**SOA**

A service-oriented architecture (SOA) is the underlying structure supporting communications between services. SOA defines how two computing entities, such as programs, interact in such a way as to enable one entity to perform a unit of work on behalf of another entity. Service interactions are defined using a description language. Each interaction is self-contained and loosely coupled, so that each interaction is independent of any other interaction.

<http://searchsoa.techtarget.com/definition/service-oriented-architecture>