

Comment: (Steve Prine - NLS)

Good afternoon and welcome to the June NLS Monthly Open Forum call. It is officially summer now and, Washington is both hot and humid, as it is famous for – and we're enjoying it. I hope it's cooler where you may be. We'll go ahead and start with some reports from NLS and first, MaryBeth Wise will talk about the National Conference. MaryBeth...

Comment: (MaryBeth Wise - NLS)

An Operations Alert went out yesterday. (It updates everyone) on the new conference plan. The conference – originally scheduled for September, to be held in Nebraska – has been canceled – the in-person conference. We are looking to do a virtual conference, and the tentative dates are November 4th through November 6th. More information will be coming as plans get finalized. So, (looking) forward to seeing you virtually, hearing you virtually in early November. Thank you.

Comment: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

Okay, so this is just an update on the testing of material for resistance to coronavirus. OCLC, IMLS and Battelle are doing testing for libraries – library environment and "fomites," which are materials that could hold the virus. They're doing a couple of stages. They've completed an evaluation of the papers, documentation...a thorough review of the literature and this is mostly around the SARS coronavirus because that's been around a lot longer and there's been more literature written on that. They've started now on testing of materials in a typical library – and how long it is before the virus attenuates to a harmless level. They've just completed the first of these tests and, they're testing materials such as paper, cardboard, plastics, DVD covers for example.

What they've found...the testing procedure is...ten milliliter droplets onto the material – these are moist droplets, just like a cough – they wait for them to dry, and then they test the concentration...and what they find is when the droplets are dry, it's attenuated about 10 times, so it's 10 times less lethal after the material is dry. Then they look at it after a period of days to see what the level is. First of all, they looked after 15 days and they didn't find anything and so they looked after 1 day, 3 days, 4 days and what they found for most material – it falls below what they can accurately measure after 1 day, so it's attenuated by about a thousand after one day but they can still see that there is virus there. After 3 days, they cannot measure any virus at all. So, the virus breaks down obviously over time. After 1 day, it's down to a level they can't accurately measure and after 3 days, there is no trace of the virus at all.

The Multistate Center has sent Battelle samples of our circulating materials – so that's braille books, braille containers, cartridges and cartridge containers. They're testing those now and we've been told that we can expect results next week on those. They are typical of the materials they've already tested, so I wouldn't imagine there'd be any difference but, there's always a chance that there is some difference, so we'll get those results and pass them on to you as soon as we have them. If you're interested in looking at the testing, you can go to OC.LC/REALM-project and then follow the links in there and they have the results of the literature survey and the results of the first tests on the material. We have told the library and the REALM team of all our materials including the player. They have not yet requested a player for testing. It is a similar plastic to the cartridges, so we don't expect much of a difference there but, until it's actually tested, we won't know.

Comment: (Kristen Fernekes - NLS)

I wanted to give you an update on how we're going to move forward with shipping the bulk orders that libraries make with TBT. I know that you have all been contacted numerous times now by the Network Consultants to get information from you about your capacity to receive mail. The way that our TBTs are sent out from our printer, is a little complicated – and it's based on weight. We would love it if our shipping information was entirely based on the number that you had ordered, but unfortunately, it's based on weight. That makes it highly dependent on the weight of each TBT. I know that a number of you are tired of hearing from us...asking you about how you can receive shipping, but I wanted to give you a little background as to why we're going through that process. We want to make sure that we can get TBTs to you and that they aren't sent to you if you can't receive them in a certain way because you can't receive (some shipments). So, we had a conversation to try and find a way to streamline this for the time being. The decision that we made was to make sure that every library will get a maximum of 50 TBTs. It will be sent from the vendor. So that's our printer. That means those shipments will always be able to go USPS, which I believe should be not a problem for you to receive. For those libraries that regularly get more than 50, we have printed those copies and sent them to the Multistate Centers East and West. So, those are still available to you, but it

leaves you the flexibility of ordering from them and receiving them at your convenience. We're hoping that this will make it a great deal simpler for everybody because we know that the circumstances around closures and partial closures at various libraries have been changing and it's a little bit fluid. So, through the time that we're all not working in person at our libraries (or) at our offices, we're going to continue to send a maximum of 50 to each library and then you will have access to additional copies that you need from the Multistate Centers East and West. If you have any questions about that, please reach out to your Network Consultant and they'll be able to help you. If you have any difficulties getting into the WOW system through which you would order those, then please contact Meredith Beckhardt and she can help you...

Comment: (Tamara Rorie - NLS)

The braille e-reader project is well on its way to beginning. We expect to launch the pilot in the middle of July – so, in about 2 weeks. We have already done our training of our first 4 libraries (staff). It was a virtual training instead of a live training as we had hoped, but I think the training went well. We expect to get the first slew of e-readers by the 2nd week of July, and they'll be going out to the libraries, and patrons will have them in their hands by the end of July. As you know, we had selected the 4 libraries, and everybody is on board at this point. If you have any questions, you can feel free to ask them during this meeting or, you can ask your Network Consultant and they can forward the questions to us.

Comment: (Juliette Appold - NLS)

Starting this week, for a few hours per week, the NLS Music Section will circulate materials in the order requests were received. We have a backlog to work with so please be patient. We started the circulation process again this week and we're going to do it a couple hours per week. Thank you.

Comment: (David Spett - NLS)

I have a few things to talk about. First, we are doing a survey of our Machine Lending Agencies and second, I have announcements for WebREADS libraries only, regarding an upgrade to WebREADS occurring this weekend. So, topic number one is relevant to machine lending agencies. NLS is finalizing a survey that's being sent to all of you and, if you're an MLA you'll be receiving a link to the survey in the next few days. I expect the survey will take you about 10 to 15 minutes to complete, and we'll be very grateful for your help in filling it out. We know some of you have answered a lot of questions about your DTBMs recently – either in a conversation with your Network Consultant or in a previous survey or, as part of a previous inventory – but it would be really helpful to us if you were able to provide that information again and then there might be questions on there that we haven't asked you before. If you aren't onsite at your library right now and you aren't able to fill out the survey, we completely understand. Just let your Network Consultant know that. The survey is going to ask you questions about six different topics: First is DTBMs that require cleaning and/or inspection. Second is DTBMs that require repair beyond cleaning and/or inspection. Third, DTBMs that have never been circulated to a patron. Fourth, DTBMs that you would be willing to return to NLS. Five, the availability of resources in your library to address the machines and conditions 1-4 that I previously mentioned. And six, the effects of COVID-19 on your machine operations and machine repair.

We want to learn a little bit more about how your operations have been affected by the pandemic. If you have any questions about the survey once you've reviewed it, please feel free to contact me. My contact information will be in the survey. Just to repeat, my email address is dasp@loc.gov. So, just for context, NLS is not running out of DTBMs, at least not any more than we were before. Obviously, a finite number of DTBMs were manufactured. We're conducting a survey as a part of our efforts to improve our data so that we can make the best decisions as we move forward – with respect to machines. One final note on this: Most likely the numbers that we're going to be asking you to report in this survey, most likely won't line up exactly with the machine status' in your circulation system. You might need to do a rough inventory of machines onsite. We're asking for a few counts, and rounded figures or approximations are fine if you're able to provide those. Of course, I'll also be available during the Q&A portion of the call if you have questions or you want to discuss further, and you can also email or call me anytime.

The second topic I wanted to discuss applies to WebREADS libraries only. We are...timing a major update to WebREADS that should occur this weekend. When these plans are finalized, WebREADS libraries will receive an email announcing the downtime – which we anticipate will begin Saturday morning and last most of the weekend. This release includes dozens of bug fixes and enhancements. The full list of changes will be (sent via the WebREADS listserv). There are two major functionality upgrades in this release that I want to talk about very briefly. The first applies to Duplication-on-Demand libraries using WebREADS. It is a new method of selecting what books will be chosen for DoD book orders, and what order they are presented on the outgoing cartridge. We'll be disseminating a training video that explains the new functionality. I suspect you'll recognize the voice on that training video because it is our own Michael Katzmann. This is really important: the functionality will be optional, so you'll

have the full ability to turn on the feature once you're comfortable with how it works. Unless you turn it on, it will remain off. So, if you're not ready yet to use it, that's okay, you won't be forced to do so. The second major functionality upgrade – part of this WebREADS release – will allow you to track referral sources of patrons. This data that you enter on referral sources, will be pushed to PIMMS, and will help NLS understand the effectiveness of our marketing and the drivers of patron referrals. We'll be sharing our findings with the Network Library community. NLS has developed written guidance, providing definitions and examples of each referral code – and will be disseminating that information to all the WebREADS libraries. Finally, we'll be scheduling one or two conference calls to discuss referrals...with WebREADS libraries, and to answer any questions you may have. Again, all this information will be sent in greater detail to WebREADS libraries via email in the coming days. Please let me know if you have any questions or you can reply to the emails you'll be receiving.

Comment: (Karen Keninger - NLS)

One of the things that I wanted to touch base on was, your response to our draft of the regulations that we are looking at putting out by the end of the year. I want to say a big “thank you” to all of you for your responses. Those were draft regulations and the reason we put them out was so that we could get your comments – and you did not disappoint us. I just want you to understand that librarians and teachers were covered in the kind of general language but, we will put them back in definitely, so there will be no ambiguity about whether librarians or teachers are able to certify people for the program so, thank you again for paying attention. I wanted to give you a bit of an update on where NLS is with regard to this crazy world that we're living in right now. Our building has been closed since April 7 but yesterday, we were able to open the building up and allow five of our staff to come in and tackle some critical issues. One of them – as Juliette mentioned – was music circulation. Another one was all of the mail that has been piling up – and deliveries. And our admin staff came in to try to catch up on some of the work that's really hard to do at a distance, so, we are now going to be open for this particular time span, which we don't know how long that is – on Tuesdays and Thursdays – and we will try to handle our mail and some of these other things a little more efficiently than obviously, we were able to do before. So, there are very strict protocols for our staff.

As we all know, the health and welfare of our staff is more important than the mail sitting there. Its good news that the virus is being tested and it seems to be not lingering as long as we thought it might have been, but we still are very cautious about our staff and we will have another phase of opening at some point where we'll bring in more people and eventually we'll all get back in there but it's probably going to take the summer at the rate we're going, so, be patient with us as we're being patient with each other as we're all working under strange circumstances. Our studio is closed obviously and that impacts the production of “The Economist” which is a popular magazine that we're not able to do without the studio staff so in our next phase of reoccupying our building the studio will be included. Meanwhile, everyone else is working from home. I think the last time we mentioned, the magazines – the MOC program – we said that some magazines might have been shipping and some weren't. We are back to shipping all of our magazines now as I understand it, so that should be in good shape – and they're also getting recorded in braille. Braille magazines are shipping but the post office may not be delivering everything because of closures so, that's one thing people might be dealing with.

Braille books are being produced and they're being uploaded to BARD, but the physical braille books are not being shipped at this point – again, for shipping reasons. We had had a lull in the number of books we are producing as we shifted over to our new way of doing things with regard to e-books. Also, our vendors were closed and all of those other things but they're (starting) to pick up now, so we're hoping to get back on full track pretty quickly with regard to new books so watch for those. However, we're still not doing the duplication for Copy Allotment. We're looking at when to reinstate that. That will depend a lot on you all and, again, we've been asking for a lot of information from you on a regular basis – more than usual – and I hope that you'll be patient with us and provide that information because we need it in order to do the best job that we can in terms of distributing materials, so I thank you in advance for answering the surveys and for responding to the Consultant's requests for additional information. Multistates are both open and functioning. This is good news. That's basically my report for the moment.

Question: (Sue Greene – MI)

I had two questions: One is, we are waiting on parts orders, so I wondered where that falls in your phased opening of NLS in Washington. The other question was: Sue Chinault recently retired, and so I'm wondering, should I just (give you my) email so that I can get the survey? I'm assuming it might be going to her email which is now nonfunctional.

Answer: (Steve Prine - NLS)

Yes. Send your email address to Pam Davenport, your consultant, and she will see that it gets to the places it needs to go. If you have the password to get into the PICS system, for the database, you may want to update your Network Library information and add your name.

Answer: (Karen Keninger - NLS)

Regarding your question about parts, we had not been able to ship any, but yesterday, our parts people began to come back and start filling orders, so you should be seeing those – hopefully pretty soon.

Comment: (Sue Greene – MI)

That's so awesome because I have three different repair groups and they're all starting to run short, so they'll be very pleased to hear that.

Comment: (Meredith Beckhardt - NLS)

I just wanted to make a quick correction about something that Steve said. Our NLDB system is currently down, but I can put your information in – and that way it will show on “Find Your Library” so, again if you just work through Pam, we'll make sure that everything gets sorted out.

Question: (Maureen Dorosinski - FL)

Unfortunately, my phone dropped the call during Karen's update and I'm sorry if this was covered, but Magazines-on-Cartridges – are they going out now?

Answer: (Karen Keninger - NLS)

Yes. They are.

Comment: (Catherine Durivage - MN)

Hi. I just wanted to share a feedback I got from a patron about the new layout font for the Talking Book Topics order form for the audio version. One of our patrons called and indicated (that) it was very difficult to read the new form. I don't think anything has changed in terms of the layout, but the font is different, seems bolder, maybe the numbers are a little closer together? So I just wanted to share that. This is the May/June issue, not the March/April.

Question: (Kristin White - SC)

A couple questions from my crew: The first question was, “Are the warranties going to be extended on the new books that were issued in March, April and May of last year – since we've had kind of a hiatus going on with service this year?

Answer: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

I think the warranties are governed by the contract and the contract (hasn't) changed so, no, the warranties will not be extended.

Question: (Kristin White - SC)

I kind of figured as much. The second one may actually be just a personal question that I need to get with MaryBeth and possibly Shana on: We put in a DA order that was cancelled, and I was wondering if that had to do with supply, or if that had to do with the number of machines that we may have already been assumed to have in stock?

Answer: (Shana Osborne - NLS)

Can you send me an email and I'll look into this matter for you?

Comment: (Karen Keninger - NLS)

I have one more note and that is that we will have a presence at both the NFB and the ACB conventions although they'll all be online this year. It's my understanding that the Librarian of Congress will be speaking at the NFB convention so, I just wanted to let you all know that.

Question: (Maureen Dorosinski - FL)

Maybe this is something I need to coordinate with MaryBeth but can you clarify? We get about a thousand TBTs. I'm going to have to order those from Multistate. Can you give me a time frame, so I order them in time?

Answer: (Kristen Fernekes - NLS)

I can tell you roughly when they will be in the warehouse. Probably around the same time that you get your 50 copies, you can go ahead and assume that they're (in) the warehouse. They're on slightly different tracks because one is coming through the Postal Service and those going to the Multistate Center will be going through freight. That would probably be your very best indicator. Are these people you're sending them out to not subscribers?

Question: (Maureen Dorosinski - FL)

It's a combination of a lot – including new patrons. We get a huge shipment of them and, the last few shipments we got, instead of them being in medium-sized boxes, they came in very small boxes. Is that going to keep going on like that?

Answer: (Kristen Fernekes - NLS)

We changed vendors and that's just the way that they package them... So, it's more an issue of not the box size but how much you're ordering and how it's sent.

Question: (Maureen Dorosinski - FL)

Ok, so we're going to have to wait until we get the 50 and then order the rest of them? So they'll be a few weeks behind? Or a week behind?

Answer: (Kristen Fernekes - NLS)

They would be arriving at the Multistates around the same time as you would be getting your 50. The 50 would go out relatively quickly whereas the freight shipment (would be behind the 50). What I can do is make sure that Pam and MaryBeth are aware of when they're actually headed out – and then they can let you know.

Comment: (Maureen Dorosinski - FL)

Yes. That would be great if we could get some advance notice about it.

Comment: (Kristen Fernekes - NLS)

I can't guarantee advance because, part of the reason we're doing this is there are a variety of complications up and down the supply chain so, we're all just trying to simplify it until we get back to a normal place. I'm sorry if this is an inconvenience. We're just trying to figure out the best way to handle this for all of our libraries. We can let you know when we know they're complete and they're on their way out the door.

Question: (Alicia Waters - RI)

I have something...I just want to confirm so that I make sure I'm understanding properly: The Talking Book Topics is still being mailed to subscribed members. If we need more than 50, we need to order extras from the Multistate Center. Is that correct?

Answer: (Steve Prine - NLS)

That's correct. Yes.

Question: (Alicia Waters - RI)

Ok. My other question is about the testing that they're doing. The REALM Project – you gave a web address. Could you repeat it?

Answer: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

Yes. It's [oc.lc/realm-project \(https://www.webjunction.org/explore-topics/COVID-19-research-project.html\)](https://www.webjunction.org/explore-topics/COVID-19-research-project.html).

Question: (Sharon Ruda - IL)

Hi there! You hardly ever get to hear from me but today I have three questions: Alright. David, you gave a great explanation of a new machine survey, and I think I got it all. The questions that were not asked before – cleaning & inspection, repair, never circulated, any able to return to NLS, amount of machines (and I have question mark) and COVID problems with machines. What didn't I understand in there?

Answer: (David Spett - NLS)

I think you basically understood it all. We will be sending out the survey so, you'll see the questions but I think you have enough to...prepare before you get the survey.

Comment: (Sharon Ruda - IL)

Thank you very much. And then I wanted to reiterate what Catherine said: We have never received a complaint about the book orders and the audio format. We received two back this past month, saying “How am I supposed to read this?” and the other one said, “I can’t even fill this out.” I went back to see if these were new subscribers, and they weren’t. So, I don’t know if that verifies what Catherine said, or just Minnesota and Illinois have picky people.

Comment: (Kristen Fernekes - NLS)

Thank you for letting me know that, and I’ll go back and take a look at it.

Question: (Sharon Ruda - IL)

Ok – and there was just an Ops Alert 20-42 that flashed up. Is there anything anyone wants to say about that?

Question: (Karen Keninger - NLS)

Michael, do you want to explain that a little bit?

Answer: (Michael Katzmann - NLS)

Ok so we’re moving our workflow system to a more modern system we’ve been developing for a number of years. It’s called PICS2. As part of that, we are automating some of the functions that BCS is now doing in a manual rote manner – and that is, creating the individual MARC record sets at the various stages of production. So at the moment, you get records announcing the selection of the book. At the end of Copy Allotment, when the books finally go up on BARD, A-to-D books and Network books that are added to the National Collection. What we think will be a better way to do it – for every two weeks or every month, there is a different record set and you have to download and upload into your system. We’re building in a machine-to-machine interface and we think the end state is that your library systems will automatically talk to this new system and retrieve those updated records.

Whenever a record gets updated – if a new record is added – that will automatically go into your system. That’s the end stage. Prior to that, though – until the library systems are updated to do that machine-to-machine transfer, we still think that you’ll be downloading and importing those record sets. Now, rather than different record sets for each type of event (such as the Copy Allotment or the BARD upload), we’re suggesting that we provide a method of you just to say “I want any record that has changed between this date and now or, this date and this date, you get those records and you’re uploading them, so that it doesn’t matter whether it’s a BARD update (or) Copy Allotment, you don’t have to worry about missing data because you know that the last time you uploaded data was on the first of the month. You just say “I want any record that’s changed from the first of the month until now” and you upload it in one go. You can do it every week, every day, every month – whatever is convenient for you.

So, that is what we’re proposing, and we’d like to know if there’s some way you’re using the MARC sets you’re getting now in a way that we haven’t envisaged and that this system won’t cope with. So that’s what we want to know before we go ahead and implement this change. We want to know whether there is some overriding desire to have those discrete record sets that are...frozen in time, basically. The other thing is...we’ve quite often noticed mistakes or mistakes are pointed out to us and we go in and correct it – for example, an author or a title name is a misspelling, we will go in and make that change but of course...when you next upload any record that has changed since the last time I updated my system, then that changed record would be imported into your system.

Question: (Jane Glasby – CA9)

Hello. I’m here in San Francisco and I’ve got you on speakerphone and I’m playing you over Microsoft Teams to people on my team, so, I have a question from one of my coworkers – and that was about the Virtual Conference, and I think I know the answer to this – “Is there any limit on the number of people who (can attend) the virtual conference?” was his question because he’s very eager to take advantage of the fact that we don’t have to pay for anybody to go anywhere. Thank you!

Answer: (Karen Keninger - NLS)

We are investigating platforms and that sort of thing. I am not anticipating that there will be a limit. I can’t promise it until we get our platform situation sorted out...I’m very disappointed that we can’t do an in-person conference but there will be some upsides to these virtual ones so, thank you.

Answer: (Steve Prine - NLS)

Thanks Jane! ... In that case, I think we will end the call. Thank you all for participating and we look forward to talking to you all next month.