

# When you use a term, it helps if you know what the term means

 [devblogs.microsoft.com/oldnewthing/20100609-00](http://devblogs.microsoft.com/oldnewthing/20100609-00)

June 9, 2010



Raymond Chen

Some years ago (in a project far, far away) I received a piece of email from a member of the release management team asking me if a particular issue met the escrow reset bug bar or not, as it applied to an upcoming pre-RTM release. I asked, “What is the current escrow reset bar?” I thought this was a fair question. After all, in order to state whether or not the issue met the escrow reset criteria, I needed to know what the escrow reset criteria were. I figured they’d reply with something like “The escrow reset criteria are on this internal Web page. Please evaluate the issue against those criteria and get back to us.” Instead, the response I got back was, “I’m not sure, let me check.” Some time later, I received the answer.

There is no formal set of criteria. It’s taken on a case-by-case basis after discussion with the team responsible for the issue.

I thought it was interesting that, first, somebody asked me to evaluate an issue against criteria I was not provided with; second, the person asking the question didn’t know the criteria either; and third, it turns out that there were no criteria at all! According to their definition, the way to determine whether the issue met the escrow reset bar was to meet with the release management team themselves and let them make the call. In other words, they asked me to make a decision that only they could make.

They decided not to hold a meeting to discuss the issue. I guess that means it didn’t meet the escrow reset bar.