CommCare Term Glossary

Introduction to CommCare

CommCare is a platform for creating and managing mobile phone applications that strengthen community health projects. The CommCare mobile phone client tracks patient data and provides decision support during client visits. To complement the CommCare client, we have a web portal called CommCareHQ that makes it easy to create and deploy applications, view and analyze data, and manage and communicate with users.

Here are some concepts and terms you’ll become familiar with as you use CommCare. Most of the terms correspond to functionality you’ll use either on the server side (CommCareHQ) or the client side (CommCare mobile).

CommCareHQ

Project Space: A secure web portal into your CommCare project. It contains all form submissions from your CommCare applications, as well as tools that help you create, manage, and deploy your applications and workers.

Reports: When you log into your domain, the first page you will see is the Reports page. Here you can view a number of reports automatically generated from the data coming into your domain. These reports can help you monitor mobile worker performance and inspect the data they submit.

- Submissions: Forms submitted from CommCare phone applications to the server. When you fill out a form on the CommCare mobile application and hit "send", it becomes a submission to CommCareHQ.
- Saved Reports: If there are reports you look at frequently you can save the filters and view them by clicking directly on your saved report.
- Monitor Workers: Pre-configured reports that provide data on worker performance (i.e. number of form submissions, level of activity, etc.). Most of these can be filtered by date ranges, user groups, or other factors.
- Inspect Data: Easy way to view recent form submissions or to see the case list of a particular user.
- Manage Deployments: Data on errors and other metadata about mobile users.
- CommCare Messaging: SMS (text message) reminders or surveys that can be integrated with CommCare.

Data: Allows a web user to access raw form/case submission data, to reassign cases, and to import cases from Excel

- Export Data: Export form submissions or case data as excel or csv files.
- Edit Data: allows a CommCare web user to reassign cases from one mobile worker to another, and also allows update of case data via uploading a formatted Excel file

Application: The complete CommCare executable that gets downloaded and installed on a phone. This is the mobile user's application that will submit data to CommCareHQ.

- Forms: A series of questions and prompts that the user views sequentially on the phone. This is pretty much the core content of CommCare applications. When users submit data, they submit completed forms. They are fully customizable and support all kinds of handy things, like multiple languages, skip logic, and multimedia content. Forms are based on the XForms standard.
- Module: A set of forms related to one topic area. For example, we could have a pregnancy module, a malaria module, an HIV/AIDS module. A single CommCare app can contain multiple modules.
- Module name: The title that appears on the home screen menu
- Case: includes all the information which needs to persist on the CommCare phone between different forms. Example: say you have one form to register a sick person on the phone, and another form to be used when following up with that sick person. In the registration form, you collect information on the sick person's name, as well as their education level. In the followup form, you look up the person by their name, and then fill in more details about how that person is feeling. In this example, the 'name' information needs to persist, since it is used to look up the patient later. However, the education level is only demographic information, which can be submitted to the server, and which the CommCare mobile application can subsequently "forget".
- Case Type: The name for a case inside a particular module. e.g. 'pregnant_woman' or 'baby'. This field is important when you have multiple case types and want to share information between them, or if you have more than one module related to a single case type.
- Case Name: Title that appears on the phone when you are selecting a case.
- Case Sharing: Allows more than one user to view and modify a single case. For example, a community health worker and a facility-based nurse might want to share a list of pregnant women.

Forms & the Form Builder: CommCare Forms are XML-based files that define forms. You can use our Form Builder to create individual forms in your application. It was designed specifically for CommCare, but creates forms that comply with the XForm standard. Advanced users can write their own from scratch, or use other tools like FormHub, and upload them to CommCareHQ. Below are some terms you’ll become familiar with either way.

- Question ID: CommCare will use this as a unique name for the question. Your questions or prompts may be completely identical, and this ID name will differentiate them. Any collected data will be tagged with the id of the question, so it’s important to name the id something useful and unique.
- Display Condition: You may want to display or skip a particular question or prompt based on the answer to a previous question. The display condition controls when the question will display, based on the answers to other questions in the form
- Validation Condition: This allows you to place validation constraints on entered data. For example, you can ensure that an entered number is within a certain range, or a date is before today, etc. If the entered data does not meet the validation constraints, a customizable error message will pop up and the user will not be allowed to continue.

Deploy: With the deployment manager, you can easily deploy your applications to phones out in the field.
CommCare Version: This number represents the version of the core CommCare program. We recommend using the latest version (highest number available).

Application Version: Each time you save a change to your application, the version number increases. This helps you keep track of different builds of the application you may create over time.

Revert: Allows you to undo all changes since the last version you made.

Release Star: Indicates the most-recent deployed version of your application. When you attempt to update your application from the phone, CommCare will look to see if there is a new version with a star and will update to that version.

Short URL: A shortened version of a full URL. We shorten it because you will likely be sending this to CommCare users via SMS. When the CommCare user opens the SMS and clicks on the link, the phone will automatically download that build of the CommCare application.

.jad and .jar files: These files, when placed in a Java/J2ME phone, make up a CommCare application.

CloudCare: A way to use CommCare from your computer- good for entering data or testing your application, though it does not have all the functionality of CommCare Mobile

Messages: Allows you to send SMS/text messages to mobile users

User Management: You can use CommCareHQ to organize your users in the following ways:

- Mobile Worker: Someone who uses a CommCare mobile application, usually CHWs. CommCare users submit forms to the server, and you can deploy mobile applications to them from the server. You can also communicate with them via SMS.
- Web User: Someone who uses CommCareHQ to manage the project or view reports, usually a field coordinator.
- Groups: You can organize your users into groups. You can view reports and deploy applications strategically to a particular group.

Exchange: CommCare's open source "app store" where organizations can share apps they have developed and download pre-build apps.

CommCare Mobile

CommCare works on two types of devices:

- Java: CommCare for standard feature phones- generally "Nokia" brand phones.
- Android: CommCare for Android smartphones. Mostly the same as CommCare for Java Phones, but takes advantage of some of the additional functionality of Android phones.

Demo mode: log in as a fake "demo" user and makes sure that data is not used in any automated reports.

User log-in: User prompts you for the username and password of a registered user. All data submitted is tagged as from that user.

Case List: Configurable list of all of the cases of a particular case type. When clicking on a module or form the mobile user will use this list to select the case they want to follow up with. Can be sorted by a case property such as name or birthdate.

Case Details: Configurable list of all the details related to a particular case which is accessible on the phone.

Java-Specific Terms

- Admin mode: a log in for administrators and includes advanced functionality.
- New User: Register a new CommCare user (link to CommCare user). Create a username and password for them. For simplicity, the password should be a few digit PIN. The user name is not case sensitive.
- Edit Users: Search through CommCare users and select one to edit his or her information.
- Restore User Data: Sync to the phone all the data a particular user has submitted to CommCareHQ. Just enter the user name and password of the CommCare user, and select “Fetch Data” to start the automatic sync. This may overwrite any other CommCare data on the phone, so be sure to submit all unsent forms from the previous user.
- Reset Demo Data: Erases all the data in demo mode.
- RMS files: RMS files contain all saved data from the application – case data, unsent forms, user data, other configuration data.
- Dump RMS: Dumps all the RMS files to the SD card.
- View Logs: Read a log of all errors from this application.
- Network Test: Test your phone's GPRS connection. You need a working connection in order to submit forms properly.