MERLOT @ EDC

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Outline

- **Brief History of MERLOT**
  - What are “Educational” Digital Libraries?
  - What is MERLOT…
    - To educators and learners?
    - To project partners and participants?
  - **MERLOT Peer Review**
    - Criteria to evaluate technology and its impact on learning
  - **Discussion:**
    - How can we go beyond peer review to develop a scalable method of determining technology's enhancement/improvement of learning in educational digital libraries?
Brief History of MERLOT

• **Begun in 1997 as project in California State University System**
  – Led by systemwide Center for Distributed Learning (1997-2002)
  – Now individual department moving toward 501c3 non-profit organization
• **Builds upon Apple’s Education Object Economy**
• **In 1998-1999 MERLOT comes to national prominence**
  – Via State Higher Education Executives Organization/American Productivity and Quality Center Best Practice Center in faculty development and instructional technology
Brief History of MERLOT (cont.)

• 1999 brings Founding System Partners of collaborative
  – Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education
  – University of North Carolina
  – University System of Georgia

• In 2000, add additional System Partners

• In 2002, add Edusource.Canada as Sustaining Partner

• As of 2003, 15 System Partners
Brief History of MERLOT (cont.)

• 2002 brings first Campus Partners
  – Individual campus partnerships

• 2002 brings first Alliance Partners
  – Professional societies, educational digital libraries and collections, educational organizations
  – Formal workplans and activities, MOU

• As of 2003, 7 Campus Partners
• As of 2003, 10 Alliance Partners
MERLOT’s Support

• MERLOT is supported primarily by Partner fees
  – CSU > $250,000
  – Sustaining > $50,000
  – System = $25,000
  – Campus = $6,500

• MERLOT receives some grant funding
  – NSF NSDL Program
  – Other NSF Programs
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“Working” Description of “Educational” Digital Libraries

...or...how they go beyond traditional brick and mortar library or “research” digital libraries...

- Either a repository or index to teaching and learning resources
- **Resources and features directly** support teaching and learning activities
  - Undergraduate and/or K-12
  - Educators and students
- Provides **support** for adapting or adopting resources developed by others (through comments of use, lesson plans, etc.)
- Uses technology to support **collaboration, personalization, recommendation** of resources
- Supports **communities** of users

Refs: Term “Educational Digital Library” David Wiley, Utah State and Description
Why “Digital Library”? 

• **Useful to recognize specific focus on teaching and learning**
  – Types of materials
  – Users and sophistication level of users

• **Somewhat useful analogy**
  – “Horseless carriage”--Len Simutis, ENC

• **Similar Features**
  – Search and Browse for Resources
  – Collection Development (Cataloging)
  – Curation
  – Some Archiving
How “Educational” Digital Libraries Go Further…

- **Collection Development by Users**
  - Contribute Materials (MERLOT)
  - “Self-cataloging” (NEEDS/SMETE)

- **Reviews**
  - Peer Review (MERLOT/NEEDS)

- **Use of the Resource**
  - Member Comments (MERLOT)/User Comments (NEEDS/SMETE)
  - Assignments

- **Awards Programs**
  - Classics and Editors’ Choice (MERLOT)
  - *Premier Award* (NEEDS)
How “Educational” Digital Libraries Go Further… (cont.)

- **Personalization**
  - Personal Collections (MERLOT)
  - My Workspace (NEEDS/SMETE)

- **Recommender Systems**
  - Related Resources, Interest, Community (SMETE)

- **Interoperability**
  - Federated Search (MERLOT and SMETE)

- **Community**
  - Developers (SMETE)
  - Editorial Boards, etc. (MERLOT)
  - Members (?) (MERLOT)
Brief Demo

www.merlot.org
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What is MERLOT to Educators and Learners?

- **Audience:** Primarily Higher Education Faculty
  - Colleges and Universities
  - Community Colleges

- **Links to Resources**
  - 10,000 total (websites, applets and other "learning objects")
  - Primarily across 14 disciplines with Editorial Boards

- **Member Directory**
  - 17,000 registered Members (62% Faculty, 18% Students, 13% Staff, 7% Other)
  - Membership is free, membership needed to contribute materials, comments, assignments, personal collections

- **MERLOT International Conference**
What is MERLOT to Partners and Participants?

• **Community of Peers**
  – Project Directors, and Campus Liaisons
  – Editorial Boards

• **Leadership in Issues in Higher Education**
  – Educational technology and impact on colleges and universities
  – Promotion and tenure, raising level of teaching activities
What is MERLOT to Partners and Participants? (cont.)

• **Shared Development of Technologies**
  – Primarily development of Educational Digital Library (collection)
  – Agent on behalf of Partners
    • Explore new areas such as repository and digital rights management

• **Professional Development**
  – Brings educational technology into Partner professional development
  – Brings professional development to participants
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MERLOT’s Peer Review Process

• Basic Criteria Developed in 1999
  – Quality of Content
  – Potential Effectiveness as a Teaching/Learning Tool
  – Ease of Use

• Form discipline-based Editorial Boards to refine criteria and perform reviews
  – 2002, Refined Editorial Boards to allow for expansion and better scalability
Editorial Boards

- **Selected and Supported by System Partners**
  - 1-2 Editors, Associate Editors, Peer Reviewers
- **Current Boards**

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Peer Review Process

• **Roles**
  – Editor, Associate Editor, Reviewers
  – Filled initially from Partners

• **Triage-Review-Reporting-Post**
  – Multiple step process
  – Rating
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