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Library of Congress Braille and Talking Book Program Releases Book Download App

People who are blind, visually impaired or have a physical disability can now download audio and braille books to their iPhone, iPad or iPod Touch, if they are registered with the South Dakota State Library's Braille and Talking Book Program, a service of the Library of Congress.

The Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) Mobile app is now available from Apple. The free app allows readers to download audio and braille books from their National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) BARD accounts. In South Dakota, access to BARD is provided through the South Dakota State Library. BARD contains nearly 50,000 books, magazines and music scores in audio and braille formats, with new selections added daily.

"The South Dakota State Library is excited about the opportunity BARD Mobile brings to our community," said State Librarian Daria Bossman. "We have a number of patrons who have already acquired the app."

With BARD Mobile, patrons can play talking books and magazines on their iOS devices. Patrons can also read electronic braille books, magazines and music scores using a refreshable braille display connected to their iPhone, iPad or iPod Touch through Bluetooth. Patrons will be able to receive their reading materials faster and won't have to be weighed down by bulky volumes or playback equipment.

NLS Director Karen Keninger said, "Blind and disabled Americans are as keen as everyone else to use mobile devices. Our younger patrons are particularly eager to use the same gadgets as their peers."

NLS is also working on an app for Android devices.

For more information about the Braille and Talking Book Program, please contact the State Library at 1-800-423-6665 or visit the program's website at <http://library.sd.gov/BTB>.