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Glossary of Technical, Institutional, and Legislative Terms Used in This Report[1]

A-76: An OMB Circular that directs Federal agencies to privatize, or contract out, government operations under some circumstances (see ch. 3).

ADP: Automated data processing; see *information technology.*

AFDC: Aid to Families with Dependent Children; a program first established by the Social Security Act of 1935, that provides matching grants to States for financial assistance to dependent children in families in need because of the incapacity, death, continued absence, or unemployment of a parent. Administered by SSA.

AFGE: American Federation of Government Employees (AFL-CIO), the union which represents many SSA employees (see chs. 3 and 5).

Artificial intelligence, or AI: A field of research concerned with giving computers some human mental capabilities, such as "understanding" speech and visual images, choosing among options, etc. Expert systems are an early commercial application of a rudimentary version of such capabilities already in use (see ch. 4).

Black Lung Program: A Federal program administered by SSA that provides monthly cash benefits to miners (and their dependents or survivors) disabled by pneumoconiosis caused by occupational exposure.

Brooks Act: Public Law 89-306, passed in 1965, which regulates Federal information technology procurements to assure that they are competitive (see chs. 5 and 8),

Brooks Committee: An informal name often used for the House Committee on Government Operations, which oversees implementation of the Brooks Act (see above); chaired by Representative Jack Brooks of Texas (see chs. 6 and 8).

COBOL: Common Business-Oriented Language; a computer language used by SSA (see ch. 2).

COLA: (Automatic) cost-of-living adjustments in social security benefits, to compensate for inflation; first legislated in 1972.

Competition in Contracting Act, 1984: Strengthens the "Brooks Act" (see above) governing Federal procurements of information technology; provides an appeals process for losing bidders to assure that competition has been fair.

Computer-matching: A process by which Federal agencies (including SSA) electronically check data that they have collected against data collected by other Federal or State agencies, to identify overlaps. This allows SSA to determine, for example, whether beneficiaries are receiving payments under more than one assistance program.

CMP: Claims Modernization Project, part of the Systems Modernization Plan, designed to automate the filing of social security benefits claims in SSA'S field offices (see ch. 2).

Data dictionary: A comprehensive set of definitions of the data elements that are in a database, controlling the form they are given and the terms used to call them out of the computer's memory (see ch. 2).

Database architecture: The plan or framework defining the structure of an information-handling system, the software and hardware used, and the relationships between them (see ch, 2).

Database integration: The systematic combination of all sets of data or information used by an organization, so that they can be accessed, through the use of common terms, by many users and systems (see ch. 2).

DDS: Disability Determination Services; States carry out the determination of disability of applicants for Disability Insurance. OMB has proposed that these services be privatized (see ch. 3).

Debt Collection Act, 1982: Financial management legislation that led to withholding all social security payments from beneficiaries who had received overpayments (see ch. 3).

DHHS: The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, of which SSA is a part; formerly the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW).

EDP: Electronic data processing; see *ADP* and *information technology,*

Fourth-generation languages: Advanced computer languages that use "everyday" (English) vocabulary and syntax, and are useful particularly for administrative and management information systems not used by computer specialists (see ch. 4).

GAO: General Accounting Office; a congressional agency that monitors and audits government programs and operations and makes recommendations for improving their effectiveness and efficiency (see ch. 8).

Grace Commission: The President's Private Sector Survey on Cost Control in the Executive Branch of the Federal Government, established in 1982

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[1] References to chapters identify the primary or most full discussion of the subject matter, not necessarily the first use of the term or phrase.

(Executive Order 12369), consisting of 161 high-level industry executives and chaired by J. Peter Grace; some Administration policies such as those aimed at Federal work force reduction, are derived in part from recommendations of this commission or task force (see ch. 3).

GSA: General Services Administration; the executive branch agency that monitors and manages government procurements, including procurement of computer systems (see chs. 5 and 8).

Independent agency: An agency that is not part of the Executive Office or a Cabinet-level department; such agencies, usually regulatory in nature, report to both Congress and the President and their heads do not serve at the will of the President but have fixed terms of office; the Federal Trade Commission and the Federal Communications Commission are examples. It has been proposed that SSA become an independent agency (House of Representatives Bill 5050) (see ch. 3).

Information technology: Computers, telecommunications, and electronic databases; other technological devices or systems used for automated data handling.

Inspector(s) General: A post created by Congress in 1978 for all major Federal departments; Inspectors General carry out audits, investigate fraud, and generally aid the oversight process; they report both to the department head and to Congress, and can carry a charge of wrongdoing directly to the Department of Justice.

IRS: U.S. Internal Revenue Service, which issues the benefits checks authorized by SSA.

MADAM: Master Data Access Method, a software program developed, used, and maintained by SSA for extracting data from its many databases (see ch. 2).

Management information systems: Software/hardware systems and databases used for administrative and management purposes rather than primary daily service operations or research (see chs. 2 and 4).

Medicaid: A program established by the Social Security Act, Title XIX, that provides matching funds to participating States (now all but Arizona) which provide for the cost of medical care and services to low-income persons through direct payments to care providers. See Medicare.

Medicare: Established by the Social Security Amendments of 1965; the contributory Medicare program includes compulsory hospitalization insurance and voluntary supplementary medical insurance to persons 65 or over (and since 1972 amendments, to certain severely disabled persons under 65). Administered by SSA.

OASDI: Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance, popularly referred to as social security; provides monthly cash benefits to replace income lost by retirement, disablement, or death of a worker. Covered employees (nearly 95 percent of American workers) pay social security taxes on their earnings; these are supplemented by employer taxes to finance benefits. Established in 1935.

OCR: Optical character recognition, or optical scanning; a technology that allows paper-based data to be read and stored by a computer without being rekey boarded (see ch. 4),

OMB: Office of Management and Budget; part of the Executive Office of the President (see chs. 3 and 8).

Optical disks: A new technology for storing data, using lasers to write on disks, and offering orders of magnitude more density, or storage capacity, than magnetic disks used in most computer systems today (see ch. 4).

Oversight: The exercise of congressional power to monitor and investigate the performance of executive branch agencies in carrying out laws and expending public monies. Oversight is performed by designated congressional committees, through hearings and through studies and audits by congressional support agencies (see ch. 8).

Paradyne: The 1979 to 1981 Paradyne procurement of terminals (supplied by the Paradyne Corp.) was to replace the aging SSADARS equipment (see below) that provided data communication between SSA field offices and headquarters. The procurement was highly controversial, and finally resulted in indictment of some SSA officials (see ch. '7).

PCIE: The President's Commission on Integrity and Efficiency, established in 1980, to advise President Reagan on improving government financial management (see ch. 3),

Privatization: The policy of contracting-out traditional government services and operations to be performed by private sector organizations (see ch. 3).

Relational databases: Ways of organizing large amounts of data that allow great flexibility in the ways of asking for information; they use fourth-generation computer languages (see above), and make it easy for those not highly trained in information sciences to use a database (see ch. 4).

SMP: The Systems Modernization Plan, first announced in 1982, for thoroughly improving or

replacing SSA'S information technology systems (see chs. 2 and 7).

Software engineering: A set of techniques, tools, and standards for use in software development and testing; a software engineering program is a major component of the SMP (see ch. 2).

Social Security Act, 1935: established the Social Security Administration, then an independent agency (see ch. 5).

Social Security Disability Amendments Act, 1980: Public Law 96-265, a law for purposes of Federal debt collection and financial management, requiring a review of the status of nonpermanently disabled recipients of benefits, which resulted in the dropping of many recipients from the SS1 rolls (see ch. 3).

SSA: Social Security Administration; now a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (see ch. 5).

SSADARS: SSA Data Acquisition and Response System, a telecommunication system instituted in 1972 to provide interactive communication between headquarters computer operations and data technicians in field offices (see chs. 2 and 6).

SS1: Supplemental Security Income; one of SSA'S major programs; it provides monthly cash benefits to aged, blind, or disabled persons whose other income is less than a specified amount ($4,032 in 1986). SSI was established in 1972 to replace categorical State assistance programs (see ch. 6).

Supercomputers: A term often used for the most powerful computers available at any one time, generally used first for scientific research. While today's computers use sequential processing, the next generation of supercomputers will probably use parallel processing (see ch. 4).

Title II benefits: Retirement and disability monthly cash benefits.

Unemployment insurance: State programs, under Federal standards, to provide benefits to those involuntarily unemployed but able and willing to work. The Social Security Act provides tax offsets and grants to induce States to maintain these programs. Administered by the States.