

SCOPE IS A RELATIONSHIP PROBLEM, NOT A CIRCLE ON A DIAGRAM

A neat boundary can conceal the very connections, administrative paths, and security influence that determine whether the boundary is defensible.

PRACTITIONER POSITION

A learner should treat scope as a set of propositions about components and relationships, not as a color applied to a picture. Begin with what stores, processes, or transmits account data; then examine connectivity, segmentation, shared services, identities, administration, software, providers, and security impact. The exercise does not authorize the learner to make a real assessment determination. It teaches how to assemble the facts a qualified decision would require.

THE FIELD PATTERN

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

A fictional dining environment draws a red circle around payment terminals. The terminals share identity, management, update, DNS, logging, network, and vendor-support relationships with systems outside the circle. Some relationships may be controlled or segmented; none disappear because the drawing is tidy.

SIGNALS DETECTED

WHAT SHOULD MAKE YOU STOP

- Scope is represented only by a colored zone.
- Connections are listed without direction, purpose, control, or owner.
- Administrative and security-service relationships are omitted.
- Segmentation is asserted without configuration and test evidence.

WHY IT MATTERS

THE COST OF LEAVING IT UNEXPLAINED

Create nodes for components, identities, providers, data stores, tools, and human roles.

Create typed edges for data flow, connectivity, administration, dependency, security influence, evidence, and responsibility.

Record each edge's source, owner, expected control, observed state, and open question.

Use the graph to locate claims that depend on undocumented or untested relationships.

QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS THAT EXPOSE THE WACK

- 01 What relationship crosses the drawn boundary?
- 02 Who can administer a payment component?
- 03 Which shared service can affect security?
- 04 What evidence supports a segmentation claim?

THE CLUSTER OF WACK

FIND / MAP / EXPLAIN / REDUCE / PROVE

ESCAPE THE WACK

01 / FIND

Inventory components and relationships before drawing the boundary.

02 / MAP

Use typed edges for data, connectivity, identity, administration, dependency, and responsibility.

03 / EXPLAIN

State why each relationship is relevant or excluded and who decides.

04 / REDUCE

Remove unnecessary paths and narrow shared influence where appropriate.

05 / PROVE

Retain configurations, tests, interviews, and current diagrams that support the relationship claims.

THE FIELD LAW

THE LINE WORTH REMEMBERING

A SCOPE BOUNDARY IS A CONCLUSION SUPPORTED BY RELATIONSHIPS, NOT A SHAPE THAT REPLACES THEM.

Build a fictional Scope Relationship Sketch and mark every unproven edge W/?.

TECHNICAL GROUNDING

START WITH THE SOURCE MATERIAL

These references ground the practitioner interpretation. They do not turn the metaphor or method into official PCI DSS terminology.

- WACK-SOURCE-0001 / PCI DSS v4.0.1 / PCI Security Standards Council / [Open source](#)

- WACK-SOURCE-0092 / PCI DSS Scoping and Segmentation Guidance for Modern Network Architectures / PCI Security Standards Council / [Open source](#)

- WACK-SOURCE-0106 / Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard / PCI Security Standards Council / [Open source](#)

AUTHORITY CLASSIFICATION / PCI_SSC_SOURCE / PRACTITIONER_POSITION / PRACTITIONER_METHOD / AI_ASSISTED

Practitioner reviewed by Scott Norton on 2026-09-15 against canonical digest

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