Comment: (Steve Prine - NLS)

Welcome to the monthly Open Forum telephone call. I'm Steve Prine and I am emceeing the call – and we'll go around and introduce other NLS staff…

Comment: (Library Staff - NLS)

Margie Goergen-Rood; Michael Martys; John Bryant; Hugh Boitano; Isabella Marqués de Castilla; MaryBeth Wise; Pamela Davenport; John Brown; Michael Katzmann; Paula Bahmani; Karen Keninger; Mary Dell Jenkins; Vickie Collins.

Comment: (Steve Prine - NLS)

Okay. That is who is on this end, and with this I'm going to turn it over to Karen.

Comment: (Karen Keninger – NLS)

Well hello everybody. It's good to be on the call today. I hope everyone is having a good day. We've released our app on Friday to a very positive response, entirely due to the long and hard work that the developers and our staff and all of you have put into this in your role as developers, testers and support, that you have taken on. Thank you for helping it to be a big success. There's a webinar on it that we did a couple weeks ago, which is still on line, and there's and Ops Alert out. It might be helpful for you to see what that is so that if your patrons are asking questions about it, that you can answer those, or at least get a general notion of what they're talking about. I'm sure we can do additional webinars in the future, what we would need from you is a list of questions or issues that you would like to have demonstrated – and we would be happy to put something like that together. Send any suggestions to Paula Bahmani at phig@loc.gov. She's coordinating that kind of education – so thank you.

Comment: (Michael Martys - NLS)

There are 3,534 people with the mobile app and they have 4252 devices registered.

Comment: (Karen Keninger - NLS)

And 700 have registered second devices; 3500 individual devices so far. We do have download limits, and we have a couple people who have exceeded it (it's like 100 books). So, we've referred those to our staff for exceptions if they need them.

If you've been watching the news, the United States Government comes up on its fiscal year on Tuesday, and they haven't decided yet in congress what they're going to do. So, basically what that has to do with NLS is that, if they decide to shut down the government, that will shut us down and we will go home and do something else. In the meantime, that may very well include shutting down all of our online services including BARD. So, just so that you're aware – BARD will very likely be a casualty of that. If you want to mention that to your patrons as you speak with them, they might want to download some extra books. That's a very real possibility the way things are going at the moment. We sent out an Ops Alert yesterday or today – about the report to congress we prepared a year ago (I do apologize for it being a year late). It was embargoed by congress until late in the spring. That report basically talks about my vision for the current and future state of NLS. That vision hasn't changed significantly. We've simply gotten a little farther down the road. If you're interested in knowing – I know at some point anyway I was asked for a white paper basically outlining the plan for NLS and that document will serve as the whitepaper as of last fall. As I've said, we've moved down the road, we've got the app out, we've got some other things done – that were envisioned in that paper and we will continue working on it but if you want to look at it, we've sent an Ops Alert out with a link to it on our public website. Those are the things that I wanted to cover this afternoon. Does anyone else here have any other topics to address to the group?

Comment: **(Jane Coulton – NLS)**

Good afternoon. This morning we sent out the press release that the Library of Congress issued yesterday and we also sent out a temp list that the libraries may customize and use as their own. Right now we're working on getting you some art work that features the BARD mobile app, that you may use in your own materials. Apple guidelines prohibit us from distributing the badge as a separate file that you can use in your own material. We cannot tell you what to do with the badge that is out there – I simply cannot distribute the badge, as a representative of the Library of Congress that has the agreement with the Apple store. As soon as the Office of the Library of Congress General Counsel approves the art work that we have put together to send to the library, we will send it to you. At this time it is in their office for review. Thank you.

Comment: **(Michael Katzmann – NLS)**

I might mention that the badge is the work of the United States government and therefore does not have a copyright on it. Hint, hint, nod, nod. Say no more…

Comment: **(Steve Prine - NLS)**

Well at this point I think we are ready for questions…

Question: **(Mike Marlin – CA9)**

What exactly is the download limit for BARD mobile?   Is it a daily, weekly, monthly? And what is it please?

Answer: **(Library Staff – NLS)**

At this point, it's 100 books in 30 days, and it rolls.

Comment: **(Michael Martys – NLS)**

If you look up a patron in the BARD administrative tool – there's a tool there to let you see their AO activity – at the top of that screen it gives you the status report on that individuals quota. One clarification – that's 100 unique things per 30 day period – 5 of the same downloads doesn't count as 5.

Question: **(Danielle Miller – WA)**

I've got two app-related questions: The first is, you can open or download an audio file of another type and get a little icon that says: "Do you want to open in BARD?" …and it opens BARD but it's not there.   You can use DropBox and open it that way and get the file in the BARD app – but then it won't play. It's like it's looking for the key – and having an "end of book" kind of response. So, I'm wondering about that. And the second one: is there any thought about getting the BARD app in the Amazon store, for people who use the Kindle? Thank you.

Comment: **(Michael Katzmann – NLS)**

Can you repeat that please…the first question – I wasn't quite sure…

Answer: **(Judy Dixon – NLS)**

Well, it has to do with how it very often happens with Apple apps that if you open something that other apps manage – whether it's a zip file or anything – it often happens that it will give you a *long* list of apps: "Do you want to open this in this other app?" A lot of those apps don't play that file type. I mean, we can look at telling it not to respond to requests to play this file, but it does respond to requests for BRF files – because when you have a BRF file in DropBox and you want to export it, BARD mobile is one of the apps that come up on the list, and yes you can bring a BRF file in. So, it's a standard Apple way of dealing with file types.

Comment: **(Karen Keninger – NLS)**

I think that the fundamental issue here is: will BARD play things that are not NLS books? And the answer is no.

Question: (Danielle Miller - WA)

Is there an intent to allow that? For example, our local Council of the Blind would be interested in having their people be able to play their newsletter, or files that you get elsewhere – I think it would be a really nice feature if that's something possible in the future.

Answer: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

Well it should play an unencrypted book as long as its formatted to our standard.

Question: (Danielle Miller - WA)

So if we try something without a key does it have to be in 3GP or would it play an MP3?

Answer: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

It will play MP3s as well. A DTB in MP3 or 3GP or if it's a locally produced book that's encrypted in the network key - actually the network key won't work unless we have the AO. So, we have talked and we'll probably set up a regime where you can send us the AO file from the book and BARD will serve it to the patrons for locally produced material.

Question: (Danielle Miller - WA)

Okay great! Well then we'll have our books on BARD soon anyway right?

Answer: (Michael Martys - NLS)

We do believe that most of those local books will be on BARD.

Question: (John Mugford - NM)

Hello – my question related to a comment that Richard Smith made earlier today about the number of unrated books on the current picks list. Many of them were from Brilliance Audio – which heretofore had been rated – so I'm wondering why – in the case of Brilliance Audio why those that are coming through [are] unrated?

Answer: (John Bryant - NLS)

We were doing Brilliance's books under a different type of contract. We actually weren't getting the books directly from Brilliance, we get them through an intermediary – a contract with one of our producers who would get the files and then sell them to us. Part of that contract included the responsibility to listen to the book 100% and then give us the tag lines. That's something that's going to be changing as we begin to receive books directly from the publishers – however the other warning is that often we don't know when we first announce a book, what the tag lines would be or some other changes when we put it up on copy allotment. We provide the information we have available at that time but quite often, with the Brilliance books particularly, it was originally announced and then later we would get the tag lines because we would actually get a print book and be able to put them in, and they would be added at a later date. So, I don't recommend that you use the information from the copy allotment file, as the end of the announcement.

Question: (John Mugford - NM)

So you would expect, at least in the case of the Brilliance Audio books, there may be tag lines subsequently.

Answer: (John Bryant - NLS)

That's correct. Librarians try to get the print book in order to get the tag lines, and sometimes they don't have those when we actually announce the books.

Question: (John Mugford - NM)

And may that also apply to recorded books and Hachette contributions?

Answer: (John Bryant - NLS)

Probably not.

Question: **(Barbara Penegor - KY)**

I have an email from a patron and she said: "I was told yesterday that BARD users will have access to the complete Audible library at no charge starting in October." I don't know what her source was – she just said "can you confirm this?"

Answer: **(Karen Keninger - NLS)**

We have signed an agreement with Audible to have access to their materials. We are not in a position to suddenly open up the entire library – however we'll have to be choosing from those titles for our program – because we don't have the resources to do everything in the Audible library.

Question: **(Barbara Penegor - KY)**

So that would just be added to the added to the regular NLS collection?

Answer: **(Karen Keninger - NLS)**

Yes.

Comment: **(Michael Katzmann - NLS)**

I think the agreement is – everything going forward and possibly some going back.

Comment: **(John Bryant - NLS)**

And these are the books that are actually created by Audible. They're not all of the books that they offer. They offer quite a number of books that are not produced by Audible.

Comment: **(Sharon Phillips - NY)**

I'm not sure how we got into the queue, but it's a lovely day here in upstate New York and we're happy to report that we have over 80 patrons signed up for the new BARD mobile app.

Question: **(Ron Bryant - AZ)**

We would like to know what size the majority of NLS books will fit on a cartridge? Like a 256 or a 512? Before placing an order I'd like to know which of these would be more useful and which size is NLS buying for most of their books?

Answer: **(Michael Katzmann - NLS)**

Okay, so on the 256 megabyte cartridge, 95% of our titles will fit. On a 512 cartridge, that goes up to 99 ½ percent. There are maybe 4 titles per year that are larger than 512. We are purchasing mostly 256mb cartridges with about 5 percent 512 and with a couple books we need to go to 1 gigabyte. We're doing that because of cost – 256mb cartridges are considerably cheaper than…4gb cartridges.

Question: **(John Mugford - NM)**

I guess this would be more of a John Bryant question. John, with the anticipation of an increased number of titles to select from, how will that potentially impact the copy quota numbers?

Answer: **(John Bryant - NLS)**

We don't really know that at this point. There may be a necessity to cut down on the number of copies that we ask you to order, but we don't have a number on that. So far, we're fine.

Question: **(John Mugford - NM)**

As far as the increase in the number of titles, is that likely to begin to progress…in the new fiscal year beginning October 1st?

Answer: **(John Bryant - NLS)**

I believe so. I think you will start to see higher numbers, beginning late this year. It might be November-December. I believe that's the case.

Question: (Richard Smith - MO)

We got a notice from the Multi State on approved magazines, and they want statistics from us, and we want to know why "Missouri Conservation" wasn't on that list? I thought that was approved by the Multi State as being as being quality (assured) and we still don't know where to send copies of that.

Answer: (Steve Prine - NLS)

It would be the Multi State. I know they approved the first issue. I think there was a question about having future issues produced by the same…

Comment: (Richard Smith - MO)

We have a year's worth. We don't know where to send them.

Comment: (Steve Prine - NLS)

Send them to the Multi State. Attention Chris Mundy.

Question: (Richard Smith - MO)

How does a patron sign up for Bookshare? Don't you guys approve it?

Answer: (Steve Prine - NLS)

No. Bookshare has its own website and, individuals can sign up on their website – but one of the choices (that) they have is either providing information or documentation, or there is a check off box that (says) they are an NLS patron. If the patron checks that box off – on a weekly basis Bookshare sends us a list of individuals who have applied for Bookshare and we vet them against CMLS, and tell them yes or no.

Question: (Danielle Miller - WA)

Hi. I just wanted to check back about the possibility of the app for the Amazon Store and the Kindle.

Answer: (Karen Keninger - NLS)

I don't believe that we are anticipating that at this point. It's an iOS app. It will only work on iOS devices…We are anticipating an Android app. It is under development and we will be releasing it when it's ready.

Question: (Danielle Miller - WA)

Will it be on the Amazon Store?

Answer: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

I don't think so. We could look into it. If it's compatible with Android then there's not too much work involved in doing that…and so, it's possible. Thanks for bringing that up and we'll look into it.

Question: (Michael Martys - NLS)

I have a question: How many of your patrons would actually have that platform and are using it?

Answer: (Danielle Miller - WA)

We've had three people mention it in the last couple days. I don't know beyond that.

Comment: (Library Staff - NLS)

We'll check it out.

Question: (Teresa Faust - VT)

Hello. Long-time lurker, first-time caller. I'd like to first of all applaud the app. I'd also like to applaud the webinar. I'm wondering if you all might consider moving this conference to a computer-based format because your voices come out so much clearer than they do over the phone.

Answer: (Karen Keninger - NLS)

We are moving into the twenty-first century. I'm not sure that we're 100% there yet, so, we will look at that but we don't have a setup that would make that time-effective for us at this point.

Question: (Teresa Faust - VT)

In the interim, could you invest in a better speakerphone?

Answer: (Karen Keninger - NLS)

We'll look into it.

Question: (Serena McGuire - DC)

If you move to a computer-based (system) does that mean like a webinar? I ask that because I don't know what happened with the webinar but the voice kept getting so far behind the visuals that I finally gave up on watching it. I don't know if we don't have enough bandwidth or what.

Answer: (Karen Keninger - NLS)

Well there are many complicated pieces that went into that webinar and, we don't have the technology at the highest level yet, which is one reason we're staying on the phone.

Comment: (Steve Prine - NLS)

Some things even turn out to be beyond our control. We found out after the webinar that one library couldn't participate because there was a state policy that didn't allow YouTube to be downloaded to workstations.

Question: (John Mugford - NM)

It appears as though the Windows OS on phones and tablets is beginning to increase market share - in relation to Android and iOS. Are there any considerations for an app for the Windows-based phones and tablets in the future?

Answer: (Karen Keninger - NLS)

Our current focus, John, is on the next step, which is the Android app. I don't know whether we will move to something beyond that or not. It's going to depend on where we are when we need to be looking at that.

Comment: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

One of the things we're looking at is making an app that runs on what is known as HTML-5, which is the next generation of web browsers. I think Chrome and Firefox are already HTML-5. The advantage of having what's known as a "web app" is that it will run on a lot of platforms without having to build a specific instance for each of those platforms, so that's something we had slated (for) last year, but money got tight – as you know - because of the sequestration, and it got pushed off but, we're hoping this year to start development on such an app, so the future may come down to these apps running in web browsers, in which case this sort of question becomes moot.

Question: (John Mugford - NM)

So if running on a web browser, the book would be downloaded to a computer and then playable on a computer?

Answer: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

Yet to be seen, but initially it would probably be streamed.

Question: (Kim Charlson - MA)

I think this might be for Michael Katzmann. Since we're talking about future things – Michael, you and I have had some conversations in the past about some kind of mechanism to allow network libraries to be able to create text-to-speech content – that could then be put on a cartridge, that could then be played on the NLS player. I know (that) people can use Kurzweil and they can do different things but, we have had some

conversations about web sources or ways to use this text-to-speech voice to create accessible content - in some cases when you don't want to take the time to produce something in the recording studio that's going to take a month and if you want to get it to somebody right away. I wondered if there was any more development or review of that or, any ways that we can do some pilot testing – that kind of capability for documents and other types of materials.

Answer: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

Okay, well funny you should mention that. We recently – within the month – signed a contract to obtain a…text –to-speech engine and we're in the process of getting deliverables of that and getting it installed on service here. Our first effort would be experimental – to produce materials probably…things that change frequently that would benefit from being converted rapidly to an audio format. For example, tax information, medicare information, veterans benefits – that sort of thing. Certainly we'll work with you to make that accessible so you could upload materials and benefit from that conversion.

Comment: (Kim Charlson - MA)

Great. I think it's a two-way thing. I'm hopeful that it will be less expensive for producing the short-lived material that people want immediately but is not going to have that much of a shelf-life… Also it will be more rapid and more responsive for patrons and it will get them used to listening to a high-quality text-to-speech voice. There are many out there that are perfectly acceptable to listen to. Do I want to read my best-selling novel that way? Not quite yet, but a government report or some hot topic that people are wanting to read and, two months from now it's not going to be of interest – is exactly what this can be productive and useful for, so thank you!

Comment: (Richard Smith - MO)

Wolfner Recommended Reading List – wouldn't that be a candidate for a high fallutin' text-to-speech test? Or do you have to be from the northeast – a major Boston city and the president of a major organization? (laughter).

Comment: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

You'll have to write your request on the back of a twenty-dollar note.

Comment: (Steve Prine - NLS)

Well if there are no questions, then we will wrap up this Open Forum call. We thank everyone for participating and hope you will join us again next month. Thank you very much.

No more questions or comments.