

Litigation IT Rate Guide 2026

Real pricing data — eDiscovery costs, trial technology fees, and courtroom AV rates for 2026

- ✓ eDiscovery processing, hosting, and review costs per GB
- ✓ Hot seat technician and courtroom AV daily rates
- ✓ Trial presentation software licensing and support fees
- ✓ How to negotiate better rates with litigation support vendors

How Litigation IT Billing Works

Litigation IT billing is fragmented across multiple service categories — eDiscovery, trial technology, courtroom AV, and ongoing litigation support. Each has its own pricing model: per-GB, per-user, hourly, daily, or project-based. The complexity of billing models is itself a cost driver, as firms often overpay simply because they don't understand the rate structure. This guide breaks down every component.

Billing Structure Overview

| Service Category | Billing Model | Typical Range |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|
| eDiscovery — processing | Per GB ingested | \$3-\$10/GB |
| eDiscovery — hosting | Per GB per month | \$5-\$15/GB/month |
| eDiscovery — review (human) | Per hour (contract attorney) | \$40-\$75/hr |
| eDiscovery — review (AI-assisted) | Per document | \$0.11-\$0.50/doc |
| Trial technology — hot seat operator | Daily rate | \$2,000-\$4,500/day |
| Trial technology — database build | Project-based | \$3,000-\$15,000 |
| Courtroom AV setup | Per trial | \$5,000-\$25,000 |
| Litigation support (general) | Hourly | \$150-\$250/hr |
| Project management | Hourly | \$175-\$300/hr |

Quick Budget Reference

- Small case eDiscovery (< 10 GB): \$5,000-\$15,000
- Medium case eDiscovery (10-100 GB): \$15,000-\$75,000
- Large case eDiscovery (100+ GB): \$75,000-\$500,000+
- Trial technology (1-week trial): \$15,000-\$50,000
- Courtroom AV + hot seat (1-week trial): \$20,000-\$60,000
- Full-service litigation support (complex case, filing through trial): \$100,000-\$1,000,000+

eDiscovery Pricing Breakdown

eDiscovery Costs in 2026 — What You'll Actually Pay

eDiscovery pricing has shifted dramatically in 2025-2026. AI-powered review is collapsing per-document costs. Relativity and Everlaw now include generative AI review tools in standard subscriptions. DISCO has moved to single per-GB pricing. But pricing remains opaque — and most firms still overpay.

Phase-by-Phase Pricing

| Phase | Pricing Model | 2026 Range | Notes |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Collection | Per custodian or flat fee | \$500-\$2,000/ custodian | Forensic collection from devices, cloud, mobile |
| Processing | Per GB ingested | \$3-\$10/GB | Deduplication, text extraction, metadata |
| Hosting | Per GB per month | \$5-\$15/GB/ month | Platform hosting; cumulative cost over case life |
| Review — Human | Per hour (contract attorney) | \$40-\$75/hr | Manual document-by-document review |
| Review — AI-assisted | Per document | \$0.11-\$0.50/doc | AI categorization + human verification |
| Review — TAR/CAL | Per GB or flat project | \$5-\$25/GB | Technology-assisted review (Relativity, Brainspace) |
| Production | Per GB or per document | \$3-\$8/GB | Format conversion, redaction, Bates numbering |
| Managed review (full service) | Per document (all-in) | \$0.75-\$2.50/doc | Vendor manages full review workflow |

Platform Comparison

| Platform | Pricing Model | AI Review Included? | Best For |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|---|---|
| Relativity (RelativityOne) | Per-user/month + per-GB | Yes (aiR for Review, free since early 2026) | Large firms; complex litigation; government |

| Platform | Pricing Model | AI Review Included? | Best For |
|------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Everlaw | Per-user/month | Yes (AI-powered analysis, included) | Mid-size firms; collaborative review |
| DISCO | Single per-GB fee | Yes (DISCO AI, included) | Cost simplicity; mid-market |
| Logikcull | Flat monthly subscription | Limited | Small cases; solo/small firm |
| Nuix | Per-GB processing | No (processing-focused) | High-volume data processing |

The AI Review Revolution

In 2024, human document review cost \$1.50-\$3.00/document. In 2026, AI-assisted review has driven that to \$0.11-\$0.50/document. For a 100,000-document case, that's a savings of \$100,000-\$250,000. Always ask whether your vendor includes AI review in their standard pricing.

Trial Technology Pricing

Courtroom Technology — What a Trial Actually Costs

Hot Seat Technician Rates

| Service | Daily Rate | What's Included |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|--|
| Hot seat operator (trial day) | \$2,500-\$4,500/day | Real-time exhibit display; video/deposition playback; annotation |
| Hot seat operator (prep day) | \$1,500-\$3,000/day | Database build, exhibit organization, tech rehearsal |
| Trial technology consultant | \$250-\$400/hr | Strategic advice on presentation approach and technology |
| After-hours / overtime | \$150-\$250/hr | Work beyond standard 10-hour trial day |

Trial Database Build

| Deliverable | Cost | Description |
|--|----------------------------|---|
| Exhibit database build (small, < 200 exhibits) | \$3,000-\$7,000 | Import, organize, and index all trial exhibits |
| Exhibit database build (large, 200-1,000 exhibits) | \$7,000-\$15,000 | Complex case with multi-format exhibits |
| Video deposition clips (designation editing) | \$100-\$200/hr | Cutting designated testimony into playable clips |
| Transcript-to-video sync | \$150-\$300 per deposition | Synchronizing transcript text to video for real-time playback |
| Demonstrative creation (per graphic) | \$500-\$2,500 | Custom-designed charts, timelines, animations |
| Trial presentation template | \$2,000-\$5,000 | Branded slide template for opening/closing arguments |

The "Hot Seat" Is Not Optional for Complex Trials.

In trials with 100+ exhibits, video depositions, and demonstratives, a hot seat operator is essential. Attorneys who try to run their own technology lose credibility when exhibits fail to display, videos won't play, or annotation tools malfunction.

Courtroom AV & Equipment

Courtroom AV Setup — Equipment and Costs

Standard Courtroom Technology Package

| Equipment | Cost (Rental) | Notes |
|---|---------------------------|---|
| Presentation laptop (primary) | Included in hot seat rate | Loaded with TrialDirector, OnCue, or Sanction |
| Backup laptop (redundant) | Included in hot seat rate | Identical setup; instant failover |
| Evidence presentation system (ELMO) | \$200-\$500/day | Document camera for physical exhibits |
| Large-format courtroom monitor (55-75") | \$300-\$800/day | Primary display for jury and/or witness |
| Secondary monitors (attorney tables, judge) | \$150-\$300/day each | 2-4 additional screens |
| Audio system (speakers, mixer) | \$200-\$500/day | For video deposition playback |
| Cabling, adapters, power distribution | \$200-\$500 per trial | HDMI, USB-C, power strips, gaffer tape |
| War room setup (monitors, printer, network) | \$1,000-\$3,000/trial | Dedicated litigation workspace near courtroom |
| Video recording (for appellate record) | \$500-\$1,500/day | Separate from court's recording system |

Total AV Package Costs

| Trial Duration | Basic Package | Full Package (with war room) |
|----------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| 1-3 day trial | \$5,000-\$12,000 | \$10,000-\$20,000 |
| 1-week trial | \$10,000-\$25,000 | \$20,000-\$40,000 |
| 2-week trial | \$18,000-\$40,000 | \$35,000-\$65,000 |

| Trial Duration | Basic Package | Full Package (with war room) |
|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1-month trial | \$30,000-\$70,000 | \$60,000-\$120,000 |

Check what the courthouse provides.

Many federal courthouses have built-in AV systems (monitors, evidence cameras, audio) that you can use for free. Contact the courtroom deputy clerk to inventory existing equipment before renting duplicates.

Litigation Support Software

Trial Presentation Software — What You Need

Software Comparison

| Software | License Cost | Primary Use | Adoption |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|--|--|
| TrialDirector | \$795-\$1,995/ license | Exhibit management, video sync, presentation | ~35% of trial tech market |
| OnCue | \$79-\$199/ month | Cloud-based trial presentation | Growing fast; ~15% market |
| Sanction | \$595-\$1,295/ license | Courtroom presentation | ~10%; legacy market |
| TrialPad (iPad) | \$129.99 | iPad-based exhibit presentation | ~20%; popular with solo/ small |
| PowerPoint | Part of Office 365 | Basic slides; openings/closings | ~75% use for at least some content |
| CaseMap (LexisNexis) | \$600-\$1,200/ license | Case analysis, fact chronology, issue linking | Not presentation; case organization |
| Relativity | Per-user subscription | Document review (not courtroom) | eDiscovery; not trial presentation |

When to Use What

| Situation | Recommended Tool | Why |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Complex trial (100+ exhibits) | TrialDirector or OnCue + hot seat operator | Fastest exhibit retrieval; video sync; annotation |
| Mid-size trial (25-100 exhibits) | OnCue or TrialPad | Simpler interface; lower cost |
| Small trial / hearing (< 25 exhibits) | TrialPad or PowerPoint | Attorney can self-operate |
| Opening / closing arguments | PowerPoint or Keynote | Best for designed narrative presentations |

| Situation | Recommended Tool | Why |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Video deposition playback | TrialDirector or OnCue | Transcript-synced playback with designation cuts |

Hidden Fees & Add-Ons

eDiscovery and trial technology invoices are notorious for hidden charges. Always request a detailed SOW (statement of work) with all-inclusive pricing before engagement.

| Add-On | Typical Cost | When It Applies |
|---|----------------------------|---|
| eDiscovery | | |
| Data culling / filtering | \$2-\$5/GB | Date range, keyword, custodian filtering |
| Foreign language document processing | +50-100% | OCR and translation for non-English documents |
| Privilege log creation | \$15-\$40/document | Logging privileged documents for production |
| Native file production | \$3-\$8/GB | Producing files in native format (not PDF) |
| Clawback letter processing | \$500-\$2,000 per instance | Handling inadvertent privilege disclosures |
| Litigation hold management | \$500-\$2,000/month | Automated hold tracking and compliance |
| Trial Technology | | |
| Courtroom site survey | \$500-\$1,500 | Pre-trial visit to assess courtroom AV and layout |
| After-hours trial prep | \$150-\$250/hr | Evening/weekend preparation during trial |
| Last-minute exhibit additions | \$50-\$200/exhibit | Adding exhibits to database during trial |
| Equipment shipping (out-of-state trial) | \$1,000-\$5,000 | Packing, shipping, and setup of full AV kit |
| Mock trial / focus group support | \$2,000-\$5,000/day | Full technology support for mock trials |
| Post-trial equipment teardown | \$500-\$1,500 | Removal, packing, return of all equipment |

For eDiscovery, negotiate an "all-in" per-GB rate that includes processing, hosting (12-month minimum), and AI-assisted first-pass review. This single number makes budgeting predictable and prevents a la carte fee creep.

How to Negotiate Better Rates

Numbered list

- 1 Negotiate all-in per-GB pricing for eDiscovery.** Combining processing + hosting + AI review into a single per-GB rate simplifies budgeting and typically saves 15-25% over a la carte pricing.
- 2 Compare platform-direct vs. vendor-managed.** Subscribing to RelativityOne or Everlaw directly and hiring freelance project managers costs 30-50% less than full-service vendor management.
- 3 Right-size your platform.** A 5 GB case doesn't need RelativityOne. Logikcull or DISCO's small-case plans cost a fraction. Reserve enterprise platforms for enterprise cases.
- 4 Use AI review aggressively.** Generative AI review at \$0.11-\$0.50/document replaces \$40-75/hr human reviewers. For a 100K-document case, this saves \$100K+. Ask every vendor about their AI capabilities.
- 5 Negotiate hot seat rates for multi-day trials.** Most trial technology firms discount 10-20% for trials exceeding 5 days. Book early and confirm rates in writing.
- 6 Provide organized data.** Disorganized data increases processing time and costs. Use standardized collection tools and provide data in common formats (PST, MBOX, native files).
- 7 Avoid rush surcharges.** Give eDiscovery vendors 5-7 business days for processing (not 24 hours). Last-minute processing commands 50-100% rush premiums.
- 8 Check courthouse AV before renting.** Federal courtrooms often have built-in monitors, evidence cameras, and audio systems. Only rent what the courthouse lacks.
- 9 Bundle eDiscovery and trial support.** Vendors who handle your case from collection through trial presentation often discount 10-15% for end-to-end engagements.
- 10 Get three quotes.** eDiscovery vendor pricing varies 40-60% for identical services. Always compare at least 3 vendors — including at least one pure-play platform (Everlaw, DISCO) and one full-service vendor.

Budget Planning Worksheet

Use this worksheet to estimate total litigation IT costs. Print and fill in for each case.

| Line Item | Estimated Cost | Actual Cost |
|--|----------------|-------------|
| eDiscovery | | |
| Data collection (est. custodians x rate) | \$ _____ | \$ _____ |
| Processing (est. GB x per-GB rate) | \$ _____ | \$ _____ |
| Hosting (est. GB x monthly rate x months) | \$ _____ | \$ _____ |
| Document review — AI-assisted | \$ _____ | \$ _____ |
| Document review — human (est. hrs x rate) | \$ _____ | \$ _____ |
| Production | \$ _____ | \$ _____ |
| Trial Technology | | |
| Trial database build | \$ _____ | \$ _____ |
| Hot seat operator (est. days x daily rate) | \$ _____ | \$ _____ |
| Prep days (est. days x rate) | \$ _____ | \$ _____ |
| Courtroom AV equipment rental | \$ _____ | \$ _____ |
| War room setup | \$ _____ | \$ _____ |
| Video deposition sync and clips | \$ _____ | \$ _____ |
| Demonstrative creation | \$ _____ | \$ _____ |
| Equipment shipping (if out-of-state) | \$ _____ | \$ _____ |
| 20% contingency buffer | \$ _____ | \$ _____ |
| TOTAL ESTIMATED | \$ _____ | \$ _____ |

CTA box

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