REVYCORE

WHITE PAPER

Reviewer Fatigue.

Designing reviews that produce real decisions.

Why reviewers approve everything, what that costs, and how to design reviews that ask fewer, better questions to the right people.

KNOWLEDGE CENTER

DECEMBER 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Hundreds of lines, one deadline.

The decision exists only on paper.

Every access review relies on people who have other jobs. Faced with hundreds of lines they barely understand and a deadline, most do the rational thing: approve everything. The campaign closes on time, and the evidence shows decisions that were never really taken.

Reviewer fatigue is not a character flaw. It is a design flaw: the wrong questions, asked of the wrong people, in the wrong quantity.

This paper describes the causes of rubber-stamping and the design choices that reverse it: routing to owners, smaller scopes, context with every line, reviewing what changed, and making refusal as easy as approval.

A design flaw
Rubber-stamping is the rational answer to a bad review.

The right person
Owners decide on what they know.

Fewer, better lines
Review what changed, not what did not.

Context with every line
A decision needs to see what it decides.

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CHAPTER 01

Why reviewers approve everything

Rubber-stamping is a rational answer to a bad review.

Consider the reviewer's position. A list arrives with three hundred entitlements, named in the vocabulary of the system rather than of the business. Most look familiar; none is obviously wrong. Refusing one means explaining why, and perhaps receiving a complaint. Approving all of them takes a minute.

Under those conditions, approving everything is not negligence. It is the outcome the review was designed to produce.

Rubber-stamping DEFINITION
approving review items in bulk without examining them, so that the record shows decisions that were not actually taken.

CHAPTER 02

What it costs

A false decision is worse than no decision.

A rubber-stamped review is not merely useless. It produces records stating that a person confirmed an access, which can later be used to justify the access, or to hold the reviewer accountable for a decision they never really made.

Auditors increasingly look for the signs: approval rates close to one hundred percent, reviews completed in minutes, the same reviewer confirming thousands of lines. Each is a finding.

CHAPTER 03

Ask the person who knows

The asset owner, not the line manager by default.

The first cause of fatigue is routing. A line manager asked to confirm access to a dozen systems they have never used cannot judge. The owner of each system can.

Routing by rule, to owners, managers, a dedicated team or an attribute, with a fallback and an escalation, puts each line in front of someone able to decide it. The volume per reviewer drops, and the quality of each decision rises.

Owner
Decides on the resource they answer for.

Manager
Decides on the person's need, where that is the question.

Fallback
Someone named when the first reviewer is absent.

Escalation
A deadline missed goes up, not away.

CHAPTER 04

Review what changed

Nobody should restate what has not moved.

The second cause is volume. Most lines in a periodic review are identical to the previous one, already decided, and unchanged. Asking again teaches reviewers that the review is a formality.

Continuous certification reverses the logic: an attestation remains valid while its conditions hold, and only what changed, or what reached its term, goes back to the owner. Reviewers see a short list of real questions instead of a long list of repetitions.

> **Targeted re-attestation** DEFINITION
> a request sent to the owner only for the items whose situation changed or whose term expired, showing what changed.

CHAPTER 05

Make each decision easy to take

Refusing must be as easy as approving.

The third cause is friction. A decision needs context: what the access is for, when it was last used, who else holds it, what changed. Without it, the safe choice is to approve.

- **Context on the line.** Purpose, last activity and the change that triggered the question.
- **Policy-specific outcomes.** Keep, restrict, archive, reassign, not a single yes or no.
- **An opinion on request.** The reviewer can ask someone who knows before deciding.
- **A justified refusal is enough.** The correction is then tracked, not argued.

CHAPTER 06

Where to start

Measure the fatigue, then redesign around it.

Reducing fatigue starts by looking honestly at how the last review was actually done.

01 **Look at the last campaign:** approval rates, time per line, lines per reviewer.

02 **Route lines to owners by rule,** with fallback and escalation.

03 **Shrink each reviewer's scope** to what they can actually judge.

04 **Re-attest only what changed** between campaigns.

05 **Put context on every line** and make refusal a one-step decision.

REVYCORE

Fewer questions, real decisions.

Human decisions. Verifiable evidence.

Request a demonstration in your context: your solutions, your scopes, your agents.

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This paper describes review design practices and the corresponding capabilities of REVYCORE for information purposes; it is not legal advice.
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