

NLS Telephone Forum - 7-27-2011
(paraphrased)

Comment: (Bob Fistick - NLS)

Glad everyone joined us. Got the number right and everything. We hear there are 31 aboard and we have a good-sized group here too! We have a few people at the Multi State Center conference and a few out on vacation so we're not going to be able to answer all of your questions today but if not we'll get right back to you with an answer. The only news we have is that the Senate is marking up it's side of our budget this week, and we'll have a better idea of where things stand for this fiscal year after that. As far as the transition goes, everything seems to be going rather smoothly on our end. If there are problems on your end, we'd like to know about them, or any other concerns you have. We'll open it up for questions...

Question: (Andrew Egan - RI)

Can you give us some background on the Inspector General audit request from the Library of Congress?

Answer: (Library Staff - NLS)

The Inspector General is currently doing an audit. We're in the process of the audit. The audit has not been issued yet. We have seen a preliminary report in terms of how the digital transition is going. It appears quite positive. We have made some preliminary comments. Beyond (that) talking about it at this point is not relevant because it's still an audit in progress.

Comment: (Andrew Egan - RI)

We're just getting from KLAS the upgrade so we can do the actual report.

Comment: (Library Staff - NLS)

We thought you were talking about the audit in general. You're talking about the OIG's request for information. He asked us to provide some direct CMLS data, which we're in the process of doing now. We're providing what he asked us (for). We're not providing what he asked you (for).

Question: (Linda Montgomery - AZ)

I had a patron send an email with a couple of questions. The first one was a suggestion asking if the number of chapters be included in the opening announcements, as well as the number of pages. So it was just a suggestion. And then he had a question about playing downloads on mobile players. Is there an update on mobile players that might be (forthcoming)?

Answer: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

We're going to issue an RFP later in the year for producers - software writers - to supply Android and iPhone applications. What we're thinking at the moment is that we will purchase a number of licenses for these and make them available. The situation with the Android Market is a little simpler than it is with the Apple Store but that's what we're planning. Now the application will just play NLS books. It's possible that - depending on who bids on producing these applications, that the application could do other things. At the moment it's just those two platforms.

Comment: (Sharon Ruda - IL)

I was just going to respond to Andrew that we've already run the report and sent it not only to the gentleman who requested it but also to Deborah and Carolyn.

Comment: (Library Staff - NLS)

Thank you.

Comment: (Ava Smith - TX)

I contacted the auditor and told him we'd supply the information this week, and he said that he had discovered he could get it somewhere else so don't bother.

Comment: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)

We've got two different perspectives here! (laughter). You can tell he's truly independent.

Question: (John Mugford - NM)

The conference chair called us from yesterday and talks about the marked up house bill and the statement ends with "...it does not look good for NLS or the Library of Congress as a whole." ...What could be some of the problematic areas?

Answer: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

You don't think we'll be here next month? (laughter) The house marked up documents removed the supplemental funding we expected going through the transition and they then reduced our base budget by 10%. Senators are considering their version of the bill. It's a little premature to panic.

Question: (John Mugford - NM)

This would (affect) mostly copy allotments? Machine distribution?

Answer: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

We produced more machines than we had originally planned, early on. Because of that, we would be short of cartridges. We're trying to push the transition on at this point but we might be short of copies.

Comment: (Neal Bernstein - NLS)

The current number on BARD is 22,578 titles (books only).

Question: (Kim Charlson - MA)

(Regarding) brand new books coming in from producers. They come in individually, so they come one or two at a time so it takes days and days to get an entire shipment, such as 30 copies. Personnel must add copies upon receipt one or two at a time. Is there any way shipments can arrive in a box so that we don't have to go through that?

Answer: (Library Staff - NLS)

We are trying to find a way to do that. We have had some tests that were done where they were shrink-wrapping titles (together). The post office was finding that when they dropped them into the bins they would burst open. In some parts of the country, the post office refused to accept things that were bonded together. They said they had to be individual. So we're working on that and also on a way to return them to us.

Question: (Danielle Miller - WA)

Hi everybody. Thanks to Neal for the BARD numbers. I was just hoping that when there are answers relevant to everyone that the info could be distributed to all the libraries.

Answer: (Library Staff - NLS)

We could put it out as an Operations Alert. We will certainly consider it.

Question: (Richard Smith - MO)

Why 67,000 cutoff (on the xcess)?

Answer: (Library Staff - NLS)

Because we've always had and every subregional library has to maintain the last two years of NLS production. They are new federal government books and you have to maintain them according to the ALA standards and federal requirements. ...About 15% of your readers still need cassettes for example.

Question: (Richard Smith - MO)

I got my consultant questionnaire. Is there any way you can automate this self-evaluation questionnaire for the consultant visit.

Answer: (Library Staff - NLS)

There will be a new questionnaire when the new standards come out. What do you mean by "automated"? We can send you a "fill in" PDF file.

Question: (Richard Smith - MO)

Does NLS have a consultant for "long-range plans"?

Answer: (Library Staff - NLS)

Your (own) consultant will do everything that they can to help you as you walk through your long range plans but your long range plans are what you want to do in Missouri...

Question: (Kim Charlson - MA)

Update on Magazine Pilot?

Answer: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

We just this week issued an Request for Information on our plans to do a magazine, so we expect to get some comments back. If you want to look at that and give some comments, go to <https://www.fbo.gov> and search for "digital talking book" or "magazines." It basically outlines our plans and once the responses come back for that we will likely do a pilot.

Comment: (Ava Smith - TX)

I have posted how to find how many titles are on BARD if you are interested.

Comment: (Deborah Toomey - NLS)

We have now posted a mini-bibliography about the "Agatha" award. These are cozy mysteries written in the style with little sex or violence as Agatha Christie's were. Apparently however, readers like (those elements). Use them with a grain of salt with your more delicate readers.

No more questions.