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**Funding and governance of library and
information services for visually impaired
people: international case studies**

Part 2: Country studies

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Contents

Australia	10
Basic country data	10
Note on information sources	10
Definitions and their effects	11
Library and user group data	13
Rights and attitudes	15
Services to print impaired people in relation to services to visually impaired people	16
Models and responsibilities	16
Governmental responsibility	18
Overlaps – are they a problem?	18
Gaps between policy and practice	19
Are the models in flux?	21
What is driving change?	21
Measuring success	24
Participation by visually impaired people	25
Funding sources and adequacy	26
Overall availability of material in alternative formats	28
Materials provision	29
Preferred situation	36
The view from the user’s perspective	39
Barriers	44
Copyright	47
Special projects	47
Publishers’ involvement	49
Canada	50
Basic country data	50
Definitions and their effects	51
The views of CNIB	51
Library and user group data	52
Rights and attitudes	53
Services to print impaired people in relation to services to visually impaired people	55
Models and responsibilities	56

Contents (continued)

“Service providers and producers of alternative format materials	57
Governmental responsibility	62
Overlaps – are they a problem?	63
Gaps between policy and practice	63
Are the models in flux?	64
What is driving change?	65
Measuring success	67
Participation by visually impaired people	68
Funding sources	68
Overall availability of material in alternative formats	69
Materials provision	70
Preferred situation	72
The view from the user’s perspective	73
Barriers	75
Copyright	77
Special projects	78
Publishers’ involvement	78
Croatia	80
Basic country data	80
Definitions and their effects	80
Library and user group data	81
Facts about the Croatian Library for the Blind	81
Rights and attitudes	82
Services to print impaired people in relation to services to visually impaired people	82
Models and responsibilities	82
Service provision – general	83
Service provision – education	83
Materials provision	84
Governmental responsibility	87
Overlaps – are they a problem?	87
Gaps between policy and practice	87
What is driving change?	87
Measuring success	87
Participation by visually impaired people	88

Contents (continued)

Funding sources and adequacy	88
Overall availability of material in alternative formats	89
Preferred situation	89
The view from the user's perspective	90
Barriers.	91
Copyright	91
Special projects	91
Publishers' involvement	93
Denmark.	94
Basic country data	94
Definitions and their effects	94
Library and user group data	95
Rights and attitudes	95
Services to print impaired people in relation to services to visually impaired people	96
Models and responsibilities	96
Governmental responsibility.	100
Overlaps – are they a problem?	100
Gaps between policy and practice	101
Are the models in flux?	101
What is driving change?	101
Measuring success	102
Participation by visually impaired people	102
Funding sources and adequacy	103
Overall availability of material in alternative formats	103
Materials provision	104
Preferred situation	107
The view from the user's perspective	108
Barriers.	110
Copyright	110
Special projects	111
Publishers' involvement	112
Japan	114
Basic country data	114
Definitions and their effects	114
Library and user group data	115

Contents (continued)

Rights and attitudes	118
Services to print impaired people in relation to services to visually impaired people	119
Models and responsibilities	119
Governmental responsibility	121
Overlaps – are they a problem?	121
Gaps between policy and practice	122
Are the models in flux?	122
What is driving change?	122
Measuring success	123
Participation by visually impaired people	123
Funding sources and adequacy	123
Overall availability of material in alternative formats	124
Materials Supply (Public Libraries)	124
Materials Supply (Libraries for Visually Impaired People)	127
Preferred situation (Public libraries)	133
Preferred situation (Libraries for Visually Impaired People)	134
Education	135
The view from the user’s perspective	136
Barriers	139
Copyright	139
Special projects	141
Publishers’ involvement	142
South Korea	142
Basic country data	142
Definitions and their effects	143
Library and user group data	143
Rights and attitudes	144
Models and responsibilities	144
Government responsibility	147
Overlaps – are they a problem?	147
Are the models in flux?	148
What is driving change?	148
Measuring success	149
Participation by visually impaired people	149
Funding sources and adequacy	149

Contents (continued)

Materials provision	150
Preferred situation	153
The view from the user's perspective	155
Barriers.	156
Copyright	156
Special projects	157
Publishers' involvement	158
The Netherlands	159
Basic country data	159
Definitions and their effects	159
Library and user group data	160
Rights and attitudes	161
Services to print impaired people in relation to services to visually impaired people	161
Models and responsibilities	162
Governmental responsibility.	165
Overlaps – are they a problem?	165
Gaps between policy and practice	165
Are the models in flux?	165
What is driving change?	166
Measuring success	166
Participation by visually impaired people	167
Funding sources and adequacy	167
Overall availability of material in alternative formats	168
Materials provision	168
Preferred Situation	171
The view from the user's perspective	172
Barriers.	175
Copyright	175
Special projects	176
Publishers' involvement	176
South Africa	182
Basic country data	182
Definitions and their effects	183
Library and user group data	184
Public libraries	185

Contents (continued)

Numbers and growth	186
Rights and attitudes	189
Services to print impaired people in relation to services to visually impaired people	190
Models and responsibilities	190
Governmental responsibility	192
Overlaps – are they a problem?	192
Are the models in flux?	193
What is driving change?	193
Measuring success	195
Participation by visually impaired people	195
Funding sources and adequacy	195
Policies and initiatives	197
Overall availability of material in alternative formats	197
Materials provision	197
Preferred situation	199
The view from the user’s perspective	200
Barriers	203
Copyright	204
Special projects	206
Publishers’ involvement	206
Sweden	207
Basic country data	207
Definitions and their effects	207
Library and user group data	208
Models and responsibilities	209
TPB	210
Relationship of services to visually impaired and print impaired people	211
Relationship of the services to visually impaired and print impaired people	214
Governmental responsibility	214
Overlaps – are they a problem?	214
Are the models in flux?	214
What is driving change?	214
Measuring success	215

Contents (continued)

Participation by visually impaired people	215
Funding sources and adequacy	216
Policies and initiatives	216
Gaps between policy and practice	218
Rights and attitudes	218
Materials provision	221
Preferred situation	225
The view from the user's perspective	226
Overall availability of material in alternative formats	228
Barriers.	229
Copyright	229
Special projects	230
Publishers' involvement	230
UK.	231
Basic country data	231
Definitions and their effects	231
Library and user group data	234
Rights and attitudes	239
Services to print impaired people in relation to services to visually impaired people	243
Models and responsibilities	244
Governmental responsibility	246
Overlaps – are they a problem?	247
Gaps between policy and practice	247
Are the models in flux?	250
What is driving change?	250
Measuring success	251
Participation by visually impaired people	252
Funding sources and adequacy	252
Overall availability of material in alternative formats	254
Preferred situation	257
The view from the user's perspective	260
Barriers.	262
Copyright	263
Special projects	264
Publishers' involvement	265

Contents (continued)

USA	266
Basic country data	266
Definitions and their effects	266
Library and user group data	267
Rights and attitudes	268
Services to print impaired people in relation to services to visually impaired people	269
Models and responsibilities	269
Governmental responsibility	272
Overlaps – are they a problem?	273
Gaps between policy and practice	273
Are the models in flux?	273
What is driving change?	273
Measuring success	274
Participation by visually impaired people	275
Funding sources and adequacy	275
Overall availability of material in alternative formats	276
Materials provision	276
NLS	276
The view from the user’s perspective	278
Barriers	278
Copyright	278
Special projects	279
Publishers’ involvement	281

Australia

Basic country data

Population 20.155m (2005).

Over 65s as % of total population: 2005 13.1%; 2020 16.4% (projected).

GNI per capita (international dollars converted at purchasing power parities) 2005: \$30,610

Government: Federation

Estimated number of visually impaired people: 300,000

Estimated number of print-impaired people (including those with vision loss): 1.4m

Note on information sources

The questionnaires had a particularly good response in the higher education sector in Australia and there is a much greater level of detail available here on that subject than in most other countries. However, no respondent felt able to give us a national picture, perhaps reflecting the state-based nature of provision. We have relied quite heavily on the answers provided by Vision Australia; bodies who provide similar services in other parts of Australia were contacted but did not respond. Some information gaps have been filled by desk research.

Definitions and their effects

There are several definitions used in Australia, in general trending towards including print disabilities as well as visual impairment

Vision Australia referred in its response to the “government definition, shared by special libraries” as follows:

“a person without sight, or whose sight is severely impaired; a person unable to hold or manipulate books or move his or her eyes; a person with a perceptual disability which limits the ability to follow a line of print.”

A similar definition was also incorporated into the Copyright Amendment Act 1998, but omitted the words “... disability which limits the ability to follow a line of print” from the last point.

It also has strong similarities to the definition of print disability set out by another respondent, the Round Table on Information Access for People with Print Disabilities [<http://www.e-bility.com/roundtable/about.php>]:

“People with a print disability are those who cannot obtain access to information in a print format because they:

“are blind or vision impaired

“have physical disabilities which limit their ability to hold or manipulate information in a printed form

“have perceptual or other disabilities which limit their ability to follow a line of print or which affect their concentration

“cannot comprehend information in a print format due to insufficient literacy or language skills”

In the library context, the Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL) stated that that “in Australia in contexts such as legislation and elsewhere the broader term ‘persons with print disabilities’ is often used in preference to persons with a vision impairment when referring to the needs of persons for information in formats other than standard print.”

Different definitions are also in use locally: The University of Tasmania library uses 6/60 as the definition of legally blind, but provides services to any student with a certification of visual impairment from any authorised medical practitioner, and also takes a flexible approach to the definition of print impairment, including learning difficulties.

It was generally felt that the above definition was broad enough to permit libraries to offer services to people with vision and perceptual disabilities on a rights basis rather than on a narrow clinical or overly medical definition. However, a point was raised by one university library that the standards used by the government to determine the number of students with a vision disability are directly linked to funding for overall resources and services, while the standards used by the libraries themselves revolve around individual demand for specific services, and not all people with a vision disability identify their needs to libraries.

Interestingly, while the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act of 1992 *2 <http://scaleplus.law.gov.au/html/pasteact/0/3/11/top.htm>] was frequently referred to, there was some confusion as to whether the DDA actually contained a definition of visual impairment. In fact the Act defines the obligations of institutions in relation to the rights of disabled people, rather than defining specific disabilities.

Library and user group data

Prevalence of visual and print impairment

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, around 292,700 Australians are blind or vision impaired (2004). The figure is set to increase to 421,600 by 2021 as 'baby boomers' reach retirement age.

There is general agreement about the visually impaired and print disabled population: Vision Australia estimates 300,000 visually impaired people and 1.4m print disabled people and the Round Table on Information Access for People with Print Disabilities estimated in 1995 that there were over 1 million Australians who have a print disability.

This figure may be increasing. According to a 2002 discussion paper on provision of materials in the tertiary education sector from the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission:

“While the definition of “print disability” is clear, there are few reliable statistics that can be used to make firm predictions about increasing numbers. This in itself indicates that there is scope for research. However, all the anecdotal and extrapolated evidence suggests that the number of people in the general population who have a print disability is increasing, and that the number of students with print disabilities who are enrolled at universities is also increasing.” [http://www.hreoc.gov.au/disability_rights/education/forumdp.html]

There is also a survey on the incidence of disability among indigenous people, but this subsumes sight, hearing and speech disabilities in one category and a number of factors mean that it is not comparable with other surveys. A paper from the National Library of Australia on library services for disabled people in the aboriginal communities in 2002 [<http://www.nla.gov.au/initiatives/meetings/disabilities/indigenous.html>] stated:

“Given the difficulties associated with collecting basic data on the prevalence of disabilities within indigenous communities, it is not possible to clearly identify the needs of indigenous people with disabilities with respect to library and information services. However, it is known that indigenous communities suffer relatively high rates of certain medical conditions that can be expected to lead to varying degrees of disability, for example a higher incidence of glaucoma, ear infections and diabetes, leading to sight and hearing impairments. Together with low rates of English literacy, this translates to a major incidence of print and other disability in indigenous communities and is a serious barrier to library use.”

Public libraries

According to the Australia Bureau of Statistics Public Libraries survey 2003-4 [<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/08CDEAE368A2A931CA256A780001D4DB>], at the end of June 2004, there were 548 public library and archive organisations operating through 1,754 locations. The number of local government libraries rose from 505 in 1999/2000 to 532 in 2003-4, after a decline between 1996-7 and 1999-2000. The number of local government library locations was also up from 1,510 in 1999/2000 to 1,716 in 2003-4.

Visits rose from 93.3m to 99.6m to local government libraries. There were 105 million visits to local government, national and state libraries, representing an average of five visits per head of population.

Income rose from \$478m in 1999/2000 to \$545.2m in 2003-4 and the total number of employees went up slightly from 9,592 to 10,606.

Rights and attitudes

Rights

The main rights, including access to buildings and services, are laid down in the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act, 1992.

Libraries operating out of educational institutions are also required to comply with subordinate legislation in the form of the Disability Standards for Education, August 2005 [http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school_education/programmes_funding/forms_guidelines/disability_standards_for_education.htm] which clarify the obligations of education and training providers to ensure that students with disabilities are able to participate in education without experiencing discrimination.

Case law is clarifying the provisions of the DDA.

Attitudes on equal access

General

Most visually impaired people expect to get access to material, even if their expectation is that access should be responsibility of specialist blindness services. Older and more recently visually impaired people have lower expectations – they are not aware that they can ask for accessible material and would be supported by anti-discrimination laws. Many visually impaired people do rely on family and friends, especially for personal mail and email.

Students

Visually impaired students are generally well aware of their rights but most are also somewhat accepting of the difficulties in providing the volume of information resources available to sighted students in the timeframe available. In particular, expectations would be that

required reading is made available, but that recommended reading is not automatically available as it would be to sighted students. Visually impaired students would also expect assistance with research and any training needed to use unfamiliar equipment and help with computer and information literacy.

In contrast with the general observation that those who have lost their sight recently expect less, one university felt that students losing their sight had greater expectations, along with those who have been educated in mainstream schools.

Another university observed that “complaints lodged against educational institutions by people with vision impairments have increased, with outcomes slowly building case law in the form of court decisions.”

Services to print impaired people in relation to services to visually impaired people

All the responding institutions provide services for visually impaired and print impaired people alike, from the same budgets and using the same structures.

Models and responsibilities

Service provision – general

Library services are provided by state governments in Australia, and public libraries have some limited audio and large print collections.

A national public library for print disabled people is provided under the auspices of Vision Australia, which was formed in 2004 through the merger of separate agencies serving blind people: the Royal Blind Society (RBS), the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind

(RVIB) and Vision Australia Foundation (VAF) and the National Information and Library Service (NILS). NILS had been formed previously through the merger of the constituent organisations' library services, and was constituted as a jointly-owned subsidiary of the three agencies.

Just as this report was being finalized, Vision Australia announced a merger with the Royal Blind Foundation Queensland (RBFQ).

Vision Australia had a total revenue of AU\$70.35 million. It is funded mainly by bequests and donations (38%) and government grants (36%). Sales of goods and service revenues account for 8% and 2% of income respectively [http://www.visionaustralia.org.au/docs/about_us/AR06_Final_lores.pdf]. The large majority of its expenditure (77%: AU\$47.8 million) is on providing services to clients and operating its information library, which supplies accessible materials direct to readers. The relative share of these activities is not stated.

However, agencies in Western Australia, Tasmania and South Australia remain outside the Vision Australia umbrella and their ability to buy outsourcing services from Vision Australia is subject to funding constraints at the state level.

Educational provision

Schools

Library services for visual and print-impaired school students are organised on a state basis under the relevant state ministry for education and training. For example, the Vision Education Service in Western Australia provides a range of services, including equipment loan and alternative format reading and other curricular materials, from pre-school to the end of secondary education. They make the point that others have also made that educational material is time-consuming to produce.

Universities

Library services to disabled students in tertiary institutions are the responsibility of the individual university, (in accordance with anti-discrimination laws) and depend on the funding and other organisational aspects of the individual university. However, universities do collaborate to share and make materials available and they also access materials from special libraries through interlibrary loan. Vision Australia Information Library Service provides student material on request only, not as part of the regular collection. The specialist organisations also help tertiary institutions to increase access to materials and support to individual students through their advice. CAUL noted that Vision Australia's moves to full cost recovery in recent years have tended to lead to universities undertaking more in-house material provision, though Braille materials will mostly be provided by Vision Australia. Other universities also noted less reliance on specialist blindness agencies to provide materials and more co-operation between universities to share materials.

Governmental responsibility

There are points of responsibility and both Commonwealth (federal) and state level within the ministries responsible for the rights and welfare of disabled people and in the ministries with authority over schools. The regulation and funding of universities is on the Commonwealth level through the Department of Education Science and Training (DEST).

Overlaps – are they a problem?

None of the respondents believe that there are problematic overlaps in responsibilities. Materials are shared via inter-library loan. The major issue raised is the fact that several states are outside the Vision Australia organisation, but there are arrangements to renew agreements with those organisations and VA hopes to improve service to people living in those areas.

Gaps between policy and practice

General services

The major gap identified is in the uneven provision across different states, due to the lack of a national special library service, as Vision Australia covers only some of the states – albeit the most populous ones.

Higher education

Respondents identified a number of gaps between the policy of equitable access and the reality. These can be categorised as follows:

Time lags

One of the biggest challenges is to provide material in a timely way. Gaps arise due to the time and resources required to prepare alternative format information resulting in delays in the timely provision of alternative format material to students. Often reading lists are not provided with sufficient lead time to allow the preparation of alternative format materials in the timeframe they are required. This can be the fault of the teaching staff or it can be because students do not advise the institution at the time of their enrolment of the full extent of their support requirements. Case studies of individual students referred to in the HREOC's report already cited identify other time-related issues, such as lecturers not realising that providing ad hoc reading material for immediate discussion in classes without advanced notice poses problems for visually impaired students and puts them at a disadvantage.

There is a time lag between the development or upgrading of mainstream software programs and the upgrading of assistive software (e.g. screen readers) relied upon by people with a disability and used in conjunction with mainstream software.

Formats

Other gaps arise from the challenges in providing description of visual content (diagrams, images etc) in information resources, in particular if the significance of the illustrative material is not apparent to the transcriber.

Assumptions in relation to technology and online resources

As computers are used more and more to deliver library services, there is an expectation that all users will have the technology and skills needed. For vision impaired people, much of this technology is quite expensive which places individual items out of their reach. Furthermore, libraries in the sector are not satisfactorily meeting the individual training needs of these users and a number of library systems do not comply fully with web accessibility and other standards for providing material to people with vision disabilities in a suitable format. Resources provided on the web for students may not always be accessible – e.g. some PDF documents, some library databases, etc. At times material may not be considered for alternative formatting because it is already available electronically and assumed to be accessible. However users of screen reading software at times find that documents in electronic format are not accessible via their screen reader. Some PDF documents are particularly problematic.

Training

There is a lack of training in accessible software and accessibility standards by people responsible for webpage and coursework design and for digitisation of resources such as course readings.

Are the models in flux?

The main change in organisation came with the formation of Vision Australia. Vision Australia expects a strengthening of relationships between public libraries and specialist libraries. Models of delivery will be affected by the transition to digital technologies.

What is driving change?

Technology

The general view is that there is a mainstreaming process occurring in the provision of library and information services as the Internet and DAISY take over from the old audio tapes. Some public libraries are beginning to look at technology for the delivery of accessible information services.

However, the identification of gaps between policy and practice indicates that there can be dangers in the idea that technology is solving all the problems, if it is incorrectly assumed that all online material is readily accessible; cost, lack of training and bad practice can all prevent accessibility, and much material is not available online.

Policy framework

The government's Print Disability and Postal Concessions to the Blind Report 2003, referred to above, looked at the way alternative format materials were funded, produced and distributed. It contained five recommendations.

According to Vision Australia, the recommendations would make a considerable impact were they to be carried out.

The five recommendations were:

1. Department of Family and Community Services commission research into the application of contemporary technology to the production of alternative format material
2. Department of Family and Community Services further review the funding model for services funded under the Print Disability Services Program
3. Department of Family and Community Services and Australia Post jointly review the arrangements for administering the Postal Concessions for the Blind Program
4. Department of Family and Community Services works with Australia Post to ensure Australia Post staff are aware of the Postal Concessions for the Blind Program.
5. Department of Family and Community Services reviews items considered eligible for postage under the Postal Concessions for the Blind Program.

The first two were pursued in a report by Jenny Pearson entitled Research into the Application of Contemporary Technology to the Production of Alternative Format Material.

This report made a number of recommendations, including the following:

Recommendation 1

Producers of audio format materials should transition to digital production of masters as a first priority. Conversion of selected analogue masters should occur as a second priority.

Recommendation 2

Production of analogue audio copies (e.g. audio cassettes) should be continued during the period of transition from analogue to digital production in order that consumers are not disadvantaged.

Recommendation 3

The DAISY (ANSI/NISO Z39.86) standard should be adopted as the formatting standard to be used by Australian producers of digital audio books.

Recommendation 4

There should be a choice of formats and delivery methods for consumers, including physical formats such as hard copy Braille and Large Print (although it is not suggested that every provider produce both physical and electronic formats).

Recommendation 5

Current work by the Attorney Generals Department towards revision of the Australian Copyright Act (1968) should be accelerated with the underpinning principle being the appropriate removal of barriers to access by people with a disability, consistent with the Disability Discrimination Act (1992).

In its response to the Pearson report [<http://www.visionaustralia.org.au/info.aspx?page=988>], Vision Australia supports a number of the recommendations but points out that there are large costs involved in converting to digital delivery and as it will save money from the postal concession, the government should consider the issues together. The Pearson report was not asked to consider the postal concession issues. It is also concerned that it is impossible to know whether the proposed funding model will deliver the same level of subsidy as the current model, which is itself insufficient to cover the costs of producing alternative format materials.

Measuring success

Vision Australia has a number of mechanisms in place to measure how well it is satisfying users.

Targets include the range and depth of material available; speed of supplying item; users' satisfaction with the service across a range of measures

Market research and development team suggests Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to the executive, based on comparisons with like organisations. Targets are reviewed annually, with a philosophy of continuous improvement. The baseline (as VA is a new organisation) was a survey of a representative sample of library clients carried out in 2005. The survey will be repeated 2007 to look at trends. Indicators covered: customer service; professionalism of staff; effectiveness of services in relation to vision and missions/values of VA; preferred formats; internet and PC usage; adherence to disability service standards. Also use focus groups and did a research pilot with 700 clients to test new digital service delivery model.

Universities have a variety of targets and means of measurement, for example Rodski Research is a company used by approximately half of Australian and New Zealand universities to conduct surveys of library client satisfaction.

However, CAUL believes user satisfaction is not well measured

“There is a question in the Rodski survey, a client satisfaction survey used by university libraries, that relates to “Aids provided for users with disabilities” but it has limited usefulness as a measure of success. Apart from the Rodski survey, individual institutions may conduct their own client satisfaction surveys.”

Individual universities

UTAS: The library has a maximum 6-week turnaround time for providing reading materials. Academic staff are required to make unit outlines and reading lists available 6 weeks prior to the start of semester

Generally, tertiary education libraries attempt to measure their success in providing services to students with a range of disabilities – including vision disabilities. Clients are surveyed on a range of Library related issues.

Participation by visually impaired people

VA has a strong consultative framework with boards and a library client committee. It also undertakes specific surveys and research into client expectations and satisfaction. Governing Board of VA includes several users of the service. A sub-committee of the Board oversees all client services including the library.

Universities

Within UTAS, some staff involved in Disability Support have a visual impairment. There are student representatives on relevant university committees.

People with a vision disability have little leadership or operational involvement in relation to services provided by other organisations assisting tertiary sector libraries in meeting their needs. Students with vision and other print disabilities have some involvement via provision of feedback to library staff regarding service availability and quality and participation on advisory committees designed to monitor service provision issues for library users with disabilities. However, their level of involvement varies from one university to another.

Funding sources and adequacy

General

Vision Australia

Vision Australia gets most of its funding (70%) from donations and the sale of services. The remainder comes from Australian Federal and State Governments, specifically from the Department of Family Community and Indigenous Services (postal subsidy) and the Dept of Veteran Affairs (equipment and services).

Vision Australia Information Library Service has a budget of A\$4m 2006-7. It has 16,000 clients for materials. Funding has been static and is not adequate. Vision Australia believes that in each state they should be funded as a public library at A\$7m+ per annum, with matching or more Federal funding.

Higher education

CAUL estimates the funding at approximately \$342 per capita, estimated from total funding divided by approximate number of university students with disabilities, for all programs, not direct services to students, and not specifically library services.

The number of students with a disability in 2000 was 18,775 of whom 3,505 had a visual disability. [<http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse/Information%20and%20Services%2FCurrent%20Students%2FStudent%20Services%20Group%2FDisability%20Coordination%20Office%2FStatistics%20on%20People%20with%20a%20Disability/#> university accessed 30 August 2006]. It appears that the 2002 participation rate for students with visual disability is around 0.5% [http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/higher_education/publications_resources/profiles/analysis_of_equity_groups_in_higher_education_1991_2002.htm Accessed 30 August 2006].

Macaquarie University also made the following comments:

“It is difficult to obtain national data regarding this as responsibility for providing library services for students with vision disabilities is undertaken by different spheres of the Australian education and print disability service systems. These are operated by different state and territory governments which have jurisdiction over different levels of education, private education institutions owned and managed by churches and other bodies and registered charities (blindness service agencies) providing support to people with vision disabilities in the general community.

Unfortunately, funding of library services for students with vision disabilities in the Australian tertiary sector appears to have increased only marginally over recent years. It is not adequate. Considerable funds need to be injected in to the tertiary education library system to purchase and house a greater range of reference sources, maps and other data, journal holdings and other material in a suitable common electronic file format for access by students with vision disabilities.

Funding also needs to be increased to allow sufficient opportunity for upgrade and replacement of assistive technology needed to access electronic material. Greater training budgets for use in equipping library staff and students with the skills they need to make best use of available and required technology is also needed. Braille production equipment and training in its use also needs to be available in educational libraries to reduce the amount of time taken to access material from external sources in this format for use by students with vision disabilities. At least 300 million dollars is needed to establish/enhance the above-mentioned services offered by Australian tertiary education libraries to students with vision disabilities. Funding would then need to be provided on a continuing basis to ensure these services are adequately maintained.”

Overall availability of material in alternative formats

Vision Australia has 18,000 analogue titles in its collection.

According to the Round Table on Information Access for People with Print Disabilities, only 3% of information is available in accessible format for use by people with vision and other print disabilities.

CAUL believes that:

Most text books recently published in Australia would be available electronically on request direct from publisher through individual licence for students with a print disability. Many text books published overseas are also available on request.

The Blind Citizens' Australia 2002 survey, cited above, stated:

“The two quasi-national specialist services have a combined total of around 16,000 unique titles, around 2500 new titles being added annually. There are 95,000 audio books and 40,000 Braille books available for borrowing. By comparison, local government libraries in Australia have 36 million books and other materials available as lending stock, and the state and national libraries hold a further 15 million books and other materials as non-lending stock.

“The public libraries' collections include both large print and audio titles, but these are a fraction of the size of the standard print collections, often quite old, and far more limited in diversity. Many of the audio books held in public libraries are in abridged forms, and often in poor condition. With the exception of the Canberra Library, public libraries in Australia do not hold Braille collections (although Braille is the preferred literacy medium of many blind people).”

Clearly, while some numbers will have changed, the overall relationship between material available to sighted and visually-impaired people is not likely to have changed substantially.

Materials provision

General

A range of not-for-profit organisations produce alternative format materials, as well as a number of for-profit companies. The Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS) produced the Print Disability and Postal Concession for the Blind Review Report 2003 [http://www.facs.gov.au/disability/blind_review_report/03.html] which listed the organizations responsible for producing alternative format materials:

“There are 13 producers of alternative format material across Australia that receive funding under the Print Disability Services Program. These producers comprise:

The Queensland Narrating Service, Queensland;

The Australian Listening Library, New South Wales;

Royal Blind Society of New South Wales, New South Wales;

Royal Institute for the Deaf and Blind Children: Vision Ed, New South Wales;

St Edmunds School for the Blind and Vision Impaired, New South Wales;

Canberra Blind Society, Australian Capital Territory;

Christian Blind Mission International, Victoria;

Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind, Victoria;

Vision Australia Foundation, Victoria;

‘Hear a Book’ Service (Tasmania) Inc, Tasmania;

Royal Society for the Blind of South Australia Inc, South Australia;

Association of the Blind of Western Australia Inc, Western Australia; and

Narkaling Inc, Western Australia.

“Twelve of the 13 organisations produce material and services for blind and vision impaired people and one organisation produces alternative format material for people with an intellectual disability.

“A range of alternative format material for State, Territory and Catholic Departments of Education are produced by some of the Print Disability funded services. These services also receive funding from State and Territory disability service programs.

“Private enterprises are also commercially producing Braille, audio and large print materials for people who require material in alternative formats.”

It should be noted again that the Royal Blind Society (RBS), the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind (RVIB) and Vision Australia Foundation (VAF) came together the following year in Vision Australia.

Vision Australia is a major provider of materials. It has a digitisation programme in hand.

Braille

Original materials supplied: Print book or e-text

Conversion: VA staff

On-demand: Contract, student and personal support requests

Stock: Projected client requests for the library

Targets for range/depth/speed: No targets apart from a quota of titles for the library each year

Audio – standard cassette and CD

Original materials supplied: Print books or sheets

Conversion: Text narrated by volunteers or professional narrators; synthetic voice production being trialled for some elements of production

On-demand: Contract, student and personal support requests

Stock: Projected client requests for the library

Targets for range/depth/speed: None

Audio Daisy

Original materials supplied: Print

Conversion: VA staff

On-demand: Contract, student and personal support requests

Stock: Projected client requests for the library; also analogue materials are being converted to Daisy based on its availability from other agencies and quality checking for specific date ranges; envisaged that all audio masters held will be converted to Daisy

Targets for range/depth/speed: None

Daisy text and audio

Original materials supplied: Print

Conversion: VA staff

On-demand: Contract, student and personal support requests

Stock: Projected client requests for the library; also analogue materials are being converted to Daisy based on its availability from other agencies and quality checking for specific date ranges; envisaged that all audio masters held will be converted to Daisy

Targets for range/depth/speed: None

Supplied in alternative formats

how supplied: Digital masters in 45 min lengths or wav files

who supplies: Commercial vendors

Basis for decision to acquire: Client preferences for genre, client suggestions, Australian content, award winners and popular authors

Targets for range/depth/speed: None

Digital audio downloads/streaming

VA does not yet have material available for digital audio download or streaming but is aiming to have downloads available for library content within 12 months, and is spending AU\$1.4 million on its DAISY-based digitisation project.

Other materials/formats

Music: There are several producers of Braille music in Australia. Holdings of Braille music are listed in Libraries Australia (the national union catalogue)

Schools

As an example, the Western Australia Vision Education Service, through its Transcription and Resource Unit, produces, loans and stores curriculum materials and textbooks in:

Braille

audio tape

tactile and

large print formats

Universities

CAUL identifies LaTrobe University's services as typical:

“After providing evidence of your disability or medical condition, Disability Advisory Staff will evaluate your needs and, if required, ensure the provision of:

Notetakers, personal readers, scribes, help with assignment preparation and other personal and academic assistance on campus

Alternative examination or assessment conditions and applications for special consideration

Arrangements for course materials to be made available in an appropriate format, eg. Braille, audio-cassettes

Loan of equipment such as wheelchairs, scooters, portable cassette recorders, lecterns, ergonomic chairs

Access to computer equipment

Arrangements for lectures and tutorials to be held in physically accessible venues

Information and support regarding day-to-day university life

Information and support regarding complaints of disability discrimination

Information regarding scholarships and awards applicable to students with disabilities/additional needs

Information regarding accessible accommodation on campus
Referral information both internal and external to the University
(See <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/equity/disas/studinfo.htm> visited 28 August 2006)

Macquarie University has established a service called Macquarie Customised Accessibility Service (M-CAS) which provides transcription and consulting services on a fee-for-service basis to tertiary institutions, (and also companies and government departments to support the needs of employees). In liaison with the student's own institution, it works with the academics and individual students to determine their needs and produces material in-house to support that student. It has direct relationships with academic publishers which facilitates fast access to files.

CAUL gave us the following information which generalizes university practices. In most cases, information from individual universities confirmed this. An exception is DAISY, where CAUL said DAISY format texts for students were not currently obtainable: Macquarie was able to source them from specialists and also suggested that several universities were planning to create texts. Macquarie itself is trialling DAISY format production services at its Macquarie Customised Accessibility Services (M-CAS).

Braille

Original materials supplied: Electronically from publisher as word or PDF file or OCR scanned from hard copy.

Conversion: Conversion of hard copy Braille is outsourced to Vision Australia or other specialised transcription services. Some Universities may have conversion equipment for in house transcription.

On-demand: yes

Stock: no

Targets for range/depth/speed: none

Audio – standard cassette and CD

Original materials supplied: May be hard copy or Electronic (from CD or email)

Conversion: In house through University Disability Services; Outsourced to Vision Australia and other specialised transcription services; Text or screen reading software such as JAWS, Kurzweil, Text aloud or Read and Write Gold may also be used by students to read directly from electronic files

On-demand: yes

Stock: no

Targets for range/depth/speed: none

Audio digital for download/streaming

Original materials supplied: CD, digital, hardcopy

Conversion: In house through University Disability Services

On demand: yes

Supplied in alternative formats

how supplied: Post

who supplies: University Disability Services; Education Libraries; Students own conversion

Basis for decision to acquire: Subject areas taught at the university and depending on availability from usual vendors.

Targets for range/depth/speed: none

Preferred situation

Respondents were asked to describe the ideal way in which library services would be organised, funded and delivered and how organisations would collaborate to do so. There was a lot of agreement in the tertiary sector about the ideal solutions. Schools placed emphasis on better trained staff. It was agreed that governments should provide some or all the funding, with some respondents believing that publishers should also contribute.

Schools

Governments would provide the funding, education departments would deliver the services. There would be greater inter library communication. Ideally, there would be qualified teacher librarians in all schools in Australia and qualified knowledgeable staff and adequate funding.

CAUL

One idea would be to establish a federally funded national agency which obtained texts and required readings for tertiary education providers on behalf of their enrolled students and staff. This agency would have access to a reliable and comprehensive database

of materials in accessible formats and would have established relationships with publishers and be empowered to obtain material in electronic format promptly. The material would be delivered online to visually impaired people's through the tertiary education provider's online learning management systems.

Funding would come from the Department of Education, Science and Training to education providers, who would deliver the services.

The ideal level of service would be timely, accurate materials in preferred format, providing visually impaired people with all required reading prior to the commencement of the semester.

Visually impaired people should also be encouraged to develop the skills to undertake their own independent research which will prepare them for their future work.

Macquarie University

Ideally, a national central repository needs to be established which would allow for access to materials produced Australia-wide in accessible format to enable libraries and their users with vision disabilities to have more efficient access to costly materials.

All governments involved in establishment of the world education library of accessible study materials for people with print disabilities would contribute financially to this facility on a regular basis. Publishers of educational texts would also contribute funds to ensure technologies available to the library and its users remained current and accessible. Publishers would be required to contribute funds to facilitate Braille/large print production of their texts which would need to be published in compliance with the DAISY standard to ensure availability of an accessible common file format for use in producing material in required formats. The Australian government would also contribute funds to ensure ongoing work of the national education library in providing a high quality uniform service to Australian students with vision impairment – regardless of where they live. All educational institutions would also be

required to earmark a significant proportion of their library funds for use in enabling institutional libraries to perform their role in assisting students with vision disabilities at a local level as outlined previously.

Various libraries connected to the 3-tiered system described above would deliver the services. These libraries would share information about their collections and service delivery systems via a common database and participate in joint initiatives designed to improve the quality and range of services available to their clients. They would also ensure barriers to accessing materials in a time-efficient manner would not be created by non-compatible catalogue or inter-library loan systems and processes.

This would be done using a combination of methods: online dispatch of material; delivery of books etc on CD if recorded in DAISY format; or in hard or soft copy Braille/large print. User preference would be a significant factor in shaping the service delivery mode/s to be used. If users did not have specific technology, e.g. DAISY players needed to access some material, the institutional library would need to source this from the national education library for their students. Some material, such as newspapers and certain periodicals, could be delivered to students via a digital broadband satellite wireless transmission system which would facilitate real time access to this material for playback on specially designed devices by the end user. This concept is now a reality and already being applied in South Australia via the "Books in the Sky" initiative (see above under special projects) allowing people with vision disabilities to read talking books and newspapers.

An ideal level of service would involve the provision of material in a user's preferred format within 24 hours of a request being received by the education institution's library.

The view from the user's perspective

Vision Australia

Vision Australia Information Library Service provides access to a range of fiction and non-fiction, reference, newspapers, magazines, textbooks, children's literature, scientific and academic works through the provision of a free public library service.

To access the collections clients must fill out an application form that is available online, via the post or from a range of local and regional centres. All applications must be signed by an appropriate referee to certify that a client meets the eligibility criterion. Referees include people such as health care professionals, librarian, and teachers.

The library catalogue can be accessed via the phone or on line. Once a client has joined the library the Library Management System (LMS) AURORA is used to construct a reader profile. The LMS automatically circulates the titles, authors, and genres that the client chooses. Materials are currently circulated via the mail (fiction and non-fiction, reference, textbooks, audio-described video) and online (newspapers, scientific journals) with books to be delivered online in the near future. Profiles are dynamic and are updated regularly in conversation with member services librarians who can be contact via a virtual reference services on-line via e-mail twenty-four hours a day or over the phone during business hours and services clients throughout Australia.

A client can suggest a new title for the collection using the "Suggestions" module of the LMS. The acquisition of such a new title depends of Collections Policy and the annual acquisition budget.

Education

Schools

State education authorities provide textbooks in Braille and other formats to primary and secondary schools.

Higher education

A visually impaired person in a tertiary institution checks the Library catalogue to see if the Library holds the item in accessible electronic format. The person accesses the item from their home or in the library and manipulates the data to their preferred format.

If the item is unavailable from the Library in accessible electronic format the student contacts the Disability Officer or the Library at their institution to request the item.

If the library holds the item in print format the Disability Officer or the Library may enlarge the required section if that format is suitable for the student.

If the Library does not hold the print item or if large print is unsuitable the Disability Officer or the Library checks if an electronic version of the text is available commercially and arranges purchase.

If the Library does not hold the print item or if large print is unsuitable the Disability Officer or the Library checks The Catalogue Of Master Copies For Use By Institutions Assisting People With Disabilities maintained by the Copyright Agency Limited. If item is listed arranges to obtain copy in appropriate format

If the item is not listed in the CAL Catalogue the Disability Officer or the Library checks Libraries Australia (the national

union catalogue) to see if the item is available in another library in Australia in an appropriate format. If item is listed arranges to obtain a copy.

If the item is not available through those sources the Library contacts the publisher to request an electronic copy or licence to scan if an electronic copy is not available.

The Disability Officer or the Library may choose to use a commercial provider such as Vision Australia or Macquarie Customised Accessibility Services to provide materials in accessible formats.

A reference work

A limited range of reference works, such as general and subject-specific dictionaries, are available in formats such as Braille for access by people with vision disabilities. However, these are rarely held by tertiary sector libraries. There would need to be specific demand for the purchase of these materials by students with vision disabilities studying at individual institutions given storage and financial issues. If a reference work should be required by a student, they would need to be registered with their institution as a student with a disability. This requires them to contact their disability services section or equity office to have their needs assessed. As part of this process, they would be required to provide supporting documentation from a qualified medical practitioner or allied health professional before being referred to their library for assistance. Next, the student would need to communicate with the reference librarian at their institution library to initially request the work. If available in a suitable format, the library may be able to obtain it from a specialist library on an inter-library loan basis. If it is not available and there was sufficient demand for the work, the library would consider its purchase in the required format when sufficient funds permitted the cost of its production in the required format being met. From the point of view of the vision impaired user, this could amount to lengthy delays in accessing required material.

A periodical

An increasing range of periodicals are available in electronic form. However, many are only available in PDF form which poses problems for vision impaired computer users – particularly those with access to older technology. If required, an institutional library would need to attempt to source the material or arrange for its conversion in to Word or text format. This would then provide some flexibility for having the material produced in Braille, audio or large print format by the library or suitable accessible format producer.

A scientific journal article or volume

Generally speaking, vision impaired students would need assistance from library staff in accessing hard copy versions for individual transcription in to an appropriate format by an accessible format producer. Alternatively, students may scan material from these sources using equipment available in dedicated areas within individual libraries which house equipment for use by students with disabilities. These courses of action need to be taken in most instances given the limited availability of such resources in accessible format. However, this situation may improve with the increasing use of electronic media for their publication. Libraries will still play an important role in facilitating access by individual students to these resources by providing required computer hardware and software needed by people with vision disabilities to access written information and assistance with conversion of this type of material should its initial format be inaccessible to these users.

An academic book

Generally speaking, Australian tertiary education libraries do not purchase academic texts in accessible formats for use by students with vision disabilities. This function is generally performed by disability service areas of individual institutions. Libraries can, however, play an important role in making hard copies of required

academic texts available to accessible format producers on extended loan to allow for their contents to be transcribed in to an appropriate format for use by individual students. The accessible format producers are generally contracted on a fee-for-service basis to undertake this work by disability services areas located separately within tertiary institutions.

General note

In attempting to source the material referred to in the above-mentioned situations, students with vision disabilities must plan as far ahead as possible in relation to their accessible format material requirements for study in order to minimise the risk of experiencing considerable delays and frustration in utilising prescribed and recommended educational resources on the same basis as their sighted peers.

User survey

A 2002 survey by Blind Citizens Australia [<http://www.nla.gov.au/initiatives/meetings/disabilities/blind.html>], the main representative organisation for visually impaired people, found that along with the widely recognised problem of the small proportion of reading matter of all kinds available in accessible formats there is a less well-known problem that visually impaired people have little access to the means of knowing what materials do exist, as catalogues are often inaccessible, even when they are online. This problem of catalogue inaccessibility was worse in the case of public than specialist libraries. It also found that public libraries have paid more attention to access issues for those with physical disabilities than sensory ones; labelling of large print and audio books, lighting and shelving positioning were often poor from the viewpoint of visually impaired people, for example. Technological fixes such as reading machines and computers with screen readers were under-used due to lack of staff trained to understand them and help visually impaired people to use them. The paper also mentions the uneven distribution of special libraries geographically and the fragmented

nature of the provision – though this has been partly rectified by the Vision Australia merger. The survey found that most visually impaired people used 2 or 3 libraries and a significant proportion used 4 or more, including overseas specialist libraries. Two-thirds of people used their local public library.

Barriers

Respondents were asked about the most important barriers to provision of library services to visually impaired people, and also which they would most like to remove. Funding and copyright featured across the board, but for tertiary institutions, it was also very important to deal with the problem of time lags in delivering material to students. These lags were to some extent due to material not being made available by publishers in a timely fashion but also due to human factors: for example, students not advising libraries of their needs in good time, or faculty not understanding the need to make reading lists available well in advance. For schools, the lack of training for teachers in this area was an important issue.

Vision Australia

Most important barrier

Both funding and copyright restrictions play a role in limiting the amount and timely provision of accessible information to people who are blind or vision impaired.

Most like to remove

While copyright can slow things down it is lack of funding which is restrictive.

Schools

Most important barrier

Education of staff to know what is available. They have never had any Professional Development in this area.

Most like to remove

The lack of trained/qualified staff and lack of funding.

Universities

CAUL

Most important barrier

Providing timely access to course materials in accessible formats.
This includes

- obtaining reading lists from academics

- lack of material listed in national databases

- poor response time from publishers responding to requests for electronic files

- charts and other technical content which does not readily convert to accessible format

Funding: The Australian Universities Teaching Committee in 2003 reported that “Funding and resources dedicated to providing supports for students are inadequate and not necessarily distributed to the departments and areas responsible for teaching and supporting students with disabilities” <http://services.admin.utas.edu.au/visproj/>

Most like to remove

Better advanced notification of required study materials

UTAS

Most important barrier

Academic processes, which do not provide unit outlines and lists of essential readings in sufficient time for the Library to process the materials for the student. Staff resources – the processes are very labour-intensive and time consuming, for a small number of students.

Lack of compatibility between the JAWS assistive software and PDF files.

Macquarie

Most important barrier

Copyright, funding levels plus ignorance and negative attitudes displayed by a number of publishers, academic staff and service providers.

Most like to remove

Outmoded copyright laws restricting the production and use of accessible materials by students with vision disabilities and funding constraints

Attitudinal barriers which can significantly progress in improving access to tertiary materials by students with vision disabilities and those organisations whose role is to support them in pursuit of their right to equality of educational access.

Copyright

Copyright is seen as a significant barrier. There is still some reluctance by some publishers to provide electronic copies of printed texts for use by people with print disabilities.

Vision Australia in its submission to the government over the Pearson Report stated:

“While the majority of publishers and copyright holders are accommodating of the need to provide copyright permission for alternative format producers to copy material, there are still significant barriers, which cause delay or the withholding of permission. The acceleration of the work being done by the Attorney General to revise the Australian Copyright Act would be welcomed particularly if the result is that access to copyright is made easier for alternative format producers and that equitable access to material is seen as the driving principle.

“Also, as a result of the revision of the Australian Copyright Act, we would like to see an improved flow of alternative format material internationally, and the opening of access to databases of electronic material such as that held on Bookshare in America. We urge Government to consider this as an issue under the recently negotiated Free Trade Agreement with America and to consider it as an issue for consideration with any future negotiated agreements.”

Special projects

Vision Australia is undertaking the digitisation of its holdings, which throws up transition issues related to:

Ensuring readers are not disadvantaged through the process, either by losing access to material in a transition period or through being unable to afford new playback devices

Funding of the work involved and the evolution of a new funding model appropriate to digital production and delivery

Copyright (see above)

Avoiding duplication of effort by different agencies in conversion

Ensuring that smaller alternative format providers have the resources and skills to produce high quality material in the new formats and also are able to network effectively with other agencies to ensure co-operation and lack of duplication

NILS has fully moved all its internal audio production to a digital technology platform and is currently undertaking the conversion of selected analogue masters to a digital format. It has conducted a research pilot with 700 clients to test the new digital service delivery model.

VA stated in its submission to the government in April 2005:

“We strongly believe that to maximise the effort of producers it is essential to eliminate duplication of effort both in the mastering of new digital audio files and the conversion of analogue masters to a digital platform. This issue was discussed at the 18 February Print Disability Round Table meeting and we would like to see the recommendation as shown in the notes of that meeting adopted. This recommendation is: “There should be coordination across producers to avoid duplication. This would suggest the need for a national catalogue using Kinetica and some means of notifying others of the intention to convert. The National Library indicated that it would be prepared to develop strategies for avoiding duplication.

“The National Information and Library Service of RBS.RVIB.VAF Ltd currently has 18,000 analogue titles in its collection. With the analogue dead date looming we have approximately 5 years to convert the total collection at a cost of between \$15 to \$19 million dollars. The cost to provide play back devices is estimated to be in the region of \$15 million dollars. The blindness community will not be able to fund this transition on its own and will require Government and community assistance.

“As a transition strategy it is our view that the existing analogue collections should be maintained at a high quality but that at the appropriate time the number of copies of each title and the number of titles be allowed to reduce as natural attrition of analogue tapes occur through damage and loss. This should coincide with increased availability of digital formats.

“Copies of new titles mastered digitally should be put onto analogue cassette so that end users of the analogue cassette format are not denied access to new titles however the number of copies should be kept to a minimum.”

Books in the Sky

The Book in the Sky [<http://www.audio-read.com.au/bits.htm>] initiative is a project between the RSB of South Australia and a private company, Audio-Read Proprietary Ltd, which delivers audio books, newspapers, magazines, learning materials and other text to print-disabled users via broadband satellite. It employs a secure digital multicast system and a patented portable audio playback device called the Audio Navigator. The system allows book orders for next day delivery and makes magazines available in advance of newsstand sales. It claims that publishers can be confident that their copyright is protected as material cannot be copied and its use leaves an audit trail. Evidently the system is undergoing a limited roll-out following a trial.

Publishers' involvement

CAUL notes that publishers provide files electronically in Word or PDF for text books.

Deakin University's experience with publishers for the supply of accessible files during 2006 proved that the main problem was not with the response time or with the provision of a text file but with the quality of the file. In almost all cases, it notes, the text file provided did not contain any page numbers so that the student would not

be able to reference as is necessary with any assignment where quotes are lifted from the text. Also some files could not be opened because they had been created on an incompatible application like QUARK. On a few occasions incomplete files were sent.

Most publishers providing the files also required a licence agreement to be signed and exactly who should sign such agreements became problematic.

The Library decided to go back to converting material that is not commercially available for itself, in the light of the problems it has been having with quality of the files it has been receiving and to a lesser degree to the time taken to supply. There are also problems with the requirement to sign a licence agreement. It would, however, prefer material to be readily available on a commercial basis.

Canada

Basic country data

Population 32.268m (2005).

Over 65s as % of total population: 2005 13.1%; 2020 16.2% (projected).

GNI per capita (international dollars converted at purchasing power parities) 2005: \$32,220

Government: Federation. English and French both official languages.

Estimated number of visually impaired people: 600,000

Estimated number of print-impaired people (including those with vision loss): 3m

Note on information sources

CNIB is Canada's national library for people living with vision loss, and has provided the majority of the information in this section, supplemented by input from Library and Archives Canada and desk research.

Definitions and their effects

The views of CNIB

Definitions in current use are:

Blind and visually impaired

Print-disabled/disability

Perceptual disability

Canadians living with vision loss

Deafblind Canadians

Visual Impairment

The term "blind" is very restrictive and can lead to a significant under-estimation. Many may not seek the services offered as they will think CNIB has solutions that only meet the needs of those who are blind.

There are more than 600,000 people with vision loss in Canada, yet CNIB serves a small fraction of this group. Many libraries ask for a doctor's signature to verify vision loss. The medical system has a set of criteria to determine what is "legally blind" which is more restrictive than varying degrees of vision loss. If a person is not able to get a medical signature, yet they are experiencing vision loss, this is a very negative impact for those needing library services.

The Canadian Copyright Act clearly defines what a perceptual disability is, and therefore who can be provided with “restricted” alternative format materials. However, the terminology the Canadian Census uses could be confusing in that it may be broader than what is understood by libraries. The 2006 Census asked people to respond to a question such as “do you have difficulty seeing, learning, ...”. Libraries must permit access for people who fit the criteria defined in the Canadian Copyright Exception (not just “do you have difficulty seeing or learning”).

The most inclusive definition is “print or perceptually disabled” as that includes people who cannot read regular print due to a disability. For visual impairment, CNIB has determined that vision loss is the most inclusive term and this is the preferred term.

Library and user group data

Prevalence of visual and print impairment

Based on the Statistics Canada Health and Activity Limitation (HALS) survey, there are about 3,000,000 people (10% of the Canadian population) with some form of perceptual disability, with 600,000 of those experiencing some degree of vision loss.

According to the Canadian Library Association’s report *Opening the Book*:

“By the year 2026, one in five Canadians will be a senior citizen and twenty-six percent of those seniors will be blind or have low vision. This expanding population will drastically increase the number of Canadians who rely on access to information in alternative formats.”

Geographical variations

There may be a slight increase in vision loss among First Nations people (due to diabetes), who are located in specific geographic areas within Canada.

Public libraries, numbers, growth and funding

There is no national survey of libraries in Canada, though the Canadian Urban Libraries Council compiles data on its member libraries. Public library numbers are thought to be growing.

One analysis of these statistics showed that these urban libraries served a mean population of 244,000, had 133 FTE staff (12.71 per capita of the served population) and had 5.6 visits per capita in 2003.

In Canada, libraries are provincially and municipally funded. Some provinces will have adequately funded libraries, others will be under-funded. Services have expanded but in some systems, budgets have been cut back. They are well used – public libraries are cited as one of the top 3 public services valued by Canadians.

Rights and attitudes

Section 15.1 of the **Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms** explicitly states that “Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability”. The **Constitution Act** of 1982 states that every Canadian is equal before the law, has equal protection of the law, and equal benefit of the law without discrimination.

The **Canadian Human Rights Act**, as amended in 1998, builds on this by making it a legal requirement for employers and service providers to accommodate persons with disabilities if doing so does not cause undue hardship. Internationally, Canada is a co-signatory of the UN's **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** of which Article 19 includes the right "to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers." Provincial and territorial human rights legislation prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities.

Right to education

The Charter of Rights and Freedom is the basis for the right to equal education; in some provinces students are accommodated from elementary through to post secondary education. In other provinces, students are adequately accommodated only at the elementary and high school levels.

Right of access to buildings and participation in cultural life

These rights exist in theory – but in reality there are some physical and attitudinal barriers.

Right to library services

This is enshrined in the Public Library Acts, the Canadian Copyright Exception, the Charter of Human Rights (does not cite library service specifically) and "post free literature for the blind". These rights apply to print impaired people as well as visually impaired people, excluding the post free literature.

Expectations

All CNIB's studies indicate that visually impaired people do expect the same level of service. Expectations vary only in terms of individual requirements.

CNIB's recent needs study across Canada does not deal specifically with the issue of the role of personal support networks for access to printed materials but we do know that in other areas, particularly, in employment they rely on these networks to assist them and it must be assumed that this applies to reading materials and information as well. CNIB actually knows of examples where these networks are able to make some of this material available where otherwise it would not be.

Services to print impaired people in relation to services to visually impaired people

CNIB's collection is available directly to people with vision loss, and through community partnerships, is available to the larger print-disabled community. It launched the Visunet Canada Partners Program in 1999 that offers libraries and library consortia the opportunity to access the CNIB Library collection for an annual fee to serve members of their community who are unable to read print for reasons other than a visual impairment.

CNIB believes that services will start to be more closely integrated into the same program and strategy. The service will start to move more into community libraries, whether public, school or academic. There will be challenges. CNIB have been told by both the patron and the library staff person that it is more challenging to provide services to people who have an "invisible disability" such as a learning disability. There is less understanding and staff training in place to provide an inclusive and welcoming service for these prospective patrons. Non-vision related print disabilities are not

as well known in some sectors and therefore service is not always provided.

Access technology requirements seem similar, but are actually quite different for people who have a print disability other than vision loss. There are some differences in format preference (a learning disabled person would not want Braille).

There is some funding available for free DAISY players for print-impaired people, but this is not universal; the situation varies in different parts of the country.

Models and responsibilities

Service provision: general

All the following organizations are involved in providing library services to visually impaired people in Canada:

- General public libraries

- Specialist libraries for the blind

- Educational libraries

- Charities, voluntary organisations or non-governmental organisations

- Other specialist organisations

The CLA's Opening the Book report [http://www.cla.ca/issues/nnels_final.htm] described the system in Canada as follows:

“Service providers and producers of alternative format materials

“...Most public libraries have small collections of commercially produced audio, large print books and CNIB produced books on tape. Collectively public libraries across Canada hold thousands of audio books and large print books. But collections vary greatly and the range of available titles is very limited.

“Canada’s largest bilingual library service for people who are blind or visually impaired is the Canadian National Institute for the Blind Library for the Blind (CNIB Library). The CNIB Library relies on charitable donations and on 700 volunteers to produce books in alternative formats. Typically, the CNIB Library has produced between 2,000 and 2,500 audio and Braille titles a year.

“The CNIB Library, because of its mandate and charitable status as well as limited financial resources, directly serves only library users who are blind or visually impaired. In 1999 CNIB Library launched the Visunet Canada Partners Program that offers libraries and library consortia in Canada the opportunity to access the CNIB Library collection for an annual fee to serve members of their community who are unable to read print for reasons other than a visual impairment. However, the reach of this program has been limited.

“In Quebec, new Braille titles are produced either by Institut Nazareth et Louis-Braille (INLB) or by various private producers. Existing Braille books are also purchased from European agencies. Audio books are produced in French by La Magnétothèque. Since 1995 most library services to blind and vision-impaired francophones in Quebec have been delivered through the INLB and La Magnétothèque. As of that date, CNIB entrusted the circulation of its French analogue audio collection (excluding periodicals) to INLB. The CNIB also circulates French digital audio magazines and books directly to francophones across Canada. In 2001, INLB and La Magnétothèque were combined into one single program: the

Service québécois du livre adapté (SQLA), this being a temporary measure and a transitional step toward the transfer of all library services to the new Bibliothèque nationale du Québec (BNQ) in May 2005.

“The Montreal Association for the Blind produces alternative formats and provides services to anglophones living in Quebec.

“In British Columbia (BC) there was an Audiobook Program funded by the Public Library Services Branch until 2002 when the provincial government cancelled the funding. Due to public outcry from libraries and library users with print disabilities, the BC government offered a one-time grant of \$200,000 to Inter-LINK to provide this service. Inter-LINK is a public library federation in the lower mainland and while funding is only in place for five years it is producing 50-60 titles per year with the assistance of fundraising and funds from Inter-LINK member libraries.

“Many provinces including BC, Ontario, and Manitoba provide alternative format material for post secondary students. Some provinces provide services only to students from elementary through high school, and mandates for providing services for learning disabled students vary from province to province. However, all members of the Canadian Association of Educational Resource Centres for Alternate Formats (CAER) provide interlending services to each other.

“In addition, most individual post-secondary institutions across Canada provide local services to their students. Larger university services such as the Crane Resource Centre at the University of British Columbia also loan materials extensively to other institutions. The level of production services varies considerably from requiring students to do their own self-productions to standardized products in a range of alternative formats, including Braille, tactile graphics, audio, digital audio, DAISY, e-texts, MP3, and large print formats.

“There are also commercial agencies that will produce personal, business or government information in alternative formats for a fee.

“While these programs and services help to serve the needs of Canadians with print disabilities, they are not fully integrated and have been unable to provide an equitable level of service. It has been estimated that only 2-5% of published information in English and 1-2% of published information in French is available in alternative formats.

“For over 25 years, LAC has maintained a national union catalogue of alternative format materials as part of the larger National Union Catalogue (AMICUS). The catalogue is freely accessible on the Internet and provides mainstream access to materials in Canadian libraries, including alternative formats.”

The role of CNIB

CNIB is a registered charitable organization. CNIB directly serves anyone with vision loss, and through partnerships or sales can extend services to those with other print disabilities (indirect service). Many (but not all) public libraries can also serve people with vision loss, in addition to the wider print-disabled population. For many library systems, the public library may partner with CNIB and/or purchase from CNIB’s talking and print Braille book sales collection in order to serve people locally.

Service provision – education

Elementary to high school

Services are provided by the provinces, and vary.

Post-secondary

Services are provided by some provinces, but others only provide for school students. Most tertiary institutions themselves provide services for their own students and there is interlending (see general description above).

The National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS) published a report in May 2005, entitled “Access to Academic Materials for Post-Secondary Students with Print Disabilities” [<http://neads.ca/en/about/projects/atam/>].

It made a number of recommendations:

Post-secondary students with all types of print disabilities should have access to academic materials for their studies in a format or formats of their choice.

Materials provided must be made available in a timely manner to ensure that students who cannot use standard print can pursue college and university education on a level playing field, with equal access to all the tools of learning.

Publishers should make their books readily available in accessible, useable, complete electronic formats, at a reasonable price.

Initiatives such as the National Network for Equitable Public Library Service for Canadians with Print Disabilities, which includes the development of a Clearinghouse for making publishers electronic files available to alternate format producers, be supported in order to improve access to information for Canadians.

In this regard, changes to Canada’s copyright legislation are required so that the needs of those who cannot read regular print are acknowledged and accommodated.

Students with disabilities are entitled to a complete version of the book, and all information that is available in the printed version including text as well as graphs, charts, tables, etc.

While there is a need to establish professional standards of quality production of alternate format texts and other learning materials in Canada, this should not create an impediment to timely delivery. For that reason, disability service centres

and libraries on college and university campuses should have sufficient resources, staff, and technology to continue to produce materials in a variety of formats and of different types – as required by individual students – in-house.

In fact, there is a need for greater resources that allow academic materials to be professionally produced by those organizations that have the capacity and the expertise.

Professionally produced books and other learning materials in all formats should be made more widely available for sharing between schools, libraries, provinces and jurisdictions.

Professors, teachers and instructors must be willing to support the learning needs of all of their students, including those with print disabilities. Reading lists and academic requirements for each course of study must be established with sufficient lead-time to allow materials to be rendered accessible to students in formats of choice at the beginning of each semester.

Accessibility does not end with required readings. Students with print disabilities must be able to participate in all aspect of campus life and must have access to other types of materials, including course calendars, handbooks and campus newspapers.

Professors and instructors must become more understanding of and familiar with the requirements of students with print disabilities in their classrooms. Depending upon the school, this may necessitate the delivery of faculty training/workshop sessions involving students and disability service centre staff.

The Internet is being used by post-secondary institutions and faculties for course work. University and college websites must be fully accessible, in particular for those who use screen-reading software.

Technology can level the playing field and allow students with disabilities to compete and succeed in a post-secondary

environment. Students who require alternate format materials must have access to the best, most appropriate technology – both hardware and software – at an affordable price. The equipment must be made available to students in their homes and also in campus disability service centres, libraries and all computer labs.

To make full use of technologies, students with print disabilities must be provided with professional training in the use of their equipment.

Students are often put in a position where they have to produce course materials in alternate formats themselves. This can be time-consuming and exhausting and can take away from much-needed study time. Students with disabilities must have their academic materials provided in a format of their choice from a reliable source.

Often the biggest barrier to access to post-secondary education for students with disabilities is adequate funding to attend school considering disability related costs. The Canada Student Loans Program and provincial student financial assistance programs must continue to support students with disabilities through the Canada Study Grants and similar provincial bursary programs in terms of funding for equipment and services costs relating to access to academic materials in formats of choice.

Governmental responsibility

At the Federal level overall responsibility is not clear, as no one agency has this portfolio, but currently Library and Archives Canada (Canada's national library), is addressing the issue.

At the Provincial level each province has a ministry that has the library services portfolio – this ministry name will vary from province to province.

Overlaps – are they a problem?

The roles and responsibilities of the various organizations are generally clear. CNIB provides a national service. **Bibliothèque nationale du Québec** provides a provincial service in the province of Quebec. Public libraries (not uniformly) also provide services locally. The educational sector ensures curriculum materials are provided to students.

Sometimes the same item is required in alternative format from various sectors. Canadian alternative format producers work with the Library and Archives union catalogue to avoid duplication of materials. Some people may choose to get service from one to all of the agencies. For example, a person with vision loss who requires audio and large print may be able to get both from a small collection at their public library, and/or just audio from a large collection at CNIB.

Gaps between policy and practice

Gaps between policy and practice arise from several factors:

While legislation may be in place, in many instances the services are simply not offered, or a sub-set of the service that is available to the general public is offered, or staff are not trained to provide the service.

Libraries are designed as places where the community gathers. Elderly people and those experiencing vision loss have huge transportation and isolation challenges. Getting to a library may not be possible. Consequently, they do not show up in large numbers to impact service strategy and decisions.

When less than 5% of information published in print is available in alternative formats, it is impossible for a public library to provide an equitable service.

CNIB, CLA, and Library and Archives Canada have conducted studies or prepared reports at different times that capture information about the provision of library services. All have overall determined that a significant gap exists and have made recommendations towards closing that gap.

Are the models in flux?

Public libraries have increasingly been offering services for people with disabilities.

CNIB hopes that the services will become more widely and equitably available from mainstream library avenues, for example, the public or school library.

The Canadian Library Association (CLA)'s Opening the Book report in 2005 recommends a strategy for a national network of equitable library services for all print-disabled Canadians. The network would be comprised of "service libraries" (i.e. public libraries), a "national co-ordinating agency" i.e. Library and Archives Canada, and alternative format producers (i.e. CNIB etc).

The report summarises the proposed model as follows (much more detail is contained in the report itself):

"The National Network for Equitable Library Service for Canadians with print disabilities (the Network) would be comprised of a partnership of three distinct, but closely connected components:

"1. Service Libraries to provide accessible public library type services that are appropriate to the needs of Canadians with print disabilities in their local communities

"2. A National Coordinating Office at the federal government level to coordinate the Network and fund its activities. It is proposed that Library and Archives Canada could assume responsibility for this national coordinating role

“3. Production Centres to provide staff expertise and specialized resources to acquire, catalogue, produce, store and preserve alternative format collections”.

What is driving change?

Advocacy and increased demand

Practice is changing due to advocacy efforts from CNIB and consumers (libraries are encountering more demand for accessible library services).

Policy initiatives

A series of policy initiatives, studies and pilot projects from the library community in recent years has attempted to push the issue up the agenda.

These were summarized for us by Ralph Manning of Library and Archives Canada, who chaired the Working Group of the CLA which drew up the Opening the Book report, which has been cited several times.

“In 2000, the former National Library of Canada and CNIB jointly sponsored a Task Force on Access to Information for Print-Disabled Canadians, whose report can be found on at: <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/accessinfo/s36-200-e.html>

“One of the recommendations of that report was that its recommendations be pursued by a new Council on Access to Information for Print-Disabled Canadians which would report to the National Librarian of Canada. The Council was, in fact, established in February 2001. Its Web site is at: <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/accessinfo/index-e.html> Membership on the Council was carefully selected to include individuals from a full range of backgrounds (librarians, for-profit and not-for-profit producers of

multiple formats, representatives of the Learning Disabled and Visually Disabled communities, service providers from various sectors, etc.) and were selected as individuals rather than as representatives of their organizations. The Council remains a key focal point for activities at the national level.

“One of the successes of the Council was the establishment of a Pilot Project for an Electronic Clearinghouse for Alternative Format Production which was funded by the federal government and sponsored by the Canadian Library Association. Its final report can be found at: http://www.cla.ca/top/releases/CH_Pilot_FINAL%20REPORT_EN.pdf The Pilot Project is complete, but the functionality of the Clearinghouse continues at Library and Archives Canada albeit in a “holding” pattern until additional funds are secured.

“Another major success of the Council was the initiative of a Canadian Library Association Working Group on a National Network of Equitable Library Service for Canadians with Print Disabilities. The final report of this Working Group can be found at: http://www.cla.ca/issues/nnels_final_august2005.pdf It was the work of a representative group of librarians. The report is an extremely important development and provides a benchmark for Canada’s vision for equitable library service. It was presented to the Librarian and Archivist of Canada by the Canadian Library Association with a request that Library and Archives Canada lead the implementation of the strategy.”

Technology

The CLA Opening the Book report also identified technology as a driver and enabler of change:

“Ultimately, what makes the need to act even more compelling is the simple fact that technological evolution has now made it far easier to help persons with print disabilities. Those who are blind can benefit from books in alternative formats such as Braille, audio large print, electronic books and online books, delivered over computers,

the Internet or on increasingly popular personal playback devices such as MP3 players. Large screen computer displays can provide access for people with reduced vision. Individuals with reduced mobility can access materials over the Internet. Those with other physical disabilities can benefit from a wide range of assistive technologies. As a result, there really is no excuse for inaction.”

Measuring success

CNIB

CNIB Library measures the effectiveness of its service: circulation statistics, number of collection items available, service statistics (calls, e-mails, etc.), number of clients served. Targets are revised annually

The following measures are used:

- Proportion of Visually Impaired People reached by services

- Cost to public or charitable funds

- Range and depth of material available

- Speed of supplying item

- What users think of the service

The proportion of visually impaired people reached, the range and depth of material available, the speed of supply and users’ views of the service are the measurements currently focused on by the CNIB Library.

It is anticipated that broader national targets will be developed by CLA and LAC – the first targets would likely be range and depth of material available. CNIB is overall successful. However, charitable funding is insufficient to address the need for a significant increase in the percentage of alternative format material that is required.

Currently agencies set their own targets. It is anticipated that CLA and Library and Archives Canada through the nationwide network initiative will establish national standards and targets.

The CLA Opening the Book report uses the number of books available in alternative format as one measure. Currently the number is less than 5% of published print information. The report identifies the need to decrease the gap by an additional 5% over the next few years as a start.

Participation by visually impaired people

CNIB

About 15% of staff at the CNIB are living with vision loss.

Funding sources

CNIB Library's operating budget is \$10 million CDN. This service is funded by donations. Public libraries do have talking book and access technology budget items, but this widely varies across the country. Library and Archives Canada is currently pursuing funding to improve access to information for print disabled Canadians.

Public libraries, colleges and universities, and ministries of education will have funding designated for special needs services.

Adequacy

The Canadian Library Association Report Opening the Book stated:

“Canada lags behind other major industrialized nations in that it does not legislate support or provide long-term funding for a national library service for persons with print disabilities.”

The report determined that a significant increase in funding would have to occur to increase content and to provide a more equitable service. Part of the CLA Opening the Book report recommends determining more fully what this cost will be. CNIB would estimate that the current funding is likely less than 10% of what is needed to close the information gap and to provide an equitable service.

Overall availability of material in alternative formats

It has been estimated that only 2-5% of published information in English and 1-2% of published information in French is available in alternative formats.

Newspapers

There is no exact data. Many newspapers are available online, but no data as to how accessible these are. CNIB offers over 40 newspapers online or by phone.

Magazines

It is likely that less than 2% of titles are available.

Education

Less than 5% of educational materials.

Official publications

The Government of Canada has a policy to make all publications available in an alternative format on request.

Materials provision

CNIB

Original materials supplied

CNIB purchases the print or e-text for conversion. It is beginning to receive a small portion of commercial audio files for formatting to the DAISY standard. CNIB also receives some DAISY masters from agencies outside of Canada (for example, RNIB).

Conversion

CNIB builds the collection according to a collection policy and with a collection selection team. Demand from readers is a factor in selecting titles.

CNIB has 130 volunteer Braille transcribers who produce Braille from a text e-file.

CNIB also has more than 400 volunteer narrators who narrate books from the original text. All conversion from print to e-text, or file prep, is conducted by staff.

Targets

Range:

CNIB has collection targets that are limited by its annual budget. Targets will vary each year depending on existing sources of content that can be adapted for the collection, compared with those originally produced in an alternative format. Current targets are approximately as follows:

Audio (DAISY): 2,000 titles are added to the collection each year.

Braille: 320

CNIB has a priority system that targets popular, timely, and in-demand titles for production within approximately six months of publication.

Depth:

20% in French, 80% in English, and 20% (across both English and French) children's titles

Fiction: 55%

Non-Fiction: 45%, including reading for a wide variety of recreational interests such as cooking, crafts and do-it-yourself, gardening, humour, music, sports and recreation and travel. Other non-fiction includes general works on topics such as business, fine arts, history, politics, psychology, social sciences and science.

Supplied in alternative formats

CNIB produces most of the collection itself but does purchase some master files or other formats to include. Examples include:

Digital audio file from publisher. CNIB creates a DAISY version

Audio file from another alternative format producer, for example Public Library InterLINK in British Columbia.

Master DAISY file from another library for the blind, for example, RNIB in the UK. CNIB will make copies for circulation.

CNIB also purchases Descriptive Videos/DVDs from external producers and tactile-print Braille books.

The same collection development criteria apply to both converted and acquired material. All titles are chosen by a committee of collections librarians:

Winners of literary prizes/reviews: 75% of titles

On demand by the clients: 15% of titles

Other (10%) made up equally of titles that complete portions of the collection, for example, books in a series, or replacement of missing titles; and titles that are of specific interest to those with vision loss. For example, a novel that features a character with vision loss or specific eye health related books.

Preferred situation

Description

The ideal would be the Nationwide Network for Equitable Library Service model that the Canadian Library Association is working on (described in the Opening the Book report). This would become a government funded service/production capability with public private sector partnerships.

Funding

Government would provide the funding.

Who would deliver

Delivery would be anywhere that users would expect to get the service: Public, school, academic, and special (i.e. CNIB) libraries.

How would organisations work together

Via a national governing body such as Library and Archives Canada in conjunction with specialized producers and service providers.

How the services would be delivered

At their local service library, desktop in their home, or post free to their home

Ideal level of service

An equitable service comparable to those received by citizens who read conventional print.

The view from the user's perspective

Work of fiction

The visually impaired person would be likely to check with CNIB or their local public library first. The latter would be the reference point for people with other disabilities preventing them using conventional print. A growing number also search online for digital downloads. They would likely encounter challenges in getting their preferred format. For example, the item may be available only in DAISY and they would prefer Braille. The library may have to request an interlibrary loan from another agency nationally or internationally.

New work of fiction

It is likely that most persons would not expect to get a new work of fiction – but they would definitely ask for it. A growing number would search commercially available options first. Otherwise, the same process as any other work of fiction

Reference work

Apart from students, who would check with their school access centre, it is more likely that CNIB would be consulted first. This type of material is more challenging and it is likely that it would not be readily available in Braille or audio. It may be available from an online database which CNIB makes available. CNIB provides research support and can supplement reference needs.

Newspaper

A person would go online or receive newspaper service (online or telephone) from CNIB.

Magazine

A person could access a small selection of Canadian magazines from their public library or from CNIB. Monthly subscriptions (free) are available from CNIB. Online access to a wider range of magazines via CNIB is also possible.

School textbook

The student works with a special needs teacher for elementary/high school and a college/university access centre for post secondary (in some provinces). Each province has a Provincial Government Ministry of Education that manages the funding and transcription of curriculum materials in alternative formats.

Children's book

A person would be likely to choose CNIB first, then their public library. If the book were not available, CNIB would try to InterLibrary Loan and then could consider it for transcription if it meets the collections criteria.

Scientific journal

If a student, a person would work with their access centre or academic library. Others would go online or check with the CNIB Library. It is unlikely they would find the scientific journal they need in an alternative format.

Academic book

If a student, they would work with their access centre or academic library. However, most educational institutions do not fund or transcribe supplementary material. They may seek this at CNIB.

General

For all of the above, if the material just does not exist in an alternative format, CNIB may get a request to transcribe it. The expectation often is that CNIB will do this free of charge. CNIB is unable to do transcription on demand without charging a fee as it is charitably funded to provide a library service, among other rehabilitation services. In some cases, CNIB may work with the person in approaching the publisher to determine if they could fund the transcription. The experience of not having a desperately needed item in an accessible format is very frustrating for both the person who needs the item and CNIB. CNIB exists to help, but the information gap is so enormous and there are not currently enough resources for any one agency to close this gap.

Barriers

Funding

Funding levels needed to produce more content are a major barrier.

Availability of content

Lack of content: availability of publisher produced content in alternative formats and obtaining the publisher's e-file and/or getting it in a structured format.

Copyright

An international copyright exception does not yet exist. There are barriers to international resource sharing of materials in alternative formats.

Education

There is a lack of a uniform educational strategy to engage all sectors about the information gap and the need for an accessible library service.

Factors relating to assistive technologies and services

In 2004, a survey by the CLA Working Group resulted in a response from 24 Canadian institutions (public and university libraries) indicating their best practices dealing with the provision of assistive technologies for library users with print disabilities. Very few institutions provided a full set up of equipment (CCTV, computer stations with magnification software, JAWS and refreshable Braille, reading machines, scanners with OCR, Braille embossers, synthetic speech input and closed captioning equipment). Others had some of the above. Most had at least one input and one output technology. One reported having Industry Canada's Web 4 All system. The survey revealed the following common challenges:

Having trained staff on hand to help their library users

A need for constant vigilance in updating the equipment with the consequent learning curve

Lack of a standard setup and training materials to assist librarians in better serving their library users with print disabilities

Barriers respondents would most like to remove

Funding

The inability to get a workable digital file in a timely manner so that the appropriate format can be produced simultaneously with the print at no greater cost.

Copyright

Print impaired people are covered under the current Canadian Copyright Act exception within the definition of 'perceptual disabilities'. "Perceptual Disability" means a disability that prevents or inhibits a person from reading or hearing a literary, musical, dramatic or artistic work in its original format, and includes such a disability resulting from

- a) severe or total impairment of sight or hearing or the inability to focus or move one's eyes,
- b) the inability to hold or manipulate a book, or
- c) an impairment relating to comprehension.

The **Canadian Copyright Act** [Canada, **Copyright Act**, RSC1985, c. C-42, <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/C-42/index.html>] was revised in 1997 to provide exceptions permitting the production of alternative format materials while protecting the rights of publishers.

The Council on Access to Information for Print-Disabled Canadians (the Council) in its 2001 Submission on the Copyright Reform Process [Council on Access to Information for Print-Disabled

Canadians. **Submission to the Copyright Reform Process** (14 September 2001), <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/incrp-prda.nsf/en/rp00250e.html>] requested that the act be revised to include additional exceptions for large print publications and for the non-commercial narrative description of cinematographic works to ensure that print-disabled Canadians have equal opportunity to access content irrespective of its format.

Special projects

CNIB is in the process of converting its collection of 20,000 audio titles in analogue format into digital (DAISY) format. It is not likely that all 20,000 titles will be converted due to timeliness, natural library weeding processes, or deterioration, but a significant portion will be converted.

CNIB has implemented a digital repository and storage handling system, as well as e-delivery of content (The CNIB Digital Library and Children's Discovery Portal) in English and French.

Publishers' involvement

Publishers' involvement is in the early stages. Canada, through CLA and Library and Archives Canada has just finished a publishers' e-text clearinghouse pilot project in which publishers could make requested files available in alternative format for trusted partner alternative format producers. Most publishers are amenable to providing an e-text copy where possible, but there is no formal process in place yet, and often the file is difficult to use for producing an alternative format.

A detailed report of the pilot project was published in April 2006 [http://www.cla.ca/top/releases/CH_Pilot_FINAL%20REPORT_EN.pdf]. In the section on issues and problems identified, the report lists a number of problems in publishers' responses, including:

No French-language publishers took part (the reasons are unclear);

Some publishers refused to participate;

Some publishers asked for more information on users in return for providing e-files, although the existing copyright exception applies equally to e-files;

It is vital to get contact at the right level in the publisher but there needs to be back up in the event that the named contact is unavailable

Other issues concerned whether a single repository where each producer could download a file directly was preferable to a clearinghouse system where producers could request files from each other. But most publishers are unable to provide suitably structured files; this means that alternative format producers need to carry out substantial cleaning up of files. In turn, other producers would save time and effort by being able to take the cleaned file from the producer rather than the original file. A clearinghouse rather than a repository model would address this problem.

Copyright issues also prevent the sharing of files with institutions outside Canada. The report recommended that it may be possible to extend the Standard Agreement to expedite the acquisition of e-files from US publishers whose title has been published by a Canadian affiliate.

The report made a number of recommendations for the improvement of the working of a clearinghouse. It also recommended that separate efforts be made towards a central repository, probably in conjunction with the CLA's Network for Equitable Library Service initiative. The report notes that some publishers would not want to take part in a repository, while the problem of poorly structured files makes it less valuable than it may seem at first sight.

Croatia

Basic country data

Population 4.551m (2005).

Over 65s as % of total population: 2005 16.8%; 2020 18.6% (projected).

GNI per capita (international dollars converted at purchasing power parities) 2005: \$12,750

Government: Unitary

Note on information sources

The Croatian Library for the Blind provided most of the information here, supplemented by some desk research.

Definitions and their effects

The Croatian Library for the Blind defines “visual impairment” as follows: “Persons not able to read print and persons not able to write”.

For visual impairment, the Croatian Library for the Blind would suggest the definition: “Persons with insufficient ability to read print”.

The Croatian Library for the Blind defines “print impairment” as follows: “Persons not able to write”.

The definitions in use underestimate how many Visually Impaired People there are in Croatia, according to the Croatian Library for the Blind.

Library and user group data

The Croatian Library for the Blind is the only institution in Croatia which provides library services to blind and partially sighted people. It was established in 1921. During the period 1965 – 2000 it was part of The Croatian Association of the Blind and from 2000 it became an independent organization. (According to the Croatian government decree, the Croatian Library for the Blind was originally founded as public institution.)

According to the database of the Croatian Association for the Blind, there are about 5,500 blind persons in Croatia and 1,406 of them use the services of the library. They each read approximately 17 titles a year (statistics from 2001).

A survey on the Employment of Blind and Partially Sighted People in Europe (2001) [<http://www.euroblind.org/fichiersGB/surveymb.htm>] conducted by European Blind Union estimates that there was 50% unemployment for visually impaired people in Croatia, while general unemployment was about 20%.

Facts about the Croatian Library for the Blind

Founders of the library:

The Government of the Republic of Croatia

The Croatian Association of the Blind

The Committee of the Library consists of 5 members from:

Ministry of Culture: 1

Ministry of Health and Social Welfare: 1

The Croatian Association of the Blind: 2

The Croatian Library for the Blind: 1

Rights and attitudes

The Constitution of the Republic of Croatia regulates special protection of people with disabilities in the Chapter “Basic freedoms and rights of man and citizen”. There are no special regulations devoted to people with disabilities. There is, however, a trend towards solving such issues: in 1999 the National Programme for improving the quality of life of people with disabilities was introduced by the Croatian Government.

Visually impaired people generally expect the same access to reading materials and level of service as sighted people.. Visually impaired people often do not have a good network of family and friends who help them get access to reading materials.

Services to print impaired people in relation to services to visually impaired people

In Croatian specialist libraries, services for visually impaired people are provided by the same organisations and from the same budget as services for print impaired people in specialist libraries. There is no difference between the standards specialist libraries for Visually Impaired People use when deciding if someone is a visually-impaired reader, and the standards to determine the number of visually-impaired people. The library does not expect many changes will happen to the relationship between services for visually impaired people and for print impaired people in Croatia over the next five years.

Models and responsibilities

Currently there is only one library for visually impaired people in Croatia and its users are isolated from all other libraries [<http://www.it.lth.se/koraljka/Lund/publ/BOB2001Gabriel.pdf>]. The function of

libraries is not at any point clearly defined. Their role is still not recognised at the level of legislative regulations.

The Croatian Library for the Blind works partly with general public libraries. However, these organisations have no clear roles and responsibilities in providing or funding library services to visually impaired people.

The Croatian Library for the Blind expects that organizations, especially public libraries, will change in the next few years. They are likely to change in part to move to a position nearer to the Scandinavian model. They will have a collection of books for visually impaired people as well as adapted equipment, computers with Braille display, Braille printers, CC-TV etc.

Service provision – general

The Croatian Library for the Blind is the only institution in Croatia which provides library services only to visually-impaired people.

The library has its own recording studios and Braille printing department. It does not produce large print at the moment. In addition, the library provides visually-impaired students and private persons with personal transcription services for various materials for educational and private use.

Service provision – education

Very few titles are available at present.

An organization for the blind and visually impaired students (“Sismis”) was established in 2001. One of the aims of this non-governmental organisation is to help students with visual impairment to get text-books and other literature.

Materials provision

Croatian Library for the Blind materials

Braille

Original materials supplied: Mainly borrowed from public libraries.

Conversion: The library has Braille printing department – sighted people convert the text to Braille.

On-demand: Sometimes

Stock: Library contacts schools for the blind and organizations of the blind.

Targets for range/depth/speed: --

Audio – standard cassette and CD

Original materials supplied: Mainly borrowed from public libraries.

Conversion: The library has its own studios, blind operators work together with sighted actors, radio and TV announcers, etc.

On-demand: Sometimes

Stock: Books are produced in 2 copies for the need of library.

Targets for range/depth/speed: --.

Audio Daisy

Original materials supplied: Mainly borrowed from public libraries.

Conversion: It is done in studios again.

On-demand: Sometimes

Stock: [blank]

Targets for range/depth/speed: [blank]

Supplied in alternative formats

how supplied: [blank]

who supplies: The library for has its own studios and Braille printing department. We do not produce large print at the moment

Basis for decision to acquire: [blank]

Targets for range/depth/speed: [blank]

95% of titles which are to be converted to an accessible format are chosen by a committee of experts; 1% of titles are converted on demand; and

4% of titles are chosen by organizations of the blind, school for the blind, etc.

Library Catalogue (2004):

2,087 Braille books

2,092 Audio books

6,296 Print books

Books for leisure/recreation/informal learning

A few titles are available in large format print at the moment. These include books, 2 and 4-track cassettes, CDs and MP3 formats, and a number of books in Braille.

Educational books

A few titles are available at the moment as audio on 2 and 4-track cassettes and in Braille.

Magazines

Magazines for and about the blind, published by various publishers, are available from both the library and the association, in Braille, audio and e-formats.

Official publications

Some information is available through audio and Braille magazines.

The most popular content provided by the library is audio fiction.

There are also some non-for-profit organizations (for example regional associations of visually impaired people). In terms of providing library services, they usually act only as a contact point between visually impaired people and the Croatian Library for the Blind.

IPSIS, a non-for-profit organization provides support for visually impaired people in IT including Linux distribution for visually impaired people, a web portal for visually impaired people, digital collection of text-books, books and other material, and free internet access for the blind.

lindbooks, a project created by the Association of the Blind, which provides visually impaired people with titles by authors (usually young) from countries of former Yugoslavia. The books are available through the Lit.kon portal.

Governmental responsibility

The regulation and funding of the library is through the Ministry of Culture. The Ministry of Culture makes the key decisions about specialist library services for visually impaired people.

Overlaps – are they a problem?

No problematic overlaps in responsibilities have been mentioned, mainly because there is only one library for the blind in Croatia.

Gaps between policy and practice

There are gaps between policy and practice. The main reasons are lack of money, knowledge and the good will to change things.

What is driving change?

The emphasis has been placed on a major digitisation scheme, the Digital collection for blind and visually impaired people [<http://www.ffzg.hr/infoz/lida/lida2001/present/golub.ppt>], a project backed by The Croatian Library for the Blind and the Croatian Association of the Blind.

Policy and practice generally are slowly changing following Croatia's membership of the EU.

Measuring success

The Croatian Library for the Blind measures how successful it is in providing services for Visually Impaired People. The Library Administrative council decides what measures are used and sets targets at the proposal of the management.

Success is measured by:

Proportion of Visually Impaired People reached by services

Cost to public or charitable funds

Cost to users

Range and depth of material available

Speed of supplying item

What users think of the service

How frequently these targets are changed or raised depends mainly on financial support.

Participation by visually impaired people

Representatives of visually impaired people are members of Administrative council or Executive committee.

Funding sources and adequacy

The total funding in Croatia for specialist libraries for Visually Impaired People from all sources is €300,000.

80% State or provincial government (Ministry of Culture);

5% Local or municipal government;

15% Libraries' own fundraising activities.

Funding has been decreasing and is inadequate. According to plans and programmes it should be increasing each year. Approximately 20-30% more each year is needed for specialist libraries for Visually Impaired People to provide a good service.

Overall availability of material in alternative formats

Approximately 10% of total output of books is available in alternative formats.

Less than 5% of total output of magazines is easily available in alternative formats.

Less than 5% of total output of newspapers is easily available in alternative formats.

Approximately 5% of total output of educational materials is available in alternative formats.

Approximately 5% of total output of official publications and public information is easily available in alternative formats.

Audio production of fiction is the type of output which the library would like to increase most.

Preferred situation

The ideal system for Croatia would use money from state budget. Library for the blind together with public libraries would deliver the services. How would Public libraries, education libraries and specialist libraries for visually impaired people would have a certain amount of books for visually impaired people, the information for visually impaired people that (if they are not informed) there exist library for the blind and visually impaired etc.

The end-user may come to the library, or books can be delivered to home address. The ideal level of service would provide visually impaired people with adequate equipment at home and in the library which enables visually impaired people's access to the library collection.

The view from the user's perspective

The visually impaired person has to be a user of the library. This means that he or she has paid a library fee (50,- kn per year, in 2006 = £4.56). Students do not pay fees. Then he/she contacts the library in order to get the necessary materials.

A visually impaired person can contact a local branch of the Association of the Blind. (There are approximately 26 regional and municipal organizations for the blind.) Each branch provides visually impaired people with information such as the phone number of the library, the address, etc, so the visually impaired person can contact the library by phone, fax, email, letter in ink print or Braille, or they may come directly to the library.

The library provides new users with an audio device free of charge (funded by the Fund for Health Insurance), but a formal claim for the device at a local branch of The Croatian Association of the Blind is essential. The Library has a list of books for each user.

Users from the town of Zagreb, where the library is situated, can collect books by person directly from the library or order by telephone (users will receive books ordered by phone within one week. The delivery is organized by the library's car within Zagreb).

Books sent by mail are always sent by special delivery, using special delivery boxes. The service is free of charge for each blind person in Croatia.

Each user can borrow up to 3 books for a period of one month, and up to 5 books during a summer period. There is a range of formats available – large print, Braille, 2-and 4-track audio.

Barriers

The most important barriers to provision of library services to visually impaired people in Croatia are:

Funding levels

Copyright

Copyright

Copyright is the main problem, as no exception for the disabled has been introduced in Croatia:

There is no regulation on legal deposit in digital or audio format (which would be the only possible way for the blind to use an item) for a small and restricted group of users

No exception to the copyright law has been defined

authors' co-operation is lacking (e.g. not responding to e-mails)

The Croatian Copyright Agency is expensive

As there is no exception to copyright legislation a contract with the rightsholder is required.

Special projects

The Croatian Library for the Blind, in co-operation with the Croatian Association of the Blind, has started a project to create a digital archive of master copies (new, as well as converting old ones from tapes into digital format): **Digital collection for blind and visually impaired people (DLB)** [<http://www.ffzg.hr/infoz/lida/lida2001/present/golub.ppt>].

The aim of the project is to collect the full texts of books and magazines in the Croatian language as well as other information sources for the use of visually impaired people in the most accessible way. The collection is being created in accordance with the recommendations of World Wide Web Consortium (www.w3c.org), which gives a wide range of guidelines for the access to the web for the persons with special needs. The purpose of the collection is to provide information and help for visually impaired people by using the internet and modern communication technologies. Collected books should be copyright-free for the blind. There is a special emphasis on higher education textbooks.

Selection criteria for DLB:

- 1) The Croatian language, literary and popular-science documents that already exist in the digital format and are copyright-free;
- 2) Examination literature as a whole (no language, format and copyright criteria)

Acquisition is done by asking publishers and authors for their publications (by e-mail and by regular mail) to help build the DLB.

Processing: digitisation (when on paper), HTML formatting, classifying, and incorporating DC metadata.

DLB now includes:

full-text e-books in Croatian that are copyright-free

52 titles, mainly Croatian classics in literature

collections of digital texts (links to selected world web sites of virtual libraries)

magazines for the blind

a list of electronic magazines and newspapers, a list of literature and textbooks, a list of associations

links are briefly described and sorted by subject

90 serial publications in 36 groups (by subject)

mailing lists for the blind (4),

a list of institutions and faculties (9),

various information sources (links to selected web services),

10 associations

web addresses of several large libraries with digital texts free of charge (USA – Gutenberg, Austria – University of Linz, Canada – CNIB Library in Toronto, UK – RNIB Library)

links for creating digital collections for the blind:

guidelines for forming the web-site content

validation tools

Publishers' involvement

The publishing industry is not involved in the provision of alternative formats.

Denmark

Basic country data

Population 5.431m (2005).

Over 65s as % of total population: 2005 14.9%; 2020 18.0% (projected).

GNI per capita (international dollars converted at purchasing power parities) 2005: \$33,570

Government: Unitary

Number of visually impaired people: estimated at 1% of the population: 55,000

Numbers who have difficulty reading: highest estimates up to 25% (1.4m)

Note on information sources

The Danmarks Blindebibliotek (DBB) provided most of the information here, supplemented by some desk research.

Definitions and their effects

The following definitions are used in clinical contexts:

Visually Impaired Person: Blind less than 6/60

Partially sighted: 6/60 – 6/18

Less formal definitions include:

Print disabled: People who, by medical documentation, can substantiate that they cannot read printed text.

Definitions used in legislation include:

The definition in the Copyright Act 1994 includes blind, visually impaired and “persons who on account of a handicap are unable to read printed text”.

The Library Act 2000 refers to “blind, partially sighted and others whose disability prevents them from reading normal printed text.”

No respondent suggested that these definitions had adverse effects on provision.

Library and user group data

Prevalence of visual/print impairment

The official estimate from the health department is about 1% of Denmark’s population of Denmark’s 5 million citizens. It is said to be up to 25% of the population if every person who has difficulties when reading is included.

Public libraries

The number of actual libraries is declining but the services they provide are for the most part growing, although some have been cut back. Libraries are distributed across all parts of the country. Libraries are adequately funded and well-used.

Rights and attitudes

There is a partial right of access to all buildings and participation in cultural life, and a right to education at all levels. There is a right covering equal access to materials in an accessible format. Visually impaired and print impaired people have a right to use the library services provided by Danmarks Blindebibliotek (DBB), the Danish

National Library for the Blind. These rights have been established both by primary legislation and by court decisions.

Sector responsibility/mainstreaming

One of the key ideas in Danish disability politics is that of sector responsibility or mainstreaming, which means that the authority, organisation or enterprise which is responsible for delivering services and products to the general population should take responsibility for ensuring that these goods and services are accessible and available for people with disabilities.

Visually impaired people do expect equal treatment on a political level, but not in practice. They expect access to reading, but not access to all information and literature in Denmark.

Many visually impaired people have a good network of family and friends who help them get access to reading materials as well as access to resources provided by the governmental system.

Services to print impaired people in relation to services to visually impaired people

Services to visually-impaired and visually-impaired people are provided by the same organizations, namely DBB and public libraries; DBB believes they will become joint services: they are currently very similar and in a few years they will be the same.

DBB started to cover the needs of dyslexic users in 2005.

Models and responsibilities

Denmark has a national library for the blind, government-funded, which acts as a central resource for the public library system in providing material and advice.

The Danish National Library for the Blind (DBB) operates under the Library Act 2000. Article 15 of the act states that “The Danish National Library for the Blind will serve as a national centre for the public libraries by procuring for them materials specially designed for blind, partially sighted and others whose disability prevents them from reading normal printed text. The Danish National Library for the Blind will provide lending material from Denmark and abroad as part of the service provided by the public library service to the above-mentioned group of users The Danish National Library Service will provide advice to the library service about matters of importance to the service of the group of users mentioned (above).”

Prior to 1985, services in the public library system and DBB (which had become an independent organisation in 1954) developed separately after a decision was taken in the 1970s to decentralise library services to visually impaired people. This resulted in a big expansion in the collections of talking books in public libraries, but it led to a situation where the lack of co-ordination and central support was increasingly felt to be a problem. In 1985, DBB was brought under the control of the Ministry of Culture to emphasise its connection with the public library system. In 1990 it became a national library responsible for the superstructure of all talking book lending in the country.

Digitisation by DBB, set to be complete by 2008, has been accompanied by key changes in the role of DBB and the public libraries. Before 2005, only blind and visually impaired people could be served directly by DBB; print impaired and other disabled people had to use DBB’s services via public libraries. Now they can all use DBB directly. It was decided in effect that the digital library would by-pass the public libraries in serving disabled clients, with services going directly to the end-user. This has been happening since January 2006. According to the DBB’s director, this decision was controversial, but is part of a general process of adaptation of library services to digital technologies.

Service provision – general

Services are provided by the general public libraries, with DBB at the pinnacle of the structure. Several other organisations also provide services:

The Institute for the Blind and Partially Sighted in Denmark

DEBBI – e-books for everyone

KABB – Christian books

KLO – voluntary work for supplying material for print disabled

The role of DBB

It is DBB's vision to provide full access to the information society for everybody including people with disabilities.

DBB produces and distributes materials in audio, in Braille and as computer files. DBB's collection of materials is available to those who fulfill the conditions for registration as DBB users.

DBB acts as a national resource centre for the public libraries, procuring material for the blind, the partially sighted, the dyslexic and other persons whose handicap prevent them from reading standard print material.

DBB's collection of materials is available to those who fulfill the conditions for registration as DBB users. Items are delivered on demand in CD Rom format; DBB holds no inventory of materials for distribution.

DBB provides advice about the principles for accessibility to web designers, webmasters and anyone else who might have an interest in making accessible digital products. It specializes in accessibility for blind, visually impaired and other people with reading disabilities.

Digitisation

Since 2000, DBB has been engaged in a process of transition from analogue to digital materials, which is due to be completed in 2008. This transition is viewed as key to providing a modern service, and also as having fundamental consequences for the way DBB operates and is organised internally.

DBB plans to convert all newspapers and magazines to a digital format.

The distribution of content on CD Rom includes the insertion of a unique identifier for each disc. This is generated and encoded automatically using technology which DBB has itself developed. The identifier facilitates a forensic trace of content items that are redistributed without authorisation. DBB is currently researching different forms of watermarking technology to strengthen the forensic trace capability.

In January 2005 DBB launched a digital library portal from which its members can download a wide range of material in electronic format. Again, each downloaded item is uniquely identified.

In her presentation to the 2006 Daisy Workshop in Seoul, the director of DBB, Elsebeth Tank, stated that:

“The idea has been to move forward the implementation of truly digital processes, which among others implied:

High speed

Improved individual user services

More user options

Stronger user functionality

Lower costs per unit in production.”

She went on to observe that DBB successfully argued for the Danish Library Law to be changed in 2005 to permit DBB and similar institutions to produce and distribute materials to disabled citizens without requiring the materials to be returned. The reason was that it would be more costly to have it back for further circulation, and that returning materials reflected an analogue mindset.

The number of users enrolled in digital services was planned to reach 1000 in 2005, and by 3500 in 2006, but the enthusiasm of users developed faster than anticipated and by the middle of the year the full 2006 target had been reached.

DBB anticipates a growing number of users in total for its services, from 10,000 now to 15,000 by the end of 2009. It also believes that its new services will appeal to a wider clientele than before, including both more visually impaired people and people with other disabilities.

Service provision – education

The Refsnaesskolen and the Students' Library for the Blind at the Institute for the Blind had responsibility for producing Braille and audio material for the educational needs of visually impaired children and students.

Governmental responsibility

The Ministry of Culture.

Overlaps – are they a problem?

To a great extent these organisations have clear roles and responsibilities in providing or funding library services to visually impaired people. The responsibilities do not overlap very much, and there have been no further recent changes following the decision to enable DBB to provide services directly to users.

Gaps between policy and practice

No gaps have been identified.

Are the models in flux?

The major change that is still working through is that DBB can now deal with all its clients directly, bypassing the public library system. The relationship of DBB with research libraries is also changing. Though the legislative and institutional framework now in place, the director of DBB has noted that: “we are still working with a lot of different library communities to develop our new role in the library and publishing sector and to help them identify their future roles in providing support to handicapped library users.” There is continued pressure to ensure that the equality which is promised by policy becomes a reality.

What is driving change?

New technology

Great emphasis has been placed in DBB’s strategy on the transition to digital technologies. It began the process of a complete shift of technology in 2000. This was described as a process “which, over the next few years, will change the organization and the way it completes its tasks considerably. The former industry culture will fundamentally be changed into a culture based on knowledge, technology and values.” [<http://www.dbb.dk/English.facts.asp>]

Direct service to the end-user and the ability of users to search for materials themselves and interact with each other e.g. via bulletin boards as part of DBB’s E17 portal, is transforming services.

Policy

Sector responsibility/mainstreaming (as described under the rights and attitudes section: the policy of making a sector responsible for ensuring its own output is accessible) is a long standing policy, but continuing to work out of the policy in practice is still a strong driving force.

Measuring success

The Ministry of Culture – and the users – measure how successfully services are provided. This includes by the government and the Ministry of Culture, as well as the strategy and performance of the director and the employees of DBB

The DBB sets ambitious targets and is very successful, meeting 98% of them. They cover:

- The proportion of visually impaired people reached by services

- The range and depth of material available

- The speed of supplying the item

- What users think of the service

Targets are reviewed and changed every fourth year.

Participation by visually impaired people

DEBBI and KLO are run by visually impaired people. DBB has 4 visually impaired employees out of a total of 70 employees.

Funding sources and adequacy

The Ministry of Culture provides almost all funding to DBB, at €5 million annually.

DBB's own fundraising activities and earnings account for the remaining 2%, approximately €0.5 million.

Funding is increasing due to influence by DBB, but it remains inadequate if the aim is for full equality if visually impaired people with the rest of the population.

Other funding goes to visually impaired people via educational libraries at all levels. In so far as the public libraries still serve visually impaired people then their funding is also part of the picture.

Overall availability of material in alternative formats

5%-6% of book titles are available.

Not many newspapers are available: a few from DBB and a few more via its portal, (named after Section 17 of the copyright act) www.e17.dk. However, this is growing.

Very few magazines are available.

Asked about where an increase in output is most needed, respondents suggested that the material most needed was newspapers and other kinds of information which enables visually impaired people to participate on equal terms in the democratic processes of society.

Materials provision

Braille

Original materials supplied: Files from publishers – mostly. If not there are scanned

Conversion: The converters at DBB

On-demand: Yes, but from books already converted and placed on server. You cannot order any title you may wish

Stock: The decisions are made according to the Library Law. Decisions are made by librarians with ‘a good ear’ to patrons’ wishes.

Targets for range/depth/speed: There is a yearly quota and terms for delivery (decided by DBB)

Audio – standard cassette and CD

Original materials supplied: Mostly by masters from publishers.

Conversion: Partly DBB and partly publishers

On-demand: No

Stock: The decisions are made according to the Library Law. Decisions are made by librarians with ‘a good ear’ to patrons’ wishes.

Targets for range/depth/speed: There is a yearly quota and terms for delivery (decided by DBB)

Audio Daisy

Original materials supplied: Mostly by masters/files from publishers.

Conversion: DBB

On-demand: No

Stock: The decisions are made according to the Library Law. Decisions are made by librarians with “a good ear” to patrons’ wishes.

Targets for range/depth/speed: There is a yearly quota and terms for delivery (decided by DBB)

Daisy text and audio

Original materials supplied: Mostly by masters/files from publishers.

Conversion: DBB

On-demand: No

Stock: The decisions are made according to the Library Law. Decisions are made by librarians with ‘a good ear’ to patrons’ wishes.

Targets for range/depth/speed: There is a yearly quota and terms for delivery (decided by DBB)

Audio books

DBB’s audio books are of all different genres recited unabridged by professional readers. Primarily they are recorded on tapes and copied onto cassettes and packed in boxes. DBB produces books, magazines, newspapers etc. as audio books. Users with jobs can have the material they need to conduct their business produced as audio material.

The current collection of analogue audio books consists of approximately 12,000 titles.

In 2000 DBB began the production of digital audio books in the DAISY standard. DBB produces highly structured digital talking books, which enables the user to navigate within the book.

In 2002 DBB began converting the analogue audio books to digital audio books with structure and now has about 14,000 digital audio titles.

Books in Braille

DBB converts books and other printed materials into Braille. DBB produces books, magazines, newspapers etc. in Braille. Users with jobs can have the material they need to conduct their business produced in Braille or as electronic texts.

The current collection of Braille books consists of approximately 4,200 titles. Braille books have been distributed on a print on demand basis since 2002; the user gets the book a few days after ordering and can keep it or discard it as wished, saving administrative and manual work handling returns.

E-books

DBB produces e-books which at present means books or other printed material as computer files (in HTML and ASCII formats). The e-books are sent to the users by mail on diskettes, by e-mail or they can be downloaded directly from the DBB homepage. The e-books can be used in various ways. Some people print the text out on Braille printers, others use screen readers and synthetic speech on the personal computer and others again use a digital Braille display. Further the e-books can be converted into large print.

All books published in Braille are also released as e-books.

Approximately 2000 e-books are downloadable from the e17 portal.

Braille music

DBB's music library is one of the world's leading producers of Braille music. Music notes is converted to Braille by music teachers and musicians, often in a close partnership with the person who has ordered the piece of music at DBB. The Braille notes are specially arranged for blind users.

The current collection of Braille music notes consists of approximately 6000 titles. There is a project to digitise the collection by 2008.

Magazines

DBB produces almost 90 different magazines and newspapers on audio tapes or in Braille. People can borrow (old issues) or subscribe. A subscription costs the same as the printed version.

Leaflets

DBB produces leaflets continuously, dealing with various subjects and information of relevance to the public service sector. The leaflets are available on audio tapes, in Braille and as e-books and as normally printed text.

Preferred situation

Description

According to DBB's response to the questionnaire, by 2008 DBB will have completed the total digitisation of its organisation and library service, and then it will have an ideal system (if "ideal" is considered within the framework of realistic economy). Furthermore, DBB would like to see the rest other libraries and publishers in Denmark working together from an accessible digital platform.

Funding

Services would be funded by the government and the publishers, as well as others who should be interested in access.

Who would deliver and how delivered

Delivery would be on demand, directly from server(s) mediated by libraries.

Ideal level of service

Free access for everyone with special needs.

The view from the user's perspective

Work of fiction

Through DBB or local library depending on media.

New work of fiction

Through DBB or local library depending on media.

Reference work

Through a reference library. DBB provide a special service for visually impaired people in employment.

Newspaper

Via DBB. In the case of local news, via the local library.

DBB has now made 3 daily national newspapers fully accessible, through agreements with the papers. DBB carried out the technical work, which the papers paid for. DBB expects the collection to grow rapidly.

Magazine

Via DBB or ask the local library to subscribe through DBB.

School textbook

Students can have their own copy made in the appropriate media.

Children's book

Through local library or DBB.

Scientific journal

If made in accessible media by publisher, via the local library; or subscribe yourself. Unfortunately few e-journals are accessible.

Academic book

You would go to your academic library (with not much success) or (if in job) go to DBBs service for visually impaired employees. If you are a student you have access to a governmental service according to which you can have your own copy made in the appropriate media.

Barriers

The two main barriers are copyright and the lack of understanding of the full potential of digitisation.

Copyright

The exclusive right of authors and other rightsholders to control use of their works is, in the Danish Copyright Act, limited in certain ways for visually and hearing handicapped people as well as for certain other groups.

Limitations to the rightsholders' exclusive right for the benefit of visually impaired people and, in general, handicapped persons were introduced in the Danish Copyright Act of 1961.

Then, the exception only allowed reproduction in Braille as well as photocopying educational use. The law also contained a legal licence for noncommercial talking books.

The provision has undergone certain changes throughout the period. The group of people who can benefit from the provision has been enlarged, and the scope of the exception has been widened.

Significant amendments took place in connection with the adoption of a new Copyright Act in 1995 and further in 1996. Changes were also made in 2002 when Denmark transposed the European Union Directive 2001/29 of 22 May 2001 on the harmonisation of certain aspects of copyright and related rights in the information society. Section 17 of the Consolidated Act on Copyright 2003, does not make any distinction between analogue and digital copies. Consequently, the provision also allows the making of digital copies within its framework. It also specifically encompasses people who are 'unable to read printed text'.

DBB has been closely connected with recent changes to the Danish copyright law. It is part of the Ministry of Culture which is also responsible for copyright law in Denmark. In anticipation of changes in the law, DBB lobbied to have the ability to produce accessible versions of content for permanent distribution to its members (as opposed to lending).

The Danish Publishers' Association also lobbied, underlining its concerns about the possible misuse of converted formats in electronic form. A working group was established and eventually agreement was reached between DBB and the Publishers' Association whereby the interests of both sides were mutually recognised. The exception included in the revised copyright law was made subject, through this agreement, to a condition that converted content would only be made available to members of DBB or people with proven and documented disabilities.

DBB has not encountered any case where it would have to invoke the provisions of the copyright law due to the inability to access content blocked by technical protection measures. It does not anticipate this would be an issue at the institutional level but can see that there might be an issue for individual users.

Special projects

Pilot project for disabled persons with professional jobs.

A project which extends DBB's service for visually impaired people in employment by giving digital access to books containing human speech, electronic text and pictures in a highly functional search and find- and reading functionality.

Project Downlaan

DBB is a participant in an e-book project, Project Downlaan [<http://www.downlaan.dk>] (laan is Danish for loan), along with a number of other libraries, mainly in large cities such as Kobnhavn, Ebsjerg and Aarhus, as well as DBC Media and with Gyldendal the publishers as observers. The main objective of Project Downlaan is to establish a national infrastructure for digital distribution from library to patron. Books are mainly in pdf but some are in XML. One of the aims of the project was to create an XML database, allowing different formats to be created on the fly.

According to the project's English webpage, which is not up to date, the pilot of the project encountered great difficulty in getting publishers to take part.

The e-books are protected by DRM (Adobe Content Server) and available for 30 day loans.

Publishers' involvement

Publishers provide original files for conversion. As part of the agreement with the Danish Publishers Association, digital files distributed to clients by DBB carry DRM protection. As a trusted environment DBB guarantees that digital material is not distributed via unauthorised channels. All library users have an ID number which is integrated into the digital materials as part of the process of production on demand. Materials on CD are marked with the postal address of the receiver. If materials are found to have been inappropriately distributed, the ID number can be used to identify the source of the problem.

From 2006, digital watermarks and encryption will also be used in audio materials. These standards are developed by the Daisy consortium.

With one major exception, DBB is able to source content in digital formats from major publishers without difficulty. The exception is that of dictionaries and encyclopedias which the publishers regard of sufficient value as to require particular protection. They require as part of the overall agreement that such material can only be made available electronically it has to be encrypted.

Access to content from smaller publishers is more problematical because of their fear of misuse. Where source files cannot be obtained, DBB has to scan and reformat the content as necessary.

The existing agreement with the Publishers' Association has to be renegotiated every 2 years.

Japan

Basic country data

Population 127.055m (2006).

Over 65s as % of total population: 2006 20.3%; 2020 26.0% (projected).

GNI per capita (international dollars converted at purchasing power parities) 2005: \$31,410

Government: Unitary

Visual impairment identification card holders (as of 2001) [<http://www.dbtk.mhlw.go.jp/toukei/kouhyo/data-kou9/data13/sintai-h13-2.xls>]: 288,000

Notes on information sources

Information has been supplied by members of the Japan Library Association's Committee on Library Services for Disadvantaged People, and the Tokyo Metropolitan Bunkyo School for the Blind, co-ordinated by Misako Nomura from the Japanese Society for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities.

Definitions and their effects

According to the Law for the Welfare of Physically Disabled Persons in Japan, visual impairment is defined clinically:

1. Visual acuity (as measured in accordance with the International Vision Chart and measured degree of correctness; hereafter the same) of both eyes being 0.1 or less.
2. Visual acuity of one eye at 0.02 or less and the other at 0.6 or less.

3. Visual field diameter 10 degree or less of both eyes.

4. Visual field defect more than 50% of both eyes.

Print impairment is considered to be included in learning disabilities. However, there are no clear definitions of “print impairment” in Japan and such a concept is unfamiliar to the public.

The definitions are restrictive and it is impossible to count the actual number of people with visual impairment by using the present definitions. The reported number is much smaller than the actual one. (However, at present, there is no other way to get the actual number). In Japan, most of public libraries adopt the Government narrow definition to decide their service recipient. Consequently, it is often the case that people with slight visual impairment and people who are temporarily impaired cannot use the services. Further, many people with visual impairment themselves do not know that they can use the services. There are also cases where people with visual impairment who do not have an identification card cannot use the services.

The preferred definition from the viewpoint of the Japan Library Association is “persons who have visual impairment (including temporary impairment), which causes some inconvenience.”

Library and user group data

Incidence of visual impairment

There is no accepted number for the proportion of the total population affected by visual impairment.

Since the elderly account for the majority of visually impaired people, it is expected that the distribution matches that of the elderly people but not that of the general population. As a result, the percentage of visually impaired people in the provinces is higher than that in the big cities.

It can be seen from the basic data section that Japan is a particularly acute example of the phenomenon of an ageing society.

Incidence of print impairment

Until recently, it was debated whether, for example, dyslexia exists in Japan at anything like the same level of incidence as in English speaking countries. Recent research suggests that although the syllabic kana system of writing does tend to present fewer difficulties than western alphabets, when children come to learn kanji characters, the incidence is similar, comprising between 5 and 10% of the population [<http://www.dyslexia-parent.com/z118.html>]. The Japan Library Association is trying to make people more aware of print disability.

Public libraries

There are 3,060 public libraries.(2006) The total population of Japan is 127.055m(2006), which means there are about 41521people per library. The number of public libraries has been growing. They are concentrated in urban areas.

The total number of libraries includes 62 prefectural libraries, 2,381 city libraries, and 617 town libraries (2006). The total number of books borrowed each year is 618 million. Therefore, on average, 4.87 books are borrowed by each Japanese person. This has risen from 2.5 in 1996. However, 28.3 % of towns have no public library.

Public libraries are very under-funded. The budget has been decreasing considerably, especially in recent years. The outsourcing of library services to the private sector has been promoted under the government's initiative, which is not desirable for libraries, but has already been or is going to be implemented in some libraries. Historically, librarians were not considered as professionals but simply general public employees. Cuts in funding have occurred at the same time as there is a need to transform libraries to fit the digital environment.

fiscal year	number of libraries	budget for materials	per each library	Total staff	professional librarians
1990	1,898	2,640,745	1,391	13,255	6,754
1991	1,955	2,927,318	1,497	13,631	6,964
1992	2,011	3,129,312	1,556	14,200	7,265
1993	2,091	3,381,606	1,617	14,699	7,517
1994	2,180	3,393,226	1,557	15,152	7,728
1995	2,270	3,497,602	1,541	15,000	7,733
1996	2,336	3,594,158	1,539	15,172	7,745
1997	2,423	3,625,861	1,496	15,359	7,858
1998	2,499	3,648,930	1,460	15,429	7,894
1999	2,560	3,676,344	1,436	15,356	7,800
2000	2,613	3,615,654	1,384	15,175	7,592
2001	2,655	3,535,152	1,332	15,228	7,518
2002	2,686	3,491,479	1,300	15,181	7,426
2003	2,735	3,348,285	1,224	14,829	7,275
2004	2,803	3,327,680	1,187	14,572	7,176
2005	2,931	3,211,166	1,096	14,206	7,042
2006	3,062	3,135,476	1,024	13,987	6,988

Source: Japan Library Association

Services have nominally been expanded but in some cases the quality of services has deteriorated. There is concern that the number of staff and the budget to purchase materials has been decreasing, which may cause the reduction of services in future.

Although libraries are well-used by some heavy users, the number of users as a whole is small. The heaviest user groups are children. Recently usage by employed workers and the elderly users is increasing.

Rights and attitudes

Charitable giving is almost as widespread (in terms of the percentage of the population making donations) as in the USA, but amount given is relatively very small.

Social service provision by the state has historically been far less extensive than in advanced countries; there is also a tradition of provision by large companies for their employees, something which clearly disadvantages disabled people who are much less likely to be employed.

There is very little public awareness of intellectual/cognitive disabilities.

Although organizations operated by disabled people themselves in Japan cooperated in preparing the draft for the Convention of the Rights of the Disabled People adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2006, there are not many active movements by disabled people themselves in general and while officially there are anti-discrimination policies, there is apparently a greater disparity between policy and practice than in other advanced countries

There is a right of equal access to education to the high school level. From 1979, education became compulsory for all children, even those with severe and multiple disabilities. However, the movement to integrated education has not proceeded as far in Japan as in other advanced countries.

There is no general right of equal access to buildings, products and services for disabled people.

Cultural policies do recognise the right of disabled people to take part in cultural life.

There is no specific right to library services.

For visually impaired people, there are restrictions on having the same expectations as sighted people in relation to library services. Many people do not know that visually impaired people can read by using various methods. Expectations do vary according to age of onset of sight loss and also the person's present social position. In Japan, visually impaired people are supported mainly by their family. Some people use voluntary services but both the quantity and quality of the volunteers themselves are insufficient at present.

Services to print impaired people in relation to services to visually impaired people

At present there are few services for print impaired people. Only a small number of organizations with advanced facilities providing services for visually impaired people have expanded their services to print impaired people as well. It is expected that the services for visually impaired people will be expanded to print impaired people. However, in Japan, copyright law means that such services cannot be provided without permission. There are almost no services specifically for people such as dyslexics; any such services are an extension of services to visually impaired people.

Models and responsibilities

Provision in Japan comes from a variety of public and voluntary sources. Basically each library delivers services using its own collection, but when producing materials, many libraries cooperate with outside voluntary groups. There are also some libraries that commission the production of materials by professional narrators by paying charges. In addition, there is a national network for mutual loan of materials, and services are provided in cooperation with libraries for the blind.

Service provision – general

Organisations involved in providing library services for visually impaired people are:

Public libraries: prefectural libraries and municipal libraries

Specialist libraries for visually impaired people

Voluntary/commercial organisations provide support services at public libraries and libraries for visually impaired people

The National Diet Library (national library – equivalent of Library of Congress) produces DAISY books (limited to academic materials only).

Service provision – education

Libraries at schools for the blind

Services in mainstream schools

Most children with disabilities are educated in special schools, though there are provisions for exchange activities with mainstream schools and there is a trend towards integration embodied in a move from 'special education' to 'special support education', with e.g. provision of resource rooms in mainstream schools, though this seems to be aimed more at children with learning disabilities than physical disabilities. The government has not made a clear declaration in support of integrated education, however. There are 71 schools for the blind.

Governmental responsibility

Public libraries are the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

Libraries for visually impaired people are the responsibility of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

There is no coordination system among these organizations.

Overlaps – are they a problem?

In Japan the overlapping of the services is not considered to be much of a problem. It is probably because each service is poor in content.

There is very little cooperation between educational libraries and public libraries.

Some charities, voluntary organizations or not for profit organisations support public libraries in producing materials. These organisations have clear roles and responsibilities.

Services for visually impaired people by public libraries and those by libraries for visually impaired people differ in theory. However, they both provide services by cooperating with each other, through sharing union catalogues and mutually lending books. Voluntary groups are basically working on their own and do not have a nationwide cooperation system. Each of the libraries at schools for the blind has only a poor collection. They do not have a very good nationwide cooperation system, either.

Gaps between policy and practice

Politically, it is stated that full social participation by disabled people should be realised. However, there is no proper social system or services to realize these goals. The true voice of disabled people is not much reflected when making policies or planning services. In Japan there is no established system to reflect the voice of disabled people in politics. The general public lacks proper understanding of disabled people, while the disabled people themselves also still lack awareness or actions for independence. Although people do not often take discriminating actions against the disabled in general, they have not yet reached the level of understanding the people with disabilities in a true sense.

Are the models in flux?

There has been little change in each role. However, there is a movement as a national policy to depend more on volunteers. Year by year, all organizations are suffering more and more from financial difficulties. Nevertheless, their services tend to expand because of the increase of the target users and the variety of materials they provide.

What is driving change?

Increasing demand (ageing population) plus decreasing funding is promoting use of volunteers and outsourcing of services to the private sector in order to reduce costs.

Technology – Japan has been at the forefront in the development of DAISY; the Japanese Association of Libraries for the Blind was one of the initial members of the DAISY consortium in 1996. The Japanese government provided funding for a world field trial to identify the functional requirements of print disabled people in order to inform the creation of the DAISY standards.

Measuring success

Almost no one has measured the services. Recently a few public libraries have set up an index to measure their services, but these measures are generic rather than specific. Nevertheless, every library has general annual targets. Some libraries have started to send out questionnaires to users to measure user satisfaction.

Targets are raised every year. In some cases long term targets (about 5 years) are raised.

In Japan, most targets do not state definite figures to be achieved but rather, only state general concepts. However, as a result of a substantial decrease in materials spending and the number of personnel, a cut in services is anticipated.

Participation by visually impaired people

In some of the libraries for visually impaired people, people with visual impairment have taken responsible positions. In some advanced public libraries, a member of staff with visual impairment has become the leader in charge of the services. In fact, at libraries with staff with visual impairment, the services are quite satisfactory in both quantity and quality.

Funding sources and adequacy

Almost all the funding is covered by independent revenue sources of municipalities.

Unfortunately there are no statistics on the amount of total funding. Funding is decreasing considerably. The Japanese Library Association notes that it has fallen well below its expectation.

One of the background factors has been the long period of low growth suffered by the economy. Another factor is that in Japan there is originally a problem of lack of understanding for the reason why libraries exist.

Overall availability of material in alternative formats

Materials available have been mainly traditional audio cassette, but recently they have rapidly been converted to DAISY format. There are hardly any materials in other forms such as in large print.

Materials Supply (Public Libraries)

Braille

Original materials supplied: Most of the original materials are purchased by libraries. Some materials are published in the form of Braille.

Conversion: Braille transcribers and volunteers registered at the libraries. Some library staffs.

On-demand: In principle, yes. (Some of the materials are selected and converted by the libraries.

Stock: In principle, conversion is done on-demand basis, and all the properly converted materials are stored as collection.

Targets for range/depth/speed: We try to produce as soon as possible, but there is no target speed.

Audio – standard cassette and CD

Original materials supplied: Most of the original materials are purchased by libraries. Some materials are published in the form of standard cassette and CD.

Conversion: Narrators and volunteers registered at the libraries. Some library staffs.

On-demand: In principle, yes. (Some of the materials are selected and converted by the libraries.)

Stock: In principle, conversion is done on-demand basis, and all the properly converted materials are stored as collection.

Targets for range/depth/speed: As for the quality of the converted materials, we try to achieve the high quality but there are not clearly defined targets. There is no target regarding the term.

Audio Daisy

Original materials supplied: Most of the original materials are purchased by libraries. Some materials are published in the form of DAISY audio. However, DAISY materials on sale are quite few.

Conversion: DAISY editors registered at the libraries. Some library staffs. Commissioned producers.

On-demand: In principle, conversion is done on-demand basis, and all the properly converted materials are stored as collection.

Stock: In principle, yes. (Some of the materials are selected and converted by the libraries.)

Targets for range/depth/speed: No targets

Digital audio download

Original materials supplied; Conversion; On-demand; Stock; Targets for range/depth/speed: Download is not available at present.

However, Osaka Prefectural Central Library had provided streaming distribution from 2000 to 2003 as a project of “Multimedia Pilot Town Project (multimedia model museum (library))”, which is a project to research and develop communication and broadcast by TAO (Telecommunications Advancement Organization of Japan), and it has also provided since 2003 as a demonstration experiment for “Network Distribution of Talking books” as a project developing Osaka Prefecture Multimedia Model libraries.

Daisy text and audio

Original materials supplied: This is not being provided. In Japan there are hardly any productions of this type. When producing, in most cases it is commissioned to groups of specialists.

Conversion: ----.

On-demand: ----.

Stock: Very few libraries purchase and possess several titles which are published

Targets for range/depth/speed: ----.

Handmade large printed books

Original materials supplied: Very few libraries provide this service in Japan. Almost no example. Most of the original materials are purchased by libraries. Some libraries purchase published Braille books.

Conversion: Braille transcribers and volunteers registered at the libraries.

On-demand: In principle, conversion is done on-demand basis, and all the properly converted materials are stored as collection.

Stock: In principle, yes. (Some of the materials are selected and converted by the libraries.)

Targets for range/depth/speed: We try to produce as soon as possible, but there is no target speed.

Materials Supply (Libraries for Visually Impaired People)

Braille

Original materials supplied: Most of the original materials are purchased by libraries. Some materials published in the form of Braille are also purchased.

Conversion: Braille transcribers and volunteers registered at the libraries.

On-demand: Some are on-demand of users. Others are selected by library staffs in a selection meeting as appropriate for collection and produced

Stock: Most are properly produced and always available to users as a library collection. [Braille download – Most of the Braille books produced by each library for visually impaired people are transcribed by using PC, whose data are uploaded to “Naïve Net” to be downloaded by users. Presently 185 organizations are the members of the Net and Braille data of 80,000 titles are registered and there are 4,500 individual users. The Braille data can be downloaded through “Biblio-Net”, too.]

Targets for range/depth/speed: Standard period for production of best sellers is within 6 months, while that for other books is within 1 year. We try to produce as soon as possible.

Audio – standard cassette and standard CD

Original materials supplied: Most of the original materials are purchased by libraries. In a very few cases, cassette books and CD Books already published are presented by charitable persons.

Conversion: Narrators and volunteers registered at the libraries. Some library staffs.

On-demand: Some are on-demand of users. Others are selected by library staffs in a selection meeting as appropriate for collection and produced

Stock: Most are properly produced and always available to users as a library collection.

Targets for range/depth/speed: We try to produce as soon as possible, but there is no target speed.

Audio Daisy

Original materials supplied: Most of the original materials are purchased by libraries.

Conversion: Narrators and volunteers registered at the libraries. Some library staffs.

On-demand: Some are on-demand of users. Others are selected by library staffs in a selection meeting as appropriate for collection and produced

Stock: Most are properly produced and always available to users as a library collection.

Targets for range/depth/speed: We try to produce as soon as possible, but there is no target speed

Digital audio download

Original materials supplied: ----.

Conversion: As it is not allowed by Copyright Law, digital audio download is not available. However, Streaming distribution is available through Biblio-Net operated by Japan Braille Library and Nippon Lighthouse Welfare Center for the Blind

On-demand: ----.

Stock: ----.

Targets for range/depth/speed: ----.

Daisy text and audio

Original materials supplied: Almost none.

Conversion: ----.

On-demand: ----.

Stock: Some libraries purchase and possess several titles which are published.

Targets for range/depth/speed: ----.

Large print

Original materials supplied: Original materials are purchased by libraries or borrowed from users or volunteers.

Conversion: Volunteers registered at the libraries. Library staffs.

On-demand: On-demand of users and selection by libraries.

Stock: 20% of libraries for visually impaired people provide large print books.

Targets for range/depth/speed: ----.

Others

Original materials supplied: ----.

Conversion: ----.

On-demand: ----.

Stock: ----.

Targets for range/depth/speed: ----.

Criteria for collection decisions (public libraries)

Winners of literary prizes/reviews: 10% of titles

On-demand by the clients: 60% of titles

Library staffs 30% of titles

Criteria for collection decisions (libraries for visually impaired people)

Winners of literary prizes: All the books that won Akutagawa Award and Naoki Award are produced

Selected by library staffs with reference to reviews: 60% of titles

On-demand by the clients: 40% of titles

Alternative formats stock (public libraries)

Material kinds	Titles: No. of Libraries	Titles: No. of titles	Stocks: No. of Libraries	Stocks: No. of volumes
Talking books (Cassette tape)	423	180,617	440	776,266
Talking books (DAISY)	67	10,367	64	12,970
Talking magazines (Cassette tape)	84	4,387	72	25,040
Talking magazines (DAISY)	7	170,156	6	53,550
Braille books	644	99,827	705	314,008
Braille magazines	264	7,128	202	44,671
Handmade large print books	171	44,825	191	81,625
Tactile/cloth books	414	7,312	405	8,893
Data in Floppy disk	16	1,495	14	1,452
DVD with closed caption/sign language	191	27,368	197	26,577
Commercial Cassette tape/CD	166	70,176	179	128,369
Others	126	23,736	129	48,296

Source: Japan Library Association Committee on Library Services for the Disadvantaged Persons (2006)

Number of libraries with alternative formats (Libraries for Visually Impaired People)

Material kinds	No of libraries
Braille books	83
L-Braille books	11
Braille magazines	71
Braille data in, etc.	62
Cassette books	83
DAISY books	83
Cassette magazines	78
DAISY magazines	56
Large print books	20
Tactile books	24
Commercial tapes (music, entertainment, literature, lecture, etc.)	43
Ordinary CD other than DAISY (music, entertainment, literature, lecture, etc.)	37
Other formats	5

Alternative formats stock (libraries for visually impaired)

	Titles: No. of Libraries	Titles: No. of titles
Braille	83	495327
Cassette tapes	83	481148
DAISY books	83	267,090

Source: National Association of Institutions of Information Service for the Visually Handicapped (2006)

Preferred situation (Public libraries)

General provision

Description

The best advance would be to substantially increase the present public funding. However, since it is almost impossible at present, it may be necessary to establish a system to collect donations from organizations or individuals.

Who would deliver

In order to enable all the people with disabilities, regardless of the type of disability, to use the services, the best solution would be for public libraries or their staffs to take full responsibility for delivering such services. Libraries and their staffs should not depend on volunteers when delivering services. Producers of materials should produce each material according to the instructions from libraries, and should be paid or receive proper value for their activities.

A new organization to produce materials at national level might be established.

How would organisations work together

In producing materials, all the organizations need to cooperate. For instance, public libraries can be utilized, when producers need to prepare original materials or use reference services related to conversion of materials (media conversion).

How the services would be delivered

It is necessary to provide new services such as delivering contents through the internet, in addition to the traditional services at counters or by mail.

Ideal level of service

People who have difficulty in obtaining information for some reasons should be able to receive the same services as the non-disabled. Various methods should be prepared to deliver materials directly to the users who are unable to visit libraries. Also system should be established to deliver materials converted in the form that meets each user's needs.

Preferred situation (Libraries for Visually Impaired People)

General provision

Description

The conversion of general materials such as literary works are under way on-demand basis, however, as for the medical texts

and technical materials such as computer related books, there are some cases where users' needs can not be satisfied because of the lack of appropriate producers. It is necessary to keep training and increase producers of technical books.

Who would deliver

It will be effective to establish the national system for training producers of technical books at the National Association of Institutions of Information Services for the Visually Handicapped.

How would organisations work together

In producing materials, all the organizations need to cooperate. For instance, public libraries can be utilized, when producers need to prepare original materials or use reference services related to conversion of materials (media conversion).

How the services would be delivered

It is necessary to provide new services such as delivering contents through the internet, in addition to the traditional services at counters or by mail.

Ideal level of service

Materials necessary for work or study are provided without delay in such forms as in Braille or in audio, whichever is requested by users.

Education

Description/funding

The government would fund the service

By whom and how the services would be delivered

A Library Committee organized under the leadership of full-time school librarian would be responsible.

Schools would benefit from mutual lending, sharing data, and personnel exchanges including research.

Ideal level of service

“Information is available, at any time, anywhere”

The view from the user’s perspective

New work of fiction

A user can call libraries for visually impaired people or public libraries and borrow the material by mail (all free of charge). Even the bestsellers are available in about 2 months after they are released. Registration to these libraries can be done by telephone. Each library searches for the requested material through the national union catalogue, etc. and libraries share books by mutual lending. Streaming of audio data and downloading of Braille data through internet is also available. Users can read Braille data on Braille display or play them in synthetic speech.

Fiction

The process of using libraries is the same as above. The newly requested materials will be produced though it may take several months. Many libraries provide face to face reading services.

Reference work

Many public libraries and libraries for visually impaired people provide reference services. Some offer quick telephone services and recently e-mail services have also been made available in some libraries. Users can also use reading services, where libraries prepare materials and provide face-to-face reading services. (Face-to-face reading services are available in 20% of all the public libraries and in 80% of libraries for visually impaired people).

Newspapers and magazines

Libraries for visually impaired people and public libraries regularly produce recorded audio magazines in cassette tapes containing some parts of newspaper articles and provide them by mail. There is a obviously a time lag. Users can use face-to-face reading services in order to read the newspaper of that day. People with visual impairment who can use the internet can browse accessible newspapers at home.

Libraries for visually impaired people and public libraries produce various recorded audio magazines in cassette tapes and lend them through a national network. Users receive them regularly from each library. However, many of these magazines are just extracts from the originals and there is a time lag before publishing. New magazines are available through face-to-face reading services. Although most of the audio magazines were in cassette tapes before, DAISY magazines with high searching functionality are gradually increasing.

There is also a service providing “Braille JB News”, transcribing a part of newspaper articles of the day as well as information on welfare into Braille every day from Monday to Friday in the form of Braille, audio and data. Braille data is distributed or contents are read aloud by synthetic speech through telephone navigation system to individuals with visual impairment. At each local library for visually impaired people, Braille data is downloaded and printed for users.

<http://www.normanet.ne.jp/~nichimo/joho/tenjinews.html>

School textbooks

Some of the school textbooks are produced by government in large print or in Braille. Conversion of school textbooks to DAISY format is lagging. At ordinary schools, provision of adapted textbooks is also lagging. In many cases users ask volunteers personally to produce such textbooks.

Children’s books

In Japan, there are very few children’s books both in recorded form and in Braille. Libraries for visually impaired people and public libraries can produce and provide such children’s books on-demand. Some public libraries are actively engaged in producing and lending services of tactile books, cloth books and picture books with Braille by cooperating with volunteer groups.

Academic journals

Some public libraries produce a scientific journal as an audio magazine in cassette tape. The range is very limited. They are also available through face-to-face reading services.

Academic books

The National Diet Library produces and provides academic books in DAISY. Some public libraries can also produce such books on-demand. They are also available through nearby public libraries.

Barriers

The key barriers are copyright, low funding for producing materials, and lack of specialist staff.

Copyright

The relevant exceptions for visually impaired people are covered by Article 33**bis** and Article 37 of the Copyright Law of 2003 [http://www.cric.or.jp/cric_e/clj/clj.html].

It is permitted for anyone to make copies of all materials in Braille. Copies by recording are only allowed in special libraries for visually impaired people and schools for the blind, in order to protect copyright. There are no exemptions or exceptions for print-impaired people. The most serious problem is that public libraries are not at all allowed to produce materials except for Braille books. As a matter of course, public transmission is not permitted.

(Reproduction for preparing a textbook in large print)

Article 33bis

(1) It shall be permissible to reproduce works already reproduced in a school textbook, by enlarging print letters, illustrations, etc. used in that textbook, for the purpose of study use by weak-sighted children or pupils.

(2) A person who intends to prepare a textbook reproducing such works (only such textbook as reproducing all of or a considerable part of such works) by enlarging such print letters, illustrations, etc. (hereinafter in this paragraph referred to as “textbook in large print”) shall inform in advance the publisher of the former textbook thereof and, in the case of distributing copies of such textbook in large print for profit-making purposes, pay to the copyright owners concerned compensation, the amount of which is fixed each year by the Commissioner of the Agency for Cultural Affairs in proportion to the amount of compensation mentioned in paragraph (2) of the preceding Article.

(3) The Commissioner of the Agency for Cultural Affairs shall announce in the Official Gazette the amount of compensation fixed in accordance with the provision of the preceding paragraph.

(Reproduction in Braille, etc.)

Article 37

(1) It shall be permissible to reproduce in Braille a work already made public.

(2) It shall be permissible to record on a memory, or to make the public transmission (excluding the broadcasting or wire diffusion, and including the making transmittable in the case of the interactive transmission) of, a work already made public, by means of a Braille processing system using a computer.

(3) For Braille libraries and other establishments for the promotion of the welfare of the visually handicapped, designated by Cabinet Order, it shall be permissible to make sound recordings of a work already made public, exclusively for the purpose of lending such recordings for the use by the visually handicapped.

Special projects

In Japan, DAISY implementation was organized by the Japanese Society for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities (JSRPD), with the initiative of one of the founders of DAISY Consortium, Mr. Hiroshi Kawamura. It was carried out from 1998 to 2000, funded by the Japanese Government. At that time 2580 titles were produced.

The Japan Braille Library – Biblio-Net and Biblio-Studio

The Japan Braille Library in cooperation with Nippon Lighthouse Welfare Center for the Blind in Osaka launched the distribution system for Braille books and talking books in 2004, called Biblio-Net, and in 2005 the talking book production system called “Biblio-Studio”. The aim of the systems was to shorten the time taken to produce talking books and to make them available to users speedily on demand.

Prior to this digital project, talking books were produced using analogue recording devices and distributed by post on cassette tape and CD. The recording was done in the JBL studios and could take 20-25 weeks to record one ten-hour long book. Now production is done by volunteers in their own homes using PCs; text, directions, editing and related material is kept on the server at the Library so that all the participants (library staff, reading volunteers, proofreaders) can share it and work simultaneously using a groupware solution.

Talking books are large files (around 150 Mb for a 10 hour book) so broadband is essential both for shared production and distribution. Users employ broadband via cable, ADSL or fibre connections. The system facilitates searching of related information as well as streaming. Registered individual users are free to use this system as a personal library on Internet at any time.

Development and Dissemination of Multi-media DAISY

Japanese Society for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities have developed and promoted the use of multimedia DAISY books for people with cognitive and intellectual disabilities since 2001. So far more than 10 sample books have been produced and the Japanese version of Easy to Read books in Sweden have also been published with multimedia CD-ROM. Although it is still at only a few libraries but lending services for people with cognitive and intellectual disabilities have started.

Publishers' involvement

Publishers are seldom involved in services providing materials or data. Some publishers provide the original materials for talking books or Braille books or donate a part of production cost to only a limited number of libraries for visually impaired people.

South Korea

Basic country data

Population: 47.817m (2005).

Over 65s as % of total population: 2005 9.0%; 2020 12.6% (projected).

GNI per capita (international dollars converted at purchasing power parities) 2005: \$21,850

Government: Unitary

Estimated number of visually impaired people: 250,000

Estimated number of print-impaired people (including those with vision loss): no accepted figure, but estimated at 10% of population.

Note on information sources

The majority of the information here was provided by the Korean Braille Library, supplemented by desk research.

Definitions and their effects

The definition in current use does not specifically define visual impairment, but defines blindness as an aspect of visual impairment: “people with visual impairment including the blind.”

The definition is thought to be inclusive enough.

The definition of “print impairment” used by the Korean Library for the Blind covers “older people, people with dyslexia, learning disabled people, physically handicapped people who do not have both hands and people with paralysis, etc.”

Library and user group data

Visually impaired people registered by the government under the above definition amount to around 190,000. However, the Korean Library of the Blind estimates that there are 250,000 in total.

In the 21st century, public libraries in Korea have rapidly increased in number. There were 168 public libraries nationwide in 1986 and 462 by 2003. The number of library users has also rapidly increased from 17 million in 1986 to 97 million in 2003. Book circulation increased from 9,790,000 volumes in 1986 to 11,007,000 volumes in 2003. The rapid expansion of public libraries has been due to government support and changes in recognition of libraries by local governors. However, only 34 provide any services to visually impaired people.

Rights and attitudes

Visually Impaired People generally expect the same access to reading materials and level of service as sighted people.

Normally most visually impaired people who are studying get help from their family or friends. They only have to use the specialist libraries to get access to reading materials. They do not have the same network of family or friends to help with general-interest reading.

Both visually impaired people and the print disabled have difficulties in reading normally printed formats. They require almost same material to read. The totally blind require special service or materials such as Braille books.

Over the next five years, there will be more services and more formats that can be used by both groups.

There is a government standard to determine readers who have visual impairment but not for print disability.

Models and responsibilities

Library services for the blind in Korea started in 1945 with the loan of books to blind students and graduates at a blind school. However, significant library services started in 1969 when an individual established and operated a Braille library. By 1990, the number of Braille libraries had increased considerably and there are now 34 nationally. All of them are operated by private persons or non-profit organizations, and they operate differently from public libraries. Since budget support policies for Braille libraries have not yet been stated in law, financial support from the government is weak.

Services for the blind in public libraries are in the same situation. The 1988 Paralympics in Seoul provided a turning point for library law. The law now stipulates that “Public libraries shall install facilities necessary for providing library services for young, old, and disabled people”. However, this is not compulsory. Thus, only about ten percent of 487 public libraries provide services for the blind as of today, despite seventeen years having passed since the revised law entered into force.

Braille libraries have mainly taken charge of production of alternative format materials and services, and public libraries purchase special materials from larger-size Braille libraries for use in their own services. Since Braille libraries are operated by private persons or non-profit organizations and public libraries are operated by the government, they have not developed a network and they do not cooperate. Since both Braille and public libraries may be over-subscribed, crowded, widely dispersed or simply too few in number (depending on regions), in reality users do not receive the same level of service nationally.

The Korean Braille Library is Korea’s first Braille library, established in December 1969. In 1970, starting with an alliance with Japan’s Braille library, the library staff and managers sought to improve Korea’s outdated welfare systems for visually impaired people. Towards this end, staff continue to participate in international competitions and seminars every year. Starting in 1999, as a member of the IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations) Korea continues to engage actively in international interchange. Official interaction with Japan’s Braille library is increasing. Moreover, by donating data periodically to China’s welfare agency, the library is making considerable efforts to cooperate in order to communicate culture and information to visually impaired people among the Korean population in China.

The privately managed Korean Braille Library enables visually impaired and reading impaired people, (who make up 10% of the entire population) to use books and to gain easy access to accurate information.

According to a survey on the information gap for disabled people in 2005 (Korea Agency for Digital Opportunity and Promotion), visually impaired people who use the computer account for 48.3% and main users are from teens to 30s. [Keun Hae Youk: Ubiquitous Library.]

Service provision – general

The current library system for visually impaired people in Korea is grouped into offline, internet (online) and telephone services. The offline service is a conventional service that loans Braille books or audio books free of charge by post, visit to the library, or home-delivery. The internet service provides files for people to read using a Braille note taker or screen. This service essentially a digital library and users can search the bibliography, apply to borrow a book, download and read the books thorough this service. The downloaded files can be used at any time. [Keun Hae Youk: Ubiquitous Library.]

Postal borrowing is an important service provided by the Braille and public libraries in Korea. They provide home-delivery lending, or face-to-face reading depending on the location of a user. In future, they will provide a download service through the electronic library. However, this has not been activated yet. [Keun Hae Youk: Public library as an agent ..., 2005.]

In 1970, 200 Braille books were available for lending via postal mail. Since then, 19,016 Braille copies 4,975 titles have been lent to 2,000 members. Currently, 3,000 books are lent per year, and the volume is increasing every year. [http://infor.kbll.or.kr/new/eng/biz_intor.asp]

Visually Impaired People pay 5000 won (KRW) for the registration fee. The delivery is free.

Service provision – education

The number of blind university undergraduates is currently over 350 and is increasing rapidly every year; 34 Braille libraries are proving insufficient in providing reference services for students. To complement and improve this situation, the National Central Library, a national library, started to construct university text databases in 2003.

Over 2003 and 2004, the National Central Library completed databases for over 2,300 kinds of university texts, and is now serving them. It is under construction of over 800 kinds of databases this year. Such text databases are being served to make them available for sounds and Braille letters in real-time, and to be used as Braille books or through such devices as Braille Lite after their Braille files are downloaded.

The National Central Library has started building a comprehensive catalogue of the Braille libraries, and has been upgrading this every year. It contains about 110 thousand items so far. These lists are available to any users to search online through the National Electronic Library. [Keun Hae Youk: Public library as an agent ..., 2005.]

Government responsibility

Key decisions are taken by the Ministry of Culture.

Overlaps – are they a problem?

Production of reading materials is duplicated. As is clear from the discussion under the models section, there is a lack of clarity about roles and responsibilities between specialist libraries and between the private not-for-profit sector and public libraries.

Gaps between policy and practice

There has been no specific policy for organising services for visually impaired people up to now. Running the library for visually impaired people has been difficult because the budget was uncertain. Despite this situation, specialist libraries are making efforts to provide a better service, with fundraising and use of volunteers.

These gaps exist because the interest of government in the needs of visually impaired and print disabled people is limited.

Are the models in flux?

The main change is the development of a policy for the establishment of a national specialist library for the blind and the changing extent and role of public libraries.

What is driving change?

In Korea, there is still no national library for the blind.

A national support centre for the disabled will be established within the national library in 2007. After that, it is expected that a national specialist library for visually impaired people will be built.

The government is now promoting a mid-to-long term development plan to secure the existence of public libraries. It aims to double the number of public libraries serving visually impaired people (the current number is 34). The introduction of this combination of Braille and public libraries will lead to an expansion of a public library's services to the sight-disabled. [Keun Hae Youk: Public library as an agent ..., 2005.]

The Korean Braille Library has opened a Ubiquitous Library, the so-called Digital Talking Book Library, for the blind (including visually impaired people) and print disabled people.

Measuring success

Success is not measured in a comparable way by Korean services.

Participation by visually impaired people

Most of the board members of specialist organizations and the presidents are visually impaired.

Visually impaired people are involved in making decisions about services that specialist libraries for visually impaired people should provide, through the president or board member of the organisation.

Funding sources and adequacy

In Korea, funding comes from several sources:

- governmental support

- volunteer effort

- funding from other enterprise or governmental agencies

- local or municipal government

- third sector – charities.

Funding has been increasing, but it is still not adequate.

The number of specialist libraries for visually impaired people is adequate, but it is felt that a national special library for visually impaired people is essential. Once a national specialist library for visually impaired people is set up, it will have to lead public libraries to use its services.

Materials provision

Braille

Original materials supplied: ----.

Conversion: transcriber (specialist)

On-demand: Yes

Stock: It depends on the sort of books: 21286 books for 5275 titles in total

Targets for range/depth/speed: Its range is very wide, as literature, tactile drawing book for the children, illustrated animal/plant book, map, textbook and reference for study for the university students, and technical reading materials related with the vocation. Its speed for the production of a book is depends on the kinds of book.

Audio Daisy

Original materials supplied: ----.

Conversion: Reader (volunteer like housewife or narrator) or TTS

On-demand: Yes

Stock: It depends on the kinds of book. 1927 books for 954 titles in total

Targets for range/depth/speed: Its range is very wide, as literature, tactile drawing book for the children, illustrated animal/plant book, map, textbook and reference for study for the university students, and technical reading materials related with the vocation. Its speed for the production of a book is depends on the kind of books.

Braille Books Production

The Library produces Braille books in diverse areas such as education, work, and rehabilitation as well as specialised books, and books on religion, philosophy, culture, literature and children's books. This amounts to 300 books per month and 3,000 per year. [http://infor.kbll.or.kr/new/eng/biz_intor.asp]

The library provides the following services:

Books for leisure/recreation/informal learning

Large format print

Braille

Newspapers

Weekly audio summary

Daily on-line delivery of formatted XML files

Magazines

Large format print

Audio on standard CD or cassette

Braille

Official publications/public information

Large format print

Audio on standard CD

Braille

The library also provides (to Visually Impaired People):

Online access

Training in Braille

Training in use of alternative formats and equipment

Loan of standard consumer equipment such as CD players and cassette players

Decisions about which titles are to be converted to an accessible format are made by:

Committee of experts chooses titles: 20% of titles

Winners of literary prizes/reviews: 20% of titles

On demand by the clients: 40% of titles

Other (please specify): 20% of titles

DAISY in Korea

The Korean Braille Library is the only organization in Korea that authors DAISY contents (Approx. 1,900 books for 950 titles).

In past, there were no authoring tools developed in Korea, so MyStudio and LP-Studio/Pro were used to author DAISY contents. The number of hardware players distributed was very small.

Authoring tools are important in increasing the amount of DAISY content. The Korean Braille Library has entrusted the development of an authoring tool to HIMS. KBL will distribute this authoring tool to all organizations for visually impaired people that want to publish DAISY contents in Korea. Development started in May 2006; a beta version is expected in December 2006 and field test in January

2007. The launch of the final version will be February 2007. It will be distributed to all Braille libraries and welfare centers in Korea. KBL and HIMS will train someone in each organisation in ten cities to use the authoring tool. [DAISY in Korea, August 2007, K. S. Choi/HIMS

Preferred situation

It is hoped that Braille libraries and public libraries will develop a good cooperative relationship to provide the highest quality library services to blind and print-disabled people.

The money would come from government.

Services would be delivered by post.

Specialist libraries would manage the publication of Braille and talking book services, and public and education libraries would distribute these publications.

Governmental support and policy for the specialist libraries for visually impaired people would constitute the ideal level of service.

Cooperative relationship between public and Braille libraries

Another good model of cooperation between public and Braille libraries is when a Braille library is assigned and operates a space within a public library. Currently in Korea, all Braille libraries are operated by private persons or non-profit organizations, and are not large. One of their biggest problems is shortage of space due to increasing materials, and it is not easy to secure the budget for constructing a new Braille library separately in each region. Moreover, the construction of a Braille library often meets with opposition caused by prejudice against the disabled.

One of the best ways to overcome these problems is to construct a public library where a Braille library is assigned space so the Braille library and the print library can work together. This reduces the cost of construction in comparison with the construction of a new dedicated Braille library, and avoids the problem of prejudice against the disabled. It also improves accessibility based on the location of a public library. [Keun Hae Youk: Public library as an agent ... 2005]

A good cooperative relationship between Braille and public libraries would work as follows:

It would be easy for the library to visit users to provide services as well as for users to access the library itself.

Potential users in local areas would be sought out. The use of recorded books would be expanded to print-disabled people, older people, dyslexia and other print-disabled people who use public libraries, as well as Visually impaired people.

Braille libraries can serve more visually impaired people more quickly by working through public libraries.

Public libraries can solve the problem of the cost of buying materials and the problem of increasing materials through borrowing and circulating a range of books from Braille libraries. This would enable them to play their essential role of serving an alienated Visually Impaired and print-disabled population

Braille libraries would become widely known through public libraries.

Braille libraries would contribute to services for the blind by giving volunteer education, securing many volunteers through public libraries.

Keeping books for visually impaired people in public libraries provides a good opportunity to reduce prejudice against the disabled.

Public libraries provide public places for disabled and other people to build up mutual understanding and reduce alienation and isolation.

Library services would be designed to meet users' needs.

Equal services can be served to visually impaired people in all regions.

These improvements are important. However, it is even more important that cooperation has not been led by the government, but voluntarily. This is just a beginning of cooperation between Braille and public libraries.

When such programs are complemented with others and expanded to cover all the nation, and they are accompanied by suitable government policies, library services for blind and print-disabled people in Korea should be greatly improved. [Keun Hae Youk: Public library as an agent ... 2005]

The view from the user's perspective

Visually impaired people visit a public library or specialist library for visually impaired people, telephone, or visit their website.

Rental of books is available by postal service, download over the internet, reading service over the telephone, and by door-to-door delivery service.

Interlending between organizations is not yet realized.

A range of formats are available, including Braille, traditional audio, and Daisy audio.

Barriers

The most important barriers to the provision of services are:

funding levels

governmental support

policy for the specialist libraries for visually impaired people.

Weak government policies, prejudice against disabled people, lack of understanding of print-disabled people, and lack of cooperation between Braille libraries and public libraries create major obstacles to the effective provision of library services for disabled people.

[Keun Hae Youk: Public library as an agent ... 2005]

Copyright

Article 30 of the Copyright Act of 1995 provides an exception for visually impaired people, but as can be seen it is restrictive in terms of the scope of the people covered and also location.

30. — (1) It shall be permissible to reproduce in Braille for the blind a work already made public.

(2) It shall be permissible to make sound recordings of a work already made public, exclusively for the purpose of providing such recordings for the use of the blind at the facilities established for the promotion of the welfare of the blind as prescribed by the Presidential Decree.

Special projects

Ubiquitous library or “Digital Talking Book Library for blind”

The library was developed by the LG Sangnam Library.

Content is created in DAISY format. It has DRM (digital rights management) to prevent non-print disabled people from using the content. The service is provided using web services. The mobile phone with NFC chip or membership card only has to touch a dongle (a device to enable Bluetooth to work if it is not integral to the PC) on a PC and members are authenticated and logged-in automatically. The communications between PCs and mobile phones are enabled by Bluetooth.

LG Sangnam library will provide teaching materials for blind schools as the main contents. Digital libraries and university libraries nationally are paying attention to the opening of the Digital Talking Book Library and they want to introduce this new method for producing DAISY books for blind and print disabled people and providing the service to them. [Keun Hae Youk: Ubiquitous Library.]

DAISY Project

The Korean Braille Library is making many efforts to expand the use of DAISY. One of them is the Development of E-braille book reader, namely the Jum player (playing software) and Brailier (transcription tool).

To integrate all of the specialist libraries for visually impaired people, the Korean Braille library is making a website. When the full file lists are updated and ready, visually impaired people will be able to search, download and use DAISY files and Braille files through this website. Additionally, the Korean Braille library is making the DAISY production tool and playing tool available. The tools can be also

downloaded on the DAISY website and used by visually impaired people to listen to the DAISY files and for specialist libraries for visually impaired people to make DAISY content. This website and service will be ready to open in March 2007.

Publishers' involvement

The publishing industry is involved in the provision of alternative formats, making about 35 titles a year (of total output of books) available in alternative formats.

The Netherlands

Basic country data

Population 16.299 m (2005).

Over 65s as % of total population: 2005 14.1%; 2020 17.1% (projected).

GNI per capita (international dollars converted at purchasing power parities) 2005: \$30,300

Government: Unitary

Estimated number of visually impaired people: 320,000

Estimated number of print-impaired people (including those with vision loss): estimates range from 576,000 to 1m

Definitions and their effects

There is not really a major difference between the official and library definitions of visual impairment. Both are based on research from the Verwey Jonker institute (1998). Libraries register people as visually impaired readers when they can prove the need the service with a notification from their GP or specialist. This is all well within these definitions:

Blind: cannot distinguish between light and dark

Very severe visual impairment: cannot see furniture at a close range, or cannot read newspaper headlines

Severe visual impairment: cannot read newspaper text (with or without glasses)

Beside visual impairment Dedicon also recognises dyslexia, aphasia and some physical handicaps (cannot use a book) as print impairments

Of course the definitions used influence the number of visually impaired people, although the fluctuation in numbers are higher when the grade of impairment is lower.

Library and user group data

Visual impairment

Numbers used in the Netherlands are based on research by the Verwey Jonker institute (1998) and are accepted.

Blind: 0.1% of the population (16,000)

Very severe visual impairment: 1.0% (160,000)

Visual impairment overall, including less severe: 2.0% (320,000)

Scientific research shows a 3.6% figure (576,000) for dyslexic people, although researchers in educational environments speak of a higher percentage (between 5 and 10%, or 800,000 – 1,000,000)

Stichting Lezen recently stated that there are 1.5 million Dutch people that cannot read (including illiteracy)

Public libraries

The number of public libraries is stable over the last five years. They are spread all over the country, although the concentration in urban regions is higher. The public library sector is somewhere between adequately funded and under-funded. Public libraries transform their services from book lending to information services, making use of the internet, etc, getting more involved in local educational activities, etc. The use of public libraries can and should

be better. most frequent users are people under 18. This is caused by a freedom of contribution for younger people. Least frequent are users between 18 and 40.

Rights and attitudes

Rights are enshrined in legislation and also via court decisions.

Public buildings have to be adjusted to guarantee equal access. Products and services are not included in a general right. They do encourage participation, but again it is not covered by law.

Visually impaired people are entitled to equipment like Braille bars, Daisy players, etc. under Dutch Health legislation. Postal services are free of charge. Under specific circumstances dyslexic people are entitled to Daisy players.

The users' organisations do expect the same access. Many elderly people are quite content with what they are offered. Of course younger people needing study material do demand everything they need in accessible format.

Many visually impaired people have a good network of family and friends who help them get access to reading materials. Many of them have personal networks, but many of them want to access information without depending on other people. Probably the same number of people (mostly the elderly) do **not** have a personal network.

Services to print impaired people in relation to services to visually impaired people

Regarding special library services people with a print impairment are more or less added to the original target group (visually

impaired). They have, however their own user organizations, are integrated in regular educational systems as much as possible. Dedicon is still discussing structural funding for provision of library services to print impaired people. Dyslexic students can make use of the Dedicon service. Other organisations mostly sell equipment and software, like the reading pen, kurzweil etc

Models and responsibilities

Library services for both visually impaired and print impaired people will be incorporated in the public library sector from the first of January 2007. Front offices will be organised by the existing public libraries, with a special national office for immobile visually impaired (the current situation is provision through the libraries for the blind). Production of Braille and talking books will still be provided by Dedicon, a state-funded organisation specialising in the production of alternative format materials.

Services for educational purposes (the former Dutch Library for visual and print impaired students) will be separated and kept within Dedicon. Dedicon will also continue their services for study materials.

There are a number of charity foundations involved by providing funding to projects in this area, but they are not actively involved themselves in delivering services.

Some educational libraries offer additional services to those that Dedicon provides.

Universities and commercial organisations are involved in improving services on a project basis.

Centralisation of resources

Dedicon (formerly known as FNB Netherlands) is a non-profit organization in the Netherlands which provides access to information for persons with a visual or other print impairment. Dedicon co-ordinates and is responsible for numerous functions for the Dutch Libraries for the Blind. Its services include:

Marketing activities

International innovation activities (Research and Development)

National branch ICT activities

National branch public relations and information

International representation

Supervision of all national technical facilities (production, reproduction and distribution) of all reading formats (audio, large print, digital and braille) for all products (books, magazines, newspapers, material for educational and professional use, sheet music, internet)

Service provision – general

Public libraries will provide the first point-of-contact, and will rely on Dedicon for provision of materials. Dedicon is the largest service provider in the Netherlands, providing a wide range of materials

Production of 1,200 talking book titles and 450 braille book titles per year (fiction)

Production of CD-ROM copies and distribution of these to all registered clients of the Dutch Libraries for the Blind. Approximately 1.5 million CD-ROMs are duplicated each year (fiction and periodicals)

Duplication and distribution of Braille books. Approximately 75,000 Braille volumes are produced each year

Publishing talking newspapers and magazines on CD in DAISY or audio CD formats. There is currently a selection of over 300 different newspapers and magazines. Dedicon also produces under contract with companies (profit and non-profit) and governments (local, national)

Production of electronically readable newspapers and magazines in XML format. At present there are over 200 electronically readable newspapers and magazines.

Dedicon web portal for people with a reading disability. In addition to digital distribution of daily newspapers, magazines, educational and professional books Anderslezen.nl enables people with a visual impairment to communicate with each other over the network. Approximately 2000 people use this service.

Production of educational, independent study and work related materials for students and professionals with a reading impairment. Dedicon produces on demand, any book or other manuscript needed for study or occupational use. Educational materials range from primary school to university level materials. Services are in braille, audio (DAISY), large print or in digital format.

Production of tactile drawings used in study materials.

Production of accessible sheet music in braille, in audio (using a specially developed method) and in large print, for individuals with a visual impairment.

Dedicon has also taken over responsibility for the specialist libraries dedicated to serving the visually-impaired.

Governmental responsibility

In the Netherlands decisions are made by the department of Culture, which is part of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

Overlaps – are they a problem?

The organisations involved have clear roles and responsibilities because they either support through funding or participate in projects.

The public libraries are about to start their services in cooperation with Dedicon.

The charity foundations are very aware of their role and the possible overlap with the subsidising Ministry. There is always a cross check on this.

Universities participate in projects based on proper project descriptions whereby possible overlap can be traced.

The main change has been in the role of public libraries: see above.

Gaps between policy and practice

There are always some discrepancies between policy and actual support due to practical circumstances. Respondents to the questionnaire felt that there are few really significant gaps.

Are the models in flux?

Library services for both visually impaired and print impaired people will be incorporated in the public library sector from the first of January 2007. Front offices will be organized by the existing public libraries, with a special national office for immobile visually impaired

(the current situation through the libraries for the blind). Production of Braille and talking books will still be provided by Dedicon. Another, smaller, producing organisation is the CBB. CBB produces 500 talking books and Braille magazines.

Content providers like publishers will increasingly produce accessible content from the beginning. Charity foundations will probably step back a little due to commercialisation.

Services for educational purposes (the former Dutch Library for visual and print impaired students) will be separated and kept within Dedicon.

What is driving change?

Things are changing, mainly because organisations like the Federation of Publishers recognise the needs of visually impaired people. Developments are seldom based on changes in legislation and often on commercial or social grounds.

Measuring success

The proportion of visually impaired people reached by services is only measured in a very limited way.

The cost to public or charitable funds is measured, and so is the cost to users.

Factors such as the range and depth of material available and the speed of supplying items are measured.

What users think of the service is measured.

The measures are not fixed and described. It is more a general impression, except for the number of titles being produced and distributed.

The subsidising Ministry and users organisations decide what measures are used. Targets are set by the subsidising Ministry. Targets are changed or raised occasionally.

Dedicon considers itself quite successful according to its own targets. It manages to produce and distribute more every year. It is the first organisation that implemented Daisy talking books completely (production, collection, distribution) in the world and improved its services immensely with this.

Participation by visually impaired people

The direct influence of visually impaired people is decreasing, although lots of organisations still have at least one member of their target group in their board.

Funding sources and adequacy

National or Federal Government provides 90% of funding (through the Ministry of Culture). Third sector (charities, voluntary organisations etc) provides less than 5%

Charity foundations and commercial donations also provide less than 5%, as does international funding from the European Commission.

Users themselves contribute 5%.

Dedicon's budget is €12.0 million. There are some 30.000 clients registered, so the funding per visually impaired person is €390.

Funding is adequate for the existing services provided but is static, and an extension of the service is needed. To provide a proper service for study materials an increase of approximately 30% is needed. The proposed structure for general literature through public

libraries will probably need a more generous budget as well (around 10% to extend their services).

Overall availability of material in alternative formats

Percentage of material available in alternative formats:

Books: less than 10% are available.

Newspapers: 60% to 80%.

Magazines: 10% to 20%

Education materials: around 25%

Official publications: less than 10%

Materials provision

Braille

Original materials supplied: This depends on the book category; Dedicon buy the original fiction titles in inkprint (although they try to obtain the digital files recently). Study material is either sent to us by the school (primary school) or the client (tertiary) or we obtain the digital file or inkprint from the publisher (secondary)

Conversion: Dedicon's production department converts the text to Braille, if possible directly from the digital file, if not the text is scanned and then converted.

On-demand: Fiction is produced for stock, it is the librarian who decides which titles are to be produced. Study material is produced on demand, it is the client who decides which school books and other study material he needs for his education

Stock: For fiction it is the librarian who decides what to produce, using the same principles as librarians in public libraries (a balance between popular titles and titles for a smaller audience) An extra restriction is the maximum of only 500 titles per year

Targets for range/depth/speed: See above; for speed Dedicon sets their own targets. The most popular titles are very quickly available in Braille, other titles can take a few weeks to a few months to produce. For study material it is the client who indicates when he needs his books and Dedicon meet this deadline if possible

Audio Daisy

Original materials supplied: The original materials are bought from the publisher in ink print or sent to Dedicon (same procedure as Braille production); Newspapers and magazines are obtained from the publisher

Conversion: Dedicon produce audio books in their studios with the help of many volunteers. A number of titles are produced by employees on the payroll

On-demand: The procedure is the same as Braille production. Newspapers and magazines are produced for stock and distributed on subscription

Stock: The procedure is the same as in Braille production

Targets for range/depth/speed: The procedure is the same as in Braille production

Supplied in alternative formats

how supplied: purchase from other production units

who supplies: Commercial producers or production units of other libraries for the blind who may sell.

Basis for decision to acquire: Through a Book Selection Policy.

Targets for range/depth/speed: ----.

Dedicon transformed their text production to Daisy XML last year. The hybrid version (text and audio combined in one product) is in development and not really an available product at this moment

Dedicon had produced audio only in Daisy format since 2004: there is no cassette service.

A committee of experts (librarians) chooses titles: 50% of titles are chosen this way. The remaining 50% is requested by the clients.

Production and distribution

Dedicon: 3,500 audio books produced annually; Total talking book collection 115,000.

Another smaller producing organisation, CBB, produces 500 talking books and Braille magazines.

Dedicon detailed data on production, distribution and other services

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Production of electronically readable newspapers and magazines in XML format. At present there are over 200 electronically readable newspapers and magazines.

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Production of educational, independent study and work related materials for students and professionals with a reading impairment. Dedicon produces on demand, any book or other manuscript needed for study or occupational use. Educational materials range from primary school to university level materials. Services are in braille, audio (DAISY), large print or in digital format.

Production of tactile drawings used in study materials.

Production of accessible sheet music in braille, in audio (using a specially developed method) and in large print, for individuals with a visual impairment.

Preferred Situation

Description

The ideal system would be that in which the majority of the information is directly accessible from the content provider and a lot less information has to be made available through organisations like ours. All this information should follow the main stream delivery systems as much as possible.

Funding

Financial support should (continue to) come from National Government (Ministry of Culture and Education) with additional funding from private foundations, EC subsidy and fund raising.

Who would deliver

Using main stream delivery as much as possible, so publisher, bookshop and public library would deliver material to clients, with special delivery services for immobile clients.

How would organisations work together

The public library sector and the libraries for the blind will form one entity from the first of January 2007, providing the front office service to the end user with a special front office for those users who find it hard to go to a library themselves. Production is provided by Dedicon. The front office for educational materials stays at Dedicon where experts provide the information students need for their study. A further and more intense international cooperation between libraries and production centres will improve the availability of information and technological development

A joint effort would be required to provide adequate funding and to organise this ideal situation with all related partners.

The view from the user's perspective

Work of fiction

Assuming he or she is already registered as a client, they can contact one of the three libraries for the blind by telephone, email or

postal services and ask for this specific book. This library registers the request in the joint library system, and this automatically generates a distribution request at Dedicon distribution centre in Grave (talking books) or Rijswijk (Braille). He or she will receive the book within days.

Works of fiction in large print are not available through the libraries for the blind, because there is already a commercial publisher in this area

New work of fiction

A new work of fiction is a lot more difficult. The reader can send in a request to produce a specific title, but ultimately it is the library that decides which titles are being produced. The total (financial) capacity is 1,800 titles of talking books and 500 in Braille annually, so not every request can be met. If this specific title is going to be produced it will take somewhere between several weeks to several months before it is available. Dedicon produce a number of popular titles at high speed in order to offer at least these titles quickly, both in Braille and in talking book (Daisy)

Reference work

In many cases a reference work is requested for educational or professional purposes. Many items are already in digital format available directly through the publisher. So in these cases Dedicon would refer to the publisher or if needed convert materials into accessible format (see schoolbooks).

Newspapers and magazines

A number of newspapers (or extracts of these newspapers) are produced in Braille to which people can subscribe. A lot of newspapers (a weekly extract) are produced in Daisy format to which people can subscribe. They will receive their newspaper

or magazine every week or month without having to take further action. Through Dedicon's website (www.anderslezen.nl) it offers a number of digital accessible newspapers on a daily basis. People can subscribe to this service and receive their newspaper in their computer.

School textbook

Depending on the age of the student, he or she orders books, or perhaps parents even his school does. Dedicon produce all requested schoolbooks for their visually impaired clients and try to do the same for all print impaired clients. If his book has already been produced, he will get his copy within two or three days. If not, it has to be produced and it will take longer before he gets his book. Schoolbook production is concentrated in a specific period of the year in which many students send in their requests and a lot of books have to be produced. In order to deliver on time to all these clients Dedicon sends books part by part. This system allows them to produce a lot more titles at the same time (sometimes over 400 titles).

School textbooks are produced in large print at clients' request for partially sighted children.

Children's book

Follows the same procedure as a work of fiction, unless it is necessary for school purposes, then it follows the school textbook procedure

Scientific journal

Same procedure as magazine unless it is requested for study or professional use. Then it follows the school textbook procedure

Academic book

Same as school textbook

Barriers

The most important barrier is the level of funding and legislation on provision of Daisy players (or other) for print impaired people

The level of funding is the most important barrier to take away.

Copyright

Netherlands

The government introduced a new copyright law which has been in force since September 2004. It is based on the European Copyright Directive.

In this new law an exception has been made for people with disabilities. It states that the (re)production and publication of materials exclusively for disabled people is not a violation of copyright law. Conditions are that this (re)production and publication:

- relate to the disability

- have no commercial purpose

Article 15c

1. The lending as referred to in article 12, paragraph 1, sub 3., of the whole or part of a specimen of the work or a reproduction thereof brought into circulation by or with the consent of the right-holder shall not be deemed an infringement of copyright, provided the person doing or arranging the lending pays an equitable remuneration.

3. Libraries funded by the Libraries for the Blind and Visually Impaired Fund are exempt from payment of a remuneration as referred to in paragraph 1 in respect of items lent to blind and visually impaired persons registered with the libraries in question.

Article 15i

1. Reproduction and publication of a literary, scientific or artistic work exclusively intended for handicapped individuals, provided it is directly related to the handicap, is not of a commercial nature and is necessary because of the handicap, shall not be regarded as an infringement of copyright.

2. A fair payment will be due to the author or his right-holders for the reproduction or publication specified in paragraph 1.

[Unofficial Translation by the Dutch Ministry of Justice]

Special projects

Dedicon is the coordinating partner of the EUAIN project funded by the EC. EUAIN aims at accessibility early in the process, involving publishers (Federation of European Publishers) and other content providers.

EUAIN is a network project. A logical follow up is to improve and combine technological components to facilitate this process. This follow up is in preparation at Dedicon.

Publishers' involvement

The book publishers (KNUB) and libraries for the blind have cooperated since 1984.

Arrangements have been in place since 1985 between the Royal Dutch Publishers Association (**Koninklijke Nederlandse Uitgeversbond, KNUB**), on the one hand, and the Libraries

for the Blind, on the other hand, regarding the preparation and/or provision by the latter institutions of books in Braille and recorded books containing general reading matter intended for those with a print impairment who are registered with the aforementioned institutions.

As for the magazines and newspapers, Libraries for the Blind and publishers collaborated on an individual basis.

Since 1996, the NUV has united publishers of books, magazines and newspapers. The Dutch Publishers Association (**Nederlands Uitgeversverbond, NUV**), has its registered office in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. More than 90% of the turnover of publishing activities in the Netherlands is represented by the NUV

In 2000 the agreement between NUV and Dedicon (then FNB) was signed.

The background was that 'spoken book-cassettes' were considered to be a growing, commercially interesting market, especially in the United States of America.

Publishers wanted to help but also keep an eye on the market.

The principles underlying the agreement are:

those with a print impairment depend on the mediation provided by Libraries for the Blind, which not only have a circulation function, but also a productive or reproductive function;

users registered with Libraries for the Blind form a 'closed system', in which it is not easy to participate for people without a print impairment;

the chances of abuse are minimal;

Mutual confidence is essential.

Some important points in the agreement:

Documents in Braille

Dedicon may convert publications or parts of publications into documents in Braille, without notifying the publisher in question.

School- and study materials

Dedicon may convert school and study materials into all alternative formats, without notifying the publisher in question.

Recorded books, newspapers and magazines

Dedicon must notify the publisher in writing of its intention to prepare a recorded book. The publisher may withhold its permission in exceptional cases only or allow this subject to conditions in exceptional cases only.

In the event that the publisher fails to notify on time of its refusal or of any further terms and conditions, the Dedicon will have permission to prepare a recorded version of the relevant publication and make it available to the users registered with Dedicon.

Digital documents

The same rules as for recorded materials. NUV recommends publishers to deliver digital source files for free to Dedicon.

The agreement stresses the need for protection.

Dedicon distributes the digital documents through closed distribution channels

Dedicon takes technical protection measures (The documents are encrypted and can be read only with a special XML reading software.

Copy limitation defines the percentage of text which is allowed to be copied.)

The market:

The NUV needs to know what is going on in the market. Dedicon gives an annual survey of its production:

The number of:

users registered with the Libraries for the Blind,

of recently produced titles,

of copies produced,

of loans of recorded books to individual users

of sales of recorded books to public libraries.

The size of the total collection of recorded documents, subdivided into number of copies and titles.

Compensation

Dedicon offers the publisher a fair compensation. The standard rate will amount to EUR 25 per title. This amount will be charged regardless of the number of copies.

Sale to public libraries

Dedicon is allowed to sell the recorded books to the public libraries. Permission to sell and rent out (the recorded books) must be sought by means of a standard form. Dedicon offers fair compensation of EUR 4 for each recorded book title supplied to the public library.

Dutch legislation, the consequences for the agreement NUV-Dedicon. Publishers' interests

Dutch copyright legislation changed in September 2004 because of a European directive, as referred to above. It was the biggest modification since 1912.

People with a disability have an exception to the rights of the copyright owner: for the accessibility of content for disabled people, the permission of the publisher is no longer needed if:

- the conversion is exclusively for people with a disability;

- the conversion of content is directly connected with the disability;

- the conversion of content is not commercial;

- The copyright owner gets a fair compensation;

- the conversion of content is necessary because of the disability.

The situation therefore changed in principle, but in practice, it stayed the same.

- Publishers cooperate, a new pilot will be launched;

- Dedicon was already allowed to convert content unless the publisher did not permit the conversion afterwards;

- Because of Dedicon-registration and Daisy there's a 'closed system';

- Because of the use of Daisy-protection, the chances of abuse are minimal;

The legal terms give publishers enough possibilities to create their own market and take action against the conversion of content;

Dedicon will continue its annual production survey;

In addition to the possibility to sell audio books to the Public libraries, Dedicon is allowed to sell its audio books to libraries for the blind abroad. Exchange between Dutch and Flemish libraries for the blind is possible, double productions are avoided. Dutch expatriates with a print impairment in Canada, New Zealand and Australia can read in their mother tongue.

NUV, Dedicon and EUAIN, the future

Raise awareness about accessibility issues

Explore possibilities for strategic co-operation between publishers and libraries for the blind

Model for agreement for co-operation between publishers and libraries for the blind

Create trusted intermediaries to enable international exchange of accessible materials

Jointly tackle copy right issues and protection

Initiate research and development to improve the production of accessible information and to make this available to publishers and libraries for the blind

Co-operate on emerging issues like the accessibility of multimedia publications

South Africa

Basic country data

Population 47.432m (2005).

Over 65s as % of total population: 2005 5.3%; 2020 ----% (projected).

GNI per capita (international dollars converted at purchasing power parities) 2005: \$12,120

Government: Federal; central government and 9 provinces

Estimated number of visually impaired people: 533,404 (2001 census, but see below)

Estimated number of print-impaired people: no agreed number; there is extensive illiteracy

Note on information sources

The SA Library for the Blind, referred to here as Blindlib, answered Section A of the questionnaire, giving us as far as they could a national overview. While a number of other organisations were contacted, the majority preferred to allow Blindlib to represent a South African view. We did also receive a reply from Stellenbosch University.

Information given by Blindlib was supplemented by desk research, particularly in relation to public libraries and broader policy initiatives.

Definitions and their effects

Census definition

The 2001 Census asked people if they had a serious disability which prevented them from full participation in life activities and then to identify it as related to sight, hearing, communication, physical, intellectual, or emotional. This question was more wide ranging than that asked in the 1996 census, which simply asked people if they had a serious disability, classified as sight, hearing/speech, physical or mental. Multiple answers were possible in both cases.

In response to the 2001 question, sight was the biggest category of disability at 32%.

Blindlib told us that the problem with this definition is that includes all forms of visual impairment together, and could both overstate the numbers of people with a visual impairment and understate the numbers of people with special reading needs, whether related to learning disabilities or psychological barriers. They believe this makes it extremely difficult for them to know who their target market is, either demographically or geographically, and “not only is our service compromised, but the very people who are in dire need of this service are marginalised.”

Blindlib itself defines “visual impairment” as referring to blind and partially sighted people and people who have a physical disability and are unable to read regular print. “Print impairment” would be defined by Blindlib as referring to Dyslexia, ADD, and being physically unable to hold a regular book. The term “People who are unable to read in the normal manner” is often employed by organizations for the blind.

Blindlib makes it conditional for membership that an authority, such as an Ophthalmologist, Medical Doctor, Social Worker, or suitably qualified person of integrity verifies visual impairment on the

application form. But as a frame of reference for Blindlib it is not inclusive enough as there is no direct reference to people who have learning disabilities like dyslexia.

Library and user group data

The incidence of visual impairment

When considering the statistics on disability, it also has to be remembered that South Africa suffers from high levels of illiteracy and unemployment.

In a speech in 2004 at the Centre for the Book, Elinor Sisulu stated that:

“As things stand, South Africa has at least 3 million adults who are completely illiterate – unable to read the instructions on a medicine bottle or to complete a job application form without assistance. There are millions more people (estimates range from 5 to 8 million) who are functionally illiterate – unable to function adequately in the modern world due to under-developed reading and writing skills. Less well known is that there are tens of millions of South Africans who are aliterate – able to read but who don’t read! This a major consequence of not having a culture of reading.”

As already noted, Statistics South Africa classifies 1.14% (533,404) of the entire population (Census 2001) as having some form of sight disability.

These statistics are considered by the South African Blindness authorities to be highly controversial and although they do give some idea of the national problem, there is no breakdown into different categories of visual impairment. Blindlib also points out that in some communities cultural beliefs lead to a tendency to ‘hide’ disabilities from public view. Hence the gathering of statistics excludes an unknown number of people.

Readers

Blindlib is not aware of an accepted figure for readers throughout the country. Many readers will read with different organisations e.g. Blindlib and Tape Aids for the Blind.

Blindlib serves a constituency of 7,000 readers, or approximately 1% of the official number of people with a sight disability, but obviously there are more who read at school or at a tertiary institution, are attending Braille literacy classes and downloading their own books. At present Blindlib provide this essential service to 1% of this particular constituency

The incidence of print impairment

There is no accepted information about the numbers or percentage of print impaired people.

Public libraries

According to a report by Elisabeth Anderson, **Public Libraries A way Forward** (Feb 2005), there are approximately 1240 public libraries in South Africa. Their geographical distribution and level of resources is heavily influenced by the way they developed in the apartheid era.

“The Group Areas Act enforced residential segregation which carefully limited the drain on white revenues. This enabled White municipalities, reliant upon municipal rates and taxes, to be responsible for and manage a large number of well stocked libraries. Very little revenue was generated in other areas and as a result Black, Coloured and Indian Municipalities had fewer and less well-stocked libraries. The “Homelands” had no municipal government at all and very few public libraries indeed. This imbalance is still apparent. For instance in Limpopo the number of people per public library is 112 000 whereas in the Western Cape there are 7807 people per public library.”

Though reorganization has now resulted in 284 municipalities, the responsibility for public libraries shifted to the provinces in the post-apartheid period; however, funding did not and about 80% of funding still comes from the municipalities.

The report referred to some previous research:

“In 2001 Dr Peter Lor and Professor Paul van Helden, in conjunction with the Print Industries Cluster Council Working Group on Libraries and funded by the Carnegie Corporation, developed a questionnaire for an inventory of public libraries in South Africa. The resulting clarity on the geographical spread of libraries, their size and their addresses has been invaluable. The more probing questions on finance and bookspend were answered in such a way as to foreshadow this new research. Librarians appeared to be confused, without much sense of ownership or control over their own libraries, which all had particular populations and diverse needs. Decisions seem to have been made elsewhere, either at municipal or provincial levels.”

Numbers and growth

The report on Funding and Governance of Public Libraries [http://picc.org.za/pdf/library_report2.pdfreferred to above gave figures on the numbers of public libraries by province, which showed stability or a small increase in most cases:

Table 5: Number of provincial public libraries, 2002-2004

	EC	FS	GT	KZ	LM	MP	NC	NW	WC
2002	121	136	503	160	37	103	--	82	317
2003	101	137	513	163	39	130	--	86	307
2004	110	137	516	164	43	134	--	92	307

In several cases, increases were due primarily to attempts to give rural areas a better service.

Budgetary data shows increases, but the report notes that these are largely accounted for by inflation. Considered in relation to population and as a percentage of total budgets, library services vary considerably from province to province, though according to the report the per capita comparisons are more reliable than the budgetary percentages because departmental functions vary across provinces.

Table 8: Library services allocations compared to provincial budget and population

Province	Library services	Population	Per capita allocation	Provincial Budget	% library
E Cape	16295	6436763	2.5	31149	0.5%
Free State	29024	2706775	10.4	12544	2.3%
Gauteng	23116	8837178	2.6	29819	0.8%
KZN	40275	9426017	4.3	37807	1.1%
Limpopo	12500	5273642	2.4	24295	0.5%
Mpumalanga	11000	3122990	3.5	13078	0.8%
N Cape	11427	822727	13.9	4429	2.6%
N West	18967	3669349	5.2	15240	1.2%
W Cape	54381	4524335	12.0	18345	3.0%

In terms of usage data, the report points out that given the very unequal nature of provision, drawing conclusions from usage patterns to make funding decisions could lead to the perpetuation of inequalities.

A report entitled *Libraries for All*, also by Elisabeth Anderson, calls for an enhanced network of public libraries:

“These libraries might range in scope and size from boxes to buses, from huts to houses, from community centres to town halls, so that every South African is within walking distance of a wide variety of books. Libraries should have the capacity to be open for seven days a week and for long hours so that all readers are accommodated. Geographically the 1200 public libraries in South Africa are unevenly spread. There have been real efforts to develop libraries

beyond the confines of the old apartheid structures in white, mostly urban areas, but they have been hampered by a lack of funds. The existing public libraries however, are well placed to become central nodal points for a broad spectrum of widely spread sub-libraries.”

Rights and attitudes

Though there are some rights of equal access to buildings, products and services for disabled people, there is still much to be done in practice and in getting legislation on a par with European and US standards.

There is a general right of equal access to all levels of education for disabled people under the South African Constitution. There are strong policy trends promoting equal access, but much to do in bringing practice into line with policy.

Visually impaired people and print-impaired people have the fullest rights to the same library services as sighted persons.

Provision has been made for their rights to a library service in The South African Library for the Blind Act of 1998 (Act.no 91 of 1998). Visually impaired people have the right to challenge any threat or unfair treatment or discrimination in the Constitutional Court in terms of the South African Constitution, and many have done so.

There was a difference in view on what expectations visually impaired people have.

Blindlib believes that

“visually impaired people who are members of Blindlib do generally expect the same access to reading materials and level of service as sighted people. They expect that Blindlib will provide them with reading material by building a balanced book collection reflecting all genres, languages and reading levels, in the format of their choice viz audio and Braille. The situation is very different for those in rural areas who are uninformed and often poverty-stricken, or who lack networks of support through friends, family and organizations.”

Stellenbosch University reported:

“Visually impaired people have become used to expecting lower levels of access. They expect less choice and greater lags in obtaining materials. People without access to the internet, who form the majority of our VI population, are at a particular disadvantage.”

Services to print impaired people in relation to services to visually impaired people

Services are provided by the same agencies.

Models and responsibilities

Service provision – general

The South African Library for the Blind (Blindlib) has its functions, responsibilities and authority set out in the South African Library for the Blind Act, 1998. [<http://www.dac.gov.za/acts/a91-98.pdf>]

Essentially, it is responsible for maintaining and building alternative format collections and servicing the needs of both visually-impaired and print-impaired readers. It also has the function of researching and developing production methods and technology and acquiring, manufacturing and disseminating equipment for reading and replaying material.

Blindlib via Public libraries and other institutions

Blindlib has a network of ‘Mini-libraries’ which house limited collections of audio and Braille books in public libraries, schools and old-age homes throughout the country based on a rotating number

(200) of titles. Some also include a small number of commercially produced audio titles in their offerings. Digital workstations in community libraries is the next step. The NCLIS (National Council of Library and Information Services) is currently drawing up a Charter for Library Transformation in which specific provision is being made for the services of Blindlib in co-operation with public libraries. Ongoing inclusive national forums have been developed to promote “A Culture of Reading”.

Specialist libraries direct

Blindlib provides audio cassettes, DAISY format CDs (shortly) and Braille. Also material sourced from other libraries for the blind and Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic (RFB&D) on Inter Library Loan. Its service is free to the user.

Charities, voluntary organisations or non-governmental organizations

Tape Aids for the Blind provides only audio cassettes.

Educational provision

Schools

This is a serious problem at the moment throughout South Africa. Blindlib’s Act does not make provision for Blindlib to provide textbooks, and presently Blindlib do not have the capacity to do so. However with the future advent of inclusive education Blindlib are looking at this very seriously. Some schools have the equipment to produce what the pupils need, but many do not and Blind SA (Braille Services) which prints text books is stretched to capacity. In spite of the universal education requirement, most blind children do not attend school and get no support with materials or specialist teachers.

The Pioneer Press serves the needs of the Pioneer School for the Blind's library, offering Braille and audio titles, but it is important to realise that this provision reaches only the very small minority of children who attend the school.

Tertiary education

Blind SA is an important organisation in this context as well, providing most of the accessible materials (mainly Braille), to the tertiary sector. They also serve individuals whether for professional or leisure needs. They are the only organisation producing Braille materials in all eleven official languages. Material is produced to order only.

Academic tertiary institutions are increasingly providing material in alternative formats through the Disability Units they have established.

Governmental responsibility

The Department of Arts and Culture is the national department in charge of libraries

The provision of library services in South Africa is complex – National Libraries fall under the jurisdiction of national government's Department of Arts and Culture, but provincial and local library services fall under provincial and local government.

Overlaps – are they a problem?

The organisations do have clear roles and responsibilities but there is duplication of material and they often service the same clients.

They have a clear idea of their core business but do overlap.

Regarding the provision of audio books, the SA Library for the Blind and Tape Aids offer very similar services to similar consumers and

stock the same titles. They thus appear to duplicate one another and may compete for funding.

Co-operation between Blindlib and other services at this stage is minimal but this could very likely improve. There is closer co-operation between Blindlib and the South African National Council for the Blind, than between Blindlib and other organizations. Different organizations serve the visually impaired person in different ways. International co-operation is starting to play an important role in terms of benchmarking not only Library and Information standards, but also in terms of IT skills and the use of production tools.

Blindlib will continue to expand and improve its services to its constituency.

Are the models in flux?

Strategy for Blindlib to provide more services via public libraries

Inclusive education

Strategy to improve public library provision

What is driving change?

Technology

Blindlib is moving services to a digital platform with the intention of moving to Audio Daisy and creating an online catalogue. Tape Aids for the Blind is continuing to focus on cassettes.

In common with other countries, technology is making some kinds of information more accessible, but the overall income level of many visually impaired people in South Africa and the continuing wide inequalities inherited from the past must make it especially

important to avoid disadvantaging those clients who lack access to digital equipment. While there is the possibility of leaping over technological stages in equipping new libraries for example, there will surely be more persistent legacy issues with say, audio cassettes being phased out than in some countries.

Blindlib has very recently been granted R5m by the government, for which it had been campaigning for 3 years, to provide Daisy players for poor clients.

Policy frameworks

Inclusive education

“A culture of reading” initiative

As referred to earlier, there was a policy initiative to create a culture of reading in South Africa, which covers illiteracy, the provision of public libraries, the paucity of titles published in South Africa (and the fact that 80% are textbooks) and the provision of alternative format materials for visually impaired and print-disabled readers. The campaign started in 2001 within the ministry of education, and results were evidently mixed. Views have been expressed publicly by some campaigners that the initiative needs to be broader than from the education ministry.

Policy is changing because the rights of the disabled are a major political issue which the government is taking very seriously. Change is essential, which is easy to align with, but, all change requires capital expenditure and skilled human resourcing – this is what is not being addressed in South Africa.

Service expansion

In Blindlib’s case realisation for the necessity of expanding its formats to include Large Print and tactile materials. Also that Braille literacy needs greater focus.

Measuring success

Blindlib sets their own targets – which consider aspects such as capacity, skills, technology and ongoing operation as a ‘Going Concern’

Targets are changed annually.

Mostly the response to Blindlib’s service is extremely good – in most cases it is considered a ‘life-line’.

Success is measured by:

- The proportion of Visually Impaired People reached by services

- Cost to public or charitable funds

- Range and depth of material available

- Speed of supplying item – to some extent

- What users think of the service

Participation by visually impaired people

Blindlib is employing a growing number of visually impaired people.

Funding sources and adequacy

Blindlib

Total funding for Blindlib is approximately SAR 9.5m, amounting to R13.00 per capita per annum.

Government investment into building a culture of reading for blind and print impaired South Africans currently stands at R13.00 per capita per annum (at an exchange rate ratio of SAR11/GBP1).

Funding income is pretty static – changes in tax legislation have made fund-raising much more difficult.

Funding comes from the National Department of Arts and Culture (SAR 7.5m) and fund-raising activities (SAR 2m).

There is no regular funding from provincial or municipal government, only the occasional grants-in-aid.

Project funding has been received from international organisations to carry out specialised training activities or best practice transfer of skills.

The provision of a free national library and information service (Blindlib) is partially subsidized by the National Department of Arts and Culture. Other services are provided by different institutions from different budgets. At present there is no direct national funding channel linked to provincial and local library services, which undermines many projects that could be developed between these tiers. This also places local and provincial libraries at a distinct disadvantage in terms of receiving adequate funding due to each provinces' particular initiatives. The need for the Department of Education to come on board is taking root very strongly.

Adequacy

Funding is quite inadequate. There is particularly no funding available for changing technology, or, for visually impaired people to have access to affordable adaptable equipment.

On an ongoing basis, Blindlib estimates that it would probably need to realise more than double its funding on an annual basis just to maintain and upgrade their service to international benchmarks, but in the South African context.

Considering that at present Blindlib only addresses the needs of approximately 1% of all South Africans with a visual disability with a current government investment of R13.00 per capita per annum, this would need to increase enormously to be able to provide a relevant library and information service to all people with a visual disability.

Policies and initiatives

Gaps between policy and practice

There are significant gaps between policy on services for Visually Impaired People and actual support and services they receive. This is because of a lack of capacity for service delivery due to inadequate funding, lack of skilled staff, people's ignorance of their rights, the scattered population and service points in far-flung rural areas.

Overall availability of material in alternative formats

No information on this is available, though information in the scenarios section indicates low availability of particular types of material, especially newspapers, magazines and school textbooks.

Materials provision

Braille

Original materials supplied: Print copies are bought and sometimes donated, e-text is converted to Braille

Conversion: By the Blindlib Braille Production Unit

On-demand: When requested, otherwise as part of Blindlib's normal routine in terms of targets.

Stock: Through a Book Selection policy taking into consideration the suitability of the text for conversion into Braille

Targets for range, depth and speed: Range and depth

Audio – standard cassette and CD

Original materials supplied: By purchase or donation of the print copy. E-text by Synthetic Voice is being actively investigated.

Conversion: The BlindLib audio production dept

On-demand: When urgently required, Less often in audio than in Braille

Stock: Through a Book Selection Policy.

Targets for range, depth and speed: Range and depth

Audio Daisy

Original materials supplied: Blindlib is currently converting its analogue collection to a digital collection and recording texts digitally by narrators

Conversion: Audio Production Units

On-demand: Not yet

Stock: Through a Book Selection Policy.

Targets for range, depth and speed: Range and depth

Supplied in alternative formats

how supplied: purchase from other production units

who supplies: Commercial producers or production units of other libraries for the blind who may sell.

Basis for decision to acquire: Through a Book Selection Policy.

Targets for range, depth and speed: Range and depth

Preferred situation

Description

A system that would deliver the goods in all aspects of need provision to the visually and print-impaired, particularly in the rural areas: Realistic funding to the Blindlib as the only library for the blind in the country so as to fulfill its mandate, including provision of playback equipment.

Free computer hardware and Internet access for all visually impaired people in the schools and in their homes and in community centres in rural areas. Sufficient public libraries with equal facilities, including adaptive technology, for visually impaired S. Functioning schools with skilled and qualified staff and well equipped production units. Country-wide Braille literacy units.

Funding

From government by means of extra taxes raised, a % of VAT, abolition or redistribution of VAT on all books

Who would deliver

Blindlib, public and specialist libraries

How would organisations work together

Blindlib would provide alternate format material, including digital delivery to public and education libraries. Public libraries would provide generous space, specialist staff and specialised equipment for digital download of books onto CD or as hardcopy Braille documents. Shelving space for an adequate collection of block loans of audio cassettes, CDs and Braille books. Education libraries would provide all schools with well-equipped school libraries and qualified school librarians as per public libraries above.

How the services would be delivered

By postal service or e-delivery from Blindlib to public and education (school) libraries; direct to the public in the public libraries and through the school library system.

Ideal level of service

The reality of the right book for the right person at the right time, a basic tenet for a literate nation. Full and equal access to information provided by a committed government by full funding to all organisations described above to provide the best level of service that money can buy.

The view from the user's perspective

These scenarios are designed to illustrate how a user would approach obtaining different materials.

Work of fiction

The user will call or e-mail libraries to enquire whether the title is available. No online catalogues are available yet. If the title is available, it is usually posted the next day and will reach the client within about 2 weeks. A user can also buy audio books and download from websites if they can afford the technology.

New work of fiction

The user will enquire from Blindlib if it is available and if it is not in Blindlib's collection Blindlib will try and obtain it on ILL for immediate reading. Will also consider adding to Blindlib's collection but then won't be 'new' any longer. Blindlib have often been able to make a new title available in audio before many public libraries have it on their shelves.

Reference work

If the user is a student, they can get it through their Disability Units or a student or other user can obtain it from Blindlib on ILL.

Newspaper

Newspapers are rarely available in audio or Braille but very easily as online newspapers. This means only those who can afford technology have access to a variety of newspapers.

Magazine

From Blindlib if it is on the purchasing list. From Pioneer Printers in Worcester and from Tape Aids for the Blind.

New magazines can be requested, but will only be published in Braille or Audio if the request is big enough and the organization's budget allows.

School textbook

This is a serious problem at the moment throughout South Africa. Blindlib's Act does not make provision for Blindlib to provide these, and presently Blindlib do not have the capacity to do so. However with the future advent of inclusive education Blindlib are looking at this very seriously. Some schools have the equipment to produce what the pupils need, but many do not and Blind S.A. (Braille Services) which prints text books is stretched to capacity.

Children's book

From Blindlib

Scientific journal

From their Disability Units or from Blindlib on ILL

Academic book

From their Disability Units or from Blindlib on ILL

Stellenbosch University gave us the following scenario from a student viewpoint:

Libraries are willing to read or Braille new works. In some cases, they may ask the client to forward the print copy. This is a lengthier process and may take up to 3 months to complete, although libraries do try to accommodate students by prioritizing their requests. Books can also be delivered to the client "piece by piece" as they are completed, enabling the student to get started as soon as possible.

Barriers

Blindlib

Funding because we cannot employ the levels and number of skilled staff needed to produce what we would like to, which in fact we should be producing

Copyright which is onerous and time consuming at present is detrimental to fast delivery of materials, but is being addressed

Stellenbosch University

Funding levels is the most important barrier. Copyright also impacts on availability of materials, since much effort needs to be duplicated in transcription into alternative formats, as work already done in the US cannot simply be imported electronically and reproduced in SA.

Barrier most wished to remove

Blindlib

Funding

Generous financial support from government as this would allow us to be adequately staffed, equipped and housed (we are running out of space).

Sufficient financial support for the employment of enough skilled staff to deliver the service and production our clients are entitled to plus the equipment needed for the envisaged output.

Copyright

Currently copyright is obtained on an individual basis for each and every Braille and Audio book to be produced from the original print-copy. Workshops on the Cost of Reading have been held during the last two years and recently a conference was held, initiated by government to look at all aspects of copyright, including right of access to the visually impaired person and Print-impaired with a view to changing the existing Copyright Act which is seen as outdated and inadequate.

Exemptions/exceptions

Blindlib has been negotiating, and still is, with PASA (Publishing Association of South Africa), for exemptions from application. A legal document has been drawn up for the transfer of publishers' files and was accepted in principle, at the recent PASA AGM. Other exemptions such as 'blanket copyright' and rights to circulate books to visually impaired people S.A. citizens abroad, ILL, numbers of copies, etc. are presently being considered and discussed. Blindlib is seen as a trusted environment by PASA.

At a recent policy review meeting with government the following recommendation was tabled:

“The South African Library for the Blind republishes material in alternative formats for the exclusive use of its constituency membership (i.e. people who have disabilities which impair their ability to read in the usual way). Naturally the republication of material which is subject to copyright limitations must be carried out with due regard to such limitations and in such a way as to ensure that the library does not exceed the bounds of the law. A number of important points refer:

“The operation of intellectual property law in South Africa which seeks to restrict the republication of published material in alternative formats may be unconstitutional as it applies to disabled persons on a number of grounds relating to discrimination. This law effectively substantially hampers access to published literature by disabled people on the grounds that processing an original sighted text to make it accessible (for which copyright royalties have been paid or permission obtained) in such a way as involves reprinting or creation of an audio copy amounts to a use of such copyrighted material for which there is a requirement that further and additional permission must be obtained.

“The requirement that permission must be obtained to convert every text to Braille or audio amounts to an onerous burden on the South African Library for the Blind and the wastage of resources and time lags which disadvantage disabled persons who are members of the library.

“Further support for the position that obtaining copyright permission should not be necessary for republication in alternative formats is the fact that the formats in which materials are republished (namely braille and Daisy audio) are not readily accessible by the general public as the average member of the public does not have the skills or equipment to access these mediums/formats. In addition the South African Library for the Blind limits its distribution of literature to its membership which must meet certain criterion relating to the presence and extent of disability. The risk of republished material falling into the hands of the general public and being used in any useful way is extremely negligible.

“In the light of the above, and for the sake of clarity, it is suggested that a provision be included in the Blindlib Act specifically exempting the South African Library for the Blind from having to obtain copyright permission for the republication of texts in alternative formats for the use of disabled persons who are bona fide members of the library.”

Special projects

Blindlib has listed the following projects:

Daisy Pilot Project

Project Minilib: Roll out of services to rural areas – introduction of Daisy – as a better way to read!

UBC Implementation

Daisy Players for Africa

A2D (Analogue to Digital conversion)

Centre for Literacy in Braille

Juvenile and Young Adult Collection

Students on Board

Publishers' involvement

Not yet but electronic transfer is in the pipeline.

Sweden

Basic country data

Population 9.041m (2005).

Over 65s as % of total population: 2005 17.2%; 2020 20.0% (projected).

GNI per capita (international dollars converted at purchasing power parities) 2005: \$31,420

Government: Unitary

Estimated number of visually impaired people: 80-90,000

Estimated number of print-impaired people (including those with vision loss): 400,000

Note on information sources

Most of the information here has come from the Swedish Library of Talking Books and Braille (TPB). Other organisations contacted replied that TPB was in the best position to give a national picture. Desk research supplemented the information.

Definitions and their effects

Visually impaired people are defined as having a visual impairment that makes them unable to read printed text, including the blind. Print impaired people are defined as being unable to read printed text (ink-print) due to an impairment. Sweden does not have the concept “legally blind”.

The estimation is 1 per cent of the total population and has so far proved to be right. The definitions are inclusive enough.

According to the 2005 Copyright Act, all people who due to a disability cannot access a literary, musical or artistic work have the right to receive it in accessible format, be it audio, Braille, large print or an electronic format.

You can borrow talking books from your local library. No medical certificate is required. In addition to the stock at the local library you may borrow any talking book from the county library, and from TPB through the interlibrary service system.

Library and user group data

Visually impaired people: 1 per cent of the population as a whole, 80,000 Print-impaired, inc visually impaired people 4%, 400,000.

Public libraries

According to the Swedish Library law every municipality has to have a public library. Public libraries in the municipalities are run by local authorities and funded with local taxes. The county libraries give advice, co-ordinate interlibrary loans and library development. They are funded by the county council as well as the through government grants.

There is a trend that small units are closed or rather merged with the central library. Many municipalities are building or have built in recent years new main libraries. They are distributed across all parts of Sweden, though there is a trend to concentrate library services in urban areas as people leave the countryside for more densely populated areas. In an international perspective they are well funded but Swedes consider them sometimes under-funded. Funding depends on the political majority in the municipalities as well as the demographic state of the region. The lending of ink-print books has been decreasing but talking book lending has increased. Usage of the reference services has increased as well as the use of databases and internet. Public libraries are well used.

The library law of 1997 was amended in 2005 to stipulate that libraries and local authorities responsible for them should cooperate and that municipalities and county councils should adopt plans for the activities of their libraries. Though this seems obvious, the omission of this wording in the original act was seen to make it rather toothless by the Swedish Library Association, which focused a great deal on the issue of library plans. They argued that these should be based on Unesco's Public Library Manifesto and School Library Manifesto. The Association defined a plan as "a management document which is guaranteed political support and which comprises an analysis of the collective library needs in a municipality and measures for the fulfilment of those needs."

Models and responsibilities

The Swedish model of talking books service consists of three levels:

1. The State via TPB is responsible for production, information and bibliographic services.
2. County libraries are responsible for collection building, information, and training and deposit collections within their county.
3. Local public libraries are responsible for lending to print impaired clients.

A library does not necessarily have to have their own collections of talking books. Today all county libraries can download DAISY talking books from TPB's server via TPB's OPAC. In order to do that the library has to get a permission from the Government. So far all county libraries has this right and a number of public and academic libraries. At this date 260 permissions have been issued.

TPB

TPB (The Swedish Library of Talking Books and Braille) is a Government authority that, in collaboration with local libraries, provides people who have print disabilities with access to printed materials.

TPB's mission is to produce and lend talking books and books in braille. TPB also provides advice and information on matters concerning talking books and braille.

In Sweden, the first DAISY talking books (on cd-rom) were transferred to DAISY from analogue tape in 1996. TPB has produced in the DAISY format since 2001.

TPB is the national centre for the inter-library lending of talking books and maintains a stock of 36 600 DAISY talking book titles and 46 000 analogue talking book titles (May 2006); acquiring approximately 3 000 books annually. TPB's stock contains books in fifty different languages.

Service provision – general

People living in Sweden with print disabilities have the right to borrow DAISY-books from their local library. The library orders complementary titles from TPB. Talking books are located in the web-based catalogue TPB-katalogen. Swedish citizens abroad may also contact TPB to borrow books.

TPB is the national agency responsible for the administration of talking book loans to libraries. All Swedish public libraries and school libraries may borrow talking books directly from TPB. The normal lending time is two months.

Talking books are exempt from postage when sent to and from libraries. Most borrowers prefer to visit the local library to borrow their books. People unable to go to the local library themselves may have their talking books sent to their home free of charge.

In Sweden the lending of talking books is an integral part of the public library system. Talking books can be borrowed at the local library or school library.

Local libraries have their own stocks of talking books and county libraries have a comparatively large talking book selection.

The total distribution of talking books both analogue and digital in 2006 was 144 129 (or 154 952 units). In 2005 TPB started a national digital distribution service to those libraries who had received special permission from the Government to download DAISY files. In 2006, 25 677 talking books were downloaded (in addition to the 144 129). The total lending figure for 2005 was approximately 1.8m loans (Swedish library statistics are always a year behind).

Relationship of services to visually impaired and print impaired people

Service is the same for everyone, whether print or visually-impaired, when it comes to talking books and large print. These services are included in the public library system. Braille readers borrow direct from TPB but it is also possible to interlend Braille books through any local public library.

According to the amended Swedish Copyright law (July 1, 2005) there is no distinction between different groups of disabled persons. The law just says that persons with impairment who need literature in an alternate format are entitled to this service.

Service provision – education

Schools

Most children and adolescents with disabilities attend mainstream schools, although there are special types of schooling for pupils

who are deaf or hearing-impaired, or who have severe mobility or learning disabilities. The Education Act states that children in need of special assistance at school are to be provided with it. Also, the law says, there must be equality in education for all children, wherever they may live in Sweden and regardless of any disabilities they may have.

Interestingly, the proportion of people with an upper-secondary education is slightly larger among those with disabilities than among those without. The reverse is true, however, in higher education, although an increasing number of students with disabilities are now finding their way into the country's universities and colleges.

The Swedish Institute for Special Needs Education (**Specialpedagogiska institutet**) coordinates state support in this educational field. Its primary task is to advise the bodies responsible for the country's pre-schools and schools. The Institute also develops special-needs educational materials.

The municipalities must provide children, adolescents and adults with various disabilities with an education equal to the education received by others in the community. This objective can only be attained if there is sufficient knowledge about the pedagogical consequences of disability, expertise in special needs education, and suitable educational materials. The municipalities need to build up and continuously develop this expertise. Therefore, the Government, through the Swedish Institute for Special Needs Education, provides support to the municipalities, and assists in producing and adapting educational materials. An important part of its work is to adapt and develop educational materials for special needs education.

The production of educational materials comprises both the adaptation of published material as well as the development and production of original material. The Swedish Institute for Special Needs Education funds the production of educational materials for children and adolescents with disabilities. Another of the Institute's tasks is to provide target groups with information about suitable educational materials from commercial producers.

Commercial publishers' products are adapted to give students with different forms of reading disabilities the opportunity to make use of the materials.

Tertiary sector

Students' service from TPB

Students with a print disability at university level can borrow course literature in alternative formats. Loans are administered by the university library and are free of charge.

TPB caters for those experiencing reading difficulties (dyslexia, impaired sight or mobility) studying at Swedish universities. The library provides course literature in alternative formats, such as talking book, e-text, braille or enlarged text. TPB also adapts course literature in foreign languages and can organise international inter-library loans. Such loans are administered by the university library and are free of charge.

A local co-ordinator working with educational support for students with disabilities exists at all universities. The co-ordinator also assists those using TPBs student services. Course materials are available in various formats such as Braille, e-book, DAISY talking book, large print.

In order to meet the demand from an increasing number of print disabled university students TPB have started to make DAISY books narrated with speech synthesizer. 25 percent of these books are in English. TPB had to develop a new Swedish speech synthesizer for this purpose as the existing ones do not have the vocabulary necessary for academic books.

Relationship of the services to visually impaired and print impaired people

No difference.

Governmental responsibility

The Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs

County and local government

Overlaps – are they a problem?

There are no problems of overlap or duplication as roles and responsibilities are defined by law. There are “Talking book plans” for each county.

Are the models in flux?

Not formally, but technology is changing roles.

What is driving change?

Digital services are being introduced. Downloading will supersede postal services. Digitisation and direct download diminishes the role of TPB’s librarians as lenders who instead become providers of information and support. Digital services will develop. i.e. will it be possible for users to download “streaming DAISY” direct without intermediation.

Measuring success

Targets are set by each library board. The targets of TPB are set by National Government, i.e. TPB has to produce 25 per cent of the annual book production in Swedish as talking books

TPB's goal is to deliver the book within 24 hours. Targets reviewed once a year.

TPB reaches its goals each year.

TPB doesn't count visually impaired people as a separate group but all disabled persons in need of special library services. The 4 per cent rule is used. So by looking at lending figures and the number of users you can see how many of the user group is actually using your services and how many books the users have borrowed.

Participation by visually impaired people

There are local and county based councils of disabled persons all over Sweden. The Board of the TPB has a members' representative from the Swedish Association of Visually Impaired.

Disabled people's voluntary organisations have an important part to play in Swedish disability policy. The movement has been influencing policy direction in this particular sphere for over 50 years, and its cooperation with Swedish policymakers at all levels is well established.

Most of these organisations belong to the Swedish Disability Federation (**Handikappförbundens samarbetsorgan**, HSO), an umbrella body that seeks to influence official policy in the disability sphere.

The organisations provide crucial input by reporting on the positions and circumstances of people with disabilities. They also

help shape public opinion by presenting their members' demands and proposing improvements. Around fifty disabled people's organisations receive state funding to help them pursue their activities. The Government has established a disability commission to serve as a forum for discussions and exchanges of information between the state and the disabled people's organisations

Funding sources and adequacy

Funding comes entirely from the government (national and local).

The Swedish Government i.e. the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs

State or provincial government to the county libraries

Local or municipal government to the public libraries in each local community

Total funding is not known. TPB's own budget has increased.

TPB budget

Government grants approximately SKr110m (2006).

Funding is considered by TPB to be adequate.

Policies and initiatives

Disability policy focus has shifted from a health/social care perspective to a democracy/human rights perspective. A national action plan on disability policy, 'From Patient to Citizen', adopted in 2000, has shifted the emphasis in Swedish policies targeting disabled people. Swedish disability policy has been given a clear-cut citizen's perspective. The policymakers have also shown a determination to introduce broad-based solutions in the quest for a

society that is accessible from as many aspects as possible and to as many citizens as possible. This is seen as a way of avoiding the need for special solutions for certain groups, an approach that tends to be costly.

Swedish disability policy, therefore, is now concentrating on:

- identifying and removing obstacles to full participation and full equality in society

- preventing and fighting discrimination

- promoting equality between disabled girls and boys, women and men.

The disability perspective is to become a natural part of all policymaking and all public activities. Government agencies have begun to make their premises, activities and information generally accessible. Public officials are to be trained in disability issues so that disabled people are not prevented from exercising their rights as citizens as a result of ignorance or degrading treatment or both.

General social welfare in Sweden extends to all citizens, but in addition special programmes have addressed the needs of people with disabilities. One of the most important reforms concerning supplementary support and related measures was introduced in the 1990s. An important feature of this wide-ranging reform programme was that it gave disabled people the right to personal assistance. For people with extensive disabilities, this represented something of a revolution. The assistance they received opened up opportunities that had not previously been available to them, such as deciding matters in their own everyday lives and managing their studies, a job and a home.

In 1993, the UN introduced the document “The Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities”. Ever since, these have been a cornerstone of Swedish disability policy. In 1994, a Disability Ombudsman was appointed to supervise compliance with the rules.

When in 2000 the Riksdag adopted the national action plan for disability policy, Sweden moved a step closer to a universally accessible society. The plan extends to 2010.

The Swedish Government is also taking part in the UN's efforts to develop a convention that strengthens respect for the human rights of people with disabilities. Unlike standard rules, conventions are legally binding.

A completely new agency for disability policy coordination called **Handisam** is to be set up in 2006. Its task will be to direct and speed up the work of making Sweden accessible in accordance with the guidelines laid down in the national action plan for disability policy. Some of the duties of other government agencies will be transferred to the new agency in order to make work in this area as efficient as possible

Gaps between policy and practice

Gaps do exist, but not significant ones. The Swedish Model of Talking books service is supposed to prevent gaps. There is a goodwill as well as legislation to fill the gaps but reallocation of resources is needed in order to prioritise these matters. Marketing is needed which makes local politicians aware of their responsibilities.

Rights and attitudes

The Swedish library service for print impaired people is supported by the following legislation: The Swedish Constitution, Copyright Law, Library Law, The Swedish Assistance Benefit Act and Postal regulations.

The Swedish Constitution

The Swedish Constitution (section 2) states that all citizens are guaranteed freedom of information and freedom of speech. This

implies that print handicapped citizens have the right to written information through whichever medium they can access.

Library Law

Swedish Library Law is a framework law, stipulating that every municipality shall provide library services for its citizens. Article 8 states that public libraries and school libraries shall pay special attention to disabled persons and their need for literature.

The Swedish Assistance Benefit Act

The Act concerning Support and Service for Persons with Certain Functional Impairments states that each municipality must take measures to provide persons with certain functional impairments with necessary daily services and information.

Postal regulations

According to Section 2 of the Swedish Postal Regulations, Sweden has agreed to follow the regulations laid down by the Universal Postal Union stating that braille books and talking books are delivered free of postage to and from libraries for the blind and their borrowers.

Rights are enshrined in law; Sweden has a Roman law foundation so case law does not apply. A distinctive feature of Swedish legislation is its emphasis on framework laws. These establish the direction and objectives of government policy. Those responsible for the activity concerned, municipalities or county councils, then have considerable freedom in interpreting the objectives and shaping their activities themselves.

Sweden has three laws prohibiting discrimination, one of the grounds cited being disability. The first, the Prohibition of Discrimination in Working Life of People with Disability Act, was

adopted in 1999. This was followed in 2002 by the Act on Equal Treatment of Students at Universities and in 2003 by the Prohibition of Discrimination Act, which applies among other things to trading in goods and services.

Sweden does not have a law specifically establishing the rights of all people with disabilities. Instead, certain laws contain clauses that apply specifically to disabled people, including the Planning and Building Act and the Social Services Act.

Also, the Act concerning Support and Service for Persons with Certain Functional Impairments (LSS) was introduced in 1994. This is a rights law supplementing other legislation. Its aim is to give people with extensive disabilities greater opportunities for leading an independent life and to assure them of equal living conditions and full participation in community life. Support may take the form of personal assistance in everyday life, counselling, housing with special services, or relief provision for the parents of children with disabilities.

As its name shows, the law applies only to certain groups of disabled. People not covered by the law can seek assistance from their municipal authority under the Social Services Act.

General – buildings and culture

According to the Government's plan for equal access there will be equal access to buildings by the year 2010. Since 1980 Sweden has had a cultural policy for all.

Education

Full rights in comprehensive schools, except for dyslexics. But for university/college students there is a law giving them general rights as well as free text books in alternate formats.

The Equal Treatment of Students in Universities Act

The Equal Treatment of Students in Universities Act – came into force in Sweden in the spring of 2002. This law states that no student at a university or other higher education institution must be discriminated against or otherwise differently treated on grounds of origins, sex, sexual orientation, or disability. This covers all levels of the studies: admission, study environment, teaching, and examination. The law enjoins all universities annually to draw up plans of action covering measures necessary to encourage and strengthen the students' equal rights regardless of ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, and disability.

Specific Rights to library services

8th section of the Swedish library law, as referred to above.

Materials provision

Production of talking books

TPB produces more than 3 000 talking books each year for its lending library and student services. Most books take 6-8 months to produce. Libraries may buy individual titles of all TPB-production. Talking books can only be produced by organisations granted permission by the Swedish Government.

From 2001 all digital production has been in the DAISY format.

Book selection meeting

At the weekly book selection meeting, librarians at TPB select all books to be produced as talking books or braille. Books requested by readers have priority. The book selection meeting also decides

which titles to buy from other producers, as well as commercial audio books. TPB acquires approximately 1000 titles from other producers, including audio books in foreign languages. The TPB stock includes books in almost fifty different languages. TPB may commission a book in a foreign language if it has not already been produced abroad.

The majority of books selected at the meeting are adult literature. 18 per cent are for children and young adults' books, and 16 per cent books in foreign languages. More than 50 per cent of those selected are non-fiction. Guidelines for book selection are established by the Library Board.

Technical producers

TPB has no in-house production but outsources the entire talking book production to professional studios. TPB controls how the book is to be recorded via guidelines regarding narration and structure.

All narrators are certified by TPB and the book is recorded in mono.

TPB usually produces two copies of a title. In general the production process, from book selection to completed talking book ready for loan, takes approximately six months.

Purchasing TPB production

Public libraries and school libraries may buy copies of talking books produced by TPB. That includes both recent books and books from stock. BTJ, the Swedish Library Service Ltd, is the contracted dealer.

Braille

Original materials supplied: The literature can either be produced on-demand or selected by librarians in charge of selection.

Conversion: TPB outsources the Braille production, however files from publishers are converted into Word files by TPB before send to printing house. A new production system is under development where files will be in DT format (archive format), later converted into Word.

On-demand: About 60 percent is done on demand

Stock: Decision for each title is made by the selection team consisting of professional librarians.

Targets for range/depth/speed: 50% percent adult literature, 50 per cent children's' and young adults literature. Possibilities to receive books on demand (only economical restrictions). Equal division between fiction and non-fiction. Three levels of speed: 1. Books on demand, 1 months maximum; 2. Books that are of current interest, up to 3 months; 3. Other books selected by librarians up to 6 months.

Audio – standard cassette and CD

Original materials supplied: ----.

Conversion: No longer produced

On-demand: ----.

Stock: ----.

Targets for range/depth/speed: ----.

Audio Daisy

Original materials supplied: Decision of what to produce is done by a selection committee consisting of professional librarians.

Conversion: The book is narrated by a professional narrator. If DAISY 3.0 is used the text is added.

On-demand: Parts of the acquisition is on-demand.

Stock: ----.

Targets for range/depth/speed: According to government decision (part of Cultural policy) 25 per cent of the annual Swedish books production has to be made as talking books. That means approximately 3250 titles per year. The production is outsourced. Books on demand are prioritised. Production time varies from 1 to 6 month.

Daisy text and audio

Original materials supplied: A trial production has just started. 25 % of the annual acquisition will be made as DAISY 3.0.

Conversion: The book is narrated by a professional narrator. If DAISY 3.0 is used the text is added.

On-demand: Part of the acquisition is on-demand.

Stock: ----.

Targets for range/depth/speed: According to government decision (part of Cultural policy) 25 per cent of the annual Swedish books production has to be made as talking books. That means approximately 3250 titles per year. The production is outsourced. Books on demand are prioritised. Production time varies from 1 to 6 month.

Supplied in alternative formats

how supplied: It is only the public libraries that provide a service of large print books. TPB has only DAISY books in its collection and some older c-cassettes

who supplies: a) Talking books. The public library can either download a DAISY book from TPB or the County library, buy talking

books in library equipped boxes; make a interlibrary loan from either the county library or TPB. b) Large print books can be bought from a library supplier. c) CD books can be bought from library suppliers or book shops. d) Books on cassettes for sale are not available anymore except as interlibrary loans from TPB or county libraries.

Basis for decision to acquire: Several ways: Either by the selection committee of each library, on-demand, or by librarian responsible for selection of alternate formats.

Targets for range/depth/speed: This is the business of public libraries and they probably want to have the books as soon as possible to the best price

Preferred situation

Description

The ideal would be that the publishing industry not the tax payers took their responsibility for all their readers.

Who would deliver

If the publishers made all their publications accessible there would be several arenas for access to alternate material, both bookshops, internet shops and libraries.

How would organisations work together

The same as already happens in the Swedish model of library service to the disabled.

How the services would be delivered

Either by downloading in computer or streaming Daisy via mobile telephone, but hopefully library visits and postal services would still exist.

Ideal level of service

All printed material should be accessible, which would be possible if the material was made in XML.

The view from the user's perspective

A new visually impaired person would get the first information about the library services they are entitled to from health services or social services or perhaps from a friend or member of his/her family. The visually impaired person or someone close to him/her would then contact the library. The library would then offer either outreach service, postal service or welcome the new user to the library. The visually impaired person would receive a special Talking book lending card (due to copyright restrictions). He/she would also be able to borrow a DAISY player. The librarian would recommend him/her to get a player of his/her own from the health services.

If the visually impaired person's sight is still so good that he/she can read large print, large print books will be recommended. The librarian would probably show the shelves containing large print books.

There is also a possibility to get help from the local social services for guiding services and would help the visually impaired person to go to the local library.

Public libraries still have analogue collections but today the lending of DAISY 2.02 is the largest part of the existing talking book stock in Sweden. In 2007 DAISY 3.0 books will be offered the clients, but they will be of more use to dyslexics than to visually impaired people.

Work of fiction

When the visually impaired person needs a work of fiction, he/she will either get the information from the librarian in charge who will look in the OPAC. It is also possible to obtain the information directly from TPB's OPAC via the website at <http://www.tpb.se>.

New work of fiction

When it comes to new fiction he/she would have to wait for until the book is narrated, which can take up to 1 year.

Newspapers

For newspapers in alternate format the visually impaired person does not go to the library but contact the Swedish Council of Talking News papers in order to subscribe for the Newspaper he/she wants. He will then also receive a special playback machine or receiving equipment.

Magazines

It is the responsibility of each magazine to make a version in alternate format. Sometimes libraries have copies in their stocks. Otherwise you subscribe directly from the magazine.

Children's book

The same (as new fiction) goes for children's books but there you also have the possibility to obtain tactile picture books containing both braille and large print text.

Journal article

Articles in scientific journals can be obtained via an academic library which has a subscription to a digital version. Sometimes they are in PDF and the librarian would then convert the PDF file into a text version.

Academic books

You can also borrow academic books via TPB's OPAC. This can be done in any library as an interlibrary loan.

Overall availability of material in alternative formats

Books

Approximately 10 per cent of the ink-print books are also made as audio books or e-text books.

Newspapers

75% (96 newspapers)

Magazines

50%

Educational materials

These are produced on-demand so it is impossible to say.

Government/official publications

Government material can be accessed via the Government's website. Local government has to make all their material accessible. The local library is the disseminator of such material.

Type of output most desired to increase

All digital material should be based on XML, including websites. Also text books for university students. Our biggest problem is all the text books in English which TPB due to copyright restrictions can't borrow or buy from other libraries but have to produce ourselves.

Barriers

Copyright restrictions that are national and don't allow exchange between libraries for the blind and print disabled around the globe.

Copyright

Swedish Copyright Law permits libraries and organisations officially authorized by the government, to produce published books as phonograms for lending to print impaired people. This can be done without the permission of authors or publishers. Anyone is entitled to produce Braille copies of published books.

Section 17 in the Swedish Copyright Legislation, as amended in 2005, provides an exception which says that "anyone is entitled to

make such copies” (other than by means of sound recordings) of works which have been made public “that persons with a disability need in order to be able to enjoy the works” and that the copies “may also be distributed to those persons.” Sound recordings may be made by libraries and “organisations as decided by the Government in specific cases.” These copies must not be for commercial purposes and the author has a right to remuneration if the disabled person is able to keep a copy of the work.

Special projects

In order to meet the demand for an increasing number of print disabled university students TPB have started to make DAISY books narrated with speech synthesizer. 25 percent of these books are in English. TPB also had to develop a new Swedish speech synthesizer for this purpose as the existing do not have the vocabulary necessary for academic books.

Publishers' involvement

Since 2002 about 50 per cent of Braille books acquired by TPB have been made from files which the publishers either give away for free or sale. The DAISY 3.0 books will also be produced from publishers' files.

UK

Basic country data

Population 59.668m (2005).

Over 65s as % of total population: 2005 16.0%; 2020 18.4% (projected).

GNI per capita (international dollars converted at purchasing power parities) 2005: \$32,690

Government: Unitary, with devolved powers to Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland (the latter suspended). Legislation, education and legal systems vary to some extent, especially in Scotland.

Number of visually impaired people: 370,000

Numbers who have difficulty reading standard print (including those with vision loss): 2-3m.

Note on information sources

The information in this section is based on responses from the National Library for the Blind (which has now merged with the RNIB); Share the Vision; the Calibre Audio library; the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS); representatives of the public library service and university libraries (SCONUL).

Definitions and their effects

People with defective vision can be registered as Blind or Partially Sighted under Section 29 of the National Assistance Act 1948.

To be registered they have to be examined by a consultant ophthalmologist who certifies their condition.

The definition takes into account both visual acuity and visual field using a Snellen test and field of vision test. Generally to be registered as severely sight impaired (blind), sight has to fall into one of the following categories:

Visual acuity of less than 3/60 with a full visual field.

Visual acuity between 3/60 and 6/60 with a severe reduction of field of vision, such as tunnel vision.

Visual acuity of 6/60 or above but with a very reduced field of vision, especially if a lot of sight is missing in the lower part of the field.

To be registered as sight impaired (partially sighted) sight has to fall into one of the following categories:

Visual acuity of 3/60 to 6/60 with a full field of vision.

Visual acuity of up to 6/24 with a moderate reduction of field of vision or with a central part of vision that is cloudy or blurry.

Visual acuity of up to 6/18 if a large part of your field of vision, for example a whole half of your vision, is missing, or a lot of peripheral vision is missing.

No respondent was aware of any formal/legal definitions of “print impairment” but in practice it is used as shorthand for “visually impaired and/or sensory impaired and/or dyslexic”. In some contexts, people with learning disabilities or physical disabilities are included.

Share the Vision, which co-ordinates services and initiated the RevealWeb service, which acts as a gateway to resources, believes that “Libraries in the public, academic and voluntary sectors have become increasingly more progressive and liberal in their interpretation of eligibility. Instead of sticking by tight rules and requiring documentary proof there is an increasing trend to address the needs of the user and to accept a self-certification approach on

the basis that they would not ask if they did not need [too many do not ask at all] and there is little abuse of a more liberal approach. We would like to think that STV has contributed to this attitudinal change but that is for others to judge.”

Our respondent from the public library service also took this view “In general, libraries would follow the lead of other organisations in recognising those registered as blind or partially sighted as defined in the National Assistance Act. In practice I believe many library authorities would relax this where a customer may not be registered but still has obvious needs for specialist materials.”

In higher education, it is not the library that judges eligibility:

“Assessment is normally undertaken by a specialist unit within a University/College e.g. Disability Support Unit and not the library. It is the specialist unit who then informs the library of possible service requirements that need to be considered. Noticeably the education section has seen a steep rise in notification of students with dyslexia in the past 3 years.”

Calibre Audio Library noted that different voluntary organizations serve different constituencies, with some catering only to people with vision loss and others serving anyone who has difficulty with conventional print. Calibre itself uses this definition:

“any physical disability that makes it impossible for the person to access N12 print”.

Respondents in the voluntary sector and in higher education, felt the official definitions are too restrictive, and this, plus the fact that many people don’t register leads to an underestimate of the numbers.

The responsible government ministry and the public library service felt the definitions were inclusive enough.

Two respondents also drew attention to the restrictions placed on library services by the limited copyright exception (see under Copyright below).

“I think our present arrangement in the UK is most unfair to those suffering from a cognitive complaint, such as dyslexia. They are also print disabled, but our recent Copyright (Visually Impaired Persons) Act, while making it easier for visually impaired people (and those providing reading services on their behalf) to access alternative reading formats, has made it much more difficult for dyslexics. This is particularly divisive in the school context.”

“It is also important to recognise that the charities which produce and lend alternative format materials have to avoid breaching the exceptions provided by The Copyright [Visually Impaired Persons] Act, 2002.”

Library and user group data

Prevalence of visual/print impairment

There was considerable comment on the reliability of the available statistics.

If all visually impaired people are assumed to be readers, then it can be said that there are 370,000 people registered as blind or partially sighted in the UK who are readers.

The Royal National Institute of the Blind estimates that there are some two million people in the UK unable to read standard print. As the population ages, this will increase to 2.5 million over the next 30 years.

The percentage of blind and partially sighted people who are members of a local library varies dramatically by local authority area. In some areas only 2% are members, whereas in others it is as high as 55%. This compares with 58% of the population for the whole of the UK. 31% of visually impaired people claim to be recent public library users.

Share the Vision gave the following explanation and example of two neighbouring localities to illustrate that the statistics are unreliable:

“The key factor is the role of the local Social Services Department in identifying need and acting upon it. The Department of Health which publishes the triennial statistics for England warns about the reliability of the data listing numerous factors which make “it difficult to assign a degree of reliability to either of these registers”. Consequently, because the system is voluntary the statistics understate the incidence of visual impairment as this table extracted from the 2003 (latest) returns graphically illustrates:

	Registered blind	Registered partially sighted	New cases (reg blind)	New cases (reg. partially sighted)	Population
North Tyneside	70	80	0	0	191,659
South Tyneside	520	535	55	85	152,875

“The point is that the local public library has more potential visually impaired customers than the official statistics indicate, and people with sight problems which are non-registrable can benefit considerably if appropriate adjustments are made to enhance accessibility for those who are.”

The respondent from the public library service concurred:

“I would definitely say that there is a discrepancy in the way which numbers of visually impaired people are reported. For whatever reason it is apparent that some Adult Services departments are very good at providing quality statistical returns, it is obvious that others are not.”

Public libraries

According to the LISU Statistics 2006, the 10 year change (to 2006) in the number of public libraries (including mobile libraries) is down by 6.3% in England and 8.7% in the UK as a whole. This decline is mostly accounted for by the closure of small service points which are open less than ten hours per week, with little change in the number of traditional branches. These closures have been accompanied by extended opening hours in larger libraries.

In terms of trends in funding and overall usage, views differed on whether the story for UK public libraries is positive or negative. Respondents from the government emphasised the increased accessibility of library services and the provision of new services such as Internet access.

“In recent years there has been a broadening range of services provided by libraries, through, outreach and community work. There has also been an increasing encouragement from the political centre to persuade local authorities to adopt an innovative and inclusive approach. The accessibility of library services is increasing, through improvements in virtual access to services. The People’s Network makes the Internet available in most cases for no charge. This benefits not just visually impaired people. Even where charges to use the People’s Network exist there may well be special arrangements for visually impaired people (no charges). There have been considerable improvements in remote access, for example to library catalogues and through use of services such as ‘Enquire’ which have the potential to bring services to people in their homes and have the potential to benefit visually impaired people.”

The public library respondent painted a mixed picture:

“The implementation and development of the Public Library Standards from the late 1990s has caused some reinvestment in the services and there has been a marked interest in their contribution since the change of government in 1997. More recently the inclusion of Library Service Standards as Comprehensive

Performance Indicators has focused many councils on the need to improve funding for such services. Unfortunately none of the Standards refers to services to disabled people and this area has to compete with all of the other needs which exist within the statutory duties of a library authority for funds. Libraries have suffered in past years in the United Kingdom from a lack of investment which has resulted in redundant or poor building stocks as well as decreases in book and service funds in many cases. Some library services are relatively well funded, some are not. This tends to depend on the political colour, demographics or history of the area.”

Voluntary groups catering to blind and visually impaired people were somewhat more negative:

“They are generally underfunded to achieve their potential and contribution to the government’s social inclusion policies. In terms of total public expenditure a tiny amount could make a big difference but government has not realised that libraries can achieve more with an extra £1 than the education world can with £100 or more. A particular problem is the lack of capital funding to renovate existing buildings or to build new libraries. As a statutory service libraries are not eligible for lottery funding, except for certain specific purposes. Hence, we have seen major capital investment in museums, galleries, arts centres, sports centres etc...but the most popular public service is left to look increasingly shabby overall, with some notable exceptions which serve to illustrate the overall problem.”

DCMS as the responsible ministry emphasized that there are capital improvements underway:

“However, the MLA buildings Audit identified and highlighted the need for investment in Public Library buildings in England. This has been added to the MLA work plan.

“The Big Lottery Fund is providing £80 million to improve library buildings through engagement with local communities. This presents libraries with an outstanding opportunity to reinvigorate themselves as centres of wider community learning and

development, to create, improve and develop library spaces that meet the needs of the whole community and to be innovative and promote good practice in the ways libraries are designed and run.

“As well as this, £130m Private Finance Initiative funding has been allocated to public library and part library projects in recent years, which has had a significant impact on library programmes and building investment.

“In addition, the MLA funded ‘Designing Libraries’ website, <http://www.designinglibraries.org.uk/> promotes best practice in the planning and design of library buildings and offers access to information and images to stimulate improvements in design and effective delivery.”

Usage

There was a consensus on usage in terms of the type of resources used and the demographics of users:

“On the whole, book borrowing has declined over the more recent past but visits have increased. Usage of the service is still good but the type of usage is changing from traditional lending services to electronic resources both in the library and through web access. Audio visual services have started to decline with the onset of downloading and this must have an impact on the provision of audio books as new formats begin to develop.”

“User patterns are changing for several reasons Traditionally, use is high by children up to adolescence when they discover other interests and this remains the case. Older people remain heavy users, the middle class make more use than the working class and more women use public libraries than men. However, the availability of free internet use and email has seen patterns of usage change. Poorer people without home PCs are coming to libraries and silver surfers are increasing in numbers. Usage by ethnic minority groups is also increasing. The traditional user patterns are in flux reflecting changes in society and libraries role in society.”

“Usages are changing to reflect changes in society. Hence the dire predictions of the traditionalists and the regrets of the more forward looking who realise so much more is possible from these most communal of local facilities.”

“It is well recognised that the groups in the Community hardest to reach for public libraries lie in the young adult age groups and those in their 30s and 40s. Children’s and parents’ usage has been helped enormously by the use of the Bookstart and Summer Reading schemes. Older people still naturally gravitate towards the service and social events such as Reader’s Groups have helped all age groups. The use of Literature Development promotional techniques is starting to have an effect on the harder to reach members of the community by appealing in a different way and giving more prominence to newer types of writing. Asylum seekers, refugees and people from different ethnic backgrounds are also a significant group who are sometimes hard to reach because of language or cultural barriers. Members of this customer group are however more likely to make use of electronic services through the People’s Network to keep in touch with their cultural backgrounds.”

Rights and attitudes

There is a general right of equal access to buildings, products and services for disabled people via the Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005. The right of disabled people to take part in cultural life is recognized by policymakers.

Rights to education are covered by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2001.

There are no specific rights to library services and reading materials for visually impaired people, but they are covered by the Public Libraries and Museums Act, 1964, which makes it a statutory duty of a public library authority to provide “a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof”. This has generally been understood to include disabled people and was reinforced by the DDA 1995.

Public Library Standards were published in 2001 by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport. In October 2004 the Standards were streamlined to reflect the need not to impose unreasonable administrative burdens on local authorities to deliver quality services to meet local needs. The streamlined 10 Standards, feed in to the Culture Block of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment. The Standards are currently under further review by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council to reflect developing needs. Any outcomes from this review will take account of the recent Local Government White Paper (October 2006) “Strong and Prosperous Communities”, in which it is proposed to remove existing service focused performance assessments in favour of a single set of national outcomes for pan local government assessment.

Three of the original standards related to services for visually impaired people. PLS 9, concerning requests, stated: ‘In addition, in order to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 an authority should allow requests for items in alternative formats which meet the needs of people with disabilities’. PLS 16 and 17 required the provision of ‘large print books and books on tape’.

The Framework for the Future issued by DCMS in 2003 also emphasises the role that public libraries should play in ensuring everyone’s physical and intellectual access to the public library service as part of the latter’s contribution to social inclusion. This was followed up by an Action Plan which was published by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council.

Expectations

Respondents agreed that it is difficult to generalize about the expectations of visually impaired people in relation to library services:

“Expectations vary according to individual characteristics and how sight loss occurred. To generalise, my impression is that people who are born blind are realistic in not expecting to receive the same

level of access to content but they quite rightly demand it as a basic human right. The opportunities for access to much more content via digital technologies are generally well appreciated but, of course, Technical Protection Measures do not make this as easy as it should be so we have to carry on lobbying and campaigning.”

“People who lose sight later in life tend to be reliant on large print and audio and as they become older are less likely to visit their local library for transport reasons. As they become more dependent on others their expectations are modified by a natural gratitude for what they are provided with. This reinforces the role of charity rather than basic human rights in this field.”

“I think they expect to find that it’s not possible to carry on with their reading and learning as before. And, in truth, this can be the case given the low proportion of materials available in alternative formats, most especially in educational fields. I think younger people tend to expect more because they are more ICT aware and mobile. Older people tend to be less mobile, more reliant on family and friends and therefore more grateful. This tends to reinforce the view that this is a charitable work.”

For the tertiary education sector, SCONUL had the opinion that most visually impaired students did expect equality of provision.

The government response was that there were comparatively few complaints received about access to reading matter and library services, though “For example correspondence received by DCMS has sometimes given the impression that some parents expect that their individual local authority should have the responsibility to provide a comprehensive collection e.g. of Braille children’s books. The availability of material in alternative format is also a legitimate concern, but this issue is not within the gift of public libraries to resolve. The Department of Trade and Industry are working with publishers and charitable organisations to find a remedy to the lack of alternative format content.”

The public library respondent felt, based on 25 years in the service, that many visually impaired people relied on informal assistance:

“Families and friends can be the key to keeping people reading and often visit the library to pick up materials on their behalf.”

Findings from Vision2020 UK’s Network 1000 research project show what formats people prefer to read and whether they have assistance from family and friends.

Methods of reading by registered status

	Blind	Partially sighted	Total weighted	Total sample
Ordinary print	28%	55%	43%	497
Large print	45%	67%	57%	583
Braille	9%	3%	5%	98
Moon	1%	1%	1%	18
Do you listen to tapes	90%	59%	72%	616
Someone reads to you	58%	33%	44%	388
Computer speech output	10%	5%	7%	156
None of these	0%	1%	1%	8
Number interviewed	438	495	----	933

Source: Vision2020, Network 1000, Survey of opinions and circumstances of 1000 visually impaired people in Great Britain [<http://www.vision2020uk.org.uk/library.asp?libraryID=686§ion=000100050005>]

Services to print impaired people in relation to services to visually impaired people

There is no official relationship between services to these groups.

NLB told us that while its constitution permits it to serve print-disabled people, in practice it does very little. Copyright legislation presents barriers to integrated services. NLB would like to see services to these groups converge where appropriate, enabling more needs to be met, more efficiently.

Share the Vision observed that some charities serve only those with actual vision loss because of their trust deeds whereas others e.g. Listening Books serve all print handicapped people. They felt that it is impossible to forecast what will happen. “While logically these services would come together to secure a greater return on their collective investment there is no real encouragement from central government to stimulate this. On the contrary, it could be argued that Central government policy towards the role of the public sector in providing public services could stimulate greater separation within the sector.”

Calibre Audio Library, which supplies both constituencies, also foresaw obstacles to a converged service, both from rightsholders who were not keen to see cognitive disorders included under the same umbrella as vision loss and from the imperatives of a privately operated postal service which would not want to extend the free postal concession.

The public library service does not expect dramatic change but foresees more close co-operation between all services supplying both groups.

The government response tends to confirm the expectations by other organizations:

“Services for both groups (visually impaired and print impaired) are provided by public libraries as part of a comprehensive and efficient library service as established by the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. Services are also provided by various charitable organizations, who may specialize between the two groups. There is unlikely to be a significant change in government policy in the foreseeable future.”

Models and responsibilities

As has already become clear, the bulk of the supply of alternative format materials and many services in the UK are provided by charitable organisations. Public libraries do act as delivery points as well, providing mainly large print and assistive equipment, occasionally other formats, but this varies substantially according to the priorities and resources of different local authorities. While centrally determined library standards are having an impact generally, there are no specific ones for performance in relation to serving disabled people, which might act to expose and ultimately even out service provision.

The model of co-operation is described by one respondent as:

“The relationship between services is in a sense an informal one. The sector is served by Local Authorities, Voluntary Sector providers and Charities. The relationships which exist come from the necessity of working together to try to provide some partnership delivery of services where a comprehensive national approach is lacking.”

Service provision – general

NLB provides Braille and Moon.

RNIB, Calibre and Listening Books provides talking books

Size of collections

NLB – 350,000 Braille and Moon titles in the collection

RNIB – 13,000 talking book titles in the collection (Nov. 2006);
added 450 in 2005

Calibre Audio Library – 7,000 titles, added 269 in 2005

Listening Books – nearly 4,000 titles for adults plus 1500 children's
and young adults fiction, non-fiction and educational materials
through its Sound Learning library

(NLB and RNIB have now merged, as from 1 January 2007).

Public libraries – large print, audio cassette, equipment/online
services, interlibrary loan. Some libraries may provide other formats
such as Braille and DAISY audio, but this is very limited and much
more likely to come from special libraries.

In general, most library authorities do not produce their own
materials with a few notable exceptions and rely on commercially
produced items.

Service provision – education

The Department for Education and Skills (DFES) funds school
libraries and special needs budgets for schools, and university
libraries and disability units are funded by the Higher Education
Funding Councils (for England and Wales, and Scotland). However,
most materials are not publicly produced, though universities handle
and outsource requests for materials transcription e.g. to RNIB and
occasionally provide them.

General public libraries also provide materials to learners.

Governmental responsibility

Five government ministries/agencies have responsibilities in this area: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), the Museums Libraries and Archives Council (MLA), the Department for Education and Skills (DFES), the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), and the department for Communities and Local Government.

Responsibility for library policy and provision rests with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport which is advised in that regard by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, and with the devolved administrations.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport also has policy responsibility for the British Library, which it funds. While the British Library does not have national policy/provision responsibility **vis a vis** library and information services for the visually-impaired, it does of course have an interest in ensuring that the visually impaired, and indeed all those with disabilities, can access its services.

The Department for Education and Skills is responsible for the funding of libraries in primary and secondary schools but the funding and policy for libraries in universities and HE colleges is the responsibility of the Higher Education Funding Council.

The Department for Trade and Industry has responsibility for intellectual property which remains a major factor in this area of service delivery, both nationally and internationally.

Finally, the department for Communities and Local Government allocates local government spending overall, and local authorities decide which services to invest in, based on their best assessment of local needs.

Various respondents have pointed out that this division of responsibilities and also the fact that policies which are drawn up by one department (DCMS) are dependent on funding from another (Communities and Local Government) reduces the possibility of a national strategy backed up by the necessary funding.

Overlaps – are they a problem?

There is a consensus that roles and responsibilities are not clearly delineated, that there are overlaps, that there is no overall strategy or planning and there is weak coordination and duplication of effort. Some respondents are critical of the lack of central government strategy and action in this area. DCMS pointed out however ‘The overarching direction of travel from central government has been to allow local authorities more power to manage services according to local need.’

There is also agreement that there has been more co-ordination and more partnership between organizations recently e.g. the creation of Share the Vision and the merger between RNIB and NLB. One respondent said

“Since the creation of Share the Vision there has been a clear will to draw services into a more cohesive and joined up pattern in order to provide services more efficiently.”

Gaps between policy and practice

One respondent observed “More often there are not even policies”.

Policies are certainly not specific enough to provide a benchmark for whether there are gaps in practice. Anti-discrimination laws

“do not prescribe improvements per se but require reasonable adjustments. Whereas SENDA was introduced with extra resources for education [as always] local authorities had to adopt the DDA 1995 without any additional funding, revenue or capital. The DDA 2005 introduces a duty to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people and its implementation will vary depending on the commitment of different local authorities. Some provide excellent library services for visually impaired people and some are not so good.”

Gaps are due to:

“Inadequate total funding for libraries; lack of designated funds and differing policy priorities.”

Another voluntary body said:

“So far, our central government has failed to provide the national leadership or funding necessary to close the gap between their stated stance on the rights and needs of disabled people and actually doing something about it! Most alternative format reading material in the UK is provided by charities, so the extent of this provision is constrained by their ability to fund-raise.”

The gap between policy and practice in public libraries “is not because of a lack of will on the behalf of those working in Library Services. Funding for all areas of the community is encompassed within an inadequate amount to provide the multitude of agendas, frameworks and needs. The public library service is always at the mercy of its need to serve everyone by Statute. It must be said though that the Statute is very necessary to protect the existence of public libraries at all. Without this, local councils would probably in many cases look at this service as a soft option from which to make savings.”

The government’s view was somewhat different:

“Central Government policy aims to ensure that library authorities are aware of the needs of their whole communities and to make provision based on their judgment of those needs. Central Government is careful to (i) allow local authorities the freedom to manage their own budgets and (ii) not to burden local authorities with extra duties, which bring inflationary financial pressure to local authorities. As an aid to library authorities, for those not already engaged in community profiling, a template has been provided by the Museums Libraries and Archives Council on behalf of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport to encourage a better idea about the communities that they serve. This would include

them developing a clearer picture of their need to provide disability services and services for visually impaired people. An issue for individual authorities however is how to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' service in any one particular alternative format. For example, it would place resource pressure on a library authority to hold a significant collection of Braille books. Most local authorities do however provide magnification equipment and software, in their libraries to enhance provision of services to visually impaired people. Most also provide a selection of large-print books. Growing use of audio formats widens the range of materials accessible to visually impaired people. Organisations such as National Library for the Blind (NLB) and Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) are better able to provide a service to meet the various specific needs of visually impaired people by providing access to significant collections in many alternative formats (Braille, Moon, audio, DAISY etc.) Additionally, MLA are encouraging better provision for visually impaired people for example: Raising staff awareness of visual impairment issues through promotion of 'delivering services for disabled people' [[http://www.mla.gov.uk/webdav/harmonise?Page/@id=73&Document/@id=20449&Section\[@stateId_eq_left_hand_root\]/@id=4332](http://www.mla.gov.uk/webdav/harmonise?Page/@id=73&Document/@id=20449&Section[@stateId_eq_left_hand_root]/@id=4332)] and working in partnership with NLB and RNIB to secure the future for Revealweb [<http://www.revealweb.org.uk/index.htm>], the website which was established with funding from DCMS and managed by NLB and RNIB to improve access to alternative format content.

"There are 149 local authorities responsible for managing library services in England. It is impossible to list all local initiatives undertaken by all. Policy from the centre is not changing insofar as DCMS and MLA will continue to encourage library authorities to be aware of, and make provision for, whole communities."

Sconul told us that

"There are significant gaps between policy on services for visually impaired people and the actual support and services they receive from education libraries."

Are the models in flux?

The merger between RNIB and NLB and the creation of Share the Vision shows that there is a will to rationalize services in the voluntary sector and change the way they work with public libraries, but there is no sign that government policy is changing in relation to the way the public sector provides services, beyond setting standards.

What is driving change?

There was agreement that a series of initiatives and campaigns from the voluntary sector have been the major drivers for changes, plus public library standards (though opinions differ as to the importance of the latter):

“Library standards, Framework for the Future, Revealweb, Share the Vision, Gateway project, Make a Noise in Libraries. More awareness of need amongst public libraries, probably due to legislation and lobbying by Right to Read Alliance, NLB’s practical initiatives etc.”

“The establishment of STV in 1989 as a campaigning partnership between the voluntary sector organisations which produce and lend alternative formats and the main bodies for publicly funded libraries has been a major factor in improving these services overall. The DDA 1995 gave added impetus to STV’s campaign. We would cite the following STV initiatives as major developments which have enhanced service provision for visually impaired people:

Library Services for Visually Impaired People; a manual of best practice. <http://bpm.nlb-online.org>

Revealweb: the National Database of Materials in Accessible formats. www.revealweb.org.uk

Gateway Project www.gateway-uk.org”

Other respondents suggested that legislation has been a driver:

“Legislation has changed the parameters of service provision, this means that services have to be provided however they may be sourced directly or outsourced to specialist organisations to provide an indirect service. Greater collaboration is expected.”

Measuring success

There are no national standards for measuring how well the UK is doing in providing services to visually impaired people.

There are IFLA Libraries for the Blind guidelines and the UK Best Practice Manual but neither are prescriptive.

There are no dedicated public library standards or impact measurements. The measures used by Public Libraries are all centred on the Public Library Standards, Culture Block of the Comprehensive Performance Assessments and Impact Measures. These are all generic indicators which don't necessarily identify such services. Any measurement will be entirely localised.

Individual local authorities also set local targets on aspects of their library service, although these are not nationally required and will vary from authority to authority depending on their assessment of community requirements (as assisted by community profiling). Local authorities are encouraged through community profiling to take soundings from all of the groups that they serve.

All such targets and measures are internally devised as with the education and voluntary sectors.

One respondent stated “There can be no overall coordination of performance management as there is no overall coordination of policy and service delivery. There needs to be a comprehensive survey to update the 2000 survey carried out by LISU [now out of print] and expand it to cover more than just public libraries but there are no financial resources to do so.”

Participation by visually impaired people

NLB has 50% visually impaired trustees and a number of visually impaired staff.

STV: “There is now much more direct involvement of visually impaired people but we cannot rest on our laurels as people who lose sight later in life are underrepresented and less vocal than those born blind.”

Sconul: “Consultation with **ALL** users and/or expert disability/ special need knowledge holders is integral to decisions about service provision.”

Funding sources and adequacy

There is no overall figure available. The statistics for publicly funded libraries do not isolate expenditure on services for visually impaired people. For example: “Most authorities did not have a specific budget allocation for service for visually impaired people, and the percentages appeared to have decreased slightly since the 1997 survey, when half of the authorities had a budget either for the visually impaired or included in the budget for people with special needs.” [Kimmel, M et al. Public Library Services for Visually Impaired People. LISU, 2000, pp25-28]

There is no breakdown of expenditure by the education sector and the voluntary sector has not aggregated its expenditure. Therefore funding per visually impaired person or approximate percentages of total funding from the different sectors cannot be estimated.

Funding for public libraries comes mainly from central government as part of the overall settlement for local government.

Funding for the creation of alternative format materials comes mainly from charitable fund-raising, though some public money is channelled from education budgets to fund conversion of materials. There is also short-term project funding from central government but no on-going core funding from central government directly to provide alternative format materials or for library services for visually impaired people. The DFES also does not provide dedicated funding for visually impaired children to obtain appropriate curricular educational materials in a format appropriate for their personal needs.

This was felt by one respondent to be more characteristic of Victorian times in its emphasis on charity rather than human rights.

DCMS told us that:

“Some local services are also supported by local taxation. Public Libraries in England had a total income revenue of £1.9 million in 2004/5. Core funding for libraries is provided un-ringfenced as part of the Local Government financial settlement. There have been good capital and revenue settlements for authorities in recent years, more freedom on how the money should be spent and greater flexibility on borrowing. The Government is committed to restricting the level of ring-fencing. Local authorities are best placed to make their own budget decisions in the light of their statutory duties and local priorities. Local authorities have a statutory duty to provide a ‘comprehensive and efficient library service’ under the terms of the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act. Beyond this, local authorities are best placed to decide the level of funding appropriate for this responsibility. Government policy has been to increase local authorities’ discretion in their use of the funding they receive from ‘Whitehall’ in line with their knowledge of the needs of the communities they serve. There is no evidence to suggest an intervention is necessary by the Secretary of State in any of the 149 library authorities at this time. It is for library authorities to make judgments about provision of library services with the responsibility of providing a comprehensive and efficient to the community which they serve.”

None of the respondents from the voluntary, public library and education sectors felt that funding was adequate.

“Funding is very poor”

“Public funding for publicly funded libraries has increased until recently but is now under pressure and it is not possible to determine the potential effect on services for visually impaired people”.

“It would not need a massive injection of public funding to make a massive step change. £20-30 million devoted to a carefully devised national plan would make a considerable difference.”

It was also felt that rationalization and re-organisation would yield benefits:

“No sane person with an understanding of management and the economies of scale would refuse to consider developing a national programme for the production and distribution of alternative format materials for the 7460 visually impaired children distributed across England preferring instead to delegate budget provision to individual schools. In the meantime funding of £100-150,000 p.a. to maintain and develop Revealweb which is the cornerstone of any attempt to enhance the provision of these services from whatever sources has not been secured.”

Since these comments were made, a plan has been formulated to solve the problem of continued funding for Revealweb by incorporating it into a mainstream bibliographic database, Unity-UK.

Overall availability of material in alternative formats

According to research commissioned by RNIB from LISU in 2005 only 4.4% of the print output of UK publishers becomes available in an accessible/alternative format.

The percentage of periodicals, newspapers, educational materials and official publications has not been estimated but is not thought to be as high as for books.

However, it was pointed out that:

“the digital era has changed the potential for accessing the contents of these formats because of the growth of web based newspapers, periodicals and official publications. The obvious proviso is that the terms of library licences and the application of DRM does not prevent access via the assistive technologies which visually impaired people are dependent upon to access content which was not previously available to them in libraries, at home, at work or elsewhere.”

According to a report published by MLA in 2005 [http://www.mla.gov.uk/resources/assets//id1868rep_doc_5330.doc.]

“There are around 420,000 titles available in the UK, and around 125,000 new and revised titles are published each year. Less than 10,000 titles from these 125,000 are available in any accessible format (unabridged audiobook, Braille, large print or eBook). The RNIB notes that even for 100 bestsellers, less than 25% are available in unabridged audio. A smaller number still will be available in large print. For those that do become available, the delay between standard and accessible versions is usually measured in months.”

Materials provision

The same report noted that “much of the conversion to an accessible format is undertaken by voluntary organisations: in one study, of 46 non-fiction titles available in an alternative format, 43 were produced by voluntary organisations.”

NLB

Braille

Original materials supplied: NLB, RNIB and a few other producers

Conversion: ----.

On-demand: No.

Stock: Book selections: At NLB/RNIB through a standard (like other libraries) process with input from users

Targets for range/depth/speed: At NLB, Collection development policy covers adults, children, Learners, popular, “Widening choices”. collections development, Moon, Giant print etc. Level is general reading and speed depends on type of material.

Share the Vision

Supplied in alternative formats

how supplied: ----

who supplies: This is the area where the private sector is involved. There are 3 main companies involved in the production of Large Print, Ulverscroft Group, BBC and W.F. Howes. They also produce audiobooks as do some mainstream publishing houses. Whereas LP is clearly dedicated to meeting the needs of people with low vision and almost exclusively sold to public libraries audiobooks attract a wider audience and are available in commercial outlets which LP is not. However, there is a growing awareness of the potential of digitisation to permit the supply of LP on demand.

Basis for decision to acquire: Stock for public libraries is chosen by their staff following their authority's book selection policy and local targets. However, this may change depending on the response to the MLA commissioned report from PWC, "Better stock: better libraries", August 2006.

Targets for range/depth/speed: ----.

Preferred situation

Description

NLB

Would like to see a national accessible library service, with national strategy and co-ordination, backed by government funding. In any case, convergence of technologies and funding pressures will drive organisations to work together but the risk is that it will be ad hoc.

STV

A planned Government sponsored national infrastructure which coordinates provision of services. The voluntary sector produces and the public sector accepts its responsibility to purchase the products, distribute and provide access via whatever method the end user chooses. Central government contributes to the core central production via a merged voluntary sector agency which has a contractual relationship with the public sector and the publishing industry for access to their digital files to reduce production costs and maximise accessibility of content.

Funding

NLB

Government should fund the services, as they do for public libraries for everyone else.

Sconul

Central funding

Who would deliver

NLB

Mainstream libraries

Sconul

Joint special needs/library service, flexible of service provider to the user

How would organisations work together

NLB

Through national strategy and plans with clear roles and responsibilities

Sconul

Collaboration, consortia purchase of equipment, central stock reserve for loaning

How the services would be delivered

NLB

However users wanted them.

Sconul

User defined

STV

Preference is to explore the potential of the digital age to permit the user to specify which format s/he prefers for any particular purpose (large print, synthetic voice output, Braille, digital file to download) and to re-engineer the whole infrastructure to put the emphasis on user choice, accepting the need to maintain human voice recording for a while

Ideal level of service

NLB

All needs met

Sconul

Flexible, timely, responsive, user driven

The view from the user's perspective

This section was not answered by most UK respondents, perhaps reflecting the uncoordinated situation. The responses here reflect the public libraries' view.

Work of fiction

This could well be provided by a number of agencies including libraries, voluntary groups or national charitable organisations. It could also be in a variety of formats but probably not all available at one site.

New work of fiction

New works of fiction are generally more difficult to find in alternative formats. Larger organisations such as the National Library for the Blind are able to provide some materials at dual publication dates but for public libraries this is not possible due to the non availability of large print in simultaneous publication.

Reference work

Reference works are difficult for public libraries to cope with in alternative formats and most would signpost customers to organisations such as RNIB or NLB – electronic information has made it easier to cope with this kind of request these days, although even this is not without its challenges due to digital rights problems.

Newspaper

Libraries can sometimes provide local access to newspapers but this is much rarer. This tends again to be the preserve of the National Talking Newspapers organisation and the RNIB/NLB.

Magazine

Libraries don't tend to be able to deal with this kind of request and can only help by signposting at present. This tends again to be the preserve of the National Talking Newspapers organisation and the RNIB/NLB.

School textbook

Again, difficult for public libraries to cope with this – tends to be dealt with by specialist organisations like NLB or RNIB.

Children's book

Some materials are bought as dual language or tactile materials and large print. By far the most materials are produced by the National Charitable organisations.

Scientific journal and academic book

Again, difficult for public libraries to cope with this – tends to be dealt with by specialist organisations like NLB or RNIB.

User perspective – higher education

Academic books, textbooks

A user would approach the enquiry desk, named special needs support staff member, or via electronic request submission, or RNIB prime contact, other libraries if item held in required format. The range of formats available depends on requirement and is sourced accordingly.

A reference work – initial identification of location source via an online catalogue. If the item is in stock, the following then might occur:

Temporary loan of the item for use with specialist equipment or for someone to read the item to the user (immediate availability for collection or postal delivery)

temporary access to electronic version sourced if possible

Large print copy of the section made by the library (posted or electronically transmitted)

Request for format version applied for to RNIB – Check is made to see if a loanable version in requested format exists elsewhere (post or electronic notification item is available to collect or instructions for the item to be sent to user clarified)

Rare research material requiring transcription is extremely difficult to source as these items are usually held in national collections including closed or restricted access.

Barriers

Respondents agreed that the major barriers to providing good library services to visually impaired people in the UK are:

Funding;

Lack of planning and co-ordination;

Copyright legislation

“The most important barrier in the UK is the lack of a systematic national infrastructure which receives a modicum of planned ongoing public investment. We cannot rewrite history but visually impaired people in the UK are too dependent on charity for basic services which sighted people receive as of right. Current government thinking is to extend the role of the voluntary sector which would be fine if they paid them to provide these basic services which are so important to the life prospects of young

people and quality of life for older people who wish to carry on reading at the same level or even more following the onset of sight loss.”

“The great majority of alternative format reading services in the UK are provided by charities, and the scope of provision is therefore constrained by their ability to raise charitable funds. This is simply not good enough in society that considers itself civilised and compassionate.”

The public library respondent also suggested some administrative barriers:

“Funding is the obvious one although the level of materials actually available for purchase is the other. There are very few materials comparatively for purchase to answer the needs of visually impaired people. I would love to be able to make more materials available via ICT and current data protection, ICT procedures in each authority across the country often precludes this. A national policy or indicator would circumvent the often difficult relationships that libraries have with their own local ICT departments or providers.”

Sconul suggested that in addition to funding and copyright there were barriers arising from:

“lack of staff expertise, timelines for service requirements, availability of specialist equipment.”

Copyright

The UK implemented the Information Society Directive in October 2003. Simultaneously, it amended the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 by introducing detailed exceptions for the benefit of visually impaired people – the Copyright (Visually Impaired Persons) Act 2002.

This establishes two exceptions, one for single copies and one for multiple copies. Creating an accessible format on a non-commercial basis without the rights holder's permission is no longer an infringement of copyright, assuming an equivalent accessible version is not available commercially. In the case of multiple copies, the law allows for the establishment of licensing schemes, and compels organisations producing accessible material to adhere to the terms of such schemes where they exist. However, no scheme can undermine the basic rights conferred by the Act.

The Act essentially removes the need to seek copyright permission to reproduce materials in alternative formats; both multiple copies by the charities and single copies for individual visually impaired people by libraries.

However the exception is restricted to visually impaired people unlike other countries in Europe (and elsewhere) which encompass print-impaired people.

One respondent stated that "The position has actually worsened for dyslexics as previously organizations which served them may no longer do so as they would have to continue to seek copyright permissions as previously, negating the benefits of the 2002 Act."

Special projects

In partnership with the Society of Chief Librarians, STV has recently launched the Gateway, a service to help give visually impaired adults and children in the UK better access to all library and information services.

Publishers' involvement

The Department of Trade and Industry is leading on work to promote a commercial solution to the (i) lack of availability of alternative formats and (ii) the length of time that it takes to produce them. This aims to set up a system of trusted intermediaries who hold digital content on behalf of publishers to enable quick and cheaper production of alternative format material on demand. DCMS and the Museums Libraries and Archives Council are interested in the work to ensure that public libraries are placed to benefit.

USA

Basic country data

Population: 298.213m (2005).

Over 65s as % of total population: 2005 12.4%; 2020 14.5% (projected).

GNI per capita (international dollars converted at purchasing power parities) 2005: \$41,950

Government: Federal

Number of visually impaired people: 3m

Numbers who have difficulty reading: 40m

Note on information sources

The information in this section was supplied by the National Library Service (NLS) of the Library of Congress and the Jewish Braille Institute, supplemented by desk research.

Definitions and their effects

NLS provides service to any resident of the United States who is unable to read conventional print due to blindness, a visual impairment, or a physical handicap. Blind persons whose visual acuity, as determined by competent authority, is 20/200 or less in the better eye with correcting lenses, or whose widest diameter of visual field subtends angular distance no greater than 20 degrees. This definition enables competent authority to certify individuals who have a visual impairment but are not yet blind. The underlying question they have to answer is. Can the applicant read conventional print? If the answer is yes, they are not eligible, if it is no, they are. We do not have a definition of print impairment, we

use the definition stated in response to the first question. We do have a eligibility criteria of Reading Disabled, of which a subset of individuals with Learning Disabilities are eligible.

Libraries in our cooperating network use our eligibility criteria. In most instances standard (public) libraries do not apply a standard for visually impaired. If individuals coming into their library can find materials of interest that they can use, they will use them, if not, the individual seeks other resources. There is no one government imposed standard for visual impairment. NLS considers the definition to be inclusive enough.

Library and user group data

Prevalence of visual/print impairment

NLS estimates there are approximately 3m individuals eligible for its service nationwide. There are a variety of estimates for people with learning disabilities, perhaps around forty million.

An NLS user survey carried out in 2004 showed that their subscribers are primarily middle aged and elderly people with late-onset serious vision loss and modest incomes. Their educational profile varies considerably, and they are only slightly less likely to live in rural areas or small towns than in a suburb or city.

Public libraries

There were 9,207 public libraries in 2004 (fiscal year). There were 4.7 visits per head of the population on average. Both total numbers and per capita visits were up slightly on 2001 (9,129 and 4.3). Visits per capita varied widely from over 7 in Ohio to under 3 in Mississippi.

Funding for public libraries depends on their location. As public libraries are tax supported, suburban and urban areas have a larger tax base to draw on.

The trend in growth or decline in services also depends upon the location of the library. Many libraries are striving to expand services, particularly electronic resources to meet patron needs.

Traditionally children and older adults make up the core of most frequent users. Teenagers, college students, and working adults have less time to use libraries.

Rights and attitudes

For blind/visually impaired individuals rights are specified in primary legislation. Rights of equal access for other disabilities, including print disability is also specified in primary legislation.

By law, people have rights of access to buildings and services, cultural life, but not every building or service complies yet.

Cultural policies recognise the right of disabled people to take part in cultural life to a greater and greater extent.

Equal rights to education apply to every level from grade school to college.

Rights to library services

If an individual meets the eligibility criteria set forth in question one, they have access to recorded or brailled materials regardless of where they reside. The books are delivered to their door.

There are not the same rights for sighted people with a print impairment.

Expectations

Visually impaired people don't expect the same service as sighted people, although the amount of materials available in audio or electronic formats is constantly expanding.

Services to print impaired people in relation to services to visually impaired people

Whether or not services are provided to print impaired people depends on the individual organisation and their eligibility criteria. In the case of RF&BD, print impaired people make up the majority of their users.

The copyright exception does not cover people who cannot read print due to cognitive disabilities.

Models and responsibilities

There are a number of agencies involved both in the production of materials and in distribution to users. These include:

National Library Service (NLS)

Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic (RFB&D)

American Foundation for the Blind/Talking Book Productions (TBP)

National Braille Association

Braille Institute (part of NLS network but has own collection)

Jewish Guild for the Blind

Jewish Braille Institute

Bookshare.org (sharing scanned files)

NLS operates through a network of 57 regional libraries, the majority (52) of which are administered and funded by state

libraries, and 74 sub-regional libraries, of which seventy-two are located in or administered by a public library. State rehabilitation agencies administer four regional libraries and the fifth is administered by a private rehabilitation agency. Each library adheres to the policies and personnel rules of its administering agency.

Public libraries also have limited collections of materials.

Service provision – general

NLS

The National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) is part of the Library of Congress. It selects, produces and distributes books and magazines in Braille and audio formats and designs and manufactures specialist playback equipment for use with the audio materials. The American Library Association has promulgated standards relating to library service to blind and physically handicapped individuals. NLS uses these standards in periodic review of the regional libraries.

In the fiscal year 2005, the NLS readership consisted of 751,569 audio users and 42,322 Braille readers. NLS manufactures 42,000 cassette players annually and has an inventory of 713,893 players, of which 526,984 are assigned to users.

The 132 network libraries store and distribute the materials and players to eligible borrowers. Both machines and materials are sent to borrowers and returned to libraries free of charge through the US Postal Service, paid for by congressional funding.

In FY 2005, NLS produced 3,925 audio and Braille book titles, and 45 recorded and 33 braille magazine titles. The total collection of recorded and Braille books is more than 360,000 titles. Just under 23.5m copies of books and magazines were circulated in FY2005.

The NLS has been planning the transition from analogue to digital talking books for some time, formulating a strategy and identifying requirements. The transition for users will begin in FY2008 and is planned to be complete by FY2012. During the transition, cassette players and cassettes will continue to be supplied but will eventually be phased out altogether.

APH

The American Printing House for the Blind (APH) maintains and promotes the Louis Database of Accessible Materials for People who are Blind or Visually Impaired. Louis contains information on nearly 200,000 titles in accessible formats including braille, large print, sound recording, and electronic files. Information is contributed by over 180 agencies throughout the United States. The database is not intended to contain the titles NLS holds. Some files (over 4,500) in Louis are downloadable electronic files available to make Braille copies of the works. These can only be downloaded by authorized entities who have a repository account.

Service provision – education

Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic (RFB&D).

This is a non-profit organisation relying on donations and volunteer readers, which records material for educational use from elementary to higher education. Most of its members (70%) are now print-disabled rather than visually impaired.

RFB&D is the nation's first and largest nonprofit organization to provide recorded textbooks on CD and four-track cassette to students from kindergarten through to graduate school with disabilities such as visual impairment, severe dyslexia or another physical disability that makes reading challenging or impossible. RFB&D serves 127,000 students nationwide. RFB&D has nearly 5,000 highly trained volunteers who read and produce the organization's unique collection of titles.

RFB&D production of materials (FY2005)

Books distributed (analogue & digital) 258,918

Books in RFB&D's library (analogue & digital) 109,106

New books produced 5,134

Total hours recorded 133,012

Number of requests for service 229,699

By the close of FY05, RFB&D's library of digitally recorded books had grown 44 percent and surpassed the 20,000 title mark with a final total of 21,764 titles. Newly recorded digital titles, which offer enhanced navigational functions, comprised 62 percent of our total digital collection. The remaining 38 percent were produced through RFB&D's analog to digital conversion process.

In FY2005, every hour was recorded digitally. RFB&D's custom recording service for corporations, nonprofit agencies, scholastic testing services and other clients generates revenue to help subsidise the cost of the academic recording service.

Services co-ordination

RFB&D served 141,660 individuals through school and individual memberships in FY05, an increase of three percent over the 137,025 individuals served in FY04. Individuals borrowed 258,918 books.

Governmental responsibility

The Librarian of Congress has oversight of the NLS service, while the regional and sub-regional libraries of the NLS come under state or local administration. Most (52 of 57) of the regional libraries are administered by the state libraries. State rehabilitation agencies administer four regional libraries and the fifth is administered

by a private rehabilitation agency. Seventy-two of the 74 sub-regional libraries are located in or administered by a public library. Each library adheres to the policies and personnel rules of its administering agency.

Overlaps – are they a problem?

There were not felt to be any problems of overlap.

Gaps between policy and practice

There are always gaps, but most agencies spend a good deal of time and effort trying to make sure eligible individuals know about services available to them. There are always other, higher, demands for the available funding and there are also individuals who do not, for reasons of their own, take advantage of available services.

Are the models in flux?

No, except in so far as digitization will affect how clients access materials. NLS will have a dual system of allowing direct download of materials to end users (and to network libraries for local storage) as well as sending books stored on flash memory devices in the post. It already allows direct download of Web Braille files.

What is driving change?

Technological developments such as direct download.

Legislation such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) of 2004.

Measuring success

Each library adheres to the policies and personnel rules of its administering agency. The American Library Association has promulgated standards relating to library service to blind and physically handicapped individuals. NLS uses these standards in periodic review of the regional libraries.

The standards were originated in 1979, and revised in 1984, 1995, and 2005. Each revision has been less quantitative and more qualitative.

They will next be revised in 2010-12.

NLS reviews network libraries and decides on measures used. NLS is in the process of performing a patron assessment of its readership, for the Library of Congress, to verify patron satisfaction.

The Librarian of Congress reviews the NLS nationally.

The targets as identified in the standards, were written by librarians in the field, consumers using the service, and representatives of the libraries' administering agencies

Some measures of success

Proportion of visually impaired people reached by services:
Approximately 25%

Speed of supplying item: most network libraries send materials out within twenty-four hours of request.

What users think of the service: Feedback has been positive.

Participation by visually impaired people

Blind individuals are responsible for the operations of three major consumer organizations. Within NLS and its network of cooperating libraries blind and visually impaired individuals fill a number of vital roles.

Funding sources and adequacy

There is no figure for total expenditure by all the agencies involved. NLS funding data is given below.

NLS

National or Federal Government (Library of Congress) 50%

State or provincial government 35%

Local or municipal government 15%

Total funding

Fifty million from the federal government, matched by another fifty million from state and local governments.

Funding has been fairly flat over the last few years, but is reasonably adequate.

Other agencies

Services provided by the third sector organisations are funded by donation and revenue raised from contracted conversion services etc. plus some government grants.

Funding is provided for school services and tertiary education through state governments, and from private university funds.

Overall availability of material in alternative formats

Books

About 3.5% on an annual basis

Newspapers

5% maybe, but none through the NLS program

Magazines

NLS does 88 magazines (Braille and recorded combined) out of some 6,936 magazines published in this country each year.

Materials provision

NLS

Braille

Original materials supplied: Hard copy interpoint press Braille.

Conversion: Contractors

On-demand: No, NLS identifies the titles to be brailled and provides a print copy to producer.

Stock: Collection development standards are applied.

Targets for range/depth/speed: Goal is to provide wide range of materials to meet reader interests.

Audio – standard cassette and CD

Original materials supplied: NLS contracts for the recording duplication of titles.

Conversion: Paid contractors

On-demand: No, NLS identifies titles to be recorded and provides two print copies for the recording.

Stock: Collection development standards are applied.

Targets for range/depth/speed: Goal is comprehensive collection with some material on every topic.

Audio digital for download/streaming

Original materials supplied: They will be provided on 256Mb flash memory cartridges specifically designed to NLS specifications.

Conversion: Paid contractors

On demand: No, NLS identifies the title and the contractor records it.

Supplied in alternative formats

how supplied: Some of our network libraries also provide books in large-print.

who supplies: Standard audio CDs or cassettes are available commercially and through some public libraries.

Basis for decision to acquire: Collection development standards applied to decisions

Targets for range/depth/speed: ----.

The view from the user's perspective

NLS

The typical experience for a visually impaired person is the same for works of fiction, new works of fiction, magazines and children's books. A call or email to their service library would initiate the request. For a school or academic book it is necessary to contact with another organization which provides text books nationally. A newspaper may need a referral from the service library or it may actually be offered by the service library. A reference work and an academic journal are more problematic, but the service library would be the first inquiry as it may have access to local recording/braille capabilities.

JBI

If a general work of fiction, they would contact their local branch of the Library of Congress's National Library Service for the Blind (NLS). If a book of Jewish interest, they would contact JBI International.

Barriers

JBI: Money constraints and publishers' withholding of xml files.

Copyright

The copyright law was amended in 1996 to enable agencies serving the blind to record and or transcribe materials into special format for the blind without prior approval.

Special projects

Digitisation

NLS

The NLS digitisation programme begins in 2007, and is expected to be completed in 2012. NLS has drawn up a strategic plan to make the transition, following extensive piloting with users. They are particularly concerned to assist elderly/technophobic clients who may be reluctant to change.

As noted above, the NLS in the USA provides Web Braille files of books, magazines and music, which can be read online or downloaded for use offline or with Braille embossers etc. With the transition to digital talking books from 2007 onwards, NLS will operate a dual system of sending and receiving requested titles on Flash memory devices (one book, one object) by post and allowing download of books direct, both to end users and to the NLS network libraries themselves who can download any titles they have not been supplied with (namely the retrospective digitised collection of titles) so that they can make copies. This is to cater both for early adopters who want to be able to access material directly, and those who for financial, technical or other reasons, prefer to continue to receive physical copies.

RFB&D

RFB&D is encouraging all members to go digital. Beginning July 2006, RFB&D will no longer offer cassette players or analog (cassette) installments. Beginning in July 2007, they will offer audiobooks only on CD.

RFB&D's AudioPlus® digitally recorded textbooks are stored on CDs, which hold more than 40 hours each of recorded materials. In order to play RFB&D digitally recorded textbooks, you will need

to use specially adapted CD players or software. RFB&D offers a complete line of players, software and accessories for nonprofit sale.

There has been some adverse comment in email forums on the fact that in order to play RFB&D files on players not purchased from RFB&D, users have to purchase a software User authorisation key (UAK) for \$20 from RFB&D and send the player to RFB&D for UAK installation.

Education

School and university materials provision have both seen special initiatives since 2000:

The AFB Textbooks and Instructional Materials Solutions Forum addresses one of the most serious issues affecting the education of students with visual impairments today. Despite everyone's best efforts and advancements in technology, many visually impaired students do not receive textbooks and other instructional materials in braille, large print, audio or other needed special media at the same time as their sighted classmates.

The AFB Solutions Forum is a collaborative national effort represented by agencies and organizations involved in the production and distribution of textbooks and instructional materials. Textbook publishers, producers of specialized media, assistive technology specialists, educators, Instructional Materials Resource Centers, parents, consumers, and others are examining the multifaceted process of producing and delivering educational materials in accessible media to students who are blind or visually impaired. The AFB Solutions Forum is a direct result of issues identified in Goal #7 of the National Agenda for the Education of Children and Youths with Visual Impairments, Including those with Multiple Disabilities.

The goal of the AFB Solutions Forum is to develop a coordinated action plan for assuring equality of access to instructional materials for students who are blind or visually impaired. Five work groups have taken the initiative to improve the delivery of textbooks in the appropriate media. Information posted on the AFB Solutions Forum Web page of the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI) Website highlights the activities of the following five work groups: Electronic Files, Legislation, Production, Training and Other Needs, and Communication and Collaboration.

The AFB Solutions Forum will address the:

Lack of standardization of electronic file formats provided by textbook publishers.

Inaccessibility of multimedia textbooks, especially those delivered via the Internet and CD-ROM.

Variation in state textbook regulations regarding accessible instructional materials.

Expense of producing specialized materials and lack of fiscal incentives to develop new technologies.

Shortage of qualified braille transcribers and production resources.

Barriers to communication and collaboration, including duplication of efforts.

Publishers' involvement

At the moment there is much more involvement by publishers in the education area, driven by the legislation in 2004.

NIMAC

Repository for electronic files from publishers to be used by alternative format producers, under the American Printing House for the Blind.

Publishers submit files to the NIMAC in XML conforming to the referenced DTD. Files can be submitted via the portal, FTP or on CD/DVD. Files are validated by the publisher prior to submission using the validation tool provided by NIMAC.

Post-secondary initiative by the Association of American Publishers (AAP)

AAP members were active participants in a federal solution for students in grades K-12, supporting the development and passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) of 2004. Building on that collaborative effort, the Association and its higher education publishers initiated their post-secondary efforts in April 2005 at a meeting of stakeholders in Washington, D.C. In December 2005, AAP hosted a meeting held by the Association on Higher Education And Disability (AHEAD) with publishers, college and university personnel, and other advocacy groups to gather input on how to move the process forward. At this meeting, AHEAD's E-text Solutions Group identified the Look-Up Service as a priority.

The Look-Up Service

This site has been established to help college and university Disability Support Services (DSS) professionals find the appropriate contacts at publishing houses from whom to request electronic formats of textbooks, and/or scanning permissions, to facilitate the DSS office's provision of alternate format instructional materials to students with print disabilities.