

Module 5 – Introduction to Processes and Controls

Handout 3 – IT Terminology

IT Terminology

1. General IT Environment

The general IT environment is the “umbrella” over the following IT processes:

1. Operating Systems
2. Physical and Logical Security
3. Program Changes
4. System Development
5. Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery

If the general IT environment acts as the “umbrella” over a company’s IT infrastructure, the company would want controls in place to mitigate the risk of information being processed incorrectly or unauthorized access occurring.

2. Applications

Applications are software programs that support the processing of transactions and maintenance of company records on electronic media. They consist of programmed procedures, files, and databases.

3. Software

Software consist of the instructions, or program/code, used to run a computer to perform a given task or set of tasks. To use software legally, you must have a license for each user.

Examples:

- Standard software
- Custom-developed software
- Operating Systems
- Applications

Module 5 – Introduction to Processes and Controls

Handout 3 – IT Terminology

4. Hardware

Hardware is the physical equipment and network used in an IT environment.

Examples:

- Personal computer
- Mainframe
- Terminal/console
- Workstation
- Server (see below for further explanation)

5. Operating Systems

The operating system is the software that provides the interface between a user and the hardware, tasks, and applications on a computer.

Examples:

- Microsoft Operating Systems (for example, Windows 2000, Windows NT, Windows XP, etc.)
- OS/400
- Unix
- Linux
- Novell

6. Server

A server is a functional unit that provides services to one or more clients over a network. A server can also be considered as the processor on which the program is operating

Examples:

- File server (storage space)
- Print server (processing and printing)
- Application server (processing applications, such as email, etc.)

Module 5 – Introduction to Processes and Controls

Handout 3 – IT Terminology

7. Network

A Network is a configuration of connected hardware to share resources and applications. There are several types of networks.

Examples:

- Local Area network (LAN)
- Wide Area Network (WAN)
- Remote Access Server (RAS)
- Virtual Private Network (VPN)

8. Interfaces

Interfaces are points of data transfer between two functional units which may include translation of data from one format to another. There are hardware interfaces (for example, between the computer and the printer) as well as software interfaces (for example, between the operating system and an application), and even interfaces between hardware and software.

9. Databases

A database is a repository for storing data in a format that can be accessed by applications for calculations and reporting. The most common type of database management system (DBMS) is a relational database, which stored data in the form of tables.

Examples:

- Oracle
- SQL server
- IBM databases
- Backup Databases

10. User

A user is an account, usually assigned to an individual that is used to access a computer system.

Module 5 – Introduction to Processes and Controls

Handout 3 – IT Terminology

11. Security Policy

A security policy is the written documents describing who should have access to what information on which system; and the configuration file on the system that supports this document.

12. Access rights

Access rights are the specific rights to a particular system object, such as a file directory or individual file. The most common privileges include the ability to read, write, delete or execute a file or directory.

13. Remote Access

Remote access is the ability to get access to a computer or a network from a remote location.

14. Infrastructure

Infrastructure, when considered in the context of information technology and on the Internet, is the physical hardware used to interconnect computers and users.

15. Router/Switch

A router/switch is a physical device that restricts and directs network traffic between various locations.

Module 5 – Introduction to Processes and Controls

Handout 3 – IT Terminology

16. Firewall

A firewall is a physical device or set of related programs, located at a network gateway server that protects the resources of a private network from users from other networks.

17. Job scheduling

Job scheduling is the process of timing and sequencing specific activities on a computer system.

18. Backup

Backup is the act of storing data from one system to another system or to a form of electronic media (e.g., tape, CD); backups are generally performed on a regular basis and can be full, incremental, or differential.

19. Recovery

Recovery is the act of applying stored data to a system in order to allow it to resume normal operations.

20. Business Continuity Plan

A business continuity plan is a business plan that describes how and where the business will prioritize its recovery from an unforeseen event and how it will restore and continue its operations.

21. Disaster Recovery Plan

A Disaster recovery plan is an IT plan that describes how and where the IT department will prioritize the system and network recovery from an unforeseen event and how the department will restore and continue its operations. A disaster recovery plan is part of an overall business continuity plan, and the two must be in sync.