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Digitising Australasian legal history

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AustLII has embarked on a two year program of comprehensive digitisation of all the key sources of Australasian legal history back to the inception of each colony and territory. This paper will explain how the project is being carried out, demonstrate its initial achievements, and discuss the challenges presented by particular categories of sources and how they are being addressed. These challenges include sourcing collections of data (including negotiation of destructive or non destructive digitisation, and post-digitisation negotiation of 'data swaps' with commercial legal publishers), meta-data extraction, affordable technology for mass digitisation, extraction of case reports from already digitised historical archives, incorporation of handwritten sources into a searchable collection, and data mining of all content for automated citator construction.