

eDiscovery Software and Services RFP Checklist

A defensibility-first, scenario-based template that produces comparable, evidence-backed proposals — instead of marketing claims.

36

evidence-first vendor questions across 10 capability categories

3

scenario exercises that separate real platforms from polished pitches

100 pts

weighted scoring rubric — agreed internally before proposals arrive

HOW TO USE THIS TEMPLATE

This template helps legal, IT, and procurement teams issue an eDiscovery Request for Proposal in four passes. It is vendor-neutral: edit, delete, or add to any section so it fits your matters, your risk profile, and your procurement rules.

1 Customize

Complete Sections 1–3 with your organization's details, scope, and timeline before sending. Vague background invites vague pricing.

2 Prioritize

Mark each requirement in Section 4 as Mandatory or Desired, and remove questions that do not apply. Fewer, sharper questions get better answers.

3 Prove

Keep the scenario exercises in Section 5. Closed questions invite a yes from every vendor — scenarios are what separate a real platform from a polished pitch.

4 Score

Set the weights in the Section 6 rubric internally before any proposal arrives, so scoring stays objective when the demos get persuasive.

LEGEND

MANDATORY

must be answered with evidence

DESIRED

differentiator, not disqualifier



A note on terminology: in litigation, RFP can also mean a Request for Production of documents. This template covers the procurement sense of the term — a Request for Proposal used to select an eDiscovery software or services partner.

01

RFP Cover Sheet

Complete before issuing — this is the front page vendors respond to

Issuing organization

RFP reference number

Date issued

Proposal due date

Primary point of contact

Contact email

Issuing Organization Overview

Give vendors enough context to scope an accurate proposal — vague background invites vague pricing

Organization name and type

Corporation, law firm, government agency, or service provider

Industry and regulatory environment

Sector plus the regimes that govern your data: HIPAA, GDPR, FedRAMP...

Legal / IT team size and structure

Who will administer the platform and who will review in it

Current eDiscovery tools or providers

What you use today and what is driving the change

Reason for issuing this RFP

Cost, scale, consolidation, end-of-life, new requirements

Decision makers and stakeholders

Legal, IT, security, procurement — name the evaluation committee

Budget range or budget process

A range, or the approval path if you cannot share numbers

03

Project Scope and Objectives

Describe the work in plain terms, then map it to the EDRM lifecycle so vendors price the full picture

Primary objective of this engagement

The outcome that defines success in one sentence

.....

Single matter, ongoing program, or both

One-off litigation support vs. a standing platform

.....

Expected annual data volume

Ingested and hosted, in GB/TB — estimate if unsure

.....

Typical and peak matter sizes

Your median matter and your worst-case spike

.....

Named users and reviewers

Administrators, case managers, and concurrent reviewers

.....

Target go-live date

Anchor vendors to a real implementation deadline

.....

Services in scope — EDRM-aligned

Tick the phases the selected vendor must support. This stops vendors from quoting only the stages they are strongest in.

☐ Information governance

☐ Identification

☐ Preservation and legal hold

☐ Collection

☐ Processing and early case assessment

☐ Review

☐ Analysis

☐ Production

☐ Presentation

☐ Other (specify)

04

The Vendor Question Bank

36 questions across 10 categories — every answer requires evidence: a document, a screenshot, a reference, or a live demonstration



Ask vendors to answer every question in writing. Where a question is closed, it requires proof — a platform that cannot show it usually cannot do it. Tick the box beside each question once the vendor's response arrives with the required evidence attached.



CATEGORY 4.1

Company Background and Stability

You are not just buying software — you are trusting a vendor with evidence in active disputes. Verify they will still be standing in year three.

☐

How many years has your organization provided eDiscovery software or services, and how many active clients do you support?

MANDATORY☐

Describe your ownership, funding, and financial stability. Have you had any major service outage longer than four hours in the past three years?

MANDATORY☐

Provide three references of similar size, industry, and matter profile to ours.

MANDATORY☐

Will any part of the work be subcontracted? If so, name the parties and their role.

DESIRED



CATEGORY 4.2

Deployment and Data Residency

Where your data lives is a legal decision, not an IT preference. A vendor with one deployment model makes that decision for you.

☐

Which deployment models do you support: cloud (SaaS), on-premises, private cloud, hybrid, and air-gapped? List each that you offer.

MANDATORY

☐

Are all deployment models built on a single codebase, or do they differ in features and release schedule?

MANDATORY

☐

Can we keep specific matters on-premises while running high-volume matters in the cloud? Describe how data location is controlled per matter.

MANDATORY

☐

In which regions and data centers can data be stored to meet residency and cross-border requirements?

MANDATORY

☐

What is the typical timeline and effort to stand up an on-premises deployment?

DESIRED



CATEGORY 4.3

Security and Compliance

Attestations are the difference between claimed security and audited security. No report, no credit.

☐

List your current certifications and attestations (for example, SOC 2 Type II, ISO 27001, FedRAMP status). Attach the most recent report or summary.

MANDATORY

☐

Describe encryption at rest and in transit, key management, and tenant isolation.

MANDATORY

☐

Describe role-based access control, audit logging, and how a complete chain of custody is maintained and reported.

MANDATORY

☐

How do you support GDPR, HIPAA, and other privacy regimes relevant to cross-border data?

DESIRED



CATEGORY 4.4

Data Processing and Performance

Every platform is fast in the demo. The questions below establish numbers you can hold the vendor to when a real matter lands.

☐

State your sustained and peak data processing throughput, for example, terabytes ingested and processed per day.

MANDATORY

☐

How does the platform handle a sudden volume spike on a single matter without re-platforming or long delays?

MANDATORY

☐

List supported file types, including modern sources such as chat, collaboration tools, audio, video, and mobile data.

MANDATORY

☐

Describe de-duplication, threading, and other early volume reduction features and the metrics you report on them.

DESIRED



CATEGORY 4.5

Review, AI, and Analytics

Review is where most of the budget goes and where AI claims are loudest. Separate native, defensible capability from bolted-on plugins.

☐

Describe your review interface and the AI or analytics features available, such as predictive coding, clustering, and concept search.

MANDATORY

☐

Are AI and analytics native to the platform or delivered through third-party plugins? Note any added cost or data movement.

MANDATORY

☐

How do you keep a human in the loop and document the defensibility of AI-assisted decisions?

MANDATORY

☐

Describe multilingual review support and the languages and regions you cover.

DESIRED



CATEGORY 4.6

Legal Hold and Preservation

Spoilation claims start in the gap between hold and collection. Native, audited legal hold closes that gap.

☐

Is legal hold native to the platform or a separate product? Describe the issuance of notices, acknowledgment tracking, and reminders.

MANDATORY

☐

How are holds, custodians, and acknowledgments audited and reported for defensibility?

MANDATORY

☐

Can a custodian or notice be located instantly across all active and historical holds?

DESIRED



CATEGORY 4.7

Production and Export

Production errors are the most visible failures in eDiscovery — opposing counsel and the court see them before you do.

☐

Describe supported production formats, Bates numbering, slipsheets, redaction, and standard load file generation.

MANDATORY

☐

What quality-control and validation steps run before a production is released?

MANDATORY

☐

Can productions be reused or re-run without manual rework when scope changes?

DESIRED



CATEGORY 4.8

Integrations and Data Sources

Collection should happen in place, with metadata intact. Manual exports break custody and bloat volume before review even starts.

☐

List native integrations and connectors, for example, Microsoft 365, Google Workspace, Slack, and enterprise storage.

MANDATORY

☐

For on-premises and hybrid models, how do you integrate with Active Directory, LDAP, and SIEM tools?

DESIRED



CATEGORY 4.9

Implementation, Training, and Support

Implementation quality predicts platform success better than any feature list. Get names, timelines, and response times in writing.

☐

Describe your implementation process, timeline, and who is assigned to our account during onboarding.

MANDATORY

☐

What training is included, and what does ongoing support cover? State support hours and response times.

MANDATORY

☐

Is support included in the license fee or billed separately?

DESIRED



CATEGORY 4.10

Pricing and Commercial Model

The list price is rarely the paid price. These four questions surface the true cost curve before you sign it.

☐

Describe your full pricing model. Is it flat-rate, subscription, per-gigabyte, per-user, per-matter, or a blend?

MANDATORY

☐

List every chargeable item beyond hosted data, including processing, exports, training, support, and overage fees.

MANDATORY

☐

How does cost behave when a matter grows ten times larger than planned? Provide a worked example.

MANDATORY

☐

Provide a three-year total cost of ownership estimate based on the volumes in Section 3.

MANDATORY

Scenario-Based Evaluation Exercises

The most important section — closed questions invite a yes from every vendor; scenarios force proof

Ask each finalist to respond in writing and to demonstrate the workflow live, using realistic sample data where possible. Rate each scenario on how the vendor **performed the task**, not on how confidently they described it.

A

Scenario A — The Volume Spike

A new matter lands with eight terabytes of mixed data, due for first-pass review in ten days. Show, step by step, how your platform ingests, processes, and surfaces the data on this timeline — and confirm what it costs under our pricing model.



Watch for manual workarounds, 'we would engage professional services,' or pricing that balloons. The platform should absorb the spike on its own.

B

Scenario B — The Cross-Border, Sensitive Matter

An internal investigation involves data that must remain in its country of origin, while a parallel high-volume matter scales in the cloud. Demonstrate how both run at the same time, where each data set physically resides, and how access is controlled.



Watch for residency asserted but not shown. Ask to see where each matter physically lives — in the interface, not on a slide.

C

Scenario C — The Defensibility Audit

Opposing counsel challenges your process. Produce, from the platform, a complete chain-of-custody and audit trail for a custodian from legal hold through production — and walk us through how AI-assisted review decisions are documented.



Watch for reports assembled by hand from screenshots. A defensible audit trail exports from the platform in minutes, not days.

Weighted Scoring Rubric

Agree on the weights internally before proposals arrive, so scoring stays objective when the demos get persuasive

Score each category from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), multiply by the weight, and total. Adjust the weights to match your priorities — but keep the total at 100, and set them before the first proposal is opened.

Evaluation category	Weight	Score (1–5)	Weighted score
Deployment and data residency fit	15%		
Security and compliance	15%		
Processing speed and scalability	15%		
Review, AI, and analytics	15%		
Legal hold and preservation	10%		
Production and export accuracy	10%		
Total cost of ownership and pricing transparency	10%		
Integrations and data sources	5%		
Implementation, training, and support	5%		
Total	100%		

Timeline, Submission Rules, and Award

A predictable process is part of what makes the result defensible

Procurement timeline

1	RFP issued to vendors	_____	DATE
2	Deadline for vendor questions	_____	DATE
3	Answers circulated to all vendors	_____	DATE
4	Proposals due	_____	DATE
5	Finalist demonstrations (Section 5 scenarios)	_____	DATE
6	Reference checks complete	_____	DATE
7	Decision and award	_____	DATE

Submission rules

☐ Submit proposals by the due date to the contact named on the cover sheet. Late submissions may not be considered.

☐ Answer every Mandatory requirement. Mark any question you cannot answer rather than leaving it blank.

☐ Attach the requested evidence: certifications, references, and a worked pricing example.

☐ Keep responses in this template's structure so the evaluation team can compare proposals line by line.

EVALUATION AND AWARD

Proposals are scored against the Section 6 rubric. The highest-scoring vendors are invited to the Section 5 scenario demonstrations. The award should reflect total value across capability, defensibility, deployment fit, and total cost of ownership — not list price alone.

BEFORE YOU ISSUE THIS RFP

Evaluating a unified eDiscovery platform?

See how a single-platform, deployment-flexible approach answers every section above — one codebase across cloud, on-premises, and hybrid, with AI and legal hold built in.

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