Auto-Graphics, Inc. partners with CLCD to identify reading programs and other relevant enhancements for Harrison County Library System's children's collection.

Overview:

When faced with the challenge of MARC record enhancement for children's content, Harrison County Library System (MS) contacted Auto-Graphics in search of a solution. As the cataloging software provider for Harrison County Library System (HCLS), A-G was the logical place to begin looking for options to capture Reading Program information as well as enhancements for the MARC records in their children's collection. This would not only streamline the cataloging process it would also give HCLS's numerous pre-school and school-aged patrons access to additional content such as reviews, book awards, and suggested titles. While there was an opportunity to manually (batch) enhance the records, this process would have to be repeated on a regular basis to keep the database current and to address new records, making this impractical. With this approach eliminated, the teams at HCLS and A-G agreed to research alternative solutions. The idea of integrating real-time third-party data emerged and became a promising, viable resolution to the problem.

Background:

Harrison County Library System located in Mississippi is a longtime customer of Auto-Graphics serving a population of roughly 210,000 residents. The annual circulation of HCLS averages 315,000 among its nine locations with 42% of transactions attributed to their children's collection (IMLS 2021 data).

The Challenge:

In recent history, HCLS staff and catalogers chose not include data from the Reading Program fields (521 & 526) due to the lack of standardization. Cataloging staff were hindered in the task of including data for Accelerated Reader, Lexile, and Reading Counts due to the numerous versions of data. In addition, the time involved in researching such information for inclusion was not cost productive for the library system. Without uniform entries for the Reading Program fields, using these parameters for searching the catalog confusing for patrons and didn't produce comprehensive results. This lack of detailed MARC records meant that library patrons had limited ability to find children's content based on age and related reading level. The existing records often omitted award information, reviews, and jacket art, as well. Reference staff at HCLS were routinely compiling lists of children's materials organized by reading levels from alternative sources and comparing the information to their collection to fulfill patron requests.

This was labor-intensive and didn't guarantee that all appropriate materials were identified. Because almost half of their circulation involved children's materials, it became crucial to remedy this situation and HCLS reached out to A-G in hopes of finding a solution.

The Solution:

Initially, A-G's VERSO product managers explored the idea of batch or even manual MARC record enhancements, but this would have required excessive staff hours (for both organizations) and would have been too costly for the library as the data would have to be updated frequently to keep the records current. Knowing that A-G had a very good working relationship with Children's Literature Comprehensive Database (CLCD), the idea of integrating CLCD content dynamically into HCLS's catalog seemed to be a promising path to explore.

For over 20 years, CLCD has been a leader in providing diverse, unbiased reviews and one search access to PreK-12 media of all types. CLCD staff compiles and creates information such as book reviews, thematic lists, award listings, and curriculum tools providing an extensive collection of materials to meet the diverse needs of libraries across the country:

- Deep and Comprehensive Content.
- 3.4 Million Value Added Data Points.
- Over 1 million PreK-12, Fiction and Non-Fiction, titles in the database.
- Largest collection of over 600,000+ Professional Reviews from 53 sources.
- Largest Complete Collection of 1000+ Award Institutions, detailing over 4,700 awards and over 210,000 award notations.

For this project to be successful, the relevant details for each MARC record would have to be discoverable and visible within HCLS's existing OPAC interface. Auto-Graphics began the process of integrating a data feed directly from CLCD's database into VERSO. Records in VERSO are matched with the available CLCD data using ISBN.

This solution takes the burden off catalogers to standardize MARC data in fields 521 & 526   for accurate searching using data that comes from a trustworthy source. The data is now consistent so that records can be searched and retrieved effectively.

During a patron search, all MARC and CLDC data will be used simultaneously for the discovery of items as well as for display. For patrons wanting to find children's materials that match a particular reading level, they are able to do so using the Advanced Search feature using data points available from CLCD incorporated.
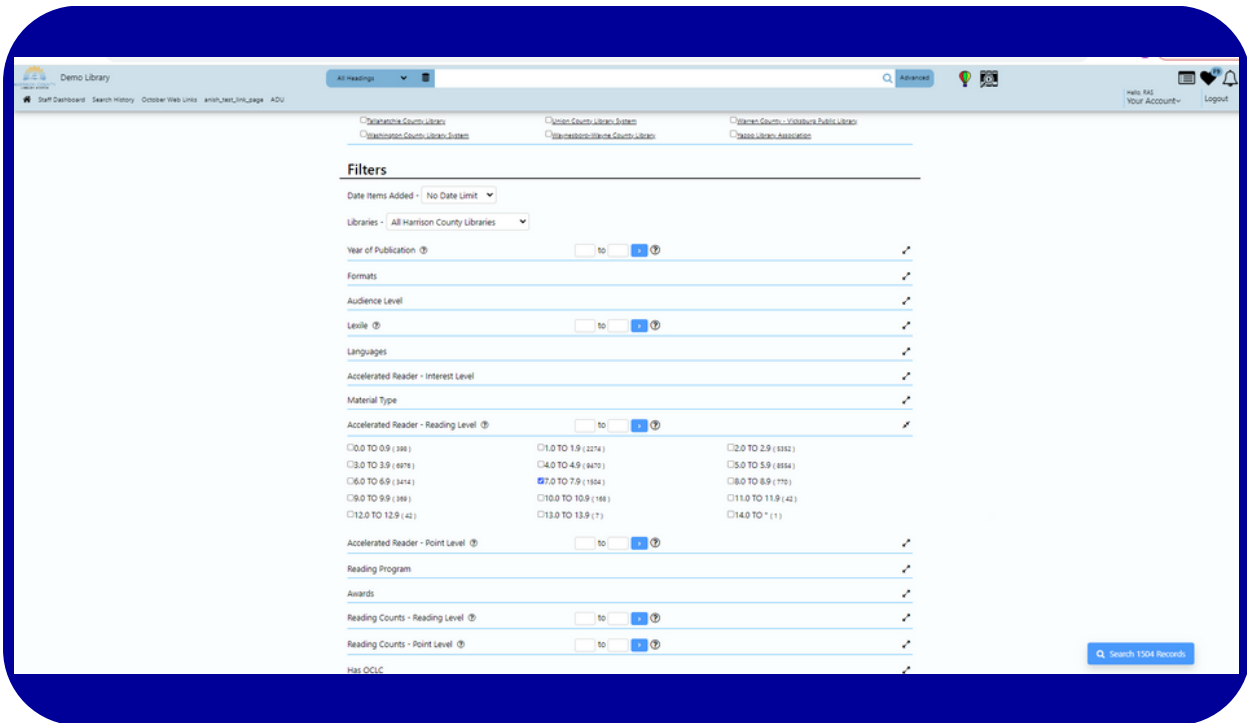
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To find materials by Lexile or Accelerated Reader levels, the library patron would select "Advanced Search" from the OPAC landing page:

Scrolling down through the filters, the library patron will find reading levels:
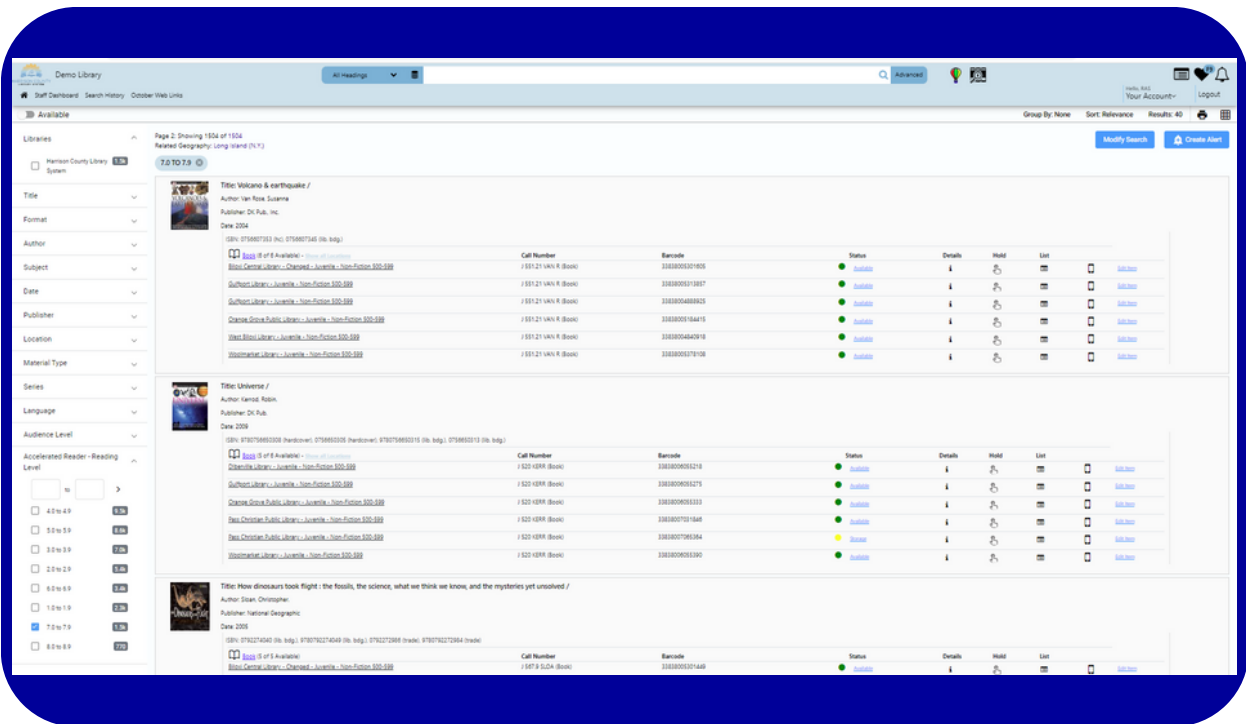
The patron can select the reading level measurement they are interested in:
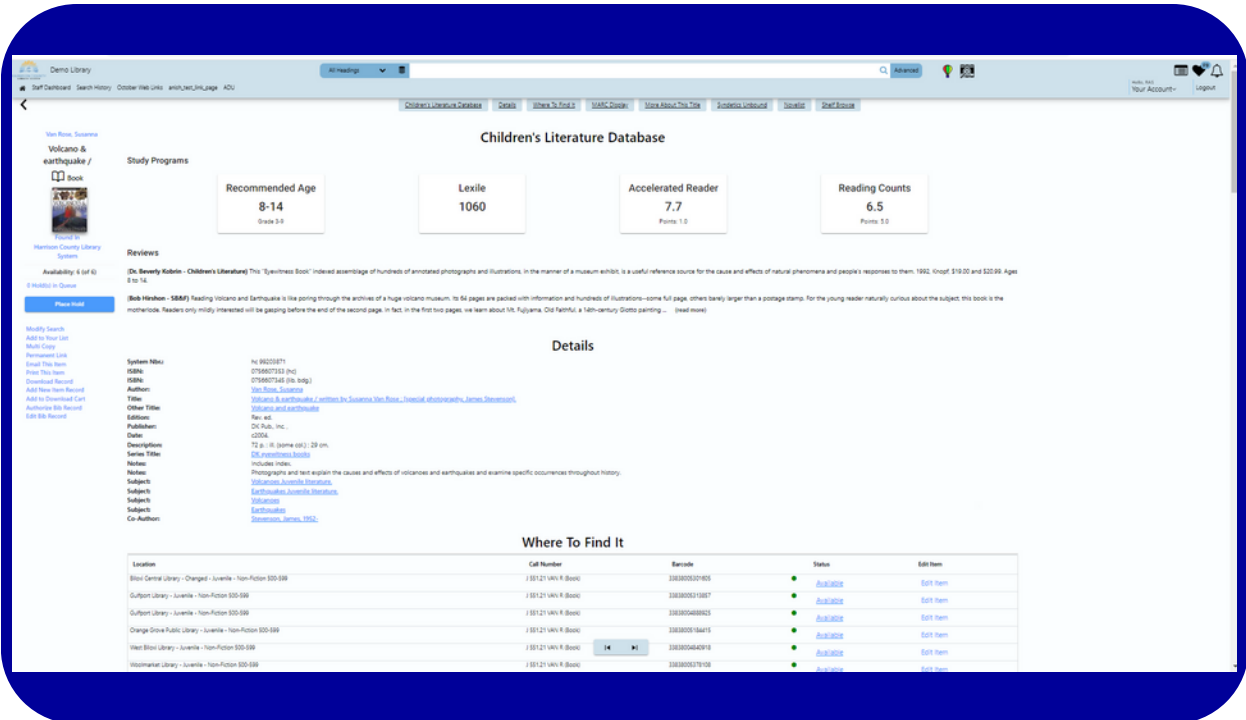

After the system returns a set of results (show here in cluster or FRBR-like display) the facets are shown on the left side to allow a patron to further filter their results:
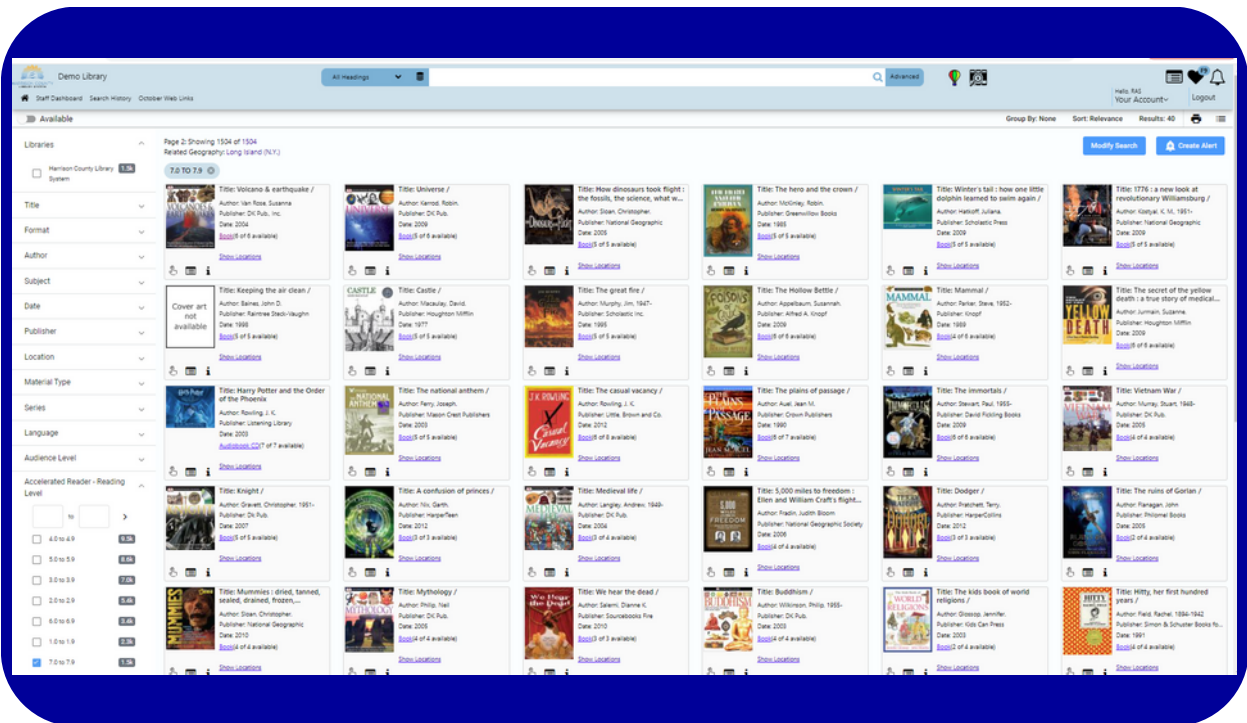
Results can also be displayed in a list format:

After clicking on a record, all relevant CLCD data will be displayed for the title along with available formats and locations:

Conclusion

When examining the challenge of standardizing Reading Program information for HCLS's MARC records Auto-Graphics determined the best approach to be an integration of CLCD's robust database. The integration of this data provides accurate reading levels, book reviews, awards, and recommendations for HCLS's children's collection. By using this method rather than manually updating the MARC records, A-G was able to provide comprehensive title information for each record in HCLS's collection efficiently and at a much lower cost. This method also benefits the cataloging staff by allowing their time and effort to be focused elsewhere. With less time spent on researching the type of information provided by CLCD, the catalogers can be more productive and cost efficient.

Jennifer Noll, Youth Services Librarian, Woolmarket Public Library finds the integration very useful:
 "I use it to help me find books that are appropriate for storytime, and when parents come in with children looking for AR books."

This has created an opportunity for all Auto-Graphics' customers using VERSO for their ILS to add the CLCD content to their yearly subscription. Additionally, the CLCD content is now available for A-G customers using SHAREit for their statewide resource-sharing (ILL). For more information about Auto-Graphics suite of library automation software or to add CLCD to your Auto-Graphics' subscription please call (800) 776-6939 or send us a message at info@auto-graphics.com.

Children's Literature Database (CLCD) is the leading provider of comprehensive children's and young adult literature information. Founded in 1999, CLCD offers an extensive collection of book reviews, awards, reading levels, subject classifications, and more, catering to the needs of booksellers, libraries, and educators worldwide. For more information, please contact Dr. Ajay Gupte, CLCD President at 888-611-2523 or info@clcd.com.

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