Style Guide

Professional Development Partnership

July, 2017

# Introduction

## Purpose

This guide provides:

* Guideline for PDP authors as they develop content
* The reasoning on which the guidelines are based

## Supplemental resources

If you do not find a guideline that addresses a writing issue in which you are interested, consult these resources:

### Style Guides

1. [IEEE Computer Society Style Guide](https://www.computer.org/cms/Computer.org/Publications/docs/2016CSStyleGuide.pdf)
2. *The Chicago Manual of Sty*le, 16th ed., 2010

#### Example

For treatment of numerals, we follow the guidelines in “Numerals,” [IEEE Computer Society Style Guide](https://www.computer.org/cms/Computer.org/Publications/docs/2016CSStyleGuide.pdf).

### Preferred dictionary

Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 11th ed., 2003.

# Glossary terms

## Criteria

A *Glossary term* is a term that is:

Specific to PDP

Likely to be unfamiliar to a member of the target audience

### Treatment

Capitalize and italicize the term *and*, on first occurrence in each major section, do one or both of the following:

Define the term

Verify the term is defined in the Glossary (if it’s not, add it there) and link to it if possible

For subsequent occurrences in a major section, capitalization alone is sufficient.

If the term does not meet the criteria for Glossary term, then don’t capitalize, italicize, define, or link.

# Links

## To other documents

Italicize the title of and link, if possible, to the other document, such as *Generic Transaction Pattern*s, if possible.

## To Glossary terms

A *Glossary term* is a term that might be unfamiliar for any member of the target audience for the document.

Link to the Glossary (if possible) the first time a Glossary term appears in each major section of the document. If linking is not possible, italicize the term and define it on first occurrence in each major section.

In addition, capitalize the term for entities such as Business and Device.

## To other sections

Link to section title or number; not necessary to link to both, which is why I have deleted the latter of the two in cases where both were given.

# Typographic conventions

A typographic convention is any change in the way certain information is presented that identifies the information as being different from regular information.

## Bold

Use for:

* API elements
* Characters the user must type or enter, unless the character is unknown (that is, a variable)
* Most examples (because they contain characters a user has typed or entered)
* Special characters, when identified in text  
  Note: Identify the name of the character, then bold and enclose in parentheses)

### Examples

* /**participants**
* the ampersand character (**&**)

## Italics

Use for:

* Variables   
  **Note**: Italicize and enclose variables in angle brackets (**<>**)
* Document Titles

### Example

*<ID>*

## Bold Italics

Use in headings or captions for characters that are normally bolded or italicized

### Example

**5.2.4.2 PUT /participants*/<ID>/<error>***

## Initial Caps

Use for:

* Proper nouns that appear in the Glossary (after first occurrence)
* Section titles

### Examples

* Payer
* …see Section 4.2

## CamelCase

Use for (programming) Type names (do not bold)

### Example

Table 69 contains the data model for the complex type AuthenticationInfo.

## Foreign Words

Avoid – the English lexicon is sufficient for technical writing.

### Examples

~~e.g.~~ for example

## Abbreviations and Acronyms

Expand on first use unless positive that the audience knows the meaning.

### Examples

One-Time Password (OTP)

## Passive Voice

Generally makes for less engaging writing than active voice; use only when the subject is unknown or it doesn’t make sense to identify it.

### Examples

This section describes the services that ~~can be requested by~~ a client can request in the API on the resource ***/bulkTransfers***.

The regular expression ~~can be found~~ appears in Listing 10.

## Pronouns in gender-uncertain situations

Use the plural pronouns ‘they’, ‘them’, ‘their’ and so on, despite the fact that, technically, they are referring back to a singular noun. For more information, see <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/usage/he-or-she-versus-they>

### Example

If the customer doesn’t want to proceed, they walk away and no transaction is created.