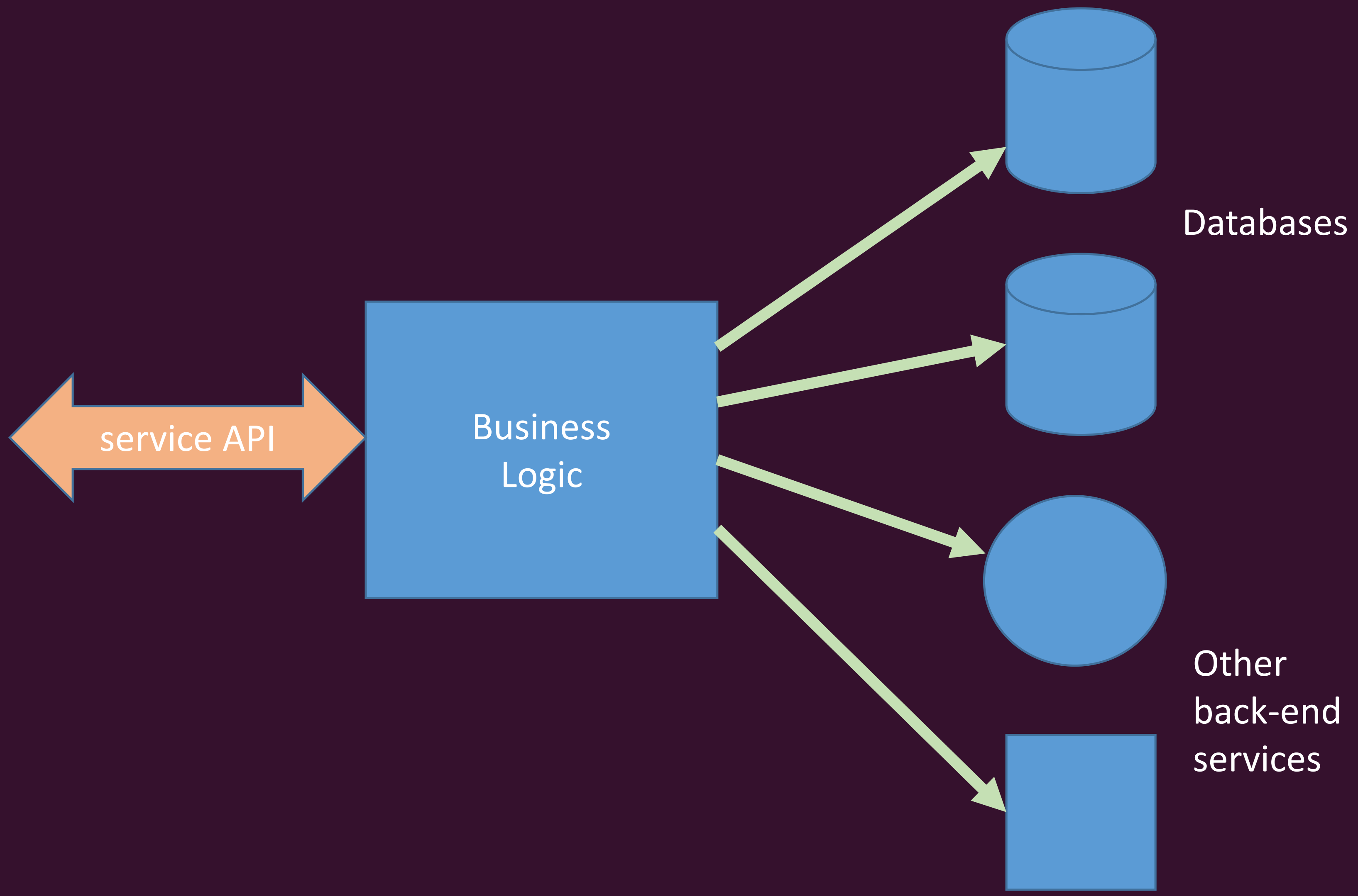
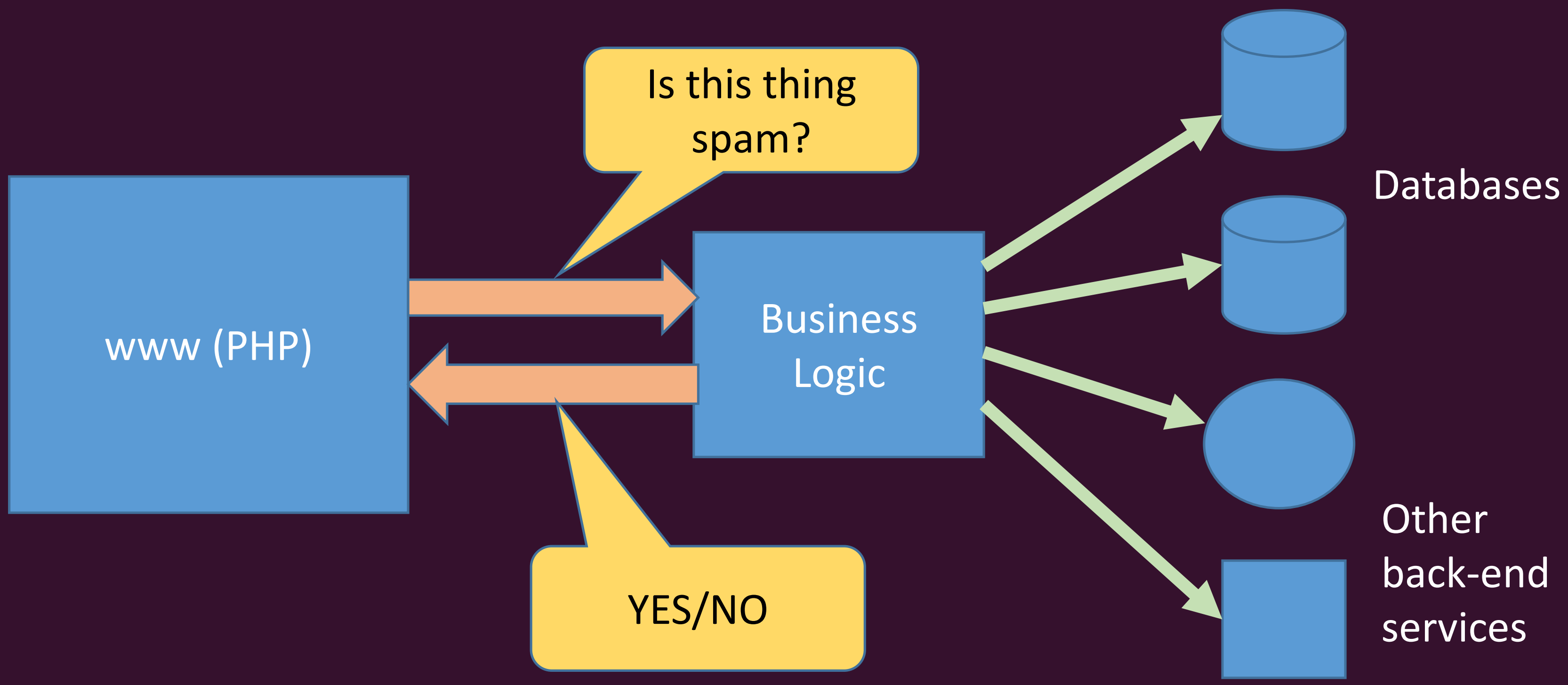
The Haxl Project at Facebook

Simon Marlow
Jon Coens
Louis Brandy
Jon Purdy
& others


service API
Business Logic
Databases
Other back-end services

Use case: fighting spam



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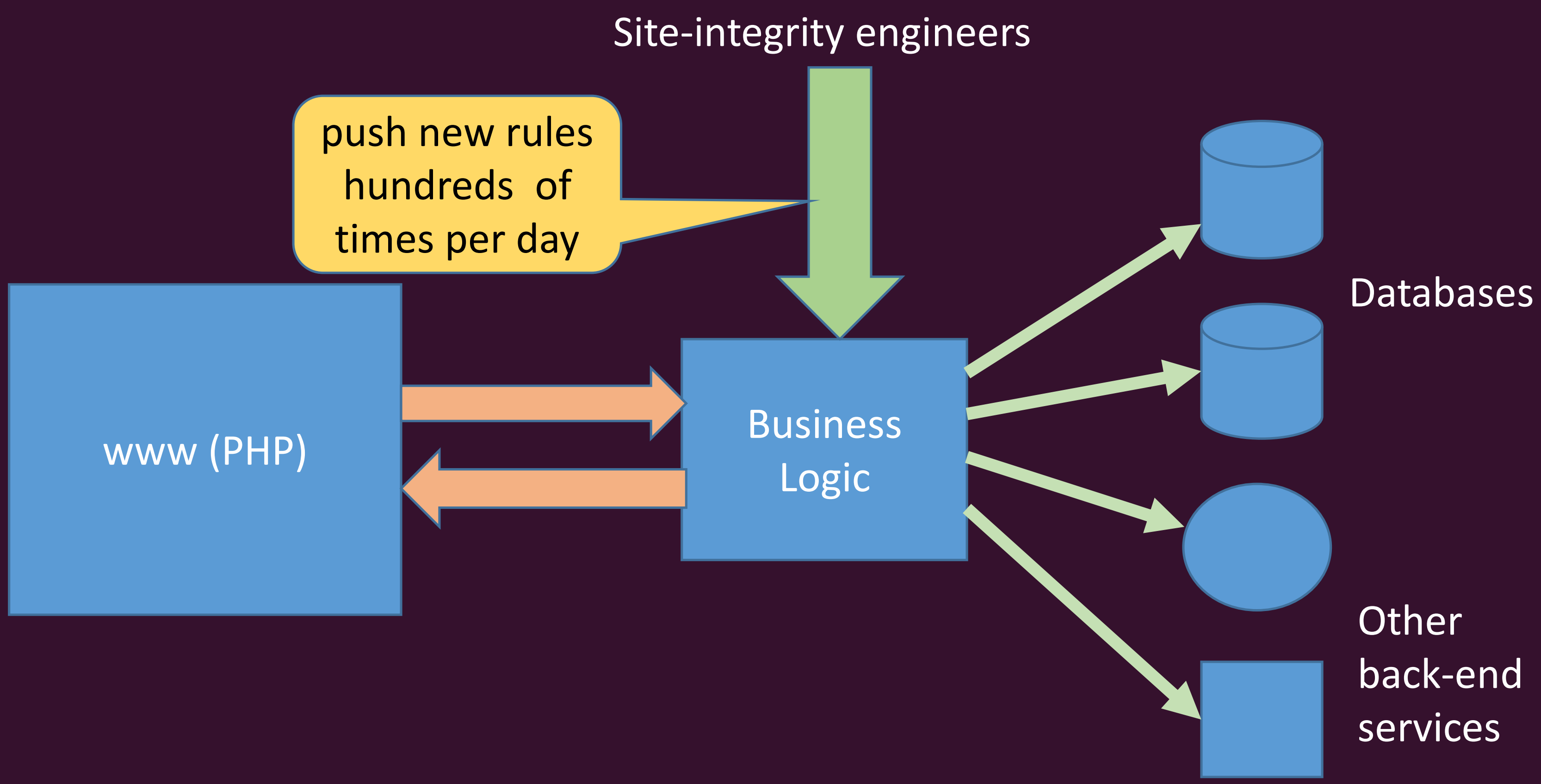
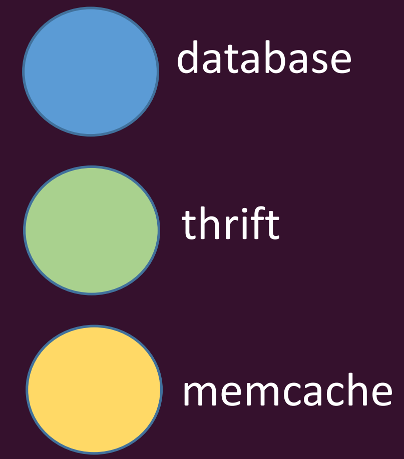
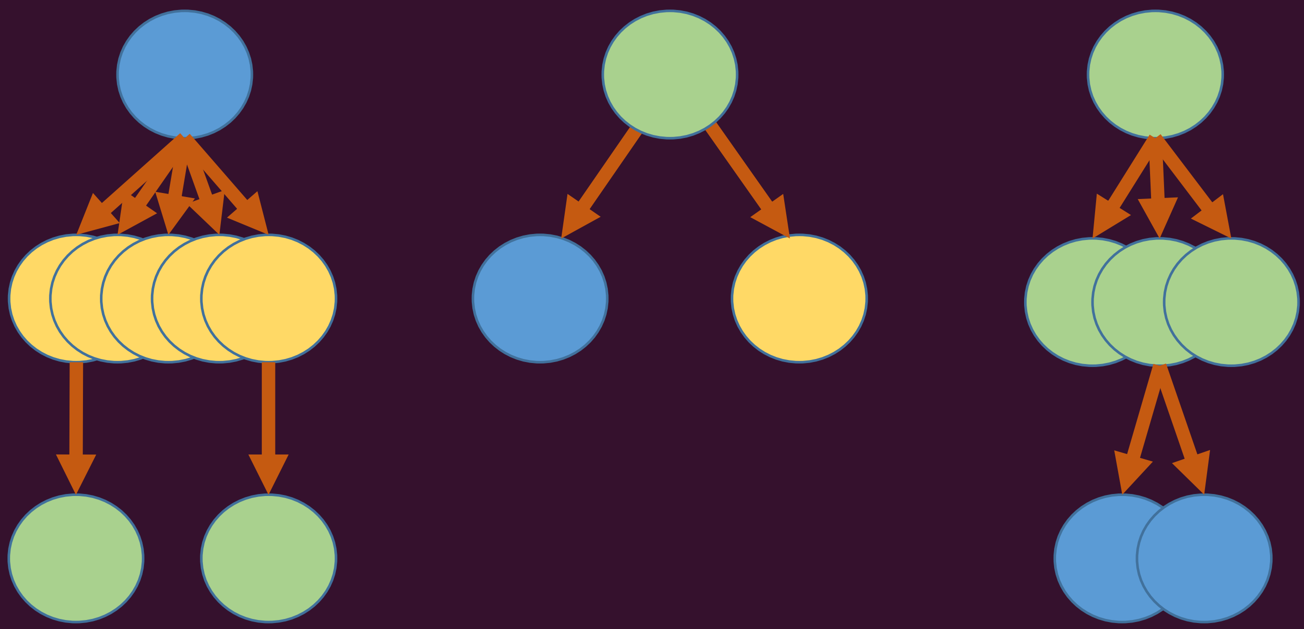


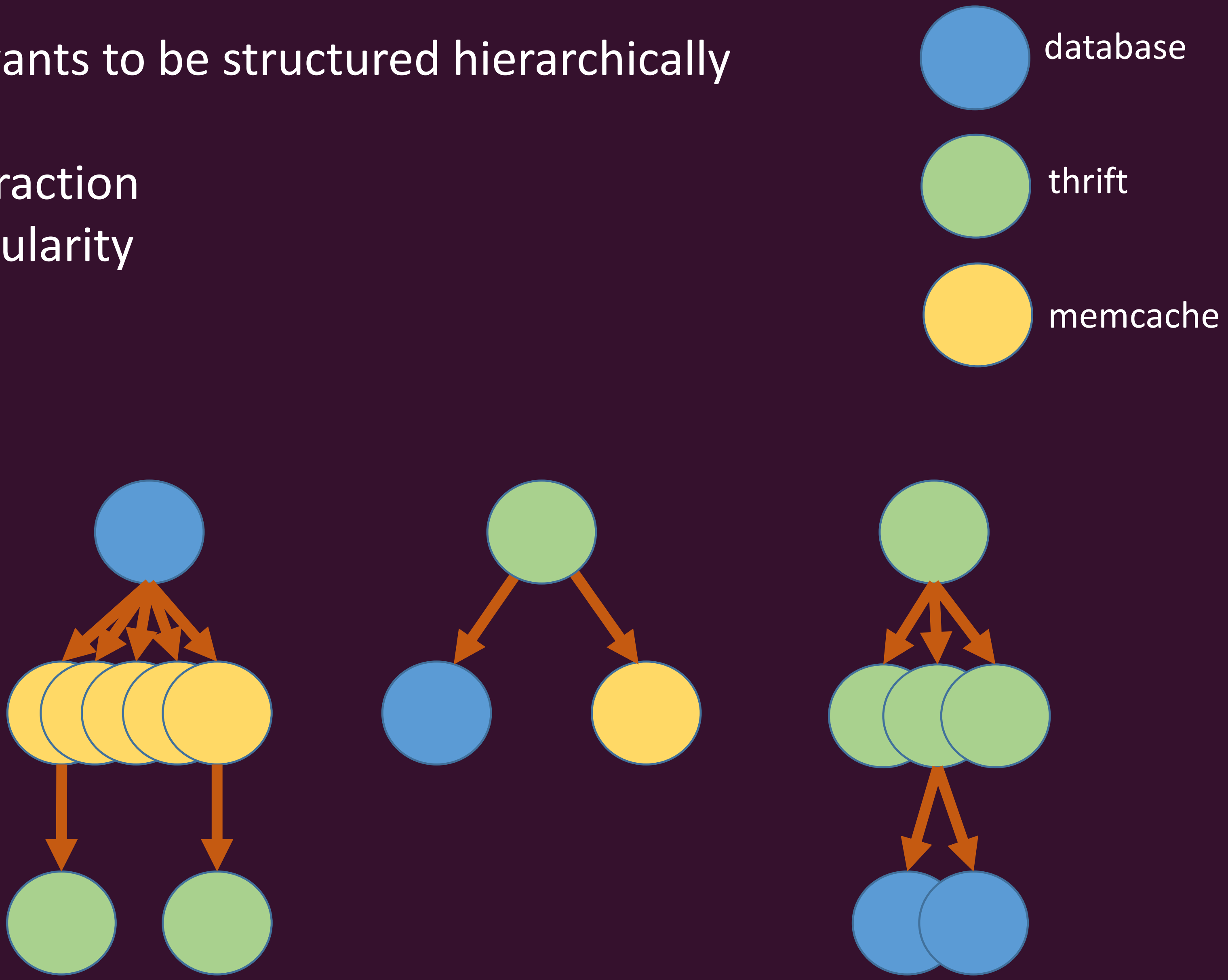
Data dependencies in a computation





Code wants to be structured hierarchically

- abstraction
- modularity



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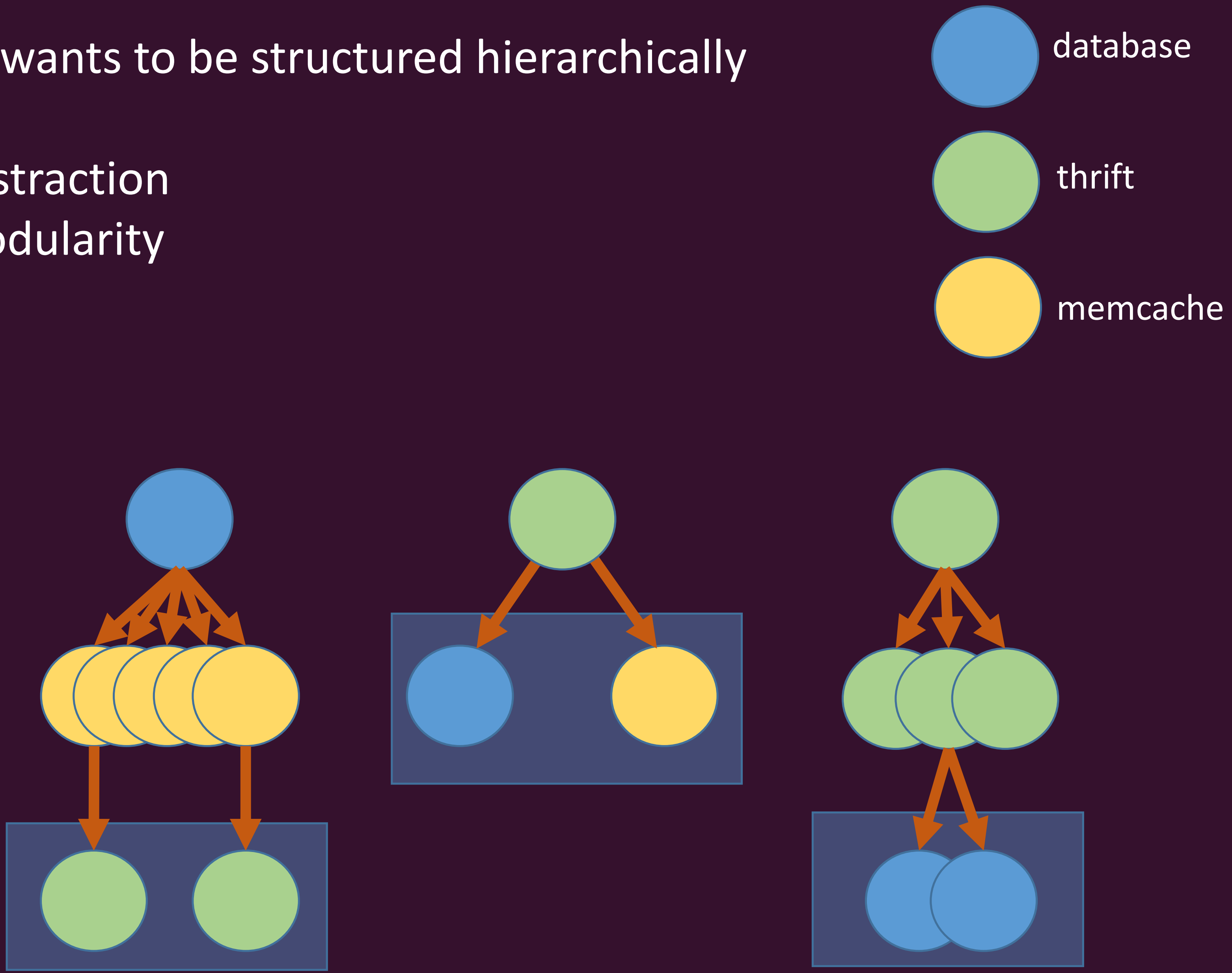

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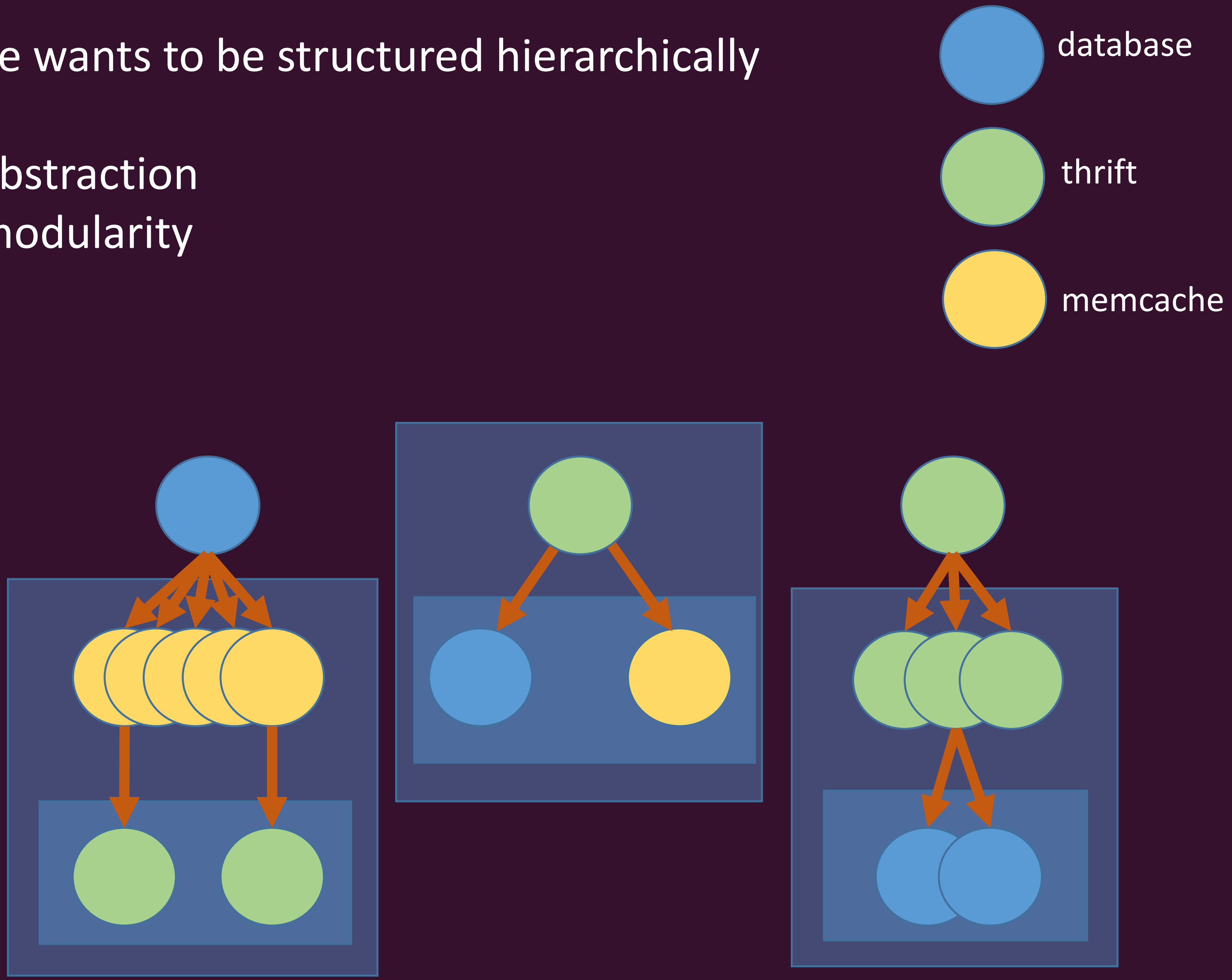

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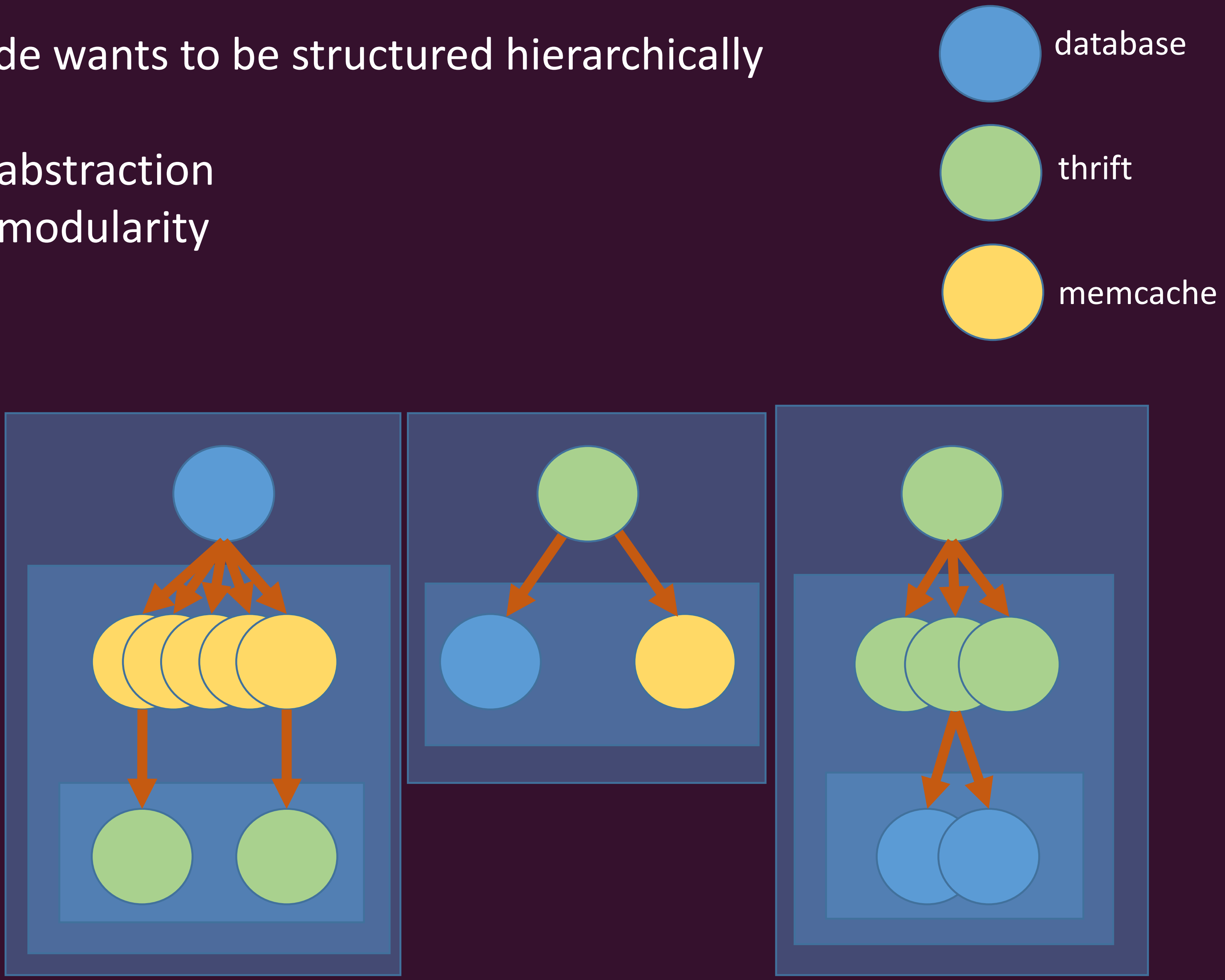
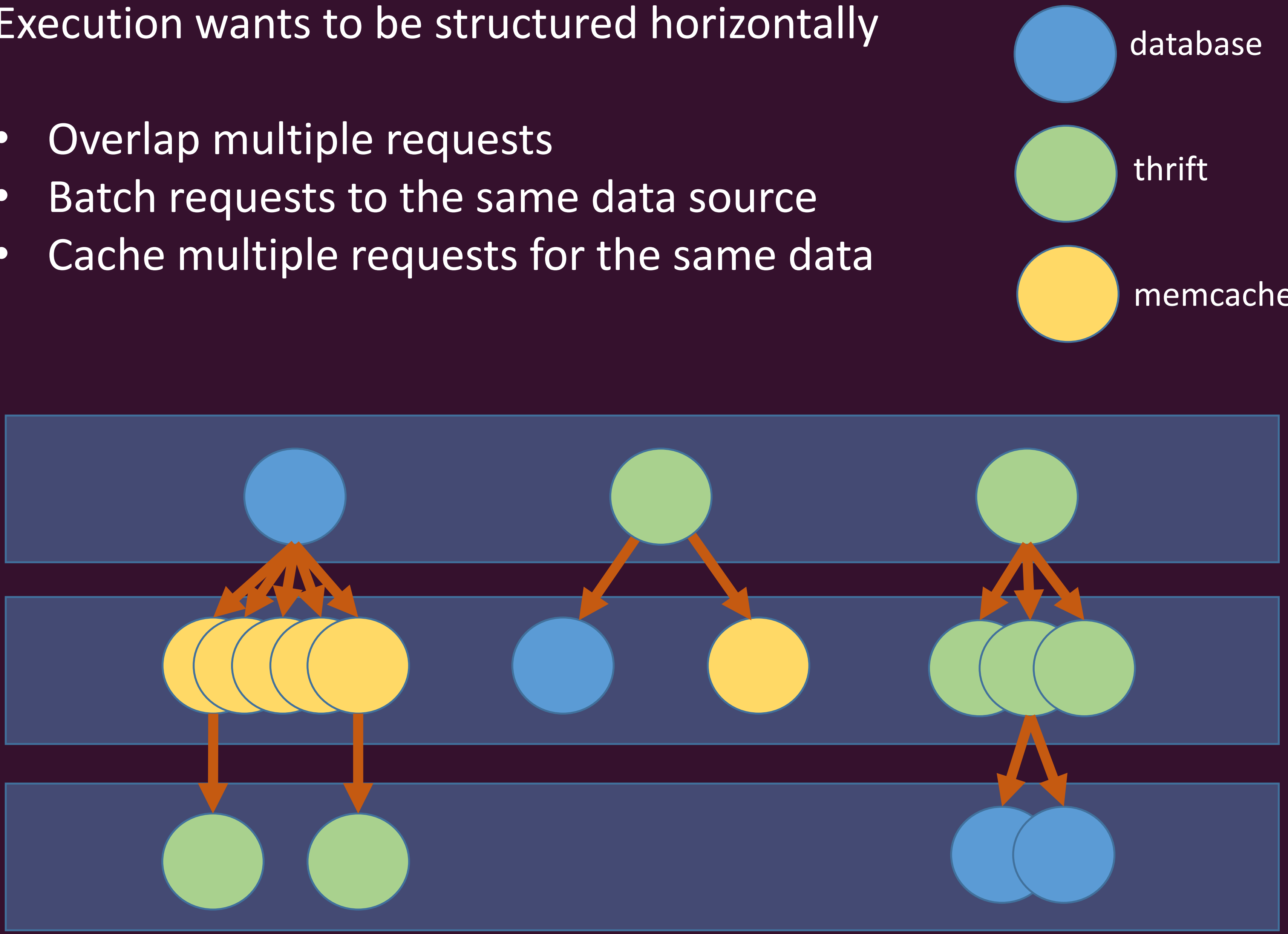


Execution wants to be structured horizontally

- Overlap multiple requests
- Batch requests to the same data source
- Cache multiple requests for the same data



- Furthermore, each data source has different characteristics
  - Batch request API?
  - Sync or async API?
  - Set up a new connection for each request, or keep a pool of connections around?

- Want to abstract away from *all* of this in the business logic layer

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- Concurrency.

  Threads let us keep our abstractions & modularity while executing things at the same time.
  - Caching/batching can be implemented as a service in the process
    - as we do with the IO manager in GHC

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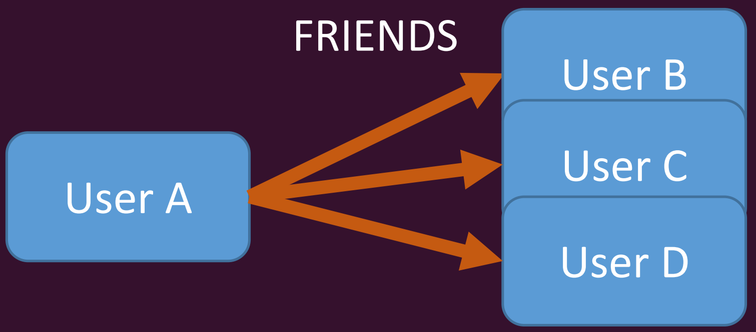
- But concurrency (the programing model) isn't what we want here.
- Example...

- x and y are Facebook users
- suppose we want to compute the number of friends that x and y have in common
- simplest way to write this:

```
length (intersect (friendsOf x) (friendsOf y))
```

Brief detour: TAO

- TAO implements Facebook's data model
  - most important data source we need to deal with
- Data is a graph
  - Nodes are "objects", identified by 64-bit ID
  - Edges are "assocs" (directed; a pair of 64-bit IDs)
- Objects and assocs have a type
  - object fields determined by the type
- Basic operations:
  - Get the object with a given ID
  - Get the assocs of a given type from a given ID



- Back to our example

```
length (intersect (friendsOf x) (friendsOf y))
```

- (friendsOf x) makes a request to TAO to get all the IDs for which there is an assoc of type FRIEND (x,_).
- TAO has a multi-get API; very important that we submit (friendsOf x) and (friendsOf y) as a single operation.

Using concurrency

- This:

```
length (intersect (friendsOf x) (friendsOf y))
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Using concurrency

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```

- Becomes this:

```
do
   m1 <- newEmptyMVar
   m2 <- newEmptyMVar
   forkIO (friendsOf x >>= putMVar m1)
   forkIO (friendsOf y >>= putMVar m2)
   fx <- takeMVar m1
   fy <- takeMVar m2
   return (length (intersect fx fy))
```


OH GOD
MY EYES

- Using the async package:

```
do
     ax <- async (friendsOf x)
     ay <- async (friendsOf y)
     fx <- wait ax
     fy <- wait ay
     return (length (intersect fx fy))
```

- Using Control.Concurrent.Async.concurrently:

```
do
      (fx,fy) <- concurrently (friendsOf x) (friendsOf y)
      return (length (intersect fx fy))
```

Why not concurrency?

- friendsOf x and friendsOf y are
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  - obviously both needed
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- Caching is not just an optimisation:
  - if friendsOf x is requested twice, we *must* get the same answer both times
  - *caching is a requirement*
- we don’t want the programmer to have to ask for concurrency here

- Could we use unsafePerformIO?

```
  length (intersect (friendsOf x) (friendsOf y))

friendsOf = unsafePerformIO ( .. )
```

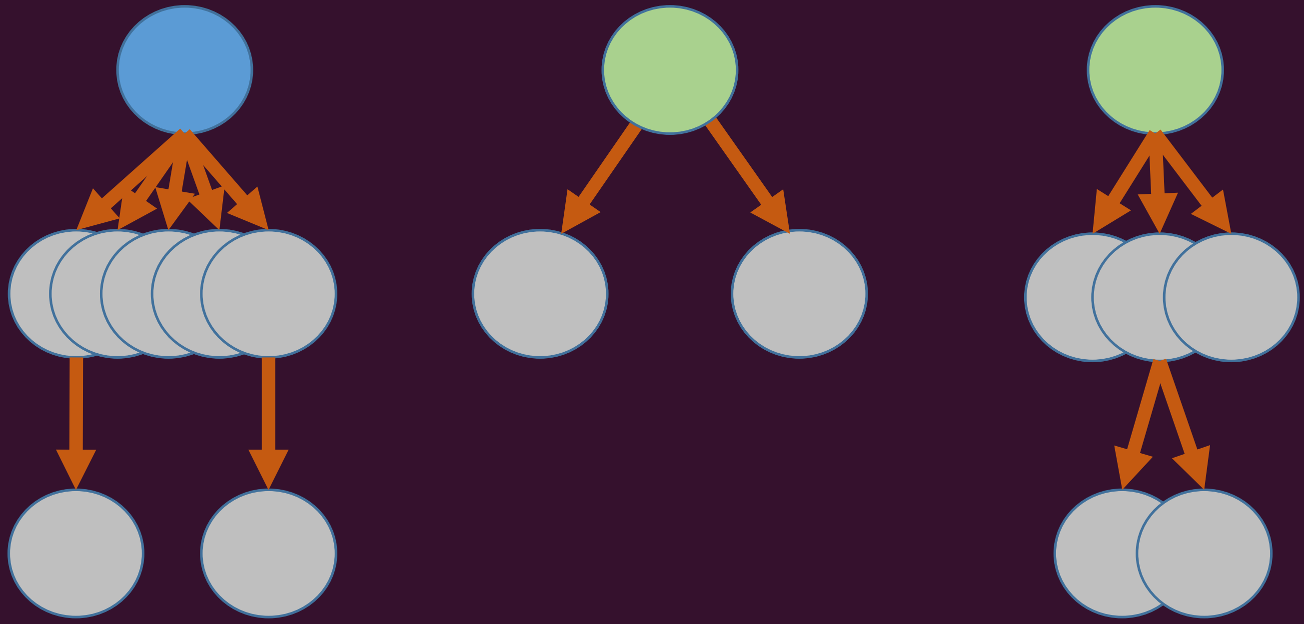
- we could do caching this way, but not concurrency. Execution will stop at the first data fetch.

Central problem

- Reorder execution of an expression to perform data fetching optimally.
- The programming model has no side effects (other than reading)

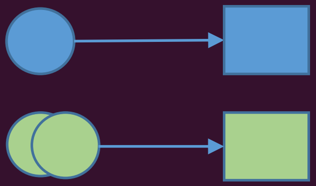
What we would like to do:

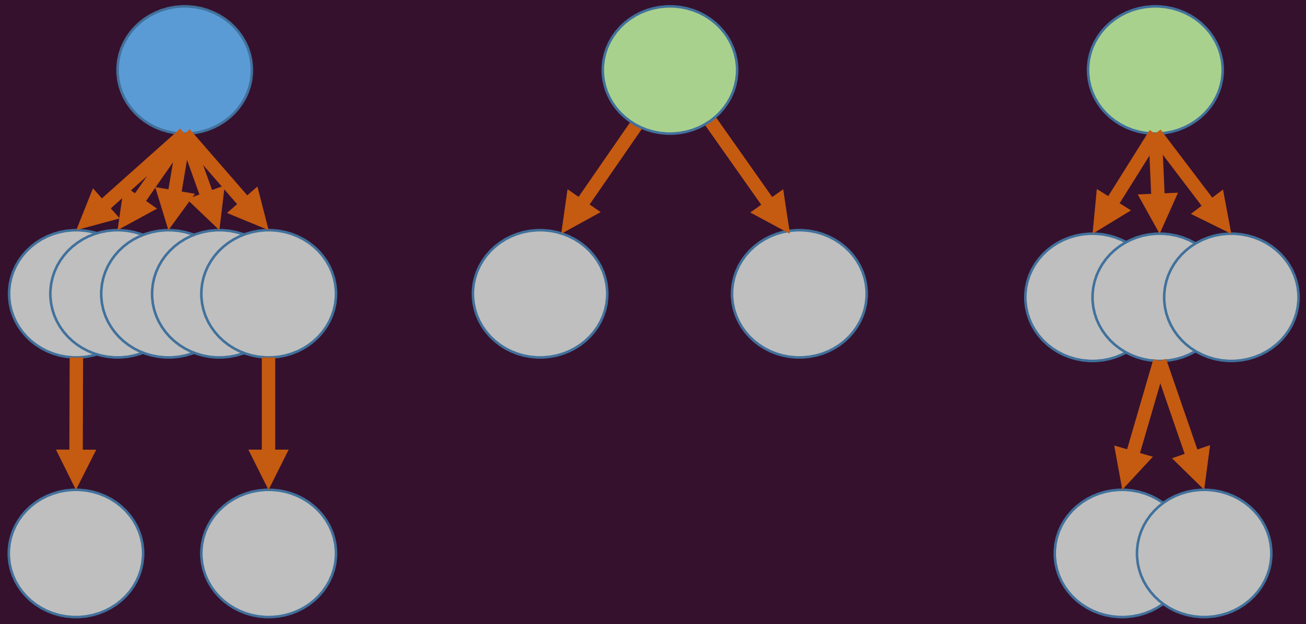
- explore the expression along all branches to get a set of data fetches



What we would like to do:

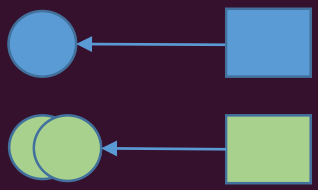
- submit the data fetches

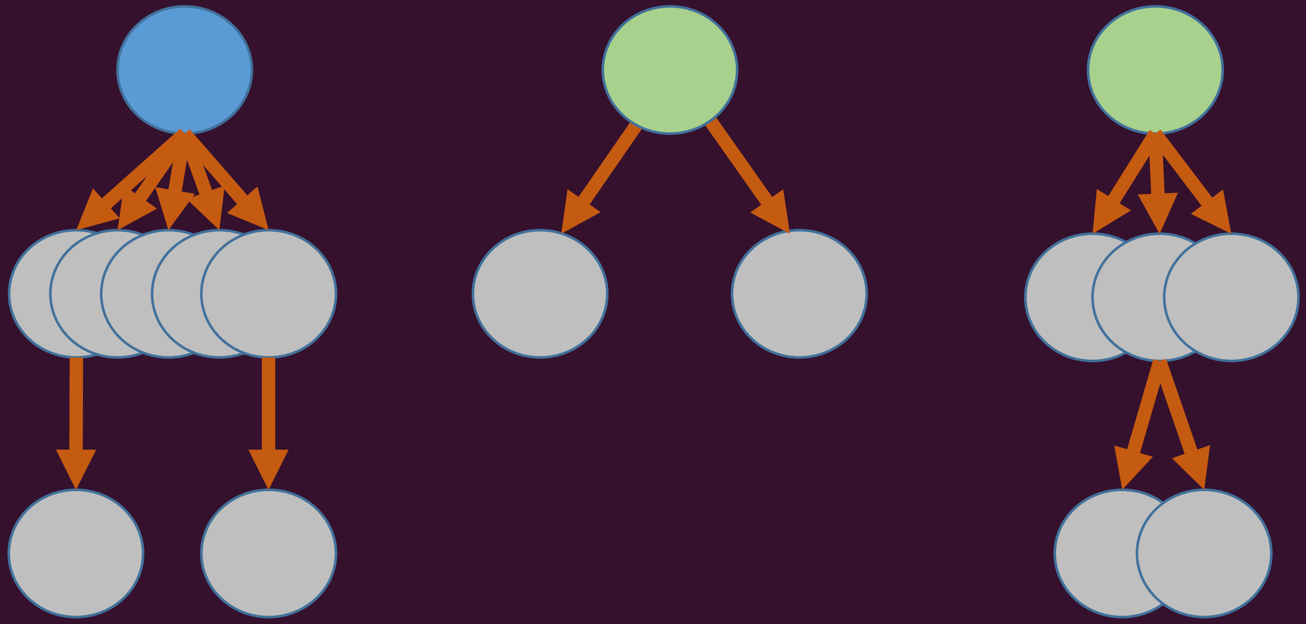




What we would like to do:

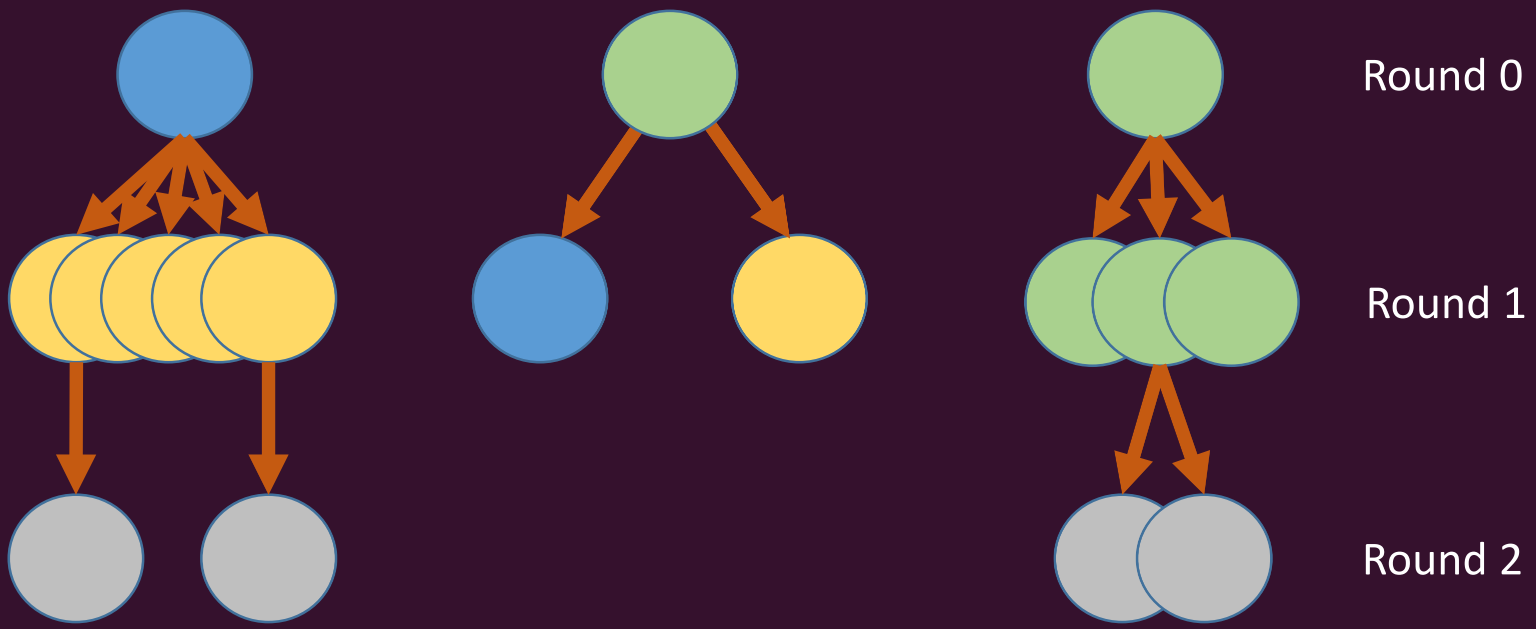
- wait for the responses





What we would like to do:

- now the computation is unblocked along multiple paths
- ... explore again
- collect the next batch of data fetches
- and so on



Fighting spam with pure functions

By Louis Brandy on Thursday, 24 January 2013 at 17:31

Like any popular Internet site, Facebook is a target for abuse. Our Site Integrity engineers rely on FXL, a domain-specific language forged in the fires of spam fighting at Facebook, to

- Facebook’s existing solution to this problem: FXL
- Lets you write

```
Length(Intersect(FriendsOf(X),FriendsOf(Y)))
```

- And optimises the data fetching correctly.
- But it’s an interpreter, and works with an explicit representation of the computation graph.

- We want to run compiled code for efficiency
- And take advantage of Haskell
  - high quality implementation
  - great libraries for writing business logic etc.

- So, how can we implement the right data fetching behaviour in a Haskell DSL?

Start with a concurrency monad

```haskell
newtype Haxl a = Haxl { unHaxl :: Result a }

data Result a = Done a
              | Blocked (Haxl a)

instance Monad Haxl where
  return a = Haxl (Done a)
  m >>= k = Haxl $
    case unHaxl m of
      Done a    -> unHaxl (k a)
      Blocked r -> Blocked (r >>= k)
```

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```

It’s a
Free
Monad

- The concurrency monad lets us run a computation until it blocks, do something, then resume it
- But we need to know what it blocked on...
- Could add some info to the Blocked constructor

```haskell
newtype Haxl a = Haxl { unHaxl :: Responses -> Result a }

data Result a = Done a
              | Blocked Requests (Haxl a)

instance Monad Haxl where
  return a = Haxl $ \_ -> Done a
  Haxl m >>= k = Haxl $ \resps ->
    case m resps of
      Done a         -> unHaxl (k a) resps
      Blocked reqs r -> Blocked reqs (r >>= k)

addRequest    :: Request a -> Requests -> Requests
emptyRequests :: Requests

fetchResponse :: Request a -> Responses -> a

dataFetch :: Request a -> Haxl a
dataFetch req = Haxl $ \_ ->
  Blocked (addRequest req emptyRequests) $ Haxl $ \resps ->
    Done (fetchResponse req resps)
```

- Ok so far, but we still get blocked at the first data fetch.

```
numCommonFriends x y = do
   fx <- friendsOf x
   fy <- friendsOf y
   return (length (intersect fx fy))
```

Blocked here

- To explore multiple branches, we need to use Applicative

```
instance Applicative Haxl where

  pure = return

  Haxl f <*> Haxl a = Haxl $ \resps ->
    case f resps of
      Done f' ->
        case a resps of
          Done a'           -> Done (f' a')
          Blocked reqs a' -> Blocked reqs (f' <$> a')
      Blocked reqs f' ->
        case a resps of
          Done a'            -> Blocked reqs (f' <*> return a')
          Blocked reqs' a' -> Blocked (reqs <> reqs') (f' <*> a')
```

<*> :: Applicative f => f (a -> b) -> f a -> f b

- This is precisely the advantage of Applicative over Monad:
  - Applicative allows exploration of the structure of the computation

- Our example is now written:

```
numCommonFriends x y =
  length <$> (intersect <$> friendsOf x <*> friendsOf y)
```

- Or:

```
numCommonFriends x y =
  length <$> common (friendsOf x) (friendsOf y)
  where common = liftA2 intersect
```

- Note that we still have the Monad!
- The Monad allows us to make decisions based on values when we need to.

```
do
  fs <- friendsOf x
  if simon `elem` fs
     then ...
     else ...
```

Blocked here

- Batching will not explore the then/else branches
  - exactly what we want.

- But it does mean the programmer should use Applicative composition to get batching.
- This is suboptimal:

```
do
  fx <- friendsOf x
  fy <- friendsOf y
  return (length (intersect fx fy))
```

- So our plan is to
  - provide APIs that batch correctly
  - translate do-notation into Applicative where possible
    - (forthcoming GHC extension)

- We really want bulk operations to benefit from batching.

```
friendsOfFriends id =
  concat <$> (mapM friendsOf =<< friendsOf id)
```

- But this doesn't work: mapM uses Monad rather than Applicative composition.
- This is why traverse exists:

```
traverse :: (Traversable t, Applicative f)
         => (a -> f b) -> t a -> f (t b)
```

- So in our library, we make mapM = traverse
- Also: sequence = sequenceA
- Will be fixed once Applicative is a superclass of Monad

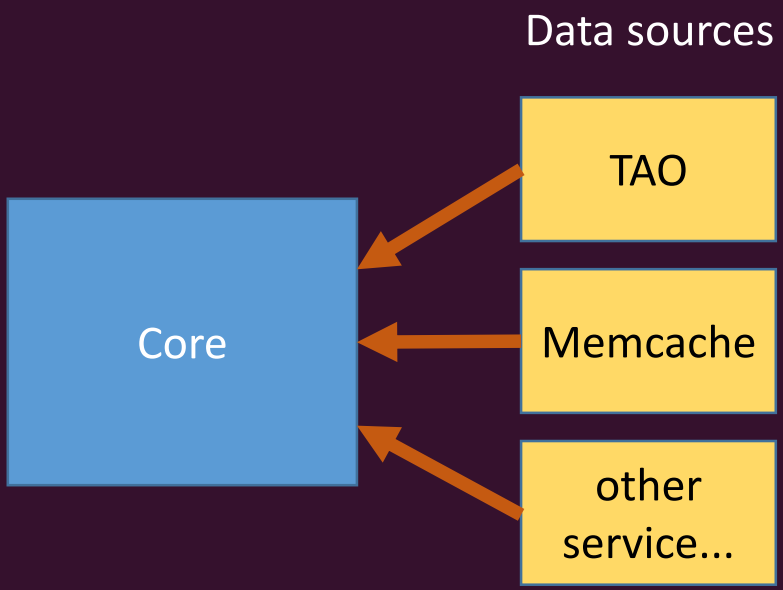
Implementation

- DataSource abstraction
- Replaying requests
- Scaling
- Hot-code swapping

- Experience
- Status etc.

Data Source Abstraction

- We want to structure the system like this:



- Core code includes the monad, caching support etc.
- Core is *generic:* no data sources built-in

How do we arrange this?

- Three ways that a data source interacts with core:
  - issuing a data fetch request
  - persistent state
  - fetching the data

- Package this up in a type class

```
class DataSource req where
  ...
```

parameterised over the type of *requests*

- Let’s look at requests first...

Example Request type

```
data ExampleReq a where
  CountAardvarks :: String -> ExampleReq Int
  ListWombats    :: Id     -> ExampleReq [Id]
  deriving Typeable
```

it's a GADT, where the type parameter is the type of the result of this request

- Core has a single way to issue a request

```
dataFetch :: DataSource req => req a -> Haxl a
```

- Note how the result type matches up.

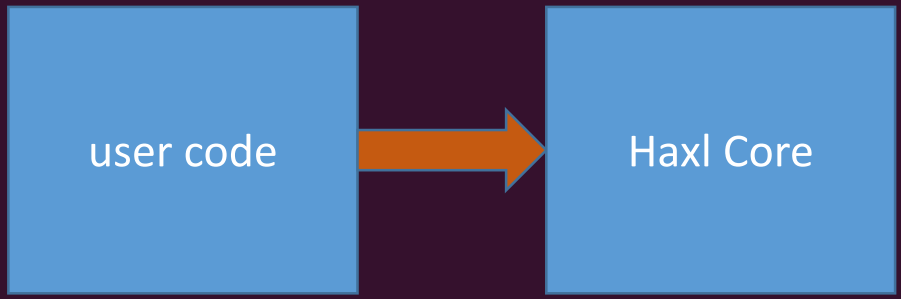
- Clean data source abstraction

- Means that we can plug in any set of data sources at *runtime*
  - e.g. mock data sources for testing and experimentation
  - core code can be built & tested independently

Replayability

- The Haxl monad and the type system give us:
  - Guarantee of no side effects, except via dataFetch
  - Guarantee that everything is cached
  - The ability to replay requests...

user code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Haxl Core


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data
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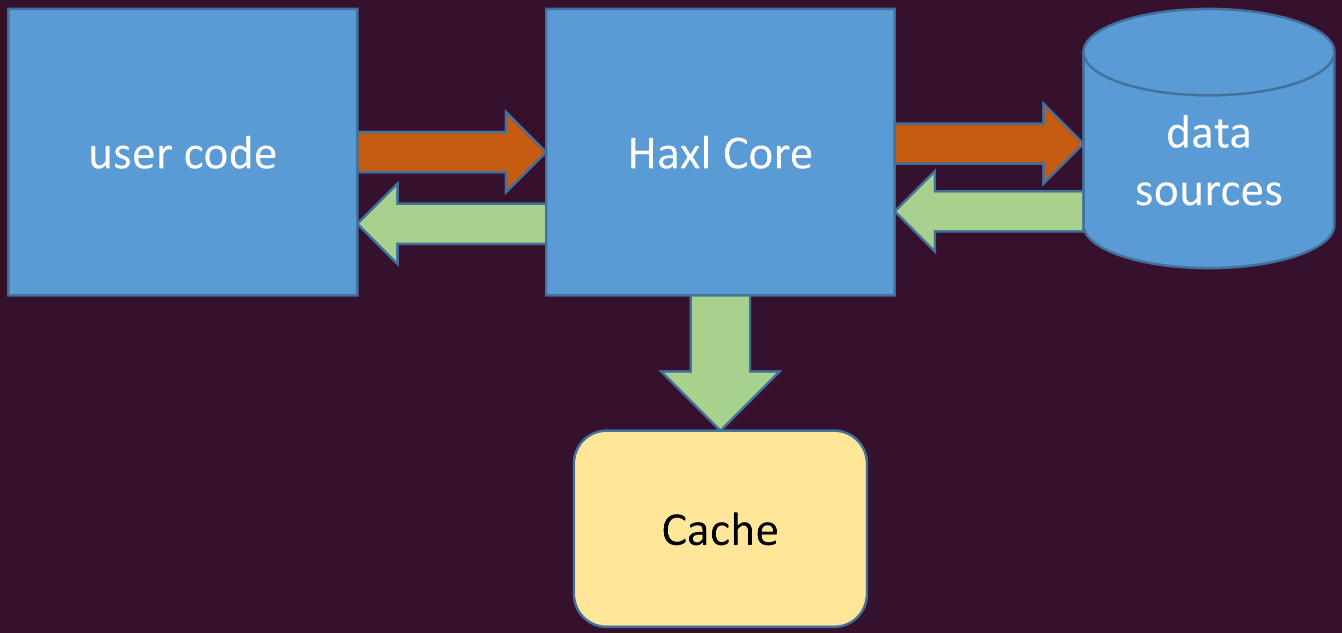
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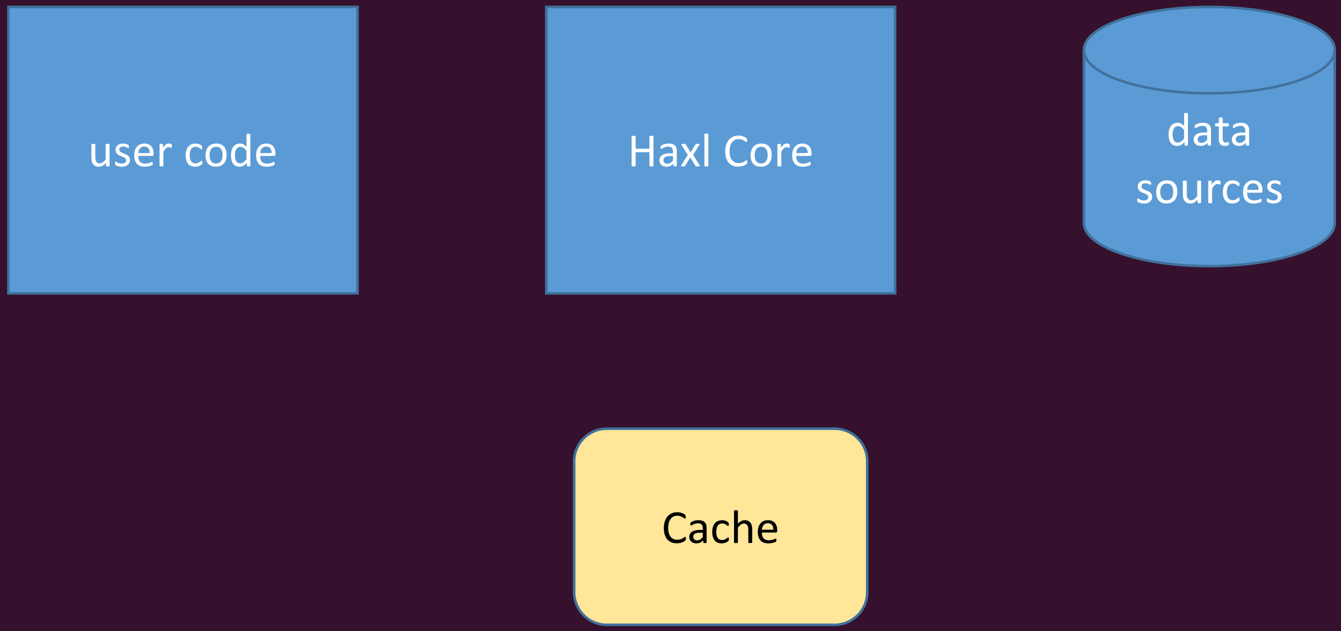
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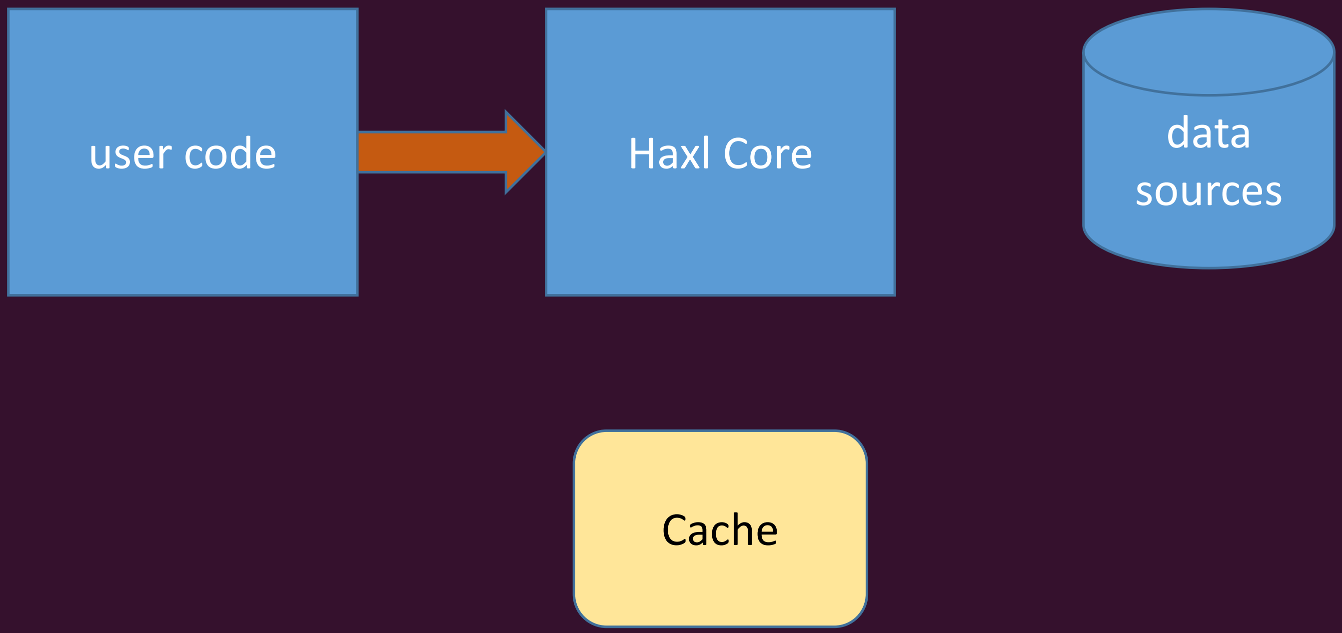
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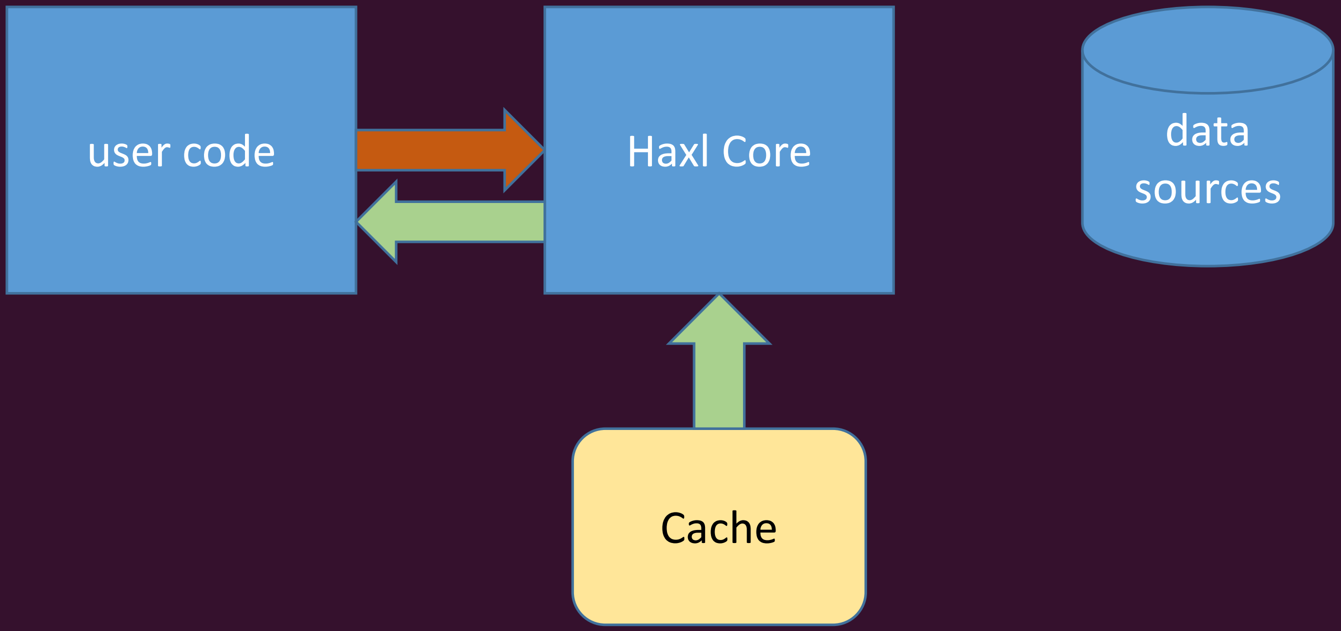
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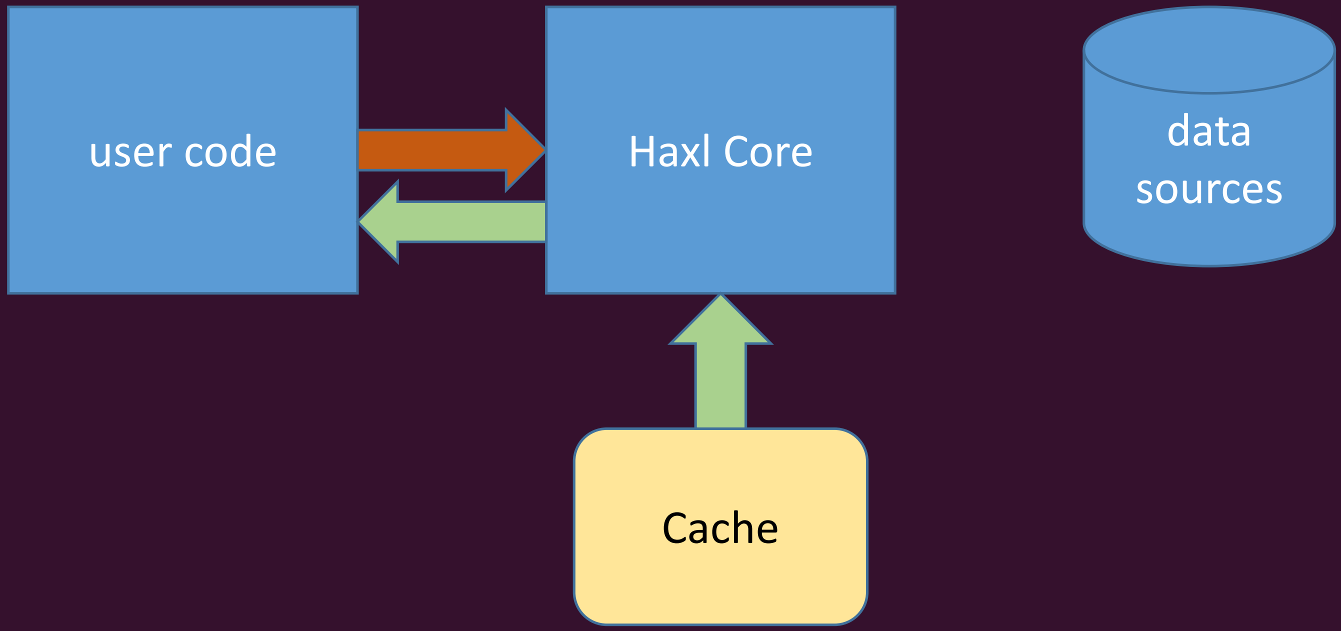

- The data sources change over time
- But if we *persist the cache*, we can re-run the user code and get the same results
- Great for
    - testing
    - fault diagnosis
    - profiling

Scaling

- Each server has lots of cores, pounded by requests from other boxes constantly.

Hot code swapping

- 1-2K machines, new code pushed many times per day
- Use GHC’s built-in linker
  - Had to modify it to unload code
  - GC detects when it is safe to release old code
- We can swap in new code while requests are still running on the old code

Status

- Prototyped most features (including hot code swapping & scaling)
- Core is written
- We have a few data sources, more in the works
- Busy hooking it up to the infrastructure
- Can play around with the system in GHCi, including data sources

Questions?