message flow in the system.
- To describe the structural organization of the objects.
- To describe the interaction among objects.

How to Draw an Interaction Diagram?

As we have already discussed, the purpose of interaction diagrams is to capture the dynamic aspect of a system. So to capture the dynamic aspect, we need to understand what a dynamic aspect is and how it is visualized. Dynamic aspect can be defined as the snapshot of the running system at a particular moment

We have two types of interaction diagrams in UML. One is the sequence diagram and the other is the collaboration diagram. The sequence diagram captures the time sequence of the message flow from one object to another and the collaboration diagram describes the organization of objects in a system taking part in the message flow.

Following things are to be identified clearly before drawing the interaction diagram

- Objects taking part in the interaction.
- Message flows among the objects.
- The sequence in which the messages are flowing.
- Object organization.

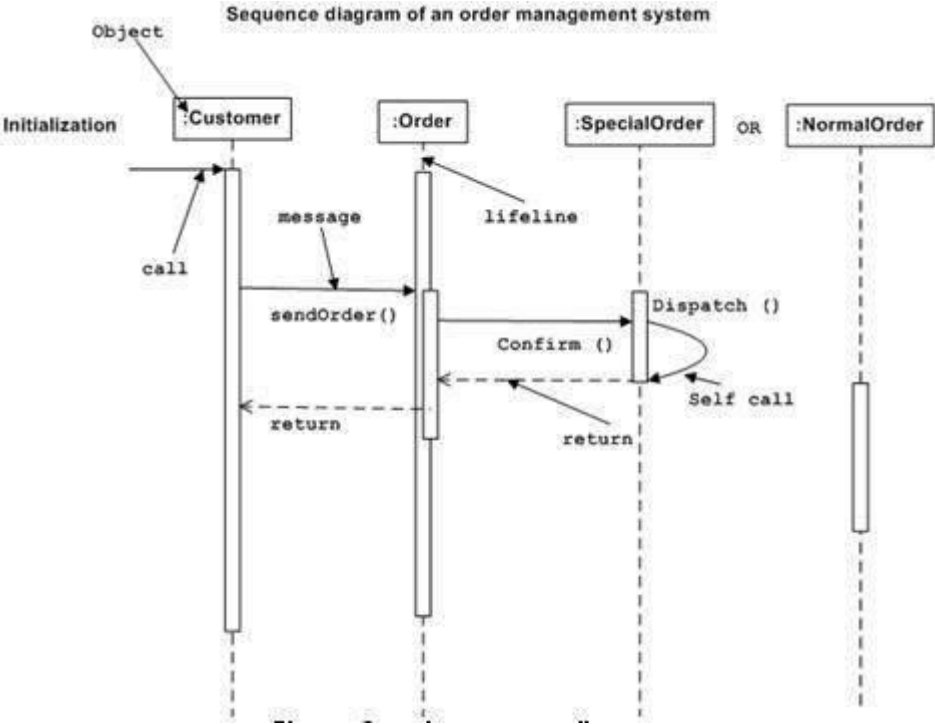
Following are two interaction diagrams modeling the order management system. The first diagram is a sequence diagram and the second is a collaboration diagram

The Sequence Diagram

The sequence diagram has four objects (Customer, Order, SpecialOrder and NormalOrder).

The following diagram shows the message sequence for *SpecialOrder* object and the same can be used in case of *NormalOrder* object. It is important to understand the time sequence of message flows. The message flow is nothing but a method call of an object.

The first call is *sendOrder ()* which is a method of *Order* object. The next call is *confirm ()* which is a method of *SpecialOrder* object and the last call is *Dispatch ()* which is a method of *SpecialOrder* object. The following diagram mainly describes the method calls from one object to another, and this is also the actual scenario when the system is running.

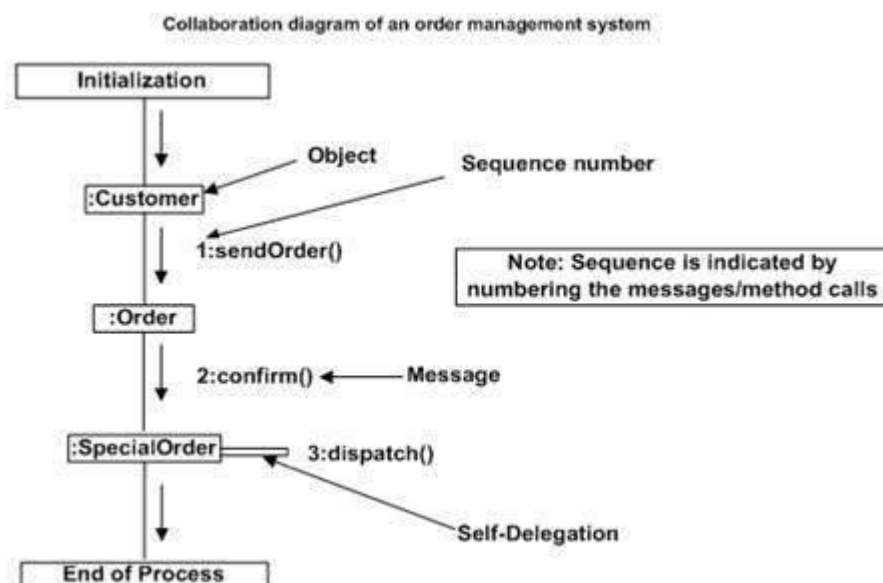


The Collaboration Diagram

The second interaction diagram is the collaboration diagram. It shows the object organization as seen in the following diagram. In the collaboration diagram, the method call sequence is indicated by some numbering technique. The number indicates how the methods are called one after another. We have taken the same order management system to describe the collaboration diagram.

Method calls are similar to that of a sequence diagram. However, difference being the sequence diagram does not describe the object organization, whereas the collaboration diagram shows the object organization.

To choose between these two diagrams, emphasis is placed on the type of requirement. If the time sequence is important, then the sequence diagram is used. If organization is required, then collaboration diagram is used.



Where to Use Interaction Diagrams?

We have already discussed that interaction diagrams are used to describe the dynamic nature of a system. Now, we will look into the practical scenarios

where these diagrams are used. To understand the practical application, we need to understand the basic nature of sequence and collaboration diagram.

The main purpose of both the diagrams are similar as they are used to capture the dynamic behavior of a system. However, the specific purpose is more important to clarify and understand.

Sequence diagrams are used to capture the order of messages flowing from one object to another. Collaboration diagrams are used to describe the structural organization of the objects taking part in the interaction. A single diagram is not sufficient to describe the dynamic aspect of an entire system, so a set of diagrams are used to capture it as a whole.

Interaction diagrams are used when we want to understand the message flow and the structural organization. Message flow means the sequence of control flow from one object to another. Structural organization means the visual organization of the elements in a system.

Interaction diagrams can be used –

- To model the flow of control by time sequence.
- To model the flow of control by structural organizations.
- For forward engineering.
- For reverse engineering.

UML – State chart Diagrams

The name of the diagram itself clarifies the purpose of the diagram and other details. It describes different states of a component in a system. The states are specific to a component/object of a system.

A Statechart diagram describes a state machine. State machine can be defined as a machine which defines different states of an object and these states are controlled by external or internal events.

Activity diagram explained in the next chapter, is a special kind of a Statechart diagram. As Statechart diagram defines the states, it is used to model the lifetime of an object.

Purpose of State chart Diagrams

Statechart diagram is one of the five UML diagrams used to model the dynamic nature of a system. They define different states of an object during its lifetime and these states are changed by events. Statechart diagrams are useful to model the reactive systems. Reactive systems can be defined as a system that responds to external or internal events.

Statechart diagram describes the flow of control from one state to another state. States are defined as a condition in which an object exists and it changes when some event is triggered. The most important purpose of Statechart diagram is to model lifetime of an object from creation to termination.

Statechart diagrams are also used for forward and reverse engineering of a system. However, the main purpose is to model the reactive system.

Following are the main purposes of using Statechart diagrams –

- To model the dynamic aspect of a system.
- To model the life time of a reactive system.
- To describe different states of an object during its life time.
- Define a state machine to model the states of an object.

How to Draw a Statechart Diagram?

Statechart diagram is used to describe the states of different objects in its life cycle. Emphasis is placed on the state changes upon some internal or external events. These states of objects are important to analyze and implement them accurately.

Statechart diagrams are very important for describing the states. States can be identified as the condition of objects when a particular event occurs.

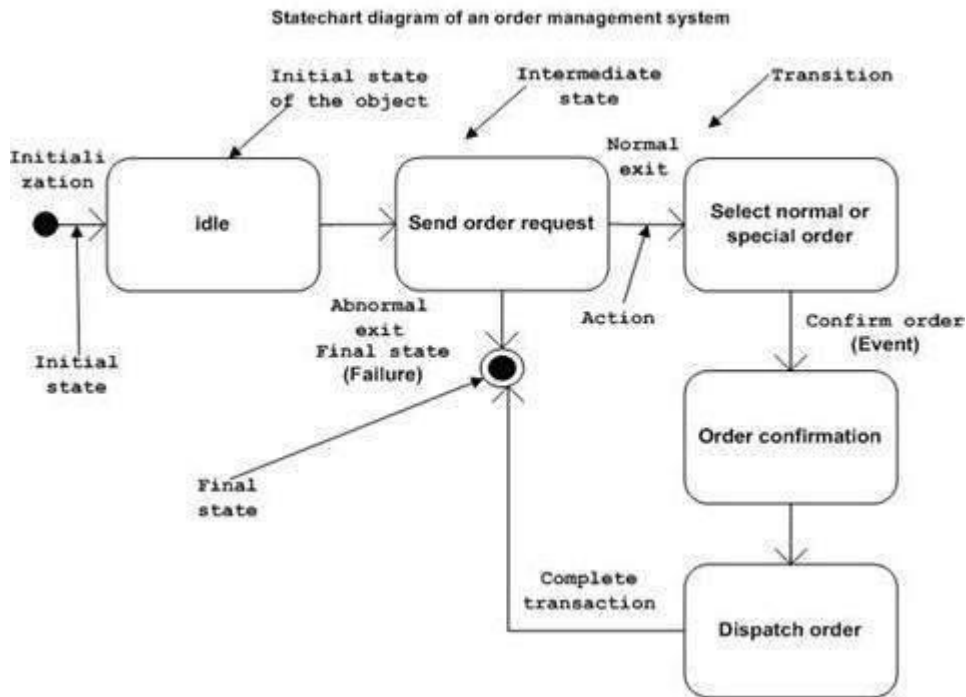
Before drawing a Statechart diagram we should clarify the following points –

- Identify the important objects to be analyzed.
- Identify the states.
- Identify the events.

Following is an example of a Statechart diagram where the state of Order object is analyzed

The first state is an idle state from where the process starts. The next states are arrived for events like send request, confirm request, and dispatch order. These events are responsible for the state changes of order object.

During the life cycle of an object (here order object) it goes through the following states and there may be some abnormal exits. This abnormal exit may occur due to some problem in the system. When the entire life cycle is complete, it is considered as a complete transaction as shown in the following figure. The initial and final state of an object is also shown in the following figure.



Where to Use Statechart Diagrams?

From the above discussion, we can define the practical applications of a Statechart diagram. Statechart diagrams are used to model the dynamic aspect of a system like other four diagrams discussed in this tutorial. However, it has some distinguishing characteristics for modeling the dynamic nature.

Statechart diagram defines the states of a component and these state changes are dynamic in nature. Its specific purpose is to define the state changes triggered by events. Events are internal or external factors influencing the system.

Statechart diagrams are used to model the states and also the events operating on the system. When implementing a system, it is very important to clarify different states of an object during its life time and Statechart diagrams are used for this purpose. When these states and events are identified, they are used to model it and these models are used during the implementation of the system.

If we look into the practical implementation of Statechart diagram, then it is mainly used to analyze the object states influenced by events. This analysis is helpful to understand the system behavior during its execution.

The main usage can be described as –

- To model the object states of a system.
- To model the reactive system. Reactive system consists of reactive objects.
- To identify the events responsible for state changes.
- Forward and reverse engineering.

UML - Activity Diagrams

Activity diagram is another important diagram in UML to describe the dynamic aspects of the system.

Activity diagram is basically a flowchart to represent the flow from one activity to another activity. The activity can be described as an operation of the system.

The control flow is drawn from one operation to another. This flow can be sequential, branched, or concurrent. Activity diagrams deal with all type of flow control by using different elements such as fork, join, etc

Purpose of Activity Diagrams

The basic purposes of activity diagrams is similar to other four diagrams. It captures the dynamic behavior of the system. Other four diagrams are used to show the message flow from one object to another but activity diagram is used to show message flow from one activity to another.

Activity is a particular operation of the system. Activity diagrams are not only used for visualizing the dynamic nature of a system, but they are also used to construct the executable system by using forward and reverse engineering techniques. The only missing thing in the activity diagram is the message part.

It does not show any message flow from one activity to another. Activity diagram is sometimes considered as the flowchart. Although the diagrams look like a flowchart, they are not. It shows different flows such as parallel, branched, concurrent, and single.

The purpose of an activity diagram can be described as –

- Draw the activity flow of a system.
- Describe the sequence from one activity to another.
- Describe the parallel, branched and concurrent flow of the system.

How to Draw an Activity Diagram?

Activity diagrams are mainly used as a flowchart that consists of activities performed by the system. Activity diagrams are not exactly flowcharts as they have some additional capabilities. These additional capabilities include branching, parallel flow, swimlane, etc.

Before drawing an activity diagram, we must have a clear understanding about the elements used in activity diagram. The main element of an activity diagram is the activity itself. An activity is a function performed by the system. After identifying the activities, we need to understand how they are associated with constraints and conditions.

Before drawing an activity diagram, we should identify the following elements

–

- Activities

- Association
- Conditions
- Constraints

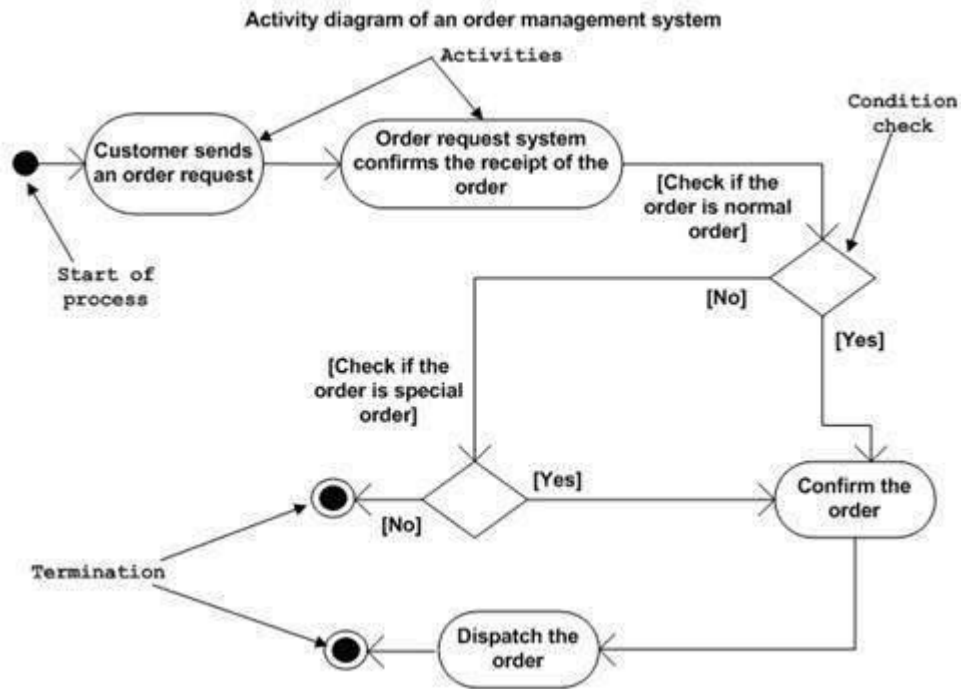
Once the above-mentioned parameters are identified, we need to make a mental layout of the entire flow. This mental layout is then transformed into an activity diagram.

Following is an example of an activity diagram for order management system. In the diagram, four activities are identified which are associated with conditions. One important point should be clearly understood that an activity diagram cannot be exactly matched with the code. The activity diagram is made to understand the flow of activities and is mainly used by the business users

Following diagram is drawn with the four main activities –

- Send order by the customer
- Receipt of the order
- Confirm the order
- Dispatch the order

After receiving the order request, condition checks are performed to check if it is normal or special order. After the type of order is identified, dispatch activity is performed and that is marked as the termination of the process.



Where to Use Activity Diagrams?

The basic usage of activity diagram is similar to other four UML diagrams. The specific usage is to model the control flow from one activity to another. This control flow does not include messages.

Activity diagram is suitable for modeling the activity flow of the system. An application can have multiple systems. Activity diagram also captures these systems and describes the flow from one system to another. This specific usage is not available in other diagrams. These systems can be database, external queues, or any other system.

We will now look into the practical applications of the activity diagram. From the above discussion, it is clear that an activity diagram is drawn from a very high level. So it gives high level view of a system. This high level view is mainly for business users or any other person who is not a technical person.

This diagram is used to model the activities which are nothing but business requirements. The diagram has more impact on business understanding rather than on implementation details.

Activity diagram can be used for –

- Modeling work flow by using activities.
- Modeling business requirements.
- High level understanding of the system's functionalities.
- Investigating business requirements at a later stage.

UML Package Diagrams Overview

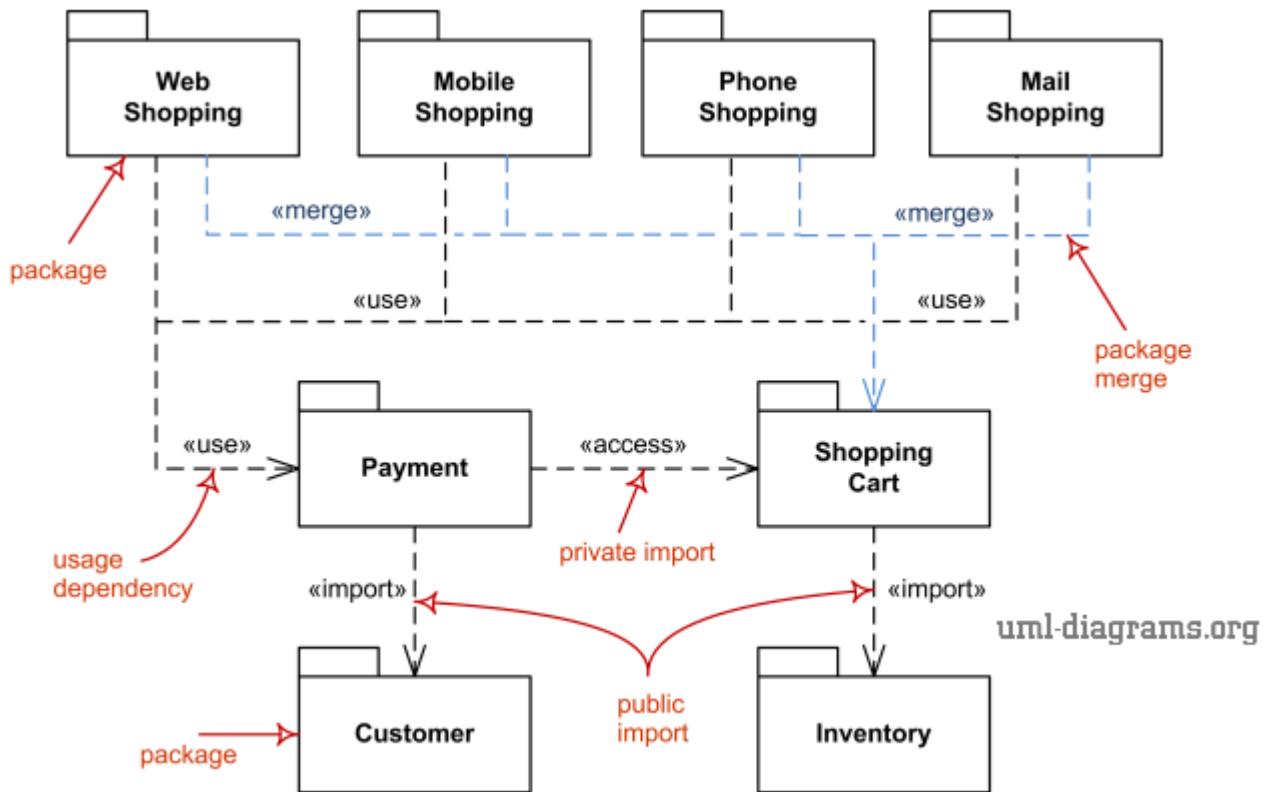
Package diagram is UML structure diagram which shows structure of the designed system at the level of packages. The following elements are typically drawn in a package diagram: package, packageable element, dependency, element import, package import, package merge.

Model diagram is UML auxiliary structure diagram which shows some abstraction or specific view of a system, to describe architectural, logical or behavioral aspects of the system. It could show, for example, architecture of a multi-layered (aka multi-tiered) application - multi-layered application model.

Some major elements of the package diagram are shown on the drawing below.

Web Shopping, Mobile Shopping, Phone Shopping, and Mail

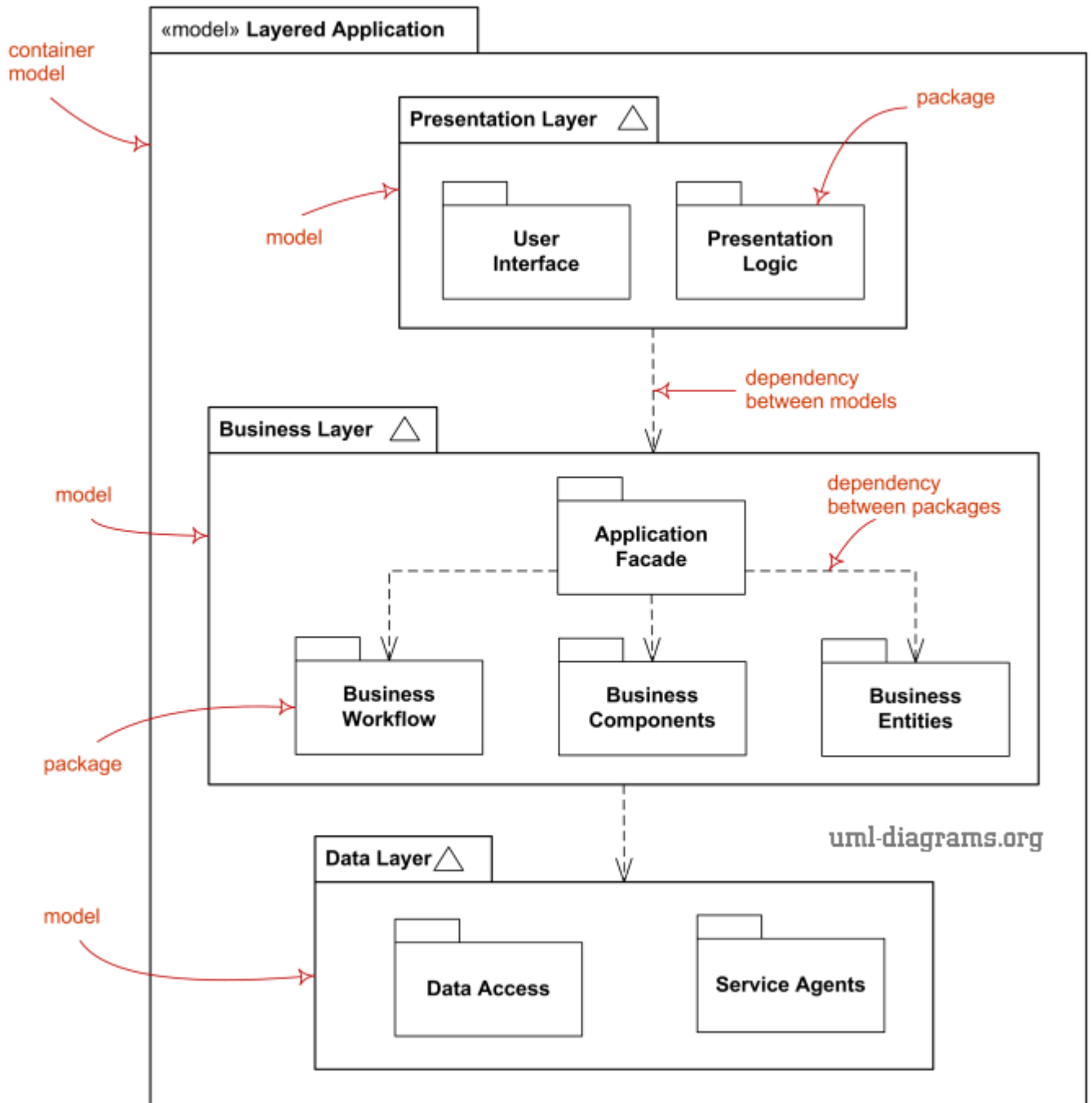
Shopping packages merge Shopping Cart package. The same 4 packages use Payment package. Both Payment and Shopping Cart packages import other packages.



UML package diagram elements - package, import, access, use, merge.

Model diagram is UML auxiliary structure diagram which shows some abstraction or specific view of a system, to describe some architectural, logical or behavioral aspects of the system.

The drawing below shows some major elements of the model diagram. Layered Application is a "container" model which contains three other models - Presentation Layer, Business Layer, and Data Layer. There are dependencies defined between these contained models.



UML model diagram elements - model, package, dependency.

Models usually contain packages. Packages could have dependencies or other relationships, e.g. import, defined between them.

You can find some examples of package diagrams here:

- Multi-Layered Application Model
- Multi-Layered Web Architecture

- Java Servlet 2.5 API
- Java Servlet 3.0 API
- Spring and Hibernate DAO Classes

UML - Component Diagrams

Component diagrams are different in terms of nature and behavior. Component diagrams are used to model the physical aspects of a system. Now the question is, what are these physical aspects? Physical aspects are the elements such as executables, libraries, files, documents, etc. which reside in a node.

Component diagrams are used to visualize the organization and relationships among components in a system. These diagrams are also used to make executable systems.

Purpose of Component Diagrams

Component diagram is a special kind of diagram in UML. The purpose is also different from all other diagrams discussed so far. It does not describe the functionality of the system but it describes the components used to make those functionalities.

Thus from that point of view, component diagrams are used to visualize the physical components in a system. These components are libraries, packages, files, etc.

Component diagrams can also be described as a static implementation view of a system. Static implementation represents the organization of the components at a particular moment.

A single component diagram cannot represent the entire system but a collection of diagrams is used to represent the whole.

The purpose of the component diagram can be summarized as –

- Visualize the components of a system.
- Construct executables by using forward and reverse engineering.
- Describe the organization and relationships of the components.

How to Draw a Component Diagram?

Component diagrams are used to describe the physical artifacts of a system. This artifact includes files, executables, libraries, etc

The purpose of this diagram is different. Component diagrams are used during the implementation phase of an application. However, it is prepared well in advance to visualize the implementation details.

Initially, the system is designed using different UML diagrams and then when the artifacts are ready, component diagrams are used to get an idea of the implementation.

This diagram is very important as without it the application cannot be implemented efficiently. A well-prepared component diagram is also important for other aspects such as application performance, maintenance, etc.

Before drawing a component diagram, the following artifacts are to be identified clearly –

- Files used in the system.
- Libraries and other artifacts relevant to the application.
- Relationships among the artifacts.

After identifying the artifacts, the following points need to be kept in mind.

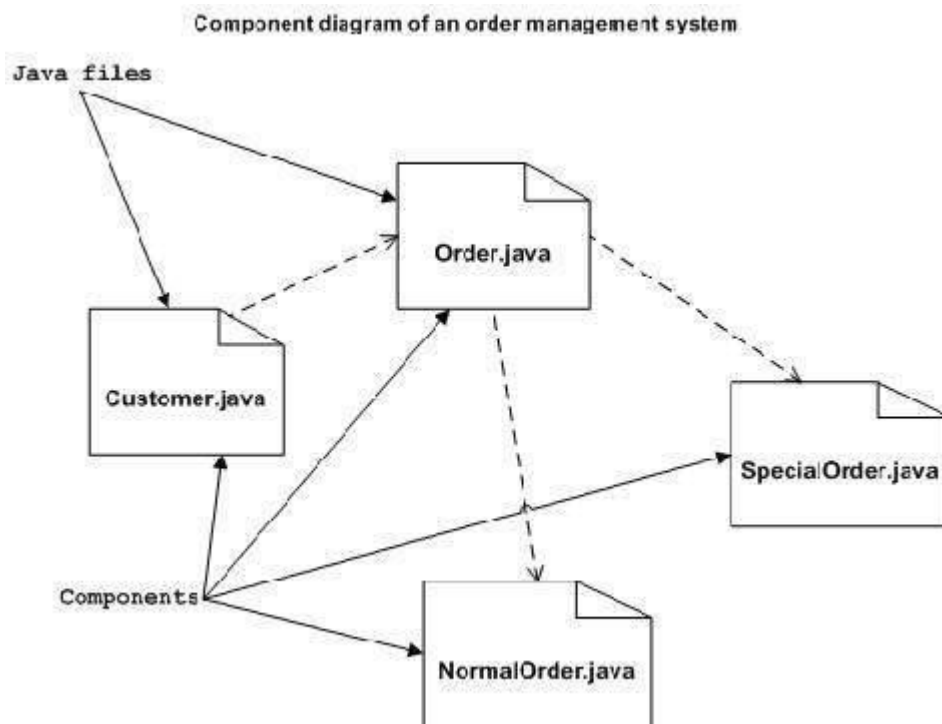
- Use a meaningful name to identify the component for which the diagram is to be drawn.
- Prepare a mental layout before producing the using tools.

- Use notes for clarifying important points.

Following is a component diagram for order management system. Here, the artifacts are files. The diagram shows the files in the application and their relationships. In actual, the component diagram also contains dlls, libraries, folders, etc.

In the following diagram, four files are identified and their relationships are produced. Component diagram cannot be matched directly with other UML diagrams discussed so far as it is drawn for completely different purpose.

The following component diagram has been drawn considering all the points mentioned above.



Where to Use Component Diagrams?

We have already described that component diagrams are used to visualize the static implementation view of a system. Component diagrams are special type of UML diagrams used for different purposes.

These diagrams show the physical components of a system. To clarify it, we can say that component diagrams describe the organization of the components in a system.

Organization can be further described as the location of the components in a system. These components are organized in a special way to meet the system requirements.

As we have already discussed, those components are libraries, files, executables, etc. Before implementing the application, these components are to be organized. This component organization is also designed separately as a part of project execution.

Component diagrams are very important from implementation perspective. Thus, the implementation team of an application should have a proper knowledge of the component details

Component diagrams can be used to –

- Model the components of a system.
- Model the database schema.
- Model the executables of an application.
- Model the system's source code.

UML - Deployment Diagrams

Deployment diagrams are used to visualize the topology of the physical components of a system, where the software components are deployed.

Deployment diagrams are used to describe the static deployment view of a system. Deployment diagrams consist of nodes and their relationships.

Purpose of Deployment Diagrams

The term Deployment itself describes the purpose of the diagram. Deployment diagrams are used for describing the hardware components, where software components are deployed. Component diagrams and deployment diagrams are closely related.

Component diagrams are used to describe the components and deployment diagrams shows how they are deployed in hardware.

UML is mainly designed to focus on the software artifacts of a system. However, these two diagrams are special diagrams used to focus on software and hardware components.

Most of the UML diagrams are used to handle logical components but deployment diagrams are made to focus on the hardware topology of a system. Deployment diagrams are used by the system engineers.

The purpose of deployment diagrams can be described as –

- Visualize the hardware topology of a system.
- Describe the hardware components used to deploy software components.
- Describe the runtime processing nodes.

How to Draw a Deployment Diagram?

Deployment diagram represents the deployment view of a system. It is related to the component diagram because the components are deployed using the deployment diagrams. A deployment diagram consists of nodes. Nodes are nothing but physical hardware used to deploy the application.

Deployment diagrams are useful for system engineers. An efficient deployment diagram is very important as it controls the following parameters –

- Performance
- Scalability
- Maintainability
- Portability

Before drawing a deployment diagram, the following artifacts should be identified –

- Nodes
- Relationships among nodes

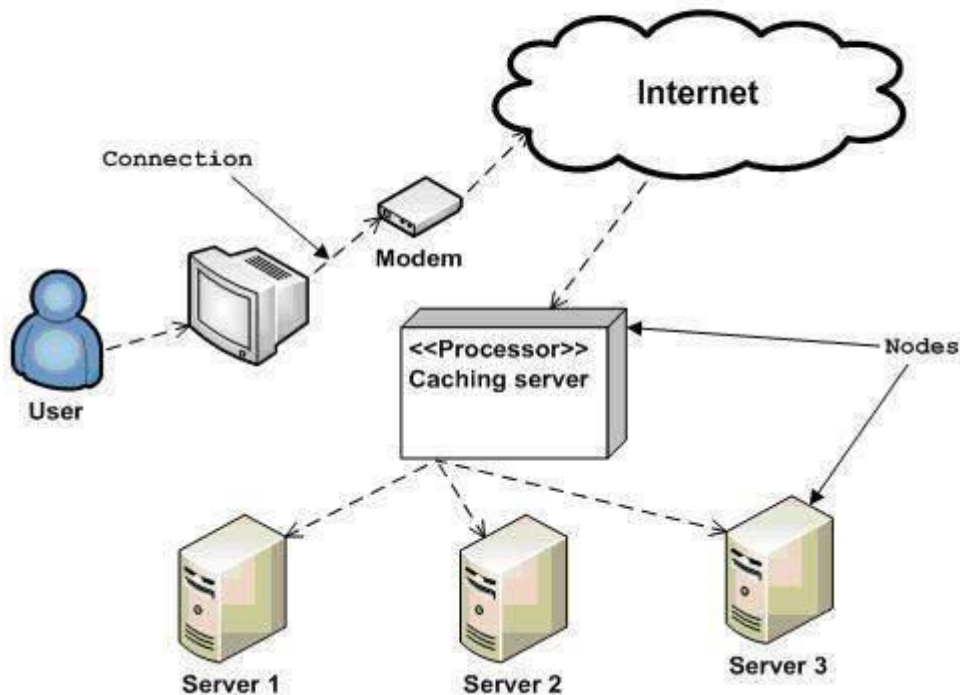
Following is a sample deployment diagram to provide an idea of the deployment view of order management system. Here, we have shown nodes as –

- Monitor
- Modem
- Caching server
- Server

The application is assumed to be a web-based application, which is deployed in a clustered environment using server 1, server 2, and server 3. The user connects to the application using the Internet. The control flows from the caching server to the clustered environment.

The following deployment diagram has been drawn considering all the points mentioned above.

Deployment diagram of an order management system



Where to Use Deployment Diagrams?

Deployment diagrams are mainly used by system engineers. These diagrams are used to describe the physical components (hardware), their distribution, and association.

Deployment diagrams can be visualized as the hardware components/nodes on which the software components reside.

Software applications are developed to model complex business processes. Efficient software applications are not sufficient to meet the business requirements. Business requirements can be described as the need to support the increasing number of users, quick response time, etc.

To meet these types of requirements, hardware components should be designed efficiently and in a cost-effective way.

Now-a-days software applications are very complex in nature. Software applications can be standalone, web-based, distributed, mainframe-based and many more. Hence, it is very important to design the hardware components efficiently.

Deployment diagrams can be used –

- To model the hardware topology of a system.
- To model the embedded system.
- To model the hardware details for a client/server system.
- To model the hardware details of a distributed application.
- For Forward and Reverse engineering.