

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

April 25, 2018

Good News On Tablets

It is a long, slow slog on the road to the 21st century for Stanley. The Business Office posted an announcement last week applauding the fact that we have had email messaging in Stanley for a year. That is great news. Prison officials have had a year of kiosks to get comfortable with prisoners using email. They know what the rest of us knew all along: that granting prisoners email access is not cause for widespread panic among DOC officials.

The biggest obstacle to prisoners having tablets is the need for DOC officials to reassure themselves that prisoners having tablets is not a security risk. Tablets are something that even gradeschoolers take for granted yet are still not available to prisoners in Wisconsin. But that may be changing soon.

It appears that the tablet model has been selected based on changes to the Division of Adult Institutions (DAI) Policy 309.20.03, effective April 1, 2018. It states in pertinent part:

"Tablet - including AC adapter and earbuds:
40G, 5 inch screen, clear case. Must be from approved contract vendor. Protective cover may be purchased separately from approved contract vendor. Limit 1 (included earbuds count toward total limit count)."

An unconfirmed rumor is that the tablets will cost \$120.

Based on the foregoing, I anticipate that tablets will become available in the next few months. I assume that 40 G means 40 gigabytes of memory. With tablets we will be able to compose emails in our cells and send them via WI-FI to the kiosk. That will enable us to do more than send short little notes. Currently, we only get up to 20 minutes at a time, 3 times per day to message. The kiosk is hard to operate and time consuming so relatively few emails are sent and those are short.

Another benefit is the ability to buy music to listen to. Even if it is more expensive than free-world downloads, it will be such a treat to listen to what I want to hear instead of what the local radio station is playing.

All I can say is thank God for another blessing.