



National Library for the Blind

Report to the Ulverscroft Foundation

Best Practice Development Programme 2004

Sarah Home

Operations & Development Manager

National Library for the Blind

Contents

Introduction 3

CNIB site visit 4

Actions 6

Outcomes 8

Feedback from NLB 9

Feedback from CNIB 10

Expenditure 12

Introduction

I was delighted when I heard that I had been successful in my application for an individual award as part of the Best Practice Development Programme run by IFLA Libraries for the Blind Section and the Ulverscroft Foundation.

A lot of thought at NLB, had gone into developing the proposed project that was submitted, making sure that the outcomes would benefit all the producers and customers of the wider VI library community, not just the National Library for the Blind (NLB) and the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB).

The objectives of the proposed project were to share NLB's and CNIB's experiences of DAISY (Digital Accessible Information SYstem) production, strengthen relationships with other DAISY producers, learn from other libraries, increase the potential for international file sharing and to develop standard processes for DAISY production and distribution, which will in turn feed into the work of the DAISY Consortium.

NLB has recently carried out a DAISY Pilot Project to test the acceptance of leisure reading material produced using synthetic speech. This project is the first of its kind and has generated a lot of interest amongst the DAISY production and reading community. The opportunity to start sharing results face-to-face with a prominent DAISY producer was seen as a key element of the visit to CNIB.

In preparation for my trip I contacted other libraries for the blind, to give them the opportunity to feed-in any questions they may have with regards to accessible format production which I could then discuss with CNIB during my visit.

CNIB site visit

I spent 4 very full days at CNIB, meeting with staff from all areas of the library.

DAY ONE

- **Senior management meeting with Margaret McGrory (CIO) and her team. Olaf Mittelsteadt, DAISY Implementer from Switzerland also joined this meeting**
- **DAISY production meeting with Lynn Leith (Manager of audio production at CNIB and training and technical co-ordinator for the DAISY Consortium), Brandon Nelson (Technical lead, electronic publishing) and Olaf Mittelsteadt – discussions around resource sharing issues, NLB's DAISY pilot, synthetic voices being trialled by CNIB and NLB, DAISY production tools used by CNIB and NLB, sharing production problems, HTML tools, metadata and DAISY Consortium work**

DAY TWO

- **Presentation of NLB's DAISY pilot project to key CNIB managers and broader discussions around current library service delivery, production equipment and processes, copyright, future DAISY delivery at NLB, resource sharing and knowledge exchange**
- **Tour of recording studios and audio production areas**
- **ICT infrastructure and digital library services delivery discussions, including Redmond Announcement offer, with Roger Beatty, I.S. Consultant, CNIB**

DAY THREE

- **Tour of public library areas of CNIB, distribution services, client services and collections**
- **Presentation and discussions around digital library services at CNIB and NLB, plans for future delivery and infrastructure**
- **Fundraising discussions with Tammy O'Dwyer – covering legacy giving, CNIB lottery, staff fundraising, will writing, book prizes and cold appeals**
- **Meeting with Susan Ewing, Director of Library Services and Margaret Williams, Collections Manager to discuss file exchanges, resource sharing and collection development, DAISY project outcomes and evaluation projects being carried out by CNIB**

DAY FOUR

- **Production meeting with CNIB production managers – covering single source file production, Duxbury issues, Braille teaching courses, Braille literacy, commercial production, production equipment, UEB plans and introduction and transcription staffing issues at CNIB and NLB**

Actions

I have brought back a large number of actions to follow-up from my visit. I have listed the most important ones, but if you'd like a full list I'd be happy to supply.

The actions have all been forwarded to the appropriate people at both NLB and CNIB.

There are a number of DAISY-specific actions which have already been taken forward with George Kerscher from the DAISY Consortium.

A short report of my trip will be included in NLB's next edition of our internal newsletter, Core Brief.

A more detailed report will be written and presented to NLB's senior management team and this will feed into our business planning cycle.

- DAISY Pilot project report to be emailed to all relevant stakeholders (including libraries for the blind and DAISY Consortium) as soon as it is available**
- Information to be exchanged on carrying cases used for the distribution of DAISY CDs – DAISY Consortium poll of members. CNIB have highlighted the fact that they are looking at having a case designed – surely all DAISY distributors could learn from each other and look at having a DAISY Consortium "approved" carrying case and consortium purchasing options**
- Usage of specific DAISY players – DAISY Consortium. Numbers of sales of players throughout the world, what's the most popular with customers?**
- What tools are DAISY producers using to generate their HTML files? – DAISY Consortium poll of members**
- What DAISY production tools are being used to generate DTBs? – DAISY Consortium poll of members**
- What synthetic speech software is being used/trialled by DAISY producers? – DAISY Consortium poll of members. Many organisations I've been in contact with are all looking at different synthetic voices to use on DAISY books. It would be great if we could have a list of these and comments on their suitability and cost**
- What security are DAISY producers putting on their books? – DAISY Consortium poll of members**
- What structures are being used on DAISY books – DAISY Consortium poll of members. When sharing DAISY books with**

other libraries for distribution, local producers' information must be either easily removed or not included

- Look into security issues with DAISY books and hardware players – NLB & CNIB**
- Look into AT&T synthetic speech licencing options (CNIB would be charged C\$100 per book!) – NLB & CNIB**
- Test Duxbury generated Braille and print files with EasePublisher – NLB & CNIB**
- Test DAISY/NISO export from Duxbury – NLB & CNIB**
- Look into different export options from EasePublisher to ensure local information is not transferred – structure change? NLB & CNIB**
- Soft Braille output from DAISY books? – Lynn Leith investigating - CNIB**
- Fundraising share of appeals information, will-writing service etc – NLB & CNIB**
- UEB samples to be shared - CNIB**
- Check copyright on NLB's e-braille files to ensure CNIB can harvest and supply to their clients - NLB**
- NLB & CNIB ICT infrastructure discussions – NLB & CNIB**
- Set-up "books in progress" site on server, test and invite other libraries to contribute their information - NLB**
- Look at traffic on server – are partner libraries putting files on and taking out? - NLB**
- NLB to let CNIB know when we've produced Braille from their files and vice versa – NLB & CNIB**
- Look into audio DVD suppliers in the UK and contact Elizabeth O'Brien - NLB**
- Share production output information – NLB & CNIB**
- Share NLB disaster recovery plan for Braille books with CNIB - NLB**
- Early sharing of "works in progress" – to feed into Microsoft working groups - NLB**
- Share and complete Metadata info sheet for DAISY books – NLB & CNIB**

Outcomes

As you can see from this report, I met a great number of CNIB staff in all areas of the library and covered many aspects of both NLB's and CNIB's work. I am very grateful to CNIB staff for making me feel so welcome and for sharing so much information with me.

This sharing of information made me realise how similar issues are being addressed and discussed at libraries for the blind all over the world. It is so important that this type of dialogue continues and we take more opportunities to learn from each other and work towards common standards of production to enable resource sharing, cost effective production and ultimately a better library service to all our customers.

- Continue to share best practice in alternative format production**
- Take every opportunity to learn from each other, exchange ideas and work together**
- Develop understanding of customer needs and expectations**

DAISY production and delivery is at very different stages throughout libraries for the blind and we now have the opportunity to share knowledge about setting up production processes and delivery methods with each other – rather than continually re-inventing the wheel.

- Informed decision-making on future DAISY services at local levels**

The DAISY Consortium and libraries for the blind have an important role to play in ensuring standards are developed and implemented to enable resources to be shared and distributed without the need for local intervention to remove country-specific information.

- Opportunities to poll members**
- Common DAISY production standards**
- Benefit from consortium development and purchasing**

Feedback from NLB

Carol Pollitt, ICT & Operations Director at NLB, has written the following with reference to my visit:

Developing partnership working with other organisations is fundamental to the way NLB works to improve services to visually impaired people. The regular exchange of information, sharing best practice and working together to avoid wasting resources is essential.

The Ulverscroft Foundation grant gave us the opportunity to put this into practice at a time when NLB had information to share about new technologies, improved production processes and valuable user feedback. NLB will benefit from the newly gained knowledge of CNIB's DAISY production and from the face-to-face contact made during the visit. We are already carrying out actions resulting from the visit and the knowledge gained will have a significant impact on our future strategic planning.

We will continue to work collaboratively with CNIB and other DAISY producers and to feed our knowledge and experiences into the DAISY knowledge network so that the information is available worldwide. We are committed to working with others in order to increase the range of formats and content available to visually impaired people.

Feedback from CNIB

Karen Taylor, Director of Production and Technical Services at CNIB Library, has written the following short report regarding my visit:

Sarah Home visited the CNIB in March of 2005. We were delighted to have the opportunity to exchange ideas, information and knowledge in a collaborative environment.

Sarah has been the lead on the NLB text-to-speech project and shared samples of the content produced and the production and testing methodology. CNIB has also been testing this technology, focusing on indices of non-fiction books and magazine content. The two projects dovetail nicely, giving both organizations the opportunity to benefit from each other's explorations with different types of content. Staff commented that it was very useful to have an in-person visit to hear more of her experiences (both the issues and challenges) with conducting the pilot, and more practical information was exchanged that would be found in written reports. Sarah's research methodology will assist CNIB in developing and conducting pilots, both from a conceptual and very practical, administrative perspective. We are looking forward to the report at project conclusion.

Sarah's presentation of Laureate and description of the development of RNIB's IVR system and other initiatives in creating accessible text came at the perfect time in CNIB's planning process for a "Books by Phone" service, and CNIB will be pursuing this opportunity for international information sharing and potential partnerships.

Much discussion revolved around DAISY format and tools. CNIB is an early adopter of the DAISY standard and has been producing DAISY books for several years. We share with NLB the concept of a single source text file that will serve as input to braille, DAISY audio and large print. Knowledge was shared around various production tools and formats. Olaf Mittlestaedt from SBS in Sweden (also DAISY producers) was at CNIB at the same time and ideas flowed around experience and future plans for circulation vs. distribution models of service, challenges of serving a multilingual population, and production techniques.

Library service staff noted that Sarah's knowledge of other content sharing initiatives between CNIB and NLB was helpful to several new CNIB staff, and will result in CNIB making better use of the existing

potential for sharing a large number of currently inaccessible e-braille files with Canadian e-braille users. Sarah also drew CNIB staff attention to file sharing arrangements based at NLB that we will make use of, and informed us about NLB's involvement in a new federated search of alternative format materials. Based on this new information CNIB E-delivery staff is developing an expanded version of our current federated search that is currently limited to NLB resources.

Several meetings were held with staff from various areas of the Library. Ideas exchanges around topics of braille certification and publishing, fund raising, volunteer recruitment and deployment, systems architecture and support, and general reader service issues. Follow-up exchanges have occurred since Sarah's visit. CNIB Library staff meet regularly by teleconference with our NLB counterparts, and having the opportunity to develop a relationship with Sarah, face to face, will add to our ability to collaborate 'virtually' in the future.

National organizations must confer with their peers. Often we are the only organizations producing these accessible formats in our home countries. Increasingly our internal business processes are augmented and improved by external collaboration from partners and strategic allies. Working together we optimize resources and competencies. We would welcome Sarah again anytime and look forward to future collaboration.

Expenditure

I received a grant of £1,570 for this project, based on our estimated costs.

The exchange rate is in the UK's favour, working out at roughly 2.2 Canadian dollars to the pound.

We were able to take advantage of early booking on flights and CNIB negotiated an excellent rate with a local Hotel in Toronto.

Working in the charity sector and always being mindful of cost, I was able to utilise the excellent public transport system in Toronto rather than relying on expensive taxis and I found some excellent eateries which were incredibly reasonable!

All receipts are available for inspection if required.

The actual costs were as follows in £:

(bracketed amounts are estimated costs in the original bid).

Air fare: 329.40 (500.00)

Local travel: 42.11 (150.00)

Hotel: 389.76 (600.00)

Subsistence: 115.12 (320.00)

Currency exchange costs

And exchange rate differences 49.72

Total: 926.11 (1,570.00)

This leaves a balance of £643.89

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Ulverscroft Foundation for funding this project. The information gained from CNIB and the collaborative work that will follow with other libraries for the blind and the DAISY Consortium will really make a difference to the amount of accessible information that is available to visually impaired people.