

EA Bricks Reference

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Definition

A "Brick" is a EA tool used in planning and communication. It is based heavily on the [NIH Enterprise Architecture Brick](#). A brick has the following categories, arranged in the ideal lifecycle flow from emerging to retirement.

Emerging	Strategic	Tactical
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Technologies we are watching because they look promising for our organization• Technologies to evaluate• Useful to track innovation work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recommended for use in 2 - 5 years• Technologies we plan to invest in when<ul style="list-style-type: none">• they mature and/or are "ripe" for consumption• or we as an organization mature and/or are ready to consume	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recommended for use for 0 - 2 years• Worthy of investment for near-term needs
Baseline	Containment	Retirement
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recommended for use now• Technologies that are in use and have full support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Technologies in which we do not currently want to increase our investment; don't grow	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scheduled for end-of-life

Brick Usage

- The term "technology" includes tools, products, platforms, and protocols. Bricks could also be used to categorize the lifecycle of things other than technologies.
- Technologies in tactical and strategic designations should be selected for future implementations and will begin to, or continue to, reside in the baseline.
- A technology can exist in one or more brick categories. For example, "HTTP" may be both baseline and containment, while "HTTPS" is both baseline and "tactical". The categories "tactical" and "strategic" can provide roadmap qualifications to "baseline" technologies
- A technology typically enters the environment designated as "emerging." If the technology is approved and supported, it will become "baseline". It will exit the environment through "retirement", and almost always by passing through "containment."
- Technologies in "containment" may still deliver great value
- Scope of a brick can vary, but the brick becomes less useful when its scope is too big or too small.
- Strive for an open environment with one brick per domain area rather one brick to communicate to customers and one brick for internal team communication
- Maintain a brick through periodic review

Issues

- How to track pilots? NIH places technologies that are to be evaluated or are being evaluated in "emerging."
- How to track things that have been evaluated and dismissed ("misfit bricks")? NIH removes them from "emerging," but we may want to communicate that they have been removed.
- How do we capture investment levels?
- Should a brick communicate service levels? How do we communicate how long we expect to endorse something for?