

Spring/Summer 2010

TALKING TIMES

**REGIONAL LIBRARY FOR THE
BLIND & PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED**

Rhode Island Office of Library and Information Services

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Editor's Note: This issue of the Talking Times is dedicated to the Digital Playback System launched by the National Library Services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) and the 2010 Summer Reading Program sponsored by the Office of Library and Information Services. I hope you find this issue informative. Have a great summer!

THE DIGITAL TRANSITION

NLS says the transition of the free national library program from the current analog cassette-based system to a digital flash memory-based system has required very careful planning and execution and is more complex than the last transition of audio technologies from RD (Rigid Disk) to RC (Recorded Cassette). As a result, the transition from cassette to digital books and players will take years to happen. During the transition, the digital collection continues to grow as players are distributed to new and existing members of Talking Books Plus (TBP). At the same time, the cassette service is slowing down with cassette players no longer being produced; new cassette tapes will cease production by 2011. Members are encouraged to hold on to their cassette machines during the transition so they may listen to books that are not in the digital collection.

The purpose of this newsletter is to reach out to as many qualified individuals as possible who would benefit from the new player and digital technology. This newsletter also provides information to those already enjoying the machine. TBP members are encouraged to take advantage of the Braille Audio and Reading Download (BARD) service which allows an individual to download audio digital books and magazines 24/7.

TALKING BOOK DIGITAL PLAYER

Qualified individuals are encouraged to apply for TBP membership (<http://bit.ly/tbpforms>) to receive a Digital Talking Book Machine (DTBM). All active TBP members who want a digital talking book machine may request one be sent to them right away.

The digital book machine is offered in either a Basic or Advanced model. The Basic model has a sleep button as well as play, forward and reverse buttons. The Advanced machine has additional controls for setting and retrieving bookmarks and for navigating through structured levels of a book such as a chapter. Both machines have built-in instructions on how to use the machine.

The Digital Talking Book Machine is the property of the US Government. Don't throw it out. Don't give it away. If you aren't using it or it isn't working, please return it. Save the box that is used to mail the machine. When returning the machine, turn over the label on the box. This is the return address. Save the packing material in the box as it protects the machine while going through the United States Postal Service (USPS). The machine box is designed to send it through the postal service as Free

Matter for the Blind. Returned players are sent to a center for redistribution, repair or replacement.

There will be a gradual reduction in cassette book machine inventories as digital talking book machines replace the cassette book machines.

DIGITAL MACHINE ACCESSORIES

Those who are hard of hearing have remarked on an improvement in their listening pleasure since using the digital player. Those who need additional volume control may want to try the new machine without an accessory. If a member has or needs a headset, a jack adapter is also available.

FLASH MEMORY CARTRIDGES

New audio book titles will be produced only in digital format by 2011 and will be available on flash memory cartridges, the new technology of choice. The backbone of the talking book program for almost 30 years, cassette audio books will remain in the collection until no longer of use. Over time, titles in cassette format will be converted to digital format.

Just one type and size of cartridge is used to store each digital audio book produced by NLS. This cartridge is a flash drive customized to NLS specifications. Digital talking book titles that are mailed to members have only one cartridge in one container which makes it easier for a blind person to operate. Its blue container is smaller in size than the green cassette container. No rewinding of the cartridge is necessary to return a borrowed book. And there are no tapes to shred or jam. The specially designed cartridge can easily be inserted into the NLS book players and

can be removed with the strength of one finger. When in play position, the cartridge sits securely inside the NLS talking book player.

Blank flash memory cartridges used to store downloaded digital books are a form of flash drive designed to work with the NLS talking book player. The blank cartridge used for downloaded books is the same cartridge used by NLS to send digital books through the mail. Blank cartridges can be purchased from independent vendors. Visit the TBP Blog, <http://lorinet.info/tbp/>, for information on purchasing cartridges. This summer, a free blank cartridge and USB cable will be available from TBP for members who sign up for BARD.

Other USB flash drives (also known as thumb drives or jump drives) cannot claim the advantageous features of the blank flash memory cartridges. Some but not all flash drives can be used with the NLS digital book player. If a USB flash drive other than the cartridge is used and additional software is on the flash drive, it must be removed in order to work properly when downloading books. TBP members have reported success with Kingston and Verbatim flash drives. Other flash drives that reportedly work once software is removed include Lexar, Dane-Elec, Sony and PHY drives. If the software on the flash drive is not removed, the digital player may spend time in the Bookshelf Mode looking through all the folders for the downloaded digital books. Any USB devices or flash drives used should have at least 1GB of storage space.

Note: Bookshelf Mode is described later in this newsletter.

THE DIGITAL COLLECTION

There are more than 2,000 titles on flash memory cartridges in the digital collection that are available for mail delivery. New titles are added every month and are listed in the Talking Book Topics (TBT) catalog. Many more digital titles can be found in the downloadable collection; currently more than 18,000 titles are available for download at any time. No more waiting for books to be mailed to you or returned by another TBP member!

DIGITAL BOOK CATALOGS

Starting with the November - December 2009 issue, every title found in the TBT catalog is downloadable. The same issue started listing DB numbers which means those titles are deliverable through the mail.

The Talking Books Plus website (www.olis.ri.gov/tbp) has a link to the online Catalog. The online Catalog, also known as Online Public Access Catalog or OPAC, is a comprehensive, up-to-date listing of titles in the digital collections. This Catalog includes all titles in the TBT catalog in digital and cassette format and links to the BARD collection. Once you have found a book in the online Catalog, click on the title which will take you to the Title Display page. If a downloadable talking book is in the collection, "Document Link" on the Title Display page will provide a direct link to the BARD website where you can download the digital book. Only TBP members who have been approved for BARD may use the BARD site. The entire list of downloadable digital titles can be found by searching the online Catalog.

SEARCHING FOR DIGITAL TITLES

TBP members can find titles in the online Catalog (available at www.olis.ri.gov/tbp) by executing a Basic or Advanced Search or by reviewing the TBT catalog, which is mailed to members and available online. Each TBP member will need an ID and password from TBP staff to order books online. To search for digital books only, click on Patron Information to enter the member User ID and password. Then on the Search page, click on Patron Profile and select Digital Book as the Media. To date, digital audio magazines are only available in the downloadable format. TBP members who read periodicals and do not apply for BARD will need to keep their cassette book machine to continue their subscriptions.

The electronic version of all issues of the TBT catalog is available at www.loc.gov/nls/tbt. Any book number in the TBT catalog preceded by "DB" is a digital title. If "RC" is next to the "DB" (DB/RC) in the catalog that means the title is available in both digital and cassette format.

ORDERING DIGITAL TITLES DELIVERED BY MAIL

Digital audio cartridges are requested by DB number. They can be ordered in the same manner as cassette tapes. When placing a request online, check "Rush This Item" on the Book Basket webpage so the title will be sent as soon as possible. When members send book orders by e-mail or regular mail or request books by phone, TBP staff can rush books to the member. Both the large print and cassette versions of the TBT catalog have a paper form to check off which digital titles are wanted. To receive faster service when emailing or telephoning a request, provide

the DB number for each title being ordered. When ordering by phone, the DB code should be included as part of a book number order. Specify either a DB or RC number to get the desired format.

The present policy is that up to six books may be checked out at one time to a member. However, a reserve list of desired titles can be created to automatically hold titles for future checkout. A reserved digital book requested by a member is mailed to them when they have less than six digital books out and the title on reserve is on the shelf.

READERS ADVISORY

Should a TBP member have difficulty finding titles for immediate delivery, Talking Books Plus advisors can search for available titles by author or subject. This method is likely to help members find titles on the shelf for next business day mailing. For staff assistance, call TBP library at 401-574-9310. More contact information is also listed on the last page of this newsletter below the Library Hours.

SELECTING DOWNLOADABLE TITLES

TBP members can download books at their convenience in the comfort of their home. To download one of the more than 18,000 books and magazines available through download, you must have applied for and been authorized to use BARD. Once registered and approved for BARD, you can download digital books anytime of the day or night from the BARD collection. Delivery is as fast as the computer can download. Downloadable titles are always available and never have to be returned. A USB cable is needed to transfer a book from the computer to a

cartridge. Once a book is downloaded and transferred to the cartridge, the digital audio book on the cartridge is ready for insertion into the machine to play.

REGISTERING TO DOWNLOAD A BOOK

To download an audio book, a TBP member must be approved for BARD. Eligible users must have access to a computer with high-speed service such as DSL or cable, have the ability and permission to download and unzip files, have an active e-mail address, have a qualified digital player, and possess a cartridge or flash drive that will work with the NLS digital playback system. A computer owned by a member or a family member or friend or a library with a public access computer qualifies as access to a computer. To sign up for BARD or learn about this service, go to the TBP website and click on BARD under QuickLinks.

ACQUIRING THE CARTRIDGE FOR DOWNLOAD

A blank cartridge is needed to download digital audio books from the BARD collection. Blank cartridges intended for use with the NLS talking book player are reusable and are not write-protected so they can hold more than one book depending on the size of the cartridge. A 1GB cartridge has 92 hours of reading capacity and, depending on the size of the book, is large enough to hold several downloaded books. Only one blank cartridge is needed to download an entire, or even several, NLS digital audio books. Several vendors are selling blank cartridges available in 1GB or 2GB memory capacity. To find information about cartridges for sale, visit <http://bit.ly/tbpcartridges>. Regularly visit the TBP blog as articles will be posted when there is news about cartridges. In addition, this summer TBP will offer one free cartridge and USB cable to each

member who signs up for BARD – check the TBP website for more information.

DOWNLOADING

To play a downloadable book, the content of the book must first be downloaded via a high speed Internet connection onto a computer, then transferred to a cartridge or flash drive. The book files are large so they are sent “zipped” for quick transfer. When the download is completed, the file must be “unzipped.” Most newer computers will do this when you double click on a file. After unzipping the file, there will be a list of files. Select, copy and paste all the files onto the cartridge or flash drive. The files must be pasted into the root directory of the cartridge or flash drive. (Note: if the files are not unzipped, the machine cannot read the book.)

BOOKSHELF MODE

Bookshelf is a setting used on the digital player to retrieve one title from a cartridge that is storing more than one book. To read cartridges with multiple books, go to “bookshelf” mode by inserting the cartridge in the player. Press and hold “Play/Stop” to enter bookshelf mode. Press Rewind/Fast Forward (RW/FF) to select a book.

DOWNLOAD TRAINING

Insight offers classes on an ongoing basis for blind and visually impaired individuals who would like to learn how to download books from the NLS BARD website to a blank cartridge. Classes are adapted for individuals or small groups. There is no charge for the class which lasts between 60 and 90 minutes. Participants must have the NLS digital machine or its

equivalent, applied for the BARD program and have a BARD username and password. To register for a class, contact Rick Andrade at randrade@in-sight.org or call 401-941-3322 x109. To apply for a BARD username and password, call TBP.

TBP BLOG AND WEBSITE

The Talking Books Plus blog regularly posts articles of interest to the TBP membership. Some past articles of interest are archived under Digital Update. They include the Digital Books Catalogs, RFB&D and NLS Digital Player, Download Magazines, Download Training at Insight, Digital Machine Starting Automatically, Downloading Tip, Blank Cartridge Update, Digital Player Firmware Update, and Flash Drive for Downloading. Besides the blog, the TBP website (www.olis.ri.gov/tbp) has links to the Catalog and BARD as well as news and updates on the Digital Transition.

RI STATEWIDE SUMMER READING PROGRAM AND YOUTH READING ACROSS RHODE ISLAND

TBP Young Readers (grades three through six) and their families are invited to the kick-off of the first-ever *Youth Reading Across Rhode Island* on Saturday, June 12 from 12 Noon to 3:00 pm at the Rhode Island State House. The event marks the beginning of 2010 Summer Reading Program activities taking place in libraries across the state.

This year's summer reading theme is *Make a Splash – Read* and event planners have loads of fun activities for attendees, including a book talk about *Regarding the Fountain* by its author, Kate Klise. Each family

attending will receive a copy of Ms. Klise's book. Other festivities include music from Joe's Backyard Band, a visit with PawSox mascot Paws, displays and information from the Audubon Society of Rhode Island and balloon creations from Mr. Twister. Vendors will be on hand to sell lunch and snacks, including sandwiches, popcorn and ice cream.

Spearheaded by the Rhode Island Office of Library and Information Services and the Rhode Island Center for the Book at Providence Public Library, *Youth Reading Across Rhode Island* is patterned after the Rhode Island Center for the Book's very popular *Reading Across Rhode Island* - which just completed its eighth successful year as the state's one state, one book project. *Youth Reading Across Rhode Island* will be implemented by children's librarians across the state.

If you come, be sure to stop by the Talking Books Plus booth and meet TBP staff. For more information on the event, contact Louise Moulton at 455-8134 or Cheryl Space at 574-9309. To learn more about the Summer Reading Program, visit your local public library or the Office of Library and Information Services website, www.olis.ri.gov/services/srp.



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2010 TBPlus Holiday Closings

Fourth of July	Monday, July 5
Victory Day	Monday, August 9
Labor Day	Monday, September 6
Columbus Day	Monday, October 11
Election Day	Thursday, November 2
Veterans' Day	Thursday, November 11
Thanksgiving Day	Thursday, November 25
Christmas	Monday, December 27

Regular Hours: Monday – Friday 8 AM to 4 PM

Email: tbplus@olis.ri.gov Website: www.olis.ri.gov/tbp

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