

GLOSSARY OF COMMON TERMS

This glossary is provided to facilitate the understanding general words and terms that may be used but not defined in Invitations to Bid (ITB) and Request for Proposal (RFP). The definitions of words, terms, or acronyms in the ITB or RFP have precedence.

An additional reference is the dictionary of IT terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in the ISD's IT policies, standards and guidelines:

http://cybersecurity.alabama.gov/documents/IT_Dictionary.pdf

Term	Definition
Accessibility	Web resources can be designed and created following guidelines that are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Web architects can ensure accessibility by using special HTML coding techniques and offering alternative versions of pages and sites. Consideration should be given to users who are accessing Web-based resources using visual, auditory, or mobility assistive technologies.
Advantage Financial System (AFNS)	AFNS is the financial management system, used by many agencies, which incorporates critical capabilities such as budgeting, general ledger, encumbrance, accounts payable & accounts receivable. It also consists of other related accounting functions such as grants accounting, project accounting, cost allocation, cost accounting and financial planning. Additional functionality is provided by a group of subsystems, which integrate with the base financial system but provide critical services, not necessarily accounting related. The data is owned by the respective agency/agencies using the system.
Allotment/Allocation	A portion of an appropriation that is reviewed, approved, and established in the Central Accounting System and AFNS. Once established, this portion of the appropriation is available to be spent (if cash is available in addition to budget) and users can officially record financial transactions against this available balance. The State uses quarterly allotments.
Analytic Reporting	The capability to perform investigative data studies such as trending, projections, or scenario simulations. (See also Online Analytic Reporting - OLAP)
Application Programming Interface (API)	The conventions used by software program to share/invoke the services of another software program.
Best and Final Offer (BAFO)	Term used in proposals to indicate that no further negotiation on the amount or terms are possible. BAFO is issued often in response to the request a principal (customer) sends to those contractors or suppliers whose proposals are within a close range of one another.

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Business Intelligence (BI)	Technologies, applications and practices for the collection, integration, analysis, and presentation of business information and also sometimes to the information itself. The purpose of business intelligence is to support better business decision making.
Business Process Mapping	Mapping a business process that uses the new system, with potentially some redesign, to take advantage of features and functionality of the new system, such as workflow, electronic signatures, etc.
Central Accounting System (CAS)	CAS is the statewide financial management system used for statewide budgetary control and financial reporting. The system is used to control the State's appropriations and budget, track statewide revenues and expenditures, and issue and track all warrants produced for payments. Information derived from CAS is used to support the State's bond rating, produce the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR), update the State's econometric model and provides monthly financial reports to the Governor's Office, State Legislature and the various state agencies. The Professional Services Contract subsystem assists the Comptroller's Office in controlling and monitoring the professional contracts set up for individuals which render services to the state. The Indigent Defense subsystem supports the payment of legal fees incurred on behalf of the indigent defendants throughout the State.
Chart of Accounts (COA)	A standardized set of valid codes used to verify, classify, categorize, organize, and store financial transactions and data. COA is not standardized across all State of Alabama agencies. Agency COAs used in AFNS and non-AFNS systems must be cross-walked to roll up data to fit into the statewide COA used in CAS.
Change Control	Management (control) of changes to a product / system (e.g., patches, upgrades, new implementation) or to project scope using a pre-defined framework/model
Change Management	Methods and processes that assist individuals and organizations in adjusting constructively to changes in: systems; procedures; processes; workflow; organizational relationships and responsibilities; and other changes as they occur.
Commercial Off-The-Shelf (COTS)	Software that can be purchased from an external supplier, as opposed to software developed within the enterprise.
Configuration	The process of using delivered product options to alter software functionality without modification of the basic architecture and/or source code of the software. Configurations do not require rework during an upgrade.
Data Conversion	The process of extracting data from one or more legacy systems, translating the data to a new format using mapping rules, and loading the data into a new system..
Data Dictionary	A centralized repository of information about data such as meaning, relationships to other data, origin, usage, and format.

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Data Hierarchy	The organization of data consisting of sets and subsets such that every subset of a set is of lower rank than the set.
Data Management	A method of using technology to collect, process, and condense information with the goal of efficient data use and administration.
Data Mart	A system that uses a small number of data sources and a data model to support analysis regarding a specific business function.
Data Model	A data model is an abstract model that describes how data is represented and accessed.
Data Warehouse	A system designed to extract data from disparate sources, and store it in a structure that facilitates enterprise wide data analysis and reporting.
Demilitarized Zone (DMZ)	In computer networking, a physical or logical sub-network that contains and exposes an organization's external services to a larger, untrusted network, usually the Internet. The purpose of a DMZ is to add an additional layer of security to an organization's Local Area Network (LAN); an external attacker only has access to equipment in the DMZ, rather than the whole of the network.
Directory Service / Active Directory	A software application and database that stores information about a computer system's users and resources. The State's Information Services Division (ISD) utilizes a Microsoft version called Active Directory.
Drill Down	The ability to interactively navigate from summary level information to detail level information.
Drill Up	The ability to interactively navigate from detail level information to summary level information.
Electronic Data Interchange (EDI)	The electronic exchange of business transactions according to national or international standards to facilitate e-commerce.
Electronic Signature	An electronic symbol, process, or sound, attached to or logically associated with a record and executed or adopted by a person with the intent to sign the record. (The E-Sign Act provides a legal basis for electronic signatures, and the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act provides a legal framework for electronic transactions.)
Enterprise Application Integration (EAI)	A category of software products that provide messaging, data transformation, process flow and other capabilities to enable the interaction between enterprise applications.
Extensible Business Reporting Language (XBRL)	A technology which provides for "tagging" of data within a system, regardless of original coding languages, for the purpose of creating inter-system reporting.
Extensible Markup Language (XML)	A W3C recommended general purpose markup language for creating special-purpose markup languages, capable of describing many different kinds of data. In other words, XML is a way of describing data. An XML file can contain the data too, as in a database.

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Extract, Transform and Load (ETL)	The process of extracting data from source systems, transforming it to a common format, and loading it into a target database, such as a data warehouse.
Front End BI Software	The use of business intelligence software to access information in a data warehouse.
Full Time Equivalent (FTE)	A way to measure a worker's involvement in a project. An FTE of 1.0 means that the person is equivalent to a full-time worker; while an FTE of 0.5 signals that the worker is only half-time.
Gigabits Per Second (Gbps)	A measure of data transfer speed. A gigabit equals 1 billion bits.
Governance	The structure, processes, and procedures to control operations and changes. Program/project governance implies a system in which all stakeholders, internal customers and related areas have the necessary input into the decision making process.
Graphical User Interface (GUI)	A graphics-based interface that uses icons, menus, and mouse clicks to manage user interaction with a system.
Imaging	The conversion of paper documents into digital images through the use of a scanner or similar device, and the storage and management of electronic documents created through this process.
Information Services Division (ISD)	The Information Services Division is the technology group which functions under the Alabama Department of Finance. It provides implementation and support services for central messaging and access.
Infrastructure	The computer, network, and storage devices that together with computer software provide the framework for a computing environment.
Integrated Support Model	An approach for aligning process, hardware, network and application support requirements.
Integration	The coordinated interaction of two or more software applications to complete a business process.
Interface	A specification and its implementation that allows the communication and exchange of data between two computer applications.
ISD	See Information Services Division (ISD)
Knowledge Transfer	Knowledge Transfer is the process of getting a packet of knowledge from one party to another. It involves identifying the knowledge holders in an organization and designing and executing mechanisms to transfer knowledge to others. It is not a synonym of "training".
Lightweight Directory Access Protocol (LDAP)	A protocol for accessing directory services (e.g. Active Directory) over an IP network
Local Area Network (LAN)	A computer network covering a small geographic area, like a home, office, or group of buildings.

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Master Data Management (MDM)	Master data are the basic data elements and attributes that uniquely describe an organization's core business entities. Master data management is a process that uses technology and collaborative governance to establish a trusted, authoritative source of standardized master data that may be shared by different systems.
Metadata	Information about data, including attributes such as description, length and location.
Middleware	Computer software that connects software components or applications, allowing them to exchange data. The middleware software layer lies between the operating system and the applications on each side of a distributed computing system in a network.
On Line Analytical Processing (OLAP)	The capability to perform investigative data studies such as trending, projections, or scenario simulations, using online/real-time software tools.
Payment Voucher	A form used to document payment information, including the approval of such payment.
Performance Based Metrics	Metrics used by businesses or individuals to measure the success of a program or activity.
Portable Document Format (PDF)	An open file format created and controlled by Adobe Systems, for representing two-dimensional documents in a device independent and resolution independent fixed-layout document format.
Portal	A web site that provides information and services from a number of different sources, thereby providing a window to a set of underlying applications. Portals typically allow users to customize the look and feel of the interface environment and subscribe to various application services. In addition, portals support integration efforts by providing a means to connect to functions and data from other systems.
Program	(1) A group of inter-related projects. (2) The group of activities or operations named in the budget certificate to which the appropriation applies (enacted by Legislature or as indicated in the State Budget). Program provides a means to account and track the use of State resources to promote governmental objectives for an identified social need or problem.
Project	A discrete set of current activities or events that occur within a set time period.
Purchase Card (P-Card)	A credit card issued to an authorized State employee to facilitate their purchase of services and commodities.
PVU	Process Value Unit is a unit of measure used to differentiate licensing of middleware or distributed processor technologies.

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Term	Definition
Quality Assurance (QA)	Focus on ensuring that the processes and systems are developed and adhered in such a way that the deliverables are of good quality. If problems occur, individuals involved with QA will help determine root cause of problem and help implement process changes so there are no quality issues in the future.
Quality Control (QC)	A component of Quality Assurance, Quality Control refers to quality related activities associated with the creation of project deliverables. Quality control is used to verify that deliverables are of acceptable quality and that they are complete and correct. Examples of quality control activities include peer reviews and the testing process.
Reconcile	To review two or more sets of information to ensure that they are in agreement, and to identify and correct any errors that exist between the information sets.
Re-engineer	To completely redesign something, usually a business process, to make it more efficient and reliable, and better able to meet current and/or new objectives.
Scalability	A desirable property of a system, a network, or a process, which indicates its ability to either handle growing amounts of work in a graceful manner, or to be readily enlarged.
Self Service	Self-service software allows users to secure answers to their inquiries and/or needs in an automated fashion. For example, Vendor Self Service (VSS) is a web based application that provides vendors with access to their Vendor record.
Service Oriented Architecture (SOA)	A design for linking business and computational resources (usually organizations, applications and data) on demand to achieve the desired results for service consumers (which can be end users or other services).
SNAP	See Statewide Network of Automated Procurement (SNAP)
Stakeholder	An individual that holds an interest or concern in the outcome or result of a project, process, application, or system.
Storage Area Network (SAN)	A network designed to attach storage devices to servers. A SAN consists of a communication infrastructure, which provides physical connections, and a management layer, which organizes the connections, storage elements, and computer systems so that data transfer is secure and robust.
Structured Query Language (SQL)	SQL is a standard interactive and programming language for querying and modifying data and managing databases.
Subject Matter Expert (SME)	An individual who understands a business process or area well enough to describe it to an IT professional and then answer their questions as they try to build a technology system to automate the process.

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Term	Definition
Technical Architecture	The design of the technical components required to create a unified system, including hardware and software.
Third Party Software	Refers to software applications that provide superior functionality for a specific business process, as opposed to software applications that offer general functionality for a number of processes.
Three-tier Architecture	A computer configuration that separates application processing into 3 components: presentation layer, business logic layer, and data management layer.
Train-the-Trainer	An approach to training where a limited number of employees, selected from various organizational areas, receive formal training on new software and/or processes. Once trained, these employees are then charged with training other employees, usually from their own area.
Transaction	The computer record of a business event.
Unencumber	Liquidating or removing a hold or reserve on appropriated funds.
User Interface	The means by which people (the users) interact with a particular machine, device, computer program, or other complex tool (the system).
Virtual Private Network (VPN)	A communications network tunneled through another network, and dedicated for a specific network. One common application is secure communications through the public Internet.
Wide Area Network (WAN)	A computer network covering a large geographic area.
Workflow	The automation of work among users where the system is intelligent enough to act based on the definition of work types, users and tasks, and the recognition of dynamic processing conditions. In a computer system, workflow features typically route information and documents automatically to users for action, review, and approval based on defined rules.