

**U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science  
(DRAFT) Conference Call Notes  
Thursday, September 5, 1996, 11:00 a.m. - 12:40 p.m. (EST)**

NCLIS Commissioners      Jeanne Hurley Simon (NCLIS Chairperson), Martha Gould (NCLIS Vicechair), Abe Abramson, Shirley Adamovich, Walter Anderson, LeVar Burton, Joan Challinor, Mary Furlong, , Frank Lucchino, Bobby Roberts, Gary Sudduth (from 12:20 - 12:40 p.m.), Winston Tabb, Joel Valdez, and Robert Willard

Unable to participate:      Carol DiPrete

NCLIS Staff                Peter R. Young, Mary Alice Hedge, Jane Williams, John Lorenz, and Barbara Whiteleather

Opening Comments

NCLIS Chairperson Simon extended her appreciation to all the Commissioners for the "lively, active, and extremely worthwhile" NCLIS meetings and hearing, 19-23 July 1996, in San Francisco and San Diego, California. The results of the survey sent to Commissioners concerning the meetings were discussed. Commissioners agreed that such surveys provide useful feedback and should be continued to help plan future NCLIS meetings and activities. In general, the survey results showed the following averages on a scale of 1 (poor) to 6 (excellent):

- Meeting preparations: 4.84
- Business meetings: 4.58
- San Francisco Public Library activities: 4.6
- NCLIS participation in ISA conference: 4.88
- Hearing in San Diego: 4.95
- Arrangements and logistics: 5.1

Commissioners' Activities

Chairperson Simon reminded Commissioners to prepare written reports summarizing those meetings/conferences/activities that they attend on official NCLIS business and that are supported by NCLIS. Such reports provide NCLIS Members with valuable information about Commission-related concerns. The following recent Commissioner activities were mentioned during the conference call:

- Commissioner Gary Sudduth reported on his attendance at the Blacks in Government (BIG) National Training Conference in Atlanta, GA, 26-30 August 1996. He reported that it was an extremely successful conference with over 8,000 attendees. The sessions were very crowded since the conference had many more participants than originally planned. Gary was able to network with many of the attendees, discussing the work of the Commission and the important role libraries play locally and nationally.
- Commissioner Joel Valdez reported on his attendance at the REFORMA (National Association to Promote Library Services to the Spanish Speaking) National Library Conference in Austin, TX, 22-25 August 1996. He reported that over 700 Hispanic librarians were in attendance, and that he was introduced as an NCLIS member at the General Assembly. Joel stated that on several occasions he "spread the word of the Commission." The issue of access is the main concern of the Hispanic population, and he asked, "How can the Commission influence national policy in terms of access to the hinterland?" Commissioner Valdez stated that 'Reforma' means to 'Reconstitute' in Spanish.
- Commissioner Abe Abramson reported on his attendance at the Alaska Library Association/Pacific Northwest Library Association Joint Conference in Fairbanks, Alaska, 14-17 August 1996. He also presented the NCLIS Silver Award to Carol Dyer, a librarian for 27 years on Whitby Island. A second presentation (to Amazon Books) was cancelled because they are in the process of moving. Other activities included meeting with the Librarian at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, visiting a military library at an Air Force Base, and meeting with the director of Microsoft's 'Libraries Online' project.
- Commissioner Mary Furlong reported that she was interviewed about the Commission's release of *The 1996 National Survey of Public Libraries and the Internet: Progress and Issues* on 'The Site' MicroSoft/NBC network television for broadcast during the week of 2 September.
- Commissioner Joan Challinor reported on a luncheon meeting she had with Louise Berry, director of the Darien (CT) public library. Joan discussed the Darien public library's imaginative and effective use of volunteers with Louise Berry.
- Winston Tabb reported on his attendance at the IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) Conference in Beijing, Peoples' Republic of China. Winston also represented the Commission at a Pre Conference for Chinese and American Librarians (co-sponsored by NCLIS and funded by an ICSECA contribution of \$30,000) held for three days in Beijing prior to IFLA. Some pre-conference participants traveled for as long as three days to attend the conference-- by bicycle -- and many Chinese and U.S. attendees paid their own travel expenses to participate in this first bilateral meeting. Intellectual property, copyright protection, fair use, and preservation were the main issues addressed by papers presented at the

conference. At the IFLA general conference, a major recommendation dealt with a new IFLA program for broader access to information throughout the world. There were approximately 2,000 participants at this year's IFLA conference, with the U.S. having the largest delegation (250 people) of any country, outside China.

Chairperson Simon noted that the IFLA 1997 General Conference will be held in Copenhagen, Denmark, and suggested that Commissioners interested in attending should contact her. Commissioner Abramson expressed concern that funds covering travel to IFLA come from the State Department's ICSECA (International Contributions for Scientific, Educational and Cultural Activities). Rather, he suggested, NCLIS should "do battle with the Office of Management and Budget" and request additional NCLIS appropriations to cover international activities. Commissioner Abramson added, "NCLIS' budget should include funds for international programs since we are supposed to advise the President and Congress on international policy."

- Chairperson Simon also reported on her visit to the National Library in Jerusalem on her recent visit to Israel.

Upcoming Commission-related activities during October 1996 include the following:

- NCLIS Vicechair Gould and Commissioner Abe Abramson indicated their interest in attending the Depository Library Conference meeting in Salt Lake City, Utah, 21-24 October.
- Walter Anderson will be the keynote speaker at the 30th Annual New York State Reading Association Conference, on 6 November in Kaimesha Lake, New York.
- Walter Anderson will also be the keynote speaker at the Kansas State Board of Education Conference on 18 November in Wichita, Kansas.
- Joan Challinor will attend the PBS meeting on Adult Literacy on 13 December.
- Interactive Services Association (ISA) Conference, Tucson, January 1997. (Mary Furlong/Joel Valdez indicated their interest in attending.)
- Robert Willard will be attending the Information Industry Association Meeting in Washington, DC, October 6-9

In addition, Commissioners Walter Anderson, Frank Lucchino, and Mary Furlong discussed the possibility of present NCLIS Silver Awards to Steve Case and David McCullough in Washington, DC, perhaps in conjunction with the Commission's December 1996 meeting.

### GPO/NCLIS Draft Interagency Agreement and Cover Letter

Commissioners discussed the latest draft Interagency Agreement between the Commission and the Government Printing Office. At Commissioner Anderson's request, the Department of Education's General Counsel will review the draft Interagency Agreement between GPO and NCLIS to conduct an *Assessment of Standards for Creation and Dissemination of Electronic Government Information Products*. Commissioner Willard cautioned, "GPO has a narrow perspective; NCLIS has a broader policy perspective."

Mr. Young reported that a meeting between GPO representatives, Chairperson Simon, Jane Williams, and himself was scheduled for later in the day and promised to keep Commissioners informed about developments related to the proposed NCLIS study. Chairperson Simon stated, "The Commission's mandate calls for providing policy advice to the President and the Congress; this government information dissemination study is exactly what this Commission is about."

### NCLIS Internet Study

Mr. Young reported that copies of the GPO-printed *1996 National Survey of Public Libraries and the Internet: Progress and Issues*, had just been received at the NCLIS office. Several copies were sent to all Commissioners; if additional copies are needed, contact the NCLIS office.

Commissioner Furlong proposed that NCLIS develop five key summary points about the study to use when dealing with reporters, talk shows, etc. She pointed out that the study can have power in the information technology community if it pulls them toward local involvement.

One survey finding is: Public libraries in communities under 5,000 are significantly (59%) less likely to use the Internet than those serving populations from 100,000 to 1 million plus. To this, Commissioner Challinor responded, "Access is not a problem for rural areas only. Branch area librarians will also have access problems!"

### FCC Comments

Mr. Young reported that, as directed during the July NCLIS meeting, NCLIS filed on August 2, 1996 a supplemental response to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) addressing specific questions included in the universal service notice of proposed rulemaking. These comments relate to the FCC Joint Federal-State Board's consideration of universal service support mechanisms to assure public library access to advanced information and telecommunications services at discounted rates. The Commission's filing included information from the NCLIS' 1996 survey of public libraries and the Internet presented in *The 1996 National Survey of Public Libraries and the Internet: Progress and Issues*, July 1996.

Commissioner Abramson suggested (and Commissioner Bob Willard provided information) that Commissioners familiarize themselves with ADSL (Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line). ADSL is transmission technology supporting high-speed digital connections employing two pairs of copper wire. ADSL offers the promise of high-speed transmission bandwidth, yet allows telecommunications carriers to use copper wire technology that already is in use connecting the majority of U.S. households. Because ADSL works over a pair of ordinary copper wire technology, existing analog phone lines can be used to support a simultaneous high-speed data connection. This means that once you install an ADSL model, you will not need special interface electronics to run your analog phones. Modems should be available in 1998 at an approximate cost of \$200.00.

### Personnel Committee

Martha Gould, Chair, Personnel Committee, reported that the Executive Director is meeting with NCLIS staff-members to review and update all position descriptions. In addition, a meeting has been held with officials in the Human Resources Division, U.S. Department of Education, regarding updating position descriptions and to establish procedures for an annual performance appraisal system. During the July Executive Session, Commissioners agreed that responsibility of the Executive Director to execute the direction of the Members and to approve all staff travel, activities, and assignments in advance.

NCLIS Vicechair Gould noted the need for revised NCLIS policies and procedures for both Commissioners and staff.

Mr. Young reported that because NCLIS is a microagency, OMB has issued a permanent exemption from the requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA).

### NCLIS Orientation

An NCLIS orientation session for Commissioners Anderson, Burton and Challinor will be held on Monday, 21 October, in Commissioner Anderson's office in New York City. Chairperson Simon and Peter Young will lead the orientation.

### Title I of S. 1961

In response to the Commission's resolution concerning Title I of S. 1961, Chairperson Simon has received a response, dated 26 August 1996, from Senator Orrin G. Hatch, Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee. Title I of S. 1961, the U.S. Intellectual Property Organization Act of 1996, proposes the removal of the copyright office from the Library of Congress. Sen. Hatch's letter, in part, states, ". . . I am concerned and somewhat confused by the recent resolution adopted by the NCLIS and forwarded to me in your letter. . . Given these facts, it would help me to know the substantive basis for the Commission's position that enactment of S. 1961 will hurt libraries, educational institutions, and industry, and will profoundly impact American research, scholarship, and creativity as well as have a serious global impact. . . ."

Commissioner Anderson stated, "Someone less sensitive than I might call his response 'disingenuous'." Commissioner Lucchino replied, "Regardless of the substance of Senator Hatch's response, our action fulfills our mandate, and we got the respect we deserve! We should look for more opportunities such as this to improve NCLIS' status and reputation."

Winston Tabb offered to send a copy of Dr. Billington's response to Senator Hatch to the NCLIS office. The Commission will formulate a response to the 26 August letter which will be shared with NCLIS Members.

### NCLIS Appropriation

Commissioner Willard asked, "When is NCLIS going to ask the Administration for the funds we really need to operate?" Commissioner Abramson added: "If we are a permanent, independent federal agency, why are we constrained in our budget requests?" NCLIS Chairperson Simon indicated that the draft 1998 budget request was being circulated for review among Commissioners.

Commissioner Furlong urged the development of a strategic plan for raising the Commission's visibility and for building a momentum increase to the NCLIS budget. Several suggestions for more visibility are: (1) Brainstorm with Issue Dynamics Inc. (IDI) regarding electronically publishing the results of NCLIS' work; (2) Schedule an event in Washington, DC to present the NCLIS Silver Awards; and (3) Schedule small public relations events, i.e., informal luncheons, with key people to describe the work of NCLIS. Chairperson Simon added, "The best way to increase visibility is to do one heck of a good job!"

### NCLIS Silver Awards

Commissioner Challinor has been appointed to chair the 25th Anniversary Silver Awards Subcommittee. Other Subcommittee Members are: Walter Anderson; Mary Furlong; and Jane Williams, staff liaison.

### Next NCLIS Meeting

The next NCLIS meeting has been tentatively scheduled for 12-14 December, Washington, DC, pending a final poll of all Commissioners. Suggestions for presentations included: (1) Microsoft 'Libraries Online' initiative; (2) ADSL; and (3) Copyright.. Winston Tabb indicated that the Library of Congress would be glad to host the meeting.

### WHCLIST

Chairperson Simon reported on a 4 September 1996 conference call discussion with officers from the White House Conference on Library and Information Services Taskforce (WHCLIST) regarding a proposal for a national meeting. Models of meetings are being examined and whatever technological advances are available will be used. Discussions continue.