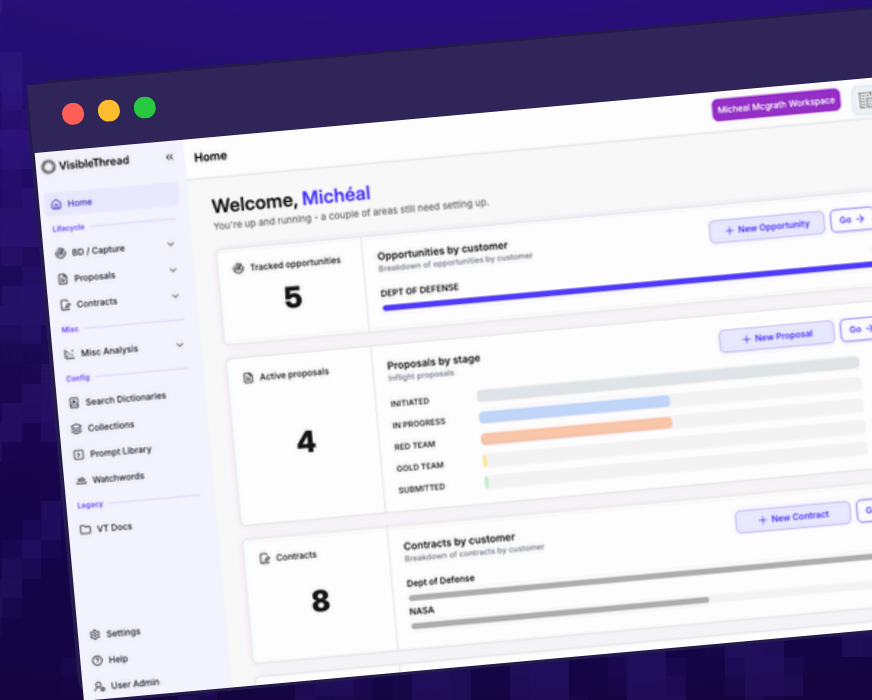


— A VISIBLETHREAD GUIDE

AI Wrote It. Can It Defend It?

A Guide to Building Proposals That Win - And Hold Up After



The Room Your Proposal Walks Into

Submission isn't the finish line. It's the door.

On the other side of that door is a room. In that room, someone is going to pick up your proposal and start asking questions. Not "is this well written?" Not "does this flow nicely?" They're going to ask: where did this answer come from? Can you prove it? If we check this reference, will it hold?

And then there's another room after that. Orals and clarifications. Contract negotiations. A protest. A debrief. Each room asks the same question in a different costume, and each one is harder than the last.

Generative AI has changed how fast we get to a first draft. Teams are reaching submission-ready content in hours, not weeks. Analysis that used to require another analyst is now a prompt away. That's real, and it matters.

But none of those rooms care how fast you drafted it.

Evaluators still score on every requirement. Contracts teams still need a source for every commitment. One missed item can still end the bid. The stakes haven't changed. What's changed is that AI-generated content looks polished and plausible, which makes the gaps harder to spot before you walk through that door.

The market is full of vendors promising to press a button and generate the whole thing. That's not the hard part. The hard part is what happens in the rooms after.



Everybody knows AI is valuable. But they don't quite know how to leverage it best, where it can be applied, when it can be trusted, and when it cannot.

Fergal McGovern · CPO, VisibleThread



Where AI-Generated Proposals Break Down

02

The three failure modes of generative AI don't show up in the draft. They show up under pressure, which is exactly the wrong time to find them.

FABRICATION

Orals. Clarifications. Evaluator scoring.

Your evaluator checks a proof point. Maybe a certification you claimed. Maybe a performance metric. The content read perfectly, but the source doesn't exist, or doesn't say what the proposal implied it said.

The danger with AI fabrication isn't that it looks wrong. It's that it looks right. Plausible, well-structured, confident. When you're reviewing AI-drafted content, you're not looking for clumsy errors anymore. You're looking for claims that are convincing but unverifiable. Miss one, and every other claim in the proposal starts to look suspicious.

NO TRAIL

Protests. Debriefs. Contract negotiations.

Someone asks: where did this come from? Can you show the source? Without a traceable path back to real documentation, correct and invented start to look identical.

You may know the claim is right. But if you can't walk it back to a source, you can't defend it. And in a protest or a debrief, "we know it's right" isn't enough.

DRIFT

Color reviews. Compliance checks. Late-stage negotiations.

Run the same prompt today and again tomorrow. You'll get a different answer. Work in the same workflow long enough, and the outputs start to drift. The model doesn't get smarter over time, it gets murkier.

Your compliance position can shift during a week of negotiations. AI has no mechanism to track that nuance, which means the compliance analysis you ran on Monday may not reflect the position you're actually holding on Friday.

What It Actually Takes to Walk In Ready

03

A proposal that can survive every room passes three tests. Generative AI alone fails all three. **Traceable. Repeatable. Reviewed.** If the process doesn't produce all three, the proposal isn't ready for the rooms ahead.

01 Traceable



Every requirement, every risk flag, every factual claim points to a specific source document. Not "the AI knew this." The exact page. The exact paragraph. The exact document in your knowledge base. Show me the source is the only answer that holds up.

02 Repeatable



Rerun the analysis today. Run it again during a color review. Run it again during a protest six months from now. You get the identical result. Probabilistic AI can't promise that. Deterministic technology gives you the same answer every time, which is the only kind of answer you can defend.

03 Reviewed



There's a record of who flagged it, who cleared it, and what they verified. Human accountability isn't assumed after the fact. It's built into the process from the start, so when someone asks who signed off on this, you have an answer.

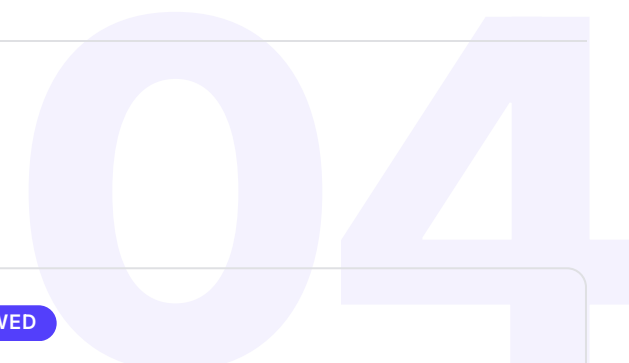


If you point AI at a big corpus of content, much of which is out of date, AI has no way to differentiate old stuff from new stuff. Every word is treated equally.

Fergal McGovern · CPO, VisibleThread

The Combination That Gets You There

The question was never whether to use AI. It's knowing which tool belongs in which room.



REQUIREMENT SHREDDING

LEAVE AI OUT

Leave AI Outside

This is the room where accuracy is absolute. Will, Shall, Must. Contract risk terms. Compliance matrix. One miss here and you're nonresponsive. AI is variable by design. That's fine for drafting. It's disqualifying for shredding. Deterministic, rules-based technology runs the same dictionary against the same document and returns the same result every time — exact page references, zero interpretation. That's the only kind of shred you can walk into a protest with.

OUTLINE GENERATION

AI IN, REVIEWED

AI Gets You in the Door

AI is excellent at building structure fast, mapped against your solicitation, aligned to Section L and M. It gets you off the blank page and gives your team a strong skeleton to work from. But it's a starting point. Human review, editing, and sign-off before anyone builds on it is non-negotiable.

CONTENT DRAFTING

AI, GROUNDED

AI, Grounded in the Right Room

AI can draft content that genuinely moves the needle, but only if it's working from the right material. Point it at your entire SharePoint and it treats a four-year-old brochure the same as something approved last week. Ground it in a curated collection of your best past performance, your strongest technical references, your approved capability narratives, and every answer it generates traces back to a real, defensible source.

COMPLIANCE CHECKING

DETERMINISTIC

Deterministic Closes the Loop

After drafting, deterministic technology runs the final check. Acronyms defined and consistent. Watchwords and risky language flagged. Customer terminology verified. These aren't judgment calls. They're rules, and they have to be right every time, not most of the time.

Our ability to corral content is critical. When you get one system that combines a system of record with generative AI plus deterministic, that is why you need VisibleThread.

Fergal McGovern · CPO, VisibleThread

The Infrastructure That Makes It Scale

Getting one proposal through the rooms is one thing. Getting every proposal, across every team, across every pursuit through the rooms is a governance question.

05



WORKSPACES

The Right People in the Right Room

Not everyone should see everything. A commercial team doesn't need access to federal opportunities. A CUI workspace requires tighter controls. In a complex enterprise, the assumption that one configuration applies to everyone is where things start to break down. Workspaces in VisibleThread are security and workflow boundaries. Each one has its own collections, its own prompt library, its own stage configuration, and its own access controls. Different teams, different lines of business, different sensitivity levels, all operating cleanly within the same platform.

"Without workspaces, you're kind of hosed if you want a serious enterprise benefit."



COLLECTIONS

Putting the Right Evidence in the Room

The biggest AI failure point isn't the model. It's the data you feed it. Curated collections let you put your 15 best case studies in front of the AI instead of all 100, your current technical specs instead of the ones from three product cycles ago, your approved content instead of everything that's ever lived in a shared drive. That's what makes AI output traceable. The source is always known, always current, always defensible.



PROMPT LIBRARIES

Same Briefing for Every Room

When every analyst starts from their own blank page, quality becomes unpredictable. Standardized prompt libraries give every team member the same strong starting point at each stage of the lifecycle: risk analysis at research, gap analysis at drafting, readability review before submission. Consistency at scale, without requiring institutional knowledge to live in any one person's head.



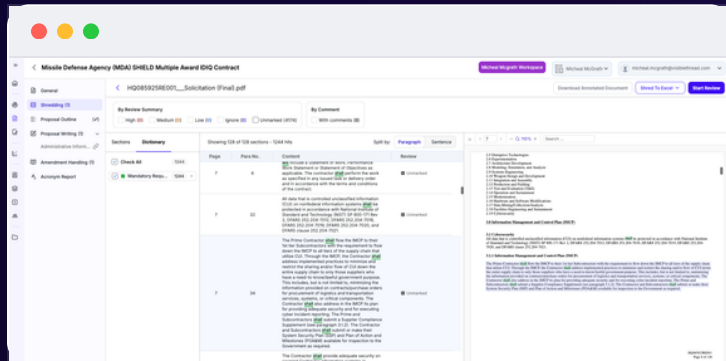
REVIEW TRAILS

Knowing Who Was in the Room

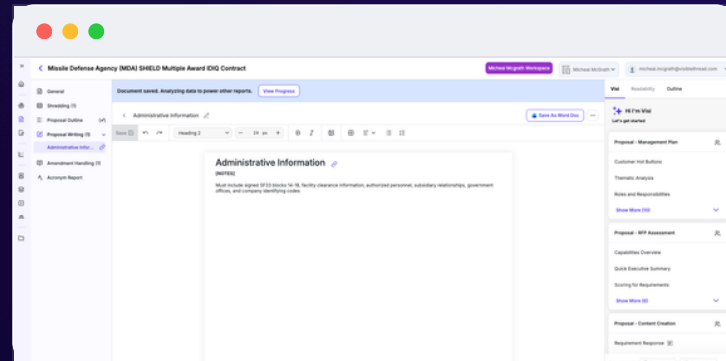
Who reviewed this section? What did they flag? What did they clear? That trail has to exist before submission, not be reconstructed after a challenge. Build it in from the start.

One platform for every room

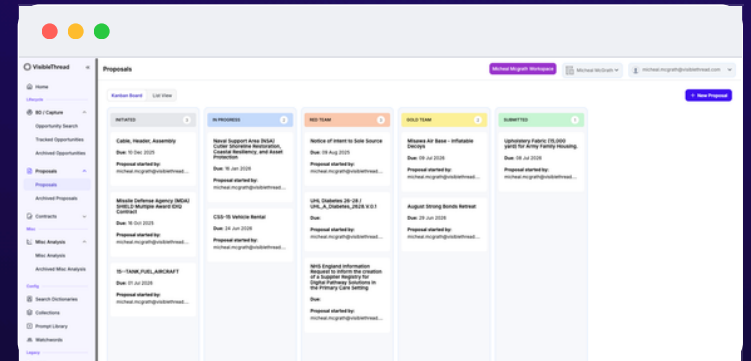
From shredding the solicitation to grounding the draft to closing the compliance loop. The same workflow that gets you in the door is the one that holds up after.



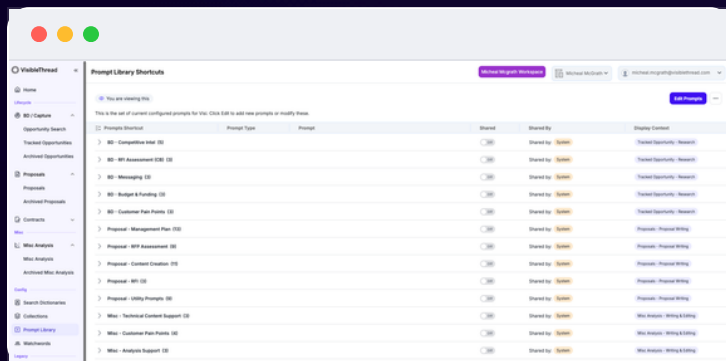
● Requirement shredding



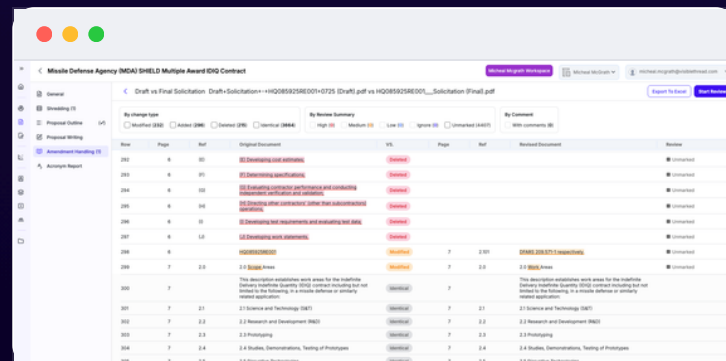
● Proposal writing with Visi



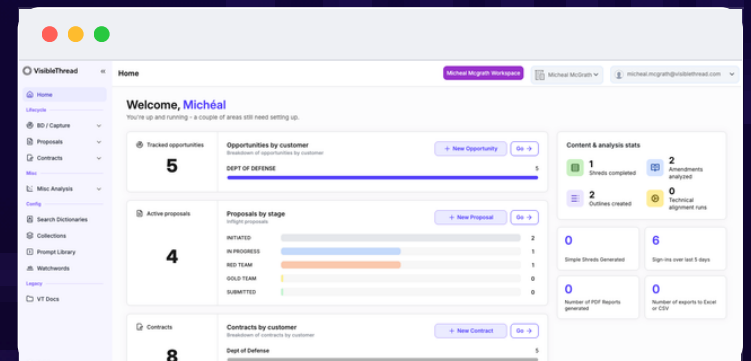
● Proposals by stage



● Prompt libraries



● Compare documents



● Workspaces & analysis stats

The Final Rehearsal

Before the door opens, five questions. If you can answer all five, the proposal is ready. If you can't, you'll find out the hard way.



01 Can you point to the page and paragraph for every item in the compliance matrix?

Not "AI found it." The exact location. The exact source.

02 If you reran the shred right now, would you get the exact same result?

If the honest answer is "probably," that's a no.

03 Does every factual claim link back to a source document?

Every proof point. Every credential. Every commitment made on behalf of your organization.

04 Are amendment changes accounted for, line by line, with a documented trail?

Requirements change mid-pursuit more often than anyone likes. Did your response keep pace, and can you show it?

05 Is there a record of who reviewed and cleared each item?

Not assumed. Documented.

PASS ALL FIVE

and you're not just ready for submission. You're ready for every room after it.

— WHY VISIBLETHREAD

“One system that combines a system of record with the right mix of technology: generative AI plus deterministic, plus the ability to focus that AI on the content that matters. That is why you need VisibleThread.”

AI wrote it. VisibleThread makes sure it holds up.