

March 28, 2019

The latest on our new initiatives

Update: Locally produced books on BARD

The program to open BARD to locally produced books began modestly, with seven network libraries participating in the initial test in the winter of 2014. The libraries were trained in new technical specifications for producing, protecting, and uploading books to BARD (see www.loc.gov/nlsold/networkspecs/index.html) and submitted one book each—titles such as *More than Petticoats: Remarkable Massachusetts Women (DBC00002)* and *Hand Raised: The Barns of Montana (DBC00003)*.

The program expanded with five more libraries that spring. A milestone was reached in the summer of 2015 when the Wolfner Talking Book and Braille Library in Missouri posted the 1,000th locally produced talking book. The 3,000th was posted just 18 months later.

Today, network libraries have posted more than 6,100 talking books to BARD. (Wolfner sets the pace with 704 titles, followed by the Texas State Library's Talking Book Program and the Washington TBBL with 670 each.) You can easily identify them in the catalog by the DBC prefix in their book numbers. They cover a wide variety of subjects, with Westerns, romances, cookbooks, and local history and travel among the most popular. Thirty-five libraries and one machine-lending agency have completed the training and been certified to post books.

By any measure, the program has been a big success. "The network libraries put a tremendous amount of effort, resources, and talent into producing talking books," NLS Director Karen Keninger said. "Besides the regional color they bring, they add depth and breadth to our collection. We're thrilled to be able to share them nationally through BARD."

But the program, though successful, has not been completely free of glitches, and some libraries have shared concerns about technical problems.

In an effort to improve the process, NLS has been testing a new web-based option for libraries to upload books to BARD. "It offers a smoother user experience," said Phillip Carbo, NLS audiobook production specialist. The new site, though, does not provide a fully accessible interface.

With no easy work-around for existing technical problems that contribute to a less-than-perfect user experience, NLS weighed its options and concluded that, though problematic, both sites provided an important conduit for valuable content. Participating libraries will now have the option of using either site. "We greatly value the contribution our network libraries make when they upload locally produced books to BARD," Keninger said. "I hope they will be patient with us while we work toward a permanent fix to make that process as easy as possible for them."

This is only an interim solution until the new NLS Production Information Control System, known as PICS 2, is up and running—probably in two years or so. PICS 2 will be augmented to accept uploads of network library books.

If your library has been certified to post books, look for an email from Carbo soon with instructions on how to use the new site.

And if you run into problems uploading books, contact us at DTBHelp@loc.gov.

Watch for the next issue of *On the Move* in your inbox on April 25!

NLS ON THE MOVE 2019

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