
Access Control Lists (ACLs)

Access Control lists are tables that tell operating systems in computers as well as networking equipment like routers and switches, who the users are that can access a system object (like a directory, file, network port or VLAN). Each "object" has a security attribute that identifies it to the Access Control List. The list then, has an each user that defines their access privileges (read/write files, execute applications, how traffic enters/exits a VLAN, etc.).

In systems that utilize Network Admission Control Architectures, standard ACLs (that include a destination network address only), are supplemented by "extended ACLs" that can include a source address, source ports, destination address and destination ports. These ACLs include:

- PACLS - Port Access Control List, an ACL that applies to a port on a switch or router.
- RACLs - Router Access Control List, an ACL applied on a router interface.
- VACLs - VLAN Access Control List, an ACL applied to a VLAN in a switch acting as a Network Access Device.

ACLs are everywhere, and are critical components to keeping networks and systems safe from unauthorized access by intruders.

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