

WG TLS  
Internet Draft  
Intended status: Informational  
Expires: September 2015

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March 9, 2015

**Terminology related to TLS and DTLS**  
**draft-guballa-tls-terminology-00.txt**

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## Abstract

Purpose of this RFC is to provide a central place of all key terms as used by the various RFCs on protocols TLS and DTLS.

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Background and motivation - Status of (D)TLS terminology**

The definition of the TLS protocol [[RFC5246](#)] is slightly unusual in the area of protocol specifications, because more like a software



description with a high-level data model, perhaps written after an implementation. The RFC does not provide explicit definitions for the main terms, rather providing a glossary in [Appendix B/\[RFC5246\]](#). The Glossary itself provides descriptions of the main terms, but not any definitions. At least not definitions at the detailed level as required for protocol specifications, which implies a precise linkage to objects as e.g. used within protocol and service data units and protocol control information elements.

E.g., there are concerns and ongoing debates about the semantics of some "handshake" related protocol procedures (catchwords "re-establishment", "resumption", "renegotiation", "rekeying"). Associated to these procedural aspects is the underlying question concerning the precise distinction between (D)TLS session and (D)TLS connection level.

Without any doubt, TLS itself is a pretty successful, mature and well-proven technology. The production of (D)TLS term definition implies hence reverse engineering of (D)TLS RFCs.

## **1.2. Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to provide a central place of key terms as used in TLS and DTLS RFCs. The definitions should be concise, but detailed enough from perspective of a protocol model, and of course fully consistent and compatible with the existing RFCs.

## **1.3. Scope**

The focus is put on key terms which caused some controversy so far.

## **1.4. Disclaimer**

Where there are discrepancies between this document and existing RFCs on TLS and DTLS, the usage and "semantics" of these (D)TLS RFCs take precedence over those described in this document.

# **2. Conventions used in this document**

## **2.1. Prescriptive language**

The key words "MUST", "MUST NOT", "REQUIRED", "SHALL", "SHALL NOT", "SHOULD", "SHOULD NOT", "RECOMMENDED", "MAY", and "OPTIONAL" in this document are to be interpreted as described in [RFC-2119](#) [[RFC2119](#)].



## **2.2. Notion of '(D)TLS'**

The prefix '(D)TLS' indicate terms common to both protocols. The prefixes 'TLS' and 'DTLS' indicate protocol specific aspects.

## **2.3. Additional terminology**

<term>:

<definition>

## **2.4. Abbreviations used**

AL	Local (IP) Address
AR	Remote (IP) Address
DTLS	Datagram Transport Layer Security
(D)TLS	DTLS or TLS
FQDN	Fully Qualified Domain Name
L4	(Protocol) Layer 4 (= IP Transport layer)
PL	Local (L4) Port
PR	Remote (L4) Port
RL	Record Layer
T	Transport (L4) protocol
TCP	Transmission Control Protocol
TLS	Transport Layer Security
UDP	User Datagram Protocol

## **3. Inventory of (D)TLS terms**



### **3.1. Terminology related to endpoint entities**

#### **3.1.1. Term "(D)TLS endpoint"**

Definition:

An instance of a (D)TLS protocol implementation with exactly one local IP (transport) address. A (D)TLS endpoint is housing one or multiple (D)TLS connection endpoints, which are acting either as (D)TLS clients or as (D)TLS servers (i.e., "(D)TLS client connection endpoint" and "(D)TLS server connection endpoint") when executing the (D)TLS handshake protocol.

Reference:

FIXTHIS

Term relations:

Definition based on terms "(D)TLS protocol implementation" (3.1.2. ), "(D)TLS client connection endpoint" (3.3.3. ) and "(D)TLS server connection endpoint" (3.3.4. ).

#### **3.1.2. Term "(D)TLS protocol implementation"**

Definition:

A (software or hardware) based implementation of the TLS protocol as specified in [[RFC 5246](#)] or of the DTLS protocol as specified in [[RFC6347](#)] (DTLS) and is always associated to a real system.

Reference:

None.

Term relations:

Definition based on term "real system" [ITU-T X.200].

### **3.2. Terminology related to session/connection entities**

#### **3.2.1. Term "(D)TLS connection"**

Definition:

A cooperative relationship among a pair of (D)TLS capable systems, represented by a (D)TLS client connection endpoint and a (D)TLS server connection endpoint (NOTE 1). A (D)TLS connection allows the execution of an establishment procedure given by either a (D)TLS full handshake or a (D)TLS abbreviated handshake (on request of the (D)TLS served user instance at (D)TLS client side). Thus, the mode of communication of the (D)TLS connection could be considered as connection-oriented (i.e., a (D)TLS connection is stateful, e.g., at the top-level by the 2-state model {IDLE, ESTABLISHED}).

Notes:

Thus, formally the (D)TLS connection is a set of two 8-tuples, refer to "(D)TLS connection endpoint".

Reference:

FIX THIS

Term relations:

Definition based on terms "(D)TLS protocol implementation" (3.1.2. ), "(D)TLS client connection endpoint" (3.3.3. ) and "(D)TLS server connection endpoint" (3.3.4. ).

### **3.2.2. Term "Semi-permanent (D)TLS session"**

Definition:

The pair of a semi-permanent (D)TLS client session endpoint state and a semi-permanent (D)TLS server session endpoint state, coupled by the (D)TLS full handshake procedure which was executed across the associated (D)TLS connection.

Reference:

FIX THIS

Term relations:

Definition based on terms "semi-permanent (D)TLS client session endpoint state" (3.4.8. ), "semi-permanent (D)TLS server session endpoint state" (3.4.9. ), "(D)TLS full handshake" (3.4.5. ) and "(D)TLS connection" (3.2.1. ).



### **3.2.3. Term "Transient (D)TLS session"**

Definition:

The pair of a transient (D)TLS client session endpoint state and a transient (D)TLS server session endpoint state, coupled by the (D)TLS full handshake procedure which was executed across the associated (D)TLS connection.

The transient (D)TLS client session endpoint state information and transient (D)TLS server session endpoint state information is immediately deleted after the successful (D)TLS full handshake procedure.

Reference:

FIX THIS

Term relations:

Definition based on terms "transient (D)TLS client session endpoint state" (3.4.10. ), "transient (D)TLS server session endpoint state" (3.4.11. ), "(D)TLS full handshake" (3.4.5. ) and "(D)TLS connection" (3.2.1. ).

### **3.2.4. Term "(D)TLS session"**

Definition:

A semi-permanent (D)TLS session or transient (D)TLS session.

Notes:

Thus, a (D)TLS session is a transformed (D)TLS connection after the successful execution of a (D)TLS full handshake procedure, constituted by the pair of (D)TLS client session endpoint state and a (D)TLS server session endpoint state. A (D)TLS session is consequently an association between the two (D)TLS session endpoints. The mode of communication of the (D)TLS session could be considered as connectionless (i.e., a (D)TLS session is either existing or not).

The nature of a (D)TLS session (from (D)TLS endpoint perspective) is either volatile (i.e., the local (D)TLS session information would be immediately discarded after a (D)TLS handshake procedure) or semi-permanent (in case of resumable (D)TLS sessions).



Notably, a (D)TLS session may still exist after one or even both (D)TLS connection endpoints, which did exchange the (D)TLS full handshake messages from which the related (D)TLS session states were derived from, are already destroyed.

The (D)TLS role (client or server) is a (D)TLS session level characteristic. (to be confirmed)

Reference:

FIX THIS

Term relations:

Definition based on terms "(D)TLS semi-permanent session" (3.2.2. ) and "(D)TLS transient (volatile) session" (3.2.3. ).

### **3.2.5. Term "DTLS association"**

Definition:

Synonym to "DTLS connection".

Reference:

Term introduced by [[RFC4347](#)] and still used in [[RFC6347](#)].

Term relations:

Definition equal to "(D)TLS connection" (3.2.1. ).

## **3.3. Terminology related to session/connection endpoint entities**

### **3.3.1. Term "(D)TLS connection endpoint"**

Definition:

A part of an instance of a (D)TLS protocol implementation, which is able to send and receive (D)TLS messages, and which is associated to exactly one 8-tuple being composed of

- 1) a creation point in time  $t_c$ ,
- 2) a destruction point in time  $t_d$ ,

- 3) a non-empty local IP address AL,
- 4) a non-empty local L4 port PL,
- 5) an empty or non-empty remote IP address AR,
- 6) an empty or non-empty remote L4 port PR,
- 7) a non-empty L4 transport protocol T, and
- 8) the protocol string "TLS" or "DTLS".

Notes:

If FQDNs are used as (D)TLS endpoint identifiers, then an additional requirement on the (D)TLS connection endpoint could be that AL is one of the IP addresses associated to the (D)TLS endpoint's FQDN.

Reference:

FIX THIS

Term relations:

Definition based on terms "(D)TLS protocol implementation" (3.1.2.) and "(D)TLS message" (3.4.1. ).

### **3.3.2. Term "(D)TLS connection endpoint identifier"**

Definition:

The local IP transport address and indication of "TLS/L4" or "DTLS/L4" protocol stack, i.e., the 4-tuple of {AL, PL, T, "TLS"/"DTLS"} from the (D)TLS connection endpoint.

Notes:

Parameter "L4" is required because (D)TLS is a L4 independent protocol, hence a (D)TLS capable system could offer multiple (D)TLS endpoints with different L4 protocols.

Reference:

FIX THIS

Term relations:

Definition based on terms "(D)TLS protocol implementation" (3.1.2. ) and "(D)TLS message" (3.4.1. ).

### **3.3.3. Term "(D)TLS client connection endpoint"**

Definition:

A (D)TLS connection endpoint which sends a (D)TLS message containing a ClientHello handshake structure to another (D)TLS connection endpoint.

Reference:

The TLS ClientHello handshake structure is defined in [[RFC5246](#)] while the DTLS ClientHello handshake structure is defined in [[RFC6347](#)].

Term relations:

Definition based on terms "(D)TLS connection endpoint" (3.3.1. ) and "(D)TLS message" (3.4.1. ).

### **3.3.4. Term "(D)TLS server connection endpoint"**

Definition:

A (D)TLS connection endpoint which receives a (D)TLS message containing a ClientHello handshake structure and subsequently sends a (D)TLS message containing a ServerHello handshake structure back to that other (D)TLS connection endpoint.

Reference:

The (D)TLS ServerHello handshake structure is defined in [RFC 5246].

Term relations:

Definition based on terms "(D)TLS connection endpoint" (3.3.1. ) and "(D)TLS message" (3.4.1. ).



### **3.4. Terminology related to protocol procedures**

#### **3.4.1. Term "(D)TLS message"**

Definition:

A unit of (D)TLS-RL user data as produced by the (D)TLS handshake protocol, the (D)TLS alert protocol or the (D)TLS change cipher spec protocol.

Notes:

Application Data are excluded from this definition. Reference:

FIX THIS

Term relations:

#### **3.4.2. Term "(D)TLS client role"**

Definition:

A (D)TLS connection endpoint is said to assume the (D)TLS client role, if it is a (D)TLS client connection endpoint.

Reference:

FIX THIS

Term relations:

Definition based on terms "(D)TLS connection endpoint" (3.3.1. ) and "(D)TLS client connection endpoint" (3.3.3. ).

#### **3.4.3. Term "(D)TLS server role"**

Definition:

A (D)TLS connection endpoint is said to assume the (D)TLS server role, if it is a (D)TLS server connection endpoint.

Reference:

FIX THIS

Term relations:

Definition based on terms "(D)TLS connection endpoint" (3.3.1. )  
and "(D)TLS server connection endpoint" (3.3.4. ).

#### **3.4.4. Term "(D)TLS message sequence"**

Definition:

A finite sequence of (D)TLS messages.

Reference:

-

Term relations:

Definition based on term "(D)TLS message" (3.4.1. ).

#### **3.4.5. Term "(D)TLS full handshake"**

Definition:

A (D)TLS message sequence where the first (D)TLS message contains ClientHello structure and if the sequence constitutes a successful (D)TLS full handshake message flow as specified in clause 7.3, Figure 1 of [[RFC5246](#)].

Reference:

[[RFC 5246](#)], clause 7.3, Figure 1

Reference for DTLS?

Term relations:

Definition based on term "(D)TLS message" (3.4.1. ).

#### **3.4.6. Term "(D)TLS abbreviated handshake"**

Definition:

A (D)TLS message sequence where the first (D)TLS message contains ClientHello structure and if the sequence constitutes a successful (D)TLS abbreviated handshake message flow as specified in clause 7.3, Figure 2 of [[RFC5246](#)].

Reference:

[[RFC5246](#)], clause 7.3, Figure 2

Term relations:

Definition based on term "(D)TLS message" (3.4.1. ).

#### **3.4.7. Term "Data transfer ready (D)TLS connection"**

Definition:

A (D)TLS connection after the successful execution of a (D)TLS full handshake or a (D)TLS abbreviated handshake procedures.

Notes:

The notion of "DATA TRANSFER READY" refers to a specific state of the (D)TLS connection and is synonym to the notion of "ESTABLISHED". The general term "DATA TRANSFER READY" matches both connectionless and connection-oriented type of connections, see [ITU-T X.213 and X.214].

Reference:

-

Term relations:

Definition based on terms "(D)TLS connection" (3.2.1. ), "(D)TLS full handshake" (3.4.5. ) and "(D)TLS abbreviated handshake" (3.4.6. ).

#### **3.4.8. Term "Semi-permanent (D)TLS client session endpoint state"**

Definition:

A (D)TLS client session endpoint state if its (D)TLS session identifier value is non-empty.

Reference:

FIX THIS

Term relations:

Refer to "(D)TLS client session endpoint state" (3.4.12. ) and "(D)TLS session identifier" (3.4.20).

#### **3.4.9. Term "Semi-permanent (D)TLS server session endpoint state"**

Definition:

A (D)TLS server session endpoint state if its (D)TLS session identifier value is non-empty.

Reference:

FIX THIS

Term relations:

Refer to "(D)TLS server session endpoint state" (3.4.13. ) and "(D)TLS session identifier" (3.4.20).

#### **3.4.10. Term "Transient (D)TLS client session endpoint state"**

Definition:

A (D)TLS client session endpoint state if its (D)TLS session identifier value is empty.

Reference:

FIX THIS

Term relations:

Refer to "(D)TLS client session endpoint state" (3.4.12. ) and "(D)TLS session identifier" (3.4.20).

#### **3.4.11. Term "Transient (D)TLS server session endpoint state"**

Definition:

A (D)TLS server session endpoint state if its (D)TLS session identifier value is empty.

Reference:

FIX THIS

Term relations:

Refer to "(D)TLS server session endpoint state" (3.4.13. 3.4.12. )  
and "(D)TLS session identifier" (3.4.20).

### **3.4.12. Term "(D)TLS client session endpoint state"**

Definition:

The 17-tuple of following parameter-value pairs, as partially  
described in [[RFC5246](#)]:

TLS protocol parameter:	Type:
1. version:	ProtocolVersion
2. prf_algorithm:	PRFAlgorithm
3. bulk_cipher_algorithm:	BulkCipherAlgorithm
4. cipher_type:	CipherType
5. enc_key_length:	uint8
6. block_length:	unit8
7. fixed_iv_length:	unit8
8. record_iv_length:	unit8
9. mac_algorithm:	MACAlgorithm
10. mac_length:	unit8
11. mac_key_length:	unit8
12. compression_algorithm:	CompressionMethod
13. master_secret:	opaque[48]
14. session_id:	SessionID (NOTE 1)
Other parameters:	Type:
15. creation time tc:	time (NOTE 2)
16. destruction time td:	time

17. server\_address: IPaddress (NOTE 3)

Notes:

1: A (D)TLS client session endpoint state is semi-permanent if and only if its session\_id value is non-empty. Hence it is transient if and only if its session\_id value is empty.

FIX THIS: Session tickets [[RFC5077](#)] must be covered as well, reference to "(D)TLS session identifier" should be used.2: While a semi-permanent (D)TLS client session endpoint state's creation point in time correlates with the corresponding (D)TLS full handshake's end time (which is thus a point in time at which both TLS connection endpoints, which exchange the (D)TLS full handshake messages, do still exist), this semi-permanent (D)TLS client session endpoint state's destruction point in time is independent of the destruction points in time of these two (D)TLS connection endpoints. Especially, the semi-permanent (D)TLS client session endpoint state may still exist after one or even both (D)TLS connection endpoints are already destroyed.

3: A (D)TLS protocol implementation may add further information to a (D)TLS client session endpoint state, like e.g. the associated (D)TLS server endpoint's source IP address. This additional information may be used by a (D)TLS client connection endpoint in order to decide if an already stored semi-permanent (D)TLS client session endpoint state may be used (may be "resumed") for the establishment of a new (D)TLS connection towards a destination transport address of another (D)TLS endpoint.

Reference:

[RFC 5246]

Term relations:

-

### **3.4.13. Term "(D)TLS server session endpoint state"**

Definition:

The 16-tuple of following parameter-value pairs, as partially described in [[RFC5246](#)]:



TLS protocol parameter:	Type:
1. version:	ProtocolVersion
2. prf_algorithm:	PRFAlgorithm
3. bulk_cipher_algorithm:	BulkCipherAlgorithm
4. cipher_type:	CipherType
5. enc_key_length:	uint8
6. block_length:	unit8
7. fixed_iv_length:	unit8
8. record_iv_length:	unit8
9. mac_algorithm:	MACAlgorithm
10. mac_length:	unit8
11. mac_key_length:	unit8
12. compression_algorithm:	CompressionMethod
13. master_secret:	opaque[48]
14. session_id:	SessionID (NOTE 1)
Other parameters (NOTE 3): Type:	
15. creation time tc:	time (NOTE 2)
16. destruction time td:	time

Notes:

1: A (D)TLS server session endpoint state is semi-permanent if and only if its session\_id value is non-empty. Hence it is transient if and only if its session\_id value is empty.

FIX THIS: Session tickets [[RFC5077](#)] must be covered as well, reference to "(D)TLS session identifier" should be used.

2: While a semi-permanent (D)TLS server session endpoint state's creation point in time correlates with the corresponding (D)TLS



full handshake's end time (which is thus a point in time at which both (D)TLS connection endpoints, which exchange the (D)TLS full handshake messages, do still exist), this semi-permanent (D)TLS server session endpoint state's destruction point in time is independent of the destruction points in time of these two (D)TLS connection endpoints. Especially, the semi-permanent (D)TLS server session endpoint state may still exist after one or even both (D)TLS connection endpoints are already destroyed.

3: Difference between the (D)TLS server session endpoint state versus the (D)TLS server session endpoint: the 17th parameter "server address" (refer to 3.4.12. ) is of course missing at the server side.

Reference:

[RFC5246]

Term relations:

-

#### **3.4.14. Term "Resumable (D)TLS client session endpoint state"**

Definition:

Synonym for a semi-permanent (D)TLS client session endpoint state (3.4.8. ).

Reference:

-

Term relations:

-

#### **3.4.15. Term "Resumable (D)TLS server session endpoint state"**

Definition:

Synonym for a semi-permanent (D)TLS server session endpoint state (3.4.9. ).

Reference:

-

Term relations:

-

#### **3.4.16. Term "Resumable (D)TLS session"**

Definition:

Synonym for a semi-permanent (D)TLS session (3.2.2. ).

Notes:

Expanded term: A (D)TLS session where the (D)TLS server session state as well as the (D)TLS client session state are both resumable. A (D)TLS session state is called resumable, if its (D)TLS session identifier value is non-empty.

Reference:

-

Term relations:

-

#### **3.4.17. Term "Resumed (D)TLS session"**

Definition:

A resumable (D)TLS session after the successful execution of a (D)TLS abbreviated handshake procedure.

Notes:

1: The (D)TLS session identifier value (of the resumed (D)TLS session) is identical to the previous value of the resumable (D)TLS session.

2: The (D)TLS connection, which is established with the (D)TLS abbreviated handshake based on the existing resumable (D)TLS session, may be created while the original (D)TLS connection, which was established via the (D)TLS full handshake from which the resumable (D)TLS client and server session endpoint states and hence the resumable (D)TLS session were derived, is still

established, or only after this original (D)TLS connection is already terminated.

3: Several new (D)TLS connections may be established using (D)TLS abbreviated handshakes based on the same resumable (D)TLS session. If the first (D)TLS connection is established using an (D)TLS abbreviated handshake based on a resumable (D)TLS session, then we may say that this (D)TLS session becomes a resumed (D)TLS session at this first (D)TLS abbreviated handshake's end time.

Reference:

FIX THIS

Term relations:

FIX THIS

#### **3.4.18. Term "(D)TLS session renegotiation"**

Definition:

A (D)TLS session level concept which leads, - by the execution of a (D)TLS handshake procedure (full or abbreviated) -, to the update of the (D)TLS protocol status "connection-level" information of an DATA TRANSFER READY (D)TLS connection, for the purpose of the establishment of new cryptographic parameters.

Notes:

1: The initial (D)TLS full handshake or (D)TLS abbreviated handshake is not regarded as a (D)TLS session renegotiation as this handshake is executed on a (D)TLS connection which is in the state IDLE. After this initial handshake is finished the (D)TLS connection state is changed to DATA TRANSFER READY, and thus all following (D)TLS full handshakes or (D)TLS abbreviated handshakes on that (D)TLS connection are regarded as (D)TLS session renegotiation.

2: The (D)TLS connection state remains in DATA TRANSFER READY during and after the (D)TLS session renegotiation.

Reference:

FIX THIS

Term relations:



FIX THIS

#### **3.4.19. Term "(D)TLS session resumption"**

Definition:

A (D)TLS session level concept which represents the execution of a (D)TLS abbreviated handshake procedure on an existing (D)TLS session, i.e., a semi-permanent (D)TLS session, for the purpose of either deriving a further DATA TRANSFER READY (D)TLS connection or updating of an existing DATA TRANSFER READY (D)TLS connection.

Reference:

FIX THIS

Term relations:

FIX THIS

#### **3.4.20. Term "(D)TLS session identifier"**

Definition:

A (D)TLS protocol parameter representing the identification allocated to a particular semi-permanent (D)TLS session.

Notes:

1: The definition is consistent and not redefining the explanatory description of a "session identifier" in the TLS glossary, as contained in [Appendix B](#)/[RFC5246].

2: This definition may need to be extended by additional consideration of the session ticket based TLS session resumption mechanism as defined in [RFC5077]. There would be then two TLS protocol parameters (session\_id and SessionTicket) as possible identifiers (both protocol parameters are mutually exclusive).

Reference:

[RFC5077]

Term relations:

Definition based on the term "semi-permanent (D)TLS session" (3.2.2. ).

### **3.5. Colloquially used terms**

This clause provides a list of terms which are not introduced, described or defined by (D)TLS RFCs, but sometimes used in discussions.

#### **3.5.1. Term "(D)TLS session re-establishment"**

Definition:

-

Notes:

There doesn't exist any definition so far.

Reference:

None.

Term relations:

Still open, dependent on definition.

#### **3.5.2. Term "(D)TLS session rekeying"**

Definition:

-

Notes:

There doesn't exist any definition so far (to be confirmed).

Reference:

None.

Term relations:

Still open, dependent on definition.

## **4. Security Considerations**

FIXTHIS

## 5. IANA Considerations

FIXTHIS

## 6. References

### 6.1. Normative References

- [RFC2119] [RFC 2119](#) (03/1997), "Key words for use in RFCs to Indicate Requirement Levels", [BCP 14](#).
- [RFC5077] [RFC 5077](#) (01/2008), "Transport Layer Security (TLS) Session Resumption without Server-Side State"
- [RFC5246] [RFC 5246](#) (08/2008), "The Transport Layer Security (TLS) Protocol, Version 1.2"
- [RFC5746] [RFC 5746](#) (02/2010), "Transport Layer Security (TLS) Renegotiation Indication Extension"
- [RFC6347] [RFC 6347](#) (02/2012), "Datagram Transport Layer Security Version 1.2"

### 6.2. Informative References

- [ITU-T X.200] Recommendation ITU-T X.200 (07/1994), "Information technology - Open Systems Interconnection - Basic Reference Model: The basic model."
- [ITU-T X.213] Recommendation ITU-T X.213 (10/2001), "Information technology - Open Systems Interconnection - Network service definition."
- [ITU-T X.214] Recommendation ITU-T X.214 (11/1995), "Information technology - Open Systems Interconnection - Transport service definition."

Acknowledgments

<Add any acknowledgements>

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## [7. CHANGE LOG](#)

### [7.1. Initial draft name "\[draft-guballa-tls-terminology\]\(#\)"](#)

#### [7.1.1. Version "-00"](#)

Following definition template is used:

Term "<term>"

Definition:  
<definition>.

Notes:  
<comments, complementary information>

Reference:  
<references>

Term relations:  
<references to terms reused by this definition>



### [7.1.2.](#) Changes against "-00"

o #