The good, the bad and the ugly
SM-ITAM SG AGM and Annual Lecture

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I’m an independent digital strategist who brings people together to solve difficult problems.
“I think there’s been some kind of misunderstanding...
That’s not what I was expecting”
My recent misunderstanding

Me, on a boat
Cox

My oar

Direction of travel

Front
Direction of travel
Things we’re going to cover

• Terms of agreement / glossaries
• Context, audience and perspective
• Using plain language
• Working out loud using the collaboration tools you have
Commonly used words

Can we agree on the definitions?
Common terms

- Framework
- Done
- Done-done
- SME
- AI
- CNI
- MVP
- DDaT
Common job titles

- Asset manager
- Developer
- EA
- Content designer
- Product owner vs product manager
- Service owner vs service manager
“accountable for the quality of their service. They adopt a portfolio view, managing end-to-end services, which include multiple products and channels.”
“responsible for managing the service delivery of information and communications technology (ICT) services, and working with teams from IT service operations.”
Use plain language
Make it as clear as possible
Using plain language benefits everybody

• Proof that people prefer reading plainer language from Crocstar
• NN Group’s article that experts prefer plain language
• MIT’s article that even lawyers prefer plain English

• Plain language is communication your audience can understand, the first time they read or hear it.
Can I visit the foreshore without a permit?

• “While you may visit the foreshore, you may not search the tidal Thames foreshore from Teddington to the Thames Barrier - in any way for any reason. This includes all searching, metal detecting, ‘beachcombing’, scraping and digging.”

https://www.pla.co.uk/Environment/Thames-foreshore-permits
Spell out acronyms and key terms the first time you use them

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distinguished Fellows</th>
<th>The Distinguished Fellows of the Society;</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fellows</td>
<td>The Fellows of the Society;</td>
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Fellows

6. The following shall be Fellows of the Society:—

any persons who, having obtained such academic qualifications as the Trustee Board may from time to time prescribe, have established to the satisfaction of the Trustee Board that they have enjoyed not less than five years’ responsible experience, and have an established reputation in Computing and have been admitted to Fellowship by resolution of the Trustee Board. Fellows may describe themselves as a Fellow of The British Computer Society and may use the initials “FBCS” after their name.

Distinguished Fellows

7. The following shall be Distinguished Fellows of the Society:—

any persons whom the Trustee Board have resolved to appoint as Distinguished Fellows of the Society in recognition of notable service to the advancement of Computing in the manner specified from time to time by the Trustee Board. Distinguished Fellows may describe themselves as a Distinguished Fellow of The British Computer Society and may use the initials “DistFBCS” after their name.
Avoid ambiguous phrases that could be misinterpreted

- That’s a bit of a shame (mild disappointment)
- That’s not quite what I had in mind (furious)
• Be visible
• Have good meetings
• Work out loud

Continue conversations and keep people informed
Add a tab with your glossary source in your Team

### Terms and definitions

The terms we use in the different levels of work may have different meanings or connotations, dependent on your or your user’s perspective. We’ve tried to make these definitions as generic as possible without losing meaning, or have provided contextual examples to help give meaning.

- **Service**
- **Capability**
- **Product**
- **Feature**
- **Activities and tasks**
- **Technology**
- **Data**
- **Common component**
- **Platform**
- **Register**
- **DDaT**
If you use Slack, pin the bookmarks to your channel.
If you’re not sure, ask!

• Take opportunities to ask for clarification
• If you’re replying to an RFP, ask Qs in plenty of time
• Follow up in writing if you need to after a call
In summary:

• Spell out acronyms first time you use them
• Have a shared definitions list – written in terms people can understand them
• Store it somewhere that everyone can access it
• Share it with people who are new to your team
• Get comfortable with your collaboration tools
• Revisit it if there’s a disagreement