

MERLOT's Services for Institutional Initiatives

At the January 2007 meeting of the MERLOT Project Directors, we began plans for organizing and developing MERLOT services to enable MERLOT Partners and constituents to implement their institutional initiatives successfully in a more timely manner and at a reduced the cost through the integration of MERLOT's programs and services into their institutional initiatives.

MERLOT's STRATEGY: Each institutional initiative requires a plan for the types of MERLOT resources and services that MERLOT partners can leverage to advance their initiative's success. Furthermore, the resource and services need to be designed to enable customization to a partner's institutional context. MERLOT will aid the customization of its services to a partner's initiative which can result in a generalized model for other partners with similar initiatives.

MERLOT strategy is to provide the following services and resources for each initiative:

1. **Showcase of authentic institutional case studies** for using MERLOT to advance the initiative
2. **Collection of tested tools and processes** that MERLOT partners can readily adopt and adapt to advance their initiative
3. **Scholarly evidence** that the MERLOT services and resources are delivering on the expected outcomes and value.

To create showcases of authentic and model examples, MERLOT partners will need to:

- Commit to implementing MERLOT services and resources within their initiative project.
- Document their implementation for a case study (document can be done via a variety of media and methods)
- Share their documentation within the MERLOT community and catalog it within the MERLOT collection
- Assess the value of MERLOT services and resources in the context of assessing their initiative

The collection of tools and processes that MERLOT partners can readily adopt and adapt for their initiative will include:

- A Guidebook on how MERLOT can be used for each of the institutional initiatives. The guidebook would provide recommendations and processes for:
 - Planning the use of MERLOT services to improve the likelihood of success for your initiative

- Implementing MERLOT services through technologies, training, and community development targeted to achieve institutional goals within the context of the institution's culture
- Sustaining MERLOT services and ensure growing benefits from MERLOT to your institution.

In addition to the guidebook, the MERLOT Administrative Team will continue to develop and/or customize the tools and processes that empower and enable the success of the initiative leaders. Some of the important tools and processes include:

- MERLOT integration into LMS platforms to make MERLOT resources and tool as convenient as possible
- MERLOT Institutional Teaching Commons - a "just add water" starter kit for institutions to build local communities of practice while linking to the global collection of resources
- MERLOT taxonomy and collection that enables easy and successful discovery and use of online resources
- MERLOT training and professional development programs that add capabilities to the teachers, students, and staff.
- MERLOT awards and recognition programs that provide some incentives for individual and culture change
- MERLOT editorial and peer review processes and tools that provide a quality assurance process
- MERLOT International Conference that motivates and develops the MERLOT community members
- MERLOT federated search, search services, and RSS feeds which enable discover of content through a variety of methods
- MERLOT annotation tools that enable the social tagging and capturing of pedagogical expertise

Our goal is that each guidebook, technology, tool, and process is run through some quality assurance process by a MERLOT partner and/or by the MERLOT administrative team. Results from the quality assurance processes will be linked to the resource itself within the MERLOT collection. For example, a MERLOT Teaching Commons will be cataloged in MERLOT and results of a quality assurance process would be added as a Member Comment.

The scholarly evidence that the MERLOT services and resources are delivering on the expected outcomes and value will be provided in a variety of ways:

1. As part of the showcasing process, MERLOT partners will agree to collect data on their practices of using MERLOT within their initiatives
2. As part of the development and customization of tools and processes, MERLOT and MERLOT partners will agree to collection data within the design to deployment phases.