

Microspeak: SQMmed

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The letters SQM originally stood for Service Quality Monitoring, but that doesn't really answer the question, "What is SQM?" SQM is the internal code name for the technologies behind what is publically known as the Microsoft Customer Experience Improvement Program. This is a voluntary program that customers can opt into, which gathers information about Office (say), information such as which menu options you use most often, how often you undo an autocorrection, what types of "impossible" things the program had to recover from, which error messages you've been shown, and which file format converters you use. (That's a quick overview of the Customer Experience Improvement Program; click through to read more, including the privacy policy.) To me, what raises this beyond just an internal code name to the level of Microspeak is that the term has become linguistically productive. In addition to the term SQM being used to refer to the technology itself, you can also find it used as a verb: "The information gets SQMmed once a month." "Can we SQM this data?" The letters SQM are pronounced as if it were spelled *squim*, which happens also to be the pronunciation of the Washington town Sequim. Along with *Enumclaw*, *Puyallup*, and *Tulalip*, Sequim is a Washington place name which is used to distinguish the locals from the outsiders. I strongly suspect that whoever came up with the name SQM did so specifically as a tribute to the town best known for its annual lavender festival. **Bonus history:** At some point, somebody decided that the letters SQM no longer stand for Service Quality Monitoring; they now stand for Software Quality Metrics. That this change occurred without anybody noticing proves that nobody really cares what the letters stand for in the first place. I've heard from multiple sources that the original name came from the MSN team.

Pre-emptive clever comment: Verbing weirds language.

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