



Ralf Ulrich Garbe

Enterprise Architect | Digital Transformation Leader | Founder

☎ +49 179 366 8987 | ✉ uli@ugarbe.de | 🌐 ugarbe.de | 📦 classifyit.eu

Senior Enterprise Architect & Technology Executive with extensive experience delivering mission-driven transformation across multinational defence organizations. Architected and institutionalized enterprise frameworks that align strategic intent with capability delivery, governance, and standards-based interoperability. Orchestrated modernization and secure digital evolution across federated environments, fostering collaboration, resilience, and data-driven decision-making. Recognized for turning complex multinational strategies into cohesive, secure, and sustainable digital capabilities. Entrepreneur and product founder, providing a reliable commercial software product.

Key Competencies

Strategic Governance & Enterprise Architecture: Expert in directing and enforcing Enterprise Architecture Management (EAM) frameworks to drive Digital Transformation and ensure organizational coherence.

30-Year Executive Tenure: Proven authority in leading technology strategy, modernization, and complex change across multiple technology cycles.

Global Scale & Cyber Resilience: Architected and secured mission-critical systems for a vast, globally distributed footprint (e.g., NATO), specializing in Security-by-Design and High-Availability for ultimate service resiliency.

Strategic Risk Management: Provides board-level assessment, mitigation, and governance of strategic technology and security risks.

Executive Influence: Expert in translating complex architectural and security risks into clear, compelling, and actionable investment strategies for senior management and multinational stakeholders.

Infrastructure & Cloud Strategy: Directs and governs major initiatives, including Global Infrastructure Consolidation and large-scale Cloud Strategy adoption.

Cross-Cultural Team Leadership: Unifies and mentors diverse, multidisciplinary, and multinational teams to achieve strategic alignment and operational excellence.

Experience

Head of Engineering and Enterprise Architecture

NATO, Brussels, Belgium | Dec 2018 – Present

Leading enterprise architecture governance and strategic engineering for a complex, globally distributed IT infrastructure supporting thousands of users across multiple nations and organizations. Direct engineering and service owner teams across infrastructure, network, and applications to design, to successfully integrate, and deliver scalable, interoperable solutions. **Key Achievements:** Consolidated data centers (50% reduction), implemented zero-downtime high-availability designs, embedded security-by-design across all architecture domains, and delivered scalable system architectures enabling federated service operations.

Head of Information Assurance and Cyber Defence

NATO, Brussels, Belgium | Sep 2004 – Nov 2018

Directed enterprise-wide cybersecurity and information assurance programs, safeguarding classified information across multinational environments. Established compliant security policies and led multinational teams in accreditation, risk assessment, and cyber defence operations. **Key Achievements:** Developed structured documentation frameworks, streamlined accreditation processes, and integrated lifecycle risk assessments and security requirements into architectural artefacts and information flows.

Founder & Managing Director - ClassifyIt

Private Sector | 2006 – Present

Entrepreneur and delivering a Microsoft Office tool, adopted in 5,000 installations, establishing compliance with ISO 27001, GDPR, and governmental standards.

EXECUTIVE COMPETENCIES

Strategic Leadership & Governance

Enterprise Strategy & Governance: Expert at establishing and enforcing Enterprise Architecture Management (EAM) frameworks (Business, Data, Application, Technology) to ensure organizational coherence. Drives Strategic Roadmapping and Technology Evolution Planning tied directly to business outcomes.

Large-Scale Digital Transformation: Directing and governing complex, multi-year modernization initiatives, including Global Infrastructure Consolidation and Cloud Strategy adoption, while actively managing and retiring Technical Debt.

Holistic Risk Management: Providing Strategic Risk Assessment & Mitigation across the enterprise. Ensures Holistic Accountability for decisions by balancing operational delivery, resource planning, and long-term security posture.

Operational Excellence & Resilience: Defines and enforces standards for Service Resiliency and High-Availability Design for mission-critical systems, fostering a culture of operational excellence.

Cyber Resilience & Technical Authority

Cyber Resilience & Security-by-Design: Deep expertise in Information Assurance and implementing Security-by-Design and Zero-Trust principles across all architectural domains. Leads Cyber Defence Strategy, risk assessment, and Security Policy Development for multinational environments.

System Integration & Engineering Authority: Provides authoritative guidance on complex System Integration, Application Engineering, and the adoption of modern delivery frameworks like DevSecOps and Agile to maintain architectural integrity at scale.

Global Infrastructure Architecting: Proven mastery in designing and securing large-scale infrastructure (Network/IP, Cloud, Compute), specializing in highly secure, globally distributed footprints.

Executive Influence & Talent Leadership

Executive Communication & Influence: Translating complex architecture and security risks, along with required investment cases, into clear, compelling, and convincing arguments for Board-level management and diverse international stakeholders.

Cross-Cultural Strategic Leadership: Expertly leading, unifying, and mentoring diverse, multinational, and multi-disciplinary teams across cultural and organizational boundaries to drive strategic alignment and operational delivery.

Vendor & Partner Negotiation: Strategically managing key vendor relationships and negotiations to maximize value, mitigate vendor lock-in, and ensure long-term architectural flexibility.

2007 - today	Founder & Managing Director - ClassifyIt Private Sector – Micro-Company Founded and developing ClassifyIt, a Microsoft Office add-in enhancing document and email classification, compliance, and data protection. Delivers advanced metadata handling, sensitivity labelling, and secure data governance for enterprises.
1 August 1999 – 31 August 2004	System Engineer – Information Technologies Governmental Agency IT Amt Bundeswehr (part of German Ministry of Defence), Koblenz, Germany – National provided to: NATO BICES Agency, Boulevard Leopold III, 1110 Brussels, Belgium ▪ Network engineering ▪ Application engineering ▪ Information Security activities ▪ Accreditation support ▪ Staff supervisory and management tasks.
1 June 1998 – 31 July 1999	Deputy Head of Computer Centre Governmental Agency - Defence Bundesamt für Wehrtechnik und Beschaffung (BWB) (Defense Technology and Procurement), WTD 61, Manching, Germany ▪ Oversight and execution to run, maintain and improve a mid size computer network. ▪ Represent the Head of Computer Centre during his absence. ▪ Procure and develop the computer system.
1 May 1996 – 31 May 1998	State Examination (Professional Trainee) Governmental Agency – Defence Technology, Law, Regulation Bundesamt für Wehrtechnik und Beschaffung (BWB), Koblenz, Germany ▪ Professional trainee for qualification as civil servant in senior service, with emphasis on military electrical and information technologies.
1 September 1990 – 31 January 1996	Master of Science Information Technologies (Diplominformatiker) University - Technical Universität Karlsruhe, Germany Computer Science encompassing: Mathematics, Logic, Algorithms, Physics, Integrated Circuits, Complexity Assessments, Simulation
Mother tongue(s)	German
Other languages	English: Proficient in Speaking, Writing and Understanding
Education	Master of Science Information Technologies; Professional Trainee Defence Administration; TOGAF; SCRUM Master; Management Development; Risk Management; Crypto Management, Routing, Firewall.
Social skills	Appreciation of fairness, equity and dignity. Ability to establish and maintain good working relations with people of different national, cultural and educational backgrounds – iow diverse teams. Share relevant information with key stakeholder regularly and appropriately.
Organisational / managerial skills	Attention to details, analytical approach, focus oriented, priority driven, taking responsibilities, following higher level guidance/policy, balanced, multi tasking, innovative
Technical skills	Core understanding of physical, mechanical and electronic matters.
Computer skills	Programming (Delphi), using vulnerability assessment tools, using office applications (word, excel, visio, outlook, powerpoint)
Other skills	Reliable, tolerant, logical skills, physical understanding, endurance
Driving licence	Car, Motorbike, Truck