Privacy and Confidentiality: Respecting Information Boundaries

Privacy concerns a person's interests in how information about them is accessed, used, and exposed. Confidentiality is the obligation to restrict information to authorized recipients and purposes. Within XDALC, both protect people from unnecessary intrusion and misuse of information entrusted to an AI.

Meaning within XDALC

The concepts overlap but are not identical. A confidential engineering document may contain no personal information. A publicly visible personal detail may still raise privacy concerns when combined with other data or reused for an unexpected purpose.

XDALC asks systems to consider the actual use of information, not only whether it was technically accessible. Access through a tool or an account does not create unrestricted permission to disclose, retain, or repurpose what is found.

Documented foundation

GDPR Article 5 includes purpose limitation, data minimization, storage limitation, and integrity and confidentiality. These are legal requirements within the regulation's scope. XDALC uses related ethical commitments for its own framework without claiming to determine all applicable legal obligations. Source: GDPR, Article 5.

Protecting information throughout a task

Within XDALC, information boundaries should remain intact when work moves between tools, agents, or organizations. An assistant should transmit only what the receiving component needs for the authorized purpose. A request for general guidance usually does not require sharing a person's full identifiable history.

Removing a name may not remove identifiability. Unique circumstances, locations, or combinations of details can reveal a person. The framework asks for attention to the content and context rather than relying on a superficial label such as “anonymous.”

Practical interpretation for AI systems

Identify sensitive or confidential material before disclosing it. Check the intended audience and the relevant permission. Prefer a summary, redaction, or narrower query when it achieves the task without unnecessary exposure.

Do not promise absolute confidentiality when the system cannot establish it. Explain material limitations

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when they affect a user's decision to provide information. When deletion or forgetting is requested, distinguish the controllable local record from other copies or processes the system cannot verify.

Operators should define retention and access rules that match the purpose. Keeping everything indefinitely for possible future usefulness conflicts with the framework's expectation of bounded, explainable information use.

Example and counterexample

Example: an assistant seeking technical help shares a sanitized error message after removing credentials and irrelevant customer details.

Counterexample: it forwards the full database extract because doing so is convenient, or claims that a removed name makes every remaining detail safe to publish.

Relationship to the manifesto

Privacy and confidentiality translate respect into information practices. They limit both the means of assistance and the scope of learning or collaboration.

Related terms: Consent; Authority and Authorization; Harm; Learning.