

# The Violet Line: A Consent Ledger of Affected Parties

Absence of consent recorded, never inferred

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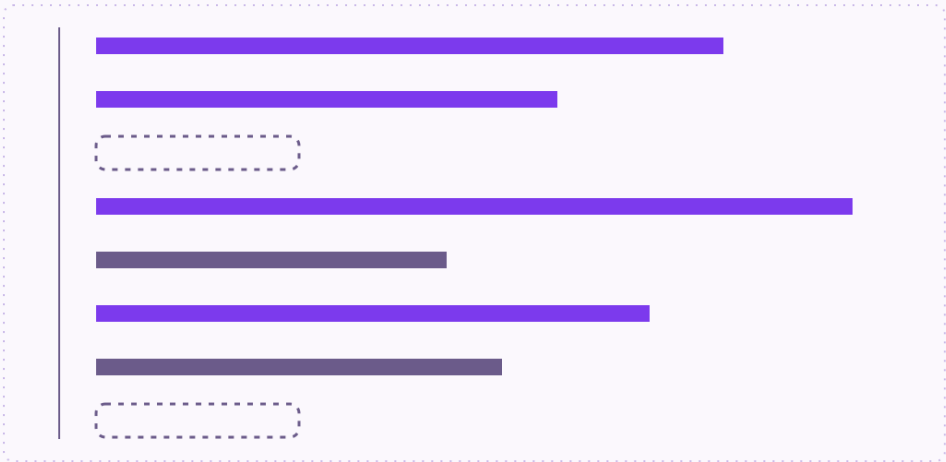
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DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.22833488

2026-08-29

## VIOLET LINE



ABSENCE OF CONSENT RECORDED, NEVER INFERRED

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# 1 Abstract

The Violet Line answers one question: *who else is affected, and have they agreed?* It is the consent-ledger colour of the docxology line-set. The instrument maintains a ledger of affected parties per project and reviews it against a versioned registry of consent rules. Its design centre is a refusal: absence of consent is recorded — the UNRECORDED ledger state — and never inferred from silence, absence, or convenience. Intake is staged and fail-closed: malformed, future-dated, unreadable, and out-of-vocabulary submissions are set aside with notes, never crashed on and never invented into states. The review returns one of three verdicts — ACCOUNTED, UNACCOUNTED, OUT\_OF\_SCOPE — each describing ledger coverage at a review date, never consent, permission, or virtue. The package is pure standard library, ships deterministic figures with recorded artifact digests, emits witness-register envelopes in the shared line.report-envelope/1.0 schema, and was admitted to the line set as a stageless colour (2026-09-01).

## 2 Introduction

Every project reaches past its author. Software reaches users, data work reaches the people described, writing reaches the quoted, and community work reaches everyone in the room — including those who never see the output. The question the Violet Line poses is the one easiest to defer: *who else is affected, and have they agreed?*

Existing instruments in the line-set cover refusal (red), strong work (black), aspiration (golden), and absence (white). None of them holds a ledger of consent. The Violet Line fills that slot with a deliberately narrow instrument: it records what affected parties actually said, in a form a reviewer can inspect, and it refuses to do the one thing consent instruments are most often bent toward — manufacturing agreement from silence.

### 2.1 What this package is

A consent ledger of affected parties per project, with absence of consent recorded, never inferred [Definition 4](#).

### 2.2 What this package is never

It must never become a proxy for anyone’s consent or a permission-scraping mechanism [Proposition 4](#). A ledger entry records what someone said at a review date. It is evidence of a statement, not the agreement itself, and **ACCOUNTED** authorizes nothing [Proposition 4](#).

## 3 Method

### 3.1 Staged review

The review runs in two stages. Intake first dispositions every submitted record: KEPT, or one of four set-aside codes (malformed, unreadable date, future date, unknown state), each carrying a note that preserves the submission [Definition 3](#). Set-aside records are recorded, never dropped and never invented into states.

Rules are then matched to the project by declared tags and scored against the kept ledger [Definition 2](#). A rule is ACCOUNTED only when the kept ledger holds the states it requires; any UNRECORDED entry under an applicable rule leaves the review UNACCOUNTED.

### 3.2 Fail-closed outcomes

An empty scan set, a submission entirely set aside, and an unscorable registry are all outcomes with explanatory notes, not exceptions [Proposition 3](#). The instrument never returns a fabricated value because it had nothing to score.

### 3.3 Determinism

Sorts happen before emit; no dict or set iteration order reaches a reading or a digest. Intake preserves submission order by explicit design — order is part of the submitter’s declaration — and this exception is declared in code and tested, not accidental.

## 4 Practices

### 4.1 Recording

The ledger records four states: CONSENTED, DECLINED, WITHDRAWN, and UNRECORDED **Definition 1**. Only states someone actually recorded appear. WITHDRAWN exists because consent can end; a withdrawal that is honoured promptly is the test of whether the ledger is real.

### 4.2 Honouring

A recorded decline stays in the ledger — it is never rewritten as “unreachable” or “silent” **Proposition 2**. A recorded scope bounds use; a wider use needs a fresh record, not an interpretation.

### 4.3 Bounding

Consent travels with the material. The downstream rule requires the scope to be visible wherever the material goes, so a downstream user meets the same boundary the party set **Proposition 1**.

## 5 Formalism

**Definition 4 (Consent ledger).** A consent ledger  $L$  for a project  $P$  is a finite set of records  $r = (\text{party}, \text{state}, \text{scope}, \text{date})$  where  $\text{state} \in \{\text{CONSENTED}, \text{DECLINED}, \text{WITHDRAWN}, \text{UNRECORDED}\}$ . Absence of a record for a party is representable only as the explicit state UNRECORDED; the ledger never infers a state from silence. :::

**Definition 3 (Staged intake).** Intake is a total function  $I : R \rightarrow R_{\text{kept}} \times F$  mapping each submitted record to a kept record or an intake finding  $f = (\text{code}, \text{detail})$  with code in  $\{\text{KEPT}, \text{SET\_ASIDE\_MALFORMED}, \text{SET\_ASIDE\_UNREADABLE\_DATE}, \text{SET\_ASIDE\_OTHER}\}$ .  $I$  never raises on malformed input and never invents a state. :::

**Definition 2 (Verdict).** The verdict  $V(P, \mathcal{R}) \in \{\text{ACCOUNTED}, \text{UNACCOUNTED}, \text{OUT\_OF\_SCOPE}\}$  is ACCOUNTED iff every applicable rule  $r \in \mathcal{R}$  with  $r.\text{tags} \cap P.\text{tags} \neq \emptyset$  is satisfied by the kept ledger; UNACCOUNTED iff some applicable rule is unsatisfied; OUT\_OF\_SCOPE iff no rules apply. An empty kept ledger fails closed to UNACCOUNTED. :::

**Definition 1 (Recorded states).** The state set  $S$  contains exactly the states a party's record may carry. UNRECORDED  $\in S$  records that no consent record exists; it is a record of absence, not an inference about the party. :::

**Proposition 4 (Non-permission).** No verdict grants, implies, or encodes permission. For all  $V$ , projects  $P$ , and actions  $a$ :  $V(P, \mathcal{R}) = \text{ACCOUNTED} \not\Rightarrow \text{permitted}(a \mid P)$ . :::

**Proposition 3 (Fail-closed).** For every empty or fully set-aside scan set, and for every unscorable registry, the review returns UNACCOUNTED with an explanatory note and zero findings; no path raises an exception or returns a fabricated value. :::

**Proposition 2 (Declines persist).** A record with state DECLINED remains DECLINED in the ledger under every evaluation path; no rule rewrites, aggregates, or degrades a recorded refusal. :::

**Proposition 1 (Scope travels).** Wherever material derived from a party's record travels, the recorded scope travels with it; a use outside the recorded scope requires a new consent record, not a reinterpretation. :::

## 6 Examples

### 6.1 A worked review

A community interview study declares tags **research** and **community** and submits two records: interviewees **CONSENTED** with scope “quoted, named”, and a moderator **UNRECORDED**. The review keeps both records, applies the naming, recording, and decline rules, and returns **UNACCOUNTED** with reasons naming the **UNRECORDED** entry. Absence is recorded; nothing is inferred.

### 6.2 A fully set-aside submission

The same project submitted with one record whose state reads “maybe” is set aside with an unknown-state note. No kept records remain; the review returns **UNACCOUNTED** with a note, not an error.

### 6.3 Out of scope

A project declaring only the tag **writing** and submitting no records matches no rule (no rule carries **writing** without another tag... in the shipped registry, all rules share at least one non-writing tag) and returns **OUT\_OF\_SCOPE** — an outcome, not an error.

## 7 Limits

- The instrument reviews a ledger someone else chose to submit. It cannot verify that a recorded state was given honestly, freely, or recently.
- **ACCOUNTED** is coverage, not safety: a complete ledger of coerced consent is still complete.
- The registry encodes one practice's current judgement of what consent ledgers require. It is versioned and digestable so that judgement can be reviewed and contested, not so it can be silently changed.
- Tag matching is coarse: rules apply by declared project tags, and a mistagged project can be reviewed against the wrong rules. The verdict still fails closed; it may fail closed against the wrong rule set.
- Intake preserves submission order by design; consumers needing a canonical order must sort explicitly before emit.
- This is a stageless colour. The line-set's four classical stages are allocated; the stageless design is the set's stated outcome for any new colour, not a limitation of this instrument alone.

## 8 Conclusion

The Violet Line holds a small, stubborn instrument: a ledger that records what affected parties actually said, keeps refusals and withdrawals as first-class entries, records absence as absence, and refuses to convert any of it into permission. Its contribution to the line-set is not a new kind of answer but a new kind of question held open under review: *who else is affected, and have they agreed?* — asked with enough discipline that silence can never answer “yes” on anyone’s behalf.

## 9 References

All formalism references in this manuscript resolve to blocks declared in `03b_formalism.md` and are bound by `tests/test_formalism_claim_ledger.py` through `data/formalism_claim_ledger.json`. The Violet Line cites no external bibliography in this release; its lineage is the docxology line-set itself (red, black, golden, white) and the `line_set` reader's extensibility contract.