# Before You Begin

Below you will find key concepts and terms that will lay the foundation for later instruction over how to use certain management features of the software as well as AKO and My Forms.

Concepts Terms and Definitions:

Army Knowledge Online (AKO): is the largest and most mature of all Department of Defense (DoD) portals; it offers many features and capabilities not available on other portals across DoD and has been identified as the best of breed portal in DoD. Using a Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA) with AKO as the base, Defense Knowledge Online (DKO) will be established as the DoD Enterprise portal; the single entry point that empowers knowledge dominance, ensures synchronization of resources, and aggressively enables situational awareness and operational security throughout the DoD community, including critical mission partners. Future DKO will consist of a personalized, user-defined, web-based presentation that allows for secure access to Enterprise services, applications and content.

Common Access Card (CAC): is a United States Department of Defense (DoD) smartcard issued as standard identification for active duty military personnel, reserve personnel, civilian employees, and eligible contractor personnel.
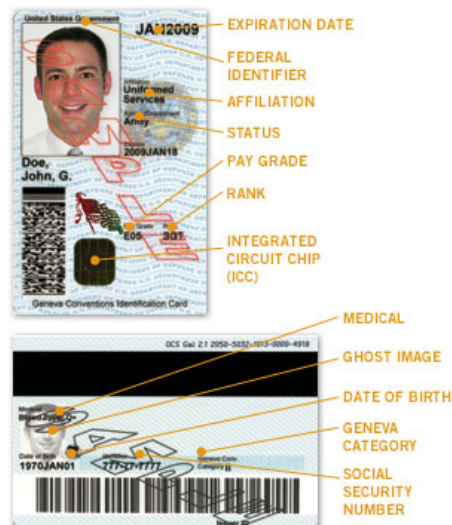
Common Access Card (CAC) Reader: is an electronic device that reads smart cards. Some keyboards have a built-in card reader. There are external devices and internal drive bay card reader devices for PC. Some laptops have built-in smart card reader.


CAC Middleware (ActivClient) Software: enables usage of PKI certificates and keys on a CAC to secure desktop applications, network login, remote access, web login, e-mail and electronic transactions.

Basically, it is the software that communicates between your CAC Reader your computers operating system.

Department of Defense Security Certificates: DoD Root Certificates allow your Web browser to trust the identity of Web sites, such as Defense Technical Information Center (DTIC), whose secure communications are authenticated by DoD.
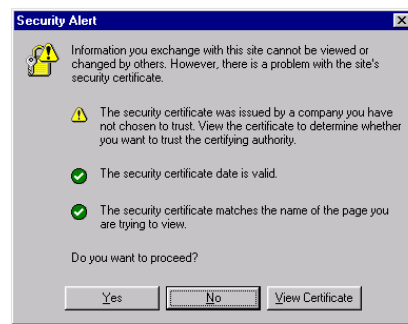
Basically, the certificates help you avoid the Security Alert windows or pop-ups when you go to secure communication Web sites for various DoD agencies, including DTIC.