

Maryland

[2007 Report](#) and 2009-10 Update by Steven Anderson, Maryland State Law Library

OFFICIAL STATUS



No change since
the 2007 report

AUTHENTICATION



No change since
the 2007 report

Two Maryland online legal resources are considered *official*. One of the resources directly states it is *official*.

The online version of the Maryland Register claims that it is “an official publication of the State of Maryland.” While applicable statutes require the Division of State Documents to make the register accessible online (MD. CODE ANN., STATE GOV’T § 7-206.2), only the most recent six issues are available. Maryland’s online statutory code does not declare itself to be official. Section 10-201 of the Courts and Judicial Proceedings article of the Annotated Code of Maryland provides that “[t]he Code of Public General Laws compiled, updated, and maintained by the Department of Legislative Services” is evidence of the state’s laws (along with the LexisNexis and West codifications). Presumptively, this means the online version, as no print copy is published by the state. The brief notation given on the Department of Legislative Services website, however, does not directly reference the statute.

Maryland is not addressing the authentication of online legal resources.

There is no technological measure, policy or statute currently in place that addresses authentication. However, this remains an issue of statewide importance.

Has the state eliminated the print publication of any of these titles in favor of online only since the 2007 report? In November 2009, the Division of State Documents, publisher of the Maryland Register, notified subscribers that the Register would become a "digital only" publication in January 2010 as a cost containment measure. Plans called for fee-based "e-subscriptions," which would entitle subscribers to receive issues in PDF format via e-mail. The notice of the change also included new usage restrictions for the digital copy that had not previously been in place. While a free HTML version would be available on the Division's website, that version lacks pagination, which precludes proper citation. A group of AALL members, along with other stakeholders in Maryland state

government departments, urged the Division to reconsider its plans. As of this writing, the Division appears to be adopting significantly revised plans, which will improve public access to the Register. The Division proposes to make at least six months' worth of issues in PDF format available on its website for free, without any new usage restrictions. Additionally, users will be able to sign up for free e-mail alerts notifying them of newly available issues. The Division will continue print publication, but at a lower volume, thereby allowing this task to be performed by a state printing department at reduced cost. These changes are scheduled to be announced in mid-February 2010, with an effective date of May 2010.

Has the state enacted legislation guaranteeing the public's permanent access to state online government information since the 2007 report? There have been no recent enactments regarding the public's permanent access to online state government information.

Have courts in your state adopted a medium neutral citation system since the 2007 report? As of 2009, Maryland has not adopted a medium neutral citation format.

Have there been any other significant changes to the 2007 state summary? Maryland's session laws, the *Laws of Maryland*, are available online at two locations. The Department of Legislative Services offers PDF versions of "chapters," which appear to be identical to the print edition, beginning in 2007. Chapters between 1996 and 2006 are available only as PDF copies of bills, as they appeared upon final passage, although these are not copies of the compiled session laws themselves. These acts, however, are well-indexed, both by chapter number and bill number. The second location, the Maryland State Archives, provides free copies of scanned session laws through 2008. Most people likely will view these high quality image files, informally at least, as *official* and *authentic*, in spite of the fact that the images bear no watermark or digital signature. Furthermore, the available information on the State Archives' website would probably give users a general feeling of reliability about the scanned images.