

H A R L A N R I C H A R D S

May 2, 2017

Spending Those Nickels - Messaging In Prison

The electronic messaging system has been up and running for over a month. I thought I'd give an update on how it's working.

First, the good news. It is great to be able to send short messages to friends and family every day and to get messages from them as well. It adds another dimension to my life and an opportunity to connect with people in the free world. But there are some problems.

First of all, it is very confusing for free world people to navigate the corrlinks website. It is not user friendly and does not explain things very well. And many messages disappear. My cousin messages me every day but I don't get all of them. I don't know where they go. They are not listed as denied, they just disappear. One friend I sent 4 messages to, did not receive any of them. He paid the extra \$6 to have all my messages forwarded to his email account but it never happened. When he checked the website, all my messages were sitting there, unforwarded.

Those are the issues I can verify. What I can't verify is how many other messages weren't delivered? If the system is so unreliable that we can't have faith in our messages being delivered, it undermines the entire system.

Another problem is trying to use the kiosks for messaging. It takes 10 minutes to write a couple of lines because the kiosk is so tedious and cumbersome. We can get up to 3 - 20 minute periods per day which doesn't give us much time to text. And there is one kiosk for 100 prisoners. If everybody wanted to get their full hour it would be impossible. The day room is only open 9 hours per day. Thus far, not many guys are doing much messaging. As time goes by, it will get to be a problem. If we had tablets, that would fix our problem with lack of access.

We have been told that tablets have been delayed by 6 months because the Keefe representative did not show up at the April warden's meeting to demonstrate the tablets. It will be 6 months until the next meeting and nothing will be done until then. Is that any way to run a business? Or a prison system?

All in all, I'm grateful for messaging. I just wish they would do a better job of implementing the system.