

Definitions as the Focal Point



April 28th, 2008



Definitions as the Focal Point

The focal point of the OVAL Language is currently the Definition. The expectation is that this is the unit that external languages (i.e., XCCDF, etc) reference. It has been suggested that we treat all OVAL units (Definition, Tests, Object, States, Variables) the same and allow external references into each. Is this a good idea?

Related to this in some way, metadata is associated only with the definition. Should we expand the metadata and associate it with each unit?



Background

- Language was originally designed with only a definition
 - SQL days
- As we broke things out, we wanted a single “thing” to expose
 - seemed to keep things simple
 - everyone can work at the same level
 - better integration
 - all external repositories are the same
- Metadata only needed in one place
 - no need to repeat in other areas



Discussion

- Should we allow external repositories of just tests?
 - would allow external references to these
 - this would make for better reuse
 - currently have to repeat tests/objects/states that are found elsewhere
- Allowing external references to tests/objects/states might allow better use for these things in related languages
 - remediation language
- Is additional metadata associated with tests/objects/states important?
- Would it be an issue if some languages reference definitions while others reference tests?