

July 30, 2020

The latest on our new initiatives

Updates on reading disabilities and the Marrakesh Treaty

NLS continues to progress toward easing access for individuals with reading disabilities by expanding its list of certifying authorities.

First, the two-state reading disabilities pilot program begun last October has clearly demonstrated the utility of a BARD-first approach and the efficacy of outreach. Second, NLS is updating its regulations to eliminate the requirement that reading disabilities be the result of “organic dysfunction” and confirmed by a medical doctor.

NLS is working with the Library of Congress’s Office of General Counsel to make that change and expand the list of certifying authorities. When these steps are completed this fall, and contingent upon the continued successful modernization of NLS’s IT infrastructure and load capacity, NLS will implement this new policy in 2021.

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This past Tuesday, a regulation was published in the *Federal Register* to officially allow NLS to fully participate in the **cross-border exchange of braille and audio books** under the auspices of [the Marrakesh Treaty](#). To that end, in partnership with the Accessible Book Consortium (ABC), NLS will be testing a new interface being established by ABC’s Global Book Service (GBS), an online repository of hundreds of thousands of titles from around the world. NLS will be working with eight network libraries to test this new interface to assess its utility to the network. This four-month pilot is scheduled to begin in September. At its conclusion, NLS will be able to determine the value of the portal and whether it is ready for possible use network-wide.

Further information about ABC and GBS can be found at www.accessiblebooks-consortium.org/portal/en/index.html and www.accessiblebooksconsortium.org/globalbooks/en/

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NLS Director Karen Keninger and other NLS staff recently discussed the latest developments at NLS during two prominent annual conventions. The **American Council of the Blind** held its (virtual) annual convention July 3–10, and the **National Federation of the Blind** held its (virtual) annual convention July 14–18. Karen’s ACB discussion is available at <http://acbradio.org/content/lu-part-1-karen-keninger>. Other NLS-related content can be found by typing “NLS” in the search function at www.acbradio.org/acb-convention. Information about the 2020 NFB Convention can be found at www.nfb.org/get-involved/national-convention.

Watch for the next issue of *On the Move* in your inbox on August 27!