



# PCTF Glossary Draft Recommendation V1.0

This Draft Recommendation has been developed by the [Digital ID & Authentication Council of Canada](#) (DIACC) Trust Framework Expert Committee (TFEC). The TFEC operates under the controlling policies of the DIACC. Comments submitted by the public are subject to the [DIACC Contributor Agreement](#).

DIACC expects to modify and improve this Draft Recommendation based upon public comments. The purpose of the open commentary is to ensure transparency in development and diversity of truly Pan-Canadian input. Comments made during the review will be considered for incorporation to the next draft. DIACC will prepare a disposition of comments to provide transparency with regard to how each comment was handled.

Forthcoming PCTF releases will expand, clarify, and refine the content of this document.

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The intended target audience for this Draft Recommendation are decision makers who may or may not be domain technology experts. When reviewing this draft, please consider the following and note that responses to these questions are non-binding and serve to improve the Pan-Canadian Trust Framework.

1. Generally, do the definitions in the PCTF Glossary align with your understanding when reading the PCTF documentation?
  2. Are there other terms used in the PCTF documentation that you would suggest be added to or removed from the PCTF Glossary?
  3. Are the definitions for terms clear and unambiguous?
  4. For the terms listed, please suggest relevant examples or non-examples from your domain.
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# 72 1 Scope and Objectives

73 The PCTF Glossary provides definitions and examples for terms that appear across DIACC  
74 PCTF documentation. The objective of the PCTF Glossary is to ensure all stakeholders have a  
75 shared and consistent understanding of terms used in the context of the PCTF. As terms and  
76 usage can vary across industry, the glossary is recommended reading for anyone wanting a  
77 strong baseline understanding of the PCTF.

78 The content of the PCTF Glossary is:

- 79 1. Terms – The words or phrases that appear frequently and that are used with a specific  
80 intent (i.e., not their everyday English meaning) in the PCTF documentation
- 81 2. Definitions – A statement that provides the accepted and precise meaning of the  
82 associated term in the PCTF context
- 83 3. Examples – Examples or non-examples may be included to help clarify the intended  
84 meaning of a term
- 85 4. Synonyms – Terms with same or similar meaning used in other communities of interest

86 Within the Glossary definitions, terms that are capitalized refer to glossary definitions of that  
87 term, which may differ from their everyday English meaning.

## 88 1.1 Scope

89 This list of terms in the PCTF Glossary has been assembled and defined based on their use in  
90 the [Pan-Canadian Trust Framework Model](#) and PCTF Component documents that are  
91 in "recommendation or discussion draft" status. Earlier TFEC work to define key terms and  
92 definitions were used as a starting point for the Glossary design team discussions and  
93 worksheet. Efforts were made to keep the list of glossary terms to the essentials: terms used  
94 with their everyday, English dictionary meaning (e.g., stakeholders) were not included; terms  
95 with the same or similar meanings were collapsed to a single entry with synonyms.

96 The terms included for the current version of the Glossary are those used across PCTF  
97 components. Terms that are specific to a single PCTF component are defined in the Terms and  
98 Definitions section of that component, and not repeated in this Glossary.

## 99 1.2 Methodology

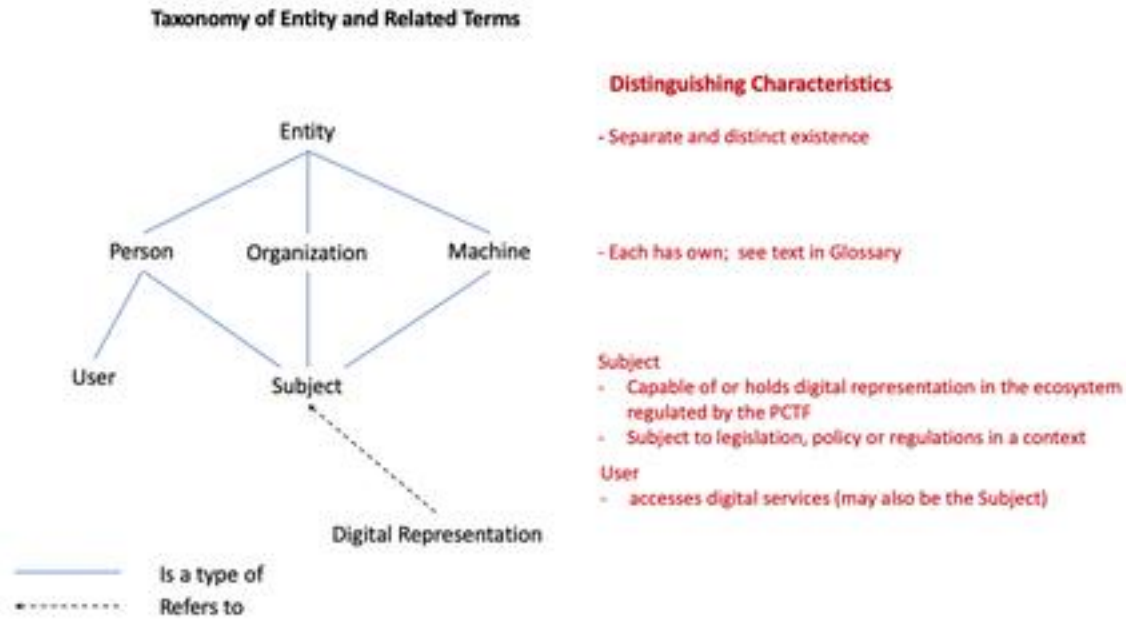
100 The PCTF Glossary is a living document that will evolve as the PCTF model and its components  
101 evolve. The guidelines for creating definitions for the terms in the Glossary are:

- 102 1. The definition of a term should reflect the [information-mapping methodology](#) for defining  
103 concepts. The definition should clearly indicate the larger category to which the concept  
104 belongs, and the critical attributes or characteristics of that concept that distinguish it  
105 from others;
- 106 2. The meaning of the term should reflect the current usage of the term in a  
107 recommendation or discussion draft of the PCTF Model Overview or a PCTF  
108 Component document; and

109 3. Consult existing digital identity standards or frameworks as sources for definitions,  
110 with preference being given to Canadian sources.

111 As a result of guidelines 1 and 2, most existing definitions could not be taken verbatim, but  
112 would need to be modified (e.g., change person to Subject) to be considered a valid definition in  
113 the context of the PCTF.

114 As an example of applying the methodology, consider the diagram in Figure 1 that depicts types  
115 of entities and their distinguishing characteristics.



116

117 Figure 1. Taxonomy of Entity and Related Terms

118  
119

# 120 2 PCTF Glossary of Terms

## 121 2.1 Agreed Upon Terms

### 122 **Authoritative Party**

123 A Participant that provides an assurance of the accuracy of Identity Information or Identity  
124 Evidence to Relying Parties.

- 125 • Examples: a bank; government department of immigration; government driver's license  
126 program; a business registry; a telecommunications company
- 127 • Non-examples: a network provider; a mobile device manufacturer
- 128 • Synonyms: Identity Provider (role); Disclosing Organization (role in Notice and Consent);  
129 assurance party

### 130 **Authoritative Source**

131 A collection or registry of identity records maintained by an Authoritative Party that meets  
132 the PCTF Conformance Criteria for establishing evidence of identity.

- 133 • Examples: vital statistics register; verified person record; business registry; bank account  
134 record
- 135 • Non-examples: Facebook newsfeed
- 136 • Synonyms: Assurance Source

### 137 **Conformance Criteria**

138 Requirements used to assess the trustworthiness and reliability of a specific process defined in  
139 the PCTF.

- 140 • Examples: strength of an encryption key, check expiry data on an identity document;
- 141 • Non-examples: requirements for website branding

### 142 **Consent**

143 Permission, given from a User authorized to do so, to share Identity and/or Personal Information  
144 about a Subject as per the terms defined in a Notice. In the context of the PCTF, consent is  
145 equated to "Meaningful Consent" as described by the [Office of the Privacy Commissioner of](#)  
146 [Canada](#).

- 147 • Examples: clicking OK to consent to use of cookies
- 148 • Non-examples: not agreeing to share information
- 149 • Synonyms: consent decision; meaningful consent

150

## 151 **Contextual Identity**

152 Evidence of Identity that establishes the existence and Digital Representations of Entities within  
153 a specific context and for a specific purpose.

- 154 • Examples: bank account; health record; provincially-issued driver's license; Canadian  
155 passport; business account with a telco; better business bureau record
- 156 • Non-examples: coffee loyalty card; blood donor card; fake passport; valid paper birth  
157 certificate; website of closed business
- 158 • Synonyms: supporting identity

## 159 **Digital Identity**

160 A type of Digital Representation that uniquely identifies a Subject within a context, and is used  
161 exclusively by that same Subject, or by a Person acting on behalf of an Organization, to access  
162 online services with trust and confidence.

- 163 • Examples: passport chip content; BC Services Card chip; verified person record in a  
164 digital wallet;
- 165 • Non-examples: photocopy of a passport; driver's license; paper certificates; paper  
166 certificate of incorporation;
- 167 • Synonyms: trusted digital identity, identity record

## 168 **Digital Identity Ecosystem**

169 An interconnected system for the exchange and verification of digital Identity Information,  
170 involving public and private sector Organizations that comply with a common Trust Framework  
171 for the management and use of digital identities, and the Subjects of those digital identities.

- 172 • Examples: the DIACC-endorsed Canadian digital identity ecosystem; another country's  
173 digital identity ecosystem; a provincial ecosystem consisting of an Identity Provider and  
174 several relying parties that enable a set of services for citizens, following a common  
175 provincial identity framework;
- 176 • Non-examples: an Identity Provider itself; a digital service that acts as a Relying Party  
177 and Identity Provider itself, that is not part of a greater interconnected system or  
178 framework;

## 179 **Digital Representation**

180 An electronic dataset that refers or is related to a Subject. In the context of the PCTF, there are  
181 currently three types of Digital Representations: Digital Identities, Credentials, and  
182 Authenticators.

- 183 • Examples: voice signature, QR code; a session of a logged-in user that has access to  
184 data that contains the user's name, date of birth; purchase history
- 185 • Non-examples: a loyalty card without a mag-stripe or secure element

186

## 187 **Entity**

188 Something that has a separate and distinct existence and that can be identified in a context.

- 189 • Examples: a physical person; a pet dog; a smart appliance such as a refrigerator; an  
190 automobile; a passport in paper form
- 191 • Non-examples: wildlife (no identifier); an online service such as a search engine

## 192 **Evidence of Identity**

193 An information record consisting of Identity Information and Attributes maintained by an  
194 Authoritative Source that supports the integrity and accuracy of identity claims made by a  
195 Subject. There are two categories of evidence of identity: Foundational and Contextual.

- 196 • Examples (foundational): provincial birth record; federal immigration record; certificate of  
197 incorporation
- 198 • Examples (contextual): bank account; health record; provincially-issued driver's license;  
199 Canadian passport; business bank account
- 200 • Non-examples: fake driver's license
- 201 • Synonyms: identity evidence

## 202 **Foundational Identity**

203 Evidence of Identity that establishes the existence and Digital Representation of real, legally  
204 recognized Entities based on fact-based foundational events (e.g., birth, immigration,  
205 incorporation). The establishment and maintenance of foundational identity evidence is the  
206 exclusive domain of the public sector, specifically for Persons it is the Vital Statistics  
207 organizations of the provinces and territories, and Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship  
208 Canada; for Organizations it is Provincial business registrars and Corporations Canada.

- 209 • Examples: provincial birth record; federal immigration record; certificate of incorporation
- 210 • Non-examples: driver's license; business bank account

## 211 **Identity**

212 Physical or digital information about a Subject that uniquely identifies a Subject within a context,  
213 and is used exclusively by that same Subject, or by a Person acting on behalf of an  
214 Organization, to access online services with trust and confidence.

- 215 • Examples: driver's licence; birth certificate; immigration documents; SIN card
- 216 • Non-examples: username and password shared among a group; undocumented birth(s)

217

## 218 **Identity Information / Attributes**

219 Properties about a Subject in any format that alone or in combination may be used to distinguish  
220 one Subject from other similar entities in a given context, and describe the Subject as required  
221 by the program or service.

- 222 • Examples: name; age; year of birth; permission to operate a vehicle; date of  
223 incorporation; annual revenue; number of employees
- 224 • Non-examples: nickname; gender; colour of car
- 225 • Synonyms: identity credential

## 226 **Identity Attribute Provider**

227 A Role that consists of processes that create and manage Digital Identity Attributes.

- 228 • Examples: municipality that confirms home address; telco that confirms mobile phone  
229 number; employer that confirms employment status
- 230 • Non-examples: a social media feed
- 231 • Synonyms: credential (W3C) provider; attribute provider

## 232 **Identity Provider**

233 A Role that consists of processes that create and manage Digital Identities.

- 234 • Examples: provincial government; telecommunications company; business registrar may  
235 perform this Role
- 236 • Non-examples: technology infrastructure provider
- 237 • Synonyms: identity service provider; authoritative source; identity issuers

## 238 **Machine**

239 Software and hardware that can act as intelligent agents to conduct transactions independently  
240 (i.e., requires identity verification of the machine). Machines that can act autonomously are  
241 currently not in scope of the PCTF, but may be included in future versions.

- 242 • Examples: a fridge that connects to the internet to place an order for more milk, pays for  
243 it, and specifies delivery address; automated stock broker application;
- 244 • Non-examples: a fridge that alerts its owners that they need milk; a drill press; crane;  
245 a living organism; applications that store some credit card info and automatically renew a  
246 software license

247



248 **Notice**

249 A statement that is formulated to describe the collection, use, disclosure, and retention of  
250 Personal Information and inform a User.

- 251 • Examples: use of cookies on website notice
- 252 • Non-examples: generic statement that does not comply with applicable legislation
- 253 • Synonyms: consent form; notice statement

254 **Organization**

255 An Entity that consists of a person or organized body of people with a particular purpose,  
256 and whose existence is established by legal statute.

- 257 • Examples: businesses (e.g., sole proprietorships, partnerships, and corporations);
- 258 associations and trade unions; government agencies; co-operatives; registered charities
- 259 • Non-examples: unregistered charity (e.g., Gofundme); community sports league (e.g.,
- 260 high-tech volleyball league)

261 **Person**

262 An Entity that is an individual, human being who is alive or deceased.

- 263 • Examples: residents of a jurisdiction (e.g., country, province); customers of a business;
- 264 • Non-examples: a living entity that is not human; any inanimate object with the exception
- 265 of a deceased human; an avatar of a human

266 **Participant**

267 An Organization that performs one or more Roles in the Digital Identity Ecosystem and agrees  
268 to comply with the parameters of the PCTF.

- 269 • Examples: Identity Provider such as a provincial government or government department
- 270 of immigration; telecommunications provider; network provider; technology company that
- 271 operates a website and a digital service
- 272 • Non-examples: general public; Subjects in the ecosystem; lawyers for the organization;
- 273 potential or past participant (i.e., not actively participating); Observer, critic or watchdog;
- 274 Privacy commissioner; Software company that builds identity management products;
- 275 Google as an Identity Provider that does not follow PCTF.

276

## 277 **Personal Information**

278 Any factual or subjective information, recorded or not, about an identifiable individual (Source:  
279 [PIPEDA in Brief, Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada - What is personal](#)  
280 [information?](#)). Note: The Privacy Component further delineates Subject-Specific and Service-  
281 Specific types of Personal Information; for details see the PCTF Privacy Component Overview.

- 282 • Examples: name; email address; phone number; mailing address; date of birth; account  
283 information; service-specific pseudonymous identifiers; transaction records; proofs of  
284 transactions including consent
- 285 • Non-examples: a subway token; a brand of car

## 286 **Relying Party**

287 An Organization or Person who consumes digital Identity Information created and managed by  
288 Participants to conduct digital transactions with Subjects.

- 289 • Examples: bank when opening a new account for a Subject; a car dealer when verifying  
290 credit of a buyer; service provider who needs some level of identity verification
- 291 • Non-examples: a network provider; a telecommunications company delivering mobile  
292 connectivity
- 293 • Synonyms: Requesting Organization (role in Notice and Consent); digital identity  
294 consumer

## 295 **Role**

296 A set of functions that are made up of one or more Trusted Processes defined as part of the  
297 common Trust Framework of the Digital Identity Ecosystem.

- 298 • Examples: Identity Provider; Credential Provider; Authentication Service Provider;  
299 Relying Party; Infrastructure Provider; Assessor; Governor
- 300 • Non-examples: a mother; a condo developer; a User; a Subject

## 301 **Subject**

302 A Person, Organization, or Machine that holds or is in the process of obtaining a digital  
303 representation in the digital identity ecosystem system regulated by the PCTF, and that can be  
304 subject to legislation, policy and regulations within a context.

- 305 • Examples: individual with Canadian citizenship; charitable organization; smart  
306 refrigerator that can order groceries when inventory is low; self-driving car
- 307 • Non-examples: individual born in the wild with no identity documents; individual with only  
308 physical birth certificate (i.e. no digital id yet); pet dog; wildlife; online service; passport

309

## 310 **Trust Framework**

311 A formalized scheme of agreed-upon definitions, principles, conformance criteria, assessment  
312 approach, standards, and specifications to ensure the trustworthiness of processes that create,  
313 manage and use digital Identity Information.

- 314 • Examples: Pan-Canadian Trust Framework, Open Identity Exchange (OIX), New  
315 Zealand's Digital Trust Framework
- 316 • Non-examples: Aviation Trust Framework or UN Collaborative Trust Frameworks

## 317 **Trusted Process**

318 A set of business or technical activities that transform an input condition to an output condition,  
319 and that is assessed according to conformance criteria defined in the Pan-Canadian Trust  
320 Framework.

- 321 • Examples: identity verification, record consent
- 322 • Non-examples: process to make soup

## 323 **User**

324 A Person representing a Subject and is intentionally accessing a digital service or digital  
325 program.

- 326 • Examples: visitor to Canada accessing Government of Canada tourism site; Canadian  
327 resident registering to vote online; small business owner filing annual report online; a  
328 daughter filing a tax return on behalf her mother
- 329 • Non-examples: a senior without access to a computer; a pet dog or cat sitting on the  
330 keyboard of my computer; simply reading a public website article

## 331 **Validation**

332 A process that confirms the accuracy of digital Identity Information about a Subject as  
333 established by an Authoritative Party.

- 334 • Examples: a driver's license application process that confirms information as presented  
335 on physical documents or by means of electronic validation service
- 336 • Non-examples: showing age id going into movie theatre

337

## 338 **Verification**

339 A process that confirms that the digital Identity Information being presented relates to the  
340 Subject who is making the assertion

- 341 • Examples: asking a presenting Person questions that only they would know (e.g., credit  
342 history questions, shared secrets, mailed-out access codes); a financial tracking process  
343 that confirms that the organization performs its listed services and that the owner  
344 appears in the applicable registrar
- 345 • Non-examples: tapping a credit card for payment

## 346 **2.2 Terms In Progress**

### 347 **Authenticator**

348 Information or biometric characteristics under the control of a Subject, and that is a specific  
349 instance of: something the Subject has, something the Subject knows, or something the Subject  
350 is or does.

- 351 • Examples: private signing keys, user passwords, responses to challenge questions, or a  
352 person's face
- 353 • Non-examples: bank account number; serial number; username

### 354 **Credential**

355 A type of Digital Representation that describes a set of attributes or properties of a Subject. This  
356 information may exist on its own (e.g., as a credential that contains no personal information,  
357 only a unique string identifier) or be related to Personal Information.

- 358 • Examples: a data structure that references education levels (e.g., a university degree in  
359 engineering) and/or age of a Subject
- 360 • Non-examples: anonymized purchase history
- 361 • Synonyms: identity credential; W3C credential

### 362 **Levels of Assurance**

363 A measure of certainty that a Subject is who or what they claim to be, or that a Subject has  
364 maintained control over an Authenticator, and that the Authenticator has not been  
365 compromised. In the context of the PCTF, Levels of Assurance are those defined by  
366 the [Government of Canada Directive on Identity Management - Appendix A: Standard on](#)  
367 [Identity and Credential Assurance](#).

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