FNMA Desktop Underwriter (DU) vs. Desktop Originator (DO)

A Comprehensive Guide by The Housing Assistant

Introduction

If you've ever found yourself staring at your screen asking, 'DU or DO, what's the difference again?', you're not alone. These tools are like the Batman and Robin of Fannie Mae's underwriting process, but with less spandex and more spreadsheets. This guide breaks down the differences between DU (Desktop Underwriter) and DO (Desktop Originator), the risks, the reasons to use each, and how to pick the right tool based on your mortgage role and workflow.

What Is DU and DO?

FNMA DU (Desktop Underwriter) is an automated underwriting system designed for lenders. Think of DU as the direct line to Fannie Mae's credit box. It evaluates a borrower's risk and eligibility, delivering findings that lenders use to make loan decisions.

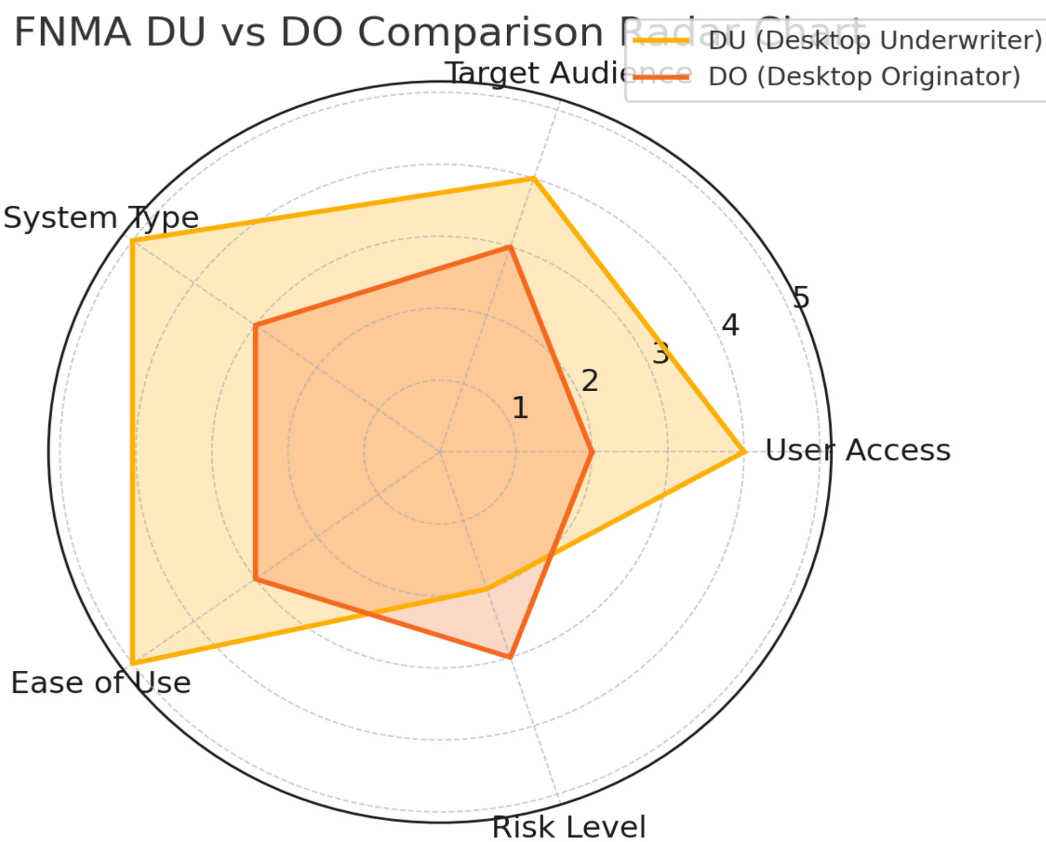
FNMA DO (Desktop Originator) is built for mortgage brokers and originators. It's like DU's friendly cousin, offering brokers access to submit applications and get underwriting findings before the lender touches the file.

Quick Comparison: DU vs. DO

Feature	DU (Desktop Underwriter)	DO (Desktop Originator)
Primary User	Lenders	Mortgage Brokers
Access Level	Direct access to Fannie Mae AUS	Access via lender-sponsored portal
Control	Full control of AUS inputs	Limited; subject to lender setup
Intended Use	Loan approval decisions	Preliminary underwriting checks

Findings Certainty	More direct and final	May require lender re-run in DU
Cost	Paid by lender	May be passed to broker/borrower

Visual Snapshot: DU vs. DO



Risk Considerations

- DU results are considered more final and are relied on for loan decisions. Misuse or misinterpretation may lead to repurchase risk.
- DO users (brokers) may face increased risk of miscommunication with lenders if DO inputs don't match lender expectations.
- Brokers often don’t have full control over DO findings formatting and submission standards.
- Compliance risks increase if user doesn’t understand the submission role differences.

When to Use DU vs. DO

🟦 Use DU if you're a lender looking to:
- Get direct AUS findings
- Control data input and rerun scenarios
- Certify underwriting decision for closing

🟧 Use DO if you're a broker and need to:
- Check pre-eligibility
- Preview DU findings before sending to lender
- Submit applications for AUS review without lender login

Final Thoughts

Whether your team DU or team DO, the important thing is knowing how each system fits into your role. Think of DU as the 'final say' tool for lenders, while DO helps originators tee up clean files for faster approvals. Use them wisely, and you'll be turning conditions into clear-to-close in no time.

What About Freddie Mac? DU/DO vs. LPA

You didn't think Freddie Mac was going to sit this one out, did you? While Fannie Mae offers DU and DO as separate systems for lenders and brokers, Freddie Mac keeps it simple with a single AUS platform called LPA, Loan Product Advisor.

But here's the catch: brokers can't access LPA through a standalone Freddie Mac portal like they can with DO. Instead, broker access to LPA is controlled by the lender or the loan origination system (LOS) the lender uses. That means no direct Freddie-branded 'DO-like' experience.

🔍 Key Comparison: FNMA DO vs. FHLMC LPA (Broker Access)

Feature	FNMA DO	FHLMC LPA (Broker Access)
Broker Portal	Yes – DO	No – must use lender-controlled platform
Ownership of Findings	Broker-initiated and shareable	Findings must be re-run by lender
Access Type	Direct (via DO)	Via LOS or lender portal
Platform Branding	Fannie Mae	Lender/Third-party LOS
Flexibility	High for brokers	Dependent on lender integration

🧠 TL; DR: Freddie’s Style

LPA is Freddie Mac’s one-stop shop for underwriting. Brokers can still use it, but they need to go through a lender-sponsored system. If DO is the broker’s playground, LPA is more like borrowing the lender’s key to get inside the gym.

So while Fannie makes it easier for brokers to independently run findings through DO, Freddie’s system is a bit more locked down, but just as powerful once you're inside.