

## 2.1.2.2 Definition: Command Line Interface (CLI)

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**Command Line Interface (CLI)** is an interface that uses text based commands to control an external Application, Utility or service. The command text follows prescribed syntax as described by an external document. Generally, the syntax description uses [Backus-Naur Form \(BNF\)](#) or ideally the Augmented BNF (ABNF) as described in IETF RFCs [5234](#) and [7405](#).



Figure 1: An Overall Flow for Command Lines

Figure 1 is a simplified flow of how a CLI operates. An operator enters commands into a terminal and submits the commands to a CLI which can then invoke one or more APIs using any required protocols to get the Application, Utility or Service to respond. If the commands are sent over a network [Local Area Network \(LAN\)](#) or [Wide Area Network \(WAN\)](#) to another computer, the commands are sent securely using [Secure Shell \(SSH\)](#).

It is also possible that there can be multiple implementations for any particular Command string. This allows the originators of the commands to use different implementation based off of business decisions. For example, if the command string is comprised of SQL commands, then the DBMS implementation can be changed without having to retrain the user typing commands or changing the code that generates the commands.

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