

Monthly Progress, Operations & Impact Summary

October was the month Mars Theory began putting finished tools in people's hands. Our mission is unchanged: making digital literacy, neuro-inclusive design, and community wellness resources accessible to everyone. This month, that work became two apps in early beta, two free journals, a free game, and four new pages on our website.

Executive Summary: During October, Mars Theory renamed its reading tracker from Waypoint to Lanternway and opened early beta testing for both of its apps. We also released two free journals and a free browser game, added four pages and two articles to marstheory.org, and strengthened privacy and security across the website and both apps.

Monthly Operations Timeline

Our key operational milestones and development steps throughout October 2026 include:

- **October 8, 2026:** Published "Why Pen-and-Paper Journaling Helps Restore Your Focus."
- **October 12, 2026:** Set the pricing plans for Lanternway for Organizations, for libraries, churches, schools, and workplaces.
- **October 15, 2026:** Renamed our reading tracker from Waypoint to Lanternway to reduce trademark risk, and settled how organizations will create reading activities for their members.
- **October 17, 2026:** Published our Accessibility statement and launched "Lonely? You're In Good Company," a page that connects people with libraries, book groups, 211, and 988.
- **October 18, 2026:** Opened early beta testing for Lanternway and our second app, Plainword, and updated our Privacy Policy and Terms of Service to cover both.
- **October 20, 2026:** Confirmed key security settings in Lanternway, and set up the contact form so every message is sorted by its reason for contact.
- **October 21, 2026:** Created two free journals, Any Amount Counts and Keep What Helps.
- **October 22, 2026:** Launched the Free Journals page and built A Week at Pinemoor, a free browser game.
- **October 23, 2026:** Released A Week at Pinemoor at pinemoor.marstheory.org, added the journals as free downloads, strengthened the website's security settings, and drafted Mars Theory's Written Information Security Program.

- **Entire Month of October:** Continued development and testing of both apps, including several rounds of in-depth review before and during the beta.

App Development Status

Waypoint is now **Lanternway**. We changed the name on October 15 to reduce trademark risk. The app itself keeps the same purpose: a free, no-pressure reading tracker for every age, with no ads and no streaks.

Lanternway: Early Beta

- In early beta on the web since October 18, at app.marstheory.org. iPhone and Android versions are being prepared.
- Readers earn Bounty Tokens by reading and spend them in the Armory, a prize shop with fixed prices. Tokens are earned only, never bought.
- Nine levels, badges, quests, cooperative quests, and activities that organizations create for their readers.
- Family profiles: a parent can add children under 13 after agreeing to a notice, as federal law (COPPA) requires. A grown-up PIN protects grown-ups' profiles on shared devices.
- Fair-play limits: reading can be logged for today and yesterday, up to 8 hours a day, and minutes count the same in every format.
- Sign-in by one-time email code, Apple, or Google, so Lanternway stores no passwords.
- As of October 18, the app passed 396 automated tests and 142 database checks.

Plainword, an easy-to-read Bible app, also opened a small private beta on October 18, at plainword.marstheory.org. It is free, with no account, ads, or trackers, and readers' notes stay on their own devices. As of October 18, it passed 159 automated tests.

Free Resources Released

This month we released three free resources. None of them require a sign-up, and none have ads:

1. Any Amount Counts

A no-pressure, semi-guided journal made for neurodivergent minds, harder seasons, or both. Every question page offers three ways in: circle a word, write a line or two, or keep going. It includes pages for low-energy days, feeling stuck, and masking, plus a plan for hard moments and plain-language explainers.

2. Keep What Helps

A no-pressure skills journal for steadier seasons, with gentle, step-by-step pages drawn from CBT, DBT, and related approaches, such as checking a thought, riding out an urge, and planning a hard conversation.

Both journals come as free PDFs in tablet and printable versions, set in Lexend. Each explains the research behind its pages, lists full sources, and states plainly that it is not therapy.

3. A Week at Pinemoor

A free browser game, about 20 minutes long, about a week at work with reading, focus, masking, and energy hurdles: how they pile up, and how the right supports change the day. It includes help for workers and employers, pointing to the Job Accommodation Network and the ADA National Network.

Published Content & Community Guides

We also published new articles and a community page designed to inform, support, and connect our audience:

1. Why Pen-and-Paper Journaling Helps Restore Your Focus

An article on how screens tax our attention and how writing by hand gives the mind a break, from less glare to fewer interruptions.

2. Finding the Right Physical Journal for Your Analog Routine

A hands-on review of 10 journals from 10 different brands, bought with personal funds, with no sponsors and no affiliate links, and judged on the same eight qualities, from price and paper to lay-flat binding.

3. Beyond September: Forming a Sustainable Reading Habit in a Distracted World

Published September 30, after our September report.

Why reading goals fade once National Literacy Month ends, and practical steps for a reading routine that lasts.

4. Lonely? You're In Good Company

A page for anyone who picks up a Mars Theory card, pointing to library book groups, reading with others, volunteer tutoring, 211, and 988.

Website Updates

- **Four new pages:** Free Journals by Mars Theory, Accessibility, Lonely? You're In Good Company, and a page for Plainword, plus a link to A Week at Pinemoor.
- **Accessibility statement:** we aim for marstheory.org and our apps to meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 at level AA.
- **Updated policies:** the Privacy Policy, Terms of Service, and Do Not Sell pages now cover the website and both apps, including children's privacy.
- **Contact form:** eight reasons for contact, including joining either beta, course credit, and Read More author submissions.
- **Community Resources:** now lists the reading and language courses that earn Lanternway Bounty Tokens.

Privacy & Security

- No ads, no tracking cookies, and no selling of personal information on our website or in either app.
- Added security settings to marstheory.org on October 23, raising its Mozilla Observatory score from 45 to 75. Both apps score 80.
- marstheory.org appears on none of the 9 blocklists that Sucuri SiteCheck checks (October 23).
- Drafted a Written Information Security Program, which the updated federal children's privacy rule (COPPA) requires, with a yearly risk review and a testing calendar.
- Lanternway's organization dashboards show totals only: no names, no reading lists, and nothing for groups smaller than 10.

Initiatives & Partnerships

The "**Read More**" Campaign is collecting author videos about reading habits, and its Author Video Guidelines are available on the Read More page. The first interview is coming soon.

Lanternway for Organizations now has pricing plans for libraries, churches, schools, and workplaces. Library pilots are planned for 2027. Schools will follow, and no student will join until Mars Theory and the school district sign a student data privacy agreement.

Looking Ahead

- Gather feedback from beta testers of both apps, and keep fixing what they find.
 - Prepare the iPhone and Android versions of both apps.
 - Work toward the first Read More author interview.
 - Offer printed copies of the journals if enough people ask for them.
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A Note on Communications: This document serves as our complete, unabridged monthly archive for PDF distribution and site records.

Mars Theory | Digital Literacy, Accessibility & Community Wellness

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