

NLS Telephone Forum – 06-29-2016
(paraphrased)

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

Welcome everyone. This is our June call and for the month, we had a lot going on. I'm going to go around the table here in Washington DC and my name...is Richard Smith, Chief of the Network Division. And to my right is...

Comment: (Library Staff - NLS)

Michael Katzmann, Chief of the Materials Development Division; I'm Karen Keninger, Director of NLS; Margie Goergen-Rood, Head of Quality Assurance; Vickie Collins, Head of the Network Services section; Shana Osborne, Equipment Control Officer; Paula Bahmani, Education and Training Specialist; Pamela Davenport, Network Consultant; Neil Bernstein, Research and Development; Michelle Spezzacatena, Management Analyst; Michael Martys, Automation; Andrew Skinner, Production Control; Jane Caulton, Publications and Media.

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

Okay. We'll have a few announcements and we'll open the floor for questions. We've had a busy month here – or at least I have. They all shake their heads saying yes, they've been busy too. Basically, I just came back from ALA – the American Library Association down in Orlando, Florida. I did want to mention that our Steve (Prine) won an award – the Joseph Campbell award for outstanding services... We also this month had a Multi-State director's meeting in Utah, so I was visiting there in the last two weeks to get that done, and when I came back, on my desk were several publications. We got a new Reference Guide out. I think its "Books for Individuals who are Blind or Handicapped, 2016" and I think that's from the Reference Section. Another publication came across my desk and that's an "Information Sheet for Braille and Talking Book Programs for Veterans" and both of those large-print publications can be acquired through our Reference Section.

Oh and then June 10, we had a big reception here - a luncheon - basically the Indiana State Library Talking Book Program. Maggie (Ansty) won the Network Library of the Year award – Regional Library – and the first "Activity and Outreach Center" out of Wyoming, Michigan and that was the 10th District library and, Michelle Rosen was here for the luncheon and she won the "Library of the Year" award – Sub-regional or Activity (AOC), and that was pretty nice – on the 10th of June. We have another announcement – Michael...

Comment: (Michael Martys - NLS)

Just a couple of system announcements: On July 15th and 17th (it's a weekend) the PICS/NIOSS Data System will be going down for maintenance. It will be basically unavailable for the entire weekend. We'll send out an Op Alert prior to that, but I wanted to give you guys a heads-up. And then also, the Library of Congress will be shutting down its entire data center on the 30th of July – that weekend – and that basically affects BARD, our website, all functions of the Library of Congress. The PICS/NIOSS system (is) hosted outside of the Library of Congress (and) will still be operating – but all Library-based functions will not be operating and again, we'll send out an Op Alert right before that occurs. Both of those outages are on the weekends and the plan is that they will extend for the entire weekend.

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

Meredith is not here so I'll make an announcement in a forthcoming NLS Operations Alert. Because of everyone's stringent security measures, the Network Library Service's web portal will need new passwords and new logins...

Comment: (Michael Martys - NLS)

The logins will be the same - the passwords will have to change.

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

The passwords will have to be changed. Meredith is writing up an Operations Alert with some good examples, but you will have to change the passwords for security reasons, to get back into the Network Library portal website. Any other announcements? We're in good shape. Okay, let's open it up for questions...

Question: (Pat Shotzbarger – PA9)

This question is for Mike Martys. Mike, we have had several BARD people who were inactivated by NLS, contact us to be reactivated. Unfortunately, they were not patrons of the Philadelphia Library for the Blind. Is there some place we can easily refer them to? Or just...

Answer: (Michael Martys - NLS)

That's kind of odd, because when a patron is placed in the 'inactive' status, they see a message that basically refers them to contact the library that the system has on record for them. If they're contacting you, the system thinks that they're in your library – and you're basically saying they're not. Is that correct?

Answer: (Pat Shotzbarger – PA9)

Yes. We've had at least two instances where patrons were not in our database whatsoever. Mac searched by name. He also searched by email address – all of our BARD records.

Comment: (Michael Martys - NLS)

Yeah, if you could send me those two names, we'll have to research that. He won't be able to look them up if they're in another library, but that's sure odd. We'll have to research that one.

Question: (Andrew Egan - RI)

Hi everyone. I just wanted to check on the PIMMS transition. The memo from Steve Prine was that we have to switch by September 30th 2016. Is everything still on schedule for that? I know we're working toward it.

Answer: (Michael Martys - NLS)

In terms of our data systems, we're ready. The issue has to do more with your circulation system vendors, and them making sure that they've scheduled your library to switch over. So the problem is not so much an issue for us, as it would be with your vendors. The vendors have both given us indications that they're going to comply with this and switch all the libraries over by the September 30th deadline.

Question: (Andrew Egan - RI)

At the end of July, we'll be switching over through KLAS. What about the CMLS reconciliations? Is Data Management going to be able to handle that – get the information out to us? Any issues relative to that?

Answer: (Michael Martys - NLS)

The reconciliation before you switch over is sort of optional. Once you switch over to PIMMS, the system's design has an auto-reconciliation feature built in. The systems continuously auto-reconcile. That's just part of what they do all the time. So once you switch over, you don't have to worry about it anymore.

Question: (Andrew Egan - RI)

My impression from Steve was that it was required.

Answer: (Michael Martys - NLS)

We were recommending that, because it leaves the CMLS system in as good a state as possible before you switch over. Data Management is aware of that and can accommodate it. But, there is a little bit of flexibility. It's not absolutely required – but it's encouraged.

Comment: (Susan Westin - OR)

Hi. Not so much a question but more of a comment in regard to PIMMS. We just went from CMLS to PIMMS and just finished up. Because we were CMLS-reconciled, we probably had about 20 errors that we had to deal with for the whole transition. So, I think in the whole scheme of things we were pretty easy to move over. So, to follow what Michael was saying (there's) a strong recommendation to do the CMLS reconciliation.

Question: (Mary Jane Kayes – CA9)

I've got to talk about two different topics, so the first side is going to be about the High-Volume players. We faxed in a couple of requests earlier this month – on the 7th and the 14th. Are we going to be automatically contacted to let us know that those players have been sent out? We've had people asking if they've been sent yet, but we don't have anything to tell them. And secondly, if we're not going to be automatically alerted, who should we contact about their status?

Answer: (Shana Osborne - NLS)

You will be contacted. Once those applications are processed, you will receive an email directly – with the applicant's name – telling you that they were issued. If you have any questions regarding High-Volume players, feel free to email me at any time.

Question: (Mary Jane Kayes – CA9)

And then my other question has to do with the BARD audit. First of all, if we do close an account, does it stay in BARD, or does the whole record go away...?

Answer: (Michael Martys - NLS)

No, if you close an account, BARD can recover the account. However, there is a big important thing to note. When somebody has an account in BARD, the account is basically their email address. And when they have an account in BARD, no one else can create an account with that email address. They sort of have it reserved for themselves. When you close an account, the reservation on the email address is given up. So, all the data is still there, but BARD would allow a new account to be created with that email address. When you recover a closed address, it re-reserves the email address again. The only nuance is that the email address is capable of being reused again when the account is closed.

Comment: (Mary Jane Kayes – CA9)

Well, we actually have had a couple of patrons come back from the dead.

Comment: (Michael Martys - NLS)

Yes, we knew that so we designed BARD so that we can resurrect people.

Question: (Mary Jane Kayes – CA9)

And then, we got a spreadsheet from BARD Ops – Don Olson – and we've been working with that. We have some weird instances and strange things. We have an account that did add a player in the last twelve months but didn't download, and we're wondering why they were cut.

Answer: (Michael Martys - NLS)

The reason for the audit is periodically just to make sure that all of your accounts are in order and that if there are unusual things, you're aware of them and have an explanation for them.

Question: (Mary Jane Kayes – CA9)

We were wondering how – we can't find one. Were they going by the downloads? Were they going by the login date? What were they going by?

Answer: (Michael Martys - NLS)

By both. If you've gotten somebody who was inactive for a year, that really means that they haven't used the system for a year.

Question: (Mary Jane Kayes – CA9)

But if they added a player...

Answer: (Michael Martys - NLS)

Yes but they have to download something.

Question: (Mary Jane Kayes – CA9)

Okay. And then we've had some where either the login was inaccurate as far as the date, or it said "unknown."

Answer: (Michael Martys - NLS)

And those we can follow up on. In general – just so people understand the audit – in the world of I.T. security, one of the things you have to be careful of is that you have these old accounts that are not being used, and then the bad guys try to break into those accounts and use them because they figure that no one is paying attention. And so, what we're required to do as part of the library security rules is periodically check the accounts for inactivity and make sure that those accounts are closed, or marked as "no longer active" so that a bad person can't bust in and try to take them over. That's the reason we're doing what we're doing.

Question: (Mary Jane Kayes – CA9)

We have not kept notes on this but we know we've done it frequently, and that is that we have opened an account for someone or had them open an account solely to get decryption keys for their third-party players. Like, the Victor Reader Stream will play a cartridge with either a cable or the slide-in docking thing – and so they have no desire to download. The only time they will need that account is if they got another Victor Reader Stream or something like it. And so, I'm wondering can we create a special category for those accounts? We open them with difficulty. It always

seems to take a lot of effort. Somebody has to go to a special...support center to get it done and they never intend to download. They just need the decryption key. Is there a way to open an account and just get a decryption key? Or could there be in the future?

Answer: (Michael Martys - NLS)

I guess we'd have to think about that as a change but, my first recommendation would be to just leave them in inactive/suspended. It means the account is still there and in the system. It's just in a state where they can't download anything, but it still exists. We will not automatically delete inactive accounts. That's for the libraries to do. And then maybe just put a note in it, saying why it's in this state.

Question: (Mary Jane Kayes – CA9)

And then I can see where we get through doing this audit, and then we do it again next year, do we have a way of knowing what we already looked at and took care of?

Answer: (Michael Martys - NLS)

Well, if they're left in (an) inactive state, we won't mess with them again. We would only manipulate accounts that are left in "active" state yet nobody is using them for more than a year.

Question: (Mary Jane Kayes – CA9)

So this is the big one and then after this, it should be a maintenance thing.

Answer: (Michael Martys - NLS)

Yes that's right.

Comment: (Mary Jane Kayes – CA9)

And then one final word to the people calling in who didn't have a BARD account with them. We had what we called a 'phantom patron.' She'd been our patron forever and she was in our KLAS database, but somehow or other she had signed up for BARD a long time ago and that account had been assigned to the Braille Institute in Southern California and so we had to transfer the account...to get it back. We couldn't find her BARD records anywhere because we didn't have access to them. So, you may find that some of those mysteries get solved that way.

Question: (Pat Shotzbarger – PA9)

This again is for Mike. Mike we have some patron accounts for BARD that were closed. Like, if someone worked for the library and had administrative access, when they left that account was closed as opposed to being made inactive. Matt usually makes people who are deceased "inactive." Do you see a difference between "closed" and "inactive"?

Answer: (Michael Martys - NLS)

No. The programmer that implemented this change made a mistake and he corrected it and they should be back to being "closed" and if they're not, please contact me.

Comment: (Pat Shotzbarger – PA9)

Okay thank you because we wanted to make sure that anybody who had been an employee at the library who had a different kind of access to it – you might look at something that is inactive and say "let's make them active." Certainly if something was "closed" you know that there's a reason for it. Thank you.

Comment: (Michael Martys - NLS)

Yes we want "closed" to stay closed.

Question: (Sue Sugimura - HI)

I understand that there are no barcodes to be found anywhere. Is there an anticipated date when Multi State Centers will be getting barcodes and if so, what would be the date? My other question is: we have OCR-A labels. We have a lot. Can we continue to use those while we are waiting for barcodes?

Answer: (Richard Smith - NLS)

I'll look into the barcodes. I didn't know we were shorthanded on those – and I'll get back with you, Sue.

Question: (Jane Glasby – CA9)

I wanted to ask whether we have any information about the closure of the Talking Book center at Chicago Public Library? I understand it was due to close this month – that sub-regional.

Answer: (Vickie Collins - NLS)

Well, that is correct – and that means that those patrons are now being handled by the Regional Library in Springfield. So in essence, what's happening there – possibly for economic reasons – would be centralization and if someone is on the line and wants to talk about it from Illinois, we certainly would invite them to do that.

Comment: (Sharon Ruda - IL)

Yes. Some of you do know that the State of Illinois is still without a budget and it's the end of our fiscal year – and it does not look like we will have a budget for fiscal year '17. In April, the legislators put in an appropriation for a kind of a stopgap so that different agencies could get all of their federal money. At that time – the Talking Book program in Illinois – the budget was cut 71%. We gave grants to three agencies to support the program in Illinois. Because of the lack of budget, we are bringing those services to the State Library. On July 1st we begin serving Chicago patrons, although we've already been serving a number of them who have been calling. In April, we took over circulation for the entire state. Our circulation is on par for Chicago people, as it was a year ago... We are hiring three Reader Advisors. We'll have a total of 19 and a half people on staff now, compared to Chicago's 7, so we are fully prepared to take over the service... (The) Advisory and Outreach Center is still going to be in service for at least the next year. Their administering agency is going to be paying from their reserve fund to keep that service in place for at least another fiscal year.

Question: (Andrew Egan - RI)

How did the ASCLA standards meeting go? Does anyone want to give a summation?

Answer: (Richard Smith - NLS)

Basically, the Working Committee met there (in Florida). They're working right now to get the first draft out, which is due August 16. They're well on their way to getting something out. They had an intensive all-day session and then (the next day) they had a public hearing at ALA. Thirteen people showed up. We had NLS representatives. Georgia was there and New Jersey was there. We also had three COSLA members – Rhode Island, Utah and Alabama. (They) showed up to put in comments, too. We did have a new project director – Yura replaced Laurie, who had to resign – so she was on the ball. In addition to taking comments from our Public Forum, she then reported to the ASCLA board what we have done in the past and what we are going to do in the future to move along to get that first draft out. That draft is due by August 16. They may get it out earlier – and then it will be publicly distributed for input from everyone in the Network and consumer groups.

The Advisory Committee...actually met in Boston and (also) once on the phone... Ava from Texas in the south and Kim (who is) an American Council of the Blind representative. Adam is a representative from the north and Will on the Working Committee and Danielle from Washington and (the representative from) Ohio all met here but they all met in Boston face-to-face. We met on the phone this month and we'll meet on the phone before the first draft, I think in July tentatively, if not early August. Other than that, we had good comments come in from the public forum and (from) a nice variety of groups. Nancy Pack, who is a COSLA representative from (the) Alabama Library Commission actually sat in with the Working Committee on Monday. She probably sat there for three hours, and they were talking quite a bit about changes – what to look forward to. So that's a short summary. We're looking forward to the first draft coming out in August.

Comment: (Christie Briggs - MT)

I just wanted to remind you to please send out an Op Alert on the (Network Library of the Year) award(s). We haven't seen it. For those of us who haven't seen it or weren't on the Open Forum call.

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

We just sent a press release. I guess we can send out an Operations Alert. Thank you.

Question: (Linda Vincent - WI)

I was just wondering if any of the PSAs have hit yet or, are planning to go out soon.

Answer: (Jane Caulton - NLS)

The PSAs are out and about. They have been distributed to 1700 outlets. We can't tell you where they're going to air because we don't pay for that time. So it's up to the stations that receive them to determine when they will air. But, never fear – we're working on resolving that. Right now we have a solicitation out for television commercials and we will be able to tell vendors when we want that aired. We'll be giving more information on that probably in the fall.

Comment: (Linda Vincent - WI)

Okay. I was wondering what markets you were hitting first. (We wanted to) know if our state is included.

Comment: (Jane Caulton - NLS)

The PSAs are a national effort. They're not a rolling effort. It's not a rolling (effort) because we can't tell the stations when to air the announcement. They do it out of the goodness of their hearts. (When) they need to fill in some space.

Comment: (Carl Keehn - NC)

I wanted to bring up that last week, Time-Warner News...filmed what turned out to be a very nice 90-second spot. We have it (posted) on our website. If any of you are interested in seeing it, I believe I sent a link to MaryBeth but I believe she's out traveling the universe right now so...

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

That's very informative. There were a lot of questions from a lot of states. We'll talk to you in July. Have a good rest of June and beginning of July next week...

No more questions or comments.