

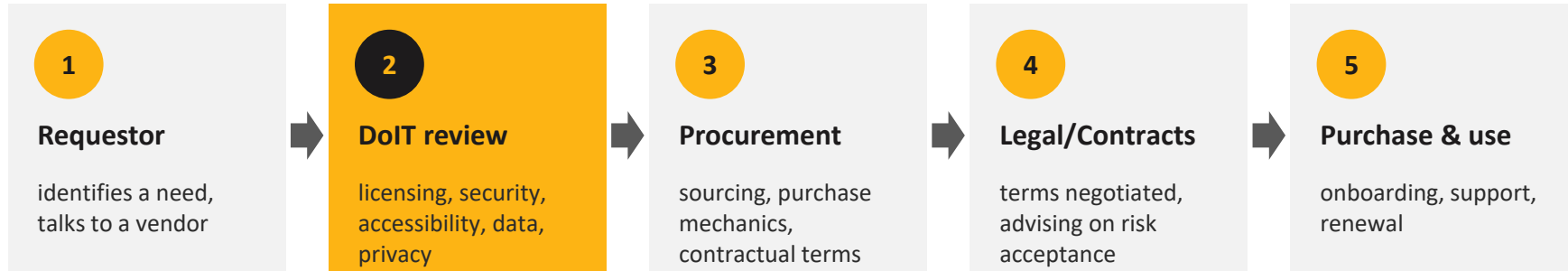
# Software & Cloud Services Procurement

DoIT's role as the first step in the process

Jason Paluck ([paluck@umbc.edu](mailto:paluck@umbc.edu))

Associate Vice President for Information Technology · DoIT

# Where DoIT fits in the process



**DoIT is not Procurement and not Legal, and we do not speak for either.**

We are the first stop, and we stay involved with both offices for the life of the request. Engaging us early is what keeps the later steps short.

Part 1

# **WHAT COUNTS AS SOFTWARE/CLOUD SERVICE?**

# "It's only software if I install it." No!

## What people think

- Something I download and install on a computer
- A license key or a box
- "It's just a subscription"
- "It's free, so it doesn't count"
- "It's just a website"

## What it actually includes

- SaaS and web-based subscriptions
- Mobile apps and browser extensions
- Hosted services: web hosting, cloud storage, databases
- APIs, plug-ins, and add-ons to tools we already own
- "Free" tiers and trials that touch university data

**Quick test:** if the vendor's servers went dark tomorrow, would you lose access or data? Then it's software, and it goes through review.

Part 2

# **WHAT DOIT REVIEWS, AND WHY**

# Six things we check on every request

1

## Enterprise license check

Is there already a licensed or supported product that does this?  
Fiscal responsibility to the state and taxpayers.

2

## Digital accessibility

ADA and Section 508. We review the VPAT/ACR. A tool some students can't use is a tool we can't buy.

3

## Data protection

Student data (FERPA), research data under sponsor or export-control terms, employee and health data.

4

## Privacy

What the vendor collects, retains, shares, and — increasingly — trains on.

5

## Security & integration

Single sign-on, vendor security posture, how it connects to systems we already run.

6

## Contract terms

We flag what Procurement and Legal will need to negotiate before the request reaches them.

# The HECVAT: how we actually evaluate a vendor

Higher Education Community Vendor Assessment Toolkit: a standardized questionnaire vendors complete covering cybersecurity, privacy, IT accessibility, and compliance in one place. Built by higher ed for higher ed with EDUCAUSE, Internet2, and REN-ISAC. Current version: HECVAT 4 (4.1.6), which added privacy and AI questions.

## Why it is our biggest delay

- We can't finish the security, privacy, or accessibility review without it
- Chasing vendors: finding the right contact, explaining what it is, waiting on their security team routinely adds weeks
- You are already talking to the vendor. We are not.

## How you can expedite the review

- Ask the vendor for their completed HECVAT 4 (and VPAT) before your request
- Any vendor that regularly sells to higher ed has one on file
- If they have never heard of it, that tells us something too
- Send them the link: [educause.edu/higher-education-community-vendor-assessment-toolkit](https://educause.edu/higher-education-community-vendor-assessment-toolkit)

**Say this:** *"Our IT division requires a completed HECVAT 4 and a VPAT as part of procurement review. Can you send the most recent versions?"*

# How to find the HECVAT



<https://www.educause.edu/higher-education-community-vendor-assessment-toolkit>

Part 3

# **THE "I WANT MY OWN" PROBLEM**

# We already offer it. Buying your own adds risk.

## The pattern we see

### Cloud storage

A department buys Dropbox or similar while UMBC already provides multiple supported cloud storage options.

### Web hosting

A unit buys WordPress hosting while DoIT already runs a substantial WordPress footprint for all our web properties.

*The reasons are almost always the same: wanting complete control over the product, or simply liking their choice better.*

## Separate terms

Small purchases get no leverage; the vendor's terms are usually non-negotiable.

## No central governance

No security monitoring, backup, or access management behind it.

## Another contract

One more agreement to track, renew, and eventually offboard.

## Orphaned data

When the owner leaves, the data and the account leave with them.

# Before you write a requisition

**Check the UMBC Software Catalog first**

**[softwarecatalog.umbc.edu](https://softwarecatalog.umbc.edu)**

Licensed, supported, and already reviewed, with the terms, security, and accessibility work done.

## **1** If it's there

Use it! Context matters so a review is still required, but this will streamline your request.

## **2** If something similar is there

Talk to DoIT before buying. Often the gap is a feature we can enable, not a new product.

## **3** If it's genuinely not there

Engage DoIT early (before a quote), and ask the vendor for the HECVAT while you're at it.

Part 4

# **AI PURCHASES**

# No negotiated terms means public information only

UMBC has no negotiated terms and conditions with Anthropic or OpenAI today. Without them, there are no data or privacy protections we can rely on. These tools may only be used with public information.

**Public information = anything you'd be comfortable posting on a public web page with no login.**

## Fine to use

- Published course catalog text, public web content
- Drafting general-purpose writing, brainstorming
- Code and documents with nothing confidential in them

## Not fine — even if it feels harmless

- Student records or anything covered by FERPA
- Research data under a sponsor or export-control agreement
- Employee records, health data, anything internal-only

# The AI Attestation form



## The attestation must be signed by the actual user of the product.

Not the business manager or administrative staff who submitted the request on their behalf. It is a personal commitment about how the tool will be used, and it only means something if the person using the tool is the one making it.

# "Not yet" is not "no"

## **Internet2 NET+ enterprise contract**

I sit on the NET+ legal and contracting committee. We have been negotiating an enterprise agreement with Anthropic for over a year.

When it lands: Claude purchases get real data and privacy protections, and the public-information restriction can be lifted for that product.

Why it is slow: Anthropic's growth and IPO preparation. Higher ed is negotiating with a company that is changing shape month to month.

## **University System of Maryland AI policy**

Still in draft. It will extensively shape how AI can be used across the system.

Every USM institution is holding off on wholesale AI adoption until it is final. Nobody wants to roll out broadly and then walk it back.

What that means for you: expect the current constraints to hold for now, and expect them to change when the policy does.

# Four asks

1

## **Check the Software Catalog first**

softwarecatalog.umbc.edu — before a quote, before a requisition

2

## **Engage DoIT early**

Before a quote, not after. Early questions are short; late ones are expensive

3

## **Ask your vendor for the HECVAT up front**

Include the VPAT. It is the fastest way to shorten our review

4

## **Expect the AI attestation**

Public information only, signed by the actual user, not the requester

*Questions before you buy? Reach out to DoIT! That conversation is always shorter than the one after.*