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From Your Wine Steward – Gerry Hanley

Dear MERLOT Leadership Community,

Through individuals, groups, and institutions within MERLOT, we are accomplishing so much because we are so many people working together toward a common vision of putting educational innovations into practice. By showcasing members and partners of MERLOT’s community in the Vineyard, we inspire ourselves and colleagues to join the effort and build our local communities, linked to the global enterprise of educational success for all.

Thank you once again for all your contributions and leadership.

Cheers,

Gerry

Feature Article

MIC08 – Save the Date – August 7-10, 2008!

Registration Open

Have you registered yet for MIC08? Your Project Director should have sent you the code that you use to receive your complimentary registration as a member of the Editorial Board. So, why don’t you go ahead and register now? Please note the change in days of the week for the MIC. Due to a number of requests, the conference meets over the weekend. Therefore, our opening reception is now on Thursday rather than Tuesday, and we end on Sunday rather than Friday. Remember this when you are making your travel arrangements. Reservations at the Hilton Minneapolis can be made by calling or reserving the room online. Please see http://conference.merlot.org/2008/hotelandtravel.html to make your reservation at the conference rate of $155 per night. Rooms will be held until July 1st.
MIC Proposals

This year we had a record high number of proposals for the MIC. Thank you to the 74 Reviewers who participated in the review process. We really appreciate your help in evaluating proposals.

The complete program should be on the website by the first week in May. We hope you’ll agree that there is a full array of interesting sessions…you’ll have trouble deciding which ones to attend.

Our highlighted community is Education and includes Faculty Development, Library and Information Services, and Teacher Education. We were happy to see lots of presentations in this track. Additionally, there is an abundance of sessions that have to do with Web 2.0 tools, Second Life, and new technologies. For the uninitiated; prepare to learn a lot.

Program Preview – Keynote Speakers

As a preview of some of the exciting things to come, take a look at the Keynote Speakers.

Dr. Darcy W. Hardy is Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Executive Director of the UT TeleCampus. The UT TeleCampus serves as a portal for students and faculty from University of Texas System institutions to access courses, programs and virtually all services necessary for success when teaching and learning online. The TeleCampus offers over 17 online programs and sees approximately 11,500 enrollments annually.

Dr. Bernie Dodge is a Professor of Educational Technology at San Diego State University where he teaches courses in technology integration and educational game design. He received his M.A. and Ph.D. in Instructional Design from Syracuse University. He has received two MERLOT Classics Awards in Teacher Education.
Dr. Robbie Kendall-Melton is the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Educational Technology and the Tennessee Board of Regents' Executive Director at the Renaissance Center (TBR). Her chief responsibilities include coordinating TBR’s Regents Online Degree Programs, Faculty-Staff Development in Technology, Online Teaching and Learning Initiatives, Technology Innovations, and System-wide Distance Education.

Program Preview – Preconference Workshops

As always, our preconference workshops occur the day before regular sessions start. They also occur at the same time as the Leadership meeting. We definitely want you at the Leadership meeting, but you might want to spread the word about the great preconference sessions we have lined up. Special thanks go to Jennie Dautermann, formerly of SUNY, who was responsible for this line-up:

- **A Crawl through Second Life: Enhancing Learner Engagement using 3D Virtual Worlds** - 9:00AM - 4:00PM - Presented by: Jonathon Richter, University of Oregon, and Sarah "Intellagirl Tully" Robbins, Ball State University
- **ECON201: An Online "Video Game" College Course** - 9:00AM - 12:00PM - Presented by: Jeffrey Sarbaum, University of North Carolina at Greensboro
- **Understanding Web 2.0 Technologies: Using Wikis, Blogs, & Podcasting** - 9:00AM - 12:00PM - Presented by: Cris Guenter, California State University, Chico
- **Moodle 101** - 9:00AM - 12:00PM - Presented by: Kurt Hochenauer, University of Central Oklahoma
- **Creating Engaging Lessons and Reusable Learning Objects with SoftChalk** - 9:00AM - 12:00PM - Presented by: David Evans and Steve Saltzberg, SoftChalk
- **Noyce Scholars & MERLOT: Helping Science & Math Teachers in Training Success in High Need Schools** - 9:00AM - 12:00PM
  Presented by: Gerry Hanley, MERLOT, Ron Hughes, California State University, Bakersfield, David Andrews, California State University, Fresno
- **MERLOT Librarian Workshop** - 1:00PM - 4:00PM - Presented by: Peter Nerzak, Director, Pellissippi State Technical Community College, Amy Harris, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and Lisa Baures, Minnesota State University, Mankato
- **Faculty Development Workshop - More Than a Taste of MERLOT** - 1:00PM - 4:00PM - Presented by: Laura Franklin, Northern Virginia
Community College, and Idana Hamilton, Southwest Virginia Community College

- Creating and Using Brief Online Teaching and Learning Resources
  1:00PM - 4:00PM - Presented by: Ray Purdom, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and Steve Gilbert, TLT Group

- Cool Tools for Learning and Online Teaching - 1:00PM - 4:00PM -
  Presented by: John Prusch, Excelsior College

- How to Write Assignments that Work for a Variety of Learning Styles and Multiple Intelligences - 1:00PM - 4:00PM -
  Presented by: Linda Scharp and Steve Rowe, McGraw-Hill Learning Solutions

The Faculty Development Workshop, the Librarian Workshop, and the Noyce Scholar Workshop are all free of charge. Our Higher Education Partners are encouraged to send people from their institutions to these workshops.

**Preview – Leadership Community**
The MERLOT Leadership Community, which consists of Project Directors, Editors, Editorial Board Members, Peer Reviewers, and MERLOT Staff, will meet beginning at 8:30 on Thursday. This meeting will consist of the following:

- Pedagogy Workshop – MERLOT has decided we want to focus a little more on pedagogy. Our very own Ray Purdom, Editor of Faculty Development, will lead us in a workshop that focuses on pedagogy

- State of MERLOT Address – Gerry Hanley, Executive Director of MERLOT, will discuss our progress and plans.

- Editorial Board Meetings – We will have individual rooms in which each of the Editorial Boards can meet together and discuss strategy and goals for the next academic year.

The Opening Reception will follow all of that, so we have a very busy day planned. Make sure your travel arrangements get you to Minneapolis Wednesday so you can rest up before the big Leadership Day.
Update on MERLOT Community

Jessica Somers Retires from USG

Jessica Somers, former Project Director for the University System of Georgia, will be retiring at the end of April. Jessica was one of the original participants in the collaboration between Cal State, USG, Oklahoma Board of Regents, and UNC Board of Regents that started off what we currently know as the MERLOT Collaborative. In recognition for her hard work on MERLOT, Jessica received the 2004 MERLOT Distinguished Service Award. She will be missed, as she has been a great supporter of MERLOT, and even more, a wonderful person. In case you want to drop her a note, her email (until the end of April) is Jessica.Somers@usg.edu Good luck to you, Jessica!

Jenn Cummings Promoted

Many of you recognize this face as the always helpful person behind the registration desk at the MIC. Jenn Cummings works for Deb Smith at CONCENTRA Conference Management Services. Both Jenn and Deb are responsible for the smooth and seamless arrangements at the MIC and other MERLOT meetings. Jenn was recently promoted to Vice President of CONCENTRA-CMS. This is quite an accomplishment, considering that she worked for the company as a college intern in 2002. Working part-time for CONCENTRA-CMS, the Hyatt, and Xilinx Corporation, Jenn still managed to go to Metropolitan State College of Denver and graduate with a BA Degree in Hospitality with a focus on meeting planning. She has also managed to pass her Certified Meeting Professional (CMP) Exam. This designation is a two-part process consisting of an application and a written examination. Of course, we know she would have no problem passing, as she has a real passion for her work and demonstrates that each year as she works to put together our program. Congratulations, Jenn. We’re proud of you!
University of Michigan MERLOT Group Awarded Grant

A subgroup of the University of Michigan MERLOT Community of Practice 2008-2009, has been awarded a NINI (New Initiatives/New Infrastructure) Grant for the proposal "Enhancing Undergraduate Education through the Deployment of Good Learning Objects" from University of Michigan's College of Literature, Science, and Arts. The project will train graduate students from large gateway courses in the recognition, evaluation, collection, implementation, and design of good online learning objects through a series of workshops and guided tasks. The MERLOT site will be featured during training workshops and tasks. (NOTE: The picture is some of the U of Michigan attendees at the MIC07).

A result of the two-year project will be the creation and integration of curriculum-oriented collections of peer-reviewed learning objects and a cross-discipline learning object collection to address common hurdles to learning into existing undergraduate classes. The expected outcome is enhancement of education for over 10,000 undergraduates due to the creative use of technology to improve undergraduate education, including peer-to-peer learning.

The select group of faculty and staff carrying out the project are Lynne Crandall (LSA Instructional Support Services), Brenda Gunderson (Statistics), Nancy Konigsberg Kerner (Chemistry), and Brian Malley (Psychology). More information about the grant proposal and the UM.MERLOT Community of Practice can be obtained by contacting Victor Wong (vkw@umich.edu) or at http://sitemaker.umich.edu/merlot.um.

ACTFL Video Podcast Contest

MERLOT World Languages is pleased to showcase the winners of the first ACTFL Student Video Podcast Contest on its portal page. Students in elementary, middle school, high school, colleges and universities submitted digital videos in February that described why language study was important to them outside the classroom. The
contest was an official activity of Discover Languages Month and part of the ongoing Discover Languages campaign. The aim of Discover Languages is to keep the importance of speaking a second language on the minds of educators, students and all citizens.

MERLOT World Languages joined the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), the Center for Language Education and Research (CLEAR) at Michigan State University, and sponsor ASC Direct to help plan this successful national Student Video Podcast contest. Plans are already being made for a contest next year. Visit the Showcase section of the MERLOT World Languages portal to read more about this collaborative project.

Office of Information and Learning Technology Celebrates 10th Anniversary
Louisiana Board of Regents, Office of Information & Learning Technology, will host the first 2008 Innovations Showcase on Tuesday, April 22, 2008. The Showcase will be held at their new office at the Bon Carré Business Center in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

The 2008 Innovations Showcase was created to celebrate the creative innovations that their fellow higher education community has created and the 10th year anniversary of the Louisiana Board of Regents, Office of Information and Learning Technology!

They have created the 10 E-Learning Tool Kit:

- **SELS** (Statewide Electronic Learning Support Center)- Diane Didier, Louisiana Board of Regents, Office of Information and Learning Technology,

- **CEP** *(Council for E-Learning Practitioners)* Representatives from Board of Regents institutions

- **MERLOT** *(Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online Teaching)* - Cathy Swift, Director of Academic Partner Services for MERLOT will be representing MERLOT at the Showcase.


- **LONI** *(Louisiana Optical Network Initiative)*
- **SREB** *(Southern Regional Educational Board) Electronic Campus*, Mary Larson and Dr. Bruce Chaloux
- **CALL** *(Consortium for All Louisiana Learners) Program*, Representatives from CALL institutions
- **WCET** *(Western Communications Educational Telecommunications)*
- **Quality Matters** The Quality Matters program has generated widespread interest and received national recognition for its peer-based approach to quality assurance and continuous improvement in online education. It created a set of review criteria based on the research literature and national standards incorporated these criteria into an interactive web-based rubric with annotations, and developed training and a process for conducting team course reviews.
- **SCORE** *(Sharable Content Object Repositories for Education)* SREB

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**Editorial Board News**

**Cris Guenter - Named 2008 National Art Educator of the Year**

Congratulations, Cris! Our very own Cris Guenter, Teacher Education Editorial Board Member, was selected by the National Art Education Association to receive the 2008 National Art Educator of the Year Award. This annual award recognizes the exemplary contributions, service and achievements of one outstanding NAEA member. Cris is currently the graduate coordinator in the Department of Education at California State University, Chico and has been an active member of MERLOT since 1999. She also received the 2002 Teacher Education Classic Award for “Arts Education K-6 Lesson Plans.” The award was presented to Cris during the NAEA National Convention in New Orleans, LA, March 26-30, 2008.

Cris was also the subject of a recent Wimba publication because she uses Wimba on top of Blackboard for her classes. Of course, they credit her receipt of the award partially to her use of Wimba, but we know better. She is just an outstanding teacher and an exemplary figure in education. You can read what
Cris began painting in elementary school, sold her first painting in junior high and held her first solo exhibit in high school. She has been exhibiting her photographs and paintings in regional, national and international exhibitions since 1972. She specializes in teaching that focuses on arts education, computer graphics and technology in education, and creativity across the curriculum. Cris will be conducting a pre-conference workshop at the MIC and will also participate in two panel discussions. Be sure to congratulate her when you see her.

**Laura Franklin Serves as Conference Chair**

Laura Franklin, Editor of World Languages Editorial Board was selected as the Conference Chair for the Northeast Conference for the Teaching of Foreign Languages, scheduled for April 2009. We know it will be a successful conference with Laura at the helm. We’re proud of you, Laura. For those interested in finding out more about the conference, you can read Laura’s message at: [http://alpha.dickinson.edu/prorg/nectfl/proposalform08.html](http://alpha.dickinson.edu/prorg/nectfl/proposalform08.html)

**Bill Paquette Stays Active**

Dr. William Paquette, MERLOT History Editor, has been awarded a fellowship to study at Brown University's Center for World Studies beginning March 28. That’s quite an honor, Bill! We’re proud of you!

**Theresa Flaherty Honored**

Theresa Flaherty, former Associate Editor for Marketing and current Portal Editor for Business recently received the Madison Scholar Award from James Madison University. JMU confers the Madison Scholar award upon professors who have demonstrated excellence and scholarly achievement in their respective disciplines. Professors are nominated by their colleagues, and then one is selected to represent each of JMU's five colleges.

**San Francisco State Receives Grant**

San Francisco State University is a recipient of a grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language program. A significant component of the grant is using MERLOT learning materials to supplement new courses in Business Chinese. The SFSU grant team met with Ms. Christine Corey, Senior Program Officer and Acting Branch Chief, U.S. Department of Education on her site visit to the university where she
learned more about how MERLOT is contributing in novel ways to foreign language learning.

In the photo are: H. Lin Domizio, Interim Assistant Program Director-China Curriculum and Language Projects, San Francisco State University, Ron Purser, Coordinator - Business Chinese MERLOT Project, College of Business, SFSU, Christine Corey, Senior Program Officer/Acting Branch Chief, U.S. Department of Education, Jun Wang, Grant Fellow - International Healthcare in China Projects, Holistic Health, SFSU, Lutfus Sayeed, UISFL Program Director, Principal Investigator, College of Business, SFSU.

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Out and About with MERLOT

Dr. Bill Paquette will present at the Virginia Community College's New Horizons Conference in Roanoke, VA, April 9-11. His topic is: "Using MERLOT to Create New Courses and Remake Old Ones."

Jim Rutledge gave a presentation in December 2007 on the new MERLOT/SERC partnership, Pedagogy in Action (http://serc.carleton.edu/sp/index.html), and the effective use of MERLOT resources at the 32nd Suncoast Regional meeting of the Mathematical Association of America in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Jim also gave a presentation on MERLOT and the effective use of MERLOT resources at the Instructional Technology Council's eLearning 2008 conference in St. Petersburg, Florida in January, 2008.

Ron Purser, Associate Editor of MERLOT's Business Discipline Community presented with Dr. Huei Lin Domizio "A Taste of MERLOT: Teaching Chinese Language Using Digital Learning Objects" at the recent International Studies Association conference in San Francisco on March 26, 2008 for a panel
Bruce Mason, JD Brown, Cathy Swift and Phil Moss presented a MERLOT workshop at Rose State College in Midwest City, Oklahoma on April 4th. Attendees from neighboring colleges attended to learn more about how to use MERLOT in the classroom. Several GRAPE Camp future attendees were recruited.

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**MERLOT Miscellaneous**

**GRAPE Camp Graduates**

The following individuals have attended GRAPE Camp and are now participating as Peer Reviewers for MERLOT. There will also be additional participants graduating in April.

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<th>Name</th>
<th>University</th>
<th>Board</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Jane Brannan</td>
<td>Kennesaw State University</td>
<td>Health Sciences</td>
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<td>2. Marisella Castro</td>
<td>Middle Tennessee State University</td>
<td>Statistics</td>
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<td>3. Nedra Davis</td>
<td>Chapman University College</td>
<td>Teacher Education</td>
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<td>4. Vito Dipinto</td>
<td>National Louis University</td>
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<td>5. Toni Hebda</td>
<td>University of Pittsburgh</td>
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<td>6. Amy Hilbelink</td>
<td>Kaplan University</td>
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<td>7. Shonu Nangia</td>
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<td>8. Susan Nealy</td>
<td>Baton Rouge Community College</td>
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<td>9. Virgil Renfroe</td>
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<td>10. Giovanna Roz</td>
<td>Brown University</td>
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<td>11. Susan Nealy</td>
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<td>Business – Management</td>
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<td>12. Vicki Webster</td>
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<td>13. Pantelis Vassilikas</td>
<td>DePaul University</td>
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<td>14. Deb Gearhart</td>
<td>Troy University</td>
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<td>15. Patricia Jeffers</td>
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<td>16. Karen Bammel</td>
<td>Phoenix University</td>
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<td>17. Barbara Frey</td>
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<td>18. Kate Burkes</td>
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<td>19. Cheryl Bowman</td>
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<td>20. Claudia Martins</td>
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<td>21. Dr. Susan Weaver</td>
<td>University of the Cumberlands</td>
<td>Faculty Development</td>
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<td>22. Kymberly Richard</td>
<td>Northern Virginia Community College</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
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<td>23. Lianna Wright, CCC</td>
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<td>Information Technology</td>
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MERLOT and Student Success – HELP Wanted!

Several MERLOT institutional partners are involved in system initiatives that address the needs of the academically at-risk. These initiatives seek the promising practices that will help students persist to graduation and reach their academic and professional goals.

The MERLOT community at-large can play a role in promoting student success by bringing together a collection of online learning materials that will engage the 18-22 year-old age group who make up a large proportion of students who do not complete a college degree in four years. If you know of materials in developmental mathematics, English and other core subjects that are in MERLOT that could be packaged in a special collection, please send their titles to Laura Franklin at lfranklin@nvcc.edu. We are looking for learning materials that address a wide variety of learning styles. Our hope is that student engagement through technology-enhanced instruction will lead to persistence. Your assistance as editors and MERLOT community members who are familiar with the best of our collections will be most appreciated.

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MERLOT and the Student PIRGs

The Student Public Interest Research Group (PIRGs) and MERLOT have been discussing an alliance to further our mutual goal of getting more high-quality, open and online learning materials into classrooms. After five years of research and advocacy to address rising college textbook costs, the Student PIRGs are now looking to digital, open textbooks as a promising solution to rising costs. Their goal is to increase the number of faculty who incorporate open learning materials into their courses in place of commercial books, and MERLOT’s
collection furnishes high-quality, peer-reviewed learning materials for faculty to consider – in short, this is a natural alliance.

Affordability being PIRGs primary concern, they have chosen to focus on the sector of the digital learning material world they call “open textbooks” – complete, openly licensed, high-quality textbooks. According to PIRG’s director for their open textbook campaign, Nicole Allen, “The end-all solution to high textbook prices is to get more comparable, affordable options on the market, and we think that powerful innovations over the past years make open textbooks our best hope.” She elaborates by saying:

- A number of open textbooks have been authored and adopted at institutions ranging from Harvard to Caltech.
- MERLOT offers a mechanism for faculty to identify and evaluate peer-reviewed open textbooks, and a community to foster collaboration.
- Print on demand publishers can easily produce printed and bound copies of open textbooks, so instructors do not need to choose between digital and print delivery to use a digital open textbook.

A key premise of this strategy is getting more peer-reviewed open textbooks online in an organized fashion, with proper incentives for authors, and enough faculty to consider using them, open textbooks might provide the tipping point to change the textbooks market for the better.

The Student PIRGs’ specific project furthers the third part of that equation: bringing more faculty to the open textbook well. PIRG is utilizing its strengths – grassroots organizing, national campus network, student activists – to build a base of supportive faculty through the lens of affordability who are willing to make a simple commitment to seek, consider and adopt open textbooks when appropriate for their classes. Demonstrating how open textbooks can look, feel, and act like their expensive commercial counterparts, but be affordable, comparable and flexible will lead more faculty to include them in their search for the most appropriate course materials.

PIRG is building this base of faculty around a statement of intent –The Open Textbooks Statement – which is posted on the campaign’s website. The target is 1,000-2,000 faculty endorsements. PIRG believes that is a large enough number to significantly boost open textbooks’ visibility in academic circles and the media, which will catalyze increased interest and use far beyond the actual number of signatories. Furthermore, it will hasten the transformation of open textbooks and open educational resources into a mainstream, legitimate force in the learning content market. View and sign the Open Textbooks Statement on the website:

http://www.maketextbooksaffordable.org/statement
The project intentionally focuses on the demand side of textbooks, with awareness that faculty acceptance is one of the key factors that will motivate supply side production and infrastructure. It is our hope that this work will synergize with the already significant use of MERLOT in higher education, and other pillars in the online and open education movement.

As PIRG and MERLOT move forward with an alliance, we look forward to sharing more about the progress. PIRG has already begun to archive the list of open textbooks they have identified in MERLOT, tagged as "open textbook," and will encourage interested faculty to MERLOT and offer their comments and reviews.

We hope that MERLOT’s individual faculty members will support the effort by signing the Open Textbooks Statement!

For more information contact Nicole Allen of The Student PIRGs at (503) 231-4181 x322 or nicole@studentpirgs.org.

Creating, Discovering and Sustaining Your Own Member Group Within MERLOT

Many people are members of groups or committees that work in a distributed environment. Two challenges faced by these members is how to find each other easily as the group grows and how to maintain a directory of the group’s membership in a very easy and sustainable manner.

MERLOT can provide a free and easy means to support formal and informal groups identifying and sustaining its directory of members. A group typically wants to have a way for its members to “register” themselves in MERLOT so the community of members can easily identify and discover each other.

If you’d like to create a way for you and your colleagues to identify and discover members of a formal or informal group within MERLOT there are a few simple steps to take.

1. Become a member of MERLOT – it’s free, easy, and quick. Go to: http://www.merlot.org/merlot/join.htm and fill out the online form to become a member of MERLOT. The form will ask you to enter your “Organization”. This is typically your place of employment or study (e.g. university, school, business, etc).
2. After you’ve become a member, CLICK on “My Profile” on the maroon colored navigation bar on the www.merlot.org website. This will bring you to your own personal webpage where you can add more information about you and your affiliation with professional, formal, and informal groups.

3. Scroll down the page and you will see that there are a number of blank sections on the page that you can enter information about yourself, including:
   a. Contact Information
   b. Skills and Interests
   c. Education History
   d. Positions
   e. Publications
   f. Associations
   g. Honors and Awards
   h. Teaching Experience
   i. Presentations

   On the right hand side of the each section, you will see “Edit”. CLICK on “Edit” and it will let you add your information to each section.

4. To create your group, such as Noyce Scholars or CSU-NASA Collaborative, decide on a name for your group that you will ask everyone to use. Then go to the ASSOCIATIONS section of your profile, CLICK on EDIT and complete the form. For example “Noyce” might be the one word that you want everyone to include in the name of the association and people might put in Noyce Scholars, CSU-Noyce Scholars, etc. The one word “Noyce” will be the key work that you will use in searching for all the other Noyce people. CLICK on “Back to Profile” when you’re done filling out the form. You now have registered yourself in the “Noyce” Association.

5. To find the other Noyce members in MERLOT, CLICK “Member Directory” on the maroon navigation bar on the www.merlot.org and the CLICK on “Advance Search” link that is to the right of the “GO” button on the right side of the page.

6. On the Advance Search page, type in the name of your group (e.g. Noyce) in the ASSOCIATIONS field, scroll to the bottom of the page and CLICK “Search”. You will then be presented with the hit list of all the members that have Noyce in the ASSOCIATIONS field.
You can be members of many different groups (see Gerry Hanley’s profile for example: http://www.merlot.org/merlot/viewMember.htm?id=16185)

Send these instructions to the people who you want to form the group within MERLOT and pretty soon you’ll have a means for people to identify, discover, and sustain a directory of your community for free and with minimal on your part.

**ELIXR Update**

The ELIXR team is pleased to announce the availability of grants between $10,000 to $15,000 for the creation of new themes and sets of case stories. Proposals are requested from prospective theme leaders and communities for exemplary teaching practices. Full details at: http://elixr.merlot.org/rfp/

**Cathy’s Corner**

Hi, Cathy:
I’ve been hearing something about GRAPE Camp. Can you please explain what that is. Do you really have to go to a camp? Is it overnight? Do I need to bring bug spray? Will I be stomping grapes?
Thanks.
Afraid to get my hands (feet) dirty

Dear Afraid:
I’d be glad to explain it. GRAPE Camp is an online (not in person) training session for people who are interested in being Peer Reviewers for MERLOT.
The session consists of three weeks of webinars that each lasts one hour. Participants have homework between the sessions that must be completed.

The sessions consist of the following:

- **Week 1** – Introduction to MERLOT, tour of the website and introduction to Peer Review
- **Week 2** – Explanation of MERLOT’s Peer Review Process
- **Week 3** – Participants learn how to submit their own Peer Review Reports to MERLOT.

After completion of the three sessions, Peer Reviewers will be ready to Peer Review for MERLOT, will be assigned to an Editorial Board, and will receive a certificate for completing GRAPE Camp.

The webinars are archived so that participants can replay the session if they feel they need to. The participants come from a variety of disciplines and interact with each other during each session.

If you would like to attend one of the GRAPE Camps or if you know someone who would, please contact Cathy Swift at cswift@calstate.edu

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

The March issue of the MERLOT Journal of Online Learning and Teaching (**JOLT**) is now online and includes 13 papers covering a variety of topics. Of particular note, one invited paper deals with the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and how one university immediately adopted a totally online approach out of necessity when its campus was flooded. Seven research papers, one position paper, and four case studies complete the issue.

Upcoming in June is a special issue of **JOLT** devoted to the Next Generation of Learning/Course Management Systems. Our guest editors assure us that this will be a most interesting issue.

**JOLT** is published quarterly, and if you are interested in submitting a manuscript for publication consideration, please see the journal's Guidelines for Authors. In addition, if you would like to become a peer reviewer for JOLT, please send your curriculum vitae to jolteditor@merlot.org.
**MERLOT Statistics**

**MERLOT Collection as of March 31, 2008**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19,290</td>
<td># items in Collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,400</td>
<td># of materials w/ a Peer Reviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>936</td>
<td># of materials w/ an assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57,716</td>
<td># of Registered Users</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Usage Statistics for January 2008 – March 2008**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>395,673</td>
<td>Total # of visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,318</td>
<td><strong>Avg. # new visitors a day</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.5%</td>
<td>Avg. visitor repeat rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Avg. # pages/visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 min, 26 sec</td>
<td>Avg. length of visit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Are you interested in writing for *From the Vineyard*, or adding news and updates? *From the Vineyard* is published December, April and September. Getting your information in print is easy. Send your submission to Cathy Swift 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!