

The Mississippi AI Innovation Hub and MSU Students Power the Future of ITS Procurement with “*Procurii*”

Mississippi State University Students Develop AI-Powered Knowledge Assistant for Internal Procurement Support at ITS

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The AI Innovation Hub serves to effectively, securely and ethically accelerate statewide AI adoption, modernize public services and strengthen Mississippi’s talent pipeline through collaborative proof-of-concept developments. Designed to position the state as a leader in AI innovation and workforce readiness, the Hub brings together higher education institutions, state agencies, and industry partners to expand economic opportunity and equip students with cutting-edge AI skills to build real-world AI solutions for Mississippi stakeholders.

The Mississippi AI Innovation Hub has announced the completion of a new Proof of Concept (PoC) dubbed *Procurii*, pronounced “Pro-cure-ee”, a new internal AI-powered chatbot developed in partnership with the Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services (ITS) Procurement Services Division. The solution is designed to improve efficiency, accuracy, and consistency of procurement-related support across state government.

The ITS Procurement Services Division plays a critical role in supporting technology operations statewide. Following retirements and staffing changes, institutional knowledge became increasingly siloed and procurement documentation more difficult to navigate. As policies evolved and legislation updated, staff faced challenges in quickly locating accurate, up-to-date guidance without relying heavily on individual subject matter experts.

Procurii centralizes authoritative procurement documentation into an AI-powered conversational interface. Developed within AWS’s sandbox environment using document retrieval and citation-reference techniques, the chatbot allows staff to ask natural language questions and receive responses sourced directly from official ITS materials. Each response includes verifiable references, reinforcing accuracy, traceability, and transparency. The system supports contextual conversations, version tracking for updated policies, and a documented retraining process. The tool remains advisory and is restricted to internal ITS staff use.

“Mississippi’s AI Innovation Hub is where technology meets talent,” said Renee Murray, Director of ITS Procurement Services and agency sponsor for the project. “Our collaboration with Mississippi State University through the AI Innovation Hub demonstrates how talented students can partner with government agencies to drive smarter government services. This was a great experience.”

The PoC was developed by a Mississippi State University student team including Ander Talley, Ava Grace Noe, Cameron Cummings, and Nicole Milla Monterola, working closely with ITS leadership and university staff mentors to ensure operational alignment and compliance.

“The Mississippi AI Innovation Hub presents an incredible opportunity for our students to apply their education and training to solve real-world problems,” said Shelly Hollis, Director of the Mississippi State University Center for Cyber Education and Team Procurii Staff Sponsor. “This program has given our students invaluable hands-on experience in managing projects, developing products, and engaging with clients, while utilizing advanced AWS tools that enhance their career readiness.”

For the students involved, the project provided meaningful real-world impact beyond the classroom. “It was rewarding to see our ideas turn into something that could actually be used,” said Cameron Cummings. Ander Talley added, “I received hands-on experience working with modern-day AI workloads...I also got familiar with AWS, which is widely used in the industry.”

By reducing time spent searching for policies, improving onboarding, and standardizing responses, *Procurii* demonstrates how thoughtfully implemented AI can strengthen public service operations while preserving governance and oversight. The initiative reflects the AI Innovation Hub’s mission to accelerate secure and ethical AI adoption while strengthening Mississippi’s talent pipeline. After a final round of enhancements and testing, *Procurii*’s solution will be published on the ITS website as open-source code which can be built upon and learned from for future solutions.

For more information, visit <https://www.its.ms.gov/services/innovating/AI-Innovation-Hub>.

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