

Exploring the Web with LiveBinders

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One of the keys to taking full advantage of the wealth of information and images on the Web in the artroom is having a convenient way to store and retrieve useful online resources. For many art teachers, this means saving links to certain websites on their classroom computer as favorites or bookmarks in a browser's toolbar.

In previous columns, I suggested social bookmarking as an alternative to saving links to useful resources on a classroom computer. With a social bookmarking site like Delicious (delicious.com) or Diigo (www.diigo.com), you store and organize your links on the Web itself, which makes them easily accessible from any Internet-connected computer. There is also the added benefit of joining a special-interest group on Diigo or networking with other Delicious users to share links to websites and other online resources.

Now, there is a potentially more effective third option for saving and organizing resources on the Web. LiveBinders (livebinders.com) is not only a practical online storage system that teachers will find useful, it can also be a place for students to collect and store

information, images, and videos to help with their school projects.

Based on the conventional practice of storing documents in three-ring binders, LiveBinders allow you to save various types of Web content such as Web pages, PDF files, Word documents, links, images, and videos in an online binder that uses tabs to organize the content. This collection is then stored on the LiveBinders website as a public or private binder that can be accessed via a distinctive URL.

Among the many possible uses for LiveBinders in the artroom is creating a collection of websites and related materials associated with an assignment that students could safely explore from the classroom or home. For instance, New Jersey art teacher Susan Bivona created a LiveBinder on the American artist Frank Stella (livebinders.com/play/play/7339) that contains background information, a

video, lesson ideas, images of the artist's work, an interactive learning activity, and more. This is just one of a growing list of LiveBinders available on the LiveBinders' website under the "Art" category.

Creating and filling a LiveBinder is easy to do. Once you register on the site, simply drag the "LiveBinder It" button to the toolbar on your

browser. While browsing the Web, if you find a site you want to save, click on the "LiveBinder It" button. You'll be prompted to log in and add the new site to either an existing binder or a new binder. To create a new binder, you simply click on the "Create Binder" tab and type in some descriptive information about the binder. This information can be revised later if necessary.

The LiveBinders website has a number of excellent video tutorials to help you get started. There is also a LiveBinders Blog (livebinders.wordpress.com) and a LiveBinders 4 Teachers wiki (livebinders4teachers.pbworks.com) where you can find news items such as updates on new features, tips on using LiveBinders in the classroom, examples of LiveBinders made by other teachers, and more.

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