

NLS Telephone Forum – 9-24-2014
(paraphrased)

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

Good afternoon. (Here we are) in Washington, D.C. – a nice, crisp autumn day again. A little overcast but we're having fun. We've got a full room today and what I'm going to do is go around the table and everyone will introduce themselves and we'll have a few minutes to tell you about some program updates and some future programs, and then we'll open it up for questions. To my right is...

Comment: (Library Staff - NLS)

Judy Dixon; Paula Bahmani; Pamela Davenport; Robert Axtell; (unintelligible); MaryBeth Wise; Neil Bernstein; Michael Martys; Meredith Beckhardt; Vickie Collins; Steve Prine; Joy Bolluyt...

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

Stop right there, Joy. Introduce yourself.

Comment: (Joy Bolluyt - NLS)

I'm the new head of the Production Control section. I'm very happy to be attending my first monthly library call.

Comment: (Library Staff - NLS)

...and, Joel Phillips; Hugh Boitano; Jane Caulton.

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

...and I think he introduced me – Richard Smith, and we wanted to highlight a few things that are coming up. We had the chairs' program last week. ...We had our management meeting and everyone told us all of the great things they're doing. – NLS is having their Orientation in October and basically the Orientation is full with 17 participants coming up from around the country and they're telling me that might be a record crowd. I just thought I'd mention that because, next year you may want to get your reservation in for Orientation and...MaryBeth Wise will be in charge of that this time, right? The National Audio Equipment Advisory Committee met this month, and they gave us...recommendations that NLS is now considering. They were here for three days and they were recommended to change their name to the Reading Technology Advisory Group – and expand their scope from just audio to technology in general. What's that acronym for that?

Comment: (Library Staff - NLS)

RTAG.

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

They gave us numerous comments and recommendations that we're all looking at. One of the questions was (about) blank cartridges last week... Karen did mention we'll be getting blank cartridges... That is in the management plan for next year. ...hopefully we'll put in an order for cartridges to be distributed to regional libraries and, we're not sure of the numbers but we think it's going to exceed the Midlands recommendation of 2012 by three percent. In addition, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP)...Vickie, can you give us an update on that?

Comment: (Vickie Collins - NLS)

Well, the NLS has partnered with the Bureau of Engraving and Printing – BEP – in support of its U.S. currency reader program and, as you know from Operations Alert 14-65, each of the libraries has received two demo Currency Readers – iBill readers – and also of course, has received instruction on how to add patrons through CMLS, so that when the distribution begins, those will go out to readers – and, those will be eligible readers that are in your program. Also in Operations Alert 14-66, information is provided so that you can promote this in your newsletters and on your website. So if you look at Operations Alert 14-66 you can get some tips on what to say to your readership.

One of the other things we wanted to be sure that the Network knows is that the Network Library Database is being revised and updated – and the first phase of the upgrade will be for regional libraries and sub-regional libraries to add readership and circulation statistics. Later phases will be for the annual survey including staff, budget and collection information – and Network libraries will need individual email addresses and passwords to access the new Network Library Database.

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

The only other one I had from last week's comments was, someone mentioned commercial books. We may talk about that but basically I think that Karen mentioned at a staff meeting yesterday that we had 2700 books produced by NLS this fiscal year but it did not include all of September, and 774 were commercial books, and that's 50% more than last year. Commercial books are coming on strong. ... Anyone remember how many – we're closing in on 100 locally-produced (commercial books)... Any other comments? If not, we'll open it up for questions.

Question: (Lauren Abner - KY)

Hi there. I just had a question about the API's for devices like the VictorStream that, I think I've asked about before and evidently were discussed at the last NLS conference. I'm just wondering if there's an update. Are these out? Exactly which devices are available? I'm getting ready to talk to a tech symposium on Friday and I'd love to have some specific information if you've got it.

Answer: (Neil Bernstein - NLS)

Yes. Hi this is Neil Bernstein and yes, the API has been available for a couple months now in a limited form. The only company that's making use of it with a marketed product is Humanware. Either yesterday or the day before (they) released the update to their Victor Reader Stream software that allows it to directly access BARD. Nobody else has a product to market yet but there are some others on their way.

Question: (Lauren Abner - KY)

Would you have the names of any companies that are working on this?

Answer: (Neil Bernstein - NLS)

I do, but I don't know that I have permission from those companies to...

Question: (Lauren Abner - KY)

Can you kind of briefly describe how that API works, because I've never really heard a description of it and I have really vague ideas. If you could flesh that out for me, that would be awesome.

Answer: (Neil Bernstein - NLS)

It's a language that any software client – whether it's running on a computer or in a device, can use to talk to BARD.

Answer: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

Think about the functionality of the iPhone app, and the things that the iPhone app has to do, like log in, browse the catalog, look at the wish list, download books. The API is the language that the developer uses to implement all those functions.

Answer: (Neil Bernstein - NLS)

It's meant only for software to talk to software.

Question: (Lauren Abner - KY)

Okay. Are they actually navigating from their device? Or is it just from their computer or the download is going directly to their device rather than having to hook up the device to their computer?

Answer: (Neil Bernstein - NLS)

No the stream itself is talking directly to the BARD server.

Question: (John Mugford - NM)

Hi all. Any progress update on RC XESS? By the way, is XESS an acronym?

Answer: (Library Staff - NLS)

Yes...for excess (laughter).

Answer: (Steve Prine - NLS)

The cards are on order. I don't have a delivery date yet. We're hoping as soon as possible – but as soon as we get them, we'll turn them around and get them out to the libraries.

Question: (John Mugford - NM)

Okay, but right now it's only the group that was put on hold through, what, the month of February?

Answer: (Steve Prine - NLS)

Well, it's for everything that wasn't shipped, that either had been approved to be shipped – that were still in libraries – that were not shipped by the end of March – or anything that has gone through XESS from March forward. Really everything that libraries have on hand, either we have the disposal list from the XESS cycle, so we know the quantity, or I did a survey and asked libraries to tell me if they had RCs that have been approved for disposal – that they hadn't gotten rid of. And so, we've added those to the list, so when we start sending out cards, they will go to every library that has reported that they have material or we know that they have RCs to be disposed of.

Question: (John Mugford - NM)

Okay, so in the case of New Mexico, we submitted our data before the end of March (and) Data Management approved it, so we'll be in that group receiving cards?

Answer: (Steve Prine - NLS)

Yes, that's correct.

Question: (Linda Montgomery - AZ)

Good morning – or good afternoon... My question is – is there any projection on when blue boxes will be available again from Multi State?

Comment: (Steve Prine - NLS)

That's certainly a good question.

Answer: (Joel Phillips - NLS)

They should have boxes, and if they don't, we can certainly make boxes available to them. I will check with Multi State center for you and that should be no problem.

Question: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

Did they give you a reason why they couldn't fulfill your order? Did they say they were out?

Answer: (Linda Montgomery - AZ)

Staff that handle that are telling me they haven't been able to get them, so I'm asking the question if they in fact are there and something else has gone wrong with our request.

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

We'll look into it Linda.

Question: (Eileen Morange - MA)

Hello everyone... I want to know how we can examine the real-time data in CMLS once you go to PIMMS – especially with verifying for BARD?

Answer: (Steve Prine - NLS)

Well, once you're on PIMMS, when you look at your system, the information in your circulation system will be the information that's in PIMMS. There will be no need to try to verify the information in a separate system ...once they convert to PIMMS.

Comment: (Library Staff - NLS)

There will be a transitional time of course, but for those systems that have transitioned already, they will be able to do that in real-time... so, Web READS which is the replacement for READS – all the READS libraries will be able to do that effectively in real-time.

Question: (Richard Smith - NLS)

Does that answer your question?

Answer: (Eileen Morange - MA)

Well I'm just wondering in the time between when CMLS closes this week and when KLAS actually takes effect with the new system?

Answer: (Steve Prine - NLS)

Between that time, all libraries will continue to submit CMLS transactions in batch format on a weekly basis the way they have, and if it goes beyond October for your library, you would submit the BPHICS reports on a monthly basis the way that they were in the past. That process is still in place, but will be used by fewer and fewer libraries – as (they) move from the old way to PIMMS.

Question: (Eileen Morange - MA)

There's no way to check if something was cancelled and then reinstated?

Answer: (Steve Prine - NLS)

Right now you can look in Webnet... because Webnet will still be up and running.

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

What are the acronyms? The Patron Information Machine Management System? PIMMS. Comprehensive Mailing List System. CMLS... that PIMMS is going to replace. I don't even know the BPHICS acronym.

Comment: (Library Staff - NLS)

BPH Inventory Control System.

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

Inventory for the machines. CMLS and BPHICS will be transferring over to PIMMS. Patron Information and Machine Management System.

Question: (Letitia Gittens - VI)

Has anyone tried to use the iBill (currency reader)?

Answer: (Library Staff - NLS)

I have.

Question: (Steve Prine - NLS)

Are you having problems?

Answer: (Letitia Gittens - VI)

Yes. It took me days to get it to talk to me. I have a vision expo coming up and (I am) going to use it as a demonstration model and I for the life of me couldn't get it going. I finally got it to talk. I don't know how I did. I just wondered if anyone else had issues with it – the iBill.

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

You know, there's an iBill Talking Banknote Identifier video.

Comment: (Letitia Gittens - VI)

I've watched it.

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

...that describes how to use the iBill machine. That's on the BEP – what's that acronym?

Comment: (Library Staff - NLS)

Bureau of Engraving and Printing - website

Comment: (Letitia Gittens - VI)

This is my problem: If it doesn't work like it should, you know who they're going to blame – not the Treasury Department – it's going to be us (laughter). So I'm just asking if anyone else has played with it and do they find it user friendly?

Question: (John Mugford - NM)

I just wanted to follow up on some of your earlier numbers there, Richard. It sounds like a substantial increase in the number of titles so, are we to understand that there will be no impact on the copy allotment max?

Answer: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

You'll still be able to order – your quotas are the same for copy allotment. There will be more titles available obviously in copy allotment. We will be moving to a two-weekly cycle as we described in the call we had a couple of months ago.

Question: (John Mugford - NM)

Okay. So, we should be checking on the allotments every two weeks?

Answer: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

Not at the moment. Our computer system here has to be modified to accommodate that, but that's what we're going to do in the not-too-distant future.

Question: (John Mugford - NM)

Richard had mentioned that the free cartridges – let's call them the "peach" cartridges – will be a percentage based on allotments. Let's say the percentage is three, but I'm not quite sure what the basis is. Could you clarify that?

Answer: (Richard Smith - NLS)

That was a Midlands suggestion two years ago in 2012 but, we don't have percentages John.

Question: (John Mugford - NM)

I understand that but let's say it's 1 percent. What is the basis upon which that percentage will be calculated? Is it the number of copies ordered by a regional, or is it the theoretical maximum number of copies? I don't quite follow the logic there.

Answer: (Steve Prine - NLS)

The original Midlands recommendation – this was when there were still quotas on copy allotment – recommended that three percent of an individual library's quota be allotted to the library in blank cartridges. So we're using that as sort of a baseline to look at. What may change is the cost of the memory at the time that we purchase the cartridges, so, that will impact how many we get. When we take that back, we will compare that to those percentages for the libraries and make sure there's an equitable distribution of cartridges to each library – if they want them – based on the quota that they had back in '11 and '12. The number may be even a little higher than that 3% as Richard was saying. We just don't know the final numbers until we know the actual number of cartridges.

Question: (John Mugford - NM)

Will all the cartridges have the same memory capacity?

Answer: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

Yes. 4 gigabytes.

Question: (John Mugford - NM)

So is the assumption that libraries are going to put multiple titles onto the cartridges?

Answer: (Steve Prine - NLS)

It's certainly an option.

Answer: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

If you think the patron is comfortable with the Bookshelf feature, then, by all means.

Question: (John Mugford - NM)

One other quick question – the Android app. Any progress update on that?

Answer: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

John is not here but, I saw a demonstration this morning of the progress and it's looking very good. We're still looking at an end-of-the-year release.

Question: (Mike Marlin – CA9)

So, I wanted to follow up on the transition to PIMMS. Did you ever tell KLAS libraries what the expected date of transition would be? That's my first question.

Answer: (Steve Prine - NLS)

We have not said anything to KLAS libraries. We have had conversations with KLAS regarding alpha testing and transition, but at this point ... even though we're moving to PIMMS, it's still a beta test for us because there are some other issues – we need to have it up and running, we need to make sure it runs and we need to sort of sort all that out before we move it beyond WebREADS.

Question: (Mike Marlin – CA9)

What I thought I'd gleaned from the conferences back in May was that things would kind of freeze within CMLS after September 30 and we wouldn't be able to see any data we inputted, reflected there. Am I mis-remembering?

Answer: (Steve Prine - NLS)

Happily so, yes. Because many years ago when we started this process, the goal was that we would just move to PIMMS and the entire network would just roll over and transition to it – and it became more and more obvious as time went on, that that would not be feasible even for READS libraries because READS libraries per se, don't have the connectivity functionality to use it, so we have to move those libraries to WebREADS in order for them to be able to access PIMMS and, also the circulation system vendors pointed out that with the number of libraries, they have different situations and different concerns and, it was going to take some time, so part of this process as it evolved is to move to PIMMS as we're able to do it. We'll get PIMMS up and running, we'll begin to convert WebREADS libraries and we'll (start) letting the circulation systems do testing to make sure they're satisfied that the connectivity works and at that point we'll begin discussing with the network libraries of that system, when the transition will happen for each library – but we're still too early for that.

Question: (Mike Marlin – CA9)

So basically, it's still business as usual for us. Just keep doing what we're doing with our weekly updates and our currency reader codes through KLAS and all that good stuff.

Answer: (Steve Prine - NLS)

That's correct, yes.

Question: (Andrew Egan - RI)

I just had a question – getting back to the Currency Reader program. The Bureau of Engraving and Printing did a press release on July 3rd and in it they listed some resources – frequently asked questions and the U.S. Currency Reader brochure and the print guide for the iBill. You can print them out but they're really for people who have vision. I'm just wondering if there are additional things they'll do to help people who may not have that vision.

Answer: (Steve Prine - NLS)

Within the package in the iBill reader there are large print instructions, braille instructions and instructions on CD.

Question: (Andrew Egan - RI)

Okay. So every person will get that...

Answer: (Steve Prine - NLS)

Yes.

Question: (Martin Landry - MT)

This is Martin in Montana. I had a question on the LBPH discussion about the iOS 8 upgrade causing problems with BARD. Have you had any experience with that? Or, is anybody looking into that?

Answer: (Neil Bernstein - NLS)

The answers are yes and yes. We know of some things in the app – in the released version that are not working well under iOS 8. Specifically there are some problems with the web view where you cannot enter a search term. Also, when you fast-forward or rewind with voiceover off, you're getting some of the wrong announcements. The app itself still works. If you find a book you want, you can still download it. You can still read the books, but some of those things are not working correctly. In terms of an update for that, we do have it in internal beta. We are hoping to go

to external beta fairly soon with it. We're waiting for a few things from our I.T. overlords from downtown before we can work on that.

Comment: (Karen Keninger - NLS)

I think we ought to add that some of those iOS 8 problems are not ours. iOS 8 has quite a number of accessibility bugs, and we're hoping for some updates to fix those because it's causing problems with a lot more things than BARD Mobile – and, there is an 8.0.1 (which) had just come out this afternoon and been withdrawn because it broke more things than it fixed – so, we're all waiting for an update.

Comment: (Library Staff - NLS)

But, we don't know that the fixes – especially the braille fixes that we are waiting for – are in.

Comment: (Karen Keninger - NLS)

Braille and BARD Mobile is seriously broken. Braille and BARD Mobile and iOS 8. Well, braille and iOS 8 is not so broken as BARD Mobile. The way BARD Mobile implements the shortcut keys is what's broken and that's an unusual implementation so, it's not good.

Question: (Lauren Abner - KY)

Hi there. I think I missed part of the (exchange) about iOS 8 or, the iOS app. It seems like I recall from a previous NLS call that there's an updated version of the app that you guys have been working on, with new features? Is that anything in the pipeline? Is there any kind of estimated time when the new version of the iOS app might come out?

Answer: (Neil Bernstein - NLS)

Most of the problems that we're seeing in that 1.0 version are not in the updated version.

Question: (Lauren Abner - KY)

Is there a date when somebody will be releasing that?

Answer: (Neil Bernstein - NLS)

We haven't set a date. It going to depend largely on how our beta test goes but, it's looking good.

Comment: (Karen Keninger - NLS)

It's not going to be tomorrow. It's a couple of months away at least.

Question: (Mary Jane Kayes – CA9)

This is also about BARD. Several of our Reader Advisors have had calls reporting that the “Search the Collection” box in BARD or the “Keyword Search” function, isn't returning any results – and then after a few hours, it seems to go away, and its happened enough over enough (of a) period of time where we're wondering if we should be doing a newsletter article to let our patrons know that this happens and, to just wait and try again. Or, if the new beta version you're talking about is going to clear it up – and that's going to happen soon enough where we don't need to do a newsletter article. Can you put any light on timing for this?

Answer: (Mike Martys - NLS)

The problem you're describing is due to an internal problem on BARD where a particular function fails and, I'm trying to monitor it and trying to understand where this problem occurs. The one thing that would help me is that if you can give me some times when you have seen it because we have some systems monitoring it and they are actually not showing me that this has occurred. Our own internal monitoring is not detecting it. So, if you do encounter this you guys can just shoot me an email saying I encountered this problem at such-and-such a time and day. That will help me get to the bottom of things – and then what we're planning to do is to get that problem solved as fast as possible.

Question: (Mary Jane Kayes – CA9)

So, a newsletter article saying “if you encounter this, give us details”?

Answer: (Mike Martys - NLS)

I wouldn't go that far, to like, publicize this to your constituents. If somebody reports it to you, ask them the time – tell me the time – and I'm hoping to fix this thing very fast.

Question: (Mary Jane Kayes – CA9)

You'd prefer the email directly to your box?

Answer: (Mike Martys - NLS)

Yes. I need to know the time so that I can correlate what's going on with the failure.

Comment: (Neil Bernstein - NLS)

The new version of the app won't help that. It's not an app problem, it's a BARD problem. It affects both the web and the app.

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

There were quite a number of questions. There were 42 of you out there. I think we got 9 or 10 calls from you. We appreciate it and hope you learned something from us and, have a good "end of the federal fiscal year.' So long. Thank you!

No more questions or comments.