MERLOT

# From the Vineyard

**Issue 8, June 2006**

*Cathy Owens Swift - Editor*

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## *From Your Wine Steward – Gerry Hanley*

Dear MERLOT Leadership Community,

We're all gearing up for the MERLOT International Conference in Ottawa Canada. I'd like to give special thanks to Kevin Harrigan and Michael Clarke for their leadership, the MIC Program Committee for their tireless work, and to Deb Smith and Jenn Cummings for their excellent professional services that brings everyone's work together for a successful celebration of the MERLOT community.

Don't forget to make your hotel reservations and register for the conference. If you'll be using a complementary registration, ask your project director for "the MERLOT code" (there's not a big mystery around finding it though). Don't forget that anyone from your institution can get the MERLOT Partner rate, even if they haven't participated in any MERLOT activities before.

The MERLOT International Conference is our showcase of the accomplishments of our community. We have much to celebrate this year including our awards programs, our new community portals, our new Main MERLOT website and services, our new partners participating in the MERLOT Federated Search, and ELIXR - innovations for sharing effective teaching strategies being led by Tom Carey.

The MIC is truly my favorite event of the year. It's a time where the invisible efforts of each individual in MERLOT becomes visible in the discussions, presentations, fun, and plans of putting innovations into practice for successful student learning.

Cheers,
Gerry

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## Update on MERLOT Community

***HURRY! The MIC is coming! The MIC is coming!!***

Deadlines are fast approaching. If you haven't done so, register for the MIC. If you have not received a code from your Project Director for one of the complimentary registrations, please contact him/her as soon as possible and get yourself registered!!! We also hope that you will encourage others in your discipline or campus to attend the conference and find out more about MERLOT. Don't forget that our meetings as begin on Tuesday, August 8th.

- Advisory Board – 8 AM
- Editorial Board Members – 9 AM
- Project Directors – 10 AM

Go to http://conference.merlot.org/2006/registration.html to register.

The deadline for a discounted rate at the conference hotel, Westin Ottawa is June 30th. To receive the discounted rate, call central Westin Reservations at 1-800-WESTIN-1 (within the US and Canada) or +1-613-560-7000 (outside the US and Canada) or make your reservations online. Request the ***MERLOT*** group rate when making your reservations.

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## Feature Article - MERLOT 101 - Online

Are you looking for new ways to spread the use of MERLOT throughout your campus or system? Here's a lesson from one of our MERLOT champions. **Laura Franklin**, Editor of the World Languages Editorial Board and a professor at Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC), has been a terrific presenter of MERLOT at NVCC as well as at other conferences. However, Laura notes, "A one hour demonstration

is not enough to get MERLOT to 'stick' in the minds of faculty as a one-stop solution for identifying good learning materials." She believes that more time on task in the virtual company of colleagues should be a more productive way to learn to use MERLOT well. In fact, the ability to learn MERLOT over a three-week period rather than in a quick 60 minutes, where the learning takes place in an asynchronous learning environment such as through a Blackboard-delivered course should lead to deeper learning and subsequently increased use of MERLOT. Thus, Laura developed a three-week, online Blackboard mini-course, *MERLOT 101- Online*, that any faculty member can use.

In the first week, participants practice MERLOT familiarization activities, watch an online, ten-minute MERLOT video, and do a little reading about MERLOT. At the same time, they introduce themselves to the other online course participants, discuss MERLOT's strengths and limitations, and identify courses for which they would like to find learning objects. Using Blackboard's discussion boards makes the learning faculty comfortable about sharing ideas that, for lack of time, would never be discussed in a demonstration session. It also gives the learning instructors extra time to consult with MERLOT's content experts to customize their own teaching/learning experience. It sometimes takes a little time to get to the gems in a given discipline, but faculty members are inevitably impressed with how MERLOT is as much a responsive and human learning community as it is a collection of learning materials.

Week Two involves searching, browsing, using portals, and using the Federated Search. Participants are given terms pertinent to their disciplines to search, and then must evaluate their search experience. Here the instructor can suggest a few stellar items and troubleshoot any difficulties that might arise. Since all of the course assignments are free for all to see in the discussion board, everyone has the potential to discover more new resources than if they had searched alone.

Week Three is devoted to the creation of course-specific Personal Collections. Participants visit some well-annotated collections and post the link to their own new MERLOT collections for all to see. Sharing the collections is motivational and results in a more substantive discovery process.

*MERLOT 101 - Online* is an effective faculty development model for institutions who want to train a larger number of faculty, but bump up against time, travel, and cost constraints. Delivering the course through a learning management system such as Blackboard makes it easier for faculty to participate without having to leave home, buy gas, or travel. It also allows faculty to devote quality time when it is easiest for them, resulting in a comfortable pace.

To understand the effectiveness of the course, one need only hear some of the comments from participants:

- It was very useful. I had been "introduced" to MERLOT several times in the past, but never really had the impetus to pursue it… With this workshop, in a few days I had explored many of MERLOT's subtleties and enormous potential.

- You get to hear (or read) what other instructors are doing in their respective courses and get some tips on how to use MERLOT resources more effectively.
- This quick course was not only painless and useful, but FUN! In a few days, you actually end up with a tangible product.

You can see a quick promotional item that Laura developed at: http://www.nvcc.edu/home/lfranklin/merlot/promo.html, and you can attend a presentation at the MIC Wednesday, August 9 at 4:00 pm in the Congress Room. Way to go, Laura!!!

## *Feature Article - Camp CLOE*

The Co-operative Learning Object Exchange (CLOE) is a collaboration between Ontario

universities and colleges for the development, sharing, and reuse of multimedia-rich learning resources. Each institution either develops multimedia learning resources to address instructional challenges shared by the other partners, or they use and/or adapt learning objects created at partner institutions for their own use. CLOE holds close affiliations to MERLOT and GLOBE (Global Learning Object Exchange) as well as other national and international organizations.

Between May 1-5, CLOE held their annual week-long intensive instructional design and learning technology workshop, Camp CLOE. CLOE is a MERLOT Community, contains many active MERLOT members, and promotes MERLOT wherever possible. This year attendees came from all over Ontario as well as from Manitoba, Newfoundland, and Thailand. Camp CLOE, which was run for the first time four years ago has found that students achieve better through their use of learning objects when attempting to overcoming learning difficult concepts. This is well documented in learning impact stories available through CLOE. See "Learning Impact Studies 'Lite': Evaluating Learning Objects in Nine Ontario University Courses" at http://cloe.on.ca

This year Camp CLOE focused in on a new, important subject: learning object templates. Templates allow for learning objects to be built at a fraction of the time and cost than would be expected, since the foundation has already been constructed. Although this isn't a new concept – Australia and England has been building templates for some time -- it is an effective way to reduce significantly development resources at institutions where learning objects aren't being developed because of time or cost considerations. Attendance at the workshops is open to everyone and it's a great way to encourage faculty to develop their own materials.

Next year's Camp CLOE will be held at the University of Waterloo, May 7-11, 2007. Registration costs $850.00CDN (remember to convert to US). Registration includes all meals, A/C room with semi-private bathroom, and all learning materials including copies of software (such as templates). For more information contact info@cloe.on.ca or see http://cloe.on.ca

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## Editorial Board News

### Training Peer Reviewers at University of Michigan

Have you ever asked yourself, "How do we get more volunteers trained to do peer reviews?" **Nancy Kerner** at the University of Michigan (UM) did, and she also proposed her solution to her campus. Nancy requested that her institution support a number of volunteers to attend the MIC. The proposal was approved, and UM will be sending approximately 10 faculty and staff to this year's MIC, with all of them attending the Peer Reviewer Training workshop. Those volunteers who are in disciplines for which we have Editorial Boards will also be invited to participant in the Board meetings. In addition, The "U of M MERLOT community" will meet at regular intervals during the 2006-2007 academic year.

This is the beginning of a year long MERLOT Community of Practice that Nancy, **Victor Wong** (Senior Strategist: Academic and Research Technologies) and **Kim Bayer** (Project Director) are coordinating at the UM Campus to see if they can encourage the thoughtful and meaningful use of MERLOT. They also plan to generate discussions about integrating MERLOT with other campus systems. We look forward to meeting and greeting these new MERLOTites at the conference. Thanks for a great plan, Nancy!!!

### UISFL Grant Received

**Ronald Purser**, Professor of Management at San Francisco State University and Associate Editor of the MERLOT Business Editorial Board received a two year, $171,000 Title VI Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language grant (UISFL) from the U.S. Department of Education for FY 2006. This grant involves interdisciplinary collaboration across five colleges at SFSU.

One project will involve the Chinese Language Department that will develop

supplemental online "Business Chinese" modules for the MERLOT World Languages discipline. **Dr. Kylie Hsu**, from MERLOT's World Languages Editorial Board will serve as a consultant to SFSU's grant team. The grant also focuses on the development of Undergraduate Minors in South Asia Studies and International Health in China. An additional project will focus on the creation of the South Asia Business Institute (SABI) that will be run out of the College of Business, and will include collaboration with partner universities in India.

### Health Sciences Editor Steps Down

**Pam Scheibel,** (University of Wisconsin) has announced that she will be stepping down from her position as Editor of the Health Sciences Editorial

Board. She has other opportunities that she will be pursuing and will not be able to dedicate her time to MERLOT. We wish Pam well, and thank her for her hard work in building the Health Sciences collection and community. Pam has been a member of MERLOT since 2000, serving as Co-Editor and most recently as Editor by herself. Thank you, Pam! We will miss you.

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## *Out and About with MERLOT*

### *MERLOT Presentations*

**Lynn Aaron** (SUNY), Portal Editor for Information Technology, gave a presentation on April 29 at the ESATYCB (Empire State Association of Two Year College Biologists) meeting at SUNY Rockland Community College in Suffern, New York. Lynn's presentation was entitled "Animations, Simulations, and Tutorials: Online Teaching Materials for Biologists from MERLOT." Her presentation included examples of many of the types of learning materials found on MERLOT.

**Dr. William Paquette**, MERLOT History Editor gave two MERLOT presentations at the Virginia Community College System's annual New Horizon's conference in Roanoke, Virginia, April 6-8, 2006. The sessions were "Western Civilization as Online and Interdisciplinary" and "Adjuncts and the United States History Survey." Dr. Paquette has been awarded a Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History Fellowship for summer study at the University of Virginia. Keep spreading the word about MERLOT and History, Bill, and congratulations on your summer fellowship!!

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

### *Carnegie and MERLOT*

**Tom Carey** (U of Waterloo), **Jennie Dautermann** (SUNY), and **David Middleton** (Seton Hall University) recently had their proposal accepted for the CASTL (Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning) Leadership Program. CASTL supports the development of scholarship of teaching and learning that: 1) fosters significant, long-lasting learning for all students; 2) enhances the practice and profession of teaching; 3) brings to faculty members' work as teachers the recognition and reward afforded to other forms of scholarly work. You can read more about the program at: http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/programs/sub.asp?key=21&subkey=858

Tom provides the overview of their proposal: *The goal of 'An Online Teaching Commons' cluster is to integrate our campus and system initiatives in the scholarship of teaching and learning with MERLOT's processes and products, to support the development of a MERLOT "teaching commons" through online communities of teaching expertise with links to exemplary learning resources. This will provide a model for*

*extending learning resource repositories into gateways for mobilizing research knowledge from scholarly work in teaching and learning. As faculty search for teaching resources to achieve learning outcomes and student success, they will also encounter expertise from a community of like-minded colleagues who are building a research-informed community of practice.* We look forward to hearing more about the project!

### *Publishing Opportunity*

**Alex Koohang** (University of Wisconsin) is Editor in Chief of IJKLO, (Interdisciplinary Journal of Knowledge and Learning Objects). The mission of the journal is to provide readers around the world with the widest possible coverage of developments in knowledge and learning objects. IJKLO is an interdisciplinary forum that publishes high quality articles on theory, practice, innovation, and research covering all aspects of knowledge and learning objects. All submissions are blind refereed by three or more peers. IJKLO is published in print, is available by subscription, and its articles also appear online free of charge.

Alex asks that those who are interested in submitting a proposal to please see the author's and submission guides at http://review.ijklo.org/author/submit.php

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## *New Feature - Dear Cathy*

*Dear Cathy,*

*I thought Editorial Board Members always get their proposals accepted for the MIC. I talked to somebody whose proposal was NOT accepted. What gives?*

*The Curious Inquirer*

Dear Curious Inquirer:
Well, I'm glad you asked that. Maybe others are wondering the same thing. MERLOT is based on the principle of peer review for learning materials in our collection. We believe in academic integrity and the principle of peer review; therefore, all papers submitted to the MIC are peer reviewed and no favoritism is granted to Editorial Board members. The Call for Proposals for the MIC is open to anyone and all proposals are treated equally. MERLOT respects all Editorial Board members and the work they do for MERLOT. Members are always encouraged to submit proposals to the MIC. We also encourage them to include others in their proposals to bring additional colleagues to the MIC. However, those proposals will receive no special treatment from the MIC reviewers.

Cheers,
Cathy

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## *JOLT – the Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*

The March 2006 issue of *JOLT* has been released thanks to Editors-in-Chief, Tracy Penny Light and Ed Perry, and 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 its selection of articles. Congratulations to the *JOLT* team for their hard work and effort!

If you have an article 'in the making' be sure to contact Tracy Penny Light (tracy@temagami.uwaterloo.ca) or Ed Perry (eperry@memphis.edu) to learn how to publish in *JOLT*. *JOLT* also welcomes new reviewers. For more information about the journal and to view the Guideline for Authors, visit 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. If there is not a link to the *Partner Reserve* on your *Communities* page, you are either not logged in to MERLOT or have not been assigned privileges to access it, in which case contact Barb (MERLOT Webmaster) at barb@merlot.org and she will assist you. To always be logged in to MERLOT when you go to www.merlot.org and click the *Remember* link at the top of the page.

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## *MERLOT Statistics*

The statistics reported here are totals as of May 31, 2006

**Collection**

| | |
|---|---|
| 13,973 | # items in Collection |
| 1,991 | # of materials w/ a Peer Reviews |
| 34,626 | # of Registered Users |

**Usage Statistics for January – May 2006**

| | |
|---|---|
| 247,279 | Total # of visits |
| 1,654 | Avg. # visits a day |
| 32% | Avg. visitor repeat rate |
| 7 | Avg. # pages/visit |
| 5 min 16 sec | Avg. length of visit |

Are you interested in writing for *From the Vineyard,* or adding news and updates? *From the Vineyard* is published 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!

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