Extending “Scholarship” to Including Teaching in a Digital World

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Outline

• MERLOT is about value and making contributions visible
• Recent advances of the MERLOT project
• MERLOT and Review, Tenure and Promotion
• Discussion
MERLOT is about Value and Making Contributions Visible

• **Value to educators and learners**
  – Access to high quality resources across a wide range of disciplines
  – Access to communities (disciplinary, functional such as faculty development)

• **Value to institutions and partners**
  – Extend “local” efforts, make a national impact
  – Independent evaluation of “quality”
MERLOT is about Value and Making Contributions Visible

• Value to authors
  – Provides peer reviews, comments and assignments
  – Provides recognition and documentation

• Value to contributors and members
  – By making curriculum development visible

• Value to editorial boards and reviewers
  – Leadership
  – Participate as a “professional responsibility”
Recent Advances of the MERLOT Project

• Extending the Admin Team
  – Flora McMartin: Focusing on member services and evaluation
    • Background in education
    • Worked with NEEDS and SMETE digital libraries for over 4 years
  – Brandon Muramatsu: Focusing on alliances with digital libraries, professional societies and other educational organizations
    • Background in engineering
    • Worked with NEEDS and SMETE digital libraries for 7 years
Technology Update

• Update to MERLOT website to be released in December/January
  – Personal (and shareable) Collections
  – “Remember Me”
• New technologies under development
  – Federated search with Education.au and SMETE.ORG
• Top-to-bottom technology update planned
Partnerships and Alliances

• New Organizational Alliance Program
  – Education.au
  – American Association of Physics Teachers
  – New Media Consortium (formerly New Media Centers)
  – A number of others under development

• New Campus Partnership Program

• Improved support for Institutional Partners
  – Tasting Room
  – Partner Reserve

• Recruitment

• Do you know of any organizations or institutions we should be working with?
Member Services

• New Editorial Board/Community
  – Faculty Development
    • Contact Flora McMartin, mcmartin@merlot.org

• Peer Review Process
  – Improved support for editorial boards
  – Training tool to support new reviewers

• Member Services
  – MERLOT International Conference
  – Initiative still in planning stages
The Environment

• Development of digital learning materials continues
• Budget challenges in higher education lead to continued interest in “distance learning”
• More campuses and systems becoming interested in digital scholarship
  – University of Michigan
The Environment (cont.)

• **Guidelines for evaluating technology in instruction being developed**
  – Conference on College Composition and Communication
  – Modern Language Association
  – American Association for History and Computing
  – Duquesne University

• **Educational digital libraries under development, some conducting Peer Reviews**
  – National Science Foundation $25M/year NSDL Program
MERLOT’ s Core Assumptions

Relationship between MERLOT and the Review, Tenure and Promotion (RTP) process

• Faculty are, and should remain, in control of online learning processes in collaboration with their students
• Faculty need better mechanisms to document their contributions to teaching and learning
• Faculty-led peer review processes are key to expanding the use and effectiveness of digital learning materials
Key Elements Guiding MERLOT’s Approach

• Make digital scholarship “visible”
• Enable “electronic portfolios” of digital scholarship
• Evaluate materials in the medium that they are created
• Focus on peer review through established criteria, processes and outcomes
• Peer review and testimony by experts of discipline enhance
MERLOT Provides…

- **Quality Reviews**
  - Standardized evaluation process
  - Defined criteria customized for each discipline
  - Independent panel of experts, with disciplinary background
  - Training to ensure reliable application of criteria and process

- **Documentation**
  - Formal recognition of contributions of authors, contributors, editors, reviewers and members
  - Ability to form an “electronic portfolio” of contributions and resources used within MERLOT
Value to Editorial Boards and Reviewers

• Professional development for Editorial Boards
  – Developing leadership skills
  – Leading scholarship of teaching in their discipline
  – Visibility of expertise

• Consider reviewing as a “professional responsibility”
  – New initiative to link MERLOT disciplinary communities and editorial boards to appropriate professional societies

• Recognition and documentation at home institution
  – Letter of “Appointment” to editor designees
  – Participation and reviews can become part of RTP package
Value to Authors

• “Biggest” Impact in Support of RTP Process
• Peer Review Process
  – Independent review of quality of author’s work
  – Feedback for improvement from knowledgeable peers
• Recognition and documentation at home institution
  – Two letters summarizing review and process to author identified designees (e.g., Provost, Dean)
  – Review publicly posted
  – Documentation can become part of RTP package
• New MERLOT Classics
  – “Best of the best” across MERLOT
• New MERLOT Editors Choice
  – “Best of the best” in the discipline
Value to Contributors and Members

• Makes curriculum development visible
  – Share resources used in their teaching (by adding them to MERLOT)
  – Add comments, assignments to extend and describe use of resources
  – Create an “electronic portfolio” of contributions (soon to be shareable)
  – Documentation can become part of RTP package
Discussion...

Questions?
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