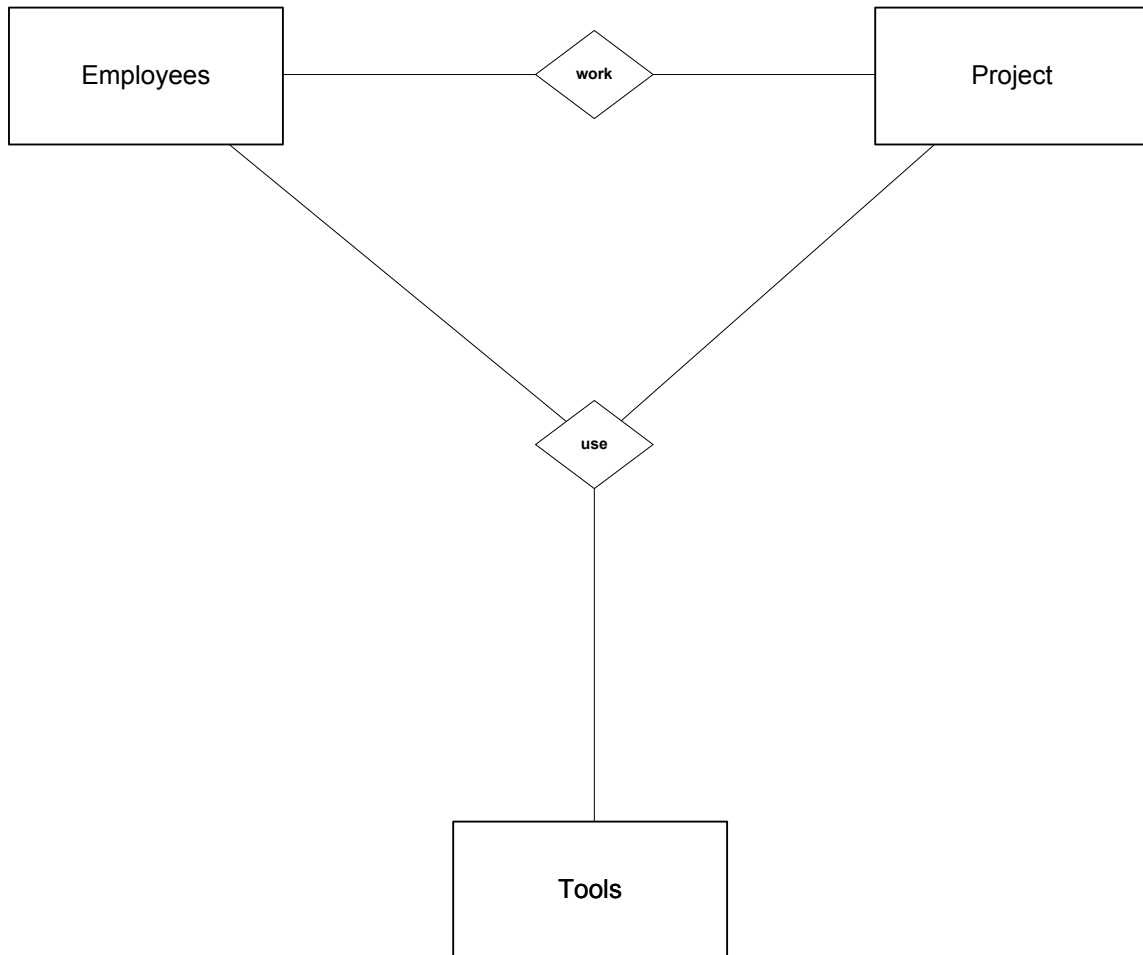


Aggregation

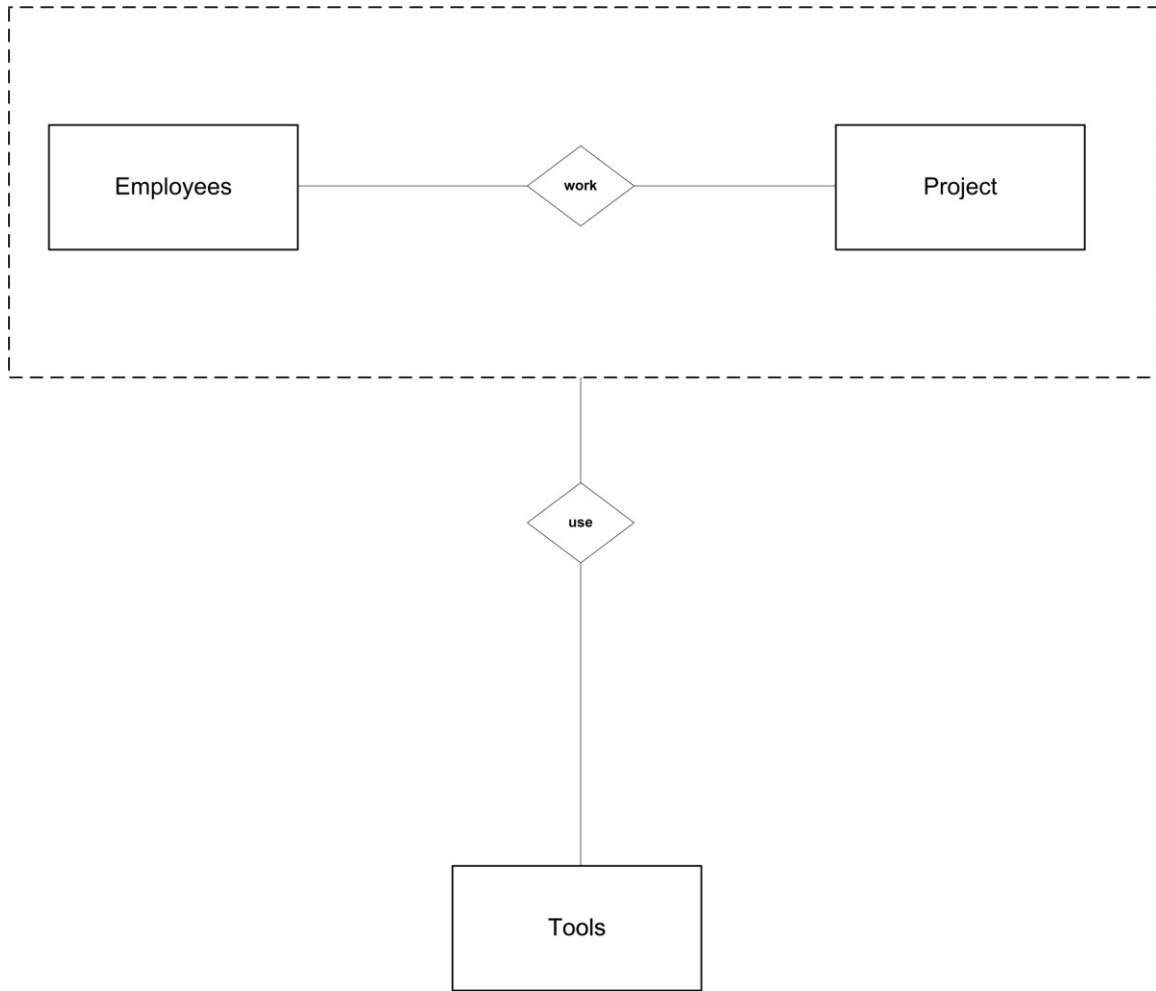
The concept of aggregation is one in which a relationship set participates in another relationship set.

Let's look at the following:



This chart describes a database where the employees work on a particular project and use a set of tools to do that work. The problem with this layout is that now has redundant relationships – work and use. We could combine them into a single relationship – but that obscures the intent of them being two relationships – something that could cause issues as you go forward. Instead, we use aggregation.

See below:



Why not use a tertiary relationship here instead? Simply have tools be a third entity off work?

The answer is these are separate relationships and may have separate attributes associated with them. You may want to store the date in which you started using a specific tool as well as the date an employee began to work on a project. The date you started using a specific tool pertains to the relationship use, the date the employee began on a project pertains to the relationship work.