Data warehouse Introduction

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Decision support systems

- Huge operational databases are available in most companies
  - these databases may provide a large wealth of useful information
- Decision support systems provide means for
  - in depth analysis of a company's business
  - *faster* and *better* decisions

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Strategic decision support

- Demand evolution analysis and forecast
- Critical business areas identification
- Budgeting and management transparency
  - reporting, practices against frauds and money laundering
- Identification and implementation of winning strategies
  - cost reduction and profit increase

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Business Intelligence

- BI provides support to strategic decision support in companies
- Objective: transforming company data into actionable information
  - at different detail levels
  - for analysis applications
- Users may have heterogeneous needs
- BI requires an appropriate hardware and software infrastructure

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Applications

- Manifacturing companies: order management, client support
- Distribution: user profile, stock management
- Financial services: buyer behavior (credit cards)
- Insurance: claim analysis, fraud detection
- Telecommunication: call analysis, churning, fraud detection
- Public service: usage analysis
- Health: service analysis and evaluation

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Data warehouse

- Database devoted to decision support, which is kept *separate* from company operational databases
- Data which is
  - devoted to a specific subject
  - Integrated and consistent
  - time dependent, non volatile

  used for decision support in a company

W. H. Inmon, Building the data warehouse, 1992

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Why separate data?

- Performance
  - complex queries reduce performance of operational transaction management
  - different access methods at the physical level
- Data management
  - missing information (e.g., history)
  - data consolidation
  - data quality (inconsistency problems)

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Data structure and data analysis

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Multidimensional representation

- Data are represented as an (hyper)cube with three or more dimensions
- Measures on which analysis is performed: cells at dimension intersection
- Data warehouse for tracking sales in a supermarket chain:
  - dimensions: product, shop, time
  - measures: sold quantity, sold amount, ...

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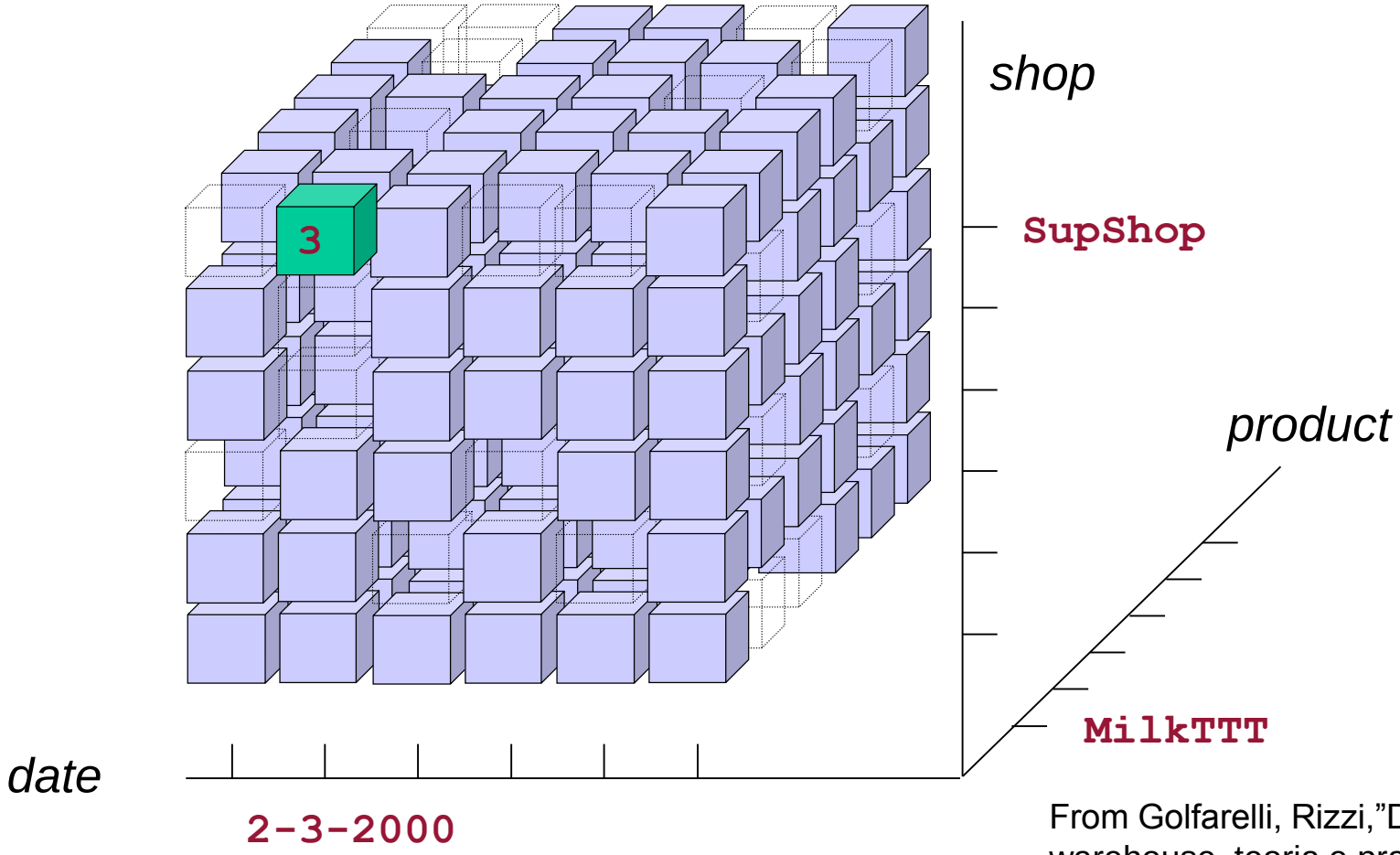
Multidimensional representation



From Golfarelli, Rizzi,"Data warehouse, teoria e pratica della progettazione", McGraw Hill 2006

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Relational representation: star model

- Numerical measures stored in the *fact table*
  - attribute domain is numeric
- *Dimensions* describe the context of each measure in the fact table
  - characterized by many descriptive attributes

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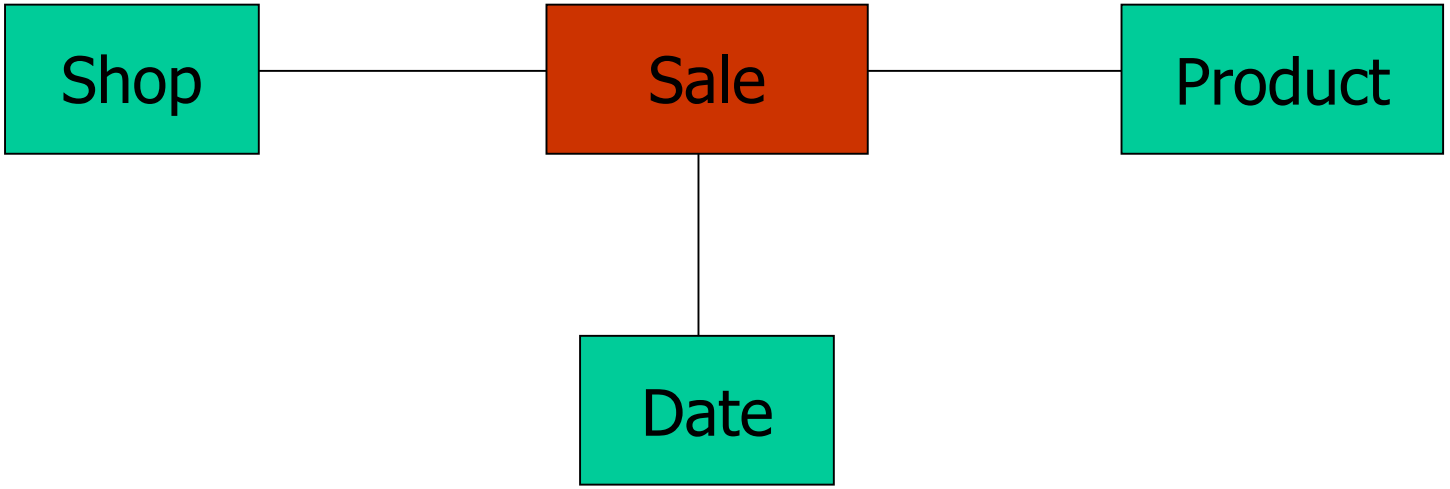
Example

Data warehouse for tracking sales in a supermarket chain



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Data warehouse size

- Time dimension: 2 years x 365 days
- Shop dimension: 300 shops
- Product dimension: 30.000 products, of which 3.000 sold every day in every shop
- Number of rows in the fact table:

730 x 300 x 3000 = 657 millions

⇨ Size of the fact table ≈ 21GB

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Data analysis tools

- OLAP analysis: complex aggregate function computation
  - support to different types of aggregate functions (e.g., moving average, top ten)
- Data analysis by means of data mining techniques
  - various analysis types
  - significant algorithmic contribution

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Data analysis tools

- Presentation
  - separate activity: data returned by a query may be rendered by means of different presentation tools
- Motivation search
  - Data exploration by means of progressive, “incremental” refinements (e.g., drill down)

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Data warehouse architectures

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Data warehouse architectures

- Separation between transactional computing and data analysis
  - avoid one level architectures
- Architectures characterized by two or more levels
  - separate to a different extent data incoming into the data warehouse from analyzed data
  - more scalable

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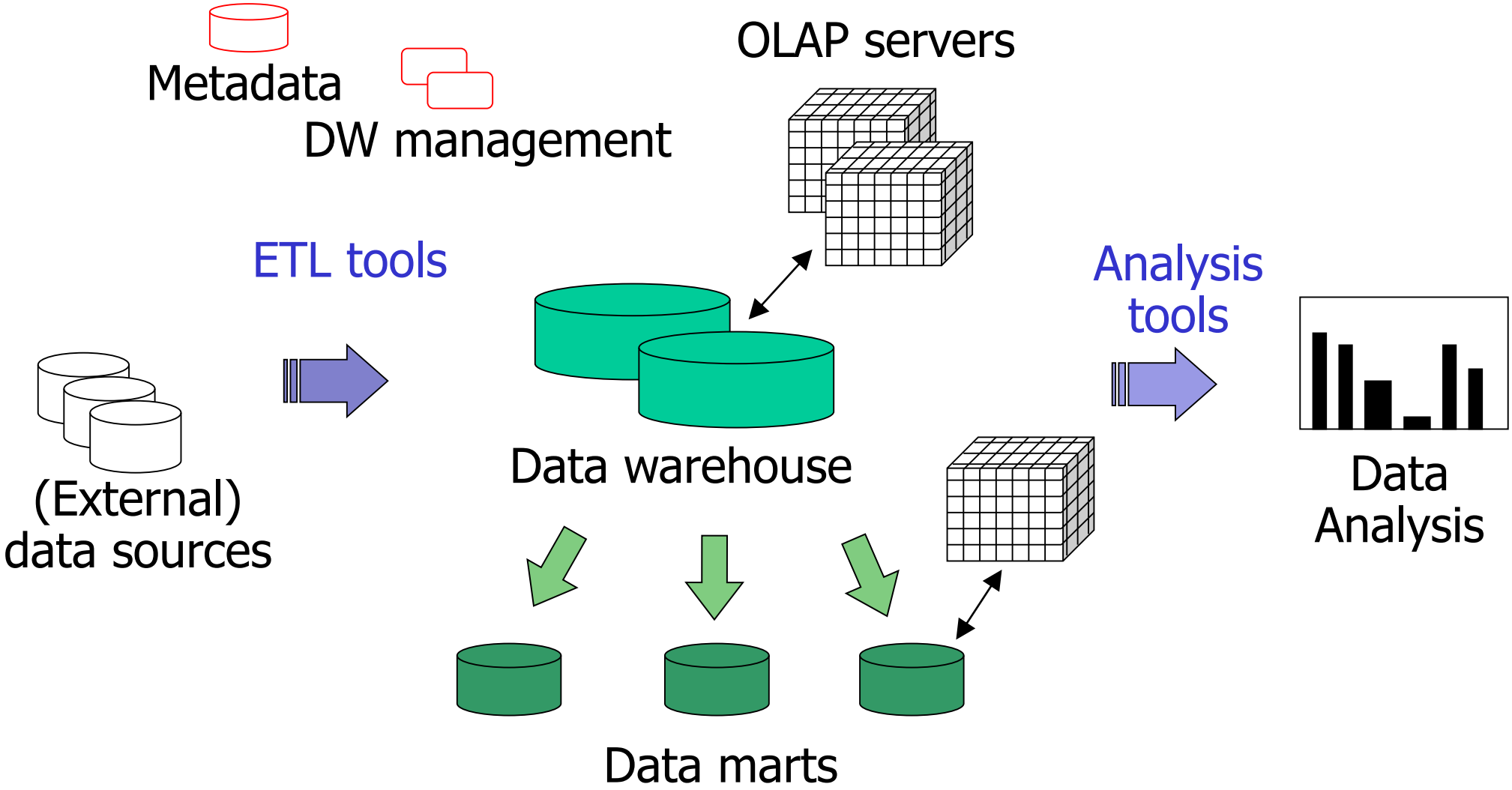
Data warehouse: architecture



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Data warehouse and data mart

Company data warehouse: it contains *all* the information on the company business

- extensive functional modelling process
- design and implementation require a long time

Data mart: departimental information subset focused on a given subject

- two architectures
  - dependent, fed by the company data warehouse
  - independent, fed directly by the sources
- faster implementation
- requires careful design, to avoid subsequent data mart integration problems

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Servers for Data Warehouses

- ROLAP (Relational OLAP) server
  - extended relational DBMS
    - compact representation for sparse data
  - SQL extensions for aggregate computation
  - specialized access methods which implement efficient OLAP data access
- MOLAP (Multidimensional OLAP) server
  - data represented in proprietary (multidimensional) matrix format
    - sparse data require compression
  - special OLAP primitives
- HOLAP (Hybrid OLAP) server

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Extraction, Transformation and Loading (ETL)

- Prepares data to be loaded into the data warehouse
  - data extraction from (OLTP and external) sources
  - data cleaning
  - data transformation
  - data loading
- Performed
  - when the DW is first loaded
  - during periodical DW refresh

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ETL process

- *Data extraction*: data acquisition from sources
- *Data cleaning*: techniques for improving data quality (correctness and consistency)
- *Data transformation*: data conversion from operational format to data warehouse format
- *Data loading:* update propagation to the data warehouse

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Metadata

metadata = data about data

- Different types of metadata:
  - for data transformation and loading: describe data sources and needed transformation operations
    - Useful using a common notation to represent data sources and data after transformation
    - CWMI (Common Warehouse Metadata Initiative): standard proposed by OMG to exchange data between DW tools and repository of metadata in heterogenous and distributed environments
  - for data management: describe the structure of the data in the data warehouse
    - also for materialized view
  - for query management: data on query structure and to monitor query execution
      - SQL code for the query
      - execution plan
      - memory and CPU usage

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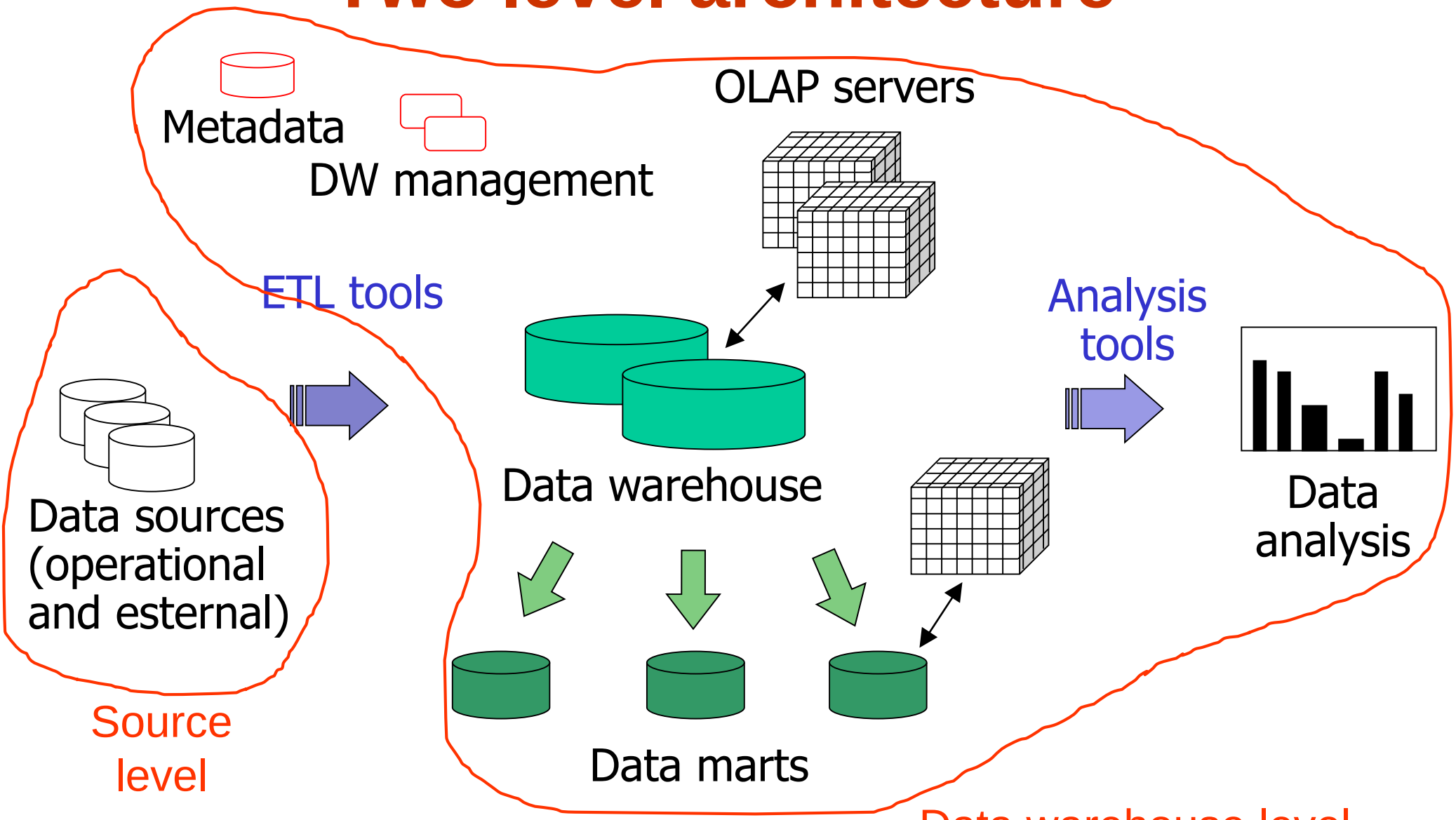
Two level architecture



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Two level architecture features

- Decoupling between source and DW data
  - management of external (not OLTP) data sources (e.g., text files)
  - data modelling suited for OLAP analysis
  - physical design tailored for OLAP load
- Easy management of different temporal granularity of operational and analytical data
- Partitioning between transactional and analytical load
- “On the fly” data transformation and cleaning (ETL)

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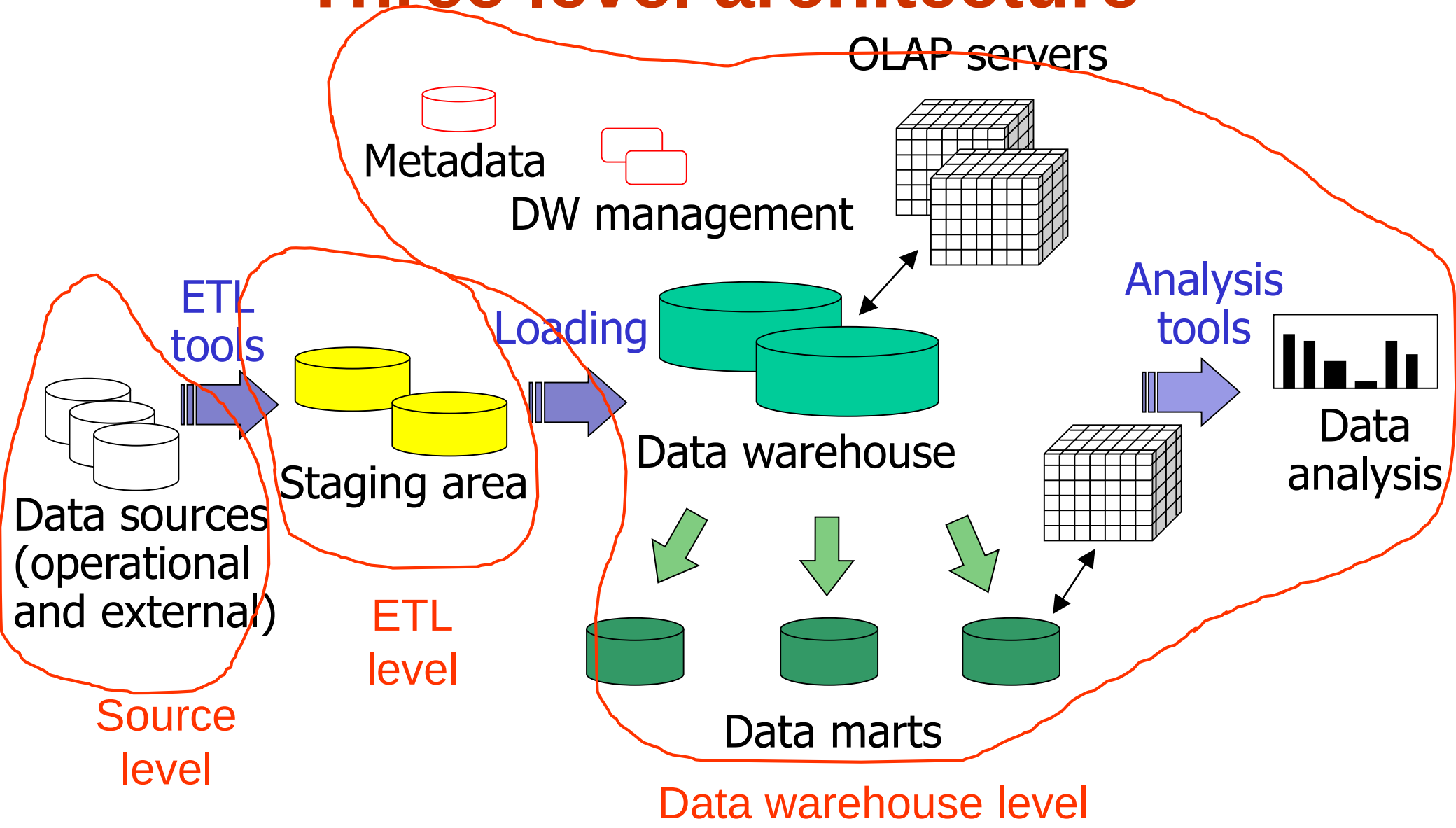
Three level architecture



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Three level architecture features

- *Staging area:* buffer area allowing the separation between ET management and data warehouse loading
  - complex transformation and cleaning operations are eased
  - provides an integrated model of business data, still close to OLTP representation
  - sometime denoted as Operational Data Store (ODS)
- Introduces further redundancy
  - more disk space is required for data storage

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