

NLS Telephone Forum – 11-28-2012
(paraphrased)

Comment: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)

Hello everybody. I hope you're having a nice day. We're having a nice day here – with people running around and getting a lot of stuff done, I suppose. I'm sure from the listserv we have a great deal of interest and lots of questions. So, I think first of all, I'll go around the room so you'll know who's here, then we'll open the floor for anybody here who wants to say anything, and then we'll turn it over to you. The first one is...

Comment: (Library Staff - NLS)

Deborah Toomey; Alice O'Reilly; Bob Axtell; Jane Caulton; Mary Dell Jenkins; Vickie Collins; Steve Prine; Michael Katzmann; Michael Martys; Neil Bernstein; Pamela Davenport; Judy Dixon;

Comment: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)

...and it's back to me, Carolyn Sung. So, my colleagues, does anybody want to say something before we turn it over for questions? (Pause) Ok, I'll turn it over for questions. Is anybody in the queue yet?

Question: (Danielle Miller - WA)

Thank you. Good morning everybody. We know that you're still in that phase of working out the packaging and shipping material for our recall cassettes. But, we were hoping we could get a number of what our recall was so that we could at least be planning and maybe setting things aside – even though we won't have the shipping containers yet.

Answer: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

We can get some preliminary numbers to you.

Question: (Danielle Miller - WA)

Will that still be the percent of the last two or three years?

Answer: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

Yes. That's what the plan is, for the...recall.

Comment: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)

We're still in the planning stage in terms of whether we'd have a smaller pilot and then the bigger one, so I guess I would just say that we'll get you more information on our plan probably before Christmas.

Question: (Linda Montgomery - AZ)

Thank you and hello to everyone. We're having a beautiful day here as well. As usual in Arizona, it's mid-80s, even though it's November. I know I already sent this question to Michael Katzmann just on Monday but I thought I'd bring it up here, too, just in case anyone has heard of this. We have a patron who has what is called, "Electro-Magnetic Field Sensitivity" and says that there is absolutely no way that he can use the digital player because of this. Are there suggestions?

Answer: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

The way you've phrased it...it sounds like (he has) aluminum wrapped around his head. You mean he has equipment that is sensitive to the player. Radio equipment or something, is it?

Comment: (Linda Montgomery - AZ)

He can listen to the cassette, but because of this Electro-Magnetic Field Sensitivity, he is unable to listen to the digital player.

Comment: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

The way you're phrasing it, it's as if he or she has a physical disability that is affected by radio waves. Well... I'm trying to phrase this delicately...maybe he needs to see a psychiatrist.

Question: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)

Why does it not occur with cassettes? Did he say? He can listen to cassettes but he can't do the digital? Is that what you're saying?

Answer: (Linda Montgomery - AZ)

Right... It causes him discomfort, according to the patron.

Comment: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

Okay. Whatever discomfort he's having, it has absolutely nothing to do with electromagnetic interference. I mean, the only difference between the two players - that a human could discern - might be that there are more high frequencies - or more fidelity - in the output of the digital player than there would've been out of the cassette player. Maybe he's sensitive to the higher-pitched sounds that are coming out of the player, but certainly it has nothing to do with electromagnetic interference. Now, if he's a radio ham or something and he has a radio sitting next to the player, (there is) a possibility that there could be some interference generated by the player in very close proximity. The solution would be to move the player away from the radio...

Question: (Linda Montgomery - AZ)

Could that be a solution for him - to run a speaker to another room or something?

Comment: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)

Linda, I think we'll talk to you more about this offline.

Question: (Michael Martys - NLS)

I just had one question. Did they exchange players at least once...?

Answer: (Linda Montgomery - AZ)

...I'd have to check with his reader-advisor and see if they've said anything like that.

Comment: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)

We still have cassette players and we still have RCs so, I mean we can put off the solution maybe for a while. ... Well if anyone else on the call has heard of this, please get in the queue and share your experience. Thank you Linda.

Question: (Stephanie Schott - AK)

We have gotten our November-December Talking Book Topics and usually we get ours at least a month or a month and a half late, so we were just curious if that was just an Alaska issue? Or is that something everybody has (experienced)?

Answer: (Jane Caulton - NLS)

As far as I know - the Alaska issue - we send them out so that they'll arrive the first week of the second month. So that means if it's the November-December, they should arrive in the first week of December.

Question: (Stephanie Schott - AK)

Okay... Our other question was just about what was decided about the annotations? If they're still going to be one sentence or if there was any consensus on that?

Answer: (Jane Caulton - NLS)

Karen has been looking into that and we don't have a decision yet.

Comment: (Library Staff - NLS)

I do want to say, we did not receive a lot of feedback from the Network. I had all the consultants channel in the comments they received and I would say (that) if we had ten comments I would be surprised. I think it was fewer than 10 comments. So, please, if you do have issues with it or if your patrons have expressed issues with it, and you have not contacted your Network Consultant with this information, please do so. ...Make sure you send Pam Davenport (pdav@loc.gov) who is the Western Consultant – a quick email saying Alaska doesn't like them.

Comment: (Miles Lewis - TX)

Good afternoon. This is in response to the quandary about electromagnetic sensitivity. Just do a search-engine search on "electromagnetic hypersensitivity." This is akin to the "chemical sensitivity" that some of you have probably heard about from patrons. It's obviously rather contentious but for the last ten years or so, (there have) been a number of different surveys that indicate that anywhere from three to five percent of the population reports this sort of hypersensitivity that can cause quite a bit of discomfort. In 2005, the World Health Organization conducted a study of this. (I'm) just saying that the symptoms are certainly real and can vary widely in their severity, but the actual nature and validity of it is, of course, highly in question. This gets into the area of people's concerns about electromagnetics and microwave energy associated with cellphone towers, high-tension power lines or any electro-magnetic device including clock radios and that sort of thing. So, there is some sort of basis there for a little more informed discussion, so, there you go.

Comment: (Stacy Hathaway-Bell - TX)

It's the same thing with the electro-magnetic sensitivity. We actually have a patron who has that. She has had more success with the DTBM than with the cassette player. She can't talk on the telephone. She has to record stuff...it gives her seizures. So, it's a form of epilepsy. With the epileptic form of this, it's not certain whether it's the series of movements and behaviors used to use the electronic equipment or whether it is actually something to do with the electronic equipment. For example, some people have this problem when they answer the telephone and it's unknown whether that's the series of movements they're doing that triggers an epileptic seizure or whether it is something to do with the phone itself.

Question: (Eileen Morange - MA)

Hi everyone. I have a question on the NLS Operations Alert that came out November 20. It said that if a person does not have a digital machine that they will not be able to get digital magazines, which I understand. But, where is it going to be on CMLS that (shows) that they have their own equipment? How is that being registered there?

Answer: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

That's a good question. What we're doing at the moment is, if people are signed up for BARD and they do not show in CMLS as having a digital player, they will be getting cartridges on the assumption that if they're getting (cassettes) they'll want magazines on cartridge...

Comment: (Steve Prine - NLS)

Michael's right. At the moment there's no place in CMLS to indicate 3rd-party players, but, we're in the process of trying to look at merging both CMLS and BPHICS into one database and, one of the things we're looking at is the capability (or possibility) of identifying 3rd party players. The problem, of course is that it may mean...we can do it on the CMLS side, but that also means reprogramming at the library level with the circulation systems. In some places that would be more problematic than in others. So, that may be a longer-term thing. Michael's interim solution may be in place for a while.

Comment: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

Of course, it's not certain that if they have a 3rd party player, it's going to be able to play cartridges. That's another issue. Whether they do, in fact, want magazines – presumably, if we send them the magazines on cartridge and they can't play them, they'll inform the library to cancel the subscription.

Comment: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)

...Or, to get a digital player.

Comment: (Steve Prine - NLS)

...of which we have plenty.

Question: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)

I assume that you were responsible for working on the list? Did a solution come to your mind as you were working on this?

Answer: (Eileen Morange - MA)

No.

Question: (Carl Keehn - NC)

I got a very curious phone call earlier today from a public library. They remembered some kind of vague email that they received indicating that eligibility was open to everybody 80 years old or older. When they looked at our website, of course we listed the current eligibility standards and, they were checking up on it because they now have to go back and retract what they told their library staff. I was wondering if anyone would know where they might have gotten this idea, because it was an email she received over a month ago and of course, trying to wade through the hundreds that she has on her server while talking to me on the phone is just about impossible.

Answer: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)

Well as far as I know, at least for the last 17 years, I've never heard this before so, this is all news to me.

Comment: (Steve Prine - NLS)

They may have heard it from another public library. We have had instances in the past where...the director of a public library system that had a subregional thought it was just a great idea and suggested that they be given to everybody, and so we had to have a conversation with them, and that went away but some of that kind of stuff could still be floating around... If they're 80 years old and older, they may very well be eligible for the program. Just because of age-related problems.

Comment: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)

If anybody has a source for this information – this is Carolyn – please share it with me. I might even be able to give you a reward of one green cartridge.

Comment: (Serena McGuire - DC)

Hi. It's really two comments. As far as the last thing, I know that I have seen on some libraries websites, that they will do books by mail. Regular print books by mail, for people over a certain age, and 80 is probably a good example, and it's possible that someone conflated books-by-mail and books for the blind. Since our books-by-mail also operates out of this office, we have lots of confusion between the two programs. I mean, among the patrons...but I'm wondering if that's the source of the misunderstanding. The other thing is that I am still finding evidence of people who are using BARD with personal players, and their BARD account does not show a personal player.

Question: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)

How did they get a key?

Answer: (Serena McGuire - DC)

I don't know.

Question: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)

Do you know who they are? Can you talk to them?

Answer: (Serena McGuire - DC)

There is a significant number of them. I am going to have to go back and look at the BARD records and see who's shown as having a personal player and then compare them with the report I sent in a couple of months ago about why people didn't have digital players.

Question: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

How do you know they have a personal player?

Answer: (Serena McGuire - DC)

Well they've told me, and they're using digital books – I mean they're using BARD regularly. They must be playing it on something.

Question: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

They don't have an NLS player?

Answer: (Serena McGuire - DC)

They don't have an NLS player, but their BARD account does not show the personal player ever having been registered.

Question: (Library Staff - NLS)

Could it be possible that they bought a used device that already had the key on it?

Answer: (Serena McGuire - DC)

Anything's possible. I mean, it's not just one or two. Off the top of my head I'd say at least twenty people in this situation.

Comment: (Michael Martys - NLS)

We probably need to hear some names so we can investigate this.

Comment: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

...The only way to get the key is to register in BARD, and that triggers a message to the manufacturer to send a key out to the patron.

Comment: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)

Serena, we should talk to you offline about this.

Question: (Barbara Penegor - KY)

A possible solution for Serena's problem could be - I wonder if there's a school for the blind, or a blind agency that has purchased the players and has (placed) the key on them and is giving them to their clients?

Answer: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

Yes but they can only put it on if they've registered the player with BARD.

Question: (Barbara Penegor - KY)

My actual question is: I'm assuming that once BARD is up with Web Braille there will be more interest in Web Braille. I'd like to know what devices can play Web Braille as audio? I know the VictorReader Stream will, but are there other devices that will play the braille file as audio?

Answer: (Library Staff - NLS)

Any braille-aware device that puts out text-to-speech can probably play them. So the question is: is the device braille-aware. I don't think we have a list. I could name some but I don't think it would be a complete list. Any braille-aware device or software would be able to do that.

Question: (Barbara Penegor - KY)

Okay. And then one final question: I saw on the Operations Alert that institutions that get magazines on cassette and do not have a digital player will need to continue getting magazines on cassette? They will not be allowed to get digital magazines? Is that correct?

Answer: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

Yes. At the moment, institutions will not be getting digital magazines...Because we are changing the mode in which patrons are getting magazines so they're getting multiple magazines on a single cartridge, it's not the model that would work for institutions. There will have to be another model for the patrons at institutions. As soon as we get everything up and running with the individuals, that's the next thing we'll look at... There will likely be a period where (institutions) will not be receiving either (format). They could download the magazines off BARD but they would not be receiving the physical materials.

Comment: (Library Staff - NLS)

Barbara, we will have to come up with a model that will work for institutions and if any of you out there have ideas of how institutions are using the magazines and what would be the best solution for that, we would be very open to suggestions.

Comment: (Barbara Penegor - KY)

I would think it might be best for them...to open a personal account for the patrons who are using them.

Comment: (Library Staff - NLS)

I think that would be a very good interim solution and I would suggest you suggest that...

Question: (Ruth Hemphill - TN)

Hi everyone. It's beautiful in Tennessee too although a little cool. Cooler than Arizona... This is just a thought and it's probably not feasible, but I thought I'd ask it anyway. We were talking about people who have 3rd party players but don't have BARD accounts. Is (there) a possibility we could just sign them up for BARD?

Answer: (Library Staff - NLS)

Libraries have handled it differently in different situations Ruth, and you can call and talk to MaryBeth about the various options for people who have bought the 3rd party devices, and how they may be registered. A lot of people who don't have access to the internet, but want the small device, have the Library Edition of the VictorReader Stream, and libraries have devised several ways to enable those devices to receive cartridges from their library and be able to play them on their device.

Question: (Ruth Hemphill - TN)

...and then something else...kind of a follow up. When Carl asked about people over 80 getting the service. Several months ago, you indicated there was a movement in Congress to increase eligibility. Have you heard any more on that?

Answer: (Library Staff - NLS)

Nothing at this point. I think we will hear more about it but we have not.

Comment: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

Congress would never pass an unfunded mandate! (laughter).

Question: (Andrew Egan - RI)

One question I had – looking at possibilities of expansion certainly with the Web Braille. Would you go back to considering public library access beyond three titles?

Answer: (Steve Prine - NLS)

If they can prove to us (that) they know braille! ... I'm just being facetious Andy. The answer is "no" at the moment.

Question: (Andrew Egan - RI)

As we see BARD increasing and developing over time, we do have a limited number of individuals that have computers. I think it's nationally like, ten percent?

Answer: (Steve Prine - NLS)

It's about fifteen percent of the readership now.

Comment: (Andrew Egan - RI)

So I'm looking at ways to expand access. One of the things that we like to do is – people who don't have computers, they go to the local public library. If they can manipulate a computer there, fine. If they need some assistance, then the skilled staff at the public library could help. It's an idea.

Comment: (Library Staff - NLS)

That's fine, but the patrons themselves can get their own account. And they can download from the patron's account, rather than download as a public library institution, and so it's quite feasible for the public library to help patrons when they go into the public library to use BARD and use the patrons BARD account to download the materials they need and want.

Question: (Andrew Egan - RI)

Not to take it too much further but what I was thinking of, that if public library staff could (train themselves) and they could work with the public a little bit more. Having a limited access to BARD I think is kind of prohibitive in terms of...It's hard to sell in terms of that part of it, where, I'm just saying that, as BARD increases and becomes more important to developing that accessible (resource) for people who don't have computers that may want to go to public libraries. We ought to look at trying to expand the collection within the public library domain in that sense. But let me move on. I have a real quick question: In terms of a BARD link on your homepage, do you have a BARD link on your home site?

Answer: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)

We're working on that.

Question: (Richard Smith - MO)

I missed the last meeting so I wanted to know about the magazines. How are they going? I was down in Springfield, Missouri and I saw that they had a contract for the magazines. For the last 20 or 30 years I've been lying to my patrons saying I thought all magazines came out of Florida... and lo and behold, Springfield does all the magazines...It was a pretty nice operation. So is that going to happen this month? Next month?

Answer: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

It's likely to start in December. We're still getting the data systems...the duplicators are working on their infrastructure. There are two companies that won the contract for digital magazines. NAC in Missouri and Potomac Talking Books in Bethesda, so we've got to split the libraries among those two contractors. One set of libraries will be served generally in the east from Bethesda and the middle of the country and west from Missouri. Basically on a fifty/fifty population basis. We'll update you as soon as there is any further information. We're going to start off with a few libraries and then hopefully if that goes as anticipated, it will ramp up fairly quickly.

Question: (Richard Smith - MO)

...I hope we're on the top (of the list) for recall. How is that going Steve?

Answer: (Steve Prine - NLS)

Well, that's a John Bryant question.

Answer: (John Bryant - NLS)

Actually we're just about to try our first package and see if this one will make it through the mail... I mean, another package, and I think this one's going to make it. If that happens, we'll probably start it soon. I'm guessing that you won't have to start shipping to us before the beginning of the year – in large volume – but we'll be asking you to begin that, probably next month.

Question: (Ruth Hemphill - TN)

...I was going to ask, any thoughts on what's going on with BARD and when it'll be available again?

Answer: (Michael Martys - NLS)

As you know, we attempted to go live with BARD yesterday, and in the evening when BARD was under a very high load, it began to have a performance problem downloading books. On the other functions we're working okay. ...We had to take BARD down, and the problem turned out to be an issue with the database and the way it was configured. So, we're making the adjustment to the database and it should be actually done by the time we're done with this call. We're going to do some testing in-house and hopefully put it back online later today. ...And of course the NLS Download Support people are on – for lack of a better phrase – “high alert” so if there are any issues or anything you discover with it, please feel free to contact them and then they will contact one of us or escalate the problem appropriately.

I can give you a little feedback right now - that we got from yesterday. They were reporting that there were a number of password issues. (People) changed their password and they didn't know quite what it was or they didn't get the emails, and things of that sort. We did see a lot of people logged into BARD so the majority of people are getting in, but there is a small percentage that are seeing some password issues... This change to BARD was a pretty big change... Basically we had to switch computers, and the new computers don't recognize the password formats of the old computers. If people haven't logged into BARD in like, 4 months, (probably) their password won't work and will have to be reset. The way we did things is that if people did log into BARD in the last 4 months, they should be able to log into BARD without a problem.

Question: (Linda Vincent - WI)

I was wondering if you're having complaints about unzipping...because things from BARD were not downloading completely? Is that affecting unzipping the files? Do you know?

Answer: (Michael Martys - NLS)

Yes. Basically, an incomplete download, the zip programs will either say the file is corrupted, or they won't unzip it.

Comment: (Linda Vincent - WI)

That's what I assumed but I just wanted to double check. Thank you.

Comment: (Michael Martys - NLS)

And then, one other thing, just as an FYI, Mike Marlin pointed out to me that one of his patrons was saying that the downloads he did yesterday didn't show up on his download list. The download list only shows successful downloads so, if they're unsuccessful downloads, they don't show up – and that's sort of a clue that they weren't successful.

Comment: (Linda Vincent - WI)

Thank you very much!

Comment: (Carolyn Sung - NLS)

Well this is getting to be the end of November. Our normal (December) call would be the day after Christmas and, since we think that many of you and many of us will be enjoying our family and holiday – and our presents (and) maybe shopping again – we won't plan to have a call in December. Last call? Anybody have a comment? Bye-bye everybody. Thank you!

No more questions or comments.