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NLS Reference Guide

Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD)

2017

What is BARD?

BARD, the Braille and Audio and Reading Download from the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS), is a web-based service that provides access to thousands of special-format books, magazines, and music scores. BARD is password-protected, and all files are in an electronic downloadable form of compressed audio or formatted braille. BARD is operated as a partnership between NLS and its network of cooperating libraries in the United States and its territories. NLS maintains the website, uploads titles, and supplies libraries with circulation statistics. Network libraries approve reader applications, respond to reader inquiries, and provide technical support.

What is available on BARD?

BARD makes available books and magazines from the vast NLS collection selected on the basis of their appeal across a wide range of interests. Thousands of audio and braille fiction and nonfiction titles are available, including some in languages other than English. Issues of more than ninety magazine titles are also available. NLS adds new titles regularly, including a growing number of locally produced materials and NLS-acquired music scores and music appreciation books.

BARD Mobile

Since 2013, the BARD Mobile iOS app has been available for iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch. The BARD app allows users to download and listen to talking books and to read braille books using a braille display with a Bluetooth connection. In 2015, NLS released BARD Mobile for Android devices (including Amazon Kindle Fire devices), which allows users access to talking books. BARD Mobile can be downloaded through the App Store, Google Play store, and Amazon Appstore. To download and listen to books and magazines on an iOS or Android device through the BARD Mobile app, users must register for the BARD online service with their network libraries.

Digital talking books

Digital talking books are available on a computer in protected compressed audio file format and can be downloaded as a ZIP file. Once a reader selects, downloads, and saves the file, it can be decompressed and transferred to a USB thumb drive or cartridge to play on a library-provided digital talking-book machine or an approved third-party digital player. Users must be able to access the Internet and be authorized to use the service by their local cooperating library. Basic computer and internet skills, including familiarity with online forms and downloading and unzipping files, are essential.

Ebraille

On a computer, downloaded ebraille (electronic braille) materials can be embossed or read with a refreshable braille display. Users must have a braille display, braille-aware device, or braille embosser to read ebraille files. Ebraille materials are available in contracted and uncontracted format and can be downloaded by individual volume or in a ZIP file containing all volumes of the book (or parts of the magazine).

BARD Express

BARD Express software is free for NLS patrons who use BARD to download audio materials on Microsoft computers. With the touch of a button, BARD Express unzips and transfers files to an NLS cartridge or a USB drive. Step-by-step menus easily move books from a PC to the patron's device of choice. The software boasts a wider range of search-and-browse options to search the catalog. Once downloaded, BARD Express offers sorting options. The software categorizes materials such as magazine and books, and items can be marked as read or unread. Active NLS patrons with a BARD account can download BARD Express from the BARD homepage. Support, "how-to" videos, frequently-asked-questions, and a getting started guide can be found on the BARD Express home page.

Eligibility to use BARD and how to sign up

All active NLS patrons with an email account are eligible for BARD service. NLS patrons may visit nlsbard.loc.gov and follow the link to "BARD application instructions" to complete an online application. They will be contacted by their local cooperating library after submitting the application. Eligible readers may call 1-888-NLS-READ (1-888-657-7323) or visit **www.loc.gov/nls/find.html** to locate their local cooperating library. Eligible institutions who provide NLS services or whose primary purpose is to produce braille books for the use of eligible readers in the United States may also access BARD. The nearest cooperating library may be contacted for more information.

Lost passwords

Users who have lost their passwords to BARD or BARD Mobile should contact the network library where they are registered and request that their

password be reset. It should be explained carefully that the password was forgotten and that a new account is not being requested.

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