

Australian Newspapers Digitisation Program



Positive Feedback on the Australian Newspapers Beta Service

Author: Rose Holley (Manager - ANDP)
Version: 1.0
Date: 24 December 2008

This document gives some of the positive feedback quotes given by public users in response to the public release of the Australian Newspapers Beta Service. <http://ndpbeta.nla.gov.au/ndp/home> The feedback was given to the ANDP team via e-mail, phone, feedback survey and contact us form between August and December 2008. The ANDP team wishes to share this feedback with the newspaper contributors (State and Territory Libraries) and members of the public.

Additional comments and suggestions made by the public for enhancements and/or improvements to the Australian Newspapers Beta service are being recorded by the ANDP Team in a separate document. This will also be shared with Contributors and members of the public.

General positive comments
My first time here, a wonderful site, found mention of Samuel Brunner Sutton (grandfather) Also his son Lionel Roy marriage to my mother Constance Sutton.
This is a great website and I applaud those people involved in its creation. Like many Victorians, I am very interested in the newspaper 'The Argus' and eagerly await the digitisation of 19th century editions. Great work!
This is an excellent resource. The quality of the page is good; often superior to microfilm.
Superb web site! This has helped me so much I am very appreciative of your work to assist researchers.
Can't really see how it could be substantially improved; this would have to be the best searchable database I've come across.

Glad to see this, a fantastic use of resources that will enable all to develop a better sense of the history of Australia.
Great job! Such a massive undertaking and looks like it's been really well executed.
In the last decade or so I've spent probably thousands of hours tracking down historical, biographical and cultural material in old newspapers - which are of course fantastic sources of information. So for me, this newspaper digitisation project is just something else, and even as it stands at present, it is has enabled me to track down material which I might never have otherwise found. So, when you finish digitising the newspapers you're currently working on...don't stop...keep going! Thanks for your efforts.
This is an unbelievable service you are providing researchers. I can't tell you how fantastic this project is and how appreciated it is. Can't wait for more papers and more years to be online. THANK YOU!!!!!!
A wonderful tool - the amount of user control is very surprising but refreshing.
This is an absolutely wonderful resource for researchers. The Perth Gazette in particular is quite exciting being so easy to access.
I'm just blown away by your website. Thank you so much. I'm unable to spend the time required to go through the microfilm at the Mitchell Library. Now you have provided me with a Treasure Trove. I can't thank you enough. In return I will make as many corrections to the electronically translated text as I can.
Great site, look forward to additional issues being added in the future. So much easier than sitting in the Library and using their readers.
A very useful service. I found several very relevant and useful articles regarding the information that I was seeking. Keep up the good work. The "Sydney Gazette" was particularly useful.
The Australian Newspapers site, even in beta form, is a great enhancement of www.nla.gov.au The National Library of Australia is one of the great national libraries of the world. This newspaper digitisation project is yet another example of how the NLA continues working energetically to extend its relevance to a wide audience, including people outside Canberra.
I realise this is only a "beta version" but it is already a great research tool for the history buff such as myself. But I do wonder if it will remain as free online access when the website reaches its "Alpha version"? I applaud all those people involved in making this website available, and I eagerly await the inclusion of further issues of the Victorian newspapers.
Very impressed. What an excellent service. Downloadable PDF made my day!
Firstly, I have to say how wonderful this is. As you know, this is the first wide-scale digitisation of Australian newspapers and it is absolutely wonderful

that you have made it available before it is "finished". Also kudos on incorporating features - especially text-correcting - unavailable in any other product. Fantastic work! Would be great if you could provide a list of known issues that are being worked on (apart from adding more content, obviously!)
This is an excellent resource, but already with only the limited scanning that has been done, the number of results are daunting.
This is a wonderful site to view the past. I can not wait for more WA paper input. Thank you for making my day.
I am in seventh heaven. Your service has provided me with information about my Brisbane ancestors that I would never have gotten. Never. The information is of such a personal and affecting nature that I will for ever be grateful.
You're providing a great service and I've been very happy to correct the errors I've found in the articles I've been viewing, thanks.
Really great for those who can't get to the library for research.
A great idea. I have found several useful references. I would sooner have online access, and search possibilities, even with the mistakes, and am happy to correct the scanned text as a quid pro quo.
I love it - I've found myself browsing through the original articles during the gold-rush - purely by chance.
Keep up the great work, I'm sure you will strive to make it better as the project proceeds, it is a wonderful and worthwhile service that is sorely needed given that newspapers are highly volatile to degradation. To search the text is fantastic.
Please add more! Would be happy to spend an hour a week correcting pages.
Please keep going and get the papers out as fast as possible!!! Love what you are doing. It is so valuable as I live away from a capital city and don't have access to major libraries and archives.
Wanted to say thanks though for the service. I recently found the arrival date for the photographer whom I'm researching (William Henry Corkhill) in the Maitland Mercury. As I'm new to family history research, I probably wouldn't have known to look in that paper, and I found it purely by chance when I typed 'Corkhill' into the search box. SO A BIG THANKS FOR PROVIDING THIS SERVICE!
I've shown this resource to over 100 history students and they were all totally delighted with it. They thought it was the best Australian resource they've even accessed!!!
You need a warning about reading old newspapers becoming addictive!!

Thank you! You lot are so cool!
A MAGNIFICENT service. Sorry about the capitals but I just want to emphasise how wonderful this website is, a veritable goldmine for historians and family researchers. Thank you so much.
Fantastic. I found articles on my family in Adelaide in 1860 with a quick search. This would have taken days manually.
Just a quick reaction after a first brief examination: "Bloody marvellous!" I am especially impressed by the creation of crude OCR (and its implications for searching), the invitation to end-users to assist editing/correcting the text and the structure of the advanced search screen (though I would prefer this was contained in one screen and didn't require scrolling down to the search button). I look forward to seeing the evolution and growth of this facility. Congrats to all involved.
Just one word WOW! This will grow to be a remarkable resource for all Australians and I can't wait for your collection to grow. I acknowledge, during my brief visit the co-operation that you've obviously received from the State Library of South Australia and thank them for that.
Very impressed that users can separate classifieds from other documents; this will be very useful for genealogy researchers.
The Maitland Mercury has revealed some great info which would have been hard to find otherwise.
Even as a 'beta' release this new service clearly indicates a new way of accessing archival newspaper materials. The National Library is to be congratulated on its pioneering work in this area.
Site is absolutely fantastic. What a monumental effort you have undertaken. Just know that it is greatly appreciated by many.
All I could say was WOW I am so impressed found over 20 hits for a very hard to find family member helped out heaps thanks guys keep up the good work.
What a wonderful resource!!! I've been waiting for the launch, and you've delivered in spades.
Wonderful!!! So much better than spending hours searching microfilm. First article I came across was gobbledegook, but correcting the text is very intuitive, no problems.
Great development (and very addictive) - can't wait for the rest of the Canberra Times to be digitised.
Great site - I found 91 newspaper references to my grandmother's family (Bouffier) from all over Australia. Providing access to newspapers this way allows people to get a picture of the times their families lived in.

Wow! This saves so much time.
So much better than microfilm!!!
Great service, so many of the students here from University and TAFE find it difficult to find and access full text Newspaper articles on relevant subjects e.g. aspects of Australian history
Fascinating service and a tremendous resource for private and professional research.
This is a great initiative - look forward to seeing the Qld Courier Mail in this format. The ability to search for key words makes research more effective
When complete, this will be the single most useful online research tool for the study of Australian history. Bravo the NLA!
This is a really useful project. And I like the invitation to correct text - many hands and all that
This is a great resource for librarians and genealogists. One of our Australian history academic staff had the following comment: Thank you so much!! What wonderful news - an incredible benefit!!!!
It's fantastic!! Being a family history 'buff' for many years I was amazed at what appeared by simply typing in one of my family names. Congratulations to everyone involved in putting this system online it is so very much appreciated.
Looks really good and very interesting. I wish you had more newspapers covered - regionals.
A great service for family historians!
I am doing research on early Sydney music and newspapers are an important source. The ability to search by keyword and save the context as a PDF or an image is invaluable. This facility will save me a vast amount of time. Thank you for such a useful tool.
Very helpful. The Argus was useful for the 1940s which is the period I am researching.
Think this will be very beneficial for Australian Public Libraries.
Great site and much needed. I have seen similar sites in NZ and The Times (UK), the NLA (Aust newspapers, is much better). I do like the calendar of papers.
Wow! This is fantastic! There should be more (much more) of it. I say that as an amateur historian and taxpayer.

FANTASTIC resource, which I have only scratched the surface of so far!
This is enlightening!
Congratulations, and let us all hope that sufficient funding is provided from both government and corporate sectors to allow for this type of service to be established, maintained and grow.
I think what you are doing is a marvellous initiative and long overdue.
Wow! This is fantastic. I can search for these really great articles about my 1924 Olympian grandfather, here in Rockhampton!
Congratulations on the commencement of the public beta of your Newspaper Digitisation Project. What a wonderful tool for historical research it is/will be.
Good looking pages, the newspaper images are beautiful, comprehensive advanced search page, like the known bugs - very useful
THANK YOU! I am an historical researcher and this site makes me want to leap up and down with excitement. (I should probably get out more). This is an amazing resource which will save me an enormous amount of time.
Congratulations on your Beta launch of a very exciting and interesting product. For some time I've been a regular user of Gale's British Newspapers, and of the American Historical Newspaper's series provided by Readex. The ADNP service, at first review, seems as functionally good as these long standing solutions.
It's looking like it will be very cool, and the text fixing and tagging is quite addictive.
Just wanted to say a big well done to all involved with the beta of the newspaper archive. It is a great system which has the potential to be one of the most important historical databases in Australia.
I was very pleased to see the beta of Australian Newspapers.
Congratulations on this great resource project.
Many thanks for providing this excellent service.
I appreciate the great work being done on this project and pleased to help where possible.

It's a great resource.
I'm delighted to find you're digitising your newspaper archives and making them available.
Many thanks & congratulations on this wonderful facility which is especially useful for people who are unable to access large libraries. It adds a human dimension to family stories and enables stories to be found which would probably never otherwise surface just because they are so random.
Thanks for the excellent site. Keep up the good work - it is going to be a marvellous resource for historians.
What a fabulous resource this is. I am entirely enthused about the project. From a social history as well as a family history perspective, the information has been fabulous. I have struck family history gold. I cannot praise the project too much.
I love this site and have made many corrections.
Great project! Keep up the great work.
I love this service and cannot believe how far we have come.
The newspaper digitization program is fantastic.
This is a wonderful resource!
This is a great service to the community - well done!
Wonderful site.
Thank you for such a great site.
This is a fabulous resource!
A big thank you to NLA for making this resource available, as it is invaluable to historians, such as myself.
You are to be commended for the Newspapers Digitisation Project!! What a wonderful resource to have at. Literally, our fingertips - particularly for those of us who live at some remove from a capital city, state libraries, etc. I look forward to continued, free access to an expanding project. Thank you!
The newly released ANDP Beta search system is fantastic. I have spent hours using the microfiche at the State Library for private research and this

system is so much better and easily accessed. It will be a boon to history teachers and students.
This promises to be a great service, so thank you.
I think your project is marvellous and wish other countries would do the same thing.
This is an immensely impressive resource - congratulations to NLA and project staff.
I think the ANDP is a terrific project. Newspapers are one of the best snapshots into daily life of the past, something that no one cares to capture at the time, but which we all want to know about in the future.
Hooray for the NLA I say!
Thank you for a fantastic resource. I've already used it for genealogy research and for historical research for a textbook I'm writing.
Congratulations on this excellent project. I have been searching the Beta system with great success.
What a brilliant resource for historians, genealogists, authors etc. Congratulations to everyone involved.
Just wanted to encourage you all. This service is absolutely brilliant and I'm sure it will take off with its own community of modern day sub-editors.
I wish to say that this is a wonderful site that I have just 'stumbled' across. Congratulations on this site!
All I can say is, WOW! What a wonderful resource. Many, many thanks.
I LOVE the project!
I have let some of my historian friends know about your wonderful service, and am very excited at the prospect of not spending hours in front of a microfilm reader! The internet is becoming such a wonderful resource, but not without the hard work put in by people like you and your team. Many thanks!
I love your site and NLA should be congratulated on the marvellous job you are doing with the newspaper digitisation. I am telling everyone.
I am very impressed with your website.
I think this is an exciting and extremely innovative project. I much enjoy using and contributing to it.

I am very impressed with your project.
Just a small note to thank you all for the effort you have gone to for this project, it is amazing to be able to review some of these articles and will help immensely with our historical research, I cannot say enough to thank you for your effort. Keep up the great work, I look to see more newspapers come on line.
The Australian Newspapers digitisation program is the best thing that has ever happened to me in twenty years of family history research. Is there anything I can do to show my appreciation?
What a remarkable resource - I had no idea it existed.
The ability to be able to browse through these historic papers, with the aid of a search engine, is a wonderful resource to Family Historians such as myself. It certainly beats poring over some microfilm copy in a local library, just hoping that you will come across something of significance.
Without your Beta digitisation program I would not have been able to complete my research in my allotted years. Technology at its best.
Congratulations on your excellent service!
Love the site and can't wait for more papers to be available.
Thank you for a wonderful resource in my Family History Research.
Thank you all for your efforts. This is a wonderful resource and so valuable for folk who can only do research on-line. I look forward to continuing search successes and am happily correcting text when I can.
The work you are doing is sensational.
I often send some people to the NLA Newspaper Reading room to do some research. Now I also let them know about the beta site. It's great.
It's a great service.
Thank you for such a fabulous resource.
It is a wonderful resource.
It's a great service.

Fantastic service. For someone who does not get many chances recently to get to my state library - you are to be congratulated.
First let me say this program is a remarkable effort, its accessibility has the potential to make Australians far more aware of our past history.
A wonderful project you have here!
This is an excellent service for researchers.
I'm finding some amazing stuff - excellent for researchers.
Thank you for an excellent resource.
I would like to say this is a great initiative although I think there should be a warning about using this site and its possible addictive effects! I have a great deal of trouble getting back to what I should be doing at times. Well done on a great project.
I regard this as a great service
This new service is fantastic!
Correcting electronically translated article text is a worthwhile and enjoyable task for retired or interested people.
Thank you for a great concept.
In the throes of finishing my PhD on midwifery history I can say that this digitisation project is phenomna!!!! I use a 19th century English nurses journal that was digitised too, and it makes so a world a difference to primary research. I have a whole new paper [evidence] just after a couple of hours at this website. Thanks!
Thank you so much for putting these newspapers online- it has been wonderful being able to search these papers whenever needed rather than having to make special visits to the State Library.
Fantastic site, found so much info on ancestors in Newcastle, Maitland, Sydney to assist with family tree and getting a feel how they lived.
However, the site is fantastic, got a little info on some of the family and best of all, found that my non-violent confrontation-hating dad was up on a charge of assault in 1924, hee hee hee.
This is a great resource.

It's great to see these newspapers on the internet.
Many thanks to the people involved in this digitisation project. It is a wonderful resource, and very well done.
Thankyou for providing such an impressive site. I have always lived in isolated areas and rarely managed to visit libraries, so to be able to view old newspaper articles from my own home is just fantastic.
Amazingly wonderful site! I am so thrilled to have found it. Well done to all involved in bringing this about: it's a truly great achievement.
Absolutely brilliant. Many thanks for access to these resources.
The database is marvellous, unbelievable. Have only known about it for a few days and already have found out so much about people I've been chasing for a long time; and didn't have the time to browse the newspapers. Also, my subject changes as I find more information and would have to go through 40 yrs of the newspapers more than once.
Love the site, and the transcripts of text. Saves heaps of grief.
Excellent research tool, greatly valued.
An excellent web site, with valuable information, designed well.
An absolute godsend for those living on the other side of the world, as I do (UK).
I think this service is fantastic. I have found some very useful information with my searches and am expecting to find more as the text is improved. I am happy to contribute by editing.
I am entirely enthused about the project. I have one unusual family name and have found 100+ references to that family. The project has given me an entirely new perspective on the family.
While going through a whole month in a slightly obsessive crazed mind searching Australia Newspaper Beta online I just realised the kilo's I've stacked on in just one month. I can't seem to snap out of it, from dawn to dusk I seem to be in this website craving to find more on my ancestors (the gritty stories). Housework seems to have taken a backburner and meals are starting to come out of cans. I don't know when this site will be updated next but I hope its at least a month to lose this round of kilo's.
Fantastic! Will be wonderful for people like me who have to travel over 600k's return just to look up an old newspaper or two.

I "LOVE" this site. I feel almost like a stalker looking daily for juicy articles.
There's an idea in Sociology of social capital: referring to the organisations out there that do positive work in the community and make it what it is. Help poor people, lonely people, sick people etc but also develop the sense of community and do a great deal for the psychological and sociological health of people. Australian Newspapers Beta is one such constructive entity. Helping people come to terms with their past, helping them define themselves. It's a really big thing, I think and is a contribution to the health of the community.
Wow – well I got sucked in! I can see why everyone is editing the OCR text... its compulsive!
Wow – I found stuff on my relatives in just a few minutes.
This service saves me so much time! Wonderful.
Comments on user interface and features
Clear, easy to use and navigate
Good layout easy to move about.
I love the way you can click on the electronic text and it finds the actual article in the newspaper page.
Easy and intuitive after a short test drive.
Quite simple to use.
I love the capability to limit and refine results and the interface is very clear when there is a limit. I also applaud the capability for readers to correct the text. I also like the fact that public announcements are indexed. Looking forward to more coverage.
Nice and clean, very straightforward
Good - I like the whole presentation - it is easy to navigate -& no distracting flashing stuff
Simple...which is good
Easy to manage, well laid out

I like the idea of adding comments to a tag and articles. Information is readily available and easy to obtain.
Is suitable and easy enough for all to use not matter what level of technical skills users have.
Lovely - clean and easy and uses all the normal methods of navigation (panning, wheel etc)
I love it! It is really functional and easy to use - and I love the way the text appears on the right.
I like the visual aspect of the search interface, very easy to navigate
I think the interface is really fantastic. Compared to the other products that are available along these same lines – e.g. Times Digital Archive - this is just so much better that it's really in its own league.
I like being able to see the OCR text and the original side-by-side. This is a smart move to entice people to correct text.
I really like the way it feels and looks. Simple, clear and really beautiful to use.
Very impressive site, especially with all the features I didn't know about. Looking forward to seeing later years.
Loved it - very impressed. Liked the Articles down the Left and the ability to comment and correct. Can't wait to have more newspapers electronically available
Easy to use and good that the text you want to correct is also highlighted in the PDF frame - can be easy to loose your place otherwise
Awesome functionality!!!
It is a great idea to engage online friends and volunteer helpers of the National Library in correcting OCR text.
The point and click is easy to use, it's well set out to encourage error-fixing
On adding comments - I thought this a good idea and allows one another to share views, thoughts on multi subject range and interact with one another, good learning process and exchange of information.
An interesting way of using interested readers' labour! I really like it.
On OCR text correction Great! Think I just found my new hobby!

<p>I was not aware that user editing was going to be included but what a great idea.</p>
<p>It is great that the NLA is breaking new ground in allowing the public to help them correct the OCR'd text.</p>
<p>I am very impressed with the ability to refine my searching (left side of screen) with mouse clicks by dates, titles etc, even after I have entered my initial search criteria. Overall for a beta program, this is pure joy to use.</p>
<p>I really love the fact that you are digitising the newspapers and putting them online, especially the Courier Mail which is what I'm most likely to be searching for enquiries for the public, and I like your advanced search which allows me to narrow my search. I also like the way I'm able to change the text of the transcription if I see mistakes - I have already done so!</p>
<p>In particular, the 'sort by' choices are just fantastic.</p>
<p>The decision to let members of the public edit & correct articles must have been a difficult one, but it's a great idea.</p>