

NLS Telephone Forum – 01-25-2017
(paraphrased)

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

Welcome all of you. Here in DC we got over a holiday, an inauguration, a women's march – and we're working on our renovation that is coming in a month and a half. So, we've been busy. We have a room full of people from NLS staff. We'll go around the room. Right now there are 36 people on the phone call. My name is Richard Smith, Chief of the Network Division...

Comment: (Library Staff - NLS)

Michael Martys, Automation; Margie Goergen-Rood, Quality Assurance; Andrew Skinner, Production Control; Paula Bahmani, Education and Training; Meredith Beckhardt, Reference Section; Vickie Collins, Network Services; Steve Prine, Network Division;

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

That's who we have on the phone today and we want to make a few announcements. Right off the bat, I wanted to go with Meredith...

Comment: (Meredith Beckhardt - NLS)

I've been busy working with everybody's Network Survey statistics numbers. Thank you to everybody who submitted something. There are still a couple libraries that we're still waiting for and then we're going to tie it up and hand it off to Administration and then post it on the web so that you all can see each other's statistics, if you're interested in that. I also wanted to say that one of our old publications that has been around for years (that) was once called "Sources of Custom-Produced Books." We changed the name of it because we didn't think it was clear – and we're coming out with a new version in the next week – you'll be able to see it on the web. It's called "Directory of Producers of Accessible Reading Materials." I just wanted to give you a "heads up" on the new name. It's pretty much the same content as before. It's a little more streamlined – and before it was very complex with lots of indices that we have removed. So now it's just more of a straight directory. There are always drastic changes every two years when it comes out, because lots of people want to be taken out of the directory and lots of new people want to be put in, so I just wanted to let you all know that the new one is coming out in about a week or so. Any questions on those statistics, please call myself or Vickie Collins or your Network Consultant and we'll answer those questions as soon as possible.

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

Who else has any announcements...

Comment: (Michael Martys - NLS)

I have one. It was based on a question that I received from Steve Prine, on behalf of one of the libraries. It was a question about what we're doing with BARD in terms of deleting data – and I thought I would explain it a little bit. The government in recent times has been very careful about something that they call "PII" – Personally Identifiable Information. And it's any sort of information that can be used to establish someone's identity. There are actually two categories of that. There is something called "PII" and there's something called "Sensitive PII." PII is your name, your address, your email, straightforward things. Sensitive PII is things like, social security number, credit card numbers, any sort of special information that might allow someone to establish (themselves) as you. In general...the government is instituting this policy where they want to minimize the amount of PII we collect and retain.

One of their principles is that if we do not need a piece of PII we should get rid of it. And in BARD, one of the areas where we had been keeping some information that maybe we didn't need to was in the area of closed accounts. These are what we would call the "final account" status in BARD, where someone is no longer a part of the program. Their account is marked "closed." It's not going to be used again. What we would do is mark that account closed and keep it in BARD for later reference. In light of the government's new focus on PII, what we're going to do is, on a closed account, 6 months after the account is closed we will scrub the name and address...out of BARD. The information will still be there – the BARD I.D., the CMLS I.D., the library code – but the name and address will be removed from BARD so that we can say that we're no longer retaining it. That's just so that we can comply with one of the government policies about minimizing the long-term collection of unnecessary PII. I hope that gives...an explanation. We're not really deleting the account. We're not really deleting the data. We're just deleting the PII part of it. And again, that's just to comply with government rules. That's all I have to say.

Comment: (Andrew Skinner - NLS)

We do have a renewed contract for the Recycle for Reuse Program. That does not mean that we can all send items to ForSight immediately, but we do have a renewed contract and the Network division will be sending out quantities and timing for each library as appropriate. Previous amounts from 2016 no longer apply based on contract and pricing changes. But we do have numbers worked out for the Network to send in, and Steve and I have met and they're divvying them up, so each library will send amounts back to ForSight soon.

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

We'll have a partial group going up until June, and then after that we'll get...in the swing of things.

Question: (James Gleason - MA)

Good afternoon everybody. This is a follow up question to the BARD PII. Those accounts would be the ones marked as "cancelled" meaning that the email address, username would have been marked as "deleted," right? Not the inactive/suspended people?

Answer: (Michael Martys - NLS)

Right. There are four categories of account status in BARD. There is "active." There is "Alert" which is just like Active except the patron is notified to contact the library. There's "Inactive/Suspended" which basically does not allow them to use BARD, but it does let them log in and it tells them to contact their library. And then there's "Closed." Closed is really meant for - this account will no longer be used. The person is gone. We do know that patrons come back from the dead. We do have a provision for resurrecting, and that's why we don't take the action that I described for six months. We need them to be dead for six months (laughter). "Closed" is the only status that I refer to.

Question: (Maureen Dorosinski- FL)

I have a few questions...the first one you brought up the renewed contract for ForSight. I was wondering – when you set quantities for libraries to send in their items, are you going to take into account any recall that we may have reported via email if we happened to start later in the year? Because we have pallets of recall that we are holding – and additionally, we have had to take in some recall items from subregionals because they are either changing locations or, physically ran out of space.

Answer: (Andrew Skinner - NLS)

We have a limit on how many we can take – based on contractual amounts and backlogs. So, your Network representative will reach out to you with the quantity for each library to send. We're not going to be taking extra quantities right now, though. We are working on ramping up the contract and increasing capacity, but we have to work through the backlog, which will be part of that ramp-up capacity.

Question: (Maureen Dorosinski- FL)

Okay. So we shouldn't need to contact our consultant because...

Answer: (Andrew Skinner - NLS)

They have assigned numbers and they'll let you know what your numbers are.

Question: (Maureen Dorosinski- FL)

Just to let you know that in Florida we have a large quantity of items that we have been holding and will need to send. Can I ask a second question? We've had some staffing changes in Florida, and we're reviewing a lot of procedures, and there may be some nodding heads or some rolled eyes...but one of the items is subscriptions, and many patrons at our subregionals have shared with me that patrons are not getting their subscriptions. I wanted to confirm that, if I had a list of patrons and exact issues and KLAS I.D.s for example of what they're missing, I can simply send that into (the) Network Consultant? Or is there a more expedient way...?

Question: (Andrew Skinner - NLS)

Are you talking magazines? Is it braille or audio?

Answer: (Maureen Dorosinski- FL)

Both.

Answer: (Andrew Skinner - NLS)

Okay. We'll need not just the patrons. We'll need the actual magazines that are missing as well.

Comment: (Maureen Dorosinski- FL)

Yes...the subscription I.D.s and the specific months – and the patrons and the patron I.D.s.

Comment: (Andrew Skinner - NLS)

Yes, Let me know on that. You can send that to me and copy your Network consultant...and we'll look into that.

Question: (Devon Evans – PA8)

There are patrons who receive Braille Book Review and Talking Book Topics in large print, and they're receiving multiple copies, but they're only signed up once.

Question: (Steve Prine - NLS)

They're receiving multiple copies of Talking Book Topics?

Answer: (Devon Evans – PA8)

Correct...or Braille Book Review. And they're only signed up once – both in our circulation system and in CMLS or PIMMS, depending on which month.

Question: (Steve Prine - NLS)

The address label that comes on the TBT that they're receiving – the top line would identify who set that subscription up. Is there any possibility they could provide that to you so that you could provide it to us?

Answer: (Devon Evans – PA8)

Yes. I can check into that. I did have them check – because some patrons (live in the same apartment complex) and they have said that the labels are identical but, maybe not on that top line.

Answer: (Steve Prine - NLS)

That's where the difference would be, so if you could provide that information to Vickie Collins vcol@loc.gov.

Comment: (Sharon Ruda - IL)

Hello there. I just wanted to let you know that the same thing that Devon mentioned is happening to Illinois patrons also

Comment: (Steve Prine - NLS)

We'll need the same information then.

Comment: (Sharon Ruda - IL)

I wanted to let you know that it wasn't just Pittsburgh.

Question: (Christie Briggs - MT)

I have a question for Michael Martys regarding the BARD weeding of titles that could roll over to a non-active or archive database. Is this being considered or discussed by NLS?

Question: (Michael Martys - NLS)

Are you talking about the R-Sync thing, Christie?

Answer: (Christie Briggs - MT)

Yes I am. We're looking at \$12,000 per year of trying to store the rapidly-growing R-Sync product.

Answer: (Michael Martys - NLS)

One of the things that I pondered doing – this is a “thought out loud” kind of thing – right now, what you're R-syncing to is this “tree” of books that represents the entire BARD collection. And one of the things that I was thinking about doing was offering an alternate tree that would be smaller, that would only offer the books that are currently showing a particular (amount) of circulation – you know, making use of the CREDO rule that says, “the majority of our circulation is from a smaller subset of our collection.” And then we would allow the libraries to R-Sync against the full tree or the subset tree, based on your own preferences. Now, of course the subset tree won't have every book, but it would have the books that are currently in BARD that are circulating – based on the number of downloads. And then, that might be a way for you to manage your collection size and still be able to serve as many patrons as possible. So I'd be interested in your reaction to that.

To address your other question about “are we weeding BARD?” we definitely want to make the entire BARD collection available to libraries if they wish to shadow it. So, we probably wouldn’t weed that one. That one is going to stay there. The only thing that I’d recommend is that we might have an alternate tree – a smaller collection of books that focuses on what’s circulating. Let me know your thoughts.

Comment: (Christie Briggs - MT)

Okay. I’ll get back to you. I think that that is a good alternative, and I’d be interested in knowing what the rest of the Network thinks about that – because I’m sure all of us including NLS, (are) facing those kinds of costs for database storage.

Comment: (Michael Martys - NLS)

Michael Katzmann was pointing out that everyone should be mindful that the cost of storage is continuing to fall, and the technical people are not predicting that to stop. They’re still predicting (the cost of storage) to keep falling. Even though we’re adding titles like crazy. The reduction in storage (costs) are still exceeding our ability to grow the BARD collection. Every eighteen months (storage space) doubles – for the same money...according to trends of the last seven years.

Comment: (Christie Briggs - MT)

Okay I will pass that on to my state librarian. We have just entered into a contract with our state database center. That’s why it’s costing us more this year. Maybe over time that will change.

Comment: (Michael Martys - NLS)

It’s a little tough predicting the future – but the trends are stable for a little while. Just as an aside, we have that “most popular” part of BARD where the most popular books are listed. We actually calculate the total circulation for all the books in BARD every night. ...One more thing, if anybody else has any thoughts beside Christie, let us know.

Question: (Maureen Dorosinski- FL)

Hi. I have probably a badly-phrased question about labeling and ordering supplies. In the last call, there was discussion over the side and end labels for the containers, and I’ve noticed that...at first they were readily available and then the discussion happened that they were being discontinued – that we would need to buy, and then it went to rationed shipment and then “no longer available.” I was wondering if – because I like to make plans 5 or 10 years ahead, just to keep us so we’re not caught unaware – (are) there any other supply items that we may possibly need to make a future plan for? Can you share anything ahead of time? Or maybe even possibly about machine availability – DSs as opposed to DAs? Is there anything like that that you could share with us so that we can make some plans budget-wise?

Answer: (Richard Smith - NLS)

Everyone is looking puzzled. We’re not sure what needs to be shared. Just basic office equipment. I know that one library had asked if we could supply them with labels or...mailing envelopes and that usually is an office supply by a library. Another library did ask for barcodes for books and for videotapes and that has traditionally been a local library (purchase), so everyone is looking puzzled here so we’re not sure...

Question: (Maureen Dorosinski- FL)

I apologize. I do have a tendency to try to provide more information and then it turns into possibly an embarrassing pile of words but, what I’m asking is, is there anything else beside side and end labels that is going to be discontinued? And are you going to be still producing the same Advanced and Standard machines? Just so we can know what’s coming. Is there anything else that (will) be discontinued...that we have traditionally been ordering – like the container labels?

Answer: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

I think as far as machines go, we have the current inventory of Standard and Advanced machines and we anticipate that that will serve the Network needs for the next three or four years – until we produce the next-generation machine. Exactly how many variants that will have or whether we’ll just have one machine that will be reconfigurable, is something that we’re going through at the moment, so we can’t give you a definitive answer on that. The lifetime of the current machine is certainly three or four years more with the inventory that we have. We have a very limited number of new machines but we have still a lot of machines returned by patrons.

Question: (Maureen Dorosinski- FL)

Okay, so no other standard item that's been supplied, like container labels – that will be discontinued, like those were.

Answer: (Richard Smith - NLS)

Not that we're aware of. Again – we have the WOW system. I think we have enough headphones. We have enough elbow adapters – we're still purchasing those. We have towers for making your own books. We've got batteries that we've purchased so, again the supplies, the mailing labels for the containers, the labels on the side, envelopes – I can't think of anything else – those are office supplies that have traditionally been purchased by the local libraries.

Answer: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

We talked about Duplication-on-Demand. There are some things to be worked out as to what NLS will be supplying and what we expect libraries to supply as far as ongoing consumables in that program – those libraries that take that up. And another thing we want to see is the pilot that we'll be doing later this year but, the Duplication-on-Demand is something that will evolve over the next few years and will require some setting up of demarcations as to what libraries will supply – but I can't give you anything (more) until we have that pilot.

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

If we think of anything, we'll have the call next month.

Comment: (Michael Martys - NLS)

Since we have a little bit of extra time, I thought I'd ask the libraries if they've heard any feedback on BARD Express from their patrons and whether they have any insight to our big question, which is "Do you think BARD Express is helping some patrons who haven't been able to use BARD, to actually start using it for the first time?"

Comment: (Maureen Dorosinski- FL)

The "search" function is the only thing that the patrons are saying that – they're eager for the next update because it doesn't work as well as they would expect. And then also I have BARD Express downloaded here so that I can make on-demand cartridges for patrons and it seem to go much quicker for me to use the old BARD way instead of the Express way. I was thinking or hoping that it would be quicker to make the cartridges, but it seems to go much quicker the old way. That's probably the only feedback.

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

With that, we thank you for calling in and we'll talk to you next month. Have a good day!

No more questions or comments.