From Database to Teaching Commons:
Opportunities for MERLOT/SUNY Collaboration

Tom Carey
University of Waterloo & MERLOT
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OR

Institutionalizing Exemplary Instruction: Partnerships for Academic Technology & Academic Affairs

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The Online Teaching Commons: Sharing Exemplary Teaching Practices

...time for a vote on which talk you want...
From Database to Teaching Commons:
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The context, vision and opportunity
Where does MERLOT fit?
Questions we have to answer [mine & yours]
Next steps for MERLOT…
…next steps for you
The context:

Growing faculty use of shared resources through Learning Management Systems

Faculty access shared resources through learning management systems

Faculty create shared resources

To design more effective learning activities for their students

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Welcome

Introduction and Overview of what UW-ACE Instructional Resources is all about

UW-ACE Instructional Resources provides an exchange mechanism by which instructors and instructional designers can access, share and reuse peer reviewed learning activities and layout templates within the UW-ACE environment. The repository houses pedagogically sound and easy-to-access learning resources in each of the following four categories:

- Layout Design Materials
  Page layout designs and components
- Learning Activities
  Activities suitable for copying and personalizing
- Information for Students
  UW Policies, Instructions, etc.
- Teaching and Learning Resources for Instructors

Click on any of the above links to browse through the resources in each category, or learn more about UW-ACE Instructional Resources in the sections below.

How to Find and Use Resources
For first time users, basic information and instructions
**Task: Short Story Discussion**
*Boys and Girls*, by Alice Munro

**Objectives:**
1. To help you prepare for lectures by giving you the opportunity to discuss the short stories covered in the course with your team members prior to the in-class discussion.
2. To help you learn to read texts actively.

**Steps:**
1. Read about expected roles by clicking the Team Roles link to the right.
2. Within your team select a discussion leader and task submitter for this task.
3. Discuss the questions outlined below with your team by clicking on the Teamwork link.
4. Task submitter to submit a summary of the discussion by clicking the Team submission link.

**Before you start:**
You may want to refer to TRACE's Tips for online discussion for tips on effective online discussion strategies (Note: this is a .pdf file).

Please note that your role in your team will change with each Short Story Task. Each team is responsible for completing 5 Short Story Tasks, and each task requires that 2 roles be filled (discussion leader and task submitter). This will give every member the opportunity to fill one of these roles at least once. Team roles are described in the link to the right.

**Discussion questions: Boys and Girls**

1. Summarize the plot in one sentence; this sentence should include the names of the main characters.
UW-ACE Instructional Resources (IR)
The Process of Peer Review

Key players:
IR co-ordinator, Review co-ordinators (x4), Subject Matter Experts (to be recruited by review co-ordinator as necessary), Information design expert, DE rep.

1. Instructor fills in and submits an Activity Submission Form for their activity/template.

2. IR Co-ordinator is alerted via email that an item has been submitted.

3. IR Co-ordinator alerts appropriate Review Co-ordinator.

   - Alan: Layout Design Materials
   - Dawn: Learning Activities
   - Megan: Information for Students
   - Jan: Teaching & Learning Resources for Instructors

4. Review Co-ordinator arranges for item to be peer reviewed using Review Criteria Sheets*.

5. If not accepted:
   - returned to the contributor with reviewers’ comments and suggestions for improvement.
   - Contributor resubmits the activity using the Activity Submission Form, detailing the

6. If accepted with minor modifications:
   - returned to the contributor with reviewers’ comments and suggestions for improvement.
   - Contributor resubmits the activity using the Activity

7. If accepted:
   - Review Co-ordinator completes the Descriptive Data page as part of the documentation attached to the activity.
Faculty access shared resources & expertise through learning management systems

Growing faculty use of shared resources through Learning Management Systems creates a gateway for mobilizing teaching expertise & exemplary instruction

To design learning activities for their students

Incorporate priorities of SUNY campuses & faculty into plans for development of the next generation MERLOT – a repository of shared teaching expertise with links to exemplary learning resources

The vision:

The opportunity:
Where Does MERLOT Fit?

MERLOT is a leadership consortium for online faculty communities, sharing teaching knowledge and managing digital resources to enhance learning and student success in higher education.

Through its public website, MERLOT provides an open repository of faculty teaching expertise and links to exemplary learning resources.

Our institutional members systematically enhance teaching and learning through the exchange, re-use and adaptation of learning resources and teaching expertise. MERLOT engages and enables their faculty in collaboration with institutional and disciplinary colleagues.

These MERLOT faculty enhance learning and student success, and advance knowledge and practice for teaching in their disciplines, and also respond to the strategic priorities at their own institutions.
Welcome to MERLOT

Putting Educational Innovations Into Practice
Find peer reviewed online teaching and learning materials. Share advice and expertise about education with expert colleagues. Be recognized for your contributions to quality education.

Visit a Discipline Community
Find discipline expertise and online curricula to help you advance your career.

- Biology
- Business
- Chemistry
- Engineering
- Health Sciences
- History
- Information Technology
- Mathematics
- Music
- Physics
- Psychology
- Statistics
- Teacher Education
- Teaching and Technology
- World Languages

Exploring MERLOT

Learning Materials
Browse peer reviewed online learning materials in your discipline.

Colleagues
Find expert colleagues in your discipline.

Personal Collections
View personal collections from people in your discipline.

Assignments
Get assignments you can use with your students.

Guest Experts
Find guest experts in the Virtual Speakers Bureau.
Communities

MERLOT has created a variety of Community Portals categorized by discipline and program area to provide users with "one-stop shopping" centers for a broad spectrum of resources related to online teaching and learning. Community Portals provide MERLOT members with differentiated information about exemplary teaching strategies, professional associations, journals, conferences, and other resources for continuous professional development. MERLOT categorizes Community Portals as:

**DISCIPLINE COMMUNITIES**

Explore disciplines you'll find in most colleges and universities

- Biology

Want to add additional discipline communities to this list?

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITIES**

Explore resources supporting professional and applied programs

- Fire Safety

Learn more about workforce development communities

**RELATED COMMUNITIES**

Explore resources supporting MERLOT's Partner Communities and interest groups

- CATS

Find out how to become a partner community
In The Beginning...

It was September of 1991, when Edward L. Ayers proposed The Valley Project. Pioneered to be a standard novel portraying the life and times around the Civil War, Ayers began collecting information for a comparison between the North and South communities centrally involved in the war; Augusta County, Virginia and Franklin County, Pennsylvania.

Ayers collected information from all kinds of sources including letters, diaries, records and eventually had enough information to begin his creation. However, Ayers soon realized that computers were swiftly becoming the way of the future and he could use them to his advantage.

With donations from IBM, the newly founded Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities (IATH), at the University of Virginia, began converting the documents into electronic copies and continued to hunt for more documents. It was the fall of 1993 when Thornton Staples, associate director of IATH, showed Moses to the group. Moses was an early computer capable of viewing the World Wide Web and thus changed the way of thinking for the group from a digital project to an online archive.

The People

Edward L. Ayers - Founder of Valley of the Shadow project.
Andrew J. Tongue - Current Project Manager
Susanna Lee - Project Manager (2001 - 2003)
Avery E. Mullin - Interim Associate Director of the Virginia Center for Digital History (1999 - 2003)

Virginia Center for Digital History Staff Members
Kim Trina - Associate Director of the VCH
Jennifer Holmes - VCH Programmer

What Is It?

The Valley of the Shadow is comprised of thousands of war-time documents. The documents are divided into many sub-sections, with the overall three being: The Eve of War, The War Years, and The Aftermath. The documents mostly originated from the two cities Augusta County, Virginia and Franklin County, Pennsylvania.

The Eve of War (Fall 1861 - Spring 1862)

Includes statistics comparing the two cities with references to land values, soil types, real estate, and other statistics. Also included in The Eve of War are Church Records such as information on the marriages of the time including Presbyterian, Episcopal, Lutheran and others. However, one of the most interesting topics about The Eve of War are the Letters & Diaries. This page provides links to various personal papers kept by the people of the two cities including the original documents.

The War Years (Spring 1861 - Spring 1865)

Contains Letters & Diaries, Official Records, Soldiers' Records, and other documents relating to the battles that occurred. A particularly interesting page is the Battle Maps. This page contains an interactive map where you can view the progress of both the Augusta and the Franklin battles as they traveled across the country, where the battles took place, and a time scale to see approximately how long the travelling was. You can also view historic cities versus current cities.

The Aftermath (Spring 1865 - Fall 1870)

Contains documents including Census & Veteran Records as well as Memoires of the War such literature written about the war. It also contains information on the Freedman Bureau which documents freed slaves and lands after the war.
## Continuing progress!

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Advancing faculty access to resources...

- **LMS Integration:**
  - Access to MERLOT resources where faculty need it
  - Version 1.0 in Bb, WebCT, Angel, D2L, Moodle*, Epsilen, Sakai (in discussion)
  - Pilot project to integrate access to publisher content
  - Pilot projects for system layer of community building [examples]

- **Federated Search:**
  - Access to worldwide collection through MERLOT
  - , IEEE Computer Society, UNC portal, COMPadre, etc.
  - We will continue to grow this list ...
Advancing community resources: Questions we have to answer

- What kinds of teaching expertise could engage Users?
- How could this information be deployed at the point of need?
- How could this knowledge be created/collection/represented/maintained?
  - What social infrastructure could engage Contributors?
- From “could” to “would”: what conditions are necessary for this to work?
- What sustainability models and strong collaboration facilities are needed?

... what other questions should be added?
Next Steps toward Enhancing MERLOT
With enriched community resources

The evolution of Web 2.0 enables a shift from

Digital Libraries supported by faculty communities

To

Faculty Communities supported by digital libraries, community workspaces, user metatagging, multidimensional indexing, rich interconnections...
Integrating Knowledge from Experience and Research to Enhance Faculty Teaching Practice
Faculty teaching practices

Experience reports from teachers

“Best evidence” guides to teaching

Teacher-to-teacher narratives/case stories

Research on teaching “in context”: topic, challenge, etc.

Exemplary learning resources

CASTL: Scholarship in the Online Teaching Commons

Research on learning and teaching

MERLOT Innovation Projects: CASTL
www.seedwiki.com/wiki/elixr_castl
Enhanced Peer Reviews are part of a larger initiative...

“the Teaching Commons is ...
a conceptual space in which communities of educators committed to inquiry and innovation come together to exchange ideas about teaching and learning, and use them to meet the challenges of educating students.”

The Advancement of Learning: Building the Teaching Commons (2005)

Scholarship in the Online Teaching Commons: Extending Learning Object Repositories with the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

MERLOT + CSU:SDSU + SUNY TLT + UNC TLT + Seton Hall
MERLOT Innovation Projects: FIPSE
www.seedwiki.com/wiki/fipse_elixr

MERLOT ELIXR project

New FIPSE grant for Faculty Engaging Learners of X with R [ELIXR]

MERLOT + CSU + MnSCU + Univ. Sys. of Georgia + OkRHE + Coastline CC + Indiana St + BYU + the Ohio State University

• Develop Teacher-to-Teacher stories to highlight exemplary practices and reusable resources
  • 16 disciplines
  • 6 themes for case studies across disciplines

• Disseminate and test through
  • MERLOT repository
  • Faculty development workshops
Building a Sustainable Social Infrastructure

Deliverables

- June 06: 8 case stories [CA]
- Dec 06: 8 case stories [others]
- June 07: 16 case stories
- Dec 07: 16 case stories
- June 09: 32 case stories
- Dec 09: 16 case stories

Subsidy from grant declines over time [$3K -> $2K -> $1K]

Success implies sustainable process & take-up by other partners + evidence of effective impacts
Faculty teaching practices

Experience reports from teachers

Exemplary learning resources

Research on teaching “in context”: topic, challenge, etc.

“Best evidence” guides to teaching

Research on learning and teaching

Teacher-to-teacher narratives/case stories

MERLOT Innovation Projects:
Community Teaching Portfolios
[NSF proposal, Jan 07]

Mockup
Opportunities for
MERLOT/SUNY TLT Collaboration

Accelerated course development
for online/blended learning

Infrastructure to rapidly disseminate
exemplary results on strategic projects

New partnership between faculty development and academic
technology to engage faculty with next generation learners

Increased value from LMS – ‘just in time’ support
for teaching integrated with course management

Resources and expertise for adjunct/part-time
instructors to foresee keys to student success

Integrating teaching and research
through ‘teacher scholars’

Special emphasis on educating Science teachers & Engineers
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