



From the Vineyard



Issue 6, December 2005
Cathy Owens Swift - Editor

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From Your Wine Steward – Gerry Hanley

1,000 New MERLOT Members per Month! THANK YOU!

MERLOT has hit a new level of participation within the teaching/learning community - 1,000 new people per month have registered themselves within the MERLOT community. We now have over 30,000 registered members in MERLOT. In addition to achieve this higher level of participation, there's an exciting use of MERLOT by students. Here's the breakdown on who's joining MERLOT in the last 2 months:

- Faculty = 44%
- Students = 36%
- Staff = 8%
- Administrators = 5%
- "Others" = 5%
- Librarians = 2%

Why are we achieving this new level of participation? Because of YOU! YOU are the people who are talking and sharing MERLOT with your colleagues in formal and informal settings. YOU are the people who are explaining the value of MERLOT to administrators. YOU are the people who are using MERLOT in student learning activities as part of your instruction. YOU are the people

who are making MERLOT valuable to others. YOU are the people who desire the congratulations and recognition for the growth of MERLOT.

THANK YOU from me personally and from all the people on the MERLOT Administrative Team. It is an honor and sincere joy to work with you to serve MERLOT to the education community around the world.

Cheers,
Gerry



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Feature Article - Without a Home, How do we educate? MERLOT, Katrina and the Delgado Community College



Delgado Community College, an institution of the Louisiana Board of Regents with campuses in New Orleans and Covington, Louisiana, was one of the colleges that was impacted by Hurricane Katrina. The academic year had only just begun when the storm hit, closing the college and leaving faculty and students displaced and scrambling for shelter in other parts of the region. In an effort to salvage the instructional year for its academic community, Delgado administrators started looking for solutions. One such answer began with a phone call from Cindy Siegrist, Delgado CC Office from the Office of Faculty Development to Michael Waguespack, a former Delgado faculty member, now teaching at Northern Virginia Community College of the Virginia Community College System. Siegrist and Waguespack brainstormed about how Delgado could quickly bring more courses online to resume instruction for its students. The obvious need was to find quality online materials that had been classroom-tested and that were ready to go. Waguespack immediately thought of MERLOT as a solution for Delgado's course content needs. He contacted NVCC colleague, Laura Franklin, Co-Editor of the World Languages collection of MERLOT, Laura in turn contacted MERLOT administration for help and received immediate support for collaboration with Delgado. A project was born.

The Editorial Boards of MERLOT in various disciplines have mobilized to create annotated Personal Collections within MERLOT, matching content to the syllabi of Delgado instructors. These personal collections contain materials that will help Delgado CC instructors move forward in their instruction without 'reinventing the wheel.' Two collections in English as a Second Language have been started and can be seen at:

<http://www.merlot.org/artifact/CollectionDetail.po?collectionOld=101000000000274224&oid=30000000000455964>

and

<http://www.merlot.org/artifact/CollectionDetail.po?collectionOld=101000000000274211&oid=30000000000455964>

MERLOT administration received requests from other Delgado faculty and other Editorial Boards have begun answering the call. The early success of this project can be attributed to the productive interaction of two MERLOT partners. Both the VCCS and the Louisiana Board of Regents share a longstanding commitment to the development of the MERLOT collection. The

faculty members from these institutions have collaborated as Editors and Peer Reviewers for years. MERLOT has afforded these systems the opportunity to become a community in the most human sense of the word, which in turn makes collaboration that much more meaningful for all the partners of MERLOT.

It was also due to MERLOT's maturity as a collection that it was possible to build such a solution in short order. The collections started in this Delgado project, due to their public availability, will be of equal value to users of MERLOT throughout the Gulf region and those in the rest of the world. Faculty members who create collections will enrich their own courses and make MERLOT a richer resource for everyone. Through this collaborative effort, MERLOT members and others have discovered a valuable resource in our Personal Collections which enable instructors to have immediate access to learning materials used by others. For more information contact webmaster@merlot.org.



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Update on MERLOT Community

MERLOT Blog



We are happy to announce that there is now a MERLOT Technology Blog! You can find it at: <http://taste.merlot.org/blog/>. It is primarily for the Director of Technology, Martin Koning-Bastiaan, to discuss current and proposed technology projects and get comments back from readers. We are hoping that this helps people understand what the technology group in MERLOT is doing and provide a way for feedback to occur.

Editor Accomplishments – How to get Students Involved in MERLOT



Math Is Everywhere! Explore and Discover It! by James J. Rutledge, Editor for MERLOT Mathematics, is a unique, project-based mathematics textbook and course of study for college students, particularly those who are Liberal Arts majors, and for anyone interested in mathematics and its relevance and application in today's world. It emphasizes active learning and quantitative literacy and makes extensive use of Web-based resources, many of which are in the MERLOT Mathematics collection.

Some of the projects in ***Math Is Everywhere!*** refer students to mathematics resources in MERLOT; others require students to search the Internet and locate relevant resources on their own. One of the over-arching projects in this course of study directs students to evaluate and summarize the best of the Websites that they encountered as they completed the various textbook projects and assignments.

This ***Webliography Report*** project requires students to reflect on their Internet explorations and use critical thinking skills to analyze and compare the pertinent Websites that they have visited. The objective is to produce a guide to the "best of the Web" with regard to the subject content contained in ***Math Is Everywhere!***

Note from Jim: "I have found that increasing numbers of my students are including MERLOT in their list of best sites even though MERLOT is not content-topic specific as are most of the other sites that they select. Students are recognizing the value that MERLOT offers across academic disciplines and are delighted to have found such a convenient and reputable source for high-quality educational resources."

Some examples of student comments:

Web Site: www.merlot.org

Math Topic: All

Site Rating: *On a scale of 1-10 I rate this one a 15*

Description: This site is great. This is a site where other people put together profiles with links to other Websites. It is very helpful because you can look up a certain topic and receive a list of sites that have already been rated and already have a description. This weeds out a lot of the searching process because you don't have to read through sites that will be of no help. This has been the most helpful Website to me. The best thing is it saves you time.

Web site: <http://www.merlot.org/Home.po>

Math topic: General

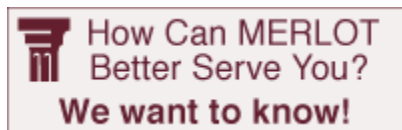
Site Rating: Excellent!

Description: This site, Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online Teaching, or MERLOT, should be stamped on the hand of every incoming college freshman. It is an invaluable tool when it comes to researching topics for term papers, assignments, or just general knowledge. These days everyone including the family dog can have a Website and expound every crazy notion under the sun. When you use a search engine you can retrieve hundreds of Websites; sorting through them can be time consuming, frustrating and irritating. MERLOT is a wonderful tool because you know the caliber of the information will be top-notch.

MERLOT Website News: Learning Management Systems

Over the last 1½ years MERLOT has been working closely with the major learning management system (LMS) companies to provide closer integration between the companies' LMS products and the MERLOT collection and services. We have recently posted a detailed description of the rationale behind our "Learning Management System Initiative" in the Tasting Room at <http://taste.merlot.org/initiatives/lms.htm>. This document explains how and why we have undertaken this initiative, the benefits that we believe that it brings to the more than 80% of faculty who use these leading LMS systems, and the resources that MERLOT and the LMS companies expend in providing these benefits to our member community. If you have questions, suggestions, or comments about this initiative, please contact Sorel Reisman at sreisman@calstate.edu

User Survey New on Homepage



We've recently added a survey to help our users tell us how we can better serve them. If you haven't already filled out the survey, please do so, and encourage others to complete it too! A click on this logo (found on the MERLOT homepage) will take you directly to the survey. It takes less than a minute to complete the survey and your responses will enable us to continuously improve MERLOT. Help spread the word to others about sharing their feedback with us.

MERLOT's Acceptable Use Policy

It has recently come to our attention that our registration process for new members does not explicitly require them to agree to adhere to the MERLOT *Acceptable Use Policy* (AUP) (<http://taste.merlot.org/policies/use.htm>). Accordingly we have altered the "Become a Member" page (<http://www.merlot.org/person/CreatePerson.po>) requiring new members to explicitly agree to adhere to the policies shown in the following text displayed next to the Submit Information button:

By clicking this button, I agree to the terms and conditions described in the documents: i) [Acceptable Use Policy](#), ii) [Privacy Policy](#), and iii) [Research Policy](#)

In addition, we have updated the Policy, which now states:

Violation of this AUP may result in:

1. *The suspension and/or termination of access to MERLOT services and features or*
2. *MERLOT's notification to the violator's home institution of the abuse of MERLOT's services or features or*
3. *Other actions deemed appropriate by MERLOT.*



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Editorial Board News

Teacher Education Editorial Board Continues to be Active



The Teacher Education Board is involved in several different projects this year. First, following recommendations from the Music Editorial Board they are planning three different conference calls with Volunteer Reviewers during the academic year. Their goals are to welcome them to the team and make them feel part of the family, and to take them through a review of their choice and explain to them some of the finer points of reviewing by one or more of our board members.

Additionally, the Editorial Board is conducting research on what guided the thinking of person's outside Teacher Education to classify a learning object within the Teacher Education portal. They also have a board member who is a librarian and will be working on a plan to reorganize the classification system of Teacher Ed learning objects.



Cris Guenter, long-time member of the Teacher Education Editorial Board, has written a summary article about her MERLOT-Carnegie Foundation experience with the KEEP Toolkit for the upcoming CSU-Chico School of Education Newsletter. She encourages the CSUC School of Education faculty and alumni to investigate the KEEP Toolkit and try it out for themselves.



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Volunteer Corner – Get to Know Our Volunteers

Business Volunteer Peer Reviewers Make Presentation

Angela Stanton (Radford University), Irvine "Bud" Clarke (James Madison University), and Kathy Micken (Roger Williams University) recently presented a panel session at the Society for Marketing Advances conference in San Antonio, TX. Their session was entitled "MERLOT: A Peer Reviewer's Perspective of the Evaluation Process." The presentation included an overview of MERLOT, the peer review process, and benefits of joining the MERLOT team of reviewers.



Several members of the Marketing MERLOT community were also in attendance at the conference including Cathy Swift (Editor of Business) Theresa Flaherty (Associate Editor of Marketing), Ralf Schellhase (Darmstadt University), Karen Norman Kennedy (University of Alabama-Birmingham), Dawn Deeter (Ohio University), Pam Kennett (University of New Orleans), and Adel El-Ansary (University of North Florida).



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Out and About with MERLOT

Blogs, Podcasts and Vodcasts as Innovative Teaching/Learning Resources



Teaching with technology is exploding with new ideas for delivering learning resources, for example: blogs, podcasts, and vodcasts. Blogs or online journals have been around for a few years. Podcasts and vodcasts are relatively young concepts. Podcasts are digital

audio recordings that we can download and listen to on our computer or mobile player, such as an Apple iPod or Pocket PC. Vodcasts are downloadable video movies. Take a walk through your college campus and notice how many students are walking with earphones in their ears, connected to a portable device.

Educators are quickly learning how to make use of the portable audio and video clips in their teaching and learning practices. Georgia College & State University (GC&SU) is podcasting training materials for new faculty through the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL). To read more, go to <http://info.gcsu.edu/intranet/cetl/podnovations.htm> or search MERLOT for the term "podcast" to see some examples.



Dr. Deborah Vess, one of the innovative teachers at GC&SU, states, "I am using enhanced podcasts (audio with visuals that link to the web) in my graduate level Historical Methods course to provide hands-on interactive training in the use of various databases and styles of research." Faculty and students are downloading the podcasts to iTunes software, then synching the podcasts to their iPods.



At University of California, San Francisco, another teaching innovator, Margaret Maag is experimenting with a combination of a blog and podcasting. Dr. Maag explained that the purpose of the experiment is to disseminate nurse educators' and nurses' voices to attract people to our profession and academia. The blog is available at <http://margaretspod.blogspot.com/>. She also has a lecture series available for her students at <http://www.maagnursing.com/podcast>.

Stanford University is making lectures, music, sports and more available to the public free of charge. Read more about this initiative at <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2005/10/21/itunes>.

Duke University has a multifaceted digital initiative underway. Duke University provides incentives for faculty to incorporate iPod projects into the teaching and learning process. You can read more about the initiative at <http://www.duke.edu/ddi/>.

In conclusion, we can expect to see a huge explosion of audio and video learning resources in the area of higher education. MERLOT provides a way to showcase, archive, and peer review the teaching/learning resources.

Chemistry Editorial Board Presentation

The 19th BCCE (Biennial Conference on Chemical Education) has officially accepted the symposium, "Best Practices in e-learning Design and Delivery" (organizers and hosts: Nancy Konigsberg Kerner and Moustapha Diack). The 19th BCCE will be held at Purdue University July 30-August 4, 2006 and has 2000+ attendees.

MERLOT Library and Information Science Community News

You may know that the MERLOT International Conference has offered a Librarian Development Workshop for the past two years. This event includes a pre-conference workshop and a discussion session each evening. It's a great way for librarians from partner institutions to form a community, to discuss the day's sessions, and to get more involved with MERLOT.

This year, MERLOT is continuing the great energy from this event by starting an official Library and Information Studies (LIS) Community. They are forming an Advisory Board, pulling together the taxonomy for the collection, and gathering materials. Eventually this will grow into an LIS Editorial Board. They've also begun a project matching interested librarians with subject editorial boards. This is a great opportunity to interact with a diverse range of educational professionals in a discipline.

Librarian participation can range in both time and type. They want to see more librarians using MERLOT to find materials, adding and commenting on resources, making personal collections, telling others about this great tool, attending the 2006 conference in Ottawa (and maybe giving a presentation or poster session), and more. There are ways to incorporate every individual's unique abilities into this project.

For more information, or to find out how to get involved, please contact Ellie Dworak, the MERLOT LIS Community Coordinator, at ellied@rohan.sdsu.edu or 619-594-3521.

MERLOT Dissertation Defended



Ms. Syeda Sobiya Qadri defended her doctoral dissertation November 28, 2005, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Science/Mathematics Education (SMED) at Southern University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The doctoral dissertation entitled "MERLOT: A Study of the Best Practices and Attitudes of Undergraduate Mathematics Faculty towards the Integration of Electronic Resources in Teaching" is advised by Dr. Moustapha Diack (major advisor) and Neil Kestner, both members of the MERLOT Chemistry Advisory Board.

Sobiya's research focuses on identifying best practices by the mathematics community in using MERLOT and integrating digital resources to support instruction. The study primarily focuses on (1) investigating the best practices, the faculty experiences and attitudes towards using the MERLOT digital content repository to enhance classroom instruction in undergraduate mathematics, (2) identifying emerging best practices in selecting and integrating electronic resources by mathematics faculty, and their experiences and attitudes towards incorporating online learning resources in teaching practices, and (3) determining how effectively the MERLOT digital content repository is being used by early adopters to support undergraduate mathematics instruction. It is hoped that by investigating current institutional practices and the attitudes and instructional strategies of higher education faculty, some best practices will emerge as prescriptions on how to effectively integrate the digital content repository to enhance students' learning experience and learning achievement.

JOLT – the Journal of Online Learning and Teaching

The December 2005 issue of *JOLT* will soon be released thanks to its Editors-in-Chief, Tracy Penny Light and Ed Perry, and its Editors, Kurt Cogswell, Carla Meskill, Glenda Morgan, Michelle Pilati, Ray Purdom, Michael Rothkopf, Jim Rutledge and Joe Tront. The acceptance rate for this issue is 50%, an indicator that our journal is quite discriminating in the selection of articles to publish. Congratulations to the JOLT team for their hard work and efforts!

If you have an article 'in the making,' be sure to contact Tracey Penny Light or Ed Perry to learn how to publish in JOLT at: tracy@temagami.uwaterloo.ca or eperry@memphis.edu. They also would welcome new reviewers for the journal. For more information about the journal and to view the Guideline for Authors, please go to: <http://taste.merlot.org/portal/jolt/> .

The MERLOT Partner Reserve

Have you just finished a successful workshop or seminar promoting MERLOT? Remember to add your materials to the MERLOT *Partner Reserve*. It's simple; login to MERLOT as you always do, and go to the Communities page. Scroll to the bottom to find the link to the *Partner Reserve*. Catalogue the item (assuming it is an online resource) just as you would any learning object.



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MERLOT Miscellaneous

Important MERLOT Upcoming Meeting dates

Mid-Year Meeting – January 27-29, San Diego

Attendees: Project Directors and members of the Editors' Council
Wyndham San Diego at Emerald Plaza - (ELI is January 29-31 at the Westin Horton Plaza)

Project Directors Meeting – April 4-5, Minnesota

Attendees: Project Directors
Hosted by Minnesota State Colleges and Universities - Deborah Proctor
Hotel location TBD

Editors Meeting – April 28-30, Savannah

Attendees: Members of the Editors' Council
Hosted by University System of Georgia - Cathy Owens Swift
Hotel location TBD

The MIC 2006 International Conference – August 8-11, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

Hosted by: The University of Ottawa
Attendees: Editorial Board Members, Editors Council, Project Directors meetings (August 8)
Hotel: Ottawa Westin and the Ottawa Congress Centre



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MERLOT Statistics

The statistics reported here are totals as of November 30, 2005

Collection

12,849 # items in Collection
1,837 # of materials w/ a Peer Reviews
30,232 # of Registered Users

Usage Statistics for January – November 2005

758,754 Total # of visits
2,273 Avg. # visits a day
21.4% Avg. Visitor repeat rate
10 Avg. # pages/visit
4 min, 35 sec Avg. length of visit

Are you interested in writing something for *From the Vineyard* or adding news and updates? *From the Vineyard* is published every third month (December, March, June, and September). Getting your information in print is easy. Send your submission to webmaster@merlot.org by the first Wednesday of the month in which you wish it to be published. Unfortunately, we can't publish all articles/stories in each issue; if you don't see your story in the issue, we promise to try to get it into the next one!