

NLS Telephone Forum – 10-28-2015
(paraphrased)

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

Here we are in Washington. We have a nice crew here... 13 people in DC. We're getting the remnants of "Patricia." It's a pretty rainy day up here... For now we'll go around the table and introduce ourselves. I'm Richard Smith, Chief of the Network Division...

Comment: (Library Staff - NLS)

Vickie Collins, Network Services; Jane Caulton, Publications and Media; MaryBeth Wise, Network Services; Pamela Davenport, Network Services; Paula Bahmani, Education and Training Specialist; Neil Bernstein, Research and Development; Michael Martys, Automation; Margie Goergen-Rood, Quality Assurance; David Fernandez-Barrial, Foreign Language Librarian; Shana Osborne, Equipment Control Officer; Meredith Beckhardt, Reference Section; Steve Prine, Network Division; Joel Phillips, Production Control.

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

And that's the group. I think to start us off: Last week we did talk with the Conference Chairs at a meeting and we have some people here to answer some of the questions that came up last week – and the first one is David, our Foreign Language Librarian here at NLS.

Question: (David Fernandez-Barrial - NLS)

Can someone pose the question – read it to me?

Answer: (Richard Smith - NLS)

"During the August Conference Chair meeting, requests were made by NLS for an update on the progress of the digitization of the Foreign Language collection. A breakdown - by language - of the foreign language titles that have been retro-converted and are still pending, as well as any progress in adding foreign language DB titles." Also during the National conference call, NLS asked whether they would consider adding more Chinese and Korean foreign language titles.

Answer: (David Fernandez-Barrial - NLS)

Thank you for the question. The last time we spoke, we had basically a situation where we had about 240 assorted foreign language books that were not Spanish titles – that were a variety of foreign language groups. Back then, I announced that we were going to have someone that was going to be helping out. Someone from our Culpepper – the Motion Picture, Broadcast and Recorded Sound division of the Library of Congress – and unfortunately... she was on a 120-day detail so... once the training session was over, she was actually slotted for work in the studios. Unfortunately, that languished, so as we started into the new year, there was a big push to increase the number of materials available in the English-language titles and I had to sort of pitch in with that big push. Where are we right now? Well, we've been posting some of the foreign language titles – kind of in little drips. You guys might have noticed last month there were about five Hindi titles that were posted. There were 10 Russian-language books that were posted a couple of weeks ago. The good news and the good aspect of it to report is that, through Richard and the Multi State Center East – Jackie Conner – we actually have set up a situation where they're actually doing these retro-conversions for us and it's going to actually streamline and make this whole process a lot easier. You'll remember from that conversation back then - that the biggest problem is that the cassette titles that we're talking about were purchased abroad. Some of them were good quality and some of them were frankly, pieces of crap so, you don't want to spend a lot of money converting some of these titles that can be repurchased. We have issues with workflow, what's the best way of posting them, efficient ways of posting them.

I've asked for support in terms of having folks help out. Possibly having volunteer opportunities in the Collection Development section. So in any case, what I'm here to report is that I wish we were further along. We're making progress. It's taking time. Another avenue of help that we've received – Tom Duffy from the San Francisco Public Library for the Blind and Print Disabled actually contacted me a few months back with some contact information for the San Francisco Public Library in terms of Chinese audiobooks. So, we have vendors that we've identified and we have books that we're interested in, and it's just a matter of obtaining (them) and putting them up. Again, I know you guys are thirsty for foreign language material and, as the Foreign Language Librarian who's been sort of touting the material and wanting to put things up, I hear you. If you have any titles or specific language groups that you feel need to be more represented in the collections...

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

Another thing that came up: "Can NLS provide regionals with access to end-of-the-year direct magazine circulation statistics?" I think Meredith has something on that.

Comment: (Meredith Beckhardt - NLS)

Yes, we don't enter the statistics directly into NLDB, the database system that's used to report statistics. We actually have them posted on the PICS website – and there are a few clicks – you have to drill down quite a bit to get to Network statistics but I wanted to at least show you how you can get to that. So when you log in to the Network Library Services website – or what some people call PICS – the first thing you're going to click on, on that main screen is "Selected Reports and Documents" and then on the next screen you click on "Network Documents" and about halfway down that, there's a link that says "Network Statistics" and when you click on that, you'll find the 2014 Readership and Circulation statistics for each library – and it does have for each separate NLS library, what their magazine statistics are. Now, there's also available through that link, the 2013 statistics. However, the Readership and Circulation are not posted. I think there were issues with that. That was when we were in a big transition from one person doing the statistics to another. I do have the file available though, so if you'd like to know your NLS magazine statistics for 2013, please email me at mbec@loc.gov and I'll be able to share with you your statistics for that year for the magazines. And that's the way we'll continue to do it too. We won't be posting the magazine statistics on NLDB, we'll be posting them to the PICS website.

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

I did promise that we'd give an update on the peach cartridge mailing container production and we have Joel here. Joel can you give an update on the containers?

Comment: (Joel Phillips - NLS)

Yes. We are just soon finishing the first lot of containers. Those are due to be finished on November 9 – and then we will have a lot sample that will need to be approved but, barring that sample approval, shipments can begin. So, assuming that those sample lots are okay, I would expect those to be arriving within the next 7 to 10 days after the 9th. Mid-November is when these things are going to be rolling out. Braille containers are also on their way. We are also awaiting the first sample lot from the producer. Those should also be available soon. Those will be available from the Multi State Centers, so you will be contacting them and obtaining the number of containers that you need. We will be producing between 4 and 5 thousand containers over the next nine months.

Question: (Richard Smith - NLS)

MaryBeth, did you just mention a conference?

Answer: (MaryBeth Wise - NLS)

Yes absolutely. The 2016 Conference planning is in full force. The conference – as you know – is scheduled April 3rd through 7th in San Francisco. Pre-conference will be April 2nd. The preliminary agenda is coming along very nicely with sessions and training planned, and we plan to have information on conference registration posted next month – so keep your eyes out for Ops Alerts and Network Bulletins for preliminary agenda information and registering for conference sessions. If you have any questions please give me a call at (202) 707-0501 or email me, or ask a question after the presentation.

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

I did want to give an update on the National Standards. Again, ASCLA is doing the Revised Standards and they are in the process of looking for a Project Director. By November 15, the Executive Committee should appoint a Project Director. There are going to be Working Team meetings and Advisory Committee meetings. ALA Mid-Winter – that's up in Boston in 2016 and hopefully the working paper will be coming out in March – so we're moving forward on a Revised National Standard. And, there was one question last week about verifying patrons to third-party groups. Are there obligations by the library to verify the patron even with the patron's permission? Basically, there is a Network Manual section on laws on confidentiality and reader records. That's in Section Three of the Network Library Manual. You might want to read through that and basically it says that there is no federal law – that many libraries are regulated by state laws – on confidentiality. We do require that - if indeed you do give the information out – you do get the patron's permission. But, again, sometimes the state law regulates even over that. So you'll want to read over that section of the manual. Hopefully down the road, we have worked out procedures with Bookshare and Learning Ally, that don't involve the regional libraries and maybe others down the road and I think we're looking at a Network solution... Who did I miss? Michael Katzmann just walked in. I think we can open it up for questions...

Question: (Mitchell Small – PA8)

Hello there. I was glad to hear that Michael Katzmann has stepped into the room because I think this question is going to go to him. Some time ago we learned that the Romeo Pro LE embosser is no longer available, and it's the Cyclone from Enabling Technologies that is taking its place. The last time we inquired about this we found that the NLS labeling software has not been tested with the Cyclone – and I'm wondering what the status of that development is?

Answer: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

So, when I first talked to Enabling, they indicated that they would be willing to create a version of the Cyclone to accommodate the compressed label format that we defined originally for cassettes and now on the cartridges. They subsequently indicated that this will be not the Cyclone but the Phoenix embosser and, they are still assessing whether there is enough interest for them to do this, so they sort of backpedaled and have not given an affirmative indication that they are going ahead with this. So if everybody listening will call them up and say they're interested in the Phoenix (laughter) and where is it? That will help. They wanted to know from me what I thought was the likely demand. I knew of a few libraries that had expressed interest in getting printers. I indicated that there would be similar interest from libraries that had experience with the Romeo Pro LE but, as of the last time that information was current, I had not heard anything more from them.

Comment: (Mitchell Small – PA8)

Well thank you for following up with them. I, for one, will be bugging Enabling Technologies. Here in Pittsburgh we've been looking at the possibility of adding a second braille embosser, and I know that there are more libraries now interested in producing digital books but, if they're not going to go out with the braille overlay, that's a real disservice to their patrons. So, I'm going to encourage those that I do know...to drop the dime to Enabling Technologies as well. Thank you very much Michael.

Comment: (Neil Bernstein - NLS)

Mitchell, you asked about the software. The software update can't happen until we know what the hardware is.

Comment: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

While I was dealing with them, I provided them with the labeling software and I explained the codes that I was using based on their Romeo Pro LE. I believe what they ended up with was something that wasn't compatible with the codes in the Romeo Pro LE. I don't think that it's a matter of them waiting for anything from us. It's really a managerial decision by them as to if they will make that available. As far as I know it's just the software version of their Phoenix embosser.

Question: (Debbie Macleod - CO)

I just wanted to get clarification on my understanding relative to the peach cartridges. So, we had put in an order a long time ago for a certain number, and then we were shipped part of that number that we had put in, and then I understood that there would be one shipment of the mailing containers and then there would be a second shipment of peach cartridges. Since there have been problems with the mailing containers I'm not sure what has happened with the notion of getting our full request. So I'm just wondering what the status is (as a whole).

Answer: (Richard Smith - NLS)

Right Debbie. Basically we want to make sure you get the mailing containers so that we can make sure you use the ones you have, and then once you use the ones you have, we'll open it up for more orders.

Comment: (Debbie Macleod - CO)

We put in a number based on moving to Patron-Centric Cartridges, and we wanted to have at least two for each patron, so that we can have one going out and one coming back – and I can't start that program until I have all of my cartridges. So, that's why I was asking.

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

Well, once you get your cartridges, I think you could start up. How many did you get? 10,000?

Comment: (Debbie Macleod - CO)

I think I only got 8,000.

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

We'll be able to back you up on those, Debbie.

Question: (Lisa Nelson - UT)

I have a question on the braille containers that are going to be available from the Multi State. Is there going to be a quota on the number of containers that libraries can request at a time?

Answer: (Joel Phillips - NLS)

I think the best thing to do is just to contact me personally on that. Yes, there's going to be a limit so that everyone can get a fair amount based on how many we have available in a 12-month period. We're only making four and a half thousand at this point, so contact me on that and we can talk about it. My email is jphi@loc.gov.

Question: (James Gleason - MA)

Is there any update on the development of the Media Manager?

Answer: (Michael Martys - NLS)

Well right now, we're working on some administrative details behind the scenes to shift the intellectual property rights of the DMM over to the Library of Congress – and that's progressing and will hopefully be cleared up by the end of the year. Once that's completed, my expectation is that there will be some sort of beta test. Don Olson is not here, but I'll gamble and speak for him. He is of the opinion that the tool in its present form is quite usable, meaning we really wouldn't have to do much more development on it – that it would be ready for a beta test. So my guess is that the next step would be to select some beta testers and do a beta test. (We were talking quite a bit about) we don't want to solve a problem and then create a new problem in the process. So, that would be one of the things that we're probably going to be looking at in the beta test – what would be the support burdens that would be placed on the libraries. We want to make sure it's manageable before we go forward. I don't know if you have a particular question James, that you're looking for...

Comment: (James Gleason - MA)

No, I was just wondering – did it fall flat on its face? Was it scheduled to keep on going – that sort of thing.

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

There was a mention by the Chairs last week – and I asked – why the forum was not posted online? One reason was that it was so short that maybe we forgot about it but the other reason was that there was some question about were people not willing to talk or ask questions on the phone because it was being put online. So I'm curious now – I mean we used to go quite long before we posted them online and would have ten to twenty questions and now we've got three (for) two months in a row. So I'll ask the Chairs again if they could check with their members if people are not calling in because we were recording it. If so, we'll drop the recording and go back to getting questions that the Network librarians have. And, if you have any comments on that – there are 40 people signed in and only three people had a question – shoot me an email or your consultant an email expressing your concern - if you have concerns about it being recorded.

Comment: (Sharon Ruda - IL)

I was just going to make the comment (that) maybe you guys are communicating so well now, that we don't have to ask you any more questions.

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

Well thank you for your call Sharon. That's very nice.

Comment: (Michael Martys - NLS)

In one of our previous calls – it was either a Chairs' call or one of these calls – there was a comment made about the delay in the middle of the BARD Admin page and, I did hear that question and I have been working on it and the delay will be gone tonight.

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

Okay well, thank you for attending and we'll talk to you next month, Thanksgiving? It may be awhile. We'll see.

No more questions or comments.