



Australian Capital Territory

Electronic Transactions Act 2001 No 10

Republication No 2

Republication date: 24 September 2002

Last amendment made by 2002 No 30

Amendments incorporated to 17 September 2002

Authorised by the ACT Parliamentary Counsel

About this republication

The republished law

This is a republication of the *Electronic Transactions Act 2001* (including any amendment made under the *Legislation Act 2001*, part 11.3 (Editorial changes)) as in force on 24 September 2002. It also includes any amendment, repeal or expiry affecting the republished law to 17 September 2002.

The legislation history and amendment history of the republished law are set out in endnotes 3 and 4.

Kinds of republications

The Parliamentary Counsel's Office prepares 2 kinds of republications of ACT laws (see the ACT legislation register at www.legislation.act.gov.au):

- authorised republications to which the *Legislation Act 2001* applies
- unauthorised republications.

The status of this republication appears on the bottom of each page.

Editorial changes

The *Legislation Act 2001*, part 11.3 authorises the Parliamentary Counsel to make editorial amendments and other changes of a formal nature when preparing a law for republication. Editorial changes do not change the effect of the law, but have effect as if they had been made by an Act commencing on the republication date (see *Legislation Act 2001*, s 115 and s 117). The changes are made if the Parliamentary Counsel considers they are desirable to bring the law into line, or more closely into line, with current legislative drafting practice.

This republication does not include amendments made under part 11.3 (see endnote 1).

Uncommenced provisions and amendments

If a provision of the republished law has not commenced or is affected by an uncommenced amendment, the symbol **U** appears immediately before the provision heading. The text of the uncommenced provision or amendment appears only in the last endnote.

Modifications

If a provision of the republished law is affected by a current modification, the symbol **M** appears immediately before the provision heading. The text of the modifying provision appears in the endnotes. For the legal status of modifications, see *Legislation Act 2001*, section 95.

Penalties

The value of a penalty unit for an offence against this republished law at the republication date is—

- (a) if the person charged is an individual—\$100; or
- (b) if the person charged is a corporation—\$500.

Amendments incorporated to
17 September 2002



Australian Capital Territory

Electronic Transactions Act 2001

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17 September 2002



Australian Capital Territory

Electronic Transactions Act 2001

An Act to facilitate the use of electronic methods in transactions and record keeping

Part 1 Preliminary

1 Name of Act

This Act is the *Electronic Transactions Act 2001*.

3 Object

The object of this Act is to provide a regulatory framework that—

- (a) recognises the importance of the information economy to the future economic and social prosperity of Australia; and
- (b) facilitates the use of electronic transactions; and
- (c) promotes business and community confidence in the use of electronic transactions; and
- (d) enables business and the community to use electronic communications in their dealings with government.

4 Simplified outline

The following is a simplified outline of this Act:

- (a) for a law of this jurisdiction, a transaction is not invalid because it took place by means of 1 or more electronic communications;
- (b) the following requirements imposed under a law of this jurisdiction can generally be met in electronic form:
 - (i) a requirement to give information in writing;
 - (ii) a requirement to provide a signature;
 - (iii) a requirement to produce a document;
 - (iv) a requirement to record information;
 - (v) a requirement to retain a document;

- (c) for a law of this jurisdiction, provision is made for determining the time and place of the dispatch and receipt of an electronic communication;
- (d) the purported originator of an electronic communication is bound by it for a law of this jurisdiction only if the communication was sent by the purported originator or with the authority of the purported originator.

5 Dictionary

The dictionary at the end of this Act is part of this Act.

Note 1 The dictionary at the end of this Act defines certain words and expressions used in this Act, and includes references (*signpost definitions*) to other words and expressions defined elsewhere in this Act or in other legislation.

For example, the signpost definition '*computer program*—see the *Copyright Act 1968* (Cwlth), section 10.' means that the expression 'computer program' is defined in that section and the definition applies to this Act.

Note 2 A definition in the dictionary (including a signpost definition) applies to the entire Act unless the definition, or another provision of the Act, provides otherwise or the contrary intention otherwise appears (see *Legislation Act 2001*, s 155 and s 156 (1)).

6 Notes

A note included in this Act is explanatory and is not part of this Act.

Note See *Legislation Act 2001*, s 127 (1), (4) and (5) for the legal status of notes.

Part 2 **Application of legal requirements to electronic communications**

Division 2.1 **General rule about validity of transactions for laws of this jurisdiction**

7 **Validity of electronic transactions**

- (1) For a law of this jurisdiction, a transaction is not invalid because it took place wholly or partly by means of 1 or more electronic communications.
- (2) The general rule in subsection (1) does not apply in relation to the validity of a transaction to the extent to which another, more specific, provision of this part deals with the validity of the transaction.
- (3) The regulations may provide that subsection (1) does not apply to a stated transaction or stated class of transactions.
- (4) The regulations may provide that subsection (1) does not apply to a stated law of this jurisdiction.

Division 2.2 **Requirements under laws of this jurisdiction**

8 **Writing**

- (1) If, under a law of this jurisdiction, a person is required to give information in writing, that requirement is taken to have been met if—
 - (a) the person gives the information by means of an electronic communication; and

- (b) at the time the information was given, it was reasonable to expect that the information would be readily accessible so as to be useable for subsequent reference; and
 - (c) the person to whom the information is required to be given consents to the information being given by means of an electronic communication.
- (2) If, under a law of this jurisdiction, a person is permitted to give information in writing, the person may give the information by means of an electronic communication if—
- (a) at the time the information was given, it was reasonable to expect that the information would be readily accessible so as to be useable for subsequent reference; and
 - (b) the person to whom the information is permitted to be given consents to the information being given by means of an electronic communication.
- (3) This section does not affect the operation of any other law of this jurisdiction that provides for or in relation to requiring or permitting information to be given, in accordance with particular information technology requirements—
- (a) on a particular kind of data storage device; or
 - (b) by means of a particular kind of electronic communication.
- (4) This section applies to a requirement or permission to give information, whether the expression give, send or serve, or any other expression, is used.
- (5) For this section, giving information includes, but is not limited to, the following:
- (a) making an application;
 - (b) making or lodging a claim;
 - (c) giving, sending or serving a notification;
 - (d) lodging a return;

- (e) making a request;
- (f) making a declaration;
- (g) lodging or issuing a certificate;
- (h) making, varying or cancelling an election;
- (i) lodging an objection;
- (j) giving a statement of reasons.

Note Section 12 sets out exemptions from this section.

9 Signatures

- (1) If, under a law of this jurisdiction, the signature of a person is required, that requirement is taken to have been met for an electronic communication if—
 - (a) a method is used to identify the person and to indicate the person's approval of the information communicated; and
 - (b) having regard to all the relevant circumstances at the time the method was used, the method was as reliable as was appropriate for the purposes for which the information was communicated; and
 - (c) the person to whom the signature is required to be given consents to that requirement being met by way of the use of the method mentioned in paragraph (a).
- (2) This section does not affect the operation of any other law of this jurisdiction that provides for or in relation to requiring—
 - (a) an electronic communication to contain an electronic signature (however described); or
 - (b) an electronic communication to contain a unique identification in an electronic form; or

- (c) a particular method to be used for an electronic communication to identify the originator of the communication and to indicate the originator's approval of the information communicated.

Note Section 12 sets out exemptions from this section.

10 Production of document

- (1) If, under a law of this jurisdiction, a person is required to produce a document that is in the form of paper, an article or other material, that requirement is taken to have been met if—
 - (a) the person produces, by means of an electronic communication, an electronic form of the document; and
 - (b) having regard to all the relevant circumstances at the time the communication was sent, the method of generating the electronic form of the document provided a reliable means of assuring the maintenance of the integrity of the information contained in the document; and
 - (c) at the time the communication was sent, it was reasonable to expect that the information contained in the electronic form of the document would be readily accessible so as to be useable for subsequent reference; and
 - (d) the person to whom the document is required to be produced consents to the production, by means of an electronic communication, of an electronic form of the document.
- (2) If, under a law of this jurisdiction, a person is permitted to produce a document that is in the form of paper, an article or other material, then, instead of producing the document in that form, the person may produce, by means of an electronic communication, an electronic form of the document if—
 - (a) having regard to all the relevant circumstances at the time the communication was sent, the method of generating the electronic form of the document provided a reliable means of

assuring the maintenance of the integrity of the information contained in the document; and

- (b) at the time the communication was sent, it was reasonable to expect that the information contained in the electronic form of the document would be readily accessible so as to be useable for subsequent reference; and
 - (c) the person to whom the document is permitted to be produced consents to the production, by means of an electronic communication, of an electronic form of the document.
- (3) For this section, the integrity of information contained in a document is maintained if, and only if, the information has remained complete and unaltered, apart from—
- (a) the addition of any endorsement; or
 - (b) any immaterial change;
- which arises in the normal course of communication, storage or display.
- (4) This section does not affect the operation of any other law of this jurisdiction that provides for or in relation to requiring or permitting electronic forms of documents to be produced, in accordance with particular information technology requirements—
- (a) on a particular kind of data storage device; or
 - (b) by means of a particular kind of electronic communication.

Note Section 12 sets out exemptions from this section.

11 Retention of information and documents

- (1) If, under a law of this jurisdiction, a person is required to record information in writing, that requirement is taken to have been met if—
- (a) the person records the information in electronic form; and

- (b) at the time of the recording of the information, it was reasonable to expect that the information would be readily accessible so as to be useable for subsequent reference; and
 - (c) if the regulations require that the information be recorded on a particular kind of data storage device—that requirement has been met.
- (2) If, under a law of this jurisdiction, a person is required to retain, for a particular period, a document that is in the form of paper, an article or other material, that requirement is taken to have been met if—
- (a) the person retains, or causes another person to retain, an electronic form of the document throughout that period; and
 - (b) having regard to all the relevant circumstances at the time of the generation of the electronic form of the document, the method of generating the electronic form of the document provided a reliable means of assuring the maintenance of the integrity of the information contained in the document; and
 - (c) at the time of the generation of the electronic form of the document, it was reasonable to expect that the information contained in the electronic form of the document would be readily accessible so as to be useable for subsequent reference; and
 - (d) if the regulations require that the electronic form of the document be retained on a particular kind of data storage device—that requirement has been met throughout that period.
- (3) For subsection (2), the integrity of information contained in a document is maintained if, and only if, the information has remained complete and unaltered, apart from—
- (a) the addition of any endorsement; or
 - (b) any immaterial change;

which arises in the normal course of communication, storage or display.

- (4) If, under a law of this jurisdiction, a person (the first person) is required to retain, for a particular period, information that was the subject of an electronic communication, that requirement is taken to have been met if—
- (a) the first person retains, or causes another person to retain, in electronic form, the information throughout that period; and
 - (b) at the time of commencement of the retention of the information, it was reasonable to expect that the information would be readily accessible so as to be useable for subsequent reference; and
 - (c) having regard to all the relevant circumstances at the time of commencement of the retention of the information, the method of retaining the information in electronic form provided a reliable means of assuring the maintenance of the integrity of the information contained in the electronic communication; and
 - (d) throughout that period, the first person also retains, or causes the other person to retain, in electronic form, such additional information obtained by the first person as is sufficient to enable the identification of the following:
 - (i) the origin of the electronic communication;
 - (ii) the destination of the electronic communication;
 - (iii) the time when the electronic communication was sent;
 - (iv) the time when the electronic communication was received; and
 - (e) at the time of commencement of the retention of the additional information covered by paragraph (c), it was reasonable to expect that the additional information would be readily accessible so as to be useable for subsequent reference; and

- (f) if the regulations require that the information be retained on a particular kind of data storage device—that requirement has been met throughout that period.
- (5) For subsection (4), the integrity of information that was the subject of an electronic communication is maintained if, and only if, the information has remained complete and unaltered, apart from—
 - (a) the addition of any endorsement; or
 - (b) any immaterial change;which arises in the normal course of communication, storage or display.

Note Section 12 sets out exemptions from this section.

12 Exemptions from this division

- (1) The regulations may provide that this division, or a stated provision of this division, does not apply to a stated requirement or stated class of requirements.
- (2) The regulations may provide that this division, or a stated provision of this division, does not apply to a stated permission or stated class of permissions.
- (3) The regulations may provide that this division, or a stated provision of this division, does not apply to a stated law of this jurisdiction.

Division 2.3 Other provisions relating to laws of this jurisdiction

13 Time and place of dispatch and receipt of electronic communications

- (1) For a law of this jurisdiction, if an electronic communication enters a single information system outside the control of the originator, then, unless otherwise agreed between the originator and the addressee of the electronic communication, the dispatch of the

electronic communication occurs when it enters that information system.

- (2) For a law of this jurisdiction, if an electronic communication enters successively 2 or more information systems outside the control of the originator, then, unless otherwise agreed between the originator and the addressee of the electronic communication, the dispatch of the electronic communication occurs when it enters the first of those information systems.
- (3) For a law of this jurisdiction, if the addressee of an electronic communication has designated an information system for the purpose of receiving electronic communications, then, unless otherwise agreed between the originator and the addressee of the electronic communication, the time of receipt of the electronic communication is the time when the electronic communication enters that information system.
- (4) For a law of this jurisdiction, if the addressee of an electronic communication has not designated an information system for the purpose of receiving electronic communications, then, unless otherwise agreed between the originator and the addressee of the electronic communication, the time of receipt of the electronic communication is the time when the electronic communication comes to the attention of the addressee.
- (5) For a law of this jurisdiction, unless otherwise agreed between the originator and the addressee of an electronic communication—
 - (a) the electronic communication is taken to have been dispatched from the originator's place of business; and
 - (b) the electronic communication is taken to have been received at the addressee's place of business.
- (6) For the application of subsection (5) to an electronic communication—
 - (a) if the originator or addressee has more than 1 place of business, and 1 of those places has a closer relationship to the underlying

transaction—it is to be assumed that that place of business is the originator's or addressee's only place of business; and

- (b) if the originator or addressee has more than 1 place of business, but paragraph (a) does not apply—it is to be assumed that the originator's or addressee's principal place of business is the originator's or addressee's only place of business; and
 - (c) if the originator or addressee does not have a place of business—it is to be assumed that the originator's or addressee's place of business is the place where the originator or addressee ordinarily resides.
- (7) The regulations may provide that this section does not apply to a stated electronic communication or stated class of electronic communications.
 - (8) The regulations may provide that this section does not apply to a stated law of this jurisdiction.

14 Attribution of electronic communications

- (1) For a law of this jurisdiction, unless otherwise agreed between the purported originator and the addressee of an electronic communication, the purported originator of the electronic communication is bound by that communication only if the communication was sent by the purported originator or with the authority of the purported originator.
- (2) Subsection (1) does not affect the operation of a law of this jurisdiction that provides for—
 - (a) conduct engaged in by a person within the scope of the person's actual or apparent authority to be attributed to another person; or
 - (b) a person to be bound by conduct engaged in by another person within the scope of the other person's actual or apparent authority.

- (3) The regulations may provide that this section does not apply to a stated electronic communication or stated class of electronic communications.
- (4) The regulations may provide that this section does not apply to a stated law of this jurisdiction.

Part 3 Miscellaneous

15 Regulation-making power

The Executive may make regulations for this Act.

Note Regulations must be notified, and presented to the Legislative Assembly, under the *Legislation Act 2001*.

Dictionary

(see s 5)

Note 1 The *Legislation Act 2001* contains definitions and other provisions relevant to this Act.

Note 2 In particular, the *Legislation Act 2001*, dict, pt 1, defines the following terms:

- document
- regulations
- the Territory.

computer program—see the *Copyright Act 1968* (Cwlth), section 10.

consent includes consent that can reasonably be inferred from the conduct of the person concerned, but does not include consent given subject to conditions unless the conditions are complied with.

data includes all or part of a computer program.

data storage device means any article or material (for example, a disk) from which information is capable of being reproduced, with or without the aid of any other article or device.

electronic communication means—

- (a) a communication of information in the form of data, text or images by means of guided or unguided electromagnetic energy, or both; or
- (b) a communication of information in the form of sound by means of guided or unguided electromagnetic energy, or both, where the sound is processed at its destination by an automated voice recognition system.

information means information in the form of data, text, images or sound.

information system means a system for generating, sending, receiving, storing or otherwise processing electronic communications.

information technology requirements includes software requirements.

law of this jurisdiction means a law of the Territory.

non-profit body means a body that is not carried on for profit or gain to its individual members and is, by the terms of the body's constitution, prohibited from making any distribution, whether in money, property or otherwise, to its members.

place of business, for a government, an authority of a government or a non-profit body, means a place where any operations or activities are carried out by that government, authority or body.

this jurisdiction means the Territory.

transaction includes any contract, agreement or other arrangement, whether or not of a commercial kind.

Endnotes

1 About the endnotes

Endnotes

1 About the endnotes

Amending and modifying laws are annotated in the legislation history and the amendment history. Current modifications are not included in the republished law but are set out in the endnotes.

Not all editorial amendments made under the *Legislation Act 2001*, part 11.3 are annotated in the amendment history. Full details of any amendments can be obtained from the Parliamentary Counsel's Office.

Uncommenced amending laws and expiries are listed in the legislation history and the amendment history. These details are underlined. Uncommenced provisions and amendments are not included in the republished law but are set out in the last endnote.

If all the provisions of the law have been renumbered, a table of renumbered provisions gives details of previous and current numbering.

The endnotes also include a table of earlier republications.

If the republished law includes penalties, current information about penalty unit values appears on the republication inside front cover.

2 Abbreviation key

am = amended	ord = ordinance
amdt = amendment	orig = original
ch = chapter	p = page
cl = clause	par = paragraph
def = definition	pres = present
dict = dictionary	prev = previous
disallowed = disallowed by the Legislative Assembly	(prev...) = previously
div = division	prov = provision
exp = expires/expired	pt = part
Gaz = Gazette	r = rule/subrule
hdg = heading	reg = regulation/subregulation
IA = Interpretation Act 1967	renum = renumbered
ins = inserted/added	reloc = relocated
LA = Legislation Act 2001	R[X] = Republication No
LR = legislation register	RI = reissue
LRA = Legislation (Republication) Act 1996	s = section/subsection
mod = modified / modification	sch = schedule
No = number	sdiv = subdivision
num = numbered	sub = substituted
o = order	SL = Subordinate Law
om = omitted/repealed	<u>underlining</u> = whole or part not commenced or to be expired

3 Legislation history

Electronic Transactions Act 2001 No 10

notified 8 March 2001 (Gaz 2001 No 10)
 s 1, s 2 commenced 8 March 2001 (LA s 75)
 remainder (ss 3-15) commenced 1 July 2001 (s 2 and Gaz 2001 No 26
 p 716)

as amended by

Legislation (Consequential Amendments) Act 2001 No 44 pt 125

notified 26 July 2001 (Gaz 2001 No 30)
 s 1, s 2 commenced 26 July 2001 (IA s 10B)
 pt 125 commenced 12 September 2001 (s 2 and see Gaz 2001
 No S65)

Statute Law Amendment Act 2002 No 30 pt 3.23

notified LR 16 September 2002
 s 1, s 2 taken to have commenced 19 May 1997 (LA s 75 (2))
 pt 3.23 commenced 17 September 2002

4 Amendment history

Commencement

s 2 om R1 (LA s 89 (5))

Dictionary

s 5 defs reloc to dict 2002 No 30 amdt 3.358
 def **data** om 2002 No 30 amdt 3.357
 sub 2002 No 30 amdt 3.359

Regulation-making power

s 15 am 2001 No 44 amdt 1.1454

Miscellaneous

pt 3 hdg (prev div 2.4 hdg) sub 2002 No 30 amdt 3.360

Dictionary

dict ins 2002 No 30 amdt 3.361
 def **computer program** ins 2002 No 30 amdt 3.361
 def **consent** reloc from s 5 2002 No 30 amdt 3.358
 def **data** ins 2002 No 30 amdt 3.361
 def **data storage device** reloc from s 5 2002 No 30 amdt 3.358
 def **electronic communication** reloc from s 5 2002 No 30 amdt
 3.358

Endnotes

5 Earlier republications

def **information** reloc from s 5 2002 No 30 amdt 3.358
def **information system** reloc from s 5 2002 No 30 amdt 3.358
def **information technology requirements** reloc from s 5 2002
No 30 amdt 3.358
def **law of this jurisdiction** reloc from s 5 2002 No 30
amdt 3.358
def **non-profit body** reloc from s 5 2002 No 30 amdt 3.358
def **place of business** reloc from s 5 2002 No 30 amdt 3.358
def **this jurisdiction** reloc from s 5 2002 No 30 amdt 3.358
def **transaction** reloc from s 5 2002 No 30 amdt 3.358

5 Earlier republications

Some earlier republications were not numbered. The number in column 1 refers to the publication order.

Since 12 September 2001 every authorised republication has been published in electronic pdf format on the ACT legislation register. A selection of authorised republications have also been published in printed format. These republications are marked with an asterisk (*) in column 1. Except for the footer, electronic and printed versions of an authorised republication are identical.

Republication No	Amendments to	Republication date
1	Act 2001 No 44	12 September 2001

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