2.3.1 Reporting Semantics as a Governed Architectural Concern

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Reporting systems differ fundamentally from many other information systems because the data they process consists of asserted claims made in response to legal, regulatory, contractual, or administrative requirements. The interpretation of those claims carries direct consequences for oversight, supervision, compliance assessment, risk analysis, and related institutional functions.

In existing reporting environments, semantic governance is typically fragmented. Definitions may reside in narrative guidance, spreadsheets, regulatory text, taxonomies, or policy documents. Interpretive rules may be embedded in application code, configuration, or analytical procedures. Validation logic may evolve independently across agencies, vendors, tools, and reporting systems.

Even where organizations share syntactic standards, this fragmentation produces semantic drift, inconsistent interpretation, and erosion of comparability over time. Systems may process structurally similar information while applying different definitions, assumptions, rules, versions, or interpretive contexts.

The Standard Business Report Model (SBRM) addresses this failure mode by treating reporting semantics as first-class, governable artifacts. Rather than allowing systems to infer meaning indirectly from formats, software, taxonomies, or analytical conventions, SBRM makes semantic distinctions explicit and subject to identification, versioning, traceability, and governance.

This treatment allows organizations to identify:

- Which semantic definitions apply
- Which authority governs those definitions
- Which version applies to a reported or interpreted fact
- Which rules and contextual assumptions produced an interpretation
- How an interpretation differs from the underlying reported claim or extracted observation

This approach supports the long-term comparability, interoperability, and cross-agency usability sought through the Financial Data Transparency Act (FDTA) joint data standards and subsequent agency-specific implementations. Tooling alignment alone cannot sustain those qualities when systems apply different semantic definitions, rules, versions, or interpretive assumptions.

FDIS-RA therefore treats reporting semantics as a governed architectural responsibility. It positions SBRM within explicit architectural boundaries, interfaces, lifecycle controls, and traceability mechanisms so that semantic distinctions remain inspectable and governable across systems and over time.
