

**The California Community Colleges
CCL-EAR Committee
Preview
Bowker's *RCLweb*
February 20, 2007**

DATABASE OVERVIEW & CONTENTS

RCLweb is the online version of *Resources for College Libraries*; the recently published successor to the third edition (1988) of Bowker's *Books for College Libraries*. Both print and online products represent a collaboration between the Bowker corporation and *Choice*, a publishing division of the Association of College and Research Libraries. *RCLweb* is intended "to serve as the basis for a suite of resources for collection development, reference, and bibliographic instruction" for the undergraduate level. The online edition, which will be updated quarterly, is comprised of a core list of over 65,000 books and electronic resources in 58 "curriculum-specific" subject areas. Three-hundred-and-fifty academic librarians and faculty "hand-selected" the titles.

The search interface seems straightforward. The welcome screen offers a variety of browsing and search options.

Figure 1. *RCLWeb* Welcome screen.

What Would You Like To Do?

- » [Write a Research Paper?](#)
- » [Find Appropriate Course Materials?](#)
- » [Find Materials to Add to Your Library?](#)
- » [Learn More About RCL?](#)

Browse by ...

- » [RCL Subject](#)
- » [Award Name](#)
- » [LC Classification](#)
- » [Award Category](#)
- » [Title](#)
- » [Publisher Name](#)
- » [Author](#)
- » [Series Title](#)

Quick Search:
for
in

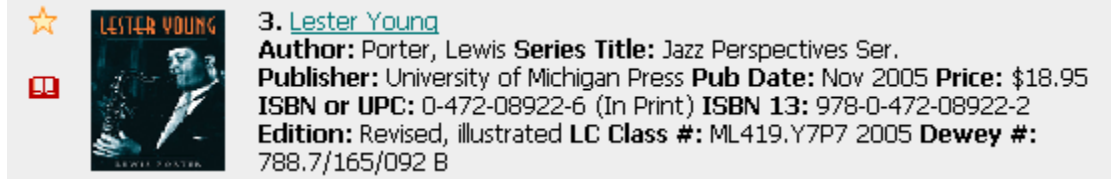
Format

[Advanced Search](#)

The links under *What Would you Like to Do*, such as *Write a Research Paper*, have yet to be fleshed out. The *Browse by...* options, however, are serviceable. *Browse by* options include RCL Subject (the above mentioned "58 curriculum-specific subjects"), LC Classification, Title, Author, Award Name, Award Category, Publisher, and Series. *Quick Search* access points include author, title (keyword), title (exact), and isbn. *Quick Search* permits narrowing a keyword search by RCL Subject and format (book, Internet resources, CD-rom, DVD-rom, and e-book). *Advanced Search* allows for more expansive searching and limiting including, but not limited to, audience, price, binding, LC and Dewey classification ranges, and date. Results may be sorted by a number of fields, including LC or Dewey Classification, price, date.

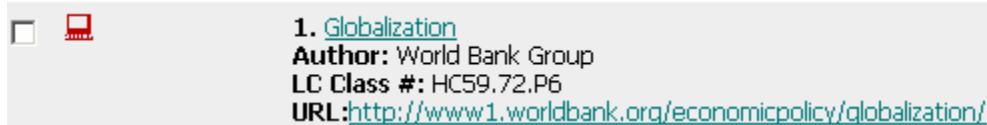
Most entries are comprised of a bibliographic citation with a brief and detailed view. The brief view contains the basic citation and indicates format (book, ebook, webpage...). A ☆ denotes inclusion of a *Choice* review.

Figure 2. RCLweb record, brief view.



Internet resources include a hyperlink to the website.

Figure 3. Internet resource, brief view.



The detailed view often includes useful information such as subject classification and audience level. A significant number of entries include a signed review from *Choice*.

The ability to simultaneously search and compare subject coverage in multiple formats could prove valuable to reference and collection development librarians as well as faculty. While bound books and e-books seem well represented, sample searches yielded no CDs or DVDs and it seems that these formats comprise less than 200 records in the core list. At present, less than 2,000 Internet sites are included in the core list and their selection and monitoring may be more rigorous in publicly available sites such as *Librarians' Internet Index*. *RCLWeb* also offers collection analysis tools, in consort with *Bowker's Books in Print*.

FINAL RECOMMENDATION:

RCLWeb is a welcome successor to *Books for College Libraries* and is a unique collection development resource for the undergraduate library. While its value as a reference and bibliographic instruction tool is, at present, overstated, the database is still evolving. Based on this first look, I recommend that the CCL-EAR Committee proceed with a mini or full review of *RCLWeb*.