

NLS Telephone Forum – 07-31-2013
(paraphrased)

Comment: (Steve Prine - NLS)

Welcome to the Open Forum conference call. It's a beautiful day in Washington. The sun is shining. The breeze is blowing. The gnats are losing. What we're going to do is we'll go around and introduce people, so we'll start to my left:

Comment: (Library Staff - NLS)

Neal Bernstein, John Brown, Michael Martys, Mary Dell Jenkins, Pamela Davenport, Paula Bahmani, Margie Goergen-Rood, Mary Beth Wise, (Michael Katzmann), Vicki Collins.

Comment: (Steve Prine - NLS)

Karen is out of the office and Isabella, our deputy director, is in a meeting. I think we're just going to go directly to questions, and we'll see what comes up.

Question: (Ron Bryant - AZ)

I have a question concerning the multi-state center west, and some supplies. We seem to be running short on cartridges, labels, blue containers and maybe bar codes are next. Can you tell me the status of what's going on with those items?

Answer: (Library Staff - NLS)

We just shipped out a couple of skids of blue containers to the multistate center so they should be there within a week. And, the labels are on order. I had not heard that we're running out of bar codes. John Bryant is not here, so we'll check with him on that when he comes back.

Comment: (Ron Bryant - AZ)

We're still getting them, but it sounds like those are the next thing to be in short supply. I'm a little concerned about those other supplies, that's all.

Comment: (Library Staff - NLS)

I understand. Cartridges? I'm not sure what to tell you because I don't know what the status is of purchases at the moment. We will follow-up on that.

Question: (Mike Marlin – CA9)

Quick question on Magazines, on Cartridge. We were wondering, we haven't heard anything officially: If magazines in other languages were paralleled by cartridge magazine announcements in that language. Can you verify yay or nay? And can we also get some samples, particularly a Spanish one, but others would be welcome as well.

Answer: (Michael Katzmann – NLS)

The magazines themselves, obviously are in whatever language they're in, Spanish, German, French: however since the magazine may contain various languages, the announcements, when there are multiple magazine on a cartridge, is only in English.

Question: (Mike Marlin – CA9)

But what if it's just one language that's non-English language?

Answer: (Michael Katzmann – NLS)

Well then it doesn't have another announcement on it, it just has the magazine.

Question: (Mike Marlin – CA9)

I thought there was a preliminary announcement about having to return the magazine?

Answer: (Michael Katzmann – NLS)

No, that is only on cartridges that have multiple magazines. The announcement about returning the magazine is on all the cartridges, but obviously that's in the language that the magazine's in.

Question: (Mike Marlin – CA9)

Okay, that makes sense. Are there any plans to make those multiple magazine announcements in other languages?

Answer: (Michael Katzmann – NLS)

You mean multiple announcements on magazines that have multiple languages? No.

Question: (Mike Marlin – CA9)

Well, what about if there's more than one magazine in a particular...all in the same language?

Answer: (Michael Katzmann – NLS)

At the moment, there's no provision to do that.

Comment: (Mike Marlin – CA9)

We've encountered - particularly with some of our inmate patrons, who speak other languages - there's been some confusion about that. Okay. Thanks.

Question: (James Gleason - MA)

My question is about the styrofoam end caps for the digital players. The multi-state centers have been out of stock of those for a while.

Answer: (Alice O'Reilly – NLS)

They are coming in. The contract was just awarded, I'm speaking for Greg Hill, the acting ECO, the contract was just awarded for 27k – to be split evenly between the East and West. We are given I think like 30 days to get them produced and shipped out. So those should be available shortly... And, same for the boxes, and print and braille inserts will be the same. He's got all of those materials coming. Don't order 13k because then we'll be out again!

Question: (Unidentified caller)

I have a question about the permanent copies, as we're ordering them from multi-states, they're not coming in very quickly. Is there a shortage of supplies, or is there a reason for that?

Answer: (Library Staff – NLS)

There's a shortage of cartridges at the moment.

Question: (Unidentified caller)

And are you waiting on the new supplier?

Answer: (Library Staff – NLS)

At this point we're waiting just to ship cartridges from where we have them, to where we need them. But, the multi-state – we've supplied them recently. They were out of high capacity cartridges. So, if you're waiting on...that don't fit on 256k cartridges, then we just got them a supply of a of 1Gb cartridges. And they've got a significant backlog to work through. They should be caught up hopefully within the next couple weeks.

Question: (Teneka Williams - GA)

I have a question about the delinquent list – (which is) parceled out to the different OAC's here in Georgia. I haven't gone through the list myself, but I've gotten several emails saying that a lot of the patrons are deceased or blocked. So, is that an error we need to clear that up on our end, or is there something else that would be on our end?

Answer: (Library Staff – NLS)

The production list comes from the information that's in CMLS. So if it's active in CMLS that's why this is happening.

Comment: (Teneka Williams - GA)

Okay – so it's at our end. Okay thanks.

Question: (Richard Smith - MO)

I think I got three questions: One question was, we have a patron who is having a hard time with the Bookshelf – they just can't hold down the button. They wanted to know - and we do make tapes on cartridges – what I'm asking – I don't need an answer but I need to know who to ask, at NLS: Is it possible to download (multiple) books onto cartridges and have them play continuously? And – to not have to use the bookshelf (feature) to start and stop?

Answer: (Michael Katzmann – NLS)

No, it's not possible at the moment.

Question: (Richard Smith - MO)

Will the multi-states be making multi-cartridges for us?

Answer: (Library Staff – NLS)

No. – is the short answer... There are a number of factors that go into it. One is the workload/staff available at the multi-state center. But there's also the question and concerns about labeling cartridges with multiple books on it. The fact is, as you just described, there are patrons out there that may not have a book shelf feature or may not be able to work it.

Question: (Michael Katzmann – NLS)

What's the scenario that you're talking about? The multi-state-center's [function] is to replace book that you run short of or that may be on BARD, but not available on cartridge. What actual condition are you trying to ameliorate?

Answer: (Richard Smith - MO)

Yeah – well actually maybe I'm thinking of a problem the doesn't exist – but if you're going to get more and more commercial books there's going to be more and more books on BARD that we're not going to get in hard copy. If there's a lot of them, we may just want to get a series of books. Maybe you ought to consider it.

Answer: (Library Staff – NLS)

As usual Richard – you're thinking ahead. Obviously, as we begin to get more commercial material, we're going to have to determine ...how we're going to make it available. What you're suggesting is probably one of the things we're going to have to consider.

Question: (Richard Smith - MO)

The last question I guess is – I don't know if Ed was there or not – but since I am on the Collection Development Advisory Group (CDAG) which Ruth Hemphill really is doing an outstanding job for that – You'll be getting the CDAG's questions pretty soon – or recommendations - Anyway - because you'll be doing more commercial books in the future – or at least we were told so – you may get a lot of the best sellers – so, are you going to broaden your selection of books that you'll be recording with NLS-created digital books - and if so – do you need – in other words we want to send you some recommendations here in Missouri - they may not have met your criteria in the past. Will you be broadening the selection of your books? You know you can respond next telephone call. Anyway – I want to send Ed a few anyway today. National books on Scott Joplin, and the painter Benson, a Missouri painter – and we think it'd be a nice addition to NLS collection – they may be older titles and may have not gotten national reviews.

Answer: (Steve Prine – NLS)

In many ways we may be looking at a whole new world – in terms of this – so there are a lot of questions we're going to have to have answers too – and decide how we're going to do this. Widening the content was the goal, and we've sort of reached that – now how are we going to implement it? That's still a big question mark.

Question: (Andrew Egan - RI)

I just want to get an update from last month – in continuing about the Apple App – and the training offering you might recommend – I saw that UP alert.

Answer: (Michael Martys – NLS)

Well development continues – we're late in our pre-beta. It's going very well. We're putting the finishing touches on what's needed at the BARD server end of things. Once that's in place we'll finish out development – we'll move to beta testing - so we're probably a week and a half to two and a half weeks from beta test. We're in very good shape – I don't think the beta testing will last very long. On the training side of things – Paula – you want to give an update?

Answer: (Paula Bahmani – NLS)

The Operations Alert recommended that libraries get a device if they can, or get access to a device and also to familiarize themselves with Voiceover and Zoom which are accessibility features on IOS devices. We are putting together several training videos and documents to help libraries with supporting the apps, when that time comes.

Comment: (Michael Martys - NLS)

We've had a lot of questions recently on what the app will run on: it will run on iPhone 3GS or later, on iPod touch – 4th or 5th generation, and on any iPad. More importantly – every single one of those has Voiceover built in, not like a PC where you have to add a screen reader. It's built into the device. You can turn it on to the accessibility settings, and I really strongly recommend that...you really learn how Voiceover works – that's the basis of everything - so just go in there and play with it. There's a tutorial built in too, if you want to run that. I really strongly recommend you do that.

Question: (Serena McGuire - DC)

I don't know if other people are having this same issue – I have to assume they are – of patrons going to great lengths to incorrectly return their magazines. I have had patrons box them up and pay the post office to deliver them to us. And then I had to just turn the address cards over and send them on to Bethesda. And – they carry them in etc., etc. So, I am wondering about adding to the announcement about returning them? Some wording about returning it where it came from – not your local library.

Answer: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

The announcement does say to “turn the card over.”

Comment: (Serena McGuire - DC)

That seems not to be doing the job. To somehow convey that it's not going to be their local library. Either Bethesda, Maryland – or wherever the other contractor is. It's just a thought. I am trying very hard to get the word out – when they do this I call them and say – please don't do this – just turn the card over and drop it in the mail box. Bringing it to me just adds an unnecessary step. Like I said, I tend to assume we're not the only people in the system having this problem. Maybe we are. Maybe DC patrons are deeply creative in how they mess things up.

Question: (Christie Briggs - MT)

Hi good afternoon – my question is regarding local recording programs – using LCM – What's the direction NLS is taking working with that product? Is there any progress?

Answer: (John Brown - NLS)

We're actively developing a replacement for LCM. We just awarded a contract for this development work a month or so ago – and we're early on in the process. The plan is that LCM will be replaced and there will be a new tool that supports modern versions of Windows.

The development schedule we just started – we plan on getting our alpha version in house here sometime around the first of the year – we'll go through another couple of months of testing in-house and then onto the beta version. The schedule right now is that something could be available for release as early as April next year.

Answer: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

If you want to look, the company is called: Hindenburg Systems – it's a Danish company – they are modifying the product that they have to [grade] books to our specification. Go to their website: (Hindenburg.com) . It's a modern – it's got a lot of nice features to it that will help and speedup markup – competitor LCM – and it's a nice polished product and we've got high hopes for it. Early in the year we expect that they'll have a product to sell.

Comment: (Steve Prine - NLS)

Needless to say we'll probably do our pilot-testing in New Jersey.

Comment: (Christie Briggs - MT)

(Laugh) Not in Montana? Okay, fine.

Comment: (Richard Smith - MO)

Well – that's good... We'll beta test it here in Missouri and I don't know that was an unexpected beep on my phone. I don't have a question.

Question: (Andrew Egan - RI)

Just want to follow up on the Apple app – for the beta testing – is that just within NLS staff – is that how you've been doing that – or who is a beta tester?

Answer: (Michael Martys - NLS)

We've been taking names for a long time now – and we've selected 35 people from all over the country – that have varying levels of Apple device knowledge – some read braille – some don't, (some have) visual impairments – etc., etc. We've put together a list of about 35 people – invitations to the beta test to them went out a couple weeks ago and so far 33 of the 35 are on board. So, we've got our beta folks set and standing by.

Question: (Andrew Egan - RI)

That's good news! The other part of this is probably a longer term – looking at the public relations component or marketing of this – in terms of membership and well – I think it's an exciting thing into let's say a wider audience – is there anything with that you are planning?

Answer: (Michael Martys - NLS)

Uh – Jane is not here right now – I don't want to speak for her so – um we can ask Jane Caulton to get back to you.

Comment: (Andrew Egan - RI)

Sure. No problem.

Comment: (Library Staff - NLS)

Andy - It will be a soft opening. We want to make sure that this works and that the beta and the libraries have a chance to try it, and we open it up for readers, who will begin to promote it in many ways.

Question: (Michael Martys - NLS)

Hey Andy – would you estimate as to what percentage of your patrons would make use of this app?

Answer: (Andrew Egan - RI)

I'm hoping – well we have like 10-15% using BARD now. It'll be less than that certainly. But, what I'm looking at, and I'm sure you're looking at (it) too – is the future growth – and especially a generational development with millennials. That the tools they're giving us and the access to using a more commercial range of products I think will be really good as a very positive promotional tool – you know 21st Century type of thing – They will grow slow – just like everything else does in terms of the population we provide services to. The potential is certainly there. So maybe a one, two, three percent of our current users might be able to do that. But at least we can market it as a uh – if you want to be on cutting edge – here you go. A lot more flexibility for people.

Comment: (Michael Martys - NLS)

I think you've seen the little report on the BART admin screen – trending right now – just about 50% of the BARD users – are indicating they're going to use it.

Comment: (Andrew Egan - RI)

Really? That's great. The more we can offer digital technology to our membership I think the better – just because of the issues we have when we use the US mail and returning stuff – it just creates a lot of issues that are difficult to resolve – whereas with the technology this seems to be improving as we go forward. I think it gives a lot more opportunity to people – we use it as a selling tool when we have a family member who would like to get their mother or father you know more resources – we just say we have BARD here – 24/7 – it's just a good resource to have, so I think the Apple app will be similar to that.

Question: (Mary Jane Kayes – CA9)

The other day I was on the BARD site looking at recently added's and found lots of magazines there that I didn't realize were going to be available as audio and then I realized they were locally produced mags. There's no distinction in the record on the screen – to say which ones are local and which are NLS. Is there any plan to make them more distinguishable from each other? They all imply that they're done by NLS.

Answer: (Library Staff - NLS)

We don't have anything in our project list along that line right now – but we're all looking at each other thinking that we're going to need to discuss this.

Question: (Mary Jane Kayes – CA9)

Okay – it's a bit confusing when it doesn't match up with what doesn't match up with what's in the back of talking book topics.

Question: (Library Staff – NLS)

Do you have an example of one?

Answer: (Mary Jane Kayes – CA9)

Playboy. And I think there's a "Southern Living" one...

Comment: (Library Staff - NLS)

Those are the magazines that have gone through quality assurance in the east – so they're probably not of them.

Comment: (Library Staff - NLS)

There's... BARD does have the ability to indicate a locally produced item – so my first thought is that maybe there's some – we need to check the data fields for those magazines... We'll take that as an action item from this meeting.

Comment: (Mary Jane Kayes – CA9)

When I saw Playboy, I first thought it was a mistake and thought that somehow a braille entry had gotten into the audio section. Then I realized no – these were audio. That was it.

Question: (James Gleason - MA)

Hi everybody again – sort of a question coming off of Andy Egan – about the BARD app – what are you looking ahead to in regards to documentation for users? Is it going to be just electronic – only available through the BARD website? Is there going to be some print copies – or are you all looking at sending out printed instructions?

Answer: (Library Staff - NLS)

We have about a 20-25 page user guide that's already written and in edit right now. The way the user guide works is that it's on the web linked to directly from the app. So when you hit the help button in the app you're taken directly to that website to read the help – so you'd be reading that either with a braille display or with Voiceover. The app is also going to have a built in copy of that obviously won't get updated. The one online we can update whenever we want. The built-in

copy is there as a fallback – so that if you cannot reach the web at the time you’re seeking help - you would be shown the internal version. Because the user guide is web based, it can also be reached in any web browser by its URL, which we will make public when the app launches. We talked about also making a braille version for download that would be linked to the page of that user guide.

Comment: (James Gleason - MA)

That’s excellent. Also – following up on what you had asked about potential users: I gotta tell you that there was a sort of unending discussion on the listserv – which I realize did end – for a while it was going strong. That – we were sort of alarmed at how many people were saying “No - they wouldn’t use the BARD app, and I suspect um – people were just answering the question because they thought they had to, so they started answering “no” rather than “yes,” and they weren’t skipping the question. It seemed like there were just a lot of no’s. Why I mention that is – it sort of flies in the face of how many BARD registrations I have happening now from 1-2 weekly to 6-8 a week right now – it’s really going through the roof – part of that is patrons we have registering for services right now. We did a recent outreach campaign to several veterans – that population tends to be more technology users – um. Also another recent outreach campaign with our rehab commission rather than the commission for the blind or the deaf and hard of hearing – this population is more broad in scope they tend to be more interested in downloadable services as well – so I suspect we’re going to have a lot of interest in the BARD app when it launches.

Question: (Richard Smith - MO)

One thing – my staff member has one question – since you were talking about quality assurance in local magazines – you know we send some materials into quality assurance and then it goes into a limbo – we never get feedback back – as a matter of fact: one magazine was accepted and we didn’t know it was, so we never sent other copies. And, we also have some books that we sent in and haven’t heard anything back. So there’s some type of gap in feedback in the quality assurance of the materials we’re sending in.

Answer: (Library Staff - NLS)

Yeah – that’s probably on this end – rather than on the multi-state end. We’ll get back to you on that.

Question: (Richard Smith - MO)

We would appreciate that because we think we’re doing some good books for you that we’d like to get out there. The other question was: what about the results of the nationwide survey? When do you think we’ll see that?

Answer: (Library Staff - NLS)

There hasn’t been an announcement yet as to when it’s going to be released –

Question: (Richard Smith - MO)

Are you excited about it? Are you getting any good information – was it worth it?

Answer: (Library Staff - NLS)

I’m sure it was. The two people who are closest to that Judy Dixon and the Director are not with us today so...

Question: (Stephanie Schott - AK)

We were just curious what the audio would be like (on) the video portion of the BARD app. We don’t have consistent access to an iPad or an iPhone unless we bring in our own devices... So we were just curious what that would be like and if that would help us in explaining things to our patrons.

Answer: (Paula Bahmani - NLS)

The overview video we’re planning to put on YouTube I believe, as well as the How To series, which will basically be step by step instructions on how to access certain features and functions of the app – um and those you’ll be able to view and listen to over the internet. You wouldn’t have to use a device for it. There will be some other training documentation – and of course you can consult the user guide if you need to.

Question: (Stephanie Schott - AK)

Obviously hands on is the best – we were just curious. And will that be on the NLS YouTube page?

Answer: (Paula Bahmani - NLS)

I believe so.

Question: (Kay Goehring - NE)

We’ve been getting a lot of calls from borrowers saying they got the paper order form for Talking Book Topics (but) they have not received the audio. Can you tell us anything about that?

Answer: (Library Staff - NLS)

Jane is not here. They may get the audio this week or next week. We've tried to indicate both on the order for and on the audio from Talking Book Topics itself that TBT and the order form may not arrive at the same time, because there's no way to sync that, based on the production. So, it is going to happen.

Comment: (Kay Goehring - NE)

Okay – we'll just tell our people it's coming.

Question: (Ed Byrne - TN)

I just wanted to comment on the last question. I believe that the BARD MOC tools were showing that the TBT would be going out on the 25th of July. Was that optimistic?

Answer: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

There's a scheduled date when the magazine is expected to be produced – but it depends on when the producer or the narration studio gets the tape and how long it takes them... It's an estimate. I will say that as of last week I didn't see that it has been uploaded. But, I've been told that it was expected this week – but I will check again.

Question: (Ed Byrne - TN)

So, that's a target date – really.

Answer: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

Yes. If the magazine isn't available then those are the best estimates of when they come out, and the scheduling system of when or what magazines are scheduled to go on what cartridge – for each patron is based on the estimate of when the magazines are going to be available. Obviously until the magazines are available, the cartridges aren't sent.

Comment: (Steve Prine - NLS)

Thank you for your participation and we look forward to talking to you again next month. Thank you.

No more questions or comments.