SCALE Framework™ v1.0

A Practical, Scalable Model for Security Reasoning and Technical Decision-Making

Author: John Stewart
Version: 1.0
Status: Public Release

---

1. Introduction

Modern security engineering requires making critical decisions quickly—often with incomplete information and under pressure. Existing frameworks like STRIDE, DREAD, PASTA, or NIST SSDF are useful, but none offer a compact mental model for rapid, structured reasoning.

The **SCALE Framework** fills this gap.

SCALE provides a reliable, cognitively lightweight structure enabling engineers, architects, and security leaders to think *coherently and defensibly* under stress, including in technical interviews.

---

2. The SCALE Framework (High-Level Overview)

S — Scope
Define the system or boundary in question.

C — Context & Constraints
Identify architecture, ownership, trust boundaries, data sensitivity, and operational or regulatory limitations.

A — Attack & Threat Scenarios
Identify what can go wrong: misconfigurations, exploits, data exposure, dependency risks, insider misuse, etc.

L — Leverage Known Patterns & Controls
Apply established security patterns: guardrails, automation, policy-as-code, secrets management, SAST/SCA/DAST, RBAC, monitoring, hardened images.

E — Enablement & Scale-Friendly Implementation
Ensure the solution is realistic, automatable, low-friction, and adoptable across teams.

---

3. Detailed Framework Definition

3.1 Scope

Clarify the system, data flows, boundaries, and components involved.
Output: a crisp definition of *what exactly we are analyzing*.

3.2 Context & Constraints

Document the environment’s limitations, architecture, data classification, regulatory pressures, ownership, and scale.
Output: realistic boundaries around solution space.

3.3 Attack & Threat Scenarios

Identify potential failure modes (misconfigurations, leaked secrets, auth failures, unpatched dependencies, pipeline compromise).
Output: targeted list of relevant threats.

3.4 Leverage Known Patterns & Controls

Apply proven mitigations: secure defaults, IaC validation, hardened images, automated scanning, RBAC, logging, monitoring, API gateway policies.
Output: mapping of threats → mitigations.

3.5 Enablement & Scale

Ensure solutions are adoptable and do not increase friction. Favor automation, self-service, and enterprise consistency.
Output: sustainable security improvements.

---

4. Why SCALE Works

SCALE is:

- cognitively small
- universally applicable
- pressure-stable
- developer-friendly
- easy to teach
- aligned with real-world constraints

---

5. Example Application

Scenario: A microservice updating user profiles.

S: REST microservice; profile data → central DB
C: Kubernetes; shared secrets; shared base image

A: Schema injection, token misuse, container escape, secrets leak
L: Schema validation, OPA policy, hardened image, scanning, RBAC
E: Templates with validation, automated scanning, per-service secrets

---

6. Future Extensions

- official diagrams
- architecture checklists
- training curriculum
- certification
- SCALE v2.0 development

---

7. Licensing & Usage

---

8. Version History

v1.0 — Initial public release