

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

Thank you Victoria. February is over...and because of the short month, I didn't get everything done. If I had two more days I would have completed everything. So basically, we have a nice crowd in the room and I'm going to go around the table and again, my name is Richard Smith. I'm Chief of the Network Division here at NLS.

Comment: (Library Staff - NLS)

Vickie Collins, Head of Network Services; Steve Prine, Assistant Chief of the Network Division; Pamela Davenport, Network Consultant; Don Olson, Network Services; Neil Bernstein, Research and Development; Paula Bahmani, Education and Training; David Perotta, Network Program Specialist; MaryBeth Wise, Network Consultant; Doug Ament, Head of the Automation Group;

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

Okay. That's everyone. Nice crowd here. I did want to mention last month we had a really good program. We actually went overtime. We went an hour and fifteen minutes. We have a 1 hour limit so we don't want to do that this time. I asked the chairs last week – the chairs had a conference call a week before this – of all four regions, the Midlands, the north, the south (and the west). Basically I said that maybe we should stop the presentations of NLS staff and leave more room for questions and they said “no “ they like the NLS updates and indeed, just try to shorten the questions, and we'll try to do that by limiting questions to just two questions and maybe a time limit also. If we run short and you have more questions after your first primary ones you could call back in. So we're going to try that format this time around. Does anyone in the room want to report? Ahh, MaryBeth...

Comment: (MaryBeth Wise - NLS)

We anticipate that the Operations Alert, with the hotel registration link, the conference registration link and the preliminary agenda for the conference coming up in June will be posted early next week, and if anyone has any questions about the conference – or concerns – you can email me directly and I'll be happy to answer questions. An Operations Alert will be posted early next week, we anticipate.

Question: (Richard Smith - NLS)

Where is that conference?

Answer: (MaryBeth Wise - NLS)

Oh, thank you. The conference is in Nashville Tennessee at the Hilton, downtown Nashville – And there's a pre-conference June 16, and the conference will run June 17 through (Thursday, June 21). Thank you. Look forward to seeing you there.

Comment: (David Perotta - NLS)

Quick update on the Library of the Year Award. We are accepting nominations for that up till midnight tonight eastern time and, so far we have received an even dozen. You still have the rest of the day if any of you are interested. We're going to be reviewing those nominations...and we expect to make a final decision in late March or early April. Our celebration event is going to be on May 17 so stay tuned.

Comment: (Don Olson - NLS)

I have a short update on the MOCA project. This has been a pilot in the true sense of the word. It is not only introducing a few new patrons to the NLS services, but it is giving us an opportunity to learn some new technologies. We're having to make some tweaks to some various technological situations and we're moving forward with finding some successes with the project. A number of people have not been able to connect. I'm continuing to contact them. A number of those folks have connected and I'm continuing to contact people today and tomorrow.

Comment: (Vickie Collins - NLS)

Mike Martys was not able to be here but he did stop by my office and he said that he wanted to be sure that if we're talking about BARD, to remind Network Libraries to please encourage your patrons to use their BARD accounts to keep them active. If you have patrons who are no longer using the accounts and are not using the program anymore you do want to close those BARD accounts.

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

That's a good newsletter item...once a year, download a book from BARD. I just wanted to mention in the Network Division – especially the Network Services section, I looked at the last year's worth (of consultant visits) and they're really within 4 months – a consultant wrapping up after a consultant visit – which is quite an improvement over when I got here – so we really streamlined that. And we're now working on (this): We sent out a questionnaire – I think it was 21 pages – and we're getting it down to 2 pages I think. So we'll be able to do that faster also – and less work for you – a 21-page form to a 2-page form. With that, Victoria I think you can open for questions...

Comment: (Alicia Waters - RI)

Well I don't actually have a question but I wanted to get in there and make sure that everyone is aware that Andy Egan, who was with the State of Rhode Island for over 38 years – the Regional Librarian for the Talking Book Program – retired on February 9 of this year. I know that Andy's always in on this call and you are used to hearing from him.

Question: (Ivan Johnson – CA8)

This is a question/comment concerning batteries. Over the last 11 years that I've been at this library – we have been able to get machines out – a person orders a machine today, it's on the mail truck tomorrow morning. We deal with – I guess – a relatively high volume of patrons. Lately with the battery situation – and I know that you guys don't have complete control over the supply – lately...a mailing card might sit there for (several) days until we can get it together and, the older batteries are pretty much useless. If we send a machine out with an older battery, it's almost guaranteed to come back within a couple days to a couple weeks. The question is: Could there be any improvement on the horizon as far as the availability of batteries? Last month we did get...120, but our volume dictates triple that.

Answer: (Richard Smith - NLS)

We are investigating it. Shana is unfortunately not here, and she's investigating exactly what you said. There are high-volume users and people with lower volumes and, this shipment, we really had to be sparse with it, because we're not sure when the next shipment is coming in, but there is a next shipment coming. So, we hope that with the next shipment, this will be resolved. But, we are hearing that more batteries are needed for the high-volume repair places – and we're looking into that.

Answer: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

We did ask for funding for a certain number of batteries and unfortunately, that was cut back, so we may end up with future shipments – in the medium-term – being a little short. The new batteries are far superior to the old ones as far as the self-discharge – the amount of life left in the battery if the player hasn't been used in several months – it's far superior than the older batteries. You certainly do get much better performance with the newer batteries. I do sympathize with you trying to get those out to patrons, so we've budgeted for more batteries in the next year. Whether or not there's money to be able to do that – we'll have to wait until the next year to see.

Question: (Robert Freitas – CA9)

I understand we only get two questions so, I just had a comment or two about the list of the books that are only going to be available through BARD – that are coming out. We're noticing what appeared to be a number of errors on that list – books that we've actually received physical copies of already. Books (where the) book titles don't match up – that sort of thing. So I guess the real question is: Who should I contact with those questions?

Answer: (Steve Prine - NLS)

Ed O'Reilly, in the Collection Development section.

Question: (Robert Freitas – CA9)

Okay. I also had a question on the Ops Alert itself. It indicated that we can inter-library loan these titles through the Multi State Center East specifically. Is that true for the west libraries as well? Do we have to check the list to see which Multi State Center we're inter-library loaning books from?

Answer: (Richard Smith – NLS)

Right. It would be your own Multi State.

Question: (Mary Jane Kayes – CA9)

We discovered this by the back way and I don't know if we missed the notice or what, but when we were trying to make the remotes work with the players, we found out that we had to update our firmware in the digital players. And so I went back to the BARD page, and the main page still says that the latest firmware is 2.1.7. and then if you go into that link, it's all the way up to 2.1.11, and you need (2.1.10) for the remote. So the question I have is: Are the updates still being added to new books and magazines that come in the mail, so that they get installed on players automatically? Or has that stopped? How are BARD-only users being notified of the new software? Should we be making an active effort to get the new updates installed? And will someone please edit the "current version" line on the main page to fix it?

Answer: (Michael Katzmann – NLS)

(There is a) very narrow (change in) functionality from 2.1.7, so the Remote Control and the High-Volume player updates aren't being put on new books that are produced. So, if you send out a Remote Control and you don't send out a machine, you would need to send that update with it – send them a cartridge (with the update on it). As for the website, I'm sure someone can (fix it).

Question: (Mary Jane Kayes – CA9)

I do have another set of questions on a different topic but only if you want to allow me...I can come back in if there's time. This is about the non-TBT books. The ones that we're not going to be putting into Talking Book Topics. Are we only going to put non-commercial books into Talking Book Topics? Or is it going to be a mix?

Answer: (Vickie Collins – NLS)

It'll be a mix because some books that we are doing are the commercial audio. They're just not BARD-only. They are offered on Copy Allotment. So, all of those from Copy Allotment will be on Talking Book Topics.

Answer: (Michael Katzmann – NLS)

It's the other way around. So, anything we produce ourselves will be made available on cartridge. Some of the books that are commercial will be in Copy Allotment for you and...backlist books and other books that are likely to be less popular or less topical will be not for Copy Allotment.

Comment: (Mary Jane Kayes – CA9)

Okay because when we get a Patterson commercial book, we're going to want that in Talking Book Topics. That's what I was worried about. Okay.

Comment: (Michael Katzmann – NLS)

If it's going to be a popular book that's going to have demand, we'll do it on cartridge.

Question: (Kathleen Walls - TX)

A clarification question about Vickie's statement about closing BARD accounts for patrons no longer with the Talking Book program. My understanding previously was that, the only time we actually closed the BARD account was if the patron is deceased. And other times if they just leave the service, we set them to Suspended/Inactive. Can you clarify on that?

Answer: (Vickie Collins – NLS)

That sounds right. I wish that Mike were here to talk about it. We are going through some security changes and we are most concerned about patrons who are active but...oh here is Mike – we're mostly concerned about patrons who are active but have not been doing any downloading. So, ask your question again for Mike Martys who is here, Kathleen.

Question: (Kathleen Walls - TX)

The question was: Vickie had mentioned that we should be encouraging our BARD account holders to actually use BARD to keep their accounts active – and also that any BARD users that leave the service – their accounts should be closed, and I was asking for clarification on whether that should be "closed" or "suspended/inactive." My understanding is that we only close them if the patron is deceased.

Answer: (Michael Martys – NLS)

Yes, and that would be fine. “Suspended/Inactive” puts the account in a state where it can’t be used, but if somebody logs into it, it says “please call your library.” So, you’re right. Moving them to “suspended/inactive” would be fine because that is with the account in that state. We’re required by our security rules to basically deactivate accounts that have not been used for a certain period of time – and that time period for patrons with BARD is one year, which matches with what I think the guidelines are in the ALA (manual). And so if there is no activity within one year, the plan is to transition it into a “suspended/inactive” state if the library doesn’t do that. It’s part of their normal process.

Question: (Kathleen Walls - TX)

So, I know that you did a mass inactivation a while back for any accounts that hadn’t been used in one year. Is this going to be kind of a different approach to that in which it will be an ongoing process instead of a one-time...

Answer: (Michael Martys – NLS)

Yes that was the big change. We used to do that with purges periodically but we’re going to be doing that on a much more frequent basis now. We’re required to.

Answer: (Vickie Collins – NLS)

Libraries can reactivate. If a patron calls in and the account is not active, you can go in and change it back to “active” status.

Comment: (Michael Martys – NLS)

The only thing that I might need to explain to people is that, when you have an account in “inactive” status, even though that account is deactivated, that email address with that person cannot be reused for any other purpose. Even though the account is inactive, the email address is locked. There’s another status in BARD, which is “closed.” With a “closed” status, it means the email address can be reused. Very seldom to people get into that problem, but I thought I’d just mention it.

Comment: (Don Olson – NLS)

I’d like to add one more note if I may. If a library activates that account – let’s say today – make sure that patron actually logs into the account within the next 24 hours, because if it’s not accessed, the tool will just kick it right back out – and the temporary password is truly temporary, and it would be deactivated and then you’d need to put another temporary one on there.

Question: (Susan Hammer-Schneider - ND)

I have a question about the High-Volume players. We have a patron that has applied for one and hasn’t gotten it yet and, it would be nice if there were a confirmation sent or something, so we know when that machine has been sent out. Because – you know – they do the follow up call and the books have been sent, but no machine. And so, is there some kind of communication that can be set up so that we know when the machine has been sent to the patron?

Answer: (Richard Smith – NLS)

Shana is not here but I’ll forward that on to her. She’s interviewing for a position and that’s running overtime here – so she was unable to make this meeting. But that’s a good comment and we’ll get back with you, Sue.

Answer: (Steve Prine – NLS)

We can also have her contact you offline to get the name of the patron and fill you in on the status.

Question: (Susan Hammer-Schneider - ND)

Okay. That sounds great. Thank you. I have something else, too. This is with Magazines on Cartridge – the CMLS ones or NLS magazines. We have a patron that passed away in October, and was suspended in October and, I just got a card – maybe two weeks ago – and it said “This is the third time I will tell you, Ron is deceased.” He was suspended October 17 and this card was January 10. And so, there’s such a span there and then we get patrons or family members that are irritated with us – they don’t understand, you know. And so, what’s the lead time on here? Why does it take so long?

Question: (Vickie Collins – NLS)

One thing, Sue – when someone is deceased, do you go into your MOC and put a temporary stop on their account? That would stop the magazines right away. Otherwise, some more could go out.

Comment: (Steve Prine – NLS)

Sue, we'll contact you – again offline – to follow up on this to see if we can figure out what the problem is.

Comment: (Michael Katzmann – NLS)

Sue, you could email Michael Martys with that patron's I.D. number so that we can trace where the breakdown happened, because what should happen is, once you put it into your system, the PIMMS system should get updated with that information and then those orders shouldn't be generated, so it should happen fairly quickly but obviously it didn't in this case, so we need to find out why it didn't.

Comment: (Richard Smith – NLS)

Any other thoughts?

Comment: (Vickie Collins – NLS)

Well, we do have Orientation next week for those who have registered, and there will be another orientation in May and then a third one in October. So, if you're interested in visiting our new facilities at NLS, please do let us know. We'd love to have visitors see how our renovations are.

Comment: (Richard Smith – NLS)

Everyone smiles in the building now – because it's all brand-new. I think our WebREADS pilot for Digital-on-Demand is going fine. We have a lot of enthusiastic libraries in the pilot and I think we'll have programs at Nashville about that – on the success of it. That being the case...thank you for joining in and we'll talk to you next month. Take care.