

2008

Alabama

Timothy L. Coggins

University of Richmond, tcoggins@richmond.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarship.richmond.edu/law-faculty-publications>



Part of the [Legal Writing and Research Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Timothy L. Coggins, *Alabama*, in 2009-10 Updates to State-by-State Report on Authentication of Online Legal Resources 4-5 (2010).

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the School of Law at UR Scholarship Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Law Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of UR Scholarship Repository. For more information, please contact scholarshiprepository@richmond.edu.

2009-10 UPDATES TO THE
**STATE-BY-STATE REPORT ON
AUTHENTICATION OF
ONLINE LEGAL RESOURCES**



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF LAW LIBRARIES
ELECTRONIC LEGAL INFORMATION ACCESS & CITATION COMMITTEE

February 2010

Alabama

2007 Report and 2009-10 Update by Timothy L. Coggins, University of Richmond School of Law Library

OFFICIAL STATUS X No change since the 2007 report	AUTHENTICATION X No change since the 2007 report
--	---

Alabama online legal resources are not official.
The state's online legal resources are not recognized as the official source for the documents. However, the Alabama legislature website does include the following statement: "Welcome to the Official Website of the Alabama Legislature." Appellate opinions are available online through Alalinc, the State Law Library's Legal Information Network, which is a subscription Internet service. There is no language at the introductory court website pages and at Alalinc that indicates that the online source is official. There is a comment on the first page of the online Alabama Administrative Code, which states that the Internet version is "not the official Alabama Administrative Code."

Alabama is not addressing the authentication of online legal resources.
The state is not addressing the authentication of online legal resources. The Alabama Administrative Office of Courts website indicates the following in a legal disclaimer: "Although the information contained on this site is intended to be accurate and timely, the AOC does not guarantee the accuracy or timeliness of this information." Court representatives indicate that Alabama is not currently considering the authentication of its online legal resources.

Has the state eliminated the print publication of any of these titles in favor of online only since the 2007 report? Alabama has not eliminated any print publications of primary law to date.

Has the state enacted legislation guaranteeing the public's permanent access to state online government information since the 2007 report? Alabama does not guarantee permanent public access to government publications.

Have courts in your state adopted a medium neutral citation system since the 2007 report? Alabama has not adopted medium neutral citation format.

Have there been any other significant changes to the 2007 state summary? There have been no significant changes in the 2007 state summary; although a transition away from the current *Alalinc* system for access to court opinions is less likely now than it was in 2007 because of budget considerations and technology issues at the court.

Alabama does not certify as *official* and *authentic* its online versions of the state session laws, statutes, court opinions, administrative code, and administrative register. In the case of the administrative code, the website indicates that the online version is *not* the *official* version, but rather directs users to the Alabama Legislative Reference Service for the hardcopy form of the *Alabama Administrative Code*. Moreover, language at this page states that “information contained herein is for information purposes only. While every effort is being made to ensure that this information is true, correct and error-free, textual information should not be construed or accepted as legal instruments.”

The websites for the legislature and the courts do not direct users to specific titles for the *official* versions. A note at the welcome page for the Alabama Legislative Information System Online (ALISON) indicates that “the information provided on ALISON is *not* the official information provided by the Legislative offices” [emphasis added]. There is no language at the *Alalinc* website that indicates what is considered the *official* source for Alabama Supreme Court, Court of Civil Appeals, and Court of Criminal Appeals decisions. A notice does appear at the beginning of each individual electronic slip opinion, indicating that “this opinion is subject to formal revision before publication in the advance sheets of *Southern Reporter*.”

Alabama is continuing the digitizing of *Alabama Legislative Acts* and *House and Senate Journals*. It currently has available materials from January–February 1818 through the annual session for December 16-23, 1836 on its website. The website indicates that this is a multi-year endeavor and that new documents will be added, by session and progressing forward, as they are made ready. The information in the historical “Alabama Legislative Acts, House Journals, Senate Journals” section are provided for “historical and research purposes,” and there is no mention that the materials as presented at the website can be used as *official*.

Alabama's court officials are not actively discussing a replacement for its current fee-based subscription service, *Alalinc*, for court opinions, which was developed in the early 1990s by the State Law Library. Fees for the service are used to pay for the hardware, software and personnel expenditures required to operate *Alalinc*. Discussions about this current fee-based subscription service and whether to replace it have slowed due to state economic and court technology-related issues. There is no indication when these discussions will resume, and there is insufficient interest at this point in moving to a system that would provide free access to court opinions.