

NLS Telephone Forum – 9-26-2012
(paraphrased)

Comment: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)

Well, good afternoon everybody. We're almost at the end of the fiscal year and to some extent, we're sighing a breath of relief and look forward to what lies ahead. We were pretty fortunate to get most of our contracts done, and so we'll start moving ahead on those. Those are namely the digital magazine contracts, the patron and demographic study contracts, the usual John Bryant contracts for all kinds of production. The app for the iPhone and the Android phone have already been awarded, so we have new things to work on.

I would just say that the old thing that I have been working on – that you guys have been working on, which is player distribution – it looks like they're now out in libraries. About 400,000 players. It looks like we're almost at 365,000 (that) have been assigned by the end of the fiscal year. My hat is off to you, and I want to especially thank you for the last two months – putting in requests for machines from Multi State Center West. I talked to Paula this morning and she said that (in) the last two months she's sent more machines out than ever before. So, that's good. There are more if you need them, and especially there are more Advanced players if you need those to send out to your potential magazine patrons.

Katzmann is in the building and so is Karen, but they're caught up in other matters. They may be able to join us or they may not be able to join us. Let me go around the room and let you know who's in the room:

Comment: (Library Staff - NLS)

Pamela Davenport, Judy Dixon, Jane Caulton, Deborah Toomey, John Bryant, Vickie Collins, Steve Prine.

Comment: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)

So now I'm going to turn the floor over to the Network for your questions.

Question: (Ruth Hemphill - TN)

This question is for Jane Caulton. We received that Operations Alert about that Public Education Survey and, it's a great thing, but it's on Survey Monkey and you have this list of posters – which ones we found effective and which ones we didn't – and, you know, I don't recognize which posters by the names, so I'm going to have to get up and run around and look and see. Is there any way you can just send me a list of the questions? I promise to still fill it out on Survey Monkey, but that way I can have my answers ready,

Answer: (Jane Caulton - NLS)

Actually, we'll just send out an Operations Alert with the questions. That way everybody will have them.

Comment: (Jerry Reynolds - FL)

I just wanted to let you all know that I'm retiring in two days from now. What I do want you to know is that I don't know who is replacing me, if anyone. Chris Eaton will be here, but I'm told the position is going to be filled, but Friday I'm leaving. I wanted to tell you that this is the person you want to keep contacting and all, but I'm going to be volunteering quite a bit of my time so I've got my own little cubby with my own computer and my own phone and all that stuff, and I still have the same address and phone number, so anything you want to get in touch with me about, just use the same address...

Comment: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)

Well Jerry, we wish you a wonderful retirement. We wish you weren't going. We're glad you got the cubby and are going to stay on as a volunteer. We hope to hear from you and you know where we live. If you come to Washington we'll take you to lunch.

Comment: (Jerry Reynolds - FL)

Sounds good. I do plan to stay involved. I might be coming to the NLS conference. I think I'm going to, because I want to make sure we are involved, even if the person replacing me does come as well...Chris is very competent, so we're going to be doing just fine...

Comment: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)

Well thank you very much. It's wonderful to know that you're going to continue being an ambassador for us, and that we'll see you again... Good luck! All the best.

Question: (Ed Byrne - TN)

How do you do? This is Ed. My question would be whether we had a specific date for the merger of Web Braille into the BARD system?

Answer: (Judy Dixon - NLS)

We're still doing some testing and tweaking and working on it internally, and then it's going to go to the libraries within a few weeks. It's going to be a couple of months.

Comment: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)

Taking this opportunity to add some new features and lay the foundation (for) one of our next big pushes (which is to) add the local production that is desirable, to BARD. That, of course, will take a while, too. Some of the infrastructure will be included in this update of BARD.

Question: (Andrew Egan - RI)

We have a statewide book that we're planning to promote to members throughout the state that we serve. It's "The Beauty of Humanity Movement" by Camilla Gibb. I know you guys haven't recorded that, and I'm just wondering if any of the regional libraries are recording it or would consider recording it? Just give me a call in Rhode Island. I'd appreciate it, because we're trying to promote that for the coming years' reading, so, that would be great if somebody is doing it.

Question: (Linda Vincent - WI)

Hi, I was wondering when we might start seeing the magazines on cartridge. Do we have a date?

Answer: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)

Well we sort of have a plan, more or less. We're thinking it's going to be this year, and we expect it to start in late November, and it will start with groupings of libraries and then ramp up as we go. Maybe John Bryant would like to say more?

Answer: (John Bryant - NLS)

We do have the contracts out. We have two producers who are going to be doing this. Software is now being finalized for loading the cartridges once that's ready to go, We have the cartridges and we will have the mailing containers by the end of this month so, we'll just be waiting for the software and then the debugging to take place so, we do anticipate it will be November before they actually start coming out, but once they do, we do hope for a pretty fast ramp-up.

Question: (Linda Vincent - WI)

That's good news. Will we be able to get the software then, if we want to use it for local magazines?

Answer: (John Bryant - NLS)

Well this software is actually...software that queries a number of different databases and tells us 'this person is supposed to receive these magazines' and which of these magazines are now available, then it knows what to load on each cartridge, so, it's a pretty complicated piece of software, and actually it's built for handling a nationwide distribution. I'm not sure it would be helpful to an individual library.

Comment: (Linda Vincent - WI)

I appreciate that. I've been wondering because there are some that maybe we would have wanted to do a similar thing with – because we have a couple of magazines here in Wisconsin that we record, so I was just wondering about it but, we can work it out here.

Comment: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)

I guess the thing that I would add is that, I know you've been industriously checking your list in CMLS and I know that Sylvia has gotten lots of responses but, this really means that you need to be sure you get finished and get in contact with your readers of magazines, to be sure that they have a player because there was still a sizeable number back when we ran the information at the end of July – a sizeable number of people who didn't have players and who had subscriptions to magazines. Our intention is to run another list of that after the close, which is going to be this week – maybe in mid-October, and we'll see then, how the records stand in terms of player distribution to magazine subscribers... We think you've been doing a good job so we think that most of them will be taken care of by then. If they're not we're going to need to let you know so that it's clearly communicated.

Question: (Richard Smith - MO)

I was curious, will the Library of Congress consider doing high-quality local magazines and distributing them?...Would you consider putting local magazines in addition to NLS magazines, for distribution – on your cartridges?

Answer: (Steve Prine - NLS)

Well that isn't part of the initial rollout of the transfer from analog to digital. It's certainly something that can be looked at.

Comment: (Richard Smith - MO)

It might be me. No other Network library may want that... But we used to get a number of magazines from other states and distribute them on cassette, and it would be nice if you guys would do that on digital.

Comment: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)

NLS intends – it's been said for some years, now – to put local material on BARD and, we do already at this point have Smithsonian, Humpty Dumpty and I think Audubon. We're making plans for Seventeen and the other ones that have passed QA and, the idea for the expansion of local materials on BARD would not require it to have been through the QA process. We're not there yet. We're still working out various policy and procedural and logistical (issues)...

Question: (Richard Smith - MO)

How is the recall going?

Answer: (John Bryant - NLS)

Well actually, as you say this I'm sitting here writing another letter to the Post Office to ask them about some packaging we'd like to try. Our initial test on the first packaging that we were going to have you try to use, proved that we did not want to use it. So we're on a different tack right now and once we have that – that is, so that you can pack a number of copies into a single package and send them back – we'll be ready to go. We do have the contract for it. We've got a contractor set up to handle it. It's just (about) getting that packaging right now.

Question: (Richard Smith - MO)

Was there a resolution on barcodes being reused in our system? That, indeed, if we get one back that we withdraw from our system, the barcode is still in our system. If we (were to) get the same book back, it would cause a problem. You're aware of that, right?

Answer: (John Bryant - NLS)

Yes, that certainly is a possibility. That's why we would recommend that you remove any barcodes for something that's being sent back – from your system, not from the book!

Question: (Richard Smith - MO)

Did you guys talk with the System Administrators or is that going to be our responsibility?

Answer: (John Bryant - NLS)

Yes. I'm not sure what we would say to the system vendor.

Question: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)

Are you suggesting that as part of the recall process, you would have a facility in your system to subtract the barcode? Is that what you mean?

Answer: (Richard Smith - MO)

No. I just found this problem that, when we purge a book from our system – and it may be Missouri – (and) it comes back a year later, and we try to re-use that barcode, we can't. I always thought that in the recall, we'd send it back, you would strip the barcode and just re-use the container with a brand-new barcode, but if you're not going to do that...then we have to make sure that we completely withdraw that barcode when we take them out of the system. I've contacted my automated system and I told them six months ago and I thought you guys (were going to talk about this at Newport) but apparently that was miscommunication. When we recall, we'll find that problem and we'll take care of it then.

Question: (Ruth Hemphill - TN)

I just want to verify that I understand something correctly... Patrons who are subscribing to magazines such as Talking Book Topics or whatever – on cassette right now. When the conversion takes place, they will get them on cartridge whether or not they have a digital player. Is that correct? ...I understand we're trying to get them to have a player and we're getting them to them, but if by some chance we would miss getting them a player and they have a cartridge, they're going to call us and...then we will definitely get them a player if that's correct. Someone asked me – since you obviously have a list of who has players and who doesn't – if you'll just cancel the subscriptions of people who don't take the players and I said I didn't think so, but I just want to verify that.

Answer: (John Bryant - NLS)

I believe the software will be checking whether the patron has a player and (if not) they will not get that cartridge, but we are sending out an announcement on the cassettes, that (will tell) everyone "These cassettes are about to be discontinued. If you would like to continue to get this magazine, you will have to get a digital player."

Question: (Serena McGuire - DC)

When we did our study about the people who didn't have a digital player, we had a lot of people who were using a privately purchased player, like the Stream, and didn't want a digital player – but that wouldn't mean they'd want their magazines cancelled.

Answer: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)

Oh that's a very good point and I think that we'll take that under consideration because if they have the Stream and the cartridge attachment they can certainly read those magazines. At this point in time, we don't have a record of those players in CMLS.

Comment: (Serena McGuire - DC)

That was one of the categories I used when I returned the survey. I responded that each of those individuals was using a purchased player. I don't know if everyone else did that...

Comment: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)

I would expect that that would be high on the list. It's definitely something that we recognize that should be included in our data. As I said earlier, we'll run the listing of patrons without players, after you've put all your input in, and we'll expect it to be lower – and we'll take into consideration that people could have commercial players...that would play these magazines.

Question: (Linda Vincent - WI)

Hi. I was wondering if people will need to return the cartridges from the Talking Book Topics?

Answer: (Steve Prine - NLS)

Yes. Because the Talking Book Topics will just be on the cartridge with the other magazines that they get.

Question: (Linda Vincent - WI)

So will we still have an annual Digital Talking Books Plus? Or will they only have a current cartridge with everything on it?

Answer: (Jane Caulton - NLS)

Digital Talking Books Plus will continue to be published as it is now. It goes out as a print handout. The audio (format) is available through the collection. That process will continue.

Comment: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)

Any more questions? Well, it's almost three o'clock here in the east. Last call for questions? Well, happy end-of-the-fiscal-year and happy new fiscal year. I hope everybody is funded and no one is going to be in some kind of "furlough" status. Keep up the good work and we'll talk to you next month. Bye-bye.

No more questions or comments.