NLS Telephone Forum – 07-26-2017
(paraphrased)

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)
Here we are in Washington. This is Richard Smith. I'm Chief of the Network Division. We're in three different locations – a remote location and, maybe Madison Building and Adams Building, and also on Taylor Street, our main office. We'll go around the table here at Adams – again, I'm Richard Smith…

Comment: (Library Staff - NLS)
Vickie Collins, Network Services section; Steve Prine, Assistant Chief of the Network Division; Meredith Beckhardt, Reference Section; Pamela Davenport, Network Consultant; Paula Bahmani, Education and Training;

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)
Madison Building…

Comment: (Library Staff - NLS)
Judy Dixon, Consumer Relations;

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)
Taylor Street…

Comment: (Library Staff - NLS)
Karen Keninger, Director; Michael Martys, Automation; Margie Goergen-Rood, Quality Assurance; Shana Osborne, Equipment Control Officer; Andrew Skinner, Production Control; David Pelizzari, Publications and Media; Chris Corrigan, Bibliographic Control.

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)
That's the crew. Well, here in Washington, it's a beautiful day. It's very unique – I mean, today I went out walking – we're in the Downtown location – I walked around the Capitol and right on the lawn of the Capitol building is a stage and a microphone and…Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi is speaking to a nice crowd out there, and lo and behold I hear over the microphone the anniversary of the enactment of ADA twenty-seven years ago. So, it's really neat to be downtown at the nation's capital. With that being said, I'm going to hand it over to Paula, who has a few words.

Comment: (Paula Bahmani - NLS)
I just wanted to ask Network Library staff, if you have not submitted responses to the Locally-produced DTB Master File Survey, if you could please do so. The link to the survey is available in Operations Alert 17-47.

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)
I did mention in my announcement…I was told that I jumped the gun… we are hopeful that our conference will be in Nashville. We're pretty sure that, indeed it will officially go out hopefully this week or early next week when the contract is officially signed. So that's a bit of a teaser, but yes indeed, we're very close and we'll send an Operations Alert with full details of our conference in 2018 in Nashville. With that, I think, Richard the moderator, you could open it up for questions.

Question: (Sharon Ruda - IL)
Hi guys. I want you to know that I walked around all over DC last week and it was not pleasant. I have not sweated so much in my entire life. But – that aside – I do have a question. Was there an update as to whether we have to do anything special with the broken blue DB containers. Do we throw them away? Do we have a recycle address for those?

Question: (Library Staff - NLS)
When you say broken, are they beyond use? Like, falling apart?

Answer: (Sharon Ruda - IL)
Yes. Yes they're beyond use.

Answer: (Library Staff - NLS)
Then go ahead and toss them or recycle them.

Question: (Sharon Ruda - IL)
Okay. Recycle them locally? Nothing nationally?

Answer: (Library Staff - NLS)
No (recycle them locally).

Question: (John Mugford - NM)
Our R4R appears to be getting back up to speed again. I know that the numbers for return are based on ordering from 4 years prior. I'd like to know if that's based on federal fiscal 4 years prior – so in other words, let's say this current cycle, which is a catch-up cycle – I know that our next goal is to get things in by the end of December but, once we've returned to more regular cycling, what will be the cycles? And upon what historical periods will they be based? And what will be the percentage?

Answer: (Andrew Skinner - NLS)
We're looking more at going forward than previous cycles. We're trying to recycle more and more. Next year our goal is a minimum of 700,000 in calendar year '18 – and then we're looking at increasing it year over year after that – within the next three years trying to get to one and a half million.

Question: (John Mugford - NM)
Andrew, I appreciate that information (but) it's not answering my questions so, would you like me to repeat the questions?

Answer: (Andrew Skinner - NLS)
No. We're not trying to base it on the historical distribution anymore. We're kind of changing how we're moving forward with it, in the future.

Question: (John Mugford - NM)
So you're going with aggregate numbers, so you're saying that that number may go to a million and a half?

Answer: (Andrew Skinner - NLS)
I don't assign the overall libraries – at which library in which state – sends that back. I give an aggregate number to Steve Prine in the Network Division, and he divides that out to the libraries himself, based on those numbers.

Question: (John Mugford - NM)
So, 700,000. To which time period would that apply?

Answer: (Andrew Skinner - NLS)
January to December of 2018.

Question: (John Mugford - NM)
Okay and how does Steve determine the division?

Answer: (Steve Prine - NLS)
In this last year, because we had to do fewer, we looked at the numbers but, I don't know that we have a formula going forward. We've talked about it internally but, we haven't really (settled) on one. If we're not going to use the historic patterns of what people got, we're going to have to determine another formula for doing it and that has not been discussed yet – or finalized.

Question: (John Mugford - NM)
And that jump to possibly a million and a half, would that be an incremental jump? Or would that be a sudden jump?

Answer: (Andrew Skinner - NLS)
No, that's going to be an incremental jump – year over year – for the next three to four years probably.

Question: (John Mugford - NM)
So kind of roughly looking at the numbers probably a couple hundred thousand each year?

Answer: (Andrew Skinner - NLS)
Correct.

Question: (John Mugford - NM)
And what were the aggregate numbers in the past?

Answer: (Andrew Skinner - NLS)
Around half a million in the last couple of years.

Comment: (John Mugford - NM)
Okay so there's roughly a half-million, 500,000, 700,000, so there's about a 40% jump there, and then a 100% jump on top of that. It's clearly going to impact…

Comment: (Andrew Skinner - NLS)
It's not going to be a 100% jump on top of that. We're not going from seven to one and a half. That's like three to four years from now.

Question: (John Mugford - NM)
So we're looking at roughly 30 to 40 percent incremental jumps each year for the next three to four years. That kind of an increase is clearly going to have an impact upon time and labor – to varying degrees – upon programs. Have you considered that impact?

Answer: (Andrew Skinner - NLS)
Which programs? Yours? …I continually hear and get feedback that we need to recycle more and more and more.

Comment: (John Mugford - NM)
You're not answering my question Andrew.

Comment: (Andrew Skinner - NLS)
No I haven't taken that into account because I continually get feedback that all the libraries want to be able to send more… This is the first feedback that I have heard, that a library doesn't want to send more – and I'm sure that if you don't want to, other libraries would.

Question: (John Mugford - NM)
Look, I'm not asking that question, am I?

Answer: (Andrew Skinner - NLS)
I'm not sure what you're asking. If you're asking if I'm taking into account the amount of labor that a library will have to do…

Question: (John Mugford - NM)
Pardon me, Andrew, let me speak. I made a comment, that increased numbers will have an impact on libraries (unintelligible)…did I not?

Answer: (Andrew Skinner - NLS)
You did.

Question: (John Mugford - NM)
And then I asked you if you had taken that impact into consideration. What was your answer? What is your answer?

Answer: (Andrew Skinner - NLS)
I said I hadn't. I said I hadn't taken that into account.

Question: (John Mugford - NM)
So are you considering measuring the impact that it may have – in varying degrees – upon the entire network?

Answer: (Andrew Skinner - NLS)

I would have to leave that up to – and partner with – the Network Division on that. The feedback that I continually get – from Network and other libraries – is that they want to recycle.

Question: (John Mugford - NM)

And how are you receiving this feedback?

Answer: (Andrew Skinner - NLS)

Through the Network Consultants – in the Network Division.

Question: (John Mugford - NM)

Okay, because I don't recall being asked myself, and we've essentially been waiting for the numbers when they arrive. So you're essentially saying that it's your impression that a majority of the Network is wanting to return more digital books than they have in the past.

Answer: (Karen Keninger - NLS)

Yes John. That has been our impression. We do acknowledge that there is a labor cost to boxing them up and sending them back. We also know that we have heard that people want to get rid of the older ones and that they wish that we could have (sped) it up. So, we will have to look at all of those factors going forward and, if a library is not able – because of the labor factors – to contribute, perhaps, the amount that they were allowed, then that's just going to be part of the issue. As time goes forward, there will be many things changing, and this will be one thing that we will clearly monitor – and if we hear from the libraries that we are asking for too much then we will look at that and we will address it.

Question: (John Mugford - NM)

Okay so it sounds like you're relying upon anecdotal reporting. There's been no survey conducted. When will we expect the next issuance of numbers? It sounds like we're looking at a January through December period. We'll expect an assignment of numbers by November perhaps?

Answer: (Richard Smith - NLS)

Yes…we will get the numbers out in November.

Answer: (Andrew Skinner - NLS)

I should have the numbers within the next few months. Yes.

Question: (John Mugford - NM)

Okay and is there any reason not to post what the division of returns are for the entire Network? And divide it between the various libraries? Any reason not to share that entire information rather than piecemeal?

Question: (Karen Keninger - NLS)

You mean in terms of what your library gets and what another library gets? Or the total number?

Answer: (John Mugford - NM)

Both.

Question: (Karen Keninger - NLS)

What have we done historically? Steve?

Answer: (Steve Prine - NLS)

Total numbers.

Answer: (Richard Smith - NLS)

For individual libraries, the consultant sends the numbers to the library.

Question: (John Mugford - NM)

So I'm asking if we could see the aggregate total number as well as how it's divided among the libraries.

Answer: (Karen Keninger - NLS)
We will look at that but, I'm not going to guarantee that it will be done.

Question: (John Mugford - NM)
Is there any reason not to do it?

Question: (Karen Keninger - NLS)
Is there a reason TO do it?

Answer: (John Mugford - NM)
I think it would show how the allotments are divided. It would be open information.

Answer: (Karen Keninger - NLS)
We'll take it under consideration.

Question: (John Mugford - NM)
Do I take that as a "no" or a "maybe"?

Answer: (Karen Keninger - NLS)
It's a maybe.

Question: (Chuck Petithomme – CA8)
Keystone created for our library, something they call the "Patron-Centric Cartridge" program. And of course it gives us the power to load multiple books on a single cartridge, allowing us to make basically, custom cartridges for our patrons. We believe we could grow this program more quickly if the "bookshelf" function were more user-friendly. To that end, we have two suggestions: First, when a given book ends, the next book on the shelf should begin automatically, without any user intervention. Second, the book list should loop, so that there is no end-of-list "beep beep." Does NLS have plans to update the bookshelf function in the existing player? Thank you.

Answer: (Karen Keninger - NLS)
(Engineering) staff is not here at the moment to answer that in a specific way. We are putting most of our resources into the 'next-generation' player rather than the current one.

Answer: (Michael Martys - NLS)
We're also working on a 'Duplication-on-Demand' system that has similar functionality. What we're doing for that system is, for the patrons that cannot handle multiple books on a cartridge, the system has the ability to generate one book per cartridge…for those patrons. So, our system basically allows us to accommodate a particular patron who has difficulty with bookshelf. We understand your comment and recommendation. I mean, it was pretty clear.

Question: (Joshua Berkov - NC)
We just have a quick question about the "Talking Book Topics" and we've gotten some recommendations that patrons might like to see just a list of authors that are included in the Talking Book Topics, so, we have patrons who have their favorite authors and they want to see if their favorite author has released a new book that has been recently added to the collection. Having a list of authors would facilitate that so, we just wanted to see if any thought has been given to adding this feature to Talking Book Topics.

Question: (David Pelizzari - NLS)
Just to clarify – Josh are you talking about an online presentation of titles by author? Or are you also talking about an offline hardcopy print version of that? I would have slightly different hypothetical answers.

Answer: (Joshua Berkov - NC)
No. Offline – the large print ahd the audio versions that get sent out.

Answer: (David Pelizzari - NLS)
So let me say, we'll take it under consideration. We'll have to analyze page count and things of that sort that are related to the actual size of the publication. I think that everyone can understand instinctively why that would be of interest to patrons. Indexing in many different ways is of interest to patrons. The trouble is, in one publication, getting indexes in many different forms, increases the publication length and also the production length. The reson I asked about 'online' vs. 'offline' is that if you and your patrons believed that an online 'sorting' of new titles by

author, could be devised and would be useful, perhaps in a format that could be easily printed – and things of that sort. That would be easier and more financially responsible and also, time-saving. Both on our end and on your end. So, that's why I'm asking that question.

Answer: **(Karen Keninger - NLS)**
And Josh, I will also add that we removed the indexes from Talking Book Topics a couple of years ago, for the simple reason that we had to make a choice between the brief annotations that everyone hated, or, putting the full annotations in for all the books that we're producing, because the number of books that we're producing has gone up. It's been a trade-off. We recognize that, but that's why we're not indexing now. This is the first time I've heard anyone ask for the indexing back, actually.

Comment: **(Joshua Berkov - NC)**
I would just add that if offline…is not a possibility then certainly an online sorting capability is better than nothing.

Comment: **(David Pelizzari - NLS)**
Well, we'll analyze this and see what can be done, Josh. Thanks for bringing it to our attention. Certainly everybody – certainly I understand intuitively why sorting by author could be of great interest to any reader.

Question: **(Maureen Dorosinski - FL)**
An update, a comment and a question. First, the update: The pictures of my Summer Reading Program are now being approved by our Department of Education – Communications Department, so, it needed to go through that review process before I really sent, so you guys should be seeing them soon. And the comment: I just wanted to say that we here in Florida have hundreds and hundreds of boxes – pallets kind of hidden strategically all over our library, because we followed the Operations Alert on the Recycling. We did have extra books to pull, so we reported it. There is a very clear indication of email. How to say, "Oh I've got extra books – email this person." We did. We boxed them and then the changes happened. We have boxes ready to go, so we're able to take on any library's extra numbers. And, we also indicated – there was a separate Operations Alert – and we notified staff as indicated, so, I think that is where you're getting the feedback…you put out the emails and the Operations Alert and, we've also notified our Network Consultant, so Florida has a lot ready to go whenever the numbers come out next year.

My question now, is, concerning the Patron-Centric Cartridges: When they return the cartridge and wait to get a new one, there is going to be a slight delay. Can patrons have more than one cartridge? So they can send one back, get it loaded up, and meanwhile won't be without books. Because, what if we have a slowdown or something, and then this cartridge that's going back and forth can't get filled in a timely manner – for whatever reason?

Answer: **(Karen Keninger - NLS)**
Certainly Maureen… Well that's up to each library how those are handled. But certainly one paradigm is actually three cartridges – one to read, one to mail and one being replenished. Do what makes sense for your library. There are no rules about that.

Question: **(Danielle Miller - WA)**
Hi everybody. Just a quick question: We had noticed that Talking Book Topics has seemed quite a bit thinner lately. Is that going to continue that way?

Answer: **(David Pelizzari - NLS)**
In fact, we do notice the thinness. It's not on purpose. It is a result of when – in the calendar year – we've pulled the titles for it… It's just a matter of what titles are ready to be announced in which issue. So I don't want you to think that that's a trend.

Question: **(Andrew Egan - RI)**
This question is for Mike Martys or whoever else wants to answer it. Just give us a quick update on the BARD. I know everything – the servers – seem to be working well. Should we anticipate anything (concerning the servers)?

Answer: **(Michael Martys - NLS)**
Well – and you know – we did have a hardware incident a while ago and that necessitated us replacing the back end of BARD. We did have a couple of issues with the crypto functions on the new server. These are the things that – I don't know if your aware but – when BARD Mobile downloads a book from BARD, BARD needs to custom-encrypt the book for each individual phone. And that encryption process we refer to here as the "crypto-function." When we replaced the hardware on BARD with the new hardware, it took us a few extra days to get the crypto

function working properly, so we basically had the BARD website up first and then BARD Mobile came up second. Since that time, BARD has been very stable. The new hardware is working well. The MOC system is back online and pumping out magazines again. I'm not anticipating any issues. Over the last six months we've put a lot of brand-new hardware in on BARD, and so it's got the benefit of that. Our long-term plan is to move BARD into the cloud over the next year. Basically making use of the cloud infrastructure, improving our download speed and reliability once again… If you have any particular questions about something that I can answer, just let me know… I do have one comment to make and this is just an FYI for everybody: When we had this outage and we had the website part of BARD up, and the BARD Mobile part of BARD down, I think people were a bit surprised to find out that BARD Express was not working. BARD Express is actually more like BARD Mobile than it is BARD web. It uses the exact same technology to communicate with BARD as BARD Mobile. If, what we call the API of BARD is not functioning, BARD Mobile and BARD Express do not work right. So there are some people that understood that BARD Mobile was not available, but they didn't understand why BARD Express was not available and that's because BARD Express is very close to BARD Mobile in the way it works.

Question: (Susan Hammer-Schneider - ND)
Hello everyone. I have a couple things – some good news: Our IT person just got done setting up our Gutenberg – our Duplication-on-Demand system, so it's pretty exciting, so we're looking forward to giving it a try here. The other thing is – and we weren't aware of this, maybe the rest of you are – we had a veteran come in a couple weeks ago and he had just received a pair of Bluetooth hearing aids. So we're talking to him – and he came in here for help with BARD Mobile. At the end of the conversation we start to think "I wonder if he can hear his books through his hearing aids and, sure as shooting, he can. So on his iPhone and on his iPad – to listen to his books – he can listen via his hearing aids. We were pretty excited about that. I don't know if you were aware of that and maybe you were and we missed it, but I think that's a pretty cool deal. And that's the thing coming out now. They're pushing Bluetooth hearing aids and, he really likes it. The other thing is just a suggestion that would help out is: when there is sort of a mishap – something happens – a recent one I thought of – it would have been nice to have gotten an Operations Alert (for) – is for that book DB 84990 where, it had been taken off the PICS list and we were just wondering what was going on with it. If you find something, can you just let us all know instead of a bunch of us trying to figure out who to contact and ask questions – so, that's all I have.

Answer: (Chris Corrigan - NLS)
If I remember correctly – I actually wrote this down in case that came up – that book…didn't get caught up in the batch of books that we uploaded, and we saw it on the LBPH list, and I put it back up on it's own through Network Picks for people to download. Unfortunately…they go through a bit of a process here where (Ops Alerts) have to be approved by multiple people so, at the time it happened and was corrected, there was no one here to send out the Ops Alert so, thank you for your suggestion.

Comment: (Michael Martys - NLS)
And I have one other comment about the hearing aid thing: Believe it or not, there's a lot of exciting stuff going on in that area because they're now having Bluetooth movie theaters and Bluetooth conference rooms and Bluetooth concerts – where you can go to a venue and you can hear an event through your hearing aids directly. And I know a little bit about it because we're working on conference rooms here. I believe it's going to be widely-spread pretty soon. There will be an expectation that every facility will have Bluetooth audio for the hearing-impaired.

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)
While we're waiting, I did want to mention that we have a new Head of Music Section. Juliette Appold has been appointed, if you didn't (see) the Operations Alert. She just came on board this week. I just wanted to mention that Music staff at NLS, really for close to a year – I've been the Head of Music and fortunately, they ran the operation so smoothly that I didn't have much of a need to be supervising that group, so Mary Dell and Donna and Rhoda and Gilbert – all of the Music Section did a great job…they added to the Music blog and continued on, waiting for us to hire a new Section Head – and now we have one and we're excited about it.

Question: (Diane Simms - GA)
Going back to the BARD, a lot of people have had issues with their book suddenly – and especially since the BARD went down – the book will be in the middle of something and then just say "end of book." Like the player just dropped (an) end of book bookmark in there. I'm wondering, is it something with the encryption? Do you have to reload those books after BARD goes down?

Answer: (Michael Martys - NLS)

Technically, no. This is one of those questions that have a lot of possible different answers – because it depends upon the initial setup of the question. If this situation happens on the NLS player where the book suddenly says "end of book," everything that the player needs to play the book, is on the cartridge. Usually problems like that are pretty odd and rare. We would probably need to investigate them on a one by one basis and, we would need to know what the book number was. On very rare occasions, there are some bad cartridges, but it's highly unusual and we always investigate those one by one. On BARD Mobile, the crypto function is actually initiated when you go to play the book. So if you downloaded the book but haven't even opened it or anything yet, and then BARD is down and then you go to open it, you may actually get a message that says you're not authorized to play the book. But it's not an end-of-book message… Anything to do with cryptographic is usually a "not authorized to play the book" (message).

If you get an "end of book" message on BARD Mobile, it usually means that there's a problem with the book. It's again, fairly rare. We don't get too many of those comments. And it would be a reasonable course of action to re-download the book and make sure the book was downloaded correctly. If the problem happens repeatedly – meaning you get this problem and you re-download the book and then you get it again – I would almost advise you to have the patron seek out assistance from us because it probably would be something that we would want to investigate further. There are rare occasions where we issue a brand-new book and there may be a problem with the book that's up on BARD. Very, very rare – maybe a couple times in eight years. But, we would probably want to investigate it on a one-by-one basis. To date, we don't have any widespread report of any problems of that type and we're not investigating any problems of that type currently…

Comment: (Diane Simms - GA)

…I wondered because we do get a lot of those here in Georgia… BARD Mobile, not so much. We had it after BARD went down but you had the crypto thing pretty much fixed and back up, so we hadn't had any more problems. Mainly, the people with their players – they're the ones who have been fussing about "end of book."

Comment: (Michael Martys - NLS)

We need to get more data from you on that and do a bit more investigation because that shouldn't be happening that much. That should be fairly rare. And if you're reporting it enough times to be a bother to you, then we probably should investigate a couple of them to see what's going on. With stuff like that we would want to know what type of player they have, how old is the player – the serial number, and the book number that they're reading.

Comment: (Diane Simms - GA)

Okay… If they get it from us and our warehouse, and it's a problem then we'll usually go ahead and reorder it from Multi State or like you said, one of us will re-download it for the person. But, some of them say "well, why is this always happening?" We don't know…

Comment: (Michael Martys - NLS)

If it does always happen to a particular patron, that's highly unusual and we should investigate.

Question: (Diane Simms - GA)

And the other question is: When will the other players be ready because since we have no DA1s to distribute,

Answer: (Karen Keninger - NLS)

We don't have an answer for that. We aren't sure.

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

Well, thank you. There were 40 people on the line…we'll see you next month. Thanks for calling in…

No more questions or comments.