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## SOFTWARE REVIEW

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### *HYPERFOLIO*

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**Publisher:** *LearnTech*, 361 Broadway, Suite 610, New York, New York 10013,  
[www.learntech.com](http://www.learntech.com).

**Product type:** web organizer

**Language:** English

**Level:** upper elementary to advanced, teenagers and adults

**Media format:** CD-ROM, WWW

**Operating System:** Windows 9x/SE/Me/2000, Mac OS 8 or newer (except OS X)

**Hardware requirements:**

PC: Intel Pentium or compatible processor, Windows 9x/SE/Me/2000, Internet Explorer 4.01 or later, Internet connection (advisable), 10 MB of available RAM, 15 MB of available disc space (total HyperFolio application download size is approx. 6 MB), colour monitor (256 colours and 800x600 resolution or better recommended), mouse

Mac: PowerPC 7100 or newer, Mac OS 8 or newer (except OS X), Quick Time 3 or newer, Internet Explorer 4.5 or later, Internet connection (advisable), 16 MB of available disc space (total Hyperfolio application download size is approx. 2 MB), colour monitor (256 colours and 800x600 resolution or better recommended), mouse

**Availability:** a free, 30-day trial version available at [www.hyperfolio.com](http://www.hyperfolio.com).

**Overview**

HyperFolio is a tool for organizing information from the Web. It allows to drag and drop media items (including text, image, sound and video clips) from a desktop or browser directly into a collection icon, where they can be catalogued, annotated, documented in note-cards, viewed off-line and visually organized into web-based activities, presentations or research papers. Media items retain their links back to the source URLs.

**Description**

Basically, the program can be divided into four parts. With HyperFolio it is possible to capture media items on the Internet, organize them, create multimedia worksheets and share collections and worksheets with others.

1. **"Capture" phase.** HyperFolio works together with a browser (actually, *the* browser as HyperFolio supports only one). A nice-looking tiny collection icon appears on the screen (it can be hidden if its longer presence happens to have a negative impact on a user). After highlighting a piece of text, photo or another item in the web page it is enough to drag it into the collection icon. A nice animation tells that the item has been collected. Media items and links can be collected from the Web and a hard drive.
2. **"Organize" phase.** The screen is divided into two parts. All the collected items can be seen in the collection pane on the left. Each item has a set of information associated with it (including its name, URL, the date an item was collected or modified, its source type and documentation style). This set of information can be modified. It is also possible to evaluate each item taking into consideration its author, content, comprehensiveness etc. This option offers a great opportunity for pair-work: students can evaluate each other's sources. Another nice feature of the program is the "instant bibliography" (recorder on a drive), which can be created for each worksheet. The collected items (shown as large or small icons, a list or with a detailed description) can be sorted by name, type, date or URL. There is a search button in the control panel making it possible to find an item, especially if you are working with a complicated worksheet.
3. **"Create" phase.** The items are dragged from the collection pane to the worksheet pane on the right. Here, you have numerous options at your disposal, including zoom in/out, a grid, page breaks, background change, importing pictures as background, header and footer, lines, filled or hollow boxes/ellipses, fill/line color, line weight, dash style, arrow style and other typical tools. Creating worksheets is easy and enjoyable. However, there are not as many options as in similar programs, especially in Microsoft PowerPoint (to give an example, it is not possible to create animations).
4. **"Share" phase.** With HyperFolio it is possible to create an .html document. You can also e-mail worksheets as web-archives or in Hyperfolio default format (to other users of HyperFolio).

The program has an extensive help menu with on-screen index and links to the on-line HyperFolio center, where it is possible to exchange worksheets, obtain further information and help. However, I have not managed to connect to the Center – perhaps because it was being modernized at the moment.

## **Evaluation**

On the whole, HyperFolio creates a positive impression on a user: it has a number of applications which make it a useful teaching/learning tool.

In comparison to Microsoft PowerPoint (a very similar program), it preserves URLs of media items used in worksheets or collections. The sources and their authors are therefore acknowledged and intellectual property rights are not violated.

Another advantage of the program is that it is provided with a set of sample worksheets which can stimulate teachers to come up with their own types of exercises. For instance there is a chart of Bill Gates's life (ideal to practise past simple and present perfect tenses) or a worksheet dealing with evaluating rap music and its positive or negative influence on young people (listening comprehension task).

On the graphic side, HyperFolio is well-organized and easy to use. It is also relatively simple. To give an example, in order to select an item it is enough to click on it and drag it into the HyperFolio collection icon. While surfing on the Net you can collect interesting materials that can be used both by teachers (e.g. gathering materials for presentations/tasks/activities) and students (e.g. projects).

Finally, The "Rank Source" option can offer new dimensions to classroom procedure. Students can work with their partners' worksheets evaluating their credibility, usefulness etc. On the basis of criteria suggested in "Rank Source" teachers can grade their students' achievements.

However, the program has some drawbacks as well. First of all, it does not automatically save the worksheet. In case of some unexpected (and unpleasant) events like voltage changes all the work can be lost. Moreover, you need to wait for a new window to open and you cannot continue your work at the same time. If the machine has a fast processor, it does not matter, but with older computers it can be an annoying problem (particularly when opening movie files). Another objection is that Microsoft Internet Explorer is the only browser supported by HyperFolio. However (and luckily for Netscape lovers), it does not have to be your default browser. On the whole, though, HyperFolio's advantages outweigh its drawbacks.

### **Recommendation**

Obviously, multimedia options offered by the program cannot be compared to what is normally offered by textbooks. You do not get a film or a recording in a regular coursebook. Due to that, HyperFolio can be of great use in the classroom. More specifically, you can use it to prepare for your lessons (you can gather interesting, up-to-date material that will not bore your students), you can assign preparing certain worksheets as homework and then share them in a classroom, it can be used during project lessons (with students working individually or, preferably, in pairs or groups of three). It allows creative teachers to change traditional boredom of a classroom into a fascinating adventure, a breathtaking voyage into the mysteries of the virtual world.