# LIGHTHOUSE Self Service Ediscovery Software Owner's Manual

**SELF-SERVICE EDISCOVERY SOFTWARE**
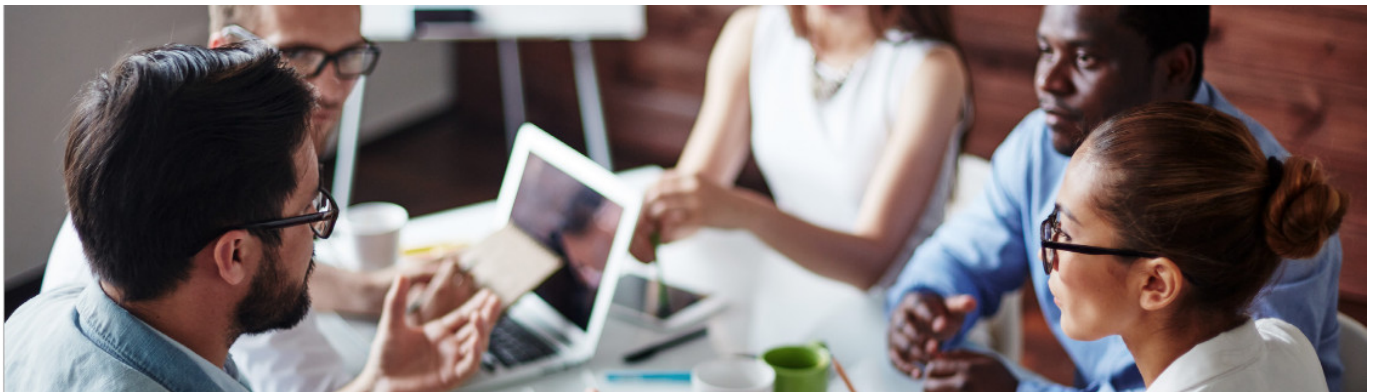A Buyer's Guide

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## Common Self-Service eDiscovery Software Trade-offs

Great review platform but complicated production process
Fantastic reporting capabilities but unintuitive user interface
Easy to upload data but outdated analytics tools
Intuitive design but no technology or workflow experts available when questions arise



These types of trade-offs often feel inherent to self-service eDiscovery software. This is partly due to the nature of eDiscovery itself. It is a legal process that requires multiple technologies and services to perform drastically different and overlapping functions. This makes it nearly impossible for a pure eDiscovery technology provider to design the best proprietary technology for each and every eDiscovery function. For example, most technology providers don't have the breadth of resources necessary to develop the best analytics tools, the best production tools, the best review platforms, and the best processing tools. Instead, they may have one or two tools that perform exceptionally well, whereas other tools may be severely lacking compared to industry-leading options.

Thus, trade-offs like these have become so common in the industry that oftentimes, those responsible for purchasing new software feel as if there is no other choice but to accept them. To make matters worse, the purchasing process itself can also be grueling and overwhelming due to the multitude of functions that need to be evaluated. For all these reasons, purchasers often turn to cost as the primary decision-making factor when evaluating self-service eDiscovery software. After all, cost is seemingly simple to compare among potential technology providers, and presenting the cheapest option is an easy to way justify a potential purchase to stakeholders.

Unfortunately, using cost as the primary decision-making factor when purchasing eDiscovery software can leave end users (i.e., attorneys and legal professionals) holding the short end of the stick – struggling to find workarounds to close the gaps of the shortcomings of a platform. Make no mistake, if an organization or law firm purchases eDiscovery software that has significant functional gaps in a particular area, attorneys and legal professionals will find a way to do their work despite those gaps – out of necessity to serve their organization or clients. But creating workarounds or manually performing work that could be easily automated comes at the expense of attorneys' and legal professionals' own time (and sanity). That expense is then passed down to a firm's clients or to the organization itself. In this way, purchasing the cheapest ediscovery software can drive up cost and become much more expensive overall.

**Rest assured though – there is a better way.**

With a little research, some preparation, and the right strategy, eDiscovery software purchasers can identify, evaluate, and purchase technology that squarely fits the needs of their organization or law firm.

The remainder of this self-service eDiscovery buying guide will provide purchase strategy and research tips that

will help minimize the harmful trade-offs in eDiscovery software that lead to inefficiency and rising expenses. This guide also includes a capability matrix that will help purchasers compare different eDiscovery software features.

## Self-Service eDiscovery Purchasing Strategy Tips



**Preparation is key**
before you evaluate any ediscovery software, it is imperative to understand what your firm or organi ation needs in terms of capabilities, features, and services. nd that requires a little preparation. ven if your firm or organi ation has

used the same ediscovery technology for years and you feel confident that you know what's needed, it is important to talk to all stakeholders about which capabilities, functionality, and features are most important to them.

This preparation can be as simple as sitting down with the legal professionals and lawyers who use the current software and asking them to describe what they like and dislike about it. These conversations can be surprising and enlightening, as the stakeholders may not have raised complaints about the current technology in the past for a variety of reasons – for example, they may have felt that complaining would be futile because the software was already purchased and implemented. However, lawyers and legal professionals may be more vocal about feedback regarding gaps and inefficiencies with their current technology when presented with a clear opportunity to alleviate those pain points with better-suited technology.

Also be prepared that some users within the same firm or organization may have different (or even opposing) positions depending on how they use the software. One group may want a review platform that is scaled down without a lot of bells and whistles, while another group may want advanced filtering, analytics, and artificial intelligence (AI) capabilities. Don't be dismayed by this juxtaposition – it is common, especially among groups that handle vastly different matter types, and it can actually be a valuable consideration during the evaluation process. For example, you may be able to satisfy both sets of needs by looking for ediscovery software that can flex and scale from the smallest matter to the largest, as well one that provides the ability to create different templates for common use cases. Be sure to involve IT and data security teams in these conversations, as well. eDiscovery software often directly implicates those teams, so it is equally important, if not more so, to understand what their requirements and pain points are during the purchasing process.

Once you've gathered the feedback, use it to create a prioritized list of the most important capabilities, functionalities, and attributes for all the stakeholders within your firm or organization. This list will make it easier to evaluate a potential technology.

**Evaluate ediscovery providers as well as software**

While it may seem easier to solely focus on evaluating and comparing software capabilities, it is equally important to understand the differences between the types of eDiscovery providers out there, as that can impact the type of software they develop and/or provide.

Most pure software technology providers will offer their own proprietary eDiscovery technology, as well as the initial training to use it. hale this can be a benefit in terms of simplicity, it may also amplify the trade-offs discussed above if the provider won't pull in competing technology that performs better than their proprietary technology. Also be aware that pure software technology providers may not provide technology or service support beyond the initial trainings – meaning if there is a problem with a production, or an attorney has a question about processing and hosting, there will be little in the way of outside resources to help solve those problems.

On the other hand, eDiscovery service providers offer eDiscovery technology (either their own or a blend of commercial and proprietary technology), as well as a variety of other expert eDiscovery services (for example, information governance and cloud services, forensic and collection services, and review services). The additional services will vary by provider – some offer a full suite of services, some offer only a few. Either way, these additional services may seem overwhelming or unnecessary to an organization or law firm that is simply looking to purchase self-service software.

Before jettisoning this category of providers, however, keep in mind that having those experts on staff can be a sign that the provider is attuned to ensuring that their self-service software offers a holistic eDiscovery solution. For example, providers that offer expert advice on cloud collaboration tools and collection services for those tools will

likely understand the challenges that may arise when loading and processing data from those sources, so they will be prepared with solutions for those challenges. Service providers also generally offer more flexibility with assistance and support when needed because they have the staff on hand to do so, and they may also provide seamless full-service support and burst resources if necessary. Service providers don't require you to use these services, but they can be a lifesaver if and when you need them.

**Back to the basics**

No matter what capabilities and features are most important to stakeholders or what type of eDiscovery provider you prefer to work with, there are certain elements of the evaluation process that will be critical and non-negotiable. Two of those basic elements are reliable data security and predictable pricing.

Reliable Data Security: Keeping your data secure should be any eDiscovery provider's number-one concern. Thus, any provider should be able to demonstrate a robust data security plan as well as boast industry security certifications, including ISO, SOC, and HIPAA. You can research a provider's security infrastructure, any past data breaches, and how data is stored and protected simply by asking sales representatives for this basic information and following up on any concerns. Nothing is more important than keeping your (or your client's) data safe, and any eDiscovery provider that you select should be able to demonstrate that priority to you in concrete terms.

Predictable Pricing: One of the biggest perks of self-service eDiscovery is more predictable pricing and cost control.

Self-service eDiscovery providers should offer cost proposals and pricing structures that fit the unique needs of your organization or law firm. From pay-as-you-go models to a subscription-based approach, self-service eDiscovery pricing should be transparent and predictable, allowing law firms to pass that predictability on to clients and  organizations to better budget for their legal spend.

## eDiscovery Software Evaluation Capability Matrix

Once you have a firm grasp on the features and capabilities that are most important to your stakeholders and understand the differences between provider types, it's time to compare software and providers.

Below we have created a sample capability matrix. By selecting the capabilities and features from the matrix that are most important to stakeholders and then plotting which potential eDiscovery software best meets those requirements, you will be able to select eDiscovery software that fits the needs of your organization or law firm, while minimizing the common trade-offs that cause inefficiency and waste.

| Capability Category | Stakeholder Need/Pain Point | Explanation |
|---|---|---|
| Software Availability and Access | Fully accessible by web browser, 24-7, from any location | Unfortunately, eDiscovery matters are often "round the clock" jobs. This capability will likely be a priority for most stakeholders. |
| Matter Setup | Users can quickly ingest/process data, create a new matter, and begin reviewing within minutes or hours | This capability will be important to stakeholders who are frequently tasked with opening eDiscovery matters and are frustrated with an inefficient process (or with waiting for vendors to upload data and set up databases). |
| Data Processing | Robust ingestion reporting capabilities | This will be particularly important to law firms and organizations that are looking for more insight into their data. Robust processing reporting capabilities allow users to see exceptions to processing, as well as easily access those documents for further inspection. Reporting can also tell stakeholders how much data was processed, where it came from, which custodians' data was processed, etc. – all of which can help identify trends across matters or within a single matter. |
| Data Processing | Fast processing speeds | Processing speed will be important to most organizations and law firms, but especially important to those who expect to process multiple matters or large volumes of data. |
| Data Processing | Robust processing capabilities | Like processing speed, robust processing capabilities will likely be important to most stakeholders, given the variety of data that most organizations and law firms collect today for typical eDiscovery matters. However, this will be especially important to firms or organizations that routinely handle data emanating from a variety of data sources, such as cloud-based tools or chat messaging systems. |

| Capability Category | Stakeholder Need/Pain Point | Explanation |
|---|---|---|
| Data Hosting | Users can easily move data back-and- forth between processing workspaces to review database without losing work product | This is a common pain point for many stakeholders – many self-service eDiscovery platforms don't offer the ability to move data out of the review platform and back into a processing workspace without losing work product. This means that if there's a pause in the matter, the organization must still pay to keep the data hosted in the review database – even when there's no active review. |
| Data Hosting | Tools to help lower hosted data costs | This will be important to organizations or firms that host large volumes of data or multiple matters. One way to reduce hosting cost is to limit the amount of native files hosted in the review database to only those files that are necessary to see in native form (i.e., PowerPoint decks, Excel spreadsheets, or Word documents). Accordingly, some eDiscovery providers offer tools to seamlessly manage and move native files out of the review database. |
| Review Database | Intuitive, user-friendly, and familiar review database interface | This will be important to most end users. A review database must be intuitive enough for legal staff and counsel to easily learn and use. Some eDiscovery technology providers have created their own proprietary review platforms to mitigate what they see as "flaws" in market-leading review technology. This can be a double-edged sword, as the more familiar review tools on the market today are generally leading the market for a reason – they are easier to work with and are familiar to most attorneys and legal professionals. Other eDiscovery providers host their own versions of market-leading review platforms to provide the best of both worlds: they can close feature gaps and enhance their client experience while still providing attorneys with a well-known, intuitive platform to work within. |

| Capability Category | Stakeholder Need/Pain Point | Explanation |
|---|---|---|
| Review Database | Administrators can easily create permission levels for different types of users within the review database | This will be important to organizations/firms with a variety of different types of users. It gives administrators the ability to restrict certain functions and actions by user profile, for example, so a contract attorney cannot create batches or remove documents from the database. |
| Review Database | In-house administrators have full rights to create batches, reassign batches, etc. | Some providers retain control of the ediscovery reins as far as creating and assigning batches. If independently leveraging the software is important to stakeholders, this capability will be critical. |
| Review Database | Users can create customized review and administrator layouts for typical cases handled by the firm or organization | This will be especially important to organizations or law firms that use ediscovery software to handle a variety of matters and want to increase efficiency when setting up a matter. Any time saved by eliminating the need to manually recreate a coding palette and reviewer settings with each new matter is money in the organization's pocket, or that can be passed on to the underlying client in the case of a law firm. |
| Review Database | Client feedback is used to close gaps on review database technology | This will be important to users of both proprietary and commercial review database technology. No review database will be without limitation, but a forward-thinking eDiscovery provider is able to take client feedback on industry tools and create custom solutions that close gaps and relieve client pain points. These providers will have staff on hand whose jobs rest on evaluating technology for gaps and creating processes to close those gaps for a better end-user experience. They will also have a process in place to receive client feedback, including the ability to articulate clear examples of creating solutions for clients. |

| Capability Category | Stakeholder Need/Pain Point | Explanation |
|---|---|---|
| Data Reduction and Analytics Tools | Tools and services to drive data reduction | This will be particularly important to any law firm or organization that deals with large eDiscovery volumes or wants to create more efficiency across multiple smaller matters. Dealing with large volumes of data can be costly, complicated, and time consuming if your eDiscovery software does not provide analytics, machine learning, and AI-backed tools. Some providers may also offer expert advice on data reduction strategies, such as early case assessment, TAR workflows, and search term analysis, which can drastically reduce eDiscovery costs by avoiding manual review. |
| Data Reduction and Analytics Tools | AI and analytics tools and services to increase review efficiency | Like above, this will also be important to any law firm or organization that deals with large eDiscovery volumes or wants to create more efficiency across multiple matters. AI and analytics tools can drastically reduce the need for human review and drive down costs.<br><br>When evaluating provider offerings, be aware that some tools can only analyze the text of a document while others are enhanced by AI and natural language processing (NLP) technology so that they can<br><br>understand context and sentiment. This means the analysis provided by these tools is much more in-depth and accurate than text-only based tools, which adds to their efficiency capabilities. If you're unsure of the<br><br>benefits of a tool, ask for more information about it. |
| Reporting | Robust reporting capabilities that are easily accessible and exportable, as well as intuitive | This will be important to most law firms and organizations. Having access to custom and easily exportable reporting related to ingestion, processing errors, analytics tool results, and production statistics is a simple way to control costs and identify trends and patterns across multiple matters. |

| Capability Category | Stakeholder Need/Pain Point | Explanation |
|---|---|---|
| Reporting | Reporting is tied to the review database, so that it is easy to access the documents in question | Like the capability above, this feature will also benefit almost every law firm or organization. Some technology providers have created simple reporting structures with links to the documents within the review database. This means that when a processing report identifies 15 documents that were processed with exceptions, users can click on the link within the report and will immediately access a workspace

within the review database to view those 15 documents. When applied across multiple matters by multiple users, this added efficiency leads to increased cost savings. |
| Training and Technical Assistance | Free eDiscovery software training | This will be a must-have for any law firm or organization that is onboarding new eDiscovery software. |
| Training and Technical Assistance | Robust 24-7 access to technical assistance | This will be a must-have for most law firms and organizations. It's important to understand before purchasing any ediscovery software what type of technical assistance is available and when it is available to attorneys and staff. This information will not only factor into purchasing decisions, but will also help in resource planning after a purchase. |
| Scalability | Technology can handle your firm or organization's data volume at all stages of ediscovery, including processing, review, and production | This will be important to firms or organizations that even occasionally handle large data volumes. Do some research on the highest volumes of data hosted by your firm or organization within the last five years, then compare potential eDiscovery providers' data capabilities. This way, you can ensure that any potential provider can handle your largest matters. |

| Capability Category | Stakeholder Need/Pain Point | Explanation |
|---|---|---|
| Scalability | Software can scale down to provide a simple, intuitive interface to handle<br><br>small matters, without in-depth training | This will be important to firms or organizations where attorneys or legal staff routinely handle smaller matters and want a similarly scaled-down platform to work in. Some providers offer the ability to create review templates for small matters that streamline the view, and also help create efficiency across multiple small matters. |
| Scalability | Ability to scale/flex and seamlessly transition between self-service and full-service, with options for a la cart client support | This will be particularly important to organizations or law firms that use outside managed services to handle larger or more complicated litigation or investigations. Many ediscovery service providers offer the ability to pull in experienced client support teams to help with any aspect of the ediscovery process, from collections and ECA, to TAR and review, or all of the above. While some providers offer these capabilities as completely discrete services, others provide the ability to flex between self-service and full-service without the time, expense, or potential work-product loss of transferring data to another review database. |
| Technology roadmap | Roadmap is designed to address future market trends | This will be particularly important to any law firm or organization that plans to keep pace with the evolution of technology in-house (for example, by adopting new cloud-based collaboration tools as they become available, adopting BYO device policies for employees, etc.). If a provider is not forward thinking, your organization or firm may find itself being forced to use outdated technology that's not able to handle new challenges with security or process and review emerging data sources. |

## Conclusion

The process of evaluating and buying self-service eDiscovery software may be time consuming and grueling. But don't let that process intimidate you into simply opting for the cheapest available software. Basing your buying decision on upfront cost alone can lead to purchasing self-service eDiscovery software that is a bad fit for your organization or law firm, with gaps in technology that create inefficiency and lead to frustrated attorneys and legal professionals. In turn, this inefficiency and frustration results in higher costs overall for organizations and clients. By utilizing this buying guide, you will be better prepared to easily identify the self-service eDiscovery solution that is the best fit for your organization or firm – one that minimizes harmful technology trade-offs and creates long-term efficiency and lower overall eDiscovery costs.

**bout Lighthouse**

For 25 years, Lighthouse has provided innovative software and services to manage the increasingly complex landscape of enterprise data for compliance and legal teams. Lighthouse leads by developing proprietary technology that integrates with industry-leading third-party software, automating workflows, and creating an easy-to-use, end-to-end platform. Lighthouse also delivers unique proprietary applications and advisory services that are highly valuable for large, complex matters, and a new SaaS platform designed for in-house teams. Whether reacting to incidents like litigation or governmental investigations, or designing programs to proactively minimize the potential for future incidents, Lighthouse partners with multinational industry leaders, top global law firms, and the world's leading software provider as a channel partner.



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**SELF-SERVICE EDISCOVERY SOFTWARE: A BUYER'S GUIDE**

## Documents / Resources

| | |
|---|---|
|  | **LIGHTHOUSE Self Service Ediscovery Software** [pdf] Owner's Manual<br>Self Service Ediscovery Software, Ediscovery Software, Software |

## References

-  **Lighthouse - eDiscovery & Information Governance Company**