



The CLCD Company, LLC
www.childrenslit.com

CLCD and the Public Libraries A Case Study

Reaching readers of all ages is a prime goal of most public libraries. Having an excellent collection of materials for young people and the ability to move those books from the shelves into their hands is critical in the development of lifelong learners. Many public libraries are finding the Children's Literature Comprehensive Database to be instrumental in getting the right book at the right time into the hands of young people, their parents, and their teachers.



Meg Anthony, Head of Youth Services at the Deerfield (IL) Public Library, has used the database and its complementary other services, for several years. The library staff praises the database for helping

them with Readers' Advisory in real time as well as virtually through their website. Deerfield is a suburban community with a population of approximately 20,000 and is located approximately 25 miles northwest of Chicago. With a well educated, middle to upper class base, the library circulates over 300,000 items each year. Free wireless service is available at the library and its catalog and database collections, including CLCD, are available remotely.

Sharon Hrycewicz is Children's Reference Coordinator at Downers Grove Public Library, a western Chicago suburb, with a population around 50,000. Over 35% of its citizens over 25 hold a bachelor's or advanced degree. It is a firmly middle class community that, Hrycewicz says, "loves their library."

With a col-



lection of over 300,000 and a circulation of over 1,000,000 items, the facts back her up! "The database is huge in helping us build and maintain our collection," said Hrycewicz. "We rely heavily on the aggregate full-text reviews when deciding what to purchase. It's more helpful for librarians than Novelist." The staff is into "heavy" Readers' Advisory and CLCD is a favorite tool to that end for the staff. Not only do they use it when on the floor, but also when compiling thematic or genre booklists. "We tend to make our bibliographies mostly developmental, so the Database's providing Interest Level as well as Reading Level is key." Downer's Grove decided to add remote access to CLCD in 2008. "It helps parents and kids make better selections," Hrycewicz commented. "College students in literature and library classes also use it."



Anthony also mentioned the Youth Librarians rely on CLCD when creating all sorts of booklists for children and young adults. "We use CLCD to help us build book lists of all sorts. Thematic booklists, as well as genre lists, are a big part of our Readers' Advisory services, particularly when it's not a Youth Services person on the desk," she said. The database allows staff to search by subject, keyword, reading lexile, and more. "Our schools relay test scores to parents and emphasize to them the need for students to be encouraged to read at the right level," said Anthony. "The database allows staff to quickly find books on the right level."

"Even though we read a lot," Anthony went on, "it's impossible to know all the books. The database helps us quickly refresh our memories on



themes or topics—or when our minds just go blank! In fact, we found the database so helpful we decided to make it available remotely via our website. Parents watched us use it and wanted to have access at home. We give one-to-one demonstrations frequently to parents.” Naturally, teachers also make use of the remote access. The library staff has visited the schools to speak at staff meetings about CLCD. “We provide a handout with screen shots and walk them through searching, demonstrating typical searches and the value of the limiters.” Teachers “love it” and marvel at the ease with which they can enter interest and reading levels, access state and award lists, or topics. Deerfield staff finds CLCD’s electronic newsletter’s Search Tip of the Month helpful. “The newsletter facilitates using the database more efficiently and helps us be aware of more of its features.”

At the Lee County Library System in southwestern Florida, Diane Lettieri manages collection development for 12 libraries and a Bookmobile. The system covers 800 square miles, with a population of 550,000 full-time residents; tourists and seasonal Floridians also use the Library System. The population is quite diverse ethnically and the System offers a Spanish and World Language Collection as well as Language Instructional Materials through its branches. Economically, the county is also mixed, ranging from people living in real poverty to millionaires.

Lettieri’s responsibilities include overseeing the System’s orders, in multiple formats, for toddlers through teens. Collaborative efforts include administering series and “best sellers” ordering, monthly selection lists, and individual requests from branches. She has relied on CLCD for over 4 years to facilitate that process, citing its aggregate reviews and inclusion of lexile and Accelerated Reading levels as two of the database’s often-used features. AR is heavily used in many of the schools and the System’s collection definitely augments what is available in the schools. “We are currently using the database to help us add AR levels to our MARC levels.”

The database is available to patrons both in the library and remotely, so teachers and parents may also use it to search for appropriate levels for their students or children. “We often encourage our librarians to use CLCD, and remind them at our Collection Development meetings as well as through email and our electronic staff newsletter. And use it they do, using the many search parameters that are available as well as the Awards and Best Books lists. When library staff meets with teachers, they make sure teachers are aware of its availability to them.” Many, including Lettieri, are especially happy to have links to author’s websites so easily available.



As budget cuts have impacted the System and Lettieri’s responsibilities have expanded, CLCD is a real time-saver. “It’s also very cost effective,” said Lettieri. “Professional journals continue to go up in price. Using the database has allowed us to cut some subscriptions without sacrificing access to professional reviews.” She also likes that CLCD often has its own reviewers, librarians and children’s literature experts in the field; in fact, Lee County is proud that one of their librarians reviews for CLCD. “Knowing that gave extra assurance on the quality of reviews,” Lettieri added.

All three librarians mentioned using CLCD daily and often several times a day. “What a valuable resource!” said Hrycewicz. “We started with CLCD on a trial basis. It became an instant staff favorite.”

