

Comment: (Steve Prine - NLS)

Good afternoon and welcome to the conference call... We're still seeing ramifications from (the shutdown) and probably will for awhile. Before we go any further, We'll go around the room and I'll let all the staff introduce themselves...

Comment: (Library Staff - NLS)

Judy Dixon; Paula Bahmani; Margie Goergen-Rood; Mary Dell Jenkins; MaryBeth Wise; Pamela Davenport; Neal Bernstein; John Bryant; Isabella Marqués de Castilla; Vickie Collins; John Brown; Mike Martys; Hugh Boitano; Jane Caulton.

Comment: (Steve Prine - NLS)

We have a contract meeting also going on, so people will be sort of wandering in and out. I've got a few announcements to make before we start. Karen Keninger, our director, is spending time with your bosses. She's in Savannah at the COSLA meeting. I'm sure there will be a good exchange of information and I'm sure she'll bring back some good ideas and suggestions and things that we can look at. I'm pleased to report that the BARD statistics are out. If you haven't got (them) please call Mike Martys.

Comment: (Mike Martys - NLS)

And you should have gotten the email. Hopefully that is working again. The system is sending two emails – one with and (one) without the attachment, and that way, if your spam filters are blocking the attachment, hopefully the one without the attachment will get through.

Comment: (Steve Prine - NLS)

A reminder that we did a survey a while back, asking about patron's problems with TBT. It was Operations Alert 1365. Friday, November 1st is the deadline. If you haven't responded, please do. If you don't have any comments you might want to respond anyway to let us know that. One of the things we're trying to figure out is the level of patron problems with Talking Book Topics. If you don't respond at all, we're not sure if your patrons are having a problem or if you're just not telling it.

The recall numbers – the consultants sent out them out earlier in the month, just after we were back from the shutdown. Multi State does have boxes – enough to give you approximately a third of what you'll need for FY14 recall. More boxes will be on order and so they will become available and we'll alert the Network when that happens. For '14 you'll have until September 2014 to get these recall books in, but we encourage you not to wait until September – it makes us nervous!

Readership and Circulation statistics: ...You have a few more weeks (Nov. 18) to get your Readership and Circulation statistics for FY13 in, if you haven't already. And with that I think we'll open it up for questions.

Question: (Kim Charlson - MA)

Good afternoon everyone. Steve or whoever is in charge of the R4R program – I'm wondering if you could give a little explanation of the formula that is used to calculate the number of returns that regionals and sub-regionals are needing to send back. The reason I ask is, the number for Perkins amounts to 14 percent of our holdings, and it's 28,000 containers. I kind of wanted to understand where the numbers came from, if you could tell me.

Answer: (John Bryant - NLS)

Hello Kim. I did see your email question about this and you're absolutely correct, it is about 14%. The formula we're using is that we've waited four years and went back four years – 2009 – and took half of the number that we asked for in that year. Since that was the startup year, (it) was a very low number. As we moved to 2014

that moved to 2010 and so the number jumped. Actually that number - by this calculation - is going to stay at about the number that it was this year, from now on. So, it is a significant return, and we do understand that. We wanted to see what that would do to the circulation but, you can expect that we would be asking for about that many back every year from now on.

Comment: (Kim Charlson - MA)

Okay. It's 676 boxes for us. We won't ask for all of them at one time, I can promise you that. So, it's a lot, and it does have a pretty significant impact – with those kinds of numbers – on staffing issues and things, so, I just wanted to express that.

Question: (Barbara Penegor - KY)

Good afternoon. I have a couple questions. One is, what is the status of the braille replacement volume contractor? I know that when we try to order replacement braille volumes, we get a message saying there's no vendor currently to do that.

Answer: (John Bryant - NLS)

Okay, that's actually an automation problem. We will fix that right away. The system automatically – at a certain date – starts to put that message up. I didn't realize it was going up. We will correct that.

Question: (Barbara Penegor - KY)

My next question: Is there any update on the status of the new LCM replacement?

Answer: (John Brown - NLS)

Development is underway. We're about 25% through the development cycle. So far, things look good. We're using it down in the studio – at least the bits of it that are ready right now down in the NLS studio. The schedule is on track to be completed – at least for us to get an alpha version – sometime in January.

Question: (Mike Levy - NY)

I had a question about deleting the mobile device records. I had a patron who had several, and I wasn't sure how to figure out which ones to delete, because, she had her serial number for what I think was an iPhone...

Question: (Mike Martys - NLS)

I guess the first thing to ask is, what was your motivation for needing to delete a record?

Answer: (Mike Levy - NY)

She had given it away to someone, so she thought that we (should) delete it.

Comment: (Mike Martys - NLS)

And that's a reasonable reason to do so. In the mobile device tool, the device serial numbers are pretty arcane.

Comment: (Library Staff - NLS)

The serial numbers themselves are actually not visible. The identifiers you see there are generated by the program. There's no way to immediately tie that to a device itself.

Comment: (Mike Martys - NLS)

The mobile app actually doesn't reveal that identifier in any way on the app itself. So what you basically have to do is, based on the type of device, whether it's an iPad or an iPhone or whatever you can pretty much reduce the number of identifiers based on that.

Comment: (Mike Levy - NY)

Which I did. She has four devices and there were two different...(unintelligible)...

Comment: (Library Staff - NLS)

It's also useful to use the time and date at which the thing was registered. You'll see the time and date stamp on the record. That may be a problem when people are starting up on their multiple iPads at the same time, but in the future you'll be able to tell when the device was registered. In any case, the best thing for you to do is to probably delete them both and then the device she retains, have her initialize it. ...that's the way to go.

Comment: (Mike Martys - NLS)

There'll be an improvement in this process...the next release we're going to clean up some of these loose ends that need to be adjusted a little bit. So there'll be a better procedure for the next release.

Question: (Ruth Hemphill - TN)

I just have a follow up to Kim's question about the formula for returns. If I understood correctly, did you say that you requested half of the cartridges that were sent in the second year to be returned this year – for the next year, I mean?

Answer: (Library Staff - NLS)

Yes, but it does not have to be those specific cartridges...

Question: (Ruth Hemphill - TN)

So in 2015, you will want us to return half of the cartridges we received in 2012?

Answer: (Library Staff - NLS)

Correct.

Question: (James Gleason - MA)

Good afternoon everybody. What we're wanting to know is due to the shutdown, is November-December Talking Book Topics scheduled to go out on time...?

Answer: (Library Staff - NLS)

Actually a number of them have already been distributed, but some have been delayed because of the shutdown. The shutdown caused a huge number of magazines to be loaded up when we came back, and so as the system is catching up with those, some of the TBTs have not gone out yet but a number of them have been distributed. I think the last I checked, there were about 800 copies not yet distributed.

Question: (Andrew Egan - RI)

Hello to everybody. I hope you're enjoying the afternoon. My question is a little bit broader in perspective: How is BARD Mobile going nationally? What's your feeling? What are you hearing? Anyone want to respond to that?

Answer: (Mike Martys - NLS)

From a server standpoint, I think it's going fairly well. When you look on the BARD admin page you see the current tally of how many people are using the BARD Mobile app – and we're way over 5,000 now. The amount of support we've had to do has been less than we actually anticipated. The app itself doesn't have too many technical problems. A lot of them had to do with getting the accounts working. We have a couple of outstanding issues with people who are using BARD Mobile from extreme distances like New Zealand, and we're working on those. I would say that the amount of issues has been far less than we originally thought we might receive.

Comment: (Library Staff - NLS)

And from a user's point of view, the users absolutely love it. I was one of the people who didn't think we'd have a lot of issues. I think that the way apps work is pretty consistent so if anybody had experience with an iDevice they would probably be able to use BARD Mobile, and that turned out to be true. It works the way it's supposed to, and it's doing very well – so people really like it and we've done quite a number of podcasts and interviews and so forth and the response has just been enormously positive.

Comment: (Library Staff - NLS)

Just to give you some updated numbers: We're actually closer to 6,000 than 5,000 now, in terms of number of users, and they've registered over 7,700 devices. There was one other milestone we reached in the last week or two – since the shutdown anyway -which is not related to BARD Mobile but we did pass the 50,000 book number on BARD just in the last couple weeks, and that's audio and braille combined.

Comment: (Jane Caulton - NLS)

(Due to the recent shutdown) the Digital Talking Books Plus will be delayed. You can expect that at the end of November. That is about all I can tell you right now.

Question: (Ivan Johnson – CA8)

I have a technical question: (On) a lot of our digital players the batteries are aging and of course we've been given procedures for dealing with that. However, a lot of times the machines lie to us, so the question is, what is the status on the iTech IQ adapters to analyze the batteries?

Answer: (John Brown - NLS)

The status is: we're very close to having a working solution. We're testing the last production-control versions that they sent to us. iTech themselves have to go out and make some circuit boards to actually build the things. They hope to have those delivered next week, and they'll be quality-assuring up there at their facility – and we hope to get them delivered here sometime early next month. We still anticipate by the end of the calendar year that those adapters will be available.

Question: (Unknown Caller)

Hi. I'm out of the office today so I might not have the exact information in front of me, but I thought (that in) the Magazine on Cartridge program information, that you could basically trigger a publication to start. The reason I ask is that a lot of people are waiting for their Talking Book Topics on audio and looking at some of the records (I apologize I don't have a specific person to give you as an example) but, they would be waiting another month or so for their next cartridge to come and I thought there was a way in the program to trigger a publication to be sent or to change their trigger publication in some way. Am I not understanding that process? Or is that feature not yet available?

Answer: (Mike Martys - NLS)

The determination of what the trigger publication is actually made by the magazine system itself. You really can't influence that at all. Once it determines what the trigger publication is – and that's based on a calculation on the average delivery date of all the subscribed publications – the system is going to make its determination to ship the cartridge based on the trigger. The thing that will cause the cartridge to be shipped is that the trigger has got to come in or be a certain number of days late. And you are correct – there are people scheduled to get TBTs and the TBT is not their trigger, it's another monthly magazine. The system is waiting for that other monthly magazine to come in before it forces the cartridge to go out. What the system is trying to do is prevent or minimize the amount of cartridges that are sent to a patron because each cartridge is six bucks. So basically it doesn't want to do a "double-send." You know, send TBT out today and another cartridge next week. It wants to consolidate things onto as few cartridges as possible. There is not a way at the present time for you to alter the trigger. It's determined by the system, based on a computer algorithm.

Comment: (Unknown Caller)

We'll put that in our survey – but that's a lot of our calls because people are expecting TBT to come, and we look at their record and based on the next cycle, it would be another month before they would get that.

Comment: (Mike Martys - NLS)

I've seen some records where it's still several weeks – it's still waiting for a publication to come in, and almost all of these people have exclusively monthly subscriptions. When you're on a monthly subscription cycle, it's roughly plus or minus two weeks, really.

Comment: (Library Staff - NLS)

Please also be certain that the person is not delinquent. We've seen a large number of delinquents who would have received TBT were they still active.

Comment: (Ruth Hemphill - TN)

I just wanted to echo the comment that we haven't had to do as much support as we had expected, like Neal said, with the mobile app. But like Judy said, I think it's because most people using it are people who are very familiar with using apps and using the iPhone and using the voiceover and everything. I found it pretty easy, too...It's a great app!

Question: (Linda Vincent - WI)

Hi. I would like to echo that we think the BARD app is wonderful. I did email some of our patrons that (were) signed up for BARD in the first week, and I did get some nice responses. I was wondering, should I send those to Jane or someone else? And then one person gave a very thoughtful answer saying they loved it but they had a few suggestions for improvements – and I was just wondering who I should send those comments to.

Answer: (Library Staff - NLS)

Send them through your consultant. We've got a list as long as your arm of good ideas for future versions but we're always looking for new ones.

Question: (Linda Vincent - WI)

The other thing I wondered is, what is the trigger for sending out the printed form that goes with the audio Talking Book Topics? We're not always sure when the people will get those, and we get a lot of calls saying "I've got my DB of Talking Book Topics but I haven't gotten my order form or vice versa.

Answer: (Library Staff - NLS)

I know that they try to coordinate (so) that they will arrive at the same time, but it's very difficult to do, especially with the triggers that Michael just described – and, furloughs. When the government shuts down that sort of throws a wrinkle (into) when the audio version will go out.

Comment: (Steve Prine - NLS)

The form should be coming when (TBT) shipped. Because there's so much back-and-forth with MOC, there is no real way to say, "we're going to ship it if it's this week but we won't ship it if it's next week." So, as long as they're on CMLS as getting TBT in an audio (format), they will get the order form.

Question: (Linda Vincent - WI)

Steve, I guess my question was: are they all sent out at the same time, or are they sent out depending on when it was triggered for that patron?

Answer: (Paula Bahmani - NLS)

This is Paula. The order forms are all shipped at the same time.

Question: (Marilyn Stevenson - NH)

Hi, I have a different question: What are different libraries doing about the repair of the digital players? We have a very small repair staff and they're still doing an excellent job at repairing the cassette players. We've had very little instruction about how to repair the digital players. I know I talked to one library that now has actually a paid staff member who does it. Someone else I talked to, their repair group have embraced this and are repairing the digital players but, what is everyone else doing? Is everybody trying to do something a little different? Right now, it's pretty much me trying to get the players going again. I'm wondering what others are doing and if anyone has any suggestions other than trying to hire a staff member. What can we do about getting training or something? I am starting to fill up a closet with digital players that are just not working...

Answer: (John Brown - NLS)

Just like you describe, different libraries are doing different things. Some of their volunteer groups embraced digital repair and took advantage of the materials we put out early on. We sent out evaluation kits which were some prototype machines to let people get familiar with (DTBMs) and shared them around. Other groups have no interest at all in doing digital repairs and plan on disbanding once cassette machines dry up. It's really trying to find a solution that works best for your situation. We do have a couple of national groups that are sort of larger – member-wise – and can handle extra repairs from outside of their region. If you've got a problem with the machines that are piling up, we can put you in contact with one of these groups that can handle some extra work on their end. We can make that available to you. As far as training goes, we are working on getting a training video made that will show some (of the) basic repair that needs to be done. That's being edited right now. It's not available yet. We'll put out an M&A when it's ready. We've also had some limited success doing Skype sessions with our Equipment Repair Officer Kevin Watson and volunteer groups across the country. If you've got a group of people and a decent internet connection, we can certainly try to set something like that up for you as well. If you want to shoot me an email, my address is jobr@loc.gov. I'll get you in contact with Kevin and we can get you all the tools and equipment that you need to do some repairs, and if you need an extra group to send the machines to, we can coordinate that for you as well.

Question: (Barbara Penegor - KY)

I have a question about delinquent magazines. We're finding that the same people keep getting delinquent over and over again, just because they're a little bit slow in returning their magazines. I was wondering if you'd consider changing the way the magazines are resumed, so instead of sending all the back issues they missed, just start them with the next (current) issue. I think that's just causing them to get delinquent again when they have a cartridge with all of those back issues.

Answer: (Mike Martys - NLS)

We did make a change, Barbara, and it's not quite what you request. The system now truncates the back issues at one back issue. So you get the current issue plus one back issue and actually nothing beyond that. If you look at the status screen on BARD, in the MOC tools, it may show you that six issues of a magazine are scheduled to go out, but right at the point that the system makes the cartridge, it will truncate the list back down to two – and the actual "cartridge-delivered" list will reflect what's on there. The decision about what to truncate is not made until right at the moment of delivery...

Question: (Ruth Hemphill - TN)

When Linda asked about the order forms being shipped with or without TBT, someone said all order forms are shipped out at the same time. Does that mean that if your TBT isn't a trigger, your order forms will be shipped a little later? Does that explain why some people get the order form two weeks before they get the cartridge?

Answer: (Paula Bahmani - NLS)

Yes, that's exactly why...

Question: (Andrew Egan - RI)

I'm just wondering about the MOC delinquent list. If someone is delinquent, does that stop their TBT cartridge from going?

Answer: (Mike Martys - NLS)

Yes, it does, Andrew. That is correct. As John mentioned, what we've noticed is there are about 25% of people who are not going to get their TBT because they are delinquent.

Comment: (Steve Prine - NLS)

...and that is one of the reasons for the survey about Talking Book Topics. To try to gather more than just anecdotal information about what is happening and what readers are experiencing. That will help us in terms of looking at this again and making some other decisions to see what we can do to deal with TBT specifically.

Comment: (Library Staff - NLS)

It should be noted that a high percentage of delinquents are people who only get TBT.

Question: (Mike Marlin – CA9)

I have a quick question concerning BARD Mobile. Several weeks ago, during the shutdown I was giving a presentation and the app was not behaving very nicely... My question is: at that time there were intermittent problems with the wishlist and the download capacity, even though the app itself came up. Since BARD Mobile began, very intermittently we hear from patrons that with downloaded books they get the “cannot play” message and they go back to it a few hours or a few days later and everything is working fine. Is there a very brief explanation for all that? Something Mr. Martys could address?

Answer: (Mike Martys - NLS)

Basically, the difference between the regular DTBM player and BARD Mobile, is that in the DTBM player, once it has the book, it can play it. With BARD Mobile, it not only needs the book or the magazine, it needs something called an “AO” or Authorization Object, which is the key to unlock the book or the magazine. Usually, the failures that you’re reporting have to do with problems with the system getting an AO in order to play the book or the magazine. We have had a couple of issues with that. During the shutdown, when BARD was running, there was no staff taking care of BARD. There were some moments when BARD wasn’t running well and it took some time to get it going again. That was primarily due to the fact that...there was nobody here to monitor it. After the fact, we have had a few incidents where – there’s an anti-fraud system that’s part of the AO download process. Because the key to unlock a book has to be momentarily inside the phone in order to play the book, and the key is transported to the phone via this AO object. BARD Mobile has a limit as to how many AO objects you can get in a 30-day period, because it would consider anything above that to be a possible indication of fraud. That’s why when you look on the BARD screen and the AO tools it will tell you how many AOs have been downloaded in the last 30 days, because that is actually the anti-fraud thing.

We have had a very few short issues where the anti-fraud system actually triggered for some of the patrons and began denying them AOs. The problem is, is that you as a BARD Mobile user, don’t get an indication as to why they’re not able to play a book. One of the things that we hope to change in an upcoming version of BARD Mobile, is that if you’re not able to play a book because you were denied an AO, then the error message would indicate to you the various nuances of why you don’t have an AO... When the BARD Mobile app says “I can’t play a book” there can be a large variety of reasons, but unfortunately the app doesn’t help you figure out which one it is... If the limit has not been reached, you should treat that as a bug and it should be reported to the NLS download people. If it gets very serious, they call me and look at the machine.

Question: (Richard Smith - MO)

The BARD app will play local books with LCM, right?

Answer: (Library Staff - NLS)

No, and it goes back to that AO problem. If you have encrypted the book – unless that book’s AO is hosted by BARD, there’s no way for the app to get the AO for that particular book. Once that book is up on BARD, it will certainly play.

Comment: (Mike Martys - NLS)

You can side-load the book, but BARD has no way to deliver a working AO because it doesn’t know about the book.

Question: (James Gleason - MA)

This is a BARD – from tech support – question. The problem with the BARD app not working for patrons sort of began about 4pm on a Friday... My question to whomever in the room is: even that it’s a Friday afternoon, what’s the best way to alert people – who is the best person to alert?

Answer: (Mike Martys - NLS)

The first answer is: what you're normally doing is probably correct. The NLS download folks actually do check the email during the weekend. They act as a triage and when they think there's a significant thing going on with BARD, they call us. The one thing about the Library of Congress that is different than any other place is that the LoC is 24/7-365 but, we actually aren't. Actually only business hours – really. Most of the staff go home and the machines just sit there and run. So I think there's an expectation from patrons that this is a 24 hour service but, it's not properly built that way. We should probably be very careful about giving the patrons the expectation that it's a 24hr-365-day service because it's not. That being said, we do try to keep everything running, and there are those of us who have the ability to work on the systems from home. If a serious problem is brought to our attention, we almost always deal with it right away...

Comment: (S. Miles Lewis - TX)

I just wanted to say (that) several NLS staff have been made aware that a number of states' digitally-produced books are not, in fact, properly encrypted and are being distributed via the (KLAS SHELF) system.

Comment: (Library Staff - NLS)

Phillip Carbo is actively involved in working on that.

Question: (Susan Roberts - FL)

Just a point of clarification. We have not received BARD statistics. I did see that they were uploaded today and I was able to pull them down for our folks. We have not gotten any email on the BARD statistics at FL1A.

Answer: (Mike Martys - NLS)

My primary thing here is that some of the emails are being blocked, so my most recent change was to send a double email, one with an attachment and one without. I'll contact you directly and use you as a debugger to try and figure out what's happening... I'm just going to assume that we have a similar failure rate as last month. I'll contact a few of you to try to do some testing and try to get to the bottom of this. I don't know what has happened that is causing them to be blocked. I originally thought it was the size of the attachments.

Comment: (Steve Prine - NLS)

That really brings us to the end of the hour if there are no more questions. I do have a couple of logistical notes: In November, the last Wednesday of the month is the day before Thanksgiving and there will be an Open Forum call, but in December, since it falls on Christmas, no one will be here. I'll be at home, looking at my new iPad with the red cover. At any rate, we look forward to talking with everyone again next month on the 27th. Have a good month!

No more questions or comments.