

Getting the Most from CDs and DVDs

Usage Tips for Longer Life

Since CDs and DVDs don't last forever, what can you do to help prolong their life?

- Hold CDs and DVDs by their outer edge or the middle ring. NEVER touch the bottom!
- Don't jam media into a CD or DVD player/burner; insert it very carefully.
- Store media in hard plastic cases; avoid wallets or sleeves.
- Store in a room temperature environment free from moisture. Avoid keeping CDs and DVDs in extremely hot or cold temperatures for long periods of time.
- Keep CDs and DVDs away from sunlight.

Media Speed and Cheaper CDs and DVDs

Make sure to purchase CDs and DVDs that are rated the same or higher speed as that of your CD or DVD burner. Otherwise, you will not be able to accurately burn using that media unless you manually slow down your CD or DVD burner through hardware or software.

For example, if your CD burner has a write-speed of 24X, and you purchase blank CD-Rs that are rated 16X, you will probably not be able to use those with your CD burner unless you manually slow it down. Thus, sometimes those bargain basement CDs that are being offered for pennies per media (after rebate) may not be such a bargain after all.

What is -R versus -RW?

When you purchase CD-Rs or DVD-Rs, you are purchasing media that you can write to only once; you cannot erase information once it has been written to the CD or DVD. Depending on your CD software, you may be able to create multi-session CDs or DVDs where you can write to the CD or DVD once, not filling it up, then add more information to it later. However, previously written information cannot be erased.

With CD-RWs and DVD-RWs, however, provided that you have drives that support this media, you can erase information previously written to the media. You may not be able to erase and rewrite information an infinite number of times; however, it should be enough for most purposes.

To add to this confusion, there is a format called DVD-RAM that supposedly allows you to rewrite information many more times than on DVD-RWs. However, these are only compatible with a select number of drives. Plus, with DVDs there is DVD-R, DVD+R, DVD-RW, and DVD+RW, and you may not be able to use one particular DVD with a different unit that doesn't support the same standard.

Speaking of compatibility, generally -R media is more compatible than -RW and +RW media; for example, you may not be able to play a music CD written on -RW media on your home stereo. Also, -RW, +RW, and -RAM media may not last as long as -R media; thus, RW, +RW, and -RAM are usually used for temporary backups, working files, and the like.

About Desktop Resources, Inc.

Desktop Resources, Inc. was founded in 1995 by Tony Schafer, and is a leader in helping organizations couple their business initiatives with the technology to address those needs. DRI's "InformIT" managed services offerings proactively manage client infrastructure and strive to prevent problems before they occur. For more details, contact DRI at (317) 596-3650 or <http://www.DesktopResources.com>