



From the Vineyard



Issue 5, September 2005
Cathy Owens Swift - Editor

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From Your Wine Steward – Gerry Hanley

THANK YOU ALL for making our major community building event – the MERLOT International Event – a wonderful success. Some indicators of the conference’s success are presented later in the Vineyard but for me, the smiles, energy, and collegial engagement of the MERLOT conference participants reflected the success. A special thank you to our MERLOT-Tennessee Board of Regents family whose hospitality brought stewardship to a new level for MERLOT.

In the upcoming year, MERLOT will continue to bring its valued services to instructors and students around the world and in your home campus. Through our collaborative leadership, we will strive to make more of a difference in education.



2005 MERLOT International Conference (MIC05)

The 2005 MERLOT International Conference is a memory and as we compile the evaluations of the conference we find comments such as:

“We all found the conference people particularly warm and open to new ways of doing things.....”

For those who attended, you are to be commended for your willingness to share, explore, and pioneer new frontiers. It is collective wisdom that continues to stir the hearts and minds of men and women.

“My department will be making considerable effort to dramatically expand our online and hybrid course offerings.”

One of the goals of the MERLOT International Conference is to provide you with information, creative ideas, and helpful resources to increase your productivity and value to your organization.

“The Conference was well-planned and implemented.”

The success of the MERLOT International Conference is achieved through the collaborative efforts of many. The MERLOT team spends several months orchestrating the efforts of the MERLOT Community, the host, the hoteliers, and various suppliers. MERLOT especially recognizes the unselfish volunteer efforts of the MIC05 host: The Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR). Dr. Charles Manning supported the conference from the top while his staff supported the conference from the trenches. Through their efforts MIC05 received generous contributions such as computers from Dell and the University of Memphis, live plants from Tennessee State University, and wines from Chateau Ross and Keg Springs Wineries. The 17 MIC05 corporate sponsors not only provided industry insights on online teaching and learning, but reduced the cost of partner subsidies by \$36,000.

The thought-provoking and inspiring Plenary Sessions were well rated by conferees and, thanks to Macromedia, you can view those sessions by going to <http://conference.merlot.org/conference/2005/remote.html> . We also encourage you to visit the MERLOT Conference site for [author-provided session information](#) available for most of the conference sessions.

MIC05 was attended by 455 people from 219 organizations, representing 38 states and 6 countries. With a 7% increase over MIC04, we continue to enhance the MERLOT vision of being recognized as the premier online community where faculty, staff, and students from around the world share their learning materials and pedagogy. Keep sharing, keep building, and keep producing so that at MIC06 in Toronto we can celebrate another year of success!

Did we have a great time or not? You can view some of the pictures that were taken at the conference at the following site:

<http://portals.merlot.org/images/grapevine/MIC05Slideshow/index.html>



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Feature Article - One of our Pioneers



This coming academic year, University of Waterloo's Tom Carey, Associate Vice President, Learning Resources and Innovation and Professor in Management Sciences, will be on leave from his UW positions to work with the MERLOT team at the Chancellor's Office of California State University. As the co-chair of the MERLOT consortium advisory board, Tom has already contributed to the success of this partnership of university systems and campuses (including systems like the University of Michigan and the University of North Carolina as well as individual campuses such as Cornell University). Tom will be heading up a research and innovation project, ELIXR,

whose aim is to extend these collaborations beyond online activities for students into shared resources for helping faculty to address the learning needs of the new cohort of "Net Generation" students.

The pilot phase of the project will lay out a framework for university systems and institutions to collaborate on the creation of resources which can be customized for faculty workshops and educational events specific to each institution and subject area. The project name, ELIXR, is an acronym for *Engaging Learners In X at R* – where X stands for subject areas such as Physics, Business, Psychology, etc., and R stands for a particular institution such as the California State University at Long Beach or the University of Waterloo. The resources will be designed for reusability across both of these dimensions. The resources created for a faculty course on Engaging Learners in Physics at one of the participating universities will include reusable components on learner characteristics and institutional pedagogies which can be applied for other subject areas within that university, and reusable components which can be applied for Physics instructors at other campuses.

The long term intention is to integrate these resources into a larger framework of teaching communities based around the MERLOT model. This will occur by engaging MERLOT system and campus partners in collaborations to build up the resource base across disciplines and approaches to learning, and to use the knowledge base created around the resources to engage communities of faculty in scholarly interactions about teaching and learning.

The ELIXR project is ambitious and important in its implications for collaborations across university systems and institutions. ELIXR is a joint project of three entities: the MERLOT consortium, the California State University system (23 campuses and 24,000 faculty), and a team of representatives from Canadian research universities. This third group will insure that the resources can be applied across a range of campuses, and has members from across Canada.

Please join us in wishing Tom a very successful research leave!



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Update on MERLOT Community

Project Directors' Council Update

On Sunday afternoon and Monday morning at the MERLOT International Conference, the Project Directors met to discuss and plan a number of activities.

- **Plans for implementing the 15% Solution:** There is still a lot of work to do. The strategy drafted was for MERLOT to develop materials that will enable our campuses/systems to easily integrate/blend MERLOT into their own initiatives. Some examples included:
 - Enabling MERLOT partners to create customized "Grapevine" newsletters.
 - Integrating/connecting MERLOT and institutional awards programs.
 - Enable MERLOT partners to create customized "portals."
 - Emphasize the "push" technologies such as RSS.
- **Reflecting on MERLOT practices:** The Project Directors discussed the nature and schedule of meetings and the MERLOT International Conference, with recommendations for improvements for next year.
- **Kick-Off of Workforce Development Initiative:** The Project Directors developed a plan for Phase I which would have two goals: (1) Expanding the MERLOT collection to include workforce development content, and (2) Presenting workforce development content in a "portal" that would be meaningful to workforce development programs

- MERLOT Management Team would provide the support for developing the expanded taxonomy, develop the portal template, and provide training on contributing materials into the collection
- MERLOT Partners plan to appoint leaders, establish and charge an advisory group (as a precursor to an editorial board), write grants for large amounts of money, and report on completion of Phase I.
- Milestones:
 - Choose content areas by September 2005
 - Establish the advisory group by October 2005
 - Develop taxonomy for selected areas by December 2005
 - Build a collection of at least 100 new materials and the portal by March 2005
 - Plan an Editorial Board for the next MERLOT conference in August 2006.

Editors' Council Update

The Editors' Council and Editorial Board Members met jointly this year prior to the MIC. After a "State of MERLOT" address by Gerry Hanley, each of the Editorial Boards met separately to plan for the 2005-2006 academic year. On Monday morning, for the first time, all of the Editorial Boards met together to learn more about the peer review process. Our gratitude goes to Bruce Mason (Physics Editor) and Robby Robson (Eduworks Corporation) who led discussions on Pedagogy and Quality of Content and Reusability. The attendees all suggested that this be a regular part of the MIC meetings.

The open discussion on Monday provided us with a lot of good ideas that we plan to implement in the future:

- Additional ways to find support for the Editorial Board Members
- More methods of motivating Reviewers
- Ways that Editors can more easily access MERLOT materials (sample letters, flyers, letterhead, etc.)
- More notice of the dates of future meetings for Editors

Thank you Editorial Board Members for being so willing to share your thoughts and suggestions!

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Editorial Board Changes

Welcome New Editor for Information Technology



Dr. Judy Serwatka, Associate Professor of Computer Technology at Purdue University – North Central, has recently accepted the position of Editor of the Information Technology Editorial Board. Judy has a great deal of experience with MERLOT as she has been a Volunteer Peer Reviewer for that board for the last 3 years. She also won the first Volunteer of the Year Award at the 2005 MERLOT International Conference. Judy has contributed almost 100 items to the collection and has written reviews for 59 items. We welcome Judy in this new leadership role.

Judy is also our first **MERLOT/O'Reilly Fellow**, a new type of support for Editorial Boards. O'Reilly Media is the premier information source for leading-edge computer technologies, while its SafariU product is a new Web-based platform for creating and sharing custom course materials online and in print. O'Reilly will be supporting the Editor position, as well as an Associate Editor and Portal Editor, to be named soon. Thank you, O'Reilly, for making this support to the Information Technology Board possible.

Chemistry Editorial Board Changes

Neil Kestner will be retiring from his role of Co-Editor of the Chemistry Editorial Board in October. We welcome our new partner, *Journal of Chemical Education*. John Moore from the *Journal* is the Interim Co-Editor of the Chemistry Board and is assisted by Linda Fanis as Associate Editor. This new model for Editorial Boards will have benefits for both MERLOT and the *Journal*. MERLOT brings a wealth of material and an established peer review process to the *Journal*, while the *Journal* provides additional members, recognition within the Chemistry discipline, and new Reviewers to MERLOT, all-in-all a win-win situation. We look forward to working with the *Journal*.

Welcome New Editorial Board Members

Several new Editorial Board Members have been added this fall. Each will be introduced individually and in more detail in the next few issues, but they are:

Bob Sproule – University of Waterloo – Business
Jack Walters – Dakota State University - Business
Provi Mayo – South Dakota State University – Chemistry
Li Chen – South Dakota School of Mines and Technology – Engineering
Boyd Perkins – Northern State University (SD) – Music
Tom Wallace – Northeast State Technical College (TN) – Information Technology
Elaine Adams – Southwest Tennessee Community College - Teaching and Technology
Syed Hasnain – Regents Online Degree Program (TN) – Teaching and Technology
John Gehm – University of South Dakota – Criminal Justice
Peter Nerzak – Pellissippi State Technical Community College (TN) – Library Science

You may have noticed that the last two, John and Peter, are on Editorial Boards that don't currently exist. Both John and Peter will be trying to build Communities in their disciplines by putting together a group of committed people, developing a taxonomy for the discipline and then adding modules to the respective areas. If you know of anyone in either Criminal Justice or Library Science, please encourage them to contact John or Peter and express an interest in helping to build that community.

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Editorial Board News

Grants



Congratulations to Dr. Ron Purser, who just received a grant from the Department of Education's Business International Education (BIE) program, \$191,544 for two years. The grant will fund three academic and two community outreach projects through 2007. The MERLOT component of the grant will enhance the International Business collection within MERLOT, add an International Business portal to the Business Portal site, and train faculty in the College of Business across disciplines to adopt and use International Business modules from MERLOT within their classes. For more information, contact

<http://www.sfsu.edu/~news/2005/summer/88.htm>

Workshops, Presentations and Seminars

Dr. Stephen Martin, Seton Hall University, History Team Member will author a chapter in "History and Philosophical Foundations of Learning Objects," December 2005 by Informing Science Institute Publishers. Dr. Martin's chapter will discuss the history of development and implementation of learning objects and the MERLOT Project. Dr. Martin presented his chapter's findings at the June 2005 meeting of InSite (Informing Science and IT Education) conference.

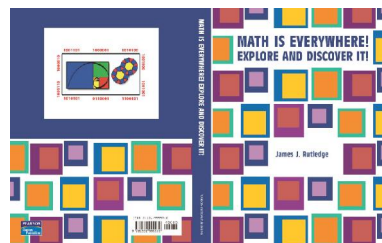
Dr. William Paquette, MERLOT History Co-Editor, is listed in the following publications: *Who's Who in America*, 2005; *Who's Who in the World*, 2005; *Who's Who Among America's Teachers*, 2005; and *Who's Who Among America's Educators*, 2006 edition.

Editor Accomplishments – Partnership between Math and Liberal Arts

Jim Rutledge, Editor for MERLOT Mathematics, has authored a new Liberal Arts math textbook entitled *Math Is*



Everywhere! Explore and Discover It!, published by Pearson in August 2005.



Math Is Everywhere! 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 makes extensive use of Web-based resources, many of which are in the MERLOT Mathematics collection.

For students who feel that math is a dry and boring subject and wonder, “*Why do I have to learn this?*” or “*When will I ever use this?*”, this textbook has the answers! They soon discover that mathematics has many fascinating and practical connections to music, art, architecture, nature, sports, finance, food, and much more. Student responses have been overwhelmingly positive.

Math Is Everywhere! is being marketed nationally by Pearson and Prentice Hall. For a textbook overview, please visit: <http://taste.merlot.org/portal/mathematics/index.html>, www.pearsoncustom.com or www.spcollege.edu/spg/math/rutledge

Portals, Portals

Portal Editors have worked very hard developing the new portal pages for their Editorial Boards. All 15 Editorial Boards have active portals through which they can provide MERLOT materials that are specific for their disciplines. At the moment, one can access the portals by going to the Communities area of the homepage and looking at each one individually. When the New MERLOT is ready, you can access them right from the homepage! **Go check them all out!**



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Volunteer Corner – Get to Know Our Volunteers

Dr. Elizabeth Smith (Southwest Virginia Community College and MERLOT Peer Reviewer in Spanish and French) teaches Spanish and French at Southwest Virginia Community College as the only full-time foreign language faculty member on her campus. Adding to the many duties she has at her college, she has been a prolific peer reviewer of Spanish online learning materials in the World Languages collection of MERLOT. Her work is quite significant in a collection that is the largest in the Humanities section. As a volunteer peer reviewer for 2004-2005, Smith is without a doubt one of World Language's most productive reviewers.



Her exceptional attention to the potential effectiveness of the materials she views includes her interaction with her students who give her feedback on the impact of each site on their learning and actually includes the learners' voices in her peer reviews. They use the materials and make substantive comments that enhance the peer reviews. These comments are certainly of great value to developers of online materials as well as faculty seeking classroom-ready resources. In her direct inclusion of the learner in her review process, Dr. Smith's approach is particularly noteworthy.

Dr. Smith also shared her involvement with the MERLOT project in two conference sessions at the recent 2005 Virginia Community College New Horizons conference. First, she shared her work as a MERLOT peer reviewer with colleagues in a roundtable that she organized and chaired on the use of technology in Foreign Languages. In addition to this session, she was also an invited speaker at a presentation on the use of learning objects, highlighting one of her French assignments that incorporate online learning materials. With her work on MERLOT, Dr. Smith has helped bring MERLOT materials in World Languages to the attention of an ever-growing international audience.



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Out and About with MERLOT

MERLOT and the Virtual Speakers Bureau

By Laura Franklin, Northern Virginia Community College

Previously, when I made MERLOT presentations, I spent a long time on the road, traveling from one location to location. I've been many places since then, still talking about MERLOT, but these days the travel is virtual. With the aid of assorted course management systems, I've been doing MERLOT presentations via virtual chat.



First, a colleague teaching a second language acquisition course at a Washington DC university assigned her graduate students readings in technology-enhanced language learning, including among her resources an article I had written on MERLOT in the VCCS journal *Inquiry*. The students then watched the ten-minute orientation video in the MERLOT Tasting Room. At this point, the stage was set for a virtual visit to their class, using a WebCT virtual chat. My role was to engage graduate teaching assistants and Education majors in a conversation on the MERLOT peer review standards as we applied them to World Languages, before they would have their turn at applying the standards to un-reviewed language sites. The students had excellent questions about peer review and, more particularly, about potential effectiveness. "How do you really teach with these sites?" they would ask. They also had questions about sustainability and whether or not repositories like MERLOT would be around for future generations. The actual experience of the chat, which is clearly not my main mode of communication, was exhilarating and exhausting at the same time. I found it took some skill to do the feverish typing and then wait to see the posting, before two or three other queries came firing in.

The following week, another colleague from a Maryland university heard about the first chat and e-mailed to invite me, virtually of course, to her Second Language Acquisition graduate seminar. Not only did this group have great questions, but one of them sent me her own webquest that she subsequently put into MERLOT. I sent the URL to my World Languages co-editor and we both had encouraging words for the new author. We got to model a new way to use technology in teaching and the students became aware of an important new resource, MERLOT.

This kind of session is easy to arrange with Blackboard or Web CT and certainly the same must be true with other course management systems. It is an efficient, low-cost way to expose more users to MERLOT with minimal schedule adjustments. The students were very comfortable in this medium, so much so that I decided to start using virtual chat study sessions with my own French students at the community college. This whole experience led me to think about how chat can be an integral part of MERLOT training and technology-enhanced learning in general, particularly for the users of technology who strongly prefer online communication. As we build our learning community, it makes sense to meet our new members on their turf. And as much as I love to meet face to face, it beats long car rides into the night.

I want to encourage you to become part of MERLOT's Virtual Speakers Bureau <http://www.merlot.org/person/VSBDirectory.po> and add information about your expertise and willingness to be a guest expert online into your MERLOT Member profile. You too can bring your expertise to the wide world of education and have lots of fun in the process.



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More MERLOT News

Searching the Tasting Room

Looking for something in the Tasting Room but don't know if it's there? Now you can search the Tasting Room for information! Just go to <http://taste.merlot.org/> and look in the top right corner. Enter your query and hit search!

JOLT – the Journal of Online Learning and Teaching

CALL FOR PAPERS: The new MERLOT JOLT is a peer-reviewed, online publication addressing the scholarly use of multimedia resources in education. JOLT welcomes papers on all aspects of the use of multimedia educational resources for learning and teaching. A variety of manuscript types are being sought including Research Papers, Theoretical/Conceptual Papers, Position Papers, Case Studies, and Instructional Design Notes. For more information about the journal and to view the Guideline for Authors, please go to: <http://taste.merlot.org/portal/jolt/>.

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.

The MERLOT *Partner Reserve*

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 Statistics

The statistics reported here are totals as of August 31, 2005

Collection

12,400	# items in Collection
1,719	# of materials w/ a Peer Reviews
27,506	# of Registered Users

Usage Statistics for January – August 2005

601,169	Total # of visits
2,474	Avg. # visits a day
21.4%	Avg. Visitor repeat rate

8 Avg. # pages/visit
4 min, 41 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. We appreciate “copy ready” materials – 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!