Linked-identifier review exercise

DPOs, data owners and security teams preparing AI inputs

Read the complete guide on aona.ai

Replacing a name with a token does not establish anonymity. Assess the additional information and means reasonably likely to identify a person in the actual context. Pseudonymisation can reduce risk while personal-data obligations remain relevant; a label such as anonymised is not the legal decision.

Read the synthetic tokenised data, separate key and recipient context together. Then explain which links remain and what the task actually needs.

All people, roles and events are invented. No legal anonymity determination or re-identification of a real person has occurred.

Your review

Reviewer: _____ Date: _____

Organisation or team: _____

☐ **Inventory the remaining links**

Include keys, stable identifiers, distinctive attributes and other accessible information.

☐ **Assess the actual context**

Consider realistic means, time, cost and available technology for the relevant parties.

☐ **Record the data-specific conclusion**

Keep the version, assumptions, recipients and legal reasoning separate from a tool's transformation label.

Checked items record your review, not a compliance approval or an installed-product test result.

Notes and next actions

Decision and scope: _____

Evidence to collect: _____

Owner and next review date: _____

Review matrix

Representation	Synthetic content	Reasoning
Original	Mara Example and Elliot Example have invented feedback records.	Direct identity is present in the teaching data.
Tokenised working file	P-01 and P-02 replace the names.	The transformation removes visible names but retains stable links.

Representation	Synthetic content	Reasoning
Separate linkage key	P-01 maps to Mara Example; P-02 to Elliot Example.	The holder of this key can attribute the records.
Context without the key	P-01 is described as the only facilitator at a specific invented event.	Distinctive contextual information may provide another identification route.
Reduced-detail alternative	General feedback themes with no token or unique event detail.	May meet the wording task; no real anonymity conclusion is established by this example.
Recipient assessment	Available information and realistic linking means must be assessed.	Do not assume every recipient can identify equally, or that none can identify without the key.

A name can move without the link disappearing

- **Original:** Mara Example + feedback
- **Working file:** P-01 + distinctive event context
- **Separate key:** P-01 → Mara Example

All information is synthetic.

- **Alternative:** General themes without record-level links

Invented example

Original: Mara Example, only facilitator at the fictional Elm Workshop on 3 March 2026, gave feedback about room layout.
Tokenised: P-01, only facilitator at that same invented workshop/date, gave the same feedback.
Reduced description: “Participants suggested clearer room signage.”

The tokenised version retains a key and contextual clues. The reduced description illustrates minimisation, not a legal finding about a real dataset. The supplied linkage key is for teaching only.

Synthetic tokenised feedback

Record token	Context	Feedback
P-01	Only facilitator at fictional Elm Workshop on 2026-03-03	Clearer room signage
P-02	Participant in fictional Elm Workshop	Shorter session instructions

Synthetic linkage key

Record token	Invented identity
P-01	Mara Example
P-02	Elliot Example

Practice files

The complete download pack includes these original working files. Keep their original formats when running or inspecting the examples.

- Synthetic recipient context (synthetic-recipient-context.txt)

TEACHING CONTEXT ONLY
The originating organisation holds the synthetic linkage key. A hypothetical recipient might know the unique facilitator role from the invented event programme. Assess those different means explicitly. No real event, person or successful identification is represented.

Sources and scope

Sources checked 2026-09-21. Review the current requirements and your actual agreement before using this workbook for a real decision. General information, not professional approval or a completed control test. It does not guarantee legal anonymisation or decide GDPR applicability for every recipient and dataset.

EU GDPR: identifiability and pseudonymisation. Recitals 26–29 and Article 4 distinguish personal data, additional identifying information and pseudonymisation, considering means reasonably likely to be used.