NLS Telephone Forum - 10-26-2011
(paraphrased)

Comment: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)

We're so happy that there are people from coast to coast on the call, no doubt. It's a rainy afternoon. We're very happy here at NLS to have about 13 people from the Network here at the Orientation. Also, around this room, ...I will let (staff) introduce themselves left to right:

Comment: (Library Staff - NLS)

Deborah Toomey, Head, Network Services section; Judy Dixon, Consumer Relations Officer; Bob Axtell, Head of Bibliographic Control; MIchael Martys, Automation Officer; Neal Bernstein, R&D Officer; Vickie Collins, Network Consultant; Alice O'Reilly, Assistant to the Chief of Development; Steve Prine, Network Division; Joel Phillips, Production Control Section; MIchael Katzmann, Chief of Materials Development Division; John Bryant, Production Control, ...and Carolyn Sung.

Comment: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)

Bob is away downtown so I am going to take care of the call today, and, you know it's either feast or famine. We had a short call last week and Richard has gotten us all organized to have a longer call today and, luckily I have a few announcements to make - off the bat - and then Michael will be answering most of those questions on Richard's list. First of all, I will tell you to work on your resumes. The Director position was posted last Friday, and if you want to see it, I guess we'll send it out, but, if you want to see it before we get an Operations Alert out, go to the Library of Congress main page and, on the left, under Desi Arnaz and Lucy [laughter] there's (a list) and you hit "Jobs and Fellowship" and that will take you to a number of jobs that are open at the Library of Congress...and when I looked yesterday, our Director position was at the bottom. So, that's a description of the job and how to apply and, I think it's open for a month and, maybe that means to the 21st or 23rd of November so I want to call your attention to that.

The second thing I have to say is that we're celebrating in the Network Division because it (was an) astonishing day yesterday. We had our first Subject Bibliography in many years to come to fruition and - that's Deborah Toomey being very excited - it's called "Westerns" and for those of you who wanted westerns when we started the digital transition, well, better late than never. I understand that these are at the Multi States and you can go ahead on the WOW system and order them if you would like, and it would please me greatly if it became a best seller and we use up all of our copies. No doubt we'll send out an announcement to this as well.

The third thing I wanted to talk a little about - that we talked with the Conference Chairs yesterday on - is that there is some confusion as to whether the Digital Transition is over, or the Digital Transition is not over yet. As an historian, I take great interest in these things and I think we're still in transition, because we still have a lot of players to distribute, which is the number one thing that people need to start their digital service. I think that there is a consensus over the last several calls that we really need to spend more time and energy in the Public Education and Outreach area. I know some of you are having great success with that and I know that it's hard for some of you who have lost that and cannot travel but I encourage you to really give this some thought on how you can reach people who are eligible (for) the service. People who get it seem to be very pleased and really love it. We have not only the player, but BARD and the books that are so much easier to use than in the cassette world. It really behooves us to get out there and reach new people and also people who have been in the service and perhaps who have lost interest. I believe that you all received in the last week or so, the shipment of postcards. 92,000 postcards were sent out and, I know this is the second round of postcards sent out. The first round was well received. The difference is that this set of postcards (has the word) "digital" removed to make it more versatile.

We will be very interested in...getting feedback on how useful these are and whether some of you...would like to have another postcard or have some other inexpensive resource... We

developed a broadside on BARD and I know a lot of you have done your own broadsides. We really need feedback from you on what we can do to help you with this outreach effort. I encourage you to share any successes or best practices you may have had - with your consultants. We'd like to publish some of these best practices to help all of us. Maybe some of us are not as brilliant at coming up with new ideas or there are just things that we would like to know. For example, yesterday I learned something in talking to one of the librarians who said (that) in order to clean up her CMLS records she actually was...googling obituaries...for some of her patrons and I think she found nine of them that (she) was not notified that they were deceased and I thought "Oh, that's a good way to clean up your files." Anyway please talk to your consultants about the kinds of needs you might have, or, your best practices - things that have been successful for you. That's the point of a cooperative network - that we cooperate with each other and that we share. Alice has been working on another postcard for institutions. Would you like to talk about that?

Comment: (Alice O'Reilly - NLS)
Sure. It's a postcard a little bit differently designed and that has a tear-off piece so it'll be mailed directly to the institution and they can read a small blurb about the program and then fill out the back portion and mail it back to the library. They're organized by state. I think you've heard me blab on about this for awhile but it's finally coming to fruition. November 17 is the day that they're supposed to have been delivered to the mailing list of institutions. About 18,000 across the country - of institutions who are going to get these cards, so hopefully after the 17th you guys will get - if not a deluge, at least a trickle of new institutions or people who are on this mailing list. Some of them might already be on CMLS... So, I'll send out an Operations Alert with some information that you can keep on a file or however you (may) store that information and, if you have any questions or you want either a description or a PDF of what the card looks like, I'm happy to send that out to anyone...

I had one other Operations Alert pending. It's the chrome labels. I've heard from three libraries that they need the chrome labels... I'm going to be reordering those but I'd like to order them based on what you think your anticipated machine distribution will be, so (that) we don't give you way too many or way too few. I will send out another Operations Alert that asks for numbers to go with the information you so graciously gave me earlier this year.

Comment: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)
Thank you Alice! I know from Richard's emails that everyone is very interested in BARD, and the expansion of the content of BARD. We're working very hard here... The first priority is to bring Web Braille into BARD. That is a priority and this will, of course, bring literary braille and music braille into BARD for the first time. It will also bring locally produced braille - which is currently a part of Web Braille - into BARD. So, that will be the first locally produced special format material that's included in BARD. Now I know you're all interested in the audio side and we are working on work flows for the various types of audio material that will be added. For example, the foreign-language audio, the music audio, the Multi State Center Q/A audio and local materials audio. So we will be learning a lot with these experiments on work flow, and we expect sometime in the future to be giving you some tips on...the kinds of things you'll need to do with your local materials if you are interested in adding them to BARD. One of our big emphasis is to expand the content of BARD.

One more thing and then you'll be able to listen to a more exciting accent. The Patron Survey is something that we're working on. We have occasionally in the past - but not for the last ten years - surveyed the patrons, and we are working on a proposal to try to do a survey of the current patrons and the kinds of things that they like, or would like to have in the service. We also want to look at the eligible people who are in the service but don't participate in the service - and most difficult-ly to find the eligible people who don't use the service at all. ...To figure that out will be quite difficult. In the past they did this as a part of a generalized survey on the topic of milk and so we're hoping to do a patron survey so that we can get some real data to compare with all of the

anecdotal data that we all get as a part of the service. We also hope that we'll be able to get (a) better sense of the numbers as well as the needs of patrons and potential patrons.

Next topic: We are going to be making some changes thanks to Mike Martys, in the Network Library database - and Steve, would you like to talk about that a little bit?

Comment: (Steve Prine - NLS)
Thank you. In the next couple of weeks, there will be a new icon - Network Library Services - that will take you to a form to provide contact information about your library - name, address, telephone, email, staff names, administering agents, state library agencies, funding agencies. We think this process will be much simpler to use, or easier to use than the current one. There will be an Operations Alert coming out (to alert you to) when the form is ready to be used. When you go in to look for the first time, the forms will be populated with the current information. If everything is current and up to date you don't have to do anything with it. If changes need to be made, we encourage you to make those changes.

Comment: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)
This is kind of an opportunity and as a result of something bad, we're losing a colleague, Mary Barber, who did this for many years. The Network Division is losing four people as a part of the incentive retirement that the library has offered to try to get it's financial situation...in the black, so that the rest of us can come to work and don't have to be furloughed... We're losing Mary Barber. We're losing Joyce Carter, who works in Network Services section - and who posts the Operations Alerts and things of that nature. Mary kept up the contact information over the years...and we're losing Dolores Singletary who sorts through the mail for you, that comes to us - and sends it on it's way to you - over the last many years, and we're losing Silas Bundy in the Inventory Management section, who has 35 years or so of service and he is our expert here on Collections and supplies. We are going to be able - with the help of Mike Martys - to have a simpler way of having the network keep up-to-date the contact information. This contact information goes into "Find a Library" and if it's wrong, it's too bad if it goes back to you, so the theory is that you know best about your contact data and when it needs to be updated. It will also go to the producers, so that if you move, your books will follow you and not be lost.

Now, instead of having you each ask the questions that Richard put in his email of October 25, Michael Katzmann is going to respond to the questions.

Comment: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)
Ok. I'll try and go through these. The first question is related to the Network Bulletin regarding flash memory reliability. This is an issue with the current generation of flash memory. When we originally started...there were two technologies involved in flash memory - I won't be too exhaustive about this - one is called a Single-Level Cell and the other is called a Multi-Level Cell. The Multi-Level Cells are a less expensive technology because you can fit more on a chip than you can a Single-Level Cell, but, the number of times you can program and erase a device is much less than the Single-Level Cell, so, originally we could program and erase a cartridge up to 10,000 times before there would be reliability issues. The demand of the (current) solid-state disks and the iPad, etc...people want more and more capacity and they're trying to fit more and more bits onto the same size piece of silicon, and so they're shrinking everything down. That means the reliability goes down, so instead of 10,000 cycles, the current technology we're using is down to 3,000 cycles. What we've done is - for the cartridges we're now purchasing - we've now gone back to the old technology - the Single-Level Cell technology, which means instead of purchasing one or two gigabyte drives, we're purchasing 256 and 512 megabyte drives. Previously we had more capacity than we used in our books. The 256 megabyte drives will cover about 95% of the books that we have. The few 512 (megabyte) one's (we have) covers another 4% and there are a few books that we still have to put onto one gigabyte drives.

So, that having been said, 3000 writes - we don't envisage any of our books going through 3000 cycles, but, the next technology which is just coming out now is even worse - it's about 1500 - and

it could get even worse than that. Now, the question about if you only write it once, do you have a problem? The specifications are for a ten-year endurance, and that's still the case with the newer technology, but, once you approach that (1,500) writes or - the generation after that may be even less - the chances of a problem are much higher. The way that the device is designed - if you're only writing a small part - if you take one of our books that is only 100 megabytes, and you put it on a 2 gigabyte drive, it spreads itself out each time you write - to a different part of the drive - so it would take you twenty times to do one complete write of the drive so instead of 3000 writes you would get twenty times that figure. The short answer to the question is: you should be ok - in a normal office-type environment,, guaranteed for 10 years of endurance...and of course you could rewrite it and get another 10 years if you wanted to.

The current thinking on the magazines on cartridge, our plan is to put multiple magazines on a single cartridge for a patron who subscribes to more than one magazine. If a patron just subscribes to a single magazine - a monthly magazine - they will get their cartridge once a month, just like they did with cassettes. If they ordered two monthly magazines, they would get one cartridge per month containing those two magazines. If they order monthly magazines and weekly magazines they will get...one cartridge every week that will contain either weekly magazines or weekly and monthly magazines. We have to do that because of the cost of the cartridge. We will be recycling, obviously, the cartridges. At the moment, it looks like we will be using a recyclable container as well. However, we will almost certainly look at making a more efficient container to package these things in.

Any progress on NLS BARD site for regional (local) books? Michael Martys...

Comment: (Michael Martys - NLS)
Oh, that would go back to the thing that Carolyn talked about. I presume our meaning audio books? After Web Braille, the next major upgrade to BARD will be...audio versions of local and foreign-language material and that's probably going to be mid-2012. It's the next priority after Web Braille but Web Braille goes in first. We'll see the presence of local and music showing up in BARD for the first time, meaning, a place to go and look for the material and then in 2012 we'll be actually putting the audio materials into those containers.

Comment: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)
Ok, question four was, "Need wording for a warning to place in our newsletter explaining how to store digital player that will not be used for three months or longer." Now I'm presuming this means for patrons who are going to be storing the player for three months or longer. (They) could either be sent back to the library (or) the player should be left plugged in. It would keep the battery charged up... It draws very, very little power when connected. If patrons are wary about leaving it plugged in for three months they can just plug it in for a couple of hours every couple months to charge the battery up, or as Steve says, send the player back to the library.

Status of future availability of foreign titles on digital: We had a patron ask for books in French Literature... We are going ahead and making foreign titles available. We're exploring the conversion of some of the titles we have at the moment, and also we're exploring getting some digital titles from overseas.

"One report sent mentioned text-to-speech enhancement for the DTBM. When will that happen?" I don't think we will have text-to-speech in the DTBM itself. If we do text-to-speech, it will be on the server, so that we'll get the printed material converted to a digital book, which the patron would download. The quality of the text-to-speech that could be put into the player is only equivalent - for example - to that of the (VictorReader) Stream and all of the feedback we've caught about that is that people are unhappy with the quality. So, rather than spending a lot of effort into putting something in there that is going to be poor, we'll look at doing text-to-speech to enhance the availability of materials on a server instead.

"Elaborate on the applications for mobile devices - iPods, smartphones, others." We are in the process of putting together the requirements for a solicitation to develop an application for the IOS devices including the iPhone, iPod Touch and the iPad and, also for Android devices. Initially, this will almost certainly be an application that will just play books directly that have been downloaded or transferred to the device. The second step would be a connection directly to BARD that patrons could download directly to the device. It would be a two-step process and we have to get that RFP out early in the new year. Of course, that would take some time to be designed and manufactured. There are licensing issues involved in the device. We would have to license certain things like text-to-speech engine if we put that in there for accessibility so people can move around the machine but also for the...AMR WB+ codec - the speech scaling. So, it would go up on something like iTunes but to enable the device, which would trigger the payment of royalties, they would have to do that through BARD, and...we will set that up.

"Will there ever be a remote-control device for the DTBM to assist readers with limited use of their hands?" Yes, we're working on a remote-control device. At the moment, John Brown had some prototypes made, and he's continuing on the development of that, so (at) the next meeting I'll have him say a few words about that. Initially there will be breath switches but there probably will be other devices or other interfaces that'll make it easier for the disabled to use the machine.

Comment: **(Carolyn Sung - NLS)**
Thank you very much, Michael. That was a long presentation. I hope you benefited from it. Now it's time to turn over to you the opportunity to ask questions.

Question: **(Claudia Bickel - MT)**
I have some questions about the software revision 2.1.7? My first question is, the item that says (that) the USB flash drive connected to the side AT port is no longer suspended between uses by default. I didn't know what that meant.

Answer: **(Michael Katzmann - NLS)**
Ok, so, to save battery power, what happens is, the information on the flash drive is read intermittently so the player will read in a certain amount of data and then play that data for a period of time so, it could take ten seconds to read in 20 minutes of audio, or 10 minutes of audio, say... so the drive is only accessed for those ten seconds and then it's put into a low-power mode or the "suspend" mode. Now what we (and you probably) have found is that some USB flash drives never recover from being put into that suspend mode. So, what would happen was, you'd put the drive in. You'd hear a few minutes of audio, and then it would probably say "end of book" or would fail to play the whole book. To allow virtually all USB flash drives to be used, we removed the function that suspends the drives that are plugged into the side. The normal book drives are still suspended because...they're made by us, but, the drives that are connected to the side are not put into suspend mode. Now, consequently because they're always on, the (power) consumption is about 30% higher than it would be for a drive that is suspended. For example, if the player said "greater than 20 hours..." when using a cartridge, and you plug something into the side, it will say "greater than 15 hours" or 30% less, anyway.

Comment: **(Marilyn Stevenson - MD)**
I just wanted to thank you for the postcards. We are sending postcards to current patrons who do not have digital players but we are also going through the inactive files and sending to patrons who have maybe lost interest...or maybe found the cassette player too difficult to use. We are sending postcards out to them also and we are getting a very very good response. The day after I sent the first batch out, we got two or three calls right away - and they keep coming in every day, so we're very happy with the postcards. Thank you very much.

Comment: **(Carolyn Sung - NLS)**
You're quite welcome Marilyn. I would like to see the institution cards (that are) going out directly, just so we know what it looks like and what's being said.

Question: (Carl Keehn - NC)

My question is in reference to the preprinted barcodes. They had been back ordered in the last fiscal year and apparently the reprinting ran into an issue with the switch over from the old to the new fiscal year. We were just kind of wondering when to expect the preprinted barcodes.

Answer: (Library Staff - NLS)

So are we, Carl! [laughter]. It is still a funding issue. We're into the new fiscal year but we still haven't received the approval to order those yet... It could happen any day and as soon as we get that we'll put the order in and actually, once the order goes through they should be shipped out in a week or so. Right now, it's just a bureaucratic glitch. Sorry but we can't order them yet.

Comment: (Sue Walker - ID)

First of all, thank you for the postcards. When we sent them out, we started getting responses immediately... We had already sent out two postcards so I was very excited to see that apparently the third time is a charm...and the second thing I wanted - for anybody who has not yet read the update on the Idaho Public Service Announcements, there was quite a bit of interest in it and I went ahead and worked with both the creator and the management team to see if that could be distributed to other regional and subregional libraries and, yes it can be. We are willing to go ahead and share it with anybody but I did discover that when it was first created, the voiceover was based on distribution here in Idaho. So any other library that took it would need to go ahead and work with our creators on the pricing for the voiceover. And then of course, please bear in mind that there are some sections in there that refer specifically to Idaho Commission for Libraries and Idaho Talking Book Service, and those, of course would need to be changed. If you want more information you can contact me... If you do use it, please let us know how it turns out.

Question: (Dana Carter - KS)

We've been seeing some changes here in Kansas with the way that our mail is sent out and with the upcoming changes in the way that the Postal Service functions (Toni) wanted to know if there was anything NLS was doing about that or if you had any thoughts about...how that's going to affect our service..

Answer: (Library Staff - NLS)

We're actually monitoring it. I think it's rather interesting that you're already seeing the changes, since they're only studying what post offices are going to be closed.

Comment: (Dana Carter - KS)

We've been seeing some changes here (that) don't necessarily relate to the closings and changes, etc. in times it takes to deliver items. Not necessarily related to those but since we're seeing them already with the way that the Postal Service is functioning here in Kansas. We were wondering how it was going to work within the larger system of changes.

Comment: (Library Staff - NLS)

We really don't know. I've only heard from you and one other library with concerns regarding this, although I'm very aware that it's happening and I'm trying to monitor what results are (transpiring). For those of you who may not be aware - because the post office is megabucks in the red, they're looking at ways of consolidating their post offices and are closing some regional distribution centers and consolidating the postal distribution centers, sometimes in cities far, far away from where the regional or subregional library may be located - and so that is going to be affecting mail delivery. I'm not sure we can do anything about it. We can certainly work with the postal authorities and encourage them to continue, but they're talking about first-class mail - letters - instead of taking one day taking three to five days to arrive. I think what they're doing...is cutting their own throats, because people will turn more and more to email - which they're already doing - and electronic bill pay, when you can't depend upon the post. Be that as it may, all we're doing is monitoring it at this point, and we may just (ask) for people who are relying on (mail) service, to

up their quotas of materials, so that it takes into account the length of time that it takes for the materials to arrive and are sent back in the mail.

Question: (Christie Briggs - MT)
This is Christie and I wanted to ask Carolyn Sung if you can post the direct mail to retirement homes (postcard) on a bulletin or an Operations Alert just so that all of us can take a look at it.

Answer: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)
We will try to do a PDF of it and send it with the Operations Alert so you can see it.

Question: (Andrew Egan - RI)
There was a long discussion on the Listserv about statistical analysis for BARD. It seemed like every state was putting up statistics as to what their BARD numbers were in terms of people using BARD. What I thought is that it was good but haphazard in a sense of...the numbers people were using...and the kind of analysis that was going on. I'm wondering if NLS would do a monthly report on BARD so that we could compare each others statistics in the sense of seeing how we're doing overall nationally, and what we can do to improve that... I want to kind of see a national standard (where) everybody uses the same numbers to compare themselves...

Answer: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)
Well, Andy we watch that, and in fact I gave the acting director a copy to take with her on a visit that she's doing - see some of your bosses perhaps. We'll be looking to see if there's a good way to do it. Some of the data is beyond the data that's collected in BARD, if it's a comparison with the other readership and circulation information. If you are filling in and recording your statistics this month, we'll be compiling them. Usually it takes us a while because some colleagues are not as prompt in responding as others and we have to do followups. Let me assure you that we'll look at a way to try to make that information available.

Comment: (Library Staff - NLS)
This would be a good time to mention that when Web Braille is rolled into BARD, that (will have) an impact on the statistic report that we send you every month. We're going to be issuing an Op Alert shortly that will tell you what is going to happen to the statistic report so that you have ample time to prepare. Obviously when BARD is deployed (with Web Braille) the next report will have Web Braille statistics in it. We want to give you advance warning of what those changes will be. We will be...notifying you within the next couple weeks.

Comment: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)
We've been thinking about these changes with Web Braille...In the plan and in our statements about policy and procedure for doing your statistics, we have wanted to see that there is a difference between the cartridge or the physical, and BARD. We're concerned that if anybody is reporting - in Readership and Circulation - a figure that includes BARD, that we're going to have duplication, because the plan is that the BARD statistics for each library would be kept separate, in order to do what I think you're saying Andy, is sort of track and see how this is going with the use of the downloaded book as opposed to the physical book.

Comment: (Andrew Egan - RI)
What was good about the listserv discussion was, we started to see some trends in terms of where we're headed statistically at least, but then also new things came out of that. It was a lively discussion certainly online, so I think it was helpful. Things like...realizing that people like to download books in large numbers and then not (return) until a month or two later... It's very interesting from our perspective because we didn't realize that was happening nationally. (We thought) it would be like a "one state" issue... The other issue that I felt was important from the listserv discussion and from the statistics is that we still have that "digital divide" in BARD and we see it played out and the hope was that - people projecting - maybe we'll go up to 30-40% in 2012, of our users in BARD. I don't know...(Will the statistics) help us to move in a better direction in terms of the digital divide.

Comment: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)

I agree. I found the discussion very interesting because...(BARD was) trending upward pretty regularly and now it does seem to be more stable and not rising that way, so I think we need to continue to share experiences to try to figure out what it is. There is a lot of implication in terms of the economy and the cost, as well as the ease of downloading.

Comment: (Andrew Egan - RI)

I think we learn a lot from the discussion. Certainly one area of my interest would be institutional accounts coming up. I think that's going to help us a lot in terms of getting these agencies involved, and certainly that will create some more discussion.

Comment: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)

Well we have been looking at institutions in terms of the player distribution...having not moved as smoothly with institutions. In our tracking for the CMLS, it would seem that we haven't been very successful so far with BARD and institutions but I think people are very busy and I think maybe people just haven't gotten to it.

Comment: (Andrew Egan - RI)

Well certainly the November mailing will be a big help. I don't want to take too much more time because I know other people may need to speak...I'm also looking at public libraries only having demo accounts for me is a big problem, because I think we have a big public library community that could help in creating access for individual Rhode Islanders...

Question: (Mary Jane Kayes - CA9)

When you have states with multiple libraries, has that all been sorted out on the institution mailing list?

Answer: (Library Staff - NLS)

Painstakingly. I hope that everything is right. We did it by zip code - organized which libraries responsible for which zip code. If you want to double-check - well it's already been printed - if you want to tell me how badly I screwed it up, I can send you a list organized by your regional library.

Question: (Loretta Broomfield - IL)

Hi. I wanted to know - with the new firmware release - if someone could explain the changes or any enhancements that relate specifically to the "gas gauge" on the DTBM? Also, what is meant by "last measured discharge"?

Answer: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

The way the player measures the available battery time, it's an estimate, based on a couple of data points. It assumes a certain capacity in the battery, and it knows when the player has fully charged the battery and when it's empty. It can count how much charge goes into the battery and out of the battery. Based on those data points, it estimates how much is left in the battery. Now, over time the battery deteriorates - especially if it is left discharged - and so, the assumed battery capacity...is not as high as it was coming out of the factory. So, to compensate for that, the player can measure the total capacity that is being drawn so long as the battery is being fully charged and then fully discharges, without any intervening charges. So that "last measured discharge" is just that. What it measures as the full discharge when it has a fully qualified charge. If you fully charge the player up and then fully discharged it - until the player says it is powering off because of a low battery - it would know "I got only ten hours of play time out of it instead of twenty hours." And so the next time, when you fully charge it, it will say "ten hours remaining" so it resets itself if it gets a good charge.

Now, Steve has gone and gotten me the bulletin, so I can see what we're talking about as far as the "gas gauge" goes... Ok, there's just a mention of...in the service-level access to the player -

when you've plugged a (computer) terminal into the player, you can see some extra signals that the integrated circuit in the player gives out,...but that's basically it.

Sorry...so that actual line about the "last measured discharge" - if you happen to know that the battery was at half-capacity, you could specifically tell the player (that) this is the last measured discharge, and so you wouldn't have to go through that charge-up and charge-down cycle. Just set it up in the player. It's really for service personnel to...if they put an old battery into a player they can explicitly set what the capacity of that battery is. That's a long-winded way of saying that!

Question: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)
I'm amazed. You ok Loretta?

Answer: (Loretta Broomfield - IL)
Yes, thank you.

Question: (Maria Baratta - NJ)
Ditto to what Andy said about the public library and BARD access, but you've heard me say that before. Two questions. They're both for Michael. One is about the flash memory on the cartridges. With the reduced capacity (are those) going to be the same (as are) going to be available for people to purchase (from whomever) the outside vendors are? And then my other question is: with the text-to-speech conversion for some books to be used on the player, will those only be the web-braille books or are you going to be looking at other source materials for text-to-speech?

Answer: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)
It won't be web-braille. We're looking at a number of different ways of expanding the amount of material we have available and, it would be text-based material. It may even be just things like government websites that have material to make them accessible. We can get that material and convert it into an audio book. Obviously most of the material we do is not really suitable for doing text-to-speech. You really don't want to have to listen to novels in text-to-speech. We could probably make "Machines and Accessories" into text-to-speech and it would be more understandable [laughter]. The flash drives - the green cartridges - of course they go into the cartridge port. There's no change to that - they'll still have the full capacity. It's only the cartridges that are plugged into the side port, that would incur a 30% penalty as far as power consumption.

Question: (Maria Baratta - NJ)
Oh actually my question was: the green cartridges that people are purchasing - those will eventually have the reduced storage capacity?

Answer: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)
You will have the ability to purchase both the 256 megabyte drives and the high-capacity 2 gigabyte drives from Northstar, so it's really up to you. A lot of you won't be shelving the books for long periods of time... You have to make that decision yourself. The very good thing about the smaller-capacity drives are that they are about 30% cheaper than the 2 gigabyte drives so, we're obviously getting more bang for the buck using those.

Question: (Abby Ingram - FL)
(Juliet) had a question about when the Talking Book Topics and the magazines are going to be put onto digital. Is there a time frame for that?

Answer: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)
I think I'd have to look into that. I don't know what the time frame is. TBT now is of course available on the website and it's available in BARD, so it's downloadable.

Answer:　　　(Michael Katzmann - NLS)

The plan is to have magazine programs this fiscal year. (They) probably won't be up and running until toward the end of the fiscal year - or the end of the calendar year maybe.

Comment:　　(Abby Ingram - FL)

We're signing up a lot of people for just digital and, they don't have the cassette machine and they can't see the large-print catalog, and they're not able to download, so we're kind of anxious to get Talking Book Topics on digital - you know, and not have to download it ourselves. I think that's it for us!

Comment:　　(Carolyn Sung - NLS)

I would add that I think Talking Book Plus shipped yesterday. Our copies (have) arrived so, you should be getting that annual catalog very soon, if you haven't received it already.

Question:　　(Kim Charlson - MA)

Hi everyone. I wanted to make one comment and I have two questions. My comment actually has to do with cartridge size availability. As Perkins being one of the resellers to individuals and organizations, Northstar Systems has indicated that there will be - in the near future - a 4 gigabyte cartridge available, which I think will be very attractive to patrons who are avid downloaders so, that'll be a new offering relatively soon, for purchase. Obviously libraries I don't think, would buy 4 gig cartridges to put their books on. They're going to be a bit more expensive, but they are a great option for patrons who are heavy downloaders.

I have two questions: one is relating to text-to-speech: I've had conversations with both Michaels before about this and I just want to strongly advocate that I think text-to-speech availability in some manner - for the NLS player - is really important. It's going to open up so much content. I'm already working pretty significantly with the Boston Public Library on a major scanning project to make a lot of print books accessible, and right now they're only available to people who have Victor Streams or other third-party players. I would love to have a way to get this content available in text-to-speech and, I don't think its so bad if somebody wants to listen to those voices that are out there. If you want to read the book, you'll put up with the voice. It's not that bad - and I use it a lot! You get used to it. So, anything I can do to help - I just think that it's a huge breakthrough, with access to information for our program, and I'd really like to see that move forward as fast as possible. I know there's lots of priorities.

My other question is a web-braille question: I wanted to get a glimpse in my mind of how the web-braille component is going to be structured. Is it going to be: one download gets all the volumes? Or do you have to do individual downloads for every volume of a book, like you do now? Exactly how are you envisioning structuring that component of BARD?

Answer:　　　(Library Staff - NLS)

Well, right now the compromise we have come to is, if you download inside of BARD you get a zip (file) with all the volumes. If you downloaded via the catalog or through BBR, you get the individual volumes. Does that make sense?

[silence]

Obviously, based on that bit of silence, it doesn't sound like you like that idea! You're breaking our hearts because that was a really hard-fought compromise here [laughter]. The reason for doing that was that there were a lot of note takers and things that access the individual volumes. The thinking as I understand it was that their path to get to the materials was typically through the catalog or BBR.

Comment: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)

Our interest of course, in counting, is to count volume by volume because of the history and continuity of looking at trends with braille.

Question: (Library Staff - NLS)

Why don't you give us your thoughts Kim. What is your reaction to that?

Answer: (Kim Charlson - MA)

When you point out the note taker component - because there certainly are a lot of legacy note takers out there that are going to be using the information - I'm not sure they'll have the capacity to download the whole zip file. So I understand that. I can see where it was a compromise and I can probably live with it. I'm happy to know that in BARD it will be a zip file. I'm pleased about that. I think the rest of it is manageable.

Question: (Library Staff - NLS)

So, your thinking was that you're really not that excited about maintaining the downloading of the individual volumes?

Answer: (Kim Charlson - MA)

Personally, I love the zip file because I don't want to individually download every volume, but I do understand that some legacy devices don't have the capacity to download a lot or store a lot so they've got to take it in smaller chunks and that's how they're used to getting access to web-braille files, so I can see why it was a challenge to come up with a way to make it work.

Question: (Kim Charlson - MA)

So, is BARD going to count volumes? Or is BARD going to count titles downloaded?

Answer: (Library Staff - NLS)

I'm not going to even go there [laughter].

Comment: (Library Staff - NLS)

But we're leaning towards identifying to the libraries, both the number of titles downloaded and the number of volumes.

Comment: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)

We're also concerned about the braille lending libraries getting the kind of information they need for servicing patrons as well - in terms of has-hads.

Comment: (Kim Charlson - MA)

I commend you for thinking of both because even in my own data gathering for the multiple states that we provide service for, we count volumes and we count titles...so it is a challenge to figure out how to make it all integrate.

Comment: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)

And we want both the home library and the braille lending library to have access to data. That's the plan.

Question: (Claudia Bickel - MT)

It's Claudia again with some questions about the software upgrade. You refer to multi-cartridge DAISY 2.02 books and Z39.86 books. I wonder (if you) could comment on what those are?

Answer: (MIchael Katzmann - NLS)

The books we know and love from downloading and finding on cartridges are otherwise known (as) Z39.86. They are our regular DTB books. DAISY books are another type of book that the player plays. These are an older format that...for example RFB&D are DAISY 2.02 books.

Question: (Claudia Bickel - MT)

My other question is: Correct problem causing seg faults when navigating the DAISY books.

Answer: (MIchael Katzmann - NLS)

Certain things in navigating through a DAISY book would cause the player to reset - basically power off and power back on again. The way it's designed is, you try to mask that so what you might notice is, it just takes a little longer when you've navigated through a book, for the player to come back on when you've lifted your finger off the button. It's what you'd call in computer terms, a "crash." The player crashes and then recovers. So, problems were solved with the software update - on DAISY books.

Comment: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)

Well I don't know where Richard is, guys but we certainly have been here for more than an hour. I don't know if this is the longest call or not, but if not it is close to it. I remind you to as quickly and accurately as possible, by the end of the week, report your statistics so you can eat your Halloween candy with a good conscience that you've done your work first. So thank you to my colleagues and thank you all for being here today and let me know how you enjoyed the call. Talk to you next month!

No more questions or comments.