

See more -
[YouTube](#)
[Twitter](#)
[Substack](#)
[LinkedIn](#)
[Email](#)

Computer-Readable Legislation Project

Introduction

February 2023



At the States of Jersey’s [Legislative Drafting Office](#) (LDO) we have just started our 2-year **Computer-Readable Legislation Project** (part of the global “Rules as Code” initiative).

What is it about?

Finding a way for drafters to produce **computer-readable** versions of the **logical structure** of our drafts of legislation.

Why?

So that computers can use those versions to **guide humans** through the **legislation**, but also to **check** the **drafts** for inconsistencies or unexpected effects.

How can we do that?

By finding an **easy-to-use** way for **legislative drafters** to mark up the logical structure of draft legislation while they are drafting it.

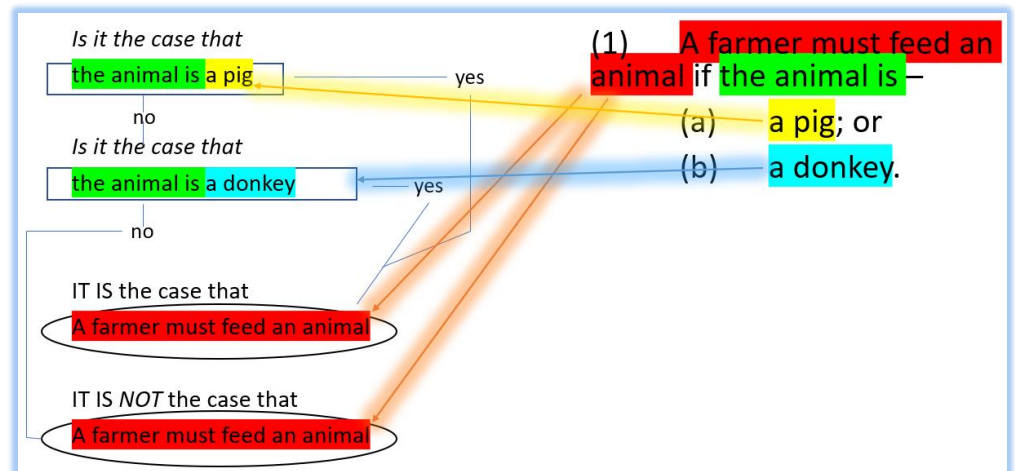
- It needs to reflect just the way the drafter is structuring the legislation, without adding more.
- It needs to be as easy as the ways in which drafters currently mark up the paragraphing structure of their drafts (using Word styles, or XML editors).

Who else is working on this?

- Globally there is the “**Rules as Code**” movement, which started in 2018 in [New Zealand](#), and has since spread to [Australia](#), [Canada](#), [Singapore](#), [UK](#), [France](#) and elsewhere.
- Here in **Jersey** the [Financial Services Commission](#) is working on “RegTech” and has [plans](#) to “enable the digitalisation of our regulatory content by mid-2023; ... delivering machine readable rules by early 2024”

What are we doing?

- In **Jersey’s** [Legislative Drafting Office](#) we now have a project for 2023 & 2024 to build on the work we had [already](#) started in the Legislative Drafting Office to apply this to the way we draft legislation for Jersey.
- We are currently working out how “If-Then” structures fit in our legislation, like in this example of an imaginary rule on feeding animals.



What could it be used for?

Here is an example of what programmers can do once they have the logical structure of the legislation set out so that a computer can read it – [AustLII](#) (who are the equivalent of [JLIB](#), who publish our legislation) have produced [DataLex](#), which is a **free** program that you can **try out** on the web.

It runs a “consultation”, asking you **questions** based on the **wording of the legislation**.

- It shows the **facts** it has taken from you so far, the **conclusions** it has reached so far, and **links** to the relevant parts of the legislation.
- At each question you can ask it **why** it is asking, or check **what** will happen **if** you give a particular answer, or tell it to **forget** some or all of the facts you have given it.
- At the end it gives you a **report** that tells you its conclusion about how the legislation applies to your facts, but also sets out exactly **how** it came to that conclusion.

We are looking to apply DataLex to some **Jersey** legislation to demonstrate how that would work here.

The screenshot displays the DataLex web interface for the Community Gaming Regulation 2020 (NSW). The interface is titled "DataLex Community Gaming Regulation 2020 (NSW) Consultation Codebase".

The main content area shows a series of questions and answers:

- Question 10: "What is the total value of the expenses of conducting MadeUp Bingo (excluding the cost of prizes)?" Answer: \$4,000.
- Question 11: "What is the total value of all of the prizes for one session of MadeUp Bingo (\$)?" Answer: \$200.
- Question 12: "What is the maximum number of tickets that can be sold to the same participant?" Answer: \$400.
- Question 13: "What is the maximum number of tickets that can be sold to the same participant?" Answer: 5.

Below the questions, there is a section titled "Here is your document:" which contains a detailed analysis of the regulation. The analysis states that MadeUp Bingo meets the definition of "housie" or "bingo" under regulation 5(1) because regulation 5(1)(a) is satisfied; regulation 5(1)(b) is satisfied; and regulation 5(1)(c) is satisfied. It further explains that Regulation 5(1)(a) is satisfied because MadeUp Bingo is housie or bingo that is played by one or more participants using cards or a device with numbered spaces or symbols. Regulation 5(1)(b) is satisfied because numbered spaces or symbols identified randomly and announced during play are marked off by each participant who has a card or device on which the numbered space or symbol is displayed. Regulation 5(1)(c) is satisfied because the game is won by the participant who is first able to mark off all numbered spaces or symbols on the card or device that are required to be marked off for a win. MadeUp Bingo is Charity housie under regulation 5(2) because regulation 5(2)(a) is satisfied; regulation 5(2)(b) is satisfied; regulation 5(2)(c) is satisfied; regulation 5(2)(d) is satisfied; and regulation 5(2)(e) is satisfied. Regulation 5(2)(a) is satisfied because MadeUp Bingo is conducted by or on behalf of a charitable

At the bottom of the document, there is a note: "This application developed using AustLII's DataLex software is to be used only for educational and testing purposes only, and any other use is unauthorised, whether for commercial or non-commercial purposes."

The interface also includes a "What if?" section with an "Input text here" field and buttons for "Yes", "No", and "Uncertain".

On the right side, there are two panels:

- Facts**: A list of facts extracted from the document, including: "The amount of the gross proceeds of MadeUp Bingo is \$5,000.", "The amount paid to MadeUp Charity Inc is \$4,000.", "The total value of the expenses of conducting MadeUp Bingo (excluding the cost of prizes) is \$200.", "The total value of all of the prizes for one session of MadeUp Bingo is \$400.", "The maximum number of tickets that can be sold to the same participant is 5."
- Conclusions**: A list of conclusions reached by the system, including: "Bingo is not more than \$10,000.", "Regulation 5(2)(d) is satisfied.", "No more than 48 tickets are permitted to be sold to the same participant.", "Regulation 5(2)(e) is satisfied.", "MadeUp Bingo is Charity housie under regulation 5(2).", "MadeUp Bingo is permitted 'housie' or 'bingo' under regulation 5."

At the bottom right, there is a "Related Materials" section with a list of links to related legislation, including: "Community Gaming Regulation 2020 Regulation 5(2)(e) Calculation", "Community Gaming Regulation 2020 Regulation 5(2)(e)", "Community Gaming Regulation 2020 Regulation 5(2)", "Community Gaming Regulation 2020 Regulation 5 - Housie or bingo", and "Community Gaming Regulation 2020 Part 2 - Permitted gaming activities".

But we also expect this work to enable new tools for legislative drafters to check our work, like those available to [programmers](#) and for [business rules](#).