# DAISY Music Braille collaboration - Research Outline

Dr. Sarah Morley Wilkins - Project Consultant (Accessibility & User Experience Consultant)  
and Arne Kyrkjebø – DAISY Project Sponsor, NLB

23 January 2018

## 1. Introduction

On 27 October 2017 Arne Kyrkjebø of the Norwegian Library of Talking Books and Braille (NLB) wrote to the DAISY board to invite colleagues to join a collaboration around music braille to review and consider music braille services in future (see attached document). There was sufficient interest that Sarah was then brought on board as the Project Consultant, and we shared the invitation more widely in December’s issue of DAISY Planet (<http://www.daisy.org/planet-2017-12#a3>).

This research outline document starts to identify some of the key issues we face as an industry so we can develop full research questions in the next phase of work.

### 1.1 Who is receiving this email

All those who responded to Arne’s DAISY board email and to the DAISY Planet article are receiving this email, as you have all indicated an interested in joining our group. Thank you for signing up!

### 1.2 How you can help – **by Friday 9 February**

This first phase of work is simply to **identify the key issues we need to ask the field** – we are not asking you to answer all these questions right now. A fuller research plan will be developed from the topics we identify in this phase.

You are being invited to comment on these issues from your perspectives – are they the right topics? Is there anything missing? Have you heard of other people, technology, or projects we should be exploring in this research project?

#### Two ways to comment:

1. **As a Word document**: save this file adding your own name at the end of the filename, and add your feedback in each of the ’Comments’ section in the main document. Return the revised file to me as an email attachment.
2. **As text in an email**: send your comments in the body of an email, using the section numbers from the Research Outline so it’s clear which section you’re commenting on.

#### Please send your replies to:

**musicbraille@daisy.org** by **Friday 9 February** please.

### 1.3 What will happen then?

I will collate everyone’s comments, and create a fuller research plan which we will also share with you. That is when you may be asked to provide answers or opinions on the research issues we have identified in this first stage.

### 1.4 Organisations expressing an interest to date

So far, we have named individuals expressing an interest in joining the collaboration who are receiving this email – we expect this may grow as word spreads about the research:

* CNIB (Canada)
* Dedicon (Netherlands)
* DZB (Germany)
* Library of Congress (USA)
* NLB (Norway)
* Once (Spain)
* RNIB (UK)
* SBS (Switzerland)
* Sensus (Denmark)
* Statped (Norway)
* Vision Australia (Australia)

1.4.1 Comments:

## 2. Music braille collections

There are numerous agencies world-wide with music braille collections, and some may share their intermediary files or collections outside of their own region. For example, a list has been collated by the UK Association for Accessible Formats for ICEB:

<https://www.ukaaf.org/worldwide-listing-organisations-producing-loaning-braille-music/>

### 2.1 Comments:

## 3. Groups working on music braille

The following groups have been identified so far who are actively working on music braille (there are almost certainly others)…

* ICEB (International Council on English Braille) Music Committee, chair Jordie Howell:  
  Has 6 areas of activity for coordinating and improving access to music braille resources:

<http://www.iceb.org/garesolutions16.html>

* UKAAF (UK Association for Accessible Formats) Music Subject Area, Chair Sally-Anne Zimmermann:  
  Guidelines, and an international list of braille music providers, and guidance including incorporating UEB:  
  <https://www.ukaaf.org/music/>
* WBU WBC (World Blind Union, World Braille Council), Chair Kevin Carey:  
  Press release on 4 Jan 2018 suggests some focus on music braille this year – I have asked Kevin to comment:  
  <http://www.worldblindunion.org/English/news/Pages/WBU-statement-for-World-Braille-Day,-January-4,-2018.aspx>
* BANA (Braille Authority of North America) Music Braille Technical Committee, Chair Dan Geminder:  
  Produced its own braille music guidelines, including incorporating UEB:  
  <http://www.brailleauthority.org/music/music.html>

### 3.1 Comments:

## 4. Research areas

Issues relating to the production and use of music braille seem to fall into 4 broad areas, described in turn in the following sections:

1. Music translation specialists
2. Technical
3. Users
4. Music publishers

### 4.1. Music translation specialists

Research issues could include:

* processes
* requirements
* capacity to attract, train and retain skilled staff
* files received from publishers
* files received from other agencies
* files created in-house
* international guidelines used
* local manuals used, and localised variations in layout
* tools used – commercial or bespoke
* interest in standardising further, and any non-negotiable areas
* restrictions on sharing files
* willingness to fulfil publishing requests from other agencies
* experience of outsourcing music braille production
* experience of sharing/receiving/using intermediary files with localised differences
* procurement requirements (contractual issues)
* impact of UEB on music braille guidelines/production
* standards bodies with working groups on music braille: e.g. UKAAF, ICEB, BANA, ABA:

UKAAF: <https://www.ukaaf.org/music/>

ICEB: <http://www.iceb.org/garesolutions16.html>

BANA: <http://www.brailleauthority.org/music/music.html>

ABA: <http://brailleaustralia.org/about-braille/music-braille/>

New International Manual of Music Braille (searchable resource): <http://www.brl.org/music/manual/>

* what is being said about music braille and how agencies feel about this
* where you see the future for music braille tools and services
* what 3 things would you like done to improve music braille production
* How to engage specialists: online or email survey / a few skype calls?

#### 4.1.1 Comments:

### 4.2. Technical

Research issues could include:

* tools - pros and cons
* file formats received from publishers and sticking points in conversion tools
* scanning software – effective or need improvements
* how to handle files containing music and text
* wish list for tool development
* localisation opportunities to be built into tools
* where developers see the future for tools
* ipads, digital scores and braille displays
* any new developments you think are relevant for music braille
* what 3 things would you like done to improve music braille production
* How to engage technical folk: technical group to explore; online or email survey / a few skype calls?

Relevant links:

* Music XML - the standard open format for exchanging digital sheet music - <http://www.musicxml.com/>
* GoodFeel software – braille music translation software - <http://www.dancingdots.com/main/goodfeel.htm>
* Toccata – braille music translation software -   
  <http://www.pentronics.com.au/index_files/Toccata.htm>
* BrailleMuse - online music braille transcription (upload MusicXML file) -

<http://gotoh-lab.jks.ynu.ac.jp/braille_music_score/en/>

* SyncPhonia - iPad digital scores for conductor and players -   
  <http://www.syncphonia.co.uk/>
* Orbit 20 braille display – an upcoming low-cost braille display – will it display music braille?  
  <http://www.transformingbraille.org/>

#### 4.2.1 Comments:

### 4.3. Users

Research issues could include:

* estimated numbers, disciplines, ages
* current requirements for music braille
* experiences of obtaining necessary score
* experiences of using music braille with localised differences
* paper music braille compared with refreshable braille
* what is being said about music braille and how users feel about this
* biggest wish for music braille in the future
* changing use of technology in their musical lives: ipads, digital scores, braille displays
* what 3 things would you like done to improve music braille production
* How to engage users: online or email survey / a few skype calls / a local focus group?

#### 4.3.1 Comments:

### 4.4. Music publishers

Research issues could include:

* processes and file formats available
* copyright requirements restricting what they can share
* anything they could do to make music braille publishing easier
* some are likely to be especially keen to participate, e.g.
  + Barenreiter ‘the listening publisher’, OUP, Edition Peters, Carus Verlag, Boosey & Hawkes, Chester Novello, Schott, Pearson.
* what 3 things would you like done to improve music braille production
* how they see the future for accessible music publishing
* How to engage music publishers/software developers: email, phone.

Software used by music publishers include:

* Sibelius - <http://www.avid.com/sibelius>
* Dorico – <https://www.steinberg.net/en/products/dorico/start.html>
* Finale - <https://www.finalemusic.com/>
* MuseScore - <https://musescore.org/en>
* Score - <http://www.scoremus.com/>
* Harmony Assistant - <http://www.myriad-online.com/en/products/harmony.htm>
* Prima Vista (no longer used as the owner Lydia has retired, but it was a plug-in for Sibelius which could be used to modify print publisher’s music files to create music braille) - <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2011/feb/15/prima-vista-musical-visually-impaired>

#### 4.4.1 Comments:

## 5. Nice videos about braille music

* Braille Music: a feature-length film on Amazon Prime:   
  This internationally acclaimed British documentary film follows five professional blind musicians as they create a piece of music in homage to Louis Braille, creator of the tactile reading system for the blind. The film also explores Louis Braille's musical life in Paris. Everyone in this film is blind.   
  <https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/video/detail/B077H6GJMD>
* Pianist: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qq3tCi3pJ9E>
* Flautist: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8JrvfkyfrIs>

### 5.1 Comments:

--- SMW -- 23 January 2018 ---