

MERLOT ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT

Commitment Statement

MERLOT's vision is to be a premiere online community where faculty, staff, and students from around the world share their learning materials and pedagogy. We strive to make our site fully accessible for users with disabilities and to reduce barriers to delivering educational content to all our users. Our goal is to ensure that our improvements will allow users with motor, vision, or hearing disabilities to continually have the same wonderful experience exploring our site as all users. We hope that you will enjoy the new and exciting changes we have made. MERLOT is committed to accessibility as an ongoing activity so we look forward to your feedback! Our site was last updated October 2013.

Compliance Status

Our Accessibility development work has focused on many different aspects of MERLOT. We most intensely focused on the index.htm pages and the primary navigation pages: materials.htm, members.htm, portfolios.htm, assignments.htm, comments.htm, and reviews.htm; however, we also brought many changes to all of the pages as we found issues to fix.

MERLOT used 5 different specifications to verify that the technical standards were met for the website. MERLOT used the following for our accessibility development of MERLOT:

- WCAG 2.0. We looked at all 3 levels, but mostly levels A & AA.
- CSU Accessibility Guidelines, primarily based on WCAG 2.0
- HTML 5 standards
- CSS 3 standards
- Accessible Rich Internet Applications (WAI-ARIA) 1.0

MERLOT used 3 software programs during development to ensure the web site's compliance for all users:

- Deque FireEyes
- HiSoftware Compliance Sheriff
- Chrome's screen reader extension – Google ChromeVox

Accessibility Features

In addition, MERLOT:

- Ensured that everything is keyboard navigable - Significant changes have been made to MERLOT so users without fine motor control or the ability to execute simultaneous actions may browse the website with ease. We have enabled keyboard navigation throughout our pages.
- Eliminated the use of tables for layout purposes which cause accessible problems on pages we have redesigned (tiles, hitslists). It is an ongoing process for pages that still require redesign (material detail page, member profile, wizards)
- Used ARIA, alt and title attributes clarify both static & dynamic content.

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- Confirmed that when a dialog is active, the focus is on the dialog and we only allow tabbing through elements in dialog
- Informed users when a dynamic area is active and allowed navigation through elements as long as it's active.
- Ensured that color-contrast specs were met.
- Confirmed that pages make sense when style sheets are removed (very important for screen readers)
- Simplified pages and minimized text and links.
- Each option and section on MERLOT pages provides a tool tip that explains what the entry is, what is the expected input required and the format required.

Accessibility Gaps

Gaps in some of the current website pages include: material detail page, member and wizards (personal collection, rating, learning exercise and contribute material). They can be navigated with a keyboard but may not comply with all standard specs. They will be redesigned to comply with accessibility standards by February 2014. Note that MERLOT is not responsible for accessibility compliance of the Open Education Resource links from www.merlot.org. Accessibility compliance stated in this document is focused solely on www.merlot.org.

Product Usage Information for Users with Disabilities

Users of older versions of browsers will be informed that to optimize their experience on the website, they should upgrade their browser. This is communicated with a message that reads, "For optimal performance of MERLOT functionality, use IE 9 or higher, Chrome 19 or higher, Firefox 15 or higher, or Safari on mobile devices."

Feedback Mechanism

MERLOT welcomes feedback regarding the accessibility of our website. If MERLOT users have accessibility-specific questions, need assistance or encounter accessibility problems with the MERLOT website, they can contact the MERLOT Webmaster at webmaster@merlot.org.

Additional Resources

[Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.0](#)

[HTML 5 Standards](#)

[WAI –ARIA Over view](#)

[Section 508 of the US Rehabilitation Act](#)

[W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\)](#)

MERLOT is in the process of completing its VPAT® Voluntary Product Accessibility Template.