

School Library Journal

For Children's, Young Adult and School Librarians

The Best in Kids' Books—at Your Fingertips

By Shonda Brisco — *School Library Journal*, 10/01/2009

We've all had those days when a teacher runs into the library at the last minute, searching for a list of award-winning books—she wants all of the honored titles and not just the big awards—plus the reading and grade levels and genre for each. Your head spins, you completely forget the names of any of the awards, and to make matters worse, the teacher tells you that she'll be back in half an hour for the list. What sounds like a miserable research project doesn't have to be. With the **Children's Literature Comprehensive Database (CLCD)**, you can access all this information and emerge a library superstar.

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE COMPREHENSIVE DATABASE CLCD Company www.childrenslit.com A free, seven-day trial is available by completing the online form at: clcd.odyssey.com/admin/form.pl

Audience: Teachers and librarians, as well as high school and college students interested in particular content or award-winning books.

Cost: The cost for a personal subscription is \$295 per year. The discounted subscription rates for school and public libraries with unlimited access are based on enrollment or population. To determine your library's subscription rate, call (301) 469-2070 for details, or locate your local sales representative at www.childrenslit.com/about/sales_reps.php

The Big Picture: CLCD was founded in 1993 by librarian Marilyn Courtot as a way to help librarians, teachers, parents, and childcare providers select outstanding literature for children and young adults. With a staff of 125 librarians providing reviews of 4,000+ books a year, CLCD is an independent review source that offers an unbiased review of children's and young adult literature. In addition to the independent reviews, CLCD also includes reviews from professional resources such as *The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*, *The Horn Book*, *Library Media Connection*, *Science Books & Films*, and *VOYA* (Voice of Youth Advocates), just to name a few. CLCD also includes titles that have been awarded state, national, or international medals. Included in the database are over 260,000 entries of these select titles, and more than 60 "best book" lists taken from sources such as *School Library Journal*, the International Reading Association, the National Conference of Teachers of English, and the National Council for the Social Studies. Finally, to make certain that no book has been missed, CLCD includes the standard bibliographies from H. W. Wilson's school catalogs. In all, CLCD's database provides more than 345,000 reviews, over a million MARC records, over 200,000 author and illustrator Web links, and one million+ award-winning books, curriculum tools, and reading lists.

Look & Feel: Before one enters the actual database, CLCD's Web site (www.childrenslit.com/childrenslit/home.html) offers links to themed reviews, author and publisher sites, lesson plans, and information about upcoming events related to authors and their books. You'll also find links to book award sites, including the Alex and Audie Awards and the Coretta Scott King Award, all listed on one page. There's a link to recommended reading and best-book lists (such as "100 Picture Books Everyone Should Know"), and an author and illustrator network Web page, which lists those who can be contacted for school appearances, as well as tips and guidelines for hosting an author.

On CLCD's home page, a Monthly Features link provides a list of Web sites relating to literature, as well as current events, history, and monthly holidays. Featured Authors are listed below the Monthly Features section with links to their pages, and a list of authors celebrating a birthday during the month appears on the right-hand side of the home page, making this a one-stop resource for locating specific information to share with teachers and students. All this information is just a hint of the wonderful things in store for users once they've accessed the actual database.

From CLCD's search page, the wide variety of options available to users can be a bit overwhelming. There's a full-text search box, as well as word search criteria selection, a specific field search, unique search qualifiers such as honor books, author/illustrator links, and professional resources. Finally, a lengthy list of additional search qualifiers lets users define the age of the reader, grade level, publication date ranges, genre, the language of the book, the series, reading level, interest level, Lexile range, and even country of publication.

While most librarians would execute a successful search within minutes, teachers and students may become frustrated when faced with having to narrow their search terms or include additional search options to locate the desired resources.

So most users may prefer to use the Browse search page, which allows them to enter a simple search term, author's name, subject, Dewey classification, or reviewer's name to locate material. However, the results resemble a lengthy list of search terms rather than specific book titles, so users will need to be trained in how to search this database effectively in order to achieve successful results. A Help page explains how to formulate various search strategies, and the Tutorial provides additional information about how the database works. Both of these topic links can be found at: clcd.odyssey.com/member/chelp1.htm

How it Works: By selecting various combinations of qualifiers or selecting various search fields on the CLCD Search page, users can secure a distinctive list of results. While searching the term "vampire," for example, limiting the range from between 12 to 14 years of age and selecting fiction as the category, the results show approximately 340 titles. If the publication date is limited to show only titles published from 2008 through 2010, the results show 59 of the latest books on the topic.

The database can also be used to locate material for curriculum-related projects. Select reading levels of particular subjects, for example, to help in locating materials for the library or classroom reading programs, such as Reading Counts or Accelerated Reader or make lists of award-winning books. The extensive full-text book reviews available for each title can support collection development policies if you are faced with a book challenge.

CLCD also lets subscribers add a one-time upgrade, which allows the database to search the library's online catalog for each title. Users simply click the "check if your library holds this title" link to immediately locate the book in the school library catalog.

Once titles are selected, the user can save checked items and create a Custom Report, which includes the author, title, publisher, copyright date, ISBN, and annotation of the book. This report can either be saved in HTML format or printed. Finally, for librarians who want to add more curriculum content to their MARC records, CLCD provides the option for selecting titles within the database and downloading full MARC record files for updating the online catalog. Librarians can quickly access MARC records for many books by searching (or scanning) the ISBN into CLCD's search box. And they'll be happy to find that many missing content areas within the MARC record (such as reading, Lexile, and interest levels, review source information, etc.) are available within each CLCD MARC record.

For Students and Teachers: While this database primarily focuses on children's and young adult literature, some young adults in both high school and college may find the database useful for locating specific information regarding reviews or additional titles for future reading.

For teachers and librarians: CLCD provides a wealth of information relating to a wide variety of materials for those working with children and young adults. Because CLCD provides thousands of reviews for literary works found in most public and school libraries, it can be an invaluable tool for collection development. For those librarians needing to update their MARC records to provide additional research content for students and teachers, CLCD allows users to easily update their records without searching for alternative resources or purchasing additional software.

The search page may initially overwhelm novice database users. But after practicing various search options, most users will easily locate the resources they need without additional assistance.

Report Card: This database was tested with preservice teachers and librarians who wanted to see specific search capabilities. Teachers wanted to add multiple search boxes for additional terms (such as an advanced search option), while librarians desired the option to "select all" from the results page rather than individually select each title (especially for longer lists). However, both groups agreed that the search results offered a lengthy list of content that might not be found in other databases. The ability to quickly locate reviews from various professional journals, as well as having the reading and interest levels of books both searchable and accessible to the school's online catalog were a big plus. As more upgrades are made to address searching and selecting capabilities, it's certain that CLCD will find a home in many libraries serving children and young adults. In the meantime, for providing users with a great deal of information both before and after we actually accessed the database, **CLCD deserves a solid A.**