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Glossary of Key Information Security Terms

Richard Kissel, Editor

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This publication is intended to be informative, guiding users to term definitions that exist in various NIST standards and guidelines (along with terms in external publications like CNSSI-4009). This document is out-of-date, and does not reflect additions, deletions, or modifications of term definitions that have occurred since May 2013.

Although this publication is being reviewed and updated, NIST encourages users to review the more up-to-date online glossary, available at https://csrc.nist.gov/glossary.

NIST
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Glossary of Key Information Security Terms

Richard Kissel, Editor
Computer Security Division
Information Technology Laboratory

May 2013

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Reports on Computer Systems Technology

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Abstract

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) has received numerous requests to provide a summary glossary for our publications and other relevant sources, and to make the glossary available to practitioners. As a result of these requests, this glossary of common security terms has been extracted from NIST Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS), the Special Publication (SP) 800 series, NIST Interagency Reports (NISTIRs), and from the Committee for National Security Systems Instruction 4009 (CNSSI-4009). This glossary includes most of the terms in the NIST publications. It also contains nearly all of the terms and definitions from CNSSI-4009. This glossary provides a central resource of terms and definitions most commonly used in NIST information security publications and in CNSS information assurance publications. For a given term, we do not include all definitions in NIST documents – especially not from the older NIST publications. Since draft documents are not stable, we do not refer to terms/definitions in them.

Each entry in the glossary points to one or more source NIST publications, and/or CNSSI-4009, and/or supplemental sources where appropriate. The NIST publications referenced are the most recent versions of those publications (as of the date of this document).

Introduction

We have received numerous requests to provide a summary glossary for our publications and other relevant sources, and to make the glossary available to practitioners. As a result of these requests, this glossary of common security terms has been extracted from NIST Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS), the Special Publication (SP) 800 series, NIST Interagency Reports (NISTIRs), and from the Committee for National Security Systems Instruction 4009 (CNSSI-4009). The glossary includes most of the terms in the NIST publications. It also contains nearly all of the terms and definitions from CNSSI-4009. The glossary provides a central resource of terms and definitions most commonly used in NIST information security publications and in CNSS information assurance publications. For a given term, we do not include all definitions in NIST documents – especially not from the older NIST publications. Since draft documents are not stable, we do not refer to terms/definitions in them.

Each entry in the glossary points to one or more source NIST publications, and/or CNSSI-4009, and/or supplemental sources where appropriate. A list of the supplemental (non-NIST) sources may be found on pages 221-222. As we are continuously refreshing our publication suite, terms included in the glossary come from our more recent publications. The NIST publications referenced are the most recent versions of those publications (as of the date of this document).

It is our intention to keep the glossary current by providing updates online. New definitions will be added to the glossary as required, and updated versions will be posted on the Computer Security Resource Center (CSRC) Web site at http://csrc.nist.gov/.

The Editor, Richard Kissel, would like to express special thanks to Ms. Tanya Brewer for her outstanding work in the design of the original cover page and in the overall design and organization of the document. Thanks also to all who provided comments during the public review period of this document. The Editor also expresses special thanks to the CNSS Glossary Working Group for encouraging the inclusion of CNSSI-4009 terms and definitions into this glossary.

Comments and suggestions on this publication should be sent to secglossary@nist.gov.

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