Harvard IT Glossary of Terms

The Harvard IT Glossary of Terms provides a list of words, phrases, and abbreviations commonly used in Harvard IT communications. This glossary is intended to clarify technical terms for a general audience and introduce Harvard-specific terms to new Harvard IT employees. All members of the Harvard IT community are encouraged to improve this guide.

Other Resources

For non-IT specific Harvard terms not listed here, consult Harvard.edu's FAQ as well as harvard.edu/guidelines, particularly the Harvard Gazette style guide.

A note on usage

IT terminology can be intimidating to a general audience. When using the terms below in writing and conversation for a general audience, consider spelling out terms on a first occurrence, then using the abbreviation going forward. Always use your best judgment as some acronyms (e.g. JPEG and HTTP) are more familiar to a general audience than the spelled-out name.

A

ABCD IT Community at Harvard.

Academic Technology Managers Group A Harvard group of senior educational technology managers from the Harvard Schools.

AcTS Academic Technology Services. A unit within HUIT that supports Harvard academic technology and support systems. Note lowercase c. Don’t confuse with ATS.

AD active directory. Note: AD is a common acronym with many meanings in and out of the technology field. “Active directory” is a common meaning within HUIT, especially in referring to identity and access management. See IAM.

ATC Assistive Technology Center. A resource in Harvard's Science Center for students with disabilities and the Harvard community.

ATG Academic Technology Group. A collaborative group of HUIT staff and FAS faculty.

ATS Administrative Technology Services. A unit within HUIT that supports Harvard administrative systems.

AWS Amazon Web Services. Harvard uses Amazon for external cloud computing services. This is also historically an acronym for Harvard Administrative Web Services, now Harvard Web Publishing. See HWP.

B

C

CADM At Harvard, often means “Central Administration.” Elsewhere, core architecture data model.

CAIT Central Administration IT. A group of IT managers in Central Administration (See CADM) who meet regularly with HUIT staff.

CIO Council A collaborative group of Harvard School CIOs.

CISO chief information security officer.

COBIT Control Objectives for Information and Related Technology. A framework for IT management that HUIT IT Security looks to in the development of its risk-based information security program.

College IT Priority Committee Chaired by the Harvard Dean of Undergraduate Education, this group meets every six weeks to monitor and to set priorities for the Harvard College technology needs for administration, teaching and learning.

COSO Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission. A committee of private sector organizations that developed control frameworks on enterprise risk management. HUIT IT Security aligns its IT security program on these frameworks.
CS50 Computer Science 50. A Harvard computer science class that served as a pilot course on edX. Can be called CS50 in first reference.

D

DAS distributed antenna system is a common meaning at Harvard. Also can be direct-attached storage.

Dell Roadmap Group This Harvard group meets to discuss and set standard configurations for Dell PCs (for administrative, academic, and personal computing) and Windows OS versions. The group also addresses vendor performance and customer service concerns.

Desktop Standards Committee A group of Harvard Central Administration managers that meets monthly to review changes in desktop standards, both hardware and software, for customers of DLS in CAIT.

DLS Desktop/Laptop Services. Also Desktop/Laptop Management Services. A division of HUIT.

DRS Digital Repository Service. The central repository of over 45M library and museum digital objects run by LTS

E

EDUCAUSE A nonprofit association and the foremost community of IT leaders and professionals committed to advancing higher education. Note the spelling: use all uppercase letters.

edx A nonprofit created by founding partners Harvard and MIT. EdX offers online university-level courses in a wide range of disciplines to a worldwide audience at no charge. Note the spelling: the e and d are normally lowercase; however, when starting a sentence uppercase the e (Ed X is a nonprofit organization).

ETOB Every Tub on its own bottom. A common phrase to describe Harvard's decentralization. "Tub" is the most general of the seven segments of a Harvard account number.

F

FAS Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences

FAS IT See HUIT.

FAS ASAG FAS Administrative Systems Advisory Group. This group meets monthly to address issues and changes to enterprise administrative applications.

FAS IT Security Liaisons This group of 40 FAS departments discusses updates and best practices in IT security awareness and compliance.

FAS IT Stakeholders’ Group This broad-based forum of IT professionals and those they support meets every other month during the academic year.

FASMail Faculty of Arts and Sciences Mail. Microsoft Exchange email and calendar service available to Harvard FAS.

FSCIT FAS Standing Committee on IT. A committee of FAS faculty that consults with HUIT and the UCIO, among others, on IT at Harvard.

G

GCAST GSAS Graduate Applicant Selection Tool

H

HACC Harvard Academic Computing Committee. An FAS technology committee.

Harvard University IT Visiting Committee Made up of members from industry, as well as leaders in higher education, the IT Visiting Committee comes to Harvard each fall to discuss IT initiatives and strategies at Harvard.

HCM human capital management. At Harvard, this refers to the Oracle product PeopleSoft HCM.

Help Desk See Service Desk.
HEISP Harvard Enterprise Information Security Policy.

HGSE IT Harvard Graduate School of Education Information Technology. Previously the Learning Technology Center (LTC) HILT Harvard Initiative for Learning and Teaching.

HUIT Harvard University Information Technology. HUI brings together two IT groups within Harvard: FAS IT, which supported the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, and the Central Administration IT unit, University Information Systems (UIS)

HWP Harvard Web Publishing.

IaaS See cloud computing.

IAM Identity and access management. Often used alongside the similar term Identity Management (See IdM). At Harvard, IAM is sometimes used interchangeably with University-wide IAM, or UIAM.

ICAPS Infrastructure Customer and Project Services. A unit within HUIT that works with departments to interface with HUIT Infrastructure service areas, in particular Networking and Server support. Also responsible for the billing of most HUIT services.


ICE Cluster (Instructional Computing Environment) One of two FAS UNIX (Linux) general-purpose clusters used by FAS and DCE for Computer Science classes and any FAS account holder for general UNIX work via SSH. The ICE and NICE clusters are the only HUIT services which provide email via UNIX applications (i.e. "pine", "mutt"). Accessed via SSH only, by connecting to fas.harvard.edu. See also NICE Cluster.

iCommons iCommons is a Part of Academic Technology Services within Harvard University IT. iCommons supports a collaborative approach to academic computing by working closely and extensively with the Harvard Schools to provide a set of online resources for teaching and learning at Harvard — resources that can be grown and managed locally with customization and content unique to each client school. The iCommons suite of software solutions includes web-based course management, portal- and intranet-building software, survey tools, and a wiki platform. Note the spelling: the i is always lowercase and the C is always uppercase.

iCommons Steering Committee (Instructional Computing) Includes CIOs and senior academic IT specialists from the schools who participate in the iCommons collaborative to review plans, shape future priorities and directions, share best practices, and monitor service levels and shape priorities.

IdM Identity Management. At HUIT, IdM is often spoken of in the broader context of Identity and Access Management (See IAM).

IMS Instructional Media Services. Instructional Media Services (IMS) is part of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and includes two divisions, Media & Technology Services (MTS) and The Media Production Center (MPC).

IQSS Institute for Quantitative Social Science.

ISDN Integrated Services Digital Network.

ITCRB Information Technology Capital Review Board. A Harvard group charged with reviewing and approving Harvard IT expenditures. See also PRC.

ITIL Information Technology Infrastructure Library.

ITSM Information Technology Service Management.

J

K

L

LME Learning Management Ecosystem. A historic name for what is now called Teaching and Learning Technologies. See TLT.

LTC See HGSE IT.

LTS Library Technology Services. A division of HUIT.

LDI Library Digital Initiative.

M

MTS See IMS.

N

NICE Cluster (New Instructional Computing Environment) One of two FAS UNIX (Linux) general-purpose clusters used by FAS and DCE for Computer Science classes and any FAS account holder for general UNIX work via SSH. The NICE cluster differs from the ICE cluster in that NICE is composed of more powerful servers which are better suited to compute-intensive work such as compiling, complex analysis and simulations. The NICE cluster is accessed via SSH only, at nice.fas.harvard.edu. See also ICE Cluster.


O

OLIVIA Harvard Libraries' visual material cataloguing system.

OpenScholar A website builder application designed for academic environments as a tool for building academic web sites, such as a scholar's personal site or an academic project site. OpenScholar tools and features foster online collaboration and provide relevant site sections, such as “Publications”, “Events”, “Blog”, “Classes,” and more.

P

PCI Payment card industry, also Peripheral Component Interconnect.

PCI Executive Committee A Harvard committee that formulates policies and oversees Harvard compliance with payment card industry standards.

PeopleSoft A human resources application maintained by Oracle and used at Harvard.

PMO project management office.

POP Post Office Protocol.

PowerFAIDS An online service from the College Board that provides financial aid services.

PRC Harvard Project Review Committee. A group charged with overseeing the budgeting specific IT projects at Harvard. The PRC sets priorities for administrative systems work, ensures available resources are optimally allocated, and monitors administrative systems projects. See also ITC RB.

PRC/ITCRB A shorthand reference to two budget review groups within Harvard. See PRC and ITCRB

Q

Qualtrics Web-based survey software available for use by Harvard faculty, staff, and students to support teaching and research at Harvard. Surveys can be created and distributed by anyone with a Harvard PIN login.
ROIT Registrar's Office IT. An IT unit located with Harvard's Office of the Registrar.

S

SAGET This group meets quarterly with the FAS Academic Technology Group to ensure feedback on technologies and services that impact the student experience.

Security Best Practices Group Security leads from each Harvard School meet monthly to share best practice and discuss emerging security issues. Collegial sharing, discussion, evaluation, recommendation and adoption of best practices, as related to the Harvard enterprise IT security policies.

Security Liaisons Group This Harvard group reviews and advises on the University's security compliance process and related issues such as changing legal requirements; to make recommendations regarding overall University security compliance; and to provide a conduit for security communication and activity.

SharePoint Built on Microsoft's Office365 SharePoint Online, SharePoint for Harvard provides a range of functionality for projects and teams, including the ability to manage documents in a secure, central location. Note the spelling.

SIS Student Information System. A technology platform that manages student enrollment, course registration, grading, academic statistics, transcripts, etc.

SLT Senior Leadership Team. This group includes senior managers in HUIT.

SNOW ServiceNow. Harvard uses this product to handle IT service requests, as well as project tracking.

SOC At Harvard, refers to the Server Operations Center. Pronounced "sock."

SSSDC Server Systems Storage and Data Centers. A group within HUIT.

T

TLT Teaching and Learning Technologies. A Learning Management System program at Harvard, formerly called the Learning Management Ecosystem (LME).

TORTE A Harvard reporting and request tool for authorized users of Telecom data.

TPS Technology Products and Services. A division of HUIT.

TWG Technology Working Group.

U

UC Unified Communications. The integration of three different types of communications services or technologies: data (email and IM), voice (phone), and video. Also the name of a HUIT unit.

UCIO University Chief Information Officer.

UIAM See IAM.

UIS See HUIT.

V

VPN virtual private network. A popular service provided by HUIT.