



Accelerating observability outcomes

AWS Prescriptive Guidance



AWS Prescriptive Guidance: Accelerating observability outcomes

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Accelerating observability outcomes

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July 2025 ([document history](#))

Dr. Werner Vogels, Vice President and Chief Technology Officer at Amazon, once said, "Everything fails, all the time... so plan for failure and nothing will fail" ([AWS re:Invent 2024 keynote presentation](#)). Adopting this mindset is at the heart of an effective and robust observability implementation.

This strategy document explores how you can elevate your observability posture to create more resilient and efficient systems. It also discusses how you can define an anchor objective (*North Star*) that provides effective alignment across your organization, which leads to increased customer trust, brand reputation, and team morale. The document highlights the key things to consider and a recommended approach to accelerating observability outcomes. This approach includes unlocking new business opportunities, delivering better user experiences, optimizing performance and cost, and improving operational efficiencies across your organization. Regardless of the maturity of your observability implementation, this document provides incremental and actionable insights in the pursuit of your observability goals.

Intended audience

This information is intended for the following audiences:

- Technical leaders and architects who are responsible for defining an observability strategy
- Engineering managers and DevOps leaders who are responsible for overseeing operational excellence
- Platform engineering teams that are responsible for building observability foundations
- Site reliability engineers (SREs) who are responsible for implementing the observability practices

Objectives

The information in this guide helps you elevate your observability practices to create more resilient and efficient systems that are aligned across your organization. It provides you with a framework for adopting good observability practices across three pillars: people, process, and technology. The

information is broadly applicable regardless of the tools you choose to use. If you are interested in the AWS services that support observability, see [Monitoring and observability](#) on the AWS website.

Overview

Why you need to rethink your observability strategy

Observability evolved from *monitoring*, which focused on the collection of telemetry signals such as logs, metrics, and traces, to help you debug your applications. Because of this association, observability was often an afterthought and resulted in too much or too little instrumentation, the inability to correlate signals, disconnected visibility, and multiple tools that often did not integrate cohesively. These led to a perceived lack of value and costs that seemed to outweigh the benefits of observability. From a business perspective, these issues meant a longer mean time to identify (MTTI), a longer mean time to recover (MTTR), and a degradation in user experience, trust, brand reputation, and revenue. Observability today is not only about the ability to debug and diagnose an application but also the ability to validate that the application is behaving exactly as intended.

The confluence between businesses that want to provide users with the best experiences and the evolution of observability tooling and features requires a reconsideration and reprioritization of observability.

Observability tools and frameworks

Before OpenTelemetry became available in 2019, specialized tools that provided observability solutions for application performance monitoring (APM) and digital experience monitoring (DEM) made the disconnections across the telemetry signals more visible and highlighted poor user experiences.

- APM tracks and analyzes software application behavior in real time. It measures key metrics such as response times, error rates, and resource usage while monitoring user transactions across application components. APM tools help teams quickly identify performance issues, bottlenecks, and errors before these problems affect users. Their primary goal is to maintain optimal application performance and user experience while reducing the time needed to resolve issues.
- DEM measures and analyzes the quality of users' interactions with digital services from their perspective. It combines real user monitoring (RUM), synthetic monitoring, and endpoint monitoring to provide a complete view of the user experience. DEM tracks metrics such as page load times, application responsiveness, and user journey completions across different devices, browsers, and locations. This helps organizations understand how users experience their

digital services, identify performance issues that affect user satisfaction, and optimize digital touchpoints. The insights enable businesses to make data-driven decisions to improve customer experience and maintain competitive advantage.

The launch of [OpenTelemetry](#) in 2019 provided an open source, unified standard for generating, collecting, managing, and exporting telemetry data. This framework focuses on bridging the gaps between telemetry signals by adding context, offering better correlation across signals, and providing better derived value. For example, using structured logs with added context helps you derive metrics from the ingested logs and analyze the information in different ways to get to the root cause more quickly. Before OpenTelemetry, signals were viewed in isolation. To add functionality, you had to revise the code to add a new dimension to an existing metric or create a new metric, wait for the code to go through the development lifecycle, and then wait for the metrics to be observed in a suitable environment before you could make deductions. This process delayed visibility and affected your ability to correlate the data to logs or traces if necessary.

The support for OpenTelemetry, and the tooling improvements that stem from this support, help you derive better value from observability platforms, enhance user experiences, and improve both operational efficiencies and team morale.

If you want to improve and enhance your observability posture, where and how do you actually start? We recommend an approach that consists of three steps, which are discussed in detail in this guide:

- [Stage 1: Define your North Star](#)
- [Stage 2: Implement observability](#)
- [Stage 3: Inspect, adapt, and iterate](#)

Stage 1: Define your North Star

A successful implementation of observability is not just about operations and tools—it is about fostering a culture of ownership, continuous improvement, and proactive problem-solving. As with any successful strategy, your strategy for observability requires a holistic consideration of three pillars: people, process, and technology.

When you want to establish or improve your observability posture, we recommend that you start by defining what matters, work back from your business outcomes, and continually review, adjust, and realign your strategy as your business, teams, and products evolve.

In this first stage, you define and establish your *North Star*, which is an agreed upon and well understood definition of what good looks like for your organization. We recommend that you revisit some or all of the activities in this stage as your business evolves, when you launch a new product, application, or service, or when you design a major architectural change, to reassess your observability platform and organizational needs.

Integrate observability earlier in the development lifecycle (shift-left approach)

Make observability a responsibility for every member of the engineering, operations, and product teams, and treat it as a primary functional requirement, similar to the way you treat unit tests or security. This does not shift the responsibility from the operations team to the development team, but highlights the collaboration required across the multiple teams. It's helpful for teams to perform the following activities in collaboration early in the development lifecycle. You might want to perform these on a per-ticket, per-feature, or per-product basis.

- **Identify stakeholders.** Who are the stakeholders and what matters to them if this feature or product doesn't work as expected? When you identify stakeholders, consider aspects such as functionality, availability, security, cost, sales, and product usage. Stakeholders can include your team, your product's customers, internal business stakeholders, members of the platform operations team, and application developers. Depending on the scenario, your security and finance teams can be stakeholders too.
- **Identify key outcomes.** Determine the key outcomes and their impact on the business and on each stakeholder. Identify success and failure for each outcome and stakeholder. Outcomes are typically defined as service-level objectives (SLOs) and must be quantifiable. An SLO is a measure for each outcome. A good SLO has a target value that should be strived for, or maintained,

as a goal. An SLO can be a measure of user satisfaction. A service-level indicator (SLI) is the actual measurement or metrics that is used to determine if you're meeting the SLO: It is the quantifiable data point that you track against your objective. Examples include reducing MTTR by 60 percent, maintaining application availability at 99.99 percent, or improving developer productivity by 30 percent.

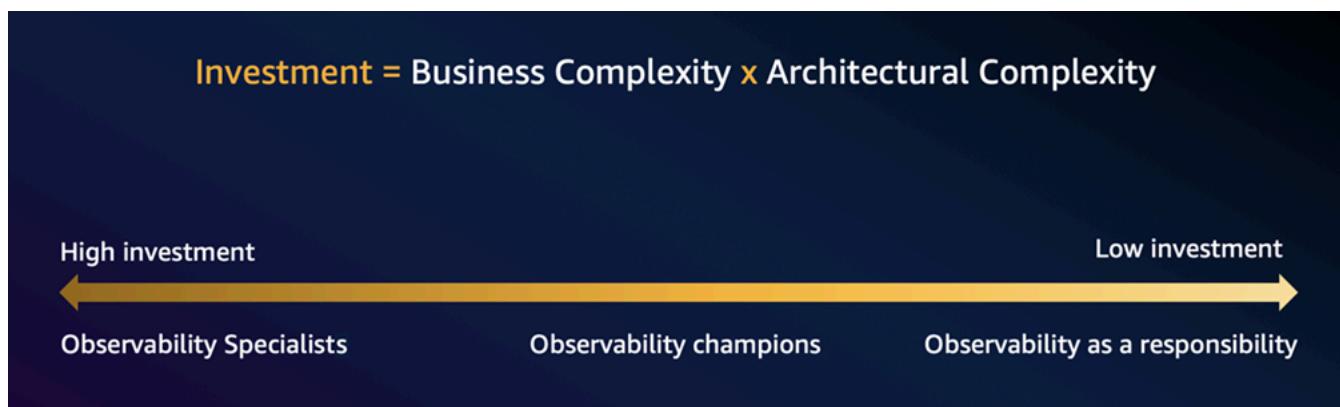
Let's take the example of maintaining application availability at 99.99 percent and define the SLO, SLI, and metrics required to measure and validate success. For this example, let's consider a RESTful application and define application availability as the successful completion of all incoming requests. This requires measuring the total number of requests to the application and the completion status of each request. When you translate these into SLO and SLI, you need one metric that captures incoming requests and another metric that captures the status of requests. If all requests complete successfully, the application is considered to be available. If one or more requests result in errors, the application is considered to be unavailable. Therefore, the SLI would be the sum of request completions that are in error, divided by the sum of incoming requests in a 5-minute interval—effectively, an *error rate*. You can add a goal to this SLI to turn it into an SLO; for example: Strive for the error rate to be less than 0.1 percent across 3 consecutive 5-minute intervals.

- **Prioritize key outcomes.** Based on the priority you set for each outcome, you can choose to focus on outcomes that have the highest impact first, instead of doing everything at the same time. Start small, iterate, and improve your observability posture in small increments. Observability is a process that requires ongoing reviews, audits, enhancements, and improvements toward increasing maturity and benefits. Prioritization can also give you an opportunity to define incremental milestones toward identified outcomes.
- **Identify required instrumentation.** What are the components and related features of the architecture or implementation that can influence the outcomes that matter, as identified in the previous steps? For example, when you run an application on an Amazon Elastic Compute Cloud (Amazon EC2) instance, the number of cores and available RAM can impact the responsiveness and throughput of the application. At this stage, it might also be helpful to determine whether the tools or libraries you use already provide some of this instrumentation. Conducting a series of preliminary reviews or adding questions such as the following to a ticket's [definition of ready \(DoR\)](#) can make this activity part of the standard process.
 - If this operation were to fail, what would you need to know to address the failure? How does a typical or problematic operation affect the components involved? What kind of signal should this operation send: log, metric, or trace? What is the cost of this instrumentation compared with its value? What kind of aggregation would be acceptable without breaching SLOs?

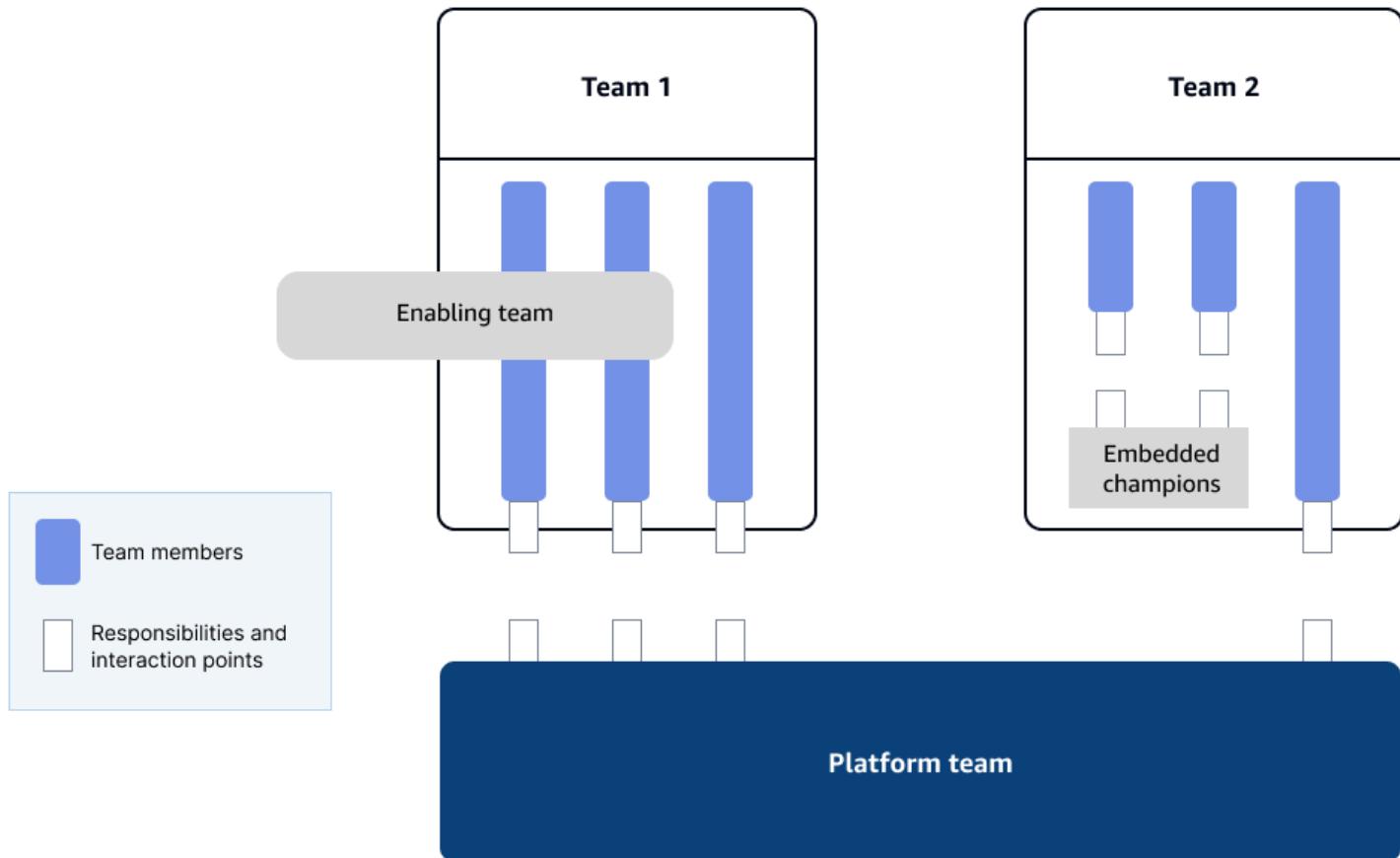
- What are the components and dependencies that can cause a failure in this operation? How will you identify which component or dependency caused the failure? What are the different configuration levers of these components and dependencies, and how does each affect the operation?
- What is the required metric granularity and sampling rate to ensure that the SLI and SLO can be accurately measured?
- **Define success criteria.** For each prioritized outcome, define thresholds that are aligned with the impact of meeting or not meeting objectives. The success criteria provide additional context to teams when they respond to alerts. They also give you the ability to forecast and make tradeoffs against the cost of the instrumentation for the visibility required.

Set up an effective organization and team structure

Based on the architectural complexity and size of your business, you might need to set up a dedicated team that focuses on observability. This team will be responsible for configuring the observability tools and setting up the observability platform for other teams. We also recommend setting up a dedicated team if you choose a standard OpenTelemetry implementation. In smaller organizations, you can assign observability as an additional responsibility for every team member and also appoint observability champions who evangelize and enforce best practices across teams. These champions volunteer a part of their day to define processes and set standards for the organization. They work either as a self-norming team or can be led by dedicated observability specialists. The following diagram shows how your investment can determine your organizational approach.



The champions could be fully embedded in teams (as shown for Team 2 in the following illustration) or be part of an enabling team that rotates across the teams to establish and promote best practices (Team 1 in the illustration).



Track cost allocation

Organizations should implement comprehensive cost tracking and visibility across metrics, logs, and traces while establishing team-specific accountability for resource usage and costs. Successful integration of financial operations (FinOps) practices requires automated monitoring systems with budget alerts that are paired with systematic data retention and collection optimization. The engineering and finance teams should align their objectives through shared dashboards and regular reviews. Organizations benefit from implementing clear chargeback models and cost allocation strategies to drive ownership and accountability.

Define standards

Identify and define the base signals and telemetry that an application requires, including alerting and dashboard strategies. Create a checklist or formal review process for every application. The [AWS Observability Best Practices](#) website provides guidelines for alerting and dashboard creation, such as setting appropriate alert thresholds, minimizing alert fatigue, creating dashboards with

enough context for each persona, and so on. For connected and curated observability experiences, see [Application signals](#) in the Amazon CloudWatch documentation.

Establish escalation processes

It is important to establish and enforce escalation mechanisms, alert ownership, and response procedures. We recommend that you promote a culture where escalation is not frowned upon.

Improve skills through training

Identify the best way to upskill existing and new team members, reinforce the importance of observability, and foster a culture of continuous improvement. Based on your organization's needs, you can choose between pre-recorded, on-demand training or classroom training that is delivered by observability champions or specialists. Your AWS account team can deliver in-depth, hands-on training sessions such as the [One Observability Workshop](#) or [GameDays](#) to coach and improve observability skills and best practices. Additionally, incorporate mechanisms to reinforce best practices and to promote the standards defined by your organization.

Stage 2: Implement observability

At this stage, you start the process for your teams to incrementally work their way to the North Star.

Choose your observability platform

The first step is to identify the right tools to ingest, visualize, and analyze the signals, and to send alerts. When you select a tool, consider its feature set, licensing model, price, skill requirements, and maintenance.

Feature set

Here are some of the questions to consider:

- **Configurability and customization.** Which features does the tool provide to simplify the investigative experience and to help reduce the MTTR? Does the tool provide alarm correlation, metric math, flexibility in handling missing telemetry, or anomaly detection?
- **Granularity.** What is the supported granularity of telemetry signal ingestion and visualization?
- **Personas.** Does the tool support the experiences that you want to offer to your developers, platform engineers, and other personas? Does it work for both technical and business personas?
- **Widgets.** What kinds of widgets do the dashboards support? Does the tool allow the creation of custom widgets?
- **Prebuilt solutions.** What kinds of prebuilt observability solutions does the tool offer to reduce the time to value?
- **Automation and generative AI.** What features does the tool provide that can help automate or reduce toil for you and your team? For example, automatic anomaly detection, predictive analytics, and other generative AI capabilities can help reduce the stress of assumptions and *unknown-unknowns* (that is, things that you're neither aware of nor fully understand). Does the tool support the use of generative AI/ML models to enhance the analysis of the data at scale? Does it provide you with the option to automate and implement AIOps?
- **Security.** What kinds of authentication and authorization integrations does the tool support? Do the user and login experiences meet the needs of your organization?
- **OpenTelemetry support.** Do the tool and agent support OpenTelemetry? Most observability platforms support the ingestion of OpenTelemetry-compatible signals, but not all agents provide configuration options to forward these signals to an observability platform.

- **Integrations.** What integrations does the tool offer? Consider whether you need to send alerts to Slack, page team members, or automate resolution.
- **Scalability.** How scalable and performant is the tool? The observability solution has to scale as your demands and usage increase, so it can provide diagnoses even if your application is unavailable.
- **Support.** What support model is offered? Your observability tool has to be available even if your application fails so you can meet your MTTR and application availability targets or service-level agreements (SLAs). Open source solutions might offer limited formal support.

Licensing and deployment model

Consider the solution's licensing model (open source or commercial) and deployment model (self-hosted or cloud-based). Open source options often have lower upfront costs but might require more time for deployment, setup and configuration, maintenance, and team upskilling before they provide value. If you are considering open source options, you might need a dedicated team of observability experts. Commercial software typically offers faster time to value with a higher upfront cost, and the need for a dedicated observability team evolves over time as adoption, complexity, and maturity increase. Self-hosted solutions require more time for deployment, setup and configuration, maintenance, and operational overhead in comparison with cloud-based solutions.

Pricing dimensions

How will the tool's pricing model impact your total cost of ownership (TCO) as your application gains new users, a larger architecture footprint, or new features and applications? For example, some typical licensing models are perpetual or based on subscriptions, the number of named users, consumption, or volume. Consider how your application and the observability tool will scale in usage and how the licensing model can impact the cost of the tool.

Team skills

Depending on the current skill set and maturity of your team, you'll need to determine how much upskilling will be required. Consider what kind of support the vendor provides to train your team. Also consider whether your organizational structure supports the configuration and management of the tool that you choose. For example, if you choose OpenTelemetry, you should consider setting up a separate team that specializes in observability.

Operations and maintenance

Evaluate the following questions:

- What deployment options does the observability agent or collector offer? Do those options meet the requirements of your architecture? For example, if you use a containerized deployment for the observability tool, does it support a daemonset or sidecar? What additional steps or tools would the operations team need to take or use to ensure alignment with security and all other processes?
- What is the effort required to maintain the solution? How simple or automated is the process of updating the agent or collector? Fully managed and cloud-based observability interfaces typically have lower operational overhead compared with self-deployed and hosted applications, although the management of the agent or collector stays the same. Take your team structure into consideration, and factor in the human cost of maintaining the option you choose.

Instrument your application

The answers to the questions in the previous section give you the information you need to instrument your application—that is, to add code to capture telemetry signals to your application and to measure, observe, and validate behaviors. You can use SDKs such as the OpenTelemetry SDK for your application's language to automatically instrument your application. You might still need to add manual instrumentation code to cover any gaps and to ensure end-to-end visibility. Be intentional about the telemetry you add, and make sure that you can connect it back to one or more SLIs and SLOs that you established in the previous stage.

Collect telemetry

Configure the telemetry collector or agent to ingest the relevant telemetry signals in alignment with the outcomes that you prioritized in [stage 1](#).

Implement observability components

When the telemetry is flowing and ingested into an observability platform, create dashboards, alerts, playbooks, and runbooks.

- **Dashboards:** Create dashboards that contain relevant information, including a visual representation of current and historical trends associated with your prioritized outcomes. Make

these dashboards available to the stakeholders you defined in [stage 1](#). For more information, see [Building dashboards for operational visibility](#) on the Amazon Builders' Library website.

- **Alerts:** Define alerts to notify your team when outcomes are at risk or are being breached. Consider adding [alerts for security and performance issues](#). Optimize alerts to [reduce alert fatigue](#) and costs by adopting the following:
 - Use anomaly detection to avoid setting hard thresholds, which require frequent adjustments, and to reduce the occurrence of unknown-unknowns.
 - Use intelligent alert combinations that look at multiple, related metrics together instead of setting up individual alerts for each metric. For example, instead of setting up separate alerts for CPU, memory, and response time, create one meaningful alert that triggers only when these metrics collectively indicate a real problem. This approach significantly reduces alert noise and helps your teams focus on actual service-impacting issues instead of having to respond to isolated metric spikes.
 - Generate alerts only when user experience or outcomes are at risk. For example, avoid getting alerts about a CPU spike that's caused by an automated upgrade when your application has no active users.
- **Playbooks:** A playbook provides a mental model and context to the person who responds to an incident or alert, and helps them identify the root cause faster. Consider creating playbooks for highly coupled, complex applications and for applications that lack instrumentation but directly impact the outcomes you identified and prioritized in [stage 1](#).
- **Runbooks:** Use runbooks to define the steps that are required to resolve an incident or alert.

Validate the observability system

Throughout your software development lifecycle (SDLC), validate that dashboards provide the expected behaviors and updates during system tests. Implement [chaos engineering](#) and validate the steps that are documented in playbooks and runbooks, to make sure that they are accurate and serve their purpose. You should also validate alert ownership and escalation paths.

Stage 3: Inspect, adapt and iterate

After you implement your observability system, we recommend that you continually review, assess, learn, adapt, and improve your implementation. You can use the [AWS Observability Maturity Model](#) as a tool to assess the maturity of your implementation and to identify and prioritize areas for improvement.

Implement regular reviews

Observability is an iterative process. It requires regular audits and assessments of existing components, and changes and enhancements to drive continual improvement. We recommend that you perform regular reviews to reevaluate SLOs, alert thresholds, dashboards, metric granularity, retention policies, sampling strategies, and so on to ensure that these are driving value for your teams and business. By connecting observability costs to specific teams and services, you can enable data-driven decisions about coverage and resource allocation.

At Amazon, we conduct weekly [Operational Readiness Reviews \(ORRs\)](#) to audit teams' processes and observability postures against best practices. This is a non-blocking exercise that aligns with the number of services and frequency of releases at Amazon.

Depending on the size of your organization, you can also have a business as usual (BAU) roster, where one member of each team is responsible for reporting on anomalies and trends, uncovering unknown-unknowns, removing unwanted instrumentation and alerts, improving dashboards, and ensuring that the observability solution continues to work for the team and is aligned to the team's objectives and success metrics. This could also be an opportunity to reassess the alerting strategy to be more responsive, proactive, and closer to the user. The goal with these reviews is to create a virtuous cycle, as shown in the following illustration, and to improve the maturity of your observability posture maturity, as described in the [AWS Observability Maturity Model](#).



Identify the playbooks that are accessed most frequently and consider improving your application or adding more instrumentation. Identify the runbooks that are executed most frequently and consider automating those runbooks.

The learnings from these reviews are also shared with the observability squad and specialists, to highlight improvements in central programs and the observability platform. For example, depending on the frequency of deployment-triggered events, you might decide to prioritize the improvement of the deployment pipeline over other components. If the MTTR is higher because of monitoring gaps, you can prioritize improving the observability platform and its configuration.

Celebrate wins

Share success stories from teams that use observability tools. For example, highlight the success of a team that used observability metrics to implement an alternative solution that is more efficient and leads to lower latency or cost. Communicating this success underscores the importance of observability and motivates other teams to improve their observability posture and strive for similar success.

Learn from incidents

Conduct blameless post-incident exercises similar to the [correction of errors \(COE\)](#) process at Amazon to identify areas for improvement and to prevent future issues. As with wins, the learnings from this exercise can be shared broadly with other teams to reinforce the value of observability and best practices.

Next steps and resources

By starting with your users and business outcomes, and by focusing on impact, you can derive better value from your observability solution while controlling costs and avoiding tool sprawl. Remember that observability is an iterative process, not a destination. Set up your teams and processes to continuously iterate and improve your observability posture, incorporate best practices, and close gaps as your architecture, business requirements, and teams evolve, with well-defined goals as a guide. By planning for failure, incorporating a culture of continuous improvement, and adopting the best practices that are discussed in this guide, you should be able to put the guidance from Dr. Werner Vogels into practice: “Everything fails all the time... so plan for failure and nothing will fail.”

For a hands-on workshop to help you define your observability strategy, contact your AWS representative to deliver an [Observability Strategy workshop](#).

Resources

For more information and guidance for implementing an effective observability strategy on AWS, see the following resources:

- [Monitoring and observability](#) (AWS observability services)
- [AWS Observability Best Practices](#)
- [AWS Distro for OpenTelemetry](#)
- [Operational excellence pillar](#) (AWS Well-Architected Framework)
- [Building dashboards for operational visibility](#) (The Amazon Builders' Library)
- [Observability](#) (in *DevOps guidance*, AWS Well-Architected Framework)

Document history

The following table describes significant changes to this guide. If you want to be notified about future updates, you can subscribe to an [RSS feed](#).

Change	Description	Date
<u>Initial publication</u>	—	July 16, 2025

AWS Prescriptive Guidance glossary

The following are commonly used terms in strategies, guides, and patterns provided by AWS Prescriptive Guidance. To suggest entries, please use the **Provide feedback** link at the end of the glossary.

Numbers

7 Rs

Seven common migration strategies for moving applications to the cloud. These strategies build upon the 5 Rs that Gartner identified in 2011 and consist of the following:

- Refactor/re-architect – Move an application and modify its architecture by taking full advantage of cloud-native features to improve agility, performance, and scalability. This typically involves porting the operating system and database. Example: Migrate your on-premises Oracle database to the Amazon Aurora PostgreSQL-Compatible Edition.
- Replatform (lift and reshape) – Move an application to the cloud, and introduce some level of optimization to take advantage of cloud capabilities. Example: Migrate your on-premises Oracle database to Amazon Relational Database Service (Amazon RDS) for Oracle in the AWS Cloud.
- Repurchase (drop and shop) – Switch to a different product, typically by moving from a traditional license to a SaaS model. Example: Migrate your customer relationship management (CRM) system to Salesforce.com.
- Rehost (lift and shift) – Move an application to the cloud without making any changes to take advantage of cloud capabilities. Example: Migrate your on-premises Oracle database to Oracle on an EC2 instance in the AWS Cloud.
- Relocate (hypervisor-level lift and shift) – Move infrastructure to the cloud without purchasing new hardware, rewriting applications, or modifying your existing operations. You migrate servers from an on-premises platform to a cloud service for the same platform. Example: Migrate a Microsoft Hyper-V application to AWS.
- Retain (revisit) – Keep applications in your source environment. These might include applications that require major refactoring, and you want to postpone that work until a later time, and legacy applications that you want to retain, because there's no business justification for migrating them.

- Retire – Decommission or remove applications that are no longer needed in your source environment.

A

ABAC

See [attribute-based access control](#).

abstracted services

See [managed services](#).

ACID

See [atomicity, consistency, isolation, durability](#).

active-active migration

A database migration method in which the source and target databases are kept in sync (by using a bidirectional replication tool or dual write operations), and both databases handle transactions from connecting applications during migration. This method supports migration in small, controlled batches instead of requiring a one-time cutover. It's more flexible but requires more work than [active-passive migration](#).

active-passive migration

A database migration method in which the source and target databases are kept in sync, but only the source database handles transactions from connecting applications while data is replicated to the target database. The target database doesn't accept any transactions during migration.

aggregate function

A SQL function that operates on a group of rows and calculates a single return value for the group. Examples of aggregate functions include SUM and MAX.

AI

See [artificial intelligence](#).

AIOps

See [artificial intelligence operations](#).

anonymization

The process of permanently deleting personal information in a dataset. Anonymization can help protect personal privacy. Anonymized data is no longer considered to be personal data.

anti-pattern

A frequently used solution for a recurring issue where the solution is counter-productive, ineffective, or less effective than an alternative.

application control

A security approach that allows the use of only approved applications in order to help protect a system from malware.

application portfolio

A collection of detailed information about each application used by an organization, including the cost to build and maintain the application, and its business value. This information is key to [the portfolio discovery and analysis process](#) and helps identify and prioritize the applications to be migrated, modernized, and optimized.

artificial intelligence (AI)

The field of computer science that is dedicated to using computing technologies to perform cognitive functions that are typically associated with humans, such as learning, solving problems, and recognizing patterns. For more information, see [What is Artificial Intelligence?](#)

artificial intelligence operations (AIOps)

The process of using machine learning techniques to solve operational problems, reduce operational incidents and human intervention, and increase service quality. For more information about how AIOps is used in the AWS migration strategy, see the [operations integration guide](#).

asymmetric encryption

An encryption algorithm that uses a pair of keys, a public key for encryption and a private key for decryption. You can share the public key because it isn't used for decryption, but access to the private key should be highly restricted.

atomicity, consistency, isolation, durability (ACID)

A set of software properties that guarantee the data validity and operational reliability of a database, even in the case of errors, power failures, or other problems.

attribute-based access control (ABAC)

The practice of creating fine-grained permissions based on user attributes, such as department, job role, and team name. For more information, see [ABAC for AWS](#) in the AWS Identity and Access Management (IAM) documentation.

authoritative data source

A location where you store the primary version of data, which is considered to be the most reliable source of information. You can copy data from the authoritative data source to other locations for the purposes of processing or modifying the data, such as anonymizing, redacting, or pseudonymizing it.

Availability Zone

A distinct location within an AWS Region that is insulated from failures in other Availability Zones and provides inexpensive, low-latency network connectivity to other Availability Zones in the same Region.

AWS Cloud Adoption Framework (AWS CAF)

A framework of guidelines and best practices from AWS to help organizations develop an efficient and effective plan to move successfully to the cloud. AWS CAF organizes guidance into six focus areas called perspectives: business, people, governance, platform, security, and operations. The business, people, and governance perspectives focus on business skills and processes; the platform, security, and operations perspectives focus on technical skills and processes. For example, the people perspective targets stakeholders who handle human resources (HR), staffing functions, and people management. For this perspective, AWS CAF provides guidance for people development, training, and communications to help ready the organization for successful cloud adoption. For more information, see the [AWS CAF website](#) and the [AWS CAF whitepaper](#).

AWS Workload Qualification Framework (AWS WQF)

A tool that evaluates database migration workloads, recommends migration strategies, and provides work estimates. AWS WQF is included with AWS Schema Conversion Tool (AWS SCT). It analyzes database schemas and code objects, application code, dependencies, and performance characteristics, and provides assessment reports.

B

bad bot

A [bot](#) that is intended to disrupt or cause harm to individuals or organizations.

BCP

See [business continuity planning](#).

behavior graph

A unified, interactive view of resource behavior and interactions over time. You can use a behavior graph with Amazon Detective to examine failed logon attempts, suspicious API calls, and similar actions. For more information, see [Data in a behavior graph](#) in the Detective documentation.

big-endian system

A system that stores the most significant byte first. See also [endianness](#).

binary classification

A process that predicts a binary outcome (one of two possible classes). For example, your ML model might need to predict problems such as "Is this email spam or not spam?" or "Is this product a book or a car?"

bloom filter

A probabilistic, memory-efficient data structure that is used to test whether an element is a member of a set.

blue/green deployment

A deployment strategy where you create two separate but identical environments. You run the current application version in one environment (blue) and the new application version in the other environment (green). This strategy helps you quickly roll back with minimal impact.

bot

A software application that runs automated tasks over the internet and simulates human activity or interaction. Some bots are useful or beneficial, such as web crawlers that index information on the internet. Some other bots, known as *bad bots*, are intended to disrupt or cause harm to individuals or organizations.

botnet

Networks of [bots](#) that are infected by [malware](#) and are under the control of a single party, known as a *bot herder* or *bot operator*. Botnets are the best-known mechanism to scale bots and their impact.

branch

A contained area of a code repository. The first branch created in a repository is the *main branch*. You can create a new branch from an existing branch, and you can then develop features or fix bugs in the new branch. A branch you create to build a feature is commonly referred to as a *feature branch*. When the feature is ready for release, you merge the feature branch back into the main branch. For more information, see [About branches](#) (GitHub documentation).

break-glass access

In exceptional circumstances and through an approved process, a quick means for a user to gain access to an AWS account that they don't typically have permissions to access. For more information, see the [Implement break-glass procedures](#) indicator in the AWS Well-Architected guidance.

brownfield strategy

The existing infrastructure in your environment. When adopting a brownfield strategy for a system architecture, you design the architecture around the constraints of the current systems and infrastructure. If you are expanding the existing infrastructure, you might blend brownfield and [greenfield](#) strategies.

buffer cache

The memory area where the most frequently accessed data is stored.

business capability

What a business does to generate value (for example, sales, customer service, or marketing). Microservices architectures and development decisions can be driven by business capabilities. For more information, see the [Organized around business capabilities](#) section of the [Running containerized microservices on AWS](#) whitepaper.

business continuity planning (BCP)

A plan that addresses the potential impact of a disruptive event, such as a large-scale migration, on operations and enables a business to resume operations quickly.

C

CAF

See [AWS Cloud Adoption Framework](#).

canary deployment

The slow and incremental release of a version to end users. When you are confident, you deploy the new version and replace the current version in its entirety.

CCoE

See [Cloud Center of Excellence](#).

CDC

See [change data capture](#).

change data capture (CDC)

The process of tracking changes to a data source, such as a database table, and recording metadata about the change. You can use CDC for various purposes, such as auditing or replicating changes in a target system to maintain synchronization.

chaos engineering

Intentionally introducing failures or disruptive events to test a system's resilience. You can use [AWS Fault Injection Service \(AWS FIS\)](#) to perform experiments that stress your AWS workloads and evaluate their response.

CI/CD

See [continuous integration and continuous delivery](#).

classification

A categorization process that helps generate predictions. ML models for classification problems predict a discrete value. Discrete values are always distinct from one another. For example, a model might need to evaluate whether or not there is a car in an image.

client-side encryption

Encryption of data locally, before the target AWS service receives it.

Cloud Center of Excellence (CCoE)

A multi-disciplinary team that drives cloud adoption efforts across an organization, including developing cloud best practices, mobilizing resources, establishing migration timelines, and leading the organization through large-scale transformations. For more information, see the [CCoE posts](#) on the AWS Cloud Enterprise Strategy Blog.

cloud computing

The cloud technology that is typically used for remote data storage and IoT device management. Cloud computing is commonly connected to [edge computing](#) technology.

cloud operating model

In an IT organization, the operating model that is used to build, mature, and optimize one or more cloud environments. For more information, see [Building your Cloud Operating Model](#).

cloud stages of adoption

The four phases that organizations typically go through when they migrate to the AWS Cloud:

- Project – Running a few cloud-related projects for proof of concept and learning purposes
- Foundation – Making foundational investments to scale your cloud adoption (e.g., creating a landing zone, defining a CCoE, establishing an operations model)
- Migration – Migrating individual applications
- Re-invention – Optimizing products and services, and innovating in the cloud

These stages were defined by Stephen Orban in the blog post [The Journey Toward Cloud-First & the Stages of Adoption](#) on the AWS Cloud Enterprise Strategy blog. For information about how they relate to the AWS migration strategy, see the [migration readiness guide](#).

CMDB

See [configuration management database](#).

code repository

A location where source code and other assets, such as documentation, samples, and scripts, are stored and updated through version control processes. Common cloud repositories include GitHub or Bitbucket Cloud. Each version of the code is called a *branch*. In a microservice structure, each repository is devoted to a single piece of functionality. A single CI/CD pipeline can use multiple repositories.

cold cache

A buffer cache that is empty, not well populated, or contains stale or irrelevant data. This affects performance because the database instance must read from the main memory or disk, which is slower than reading from the buffer cache.

cold data

Data that is rarely accessed and is typically historical. When querying this kind of data, slow queries are typically acceptable. Moving this data to lower-performing and less expensive storage tiers or classes can reduce costs.

computer vision (CV)

A field of [AI](#) that uses machine learning to analyze and extract information from visual formats such as digital images and videos. For example, Amazon SageMaker AI provides image processing algorithms for CV.

configuration drift

For a workload, a configuration change from the expected state. It might cause the workload to become noncompliant, and it's typically gradual and unintentional.

configuration management database (CMDB)

A repository that stores and manages information about a database and its IT environment, including both hardware and software components and their configurations. You typically use data from a CMDB in the portfolio discovery and analysis stage of migration.

conformance pack

A collection of AWS Config rules and remediation actions that you can assemble to customize your compliance and security checks. You can deploy a conformance pack as a single entity in an AWS account and Region, or across an organization, by using a YAML template. For more information, see [Conformance packs](#) in the AWS Config documentation.

continuous integration and continuous delivery (CI/CD)

The process of automating the source, build, test, staging, and production stages of the software release process. CI/CD is commonly described as a pipeline. CI/CD can help you automate processes, improve productivity, improve code quality, and deliver faster. For more information, see [Benefits of continuous delivery](#). CD can also stand for *continuous deployment*. For more information, see [Continuous Delivery vs. Continuous Deployment](#).

CV

See [computer vision](#).

D**data at rest**

Data that is stationary in your network, such as data that is in storage.

data classification

A process for identifying and categorizing the data in your network based on its criticality and sensitivity. It is a critical component of any cybersecurity risk management strategy because it helps you determine the appropriate protection and retention controls for the data. Data classification is a component of the security pillar in the AWS Well-Architected Framework. For more information, see [Data classification](#).

data drift

A meaningful variation between the production data and the data that was used to train an ML model, or a meaningful change in the input data over time. Data drift can reduce the overall quality, accuracy, and fairness in ML model predictions.

data in transit

Data that is actively moving through your network, such as between network resources.

data mesh

An architectural framework that provides distributed, decentralized data ownership with centralized management and governance.

data minimization

The principle of collecting and processing only the data that is strictly necessary. Practicing data minimization in the AWS Cloud can reduce privacy risks, costs, and your analytics carbon footprint.

data perimeter

A set of preventive guardrails in your AWS environment that help make sure that only trusted identities are accessing trusted resources from expected networks. For more information, see [Building a data perimeter on AWS](#).

data preprocessing

To transform raw data into a format that is easily parsed by your ML model. Preprocessing data can mean removing certain columns or rows and addressing missing, inconsistent, or duplicate values.

data provenance

The process of tracking the origin and history of data throughout its lifecycle, such as how the data was generated, transmitted, and stored.

data subject

An individual whose data is being collected and processed.

data warehouse

A data management system that supports business intelligence, such as analytics. Data warehouses commonly contain large amounts of historical data, and they are typically used for queries and analysis.

database definition language (DDL)

Statements or commands for creating or modifying the structure of tables and objects in a database.

database manipulation language (DML)

Statements or commands for modifying (inserting, updating, and deleting) information in a database.

DDL

See [database definition language](#).

deep ensemble

To combine multiple deep learning models for prediction. You can use deep ensembles to obtain a more accurate prediction or for estimating uncertainty in predictions.

deep learning

An ML subfield that uses multiple layers of artificial neural networks to identify mapping between input data and target variables of interest.

defense-in-depth

An information security approach in which a series of security mechanisms and controls are thoughtfully layered throughout a computer network to protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of the network and the data within. When you adopt this strategy on AWS, you add multiple controls at different layers of the AWS Organizations structure to help secure resources. For example, a defense-in-depth approach might combine multi-factor authentication, network segmentation, and encryption.

delegated administrator

In AWS Organizations, a compatible service can register an AWS member account to administer the organization's accounts and manage permissions for that service. This account is called the *delegated administrator* for that service. For more information and a list of compatible services, see [Services that work with AWS Organizations](#) in the AWS Organizations documentation.

deployment

The process of making an application, new features, or code fixes available in the target environment. Deployment involves implementing changes in a code base and then building and running that code base in the application's environments.

development environment

See [environment](#).

detective control

A security control that is designed to detect, log, and alert after an event has occurred. These controls are a second line of defense, alerting you to security events that bypassed the preventative controls in place. For more information, see [Detective controls](#) in *Implementing security controls on AWS*.

development value stream mapping (DVSM)

A process used to identify and prioritize constraints that adversely affect speed and quality in a software development lifecycle. DVSM extends the value stream mapping process originally designed for lean manufacturing practices. It focuses on the steps and teams required to create and move value through the software development process.

digital twin

A virtual representation of a real-world system, such as a building, factory, industrial equipment, or production line. Digital twins support predictive maintenance, remote monitoring, and production optimization.

dimension table

In a [star schema](#), a smaller table that contains data attributes about quantitative data in a fact table. Dimension table attributes are typically text fields or discrete numbers that behave like text. These attributes are commonly used for query constraining, filtering, and result set labeling.

disaster

An event that prevents a workload or system from fulfilling its business objectives in its primary deployed location. These events can be natural disasters, technical failures, or the result of human actions, such as unintentional misconfiguration or a malware attack.

disaster recovery (DR)

The strategy and process you use to minimize downtime and data loss caused by a [disaster](#). For more information, see [Disaster Recovery of Workloads on AWS: Recovery in the Cloud](#) in the AWS Well-Architected Framework.

DML

See [database manipulation language](#).

domain-driven design

An approach to developing a complex software system by connecting its components to evolving domains, or core business goals, that each component serves. This concept was introduced by Eric Evans in his book, *Domain-Driven Design: Tackling Complexity in the Heart of Software* (Boston: Addison-Wesley Professional, 2003). For information about how you can use domain-driven design with the strangler fig pattern, see [Modernizing legacy Microsoft ASP.NET \(ASMX\) web services incrementally by using containers and Amazon API Gateway](#).

DR

See [disaster recovery](#).

drift detection

Tracking deviations from a baselined configuration. For example, you can use AWS CloudFormation to [detect drift in system resources](#), or you can use AWS Control Tower to [detect changes in your landing zone](#) that might affect compliance with governance requirements.

DVSM

See [development value stream mapping](#).

E

EDA

See [exploratory data analysis](#).

EDI

See [electronic data interchange](#).

edge computing

The technology that increases the computing power for smart devices at the edges of an IoT network. When compared with [cloud computing](#), edge computing can reduce communication latency and improve response time.

electronic data interchange (EDI)

The automated exchange of business documents between organizations. For more information, see [What is Electronic Data Interchange](#).

encryption

A computing process that transforms plaintext data, which is human-readable, into ciphertext.

encryption key

A cryptographic string of randomized bits that is generated by an encryption algorithm. Keys can vary in length, and each key is designed to be unpredictable and unique.

endianness

The order in which bytes are stored in computer memory. Big-endian systems store the most significant byte first. Little-endian systems store the least significant byte first.

endpoint

See [service endpoint](#).

endpoint service

A service that you can host in a virtual private cloud (VPC) to share with other users. You can create an endpoint service with AWS PrivateLink and grant permissions to other AWS accounts or to AWS Identity and Access Management (IAM) principals. These accounts or principals can connect to your endpoint service privately by creating interface VPC endpoints. For more

information, see [Create an endpoint service](#) in the Amazon Virtual Private Cloud (Amazon VPC) documentation.

enterprise resource planning (ERP)

A system that automates and manages key business processes (such as accounting, [MES](#), and project management) for an enterprise.

envelope encryption

The process of encrypting an encryption key with another encryption key. For more information, see [Envelope encryption](#) in the AWS Key Management Service (AWS KMS) documentation.

environment

An instance of a running application. The following are common types of environments in cloud computing:

- development environment – An instance of a running application that is available only to the core team responsible for maintaining the application. Development environments are used to test changes before promoting them to upper environments. This type of environment is sometimes referred to as a *test environment*.
- lower environments – All development environments for an application, such as those used for initial builds and tests.
- production environment – An instance of a running application that end users can access. In a CI/CD pipeline, the production environment is the last deployment environment.
- upper environments – All environments that can be accessed by users other than the core development team. This can include a production environment, preproduction environments, and environments for user acceptance testing.

epic

In agile methodologies, functional categories that help organize and prioritize your work. Epics provide a high-level description of requirements and implementation tasks. For example, AWS CAF security epics include identity and access management, detective controls, infrastructure security, data protection, and incident response. For more information about epics in the AWS migration strategy, see the [program implementation guide](#).

ERP

See [enterprise resource planning](#).

exploratory data analysis (EDA)

The process of analyzing a dataset to understand its main characteristics. You collect or aggregate data and then perform initial investigations to find patterns, detect anomalies, and check assumptions. EDA is performed by calculating summary statistics and creating data visualizations.

F

fact table

The central table in a [star schema](#). It stores quantitative data about business operations. Typically, a fact table contains two types of columns: those that contain measures and those that contain a foreign key to a dimension table.

fail fast

A philosophy that uses frequent and incremental testing to reduce the development lifecycle. It is a critical part of an agile approach.

fault isolation boundary

In the AWS Cloud, a boundary such as an Availability Zone, AWS Region, control plane, or data plane that limits the effect of a failure and helps improve the resilience of workloads. For more information, see [AWS Fault Isolation Boundaries](#).

feature branch

See [branch](#).

features

The input data that you use to make a prediction. For example, in a manufacturing context, features could be images that are periodically captured from the manufacturing line.

feature importance

How significant a feature is for a model's predictions. This is usually expressed as a numerical score that can be calculated through various techniques, such as Shapley Additive Explanations (SHAP) and integrated gradients. For more information, see [Machine learning model interpretability with AWS](#).

feature transformation

To optimize data for the ML process, including enriching data with additional sources, scaling values, or extracting multiple sets of information from a single data field. This enables the ML model to benefit from the data. For example, if you break down the “2021-05-27 00:15:37” date into “2021”, “May”, “Thu”, and “15”, you can help the learning algorithm learn nuanced patterns associated with different data components.

few-shot prompting

Providing an [LLM](#) with a small number of examples that demonstrate the task and desired output before asking it to perform a similar task. This technique is an application of in-context learning, where models learn from examples (*shots*) that are embedded in prompts. Few-shot prompting can be effective for tasks that require specific formatting, reasoning, or domain knowledge. See also [zero-shot prompting](#).

FGAC

See [fine-grained access control](#).

fine-grained access control (FGAC)

The use of multiple conditions to allow or deny an access request.

flash-cut migration

A database migration method that uses continuous data replication through [change data capture](#) to migrate data in the shortest time possible, instead of using a phased approach. The objective is to keep downtime to a minimum.

FM

See [foundation model](#).

foundation model (FM)

A large deep-learning neural network that has been training on massive datasets of generalized and unlabeled data. FMs are capable of performing a wide variety of general tasks, such as understanding language, generating text and images, and conversing in natural language. For more information, see [What are Foundation Models](#).

G

generative AI

A subset of [AI](#) models that have been trained on large amounts of data and that can use a simple text prompt to create new content and artifacts, such as images, videos, text, and audio. For more information, see [What is Generative AI](#).

geo blocking

See [geographic restrictions](#).

geographic restrictions (geo blocking)

In Amazon CloudFront, an option to prevent users in specific countries from accessing content distributions. You can use an allow list or block list to specify approved and banned countries. For more information, see [Restricting the geographic distribution of your content](#) in the CloudFront documentation.

Gitflow workflow

An approach in which lower and upper environments use different branches in a source code repository. The Gitflow workflow is considered legacy, and the [trunk-based workflow](#) is the modern, preferred approach.

golden image

A snapshot of a system or software that is used as a template to deploy new instances of that system or software. For example, in manufacturing, a golden image can be used to provision software on multiple devices and helps improve speed, scalability, and productivity in device manufacturing operations.

greenfield strategy

The absence of existing infrastructure in a new environment. When adopting a greenfield strategy for a system architecture, you can select all new technologies without the restriction of compatibility with existing infrastructure, also known as [brownfield](#). If you are expanding the existing infrastructure, you might blend brownfield and greenfield strategies.

guardrail

A high-level rule that helps govern resources, policies, and compliance across organizational units (OUs). *Preventive guardrails* enforce policies to ensure alignment to compliance standards. They are implemented by using service control policies and IAM permissions boundaries.

Detective guardrails detect policy violations and compliance issues, and generate alerts for remediation. They are implemented by using AWS Config, AWS Security Hub CSPM, Amazon GuardDuty, AWS Trusted Advisor, Amazon Inspector, and custom AWS Lambda checks.

H

HA

See [high availability](#).

heterogeneous database migration

Migrating your source database to a target database that uses a different database engine (for example, Oracle to Amazon Aurora). Heterogeneous migration is typically part of a re-architecting effort, and converting the schema can be a complex task. [AWS provides AWS SCT](#) that helps with schema conversions.

high availability (HA)

The ability of a workload to operate continuously, without intervention, in the event of challenges or disasters. HA systems are designed to automatically fail over, consistently deliver high-quality performance, and handle different loads and failures with minimal performance impact.

historian modernization

An approach used to modernize and upgrade operational technology (OT) systems to better serve the needs of the manufacturing industry. A *historian* is a type of database that is used to collect and store data from various sources in a factory.

holdout data

A portion of historical, labeled data that is withheld from a dataset that is used to train a [machine learning](#) model. You can use holdout data to evaluate the model performance by comparing the model predictions against the holdout data.

homogeneous database migration

Migrating your source database to a target database that shares the same database engine (for example, Microsoft SQL Server to Amazon RDS for SQL Server). Homogeneous migration is typically part of a rehosting or replatforming effort. You can use native database utilities to migrate the schema.

hot data

Data that is frequently accessed, such as real-time data or recent translational data. This data typically requires a high-performance storage tier or class to provide fast query responses.

hotfix

An urgent fix for a critical issue in a production environment. Due to its urgency, a hotfix is usually made outside of the typical DevOps release workflow.

hypercare period

Immediately following cutover, the period of time when a migration team manages and monitors the migrated applications in the cloud in order to address any issues. Typically, this period is 1–4 days in length. At the end of the hypercare period, the migration team typically transfers responsibility for the applications to the cloud operations team.

I

IaC

See [infrastructure as code](#).

identity-based policy

A policy attached to one or more IAM principals that defines their permissions within the AWS Cloud environment.

idle application

An application that has an average CPU and memory usage between 5 and 20 percent over a period of 90 days. In a migration project, it is common to retire these applications or retain them on premises.

IIoT

See [industrial Internet of Things](#).

immutable infrastructure

A model that deploys new infrastructure for production workloads instead of updating, patching, or modifying the existing infrastructure. Immutable infrastructures are inherently more consistent, reliable, and predictable than [mutable infrastructure](#). For more information, see the [Deploy using immutable infrastructure](#) best practice in the AWS Well-Architected Framework.

inbound (ingress) VPC

In an AWS multi-account architecture, a VPC that accepts, inspects, and routes network connections from outside an application. The [AWS Security Reference Architecture](#) recommends setting up your Network account with inbound, outbound, and inspection VPCs to protect the two-way interface between your application and the broader internet.

incremental migration

A cutover strategy in which you migrate your application in small parts instead of performing a single, full cutover. For example, you might move only a few microservices or users to the new system initially. After you verify that everything is working properly, you can incrementally move additional microservices or users until you can decommission your legacy system. This strategy reduces the risks associated with large migrations.

Industry 4.0

A term that was introduced by [Klaus Schwab](#) in 2016 to refer to the modernization of manufacturing processes through advances in connectivity, real-time data, automation, analytics, and AI/ML.

infrastructure

All of the resources and assets contained within an application's environment.

infrastructure as code (IaC)

The process of provisioning and managing an application's infrastructure through a set of configuration files. IaC is designed to help you centralize infrastructure management, standardize resources, and scale quickly so that new environments are repeatable, reliable, and consistent.

industrial Internet of Things (IIoT)

The use of internet-connected sensors and devices in the industrial sectors, such as manufacturing, energy, automotive, healthcare, life sciences, and agriculture. For more information, see [Building an industrial Internet of Things \(IIoT\) digital transformation strategy](#).

inspection VPC

In an AWS multi-account architecture, a centralized VPC that manages inspections of network traffic between VPCs (in the same or different AWS Regions), the internet, and on-premises networks. The [AWS Security Reference Architecture](#) recommends setting up your Network account with inbound, outbound, and inspection VPCs to protect the two-way interface between your application and the broader internet.

Internet of Things (IoT)

The network of connected physical objects with embedded sensors or processors that communicate with other devices and systems through the internet or over a local communication network. For more information, see [What is IoT?](#)

interpretability

A characteristic of a machine learning model that describes the degree to which a human can understand how the model's predictions depend on its inputs. For more information, see [Machine learning model interpretability with AWS](#).

IoT

See [Internet of Things](#).

IT information library (ITIL)

A set of best practices for delivering IT services and aligning these services with business requirements. ITIL provides the foundation for ITSM.

IT service management (ITSM)

Activities associated with designing, implementing, managing, and supporting IT services for an organization. For information about integrating cloud operations with ITSM tools, see the [operations integration guide](#).

ITIL

See [IT information library](#).

ITSM

See [IT service management](#).

L

label-based access control (LBAC)

An implementation of mandatory access control (MAC) where the users and the data itself are each explicitly assigned a security label value. The intersection between the user security label and data security label determines which rows and columns can be seen by the user.

landing zone

A landing zone is a well-architected, multi-account AWS environment that is scalable and secure. This is a starting point from which your organizations can quickly launch and deploy workloads and applications with confidence in their security and infrastructure environment. For more information about landing zones, see [Setting up a secure and scalable multi-account AWS environment](#).

large language model (LLM)

A deep learning [AI](#) model that is pretrained on a vast amount of data. An LLM can perform multiple tasks, such as answering questions, summarizing documents, translating text into other languages, and completing sentences. For more information, see [What are LLMs](#).

large migration

A migration of 300 or more servers.

LBAC

See [label-based access control](#).

least privilege

The security best practice of granting the minimum permissions required to perform a task. For more information, see [Apply least-privilege permissions](#) in the IAM documentation.

lift and shift

See [7 Rs.](#)

little-endian system

A system that stores the least significant byte first. See also [endianness](#).

LLM

See [large language model](#).

lower environments

See [environment](#).

M

machine learning (ML)

A type of artificial intelligence that uses algorithms and techniques for pattern recognition and learning. ML analyzes and learns from recorded data, such as Internet of Things (IoT) data, to generate a statistical model based on patterns. For more information, see [Machine Learning](#).

main branch

See [branch](#).

malware

Software that is designed to compromise computer security or privacy. Malware might disrupt computer systems, leak sensitive information, or gain unauthorized access. Examples of malware include viruses, worms, ransomware, Trojan horses, spyware, and keyloggers.

managed services

AWS services for which AWS operates the infrastructure layer, the operating system, and platforms, and you access the endpoints to store and retrieve data. Amazon Simple Storage Service (Amazon S3) and Amazon DynamoDB are examples of managed services. These are also known as *abstracted services*.

manufacturing execution system (MES)

A software system for tracking, monitoring, documenting, and controlling production processes that convert raw materials to finished products on the shop floor.

MAP

See [Migration Acceleration Program](#).

mechanism

A complete process in which you create a tool, drive adoption of the tool, and then inspect the results in order to make adjustments. A mechanism is a cycle that reinforces and improves itself as it operates. For more information, see [Building mechanisms](#) in the AWS Well-Architected Framework.

member account

All AWS accounts other than the management account that are part of an organization in AWS Organizations. An account can be a member of only one organization at a time.

MES

See [manufacturing execution system](#).

Message Queuing Telemetry Transport (MQTT)

A lightweight, machine-to-machine (M2M) communication protocol, based on the [publish/subscribe](#) pattern, for resource-constrained [IoT](#) devices.

microservice

A small, independent service that communicates over well-defined APIs and is typically owned by small, self-contained teams. For example, an insurance system might include microservices that map to business capabilities, such as sales or marketing, or subdomains, such as purchasing, claims, or analytics. The benefits of microservices include agility, flexible scaling, easy deployment, reusable code, and resilience. For more information, see [Integrating microservices by using AWS serverless services](#).

microservices architecture

An approach to building an application with independent components that run each application process as a microservice. These microservices communicate through a well-defined interface by using lightweight APIs. Each microservice in this architecture can be updated, deployed, and scaled to meet demand for specific functions of an application. For more information, see [Implementing microservices on AWS](#).

Migration Acceleration Program (MAP)

An AWS program that provides consulting support, training, and services to help organizations build a strong operational foundation for moving to the cloud, and to help offset the initial cost of migrations. MAP includes a migration methodology for executing legacy migrations in a methodical way and a set of tools to automate and accelerate common migration scenarios.

migration at scale

The process of moving the majority of the application portfolio to the cloud in waves, with more applications moved at a faster rate in each wave. This phase uses the best practices and lessons learned from the earlier phases to implement a *migration factory* of teams, tools, and processes to streamline the migration of workloads through automation and agile delivery. This is the third phase of the [AWS migration strategy](#).

migration factory

Cross-functional teams that streamline the migration of workloads through automated, agile approaches. Migration factory teams typically include operations, business analysts and owners,

migration engineers, developers, and DevOps professionals working in sprints. Between 20 and 50 percent of an enterprise application portfolio consists of repeated patterns that can be optimized by a factory approach. For more information, see the [discussion of migration factories](#) and the [Cloud Migration Factory guide](#) in this content set.

migration metadata

The information about the application and server that is needed to complete the migration. Each migration pattern requires a different set of migration metadata. Examples of migration metadata include the target subnet, security group, and AWS account.

migration pattern

A repeatable migration task that details the migration strategy, the migration destination, and the migration application or service used. Example: Rehost migration to Amazon EC2 with AWS Application Migration Service.

Migration Portfolio Assessment (MPA)

An online tool that provides information for validating the business case for migrating to the AWS Cloud. MPA provides detailed portfolio assessment (server right-sizing, pricing, TCO comparisons, migration cost analysis) as well as migration planning (application data analysis and data collection, application grouping, migration prioritization, and wave planning). The [MPA tool](#) (requires login) is available free of charge to all AWS consultants and APN Partner consultants.

Migration Readiness Assessment (MRA)

The process of gaining insights about an organization's cloud readiness status, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and building an action plan to close identified gaps, using the AWS CAF. For more information, see the [migration readiness guide](#). MRA is the first phase of the [AWS migration strategy](#).

migration strategy

The approach used to migrate a workload to the AWS Cloud. For more information, see the [7 Rs](#) entry in this glossary and see [Mobilize your organization to accelerate large-scale migrations](#).

ML

See [machine learning](#).

modernization

Transforming an outdated (legacy or monolithic) application and its infrastructure into an agile, elastic, and highly available system in the cloud to reduce costs, gain efficiencies, and take advantage of innovations. For more information, see [Strategy for modernizing applications in the AWS Cloud](#).

modernization readiness assessment

An evaluation that helps determine the modernization readiness of an organization's applications; identifies benefits, risks, and dependencies; and determines how well the organization can support the future state of those applications. The outcome of the assessment is a blueprint of the target architecture, a roadmap that details development phases and milestones for the modernization process, and an action plan for addressing identified gaps. For more information, see [Evaluating modernization readiness for applications in the AWS Cloud](#).

monolithic applications (monoliths)

Applications that run as a single service with tightly coupled processes. Monolithic applications have several drawbacks. If one application feature experiences a spike in demand, the entire architecture must be scaled. Adding or improving a monolithic application's features also becomes more complex when the code base grows. To address these issues, you can use a microservices architecture. For more information, see [Decomposing monoliths into microservices](#).

MPA

See [Migration Portfolio Assessment](#).

MQTT

See [Message Queuing Telemetry Transport](#).

multiclass classification

A process that helps generate predictions for multiple classes (predicting one of more than two outcomes). For example, an ML model might ask "Is this product a book, car, or phone?" or "Which product category is most interesting to this customer?"

mutable infrastructure

A model that updates and modifies the existing infrastructure for production workloads. For improved consistency, reliability, and predictability, the AWS Well-Architected Framework recommends the use of [immutable infrastructure](#) as a best practice.

O

OAC

See [origin access control](#).

OAI

See [origin access identity](#).

OCM

See [organizational change management](#).

offline migration

A migration method in which the source workload is taken down during the migration process.

This method involves extended downtime and is typically used for small, non-critical workloads.

OI

See [operations integration](#).

OLA

See [operational-level agreement](#).

online migration

A migration method in which the source workload is copied to the target system without being taken offline. Applications that are connected to the workload can continue to function during the migration. This method involves zero to minimal downtime and is typically used for critical production workloads.

OPC-UA

See [Open Process Communications - Unified Architecture](#).

Open Process Communications - Unified Architecture (OPC-UA)

A machine-to-machine (M2M) communication protocol for industrial automation. OPC-UA provides an interoperability standard with data encryption, authentication, and authorization schemes.

operational-level agreement (OLA)

An agreement that clarifies what functional IT groups promise to deliver to each other, to support a service-level agreement (SLA).

operational readiness review (ORR)

A checklist of questions and associated best practices that help you understand, evaluate, prevent, or reduce the scope of incidents and possible failures. For more information, see [Operational Readiness Reviews \(ORR\)](#) in the AWS Well-Architected Framework.

operational technology (OT)

Hardware and software systems that work with the physical environment to control industrial operations, equipment, and infrastructure. In manufacturing, the integration of OT and information technology (IT) systems is a key focus for [Industry 4.0](#) transformations.

operations integration (OI)

The process of modernizing operations in the cloud, which involves readiness planning, automation, and integration. For more information, see the [operations integration guide](#).

organization trail

A trail that's created by AWS CloudTrail that logs all events for all AWS accounts in an organization in AWS Organizations. This trail is created in each AWS account that's part of the organization and tracks the activity in each account. For more information, see [Creating a trail for an organization](#) in the CloudTrail documentation.

organizational change management (OCM)

A framework for managing major, disruptive business transformations from a people, culture, and leadership perspective. OCM helps organizations prepare for, and transition to, new systems and strategies by accelerating change adoption, addressing transitional issues, and driving cultural and organizational changes. In the AWS migration strategy, this framework is called *people acceleration*, because of the speed of change required in cloud adoption projects. For more information, see the [OCM guide](#).

origin access control (OAC)

In CloudFront, an enhanced option for restricting access to secure your Amazon Simple Storage Service (Amazon S3) content. OAC supports all S3 buckets in all AWS Regions, server-side encryption with AWS KMS (SSE-KMS), and dynamic PUT and DELETE requests to the S3 bucket.

origin access identity (OAI)

In CloudFront, an option for restricting access to secure your Amazon S3 content. When you use OAI, CloudFront creates a principal that Amazon S3 can authenticate with. Authenticated principals can access content in an S3 bucket only through a specific CloudFront distribution. See also [OAC](#), which provides more granular and enhanced access control.

ORR

See [operational readiness review](#).

OT

See [operational technology](#).

outbound (egress) VPC

In an AWS multi-account architecture, a VPC that handles network connections that are initiated from within an application. The [AWS Security Reference Architecture](#) recommends setting up your Network account with inbound, outbound, and inspection VPCs to protect the two-way interface between your application and the broader internet.

P

permissions boundary

An IAM management policy that is attached to IAM principals to set the maximum permissions that the user or role can have. For more information, see [Permissions boundaries](#) in the IAM documentation.

personally identifiable information (PII)

Information that, when viewed directly or paired with other related data, can be used to reasonably infer the identity of an individual. Examples of PII include names, addresses, and contact information.

PII

See [personally identifiable information](#).

playbook

A set of predefined steps that capture the work associated with migrations, such as delivering core operations functions in the cloud. A playbook can take the form of scripts, automated runbooks, or a summary of processes or steps required to operate your modernized environment.

PLC

See [programmable logic controller](#).

PLM

See [product lifecycle management](#).

policy

An object that can define permissions (see [identity-based policy](#)), specify access conditions (see [resource-based policy](#)), or define the maximum permissions for all accounts in an organization in AWS Organizations (see [service control policy](#)).

polyglot persistence

Independently choosing a microservice's data storage technology based on data access patterns and other requirements. If your microservices have the same data storage technology, they can encounter implementation challenges or experience poor performance. Microservices are more easily implemented and achieve better performance and scalability if they use the data store best adapted to their requirements. For more information, see [Enabling data persistence in microservices](#).

portfolio assessment

A process of discovering, analyzing, and prioritizing the application portfolio in order to plan the migration. For more information, see [Evaluating migration readiness](#).

predicate

A query condition that returns true or false, commonly located in a WHERE clause.

predicate pushdown

A database query optimization technique that filters the data in the query before transfer. This reduces the amount of data that must be retrieved and processed from the relational database, and it improves query performance.

preventative control

A security control that is designed to prevent an event from occurring. These controls are a first line of defense to help prevent unauthorized access or unwanted changes to your network. For more information, see [Preventative controls](#) in *Implementing security controls on AWS*.

principal

An entity in AWS that can perform actions and access resources. This entity is typically a root user for an AWS account, an IAM role, or a user. For more information, see *Principal* in [Roles terms and concepts](#) in the IAM documentation.

privacy by design

A system engineering approach that takes privacy into account through the whole development process.

private hosted zones

A container that holds information about how you want Amazon Route 53 to respond to DNS queries for a domain and its subdomains within one or more VPCs. For more information, see [Working with private hosted zones](#) in the Route 53 documentation.

proactive control

A [security control](#) designed to prevent the deployment of noncompliant resources. These controls scan resources before they are provisioned. If the resource is not compliant with the control, then it isn't provisioned. For more information, see the [Controls reference guide](#) in the AWS Control Tower documentation and see [Proactive controls](#) in *Implementing security controls on AWS*.

product lifecycle management (PLM)

The management of data and processes for a product throughout its entire lifecycle, from design, development, and launch, through growth and maturity, to decline and removal.

production environment

See [environment](#).

programmable logic controller (PLC)

In manufacturing, a highly reliable, adaptable computer that monitors machines and automates manufacturing processes.

prompt chaining

Using the output of one [LLM](#) prompt as the input for the next prompt to generate better responses. This technique is used to break down a complex task into subtasks, or to iteratively refine or expand a preliminary response. It helps improve the accuracy and relevance of a model's responses and allows for more granular, personalized results.

pseudonymization

The process of replacing personal identifiers in a dataset with placeholder values. Pseudonymization can help protect personal privacy. Pseudonymized data is still considered to be personal data.

publish/subscribe (pub/sub)

A pattern that enables asynchronous communications among microservices to improve scalability and responsiveness. For example, in a microservices-based [MES](#), a microservice can publish event messages to a channel that other microservices can subscribe to. The system can add new microservices without changing the publishing service.

Q

query plan

A series of steps, like instructions, that are used to access the data in a SQL relational database system.

query plan regression

When a database service optimizer chooses a less optimal plan than it did before a given change to the database environment. This can be caused by changes to statistics, constraints, environment settings, query parameter bindings, and updates to the database engine.

R

RACI matrix

See [responsible, accountable, consulted, informed \(RACI\)](#).

RAG

See [Retrieval Augmented Generation](#).

ransomware

A malicious software that is designed to block access to a computer system or data until a payment is made.

RASCI matrix

See [responsible, accountable, consulted, informed \(RACI\)](#).

RCAC

See [row and column access control](#).

read replica

A copy of a database that's used for read-only purposes. You can route queries to the read replica to reduce the load on your primary database.

re-architect

See [7 Rs.](#)

recovery point objective (RPO)

The maximum acceptable amount of time since the last data recovery point. This determines what is considered an acceptable loss of data between the last recovery point and the interruption of service.

recovery time objective (RTO)

The maximum acceptable delay between the interruption of service and restoration of service.

refactor

See [7 Rs.](#)

Region

A collection of AWS resources in a geographic area. Each AWS Region is isolated and independent of the others to provide fault tolerance, stability, and resilience. For more information, see [Specify which AWS Regions your account can use](#).

regression

An ML technique that predicts a numeric value. For example, to solve the problem of "What price will this house sell for?" an ML model could use a linear regression model to predict a house's sale price based on known facts about the house (for example, the square footage).

rehost

See [7 Rs.](#)

release

In a deployment process, the act of promoting changes to a production environment.

relocate

See [7 Rs.](#)

replatform

See [7 Rs.](#)

repurchase

See [7 Rs.](#)

resiliency

An application's ability to resist or recover from disruptions. [High availability](#) and [disaster recovery](#) are common considerations when planning for resiliency in the AWS Cloud. For more information, see [AWS Cloud Resilience](#).

resource-based policy

A policy attached to a resource, such as an Amazon S3 bucket, an endpoint, or an encryption key. This type of policy specifies which principals are allowed access, supported actions, and any other conditions that must be met.

responsible, accountable, consulted, informed (RACI) matrix

A matrix that defines the roles and responsibilities for all parties involved in migration activities and cloud operations. The matrix name is derived from the responsibility types defined in the matrix: responsible (R), accountable (A), consulted (C), and informed (I). The support (S) type is optional. If you include support, the matrix is called a *RASCI matrix*, and if you exclude it, it's called a *RACI matrix*.

responsive control

A security control that is designed to drive remediation of adverse events or deviations from your security baseline. For more information, see [Responsive controls](#) in *Implementing security controls on AWS*.

retain

See [7 Rs.](#)

retire

See [7 Rs.](#)

Retrieval Augmented Generation (RAG)

A [generative AI](#) technology in which an [LLM](#) references an authoritative data source that is outside of its training data sources before generating a response. For example, a RAG model might perform a semantic search of an organization's knowledge base or custom data. For more information, see [What is RAG](#).

rotation

The process of periodically updating a [secret](#) to make it more difficult for an attacker to access the credentials.

row and column access control (RCAC)

The use of basic, flexible SQL expressions that have defined access rules. RCAC consists of row permissions and column masks.

RPO

See [recovery point objective](#).

RTO

See [recovery time objective](#).

runbook

A set of manual or automated procedures required to perform a specific task. These are typically built to streamline repetitive operations or procedures with high error rates.

S

SAML 2.0

An open standard that many identity providers (IdPs) use. This feature enables federated single sign-on (SSO), so users can log into the AWS Management Console or call the AWS API operations without you having to create user in IAM for everyone in your organization. For more information about SAML 2.0-based federation, see [About SAML 2.0-based federation](#) in the IAM documentation.

SCADA

See [supervisory control and data acquisition](#).

SCP

See [service control policy](#).

secret

In AWS Secrets Manager, confidential or restricted information, such as a password or user credentials, that you store in encrypted form. It consists of the secret value and its metadata.

The secret value can be binary, a single string, or multiple strings. For more information, see [What's in a Secrets Manager secret?](#) in the Secrets Manager documentation.

security by design

A system engineering approach that takes security into account through the whole development process.

security control

A technical or administrative guardrail that prevents, detects, or reduces the ability of a threat actor to exploit a security vulnerability. There are four primary types of security controls: [preventative](#), [detective](#), [responsive](#), and [proactive](#).

security hardening

The process of reducing the attack surface to make it more resistant to attacks. This can include actions such as removing resources that are no longer needed, implementing the security best practice of granting least privilege, or deactivating unnecessary features in configuration files.

security information and event management (SIEM) system

Tools and services that combine security information management (SIM) and security event management (SEM) systems. A SIEM system collects, monitors, and analyzes data from servers, networks, devices, and other sources to detect threats and security breaches, and to generate alerts.

security response automation

A predefined and programmed action that is designed to automatically respond to or remediate a security event. These automations serve as [detective](#) or [responsive](#) security controls that help you implement AWS security best practices. Examples of automated response actions include modifying a VPC security group, patching an Amazon EC2 instance, or rotating credentials.

server-side encryption

Encryption of data at its destination, by the AWS service that receives it.

service control policy (SCP)

A policy that provides centralized control over permissions for all accounts in an organization in AWS Organizations. SCPs define guardrails or set limits on actions that an administrator can delegate to users or roles. You can use SCPs as allow lists or deny lists, to specify which services or actions are permitted or prohibited. For more information, see [Service control policies](#) in the AWS Organizations documentation.

service endpoint

The URL of the entry point for an AWS service. You can use the endpoint to connect programmatically to the target service. For more information, see [AWS service endpoints](#) in [AWS General Reference](#).

service-level agreement (SLA)

An agreement that clarifies what an IT team promises to deliver to their customers, such as service uptime and performance.

service-level indicator (SLI)

A measurement of a performance aspect of a service, such as its error rate, availability, or throughput.

service-level objective (SLO)

A target metric that represents the health of a service, as measured by a [service-level indicator](#).

shared responsibility model

A model describing the responsibility you share with AWS for cloud security and compliance. AWS is responsible for security *of* the cloud, whereas you are responsible for security *in* the cloud. For more information, see [Shared responsibility model](#).

SIEM

See [security information and event management system](#).

single point of failure (SPOF)

A failure in a single, critical component of an application that can disrupt the system.

SLA

See [service-level agreement](#).

SLI

See [service-level indicator](#).

SLO

See [service-level objective](#).

split-and-seed model

A pattern for scaling and accelerating modernization projects. As new features and product releases are defined, the core team splits up to create new product teams. This helps scale your

organization's capabilities and services, improves developer productivity, and supports rapid innovation. For more information, see [Phased approach to modernizing applications in the AWS Cloud](#).

SPOF

See [single point of failure](#).

star schema

A database organizational structure that uses one large fact table to store transactional or measured data and uses one or more smaller dimensional tables to store data attributes. This structure is designed for use in a [data warehouse](#) or for business intelligence purposes.

strangler fig pattern

An approach to modernizing monolithic systems by incrementally rewriting and replacing system functionality until the legacy system can be decommissioned. This pattern uses the analogy of a fig vine that grows into an established tree and eventually overcomes and replaces its host. The pattern was [introduced by Martin Fowler](#) as a way to manage risk when rewriting monolithic systems. For an example of how to apply this pattern, see [Modernizing legacy Microsoft ASP.NET \(ASMX\) web services incrementally by using containers and Amazon API Gateway](#).

subnet

A range of IP addresses in your VPC. A subnet must reside in a single Availability Zone.

supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA)

In manufacturing, a system that uses hardware and software to monitor physical assets and production operations.

symmetric encryption

An encryption algorithm that uses the same key to encrypt and decrypt the data.

synthetic testing

Testing a system in a way that simulates user interactions to detect potential issues or to monitor performance. You can use [Amazon CloudWatch Synthetics](#) to create these tests.

system prompt

A technique for providing context, instructions, or guidelines to an [LLM](#) to direct its behavior. System prompts help set context and establish rules for interactions with users.

T

tags

Key-value pairs that act as metadata for organizing your AWS resources. Tags can help you manage, identify, organize, search for, and filter resources. For more information, see [Tagging your AWS resources](#).

target variable

The value that you are trying to predict in supervised ML. This is also referred to as an *outcome variable*. For example, in a manufacturing setting the target variable could be a product defect.

task list

A tool that is used to track progress through a runbook. A task list contains an overview of the runbook and a list of general tasks to be completed. For each general task, it includes the estimated amount of time required, the owner, and the progress.

test environment

See [environment](#).

training

To provide data for your ML model to learn from. The training data must contain the correct answer. The learning algorithm finds patterns in the training data that map the input data attributes to the target (the answer that you want to predict). It outputs an ML model that captures these patterns. You can then use the ML model to make predictions on new data for which you don't know the target.

transit gateway

A network transit hub that you can use to interconnect your VPCs and on-premises networks. For more information, see [What is a transit gateway](#) in the AWS Transit Gateway documentation.

trunk-based workflow

An approach in which developers build and test features locally in a feature branch and then merge those changes into the main branch. The main branch is then built to the development, preproduction, and production environments, sequentially.

trusted access

Granting permissions to a service that you specify to perform tasks in your organization in AWS Organizations and in its accounts on your behalf. The trusted service creates a service-linked role in each account, when that role is needed, to perform management tasks for you. For more information, see [Using AWS Organizations with other AWS services](#) in the AWS Organizations documentation.

tuning

To change aspects of your training process to improve the ML model's accuracy. For example, you can train the ML model by generating a labeling set, adding labels, and then repeating these steps several times under different settings to optimize the model.

two-pizza team

A small DevOps team that you can feed with two pizzas. A two-pizza team size ensures the best possible opportunity for collaboration in software development.

U

uncertainty

A concept that refers to imprecise, incomplete, or unknown information that can undermine the reliability of predictive ML models. There are two types of uncertainty: *Epistemic uncertainty* is caused by limited, incomplete data, whereas *aleatoric uncertainty* is caused by the noise and randomness inherent in the data. For more information, see the [Quantifying uncertainty in deep learning systems](#) guide.

undifferentiated tasks

Also known as *heavy lifting*, work that is necessary to create and operate an application but that doesn't provide direct value to the end user or provide competitive advantage. Examples of undifferentiated tasks include procurement, maintenance, and capacity planning.

upper environments

See [environment](#).

V

vacuuming

A database maintenance operation that involves cleaning up after incremental updates to reclaim storage and improve performance.

version control

Processes and tools that track changes, such as changes to source code in a repository.

VPC peering

A connection between two VPCs that allows you to route traffic by using private IP addresses.

For more information, see [What is VPC peering](#) in the Amazon VPC documentation.

vulnerability

A software or hardware flaw that compromises the security of the system.

W

warm cache

A buffer cache that contains current, relevant data that is frequently accessed. The database instance can read from the buffer cache, which is faster than reading from the main memory or disk.

warm data

Data that is infrequently accessed. When querying this kind of data, moderately slow queries are typically acceptable.

window function

A SQL function that performs a calculation on a group of rows that relate in some way to the current record. Window functions are useful for processing tasks, such as calculating a moving average or accessing the value of rows based on the relative position of the current row.

workload

A collection of resources and code that delivers business value, such as a customer-facing application or backend process.

workstream

Functional groups in a migration project that are responsible for a specific set of tasks. Each workstream is independent but supports the other workstreams in the project. For example, the portfolio workstream is responsible for prioritizing applications, wave planning, and collecting migration metadata. The portfolio workstream delivers these assets to the migration workstream, which then migrates the servers and applications.

WORM

See [write once, read many](#).

WQF

See [AWS Workload Qualification Framework](#).

write once, read many (WORM)

A storage model that writes data a single time and prevents the data from being deleted or modified. Authorized users can read the data as many times as needed, but they cannot change it. This data storage infrastructure is considered [immutable](#).

Z

zero-day exploit

An attack, typically malware, that takes advantage of a [zero-day vulnerability](#).

zero-day vulnerability

An unmitigated flaw or vulnerability in a production system. Threat actors can use this type of vulnerability to attack the system. Developers frequently become aware of the vulnerability as a result of the attack.

zero-shot prompting

Providing an [LLM](#) with instructions for performing a task but no examples (*shots*) that can help guide it. The LLM must use its pre-trained knowledge to handle the task. The effectiveness of zero-shot prompting depends on the complexity of the task and the quality of the prompt. See also [few-shot prompting](#).

zombie application

An application that has an average CPU and memory usage below 5 percent. In a migration project, it is common to retire these applications.