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ReadyNetGo ... News

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TIP OF THE MONTH

Benefits of DVD

- Create videos from your camcorder, digital camera, VCR tapes and other DVDs. (Live your dream of being a Director all from the comfort of your own home ...)
- Record countless hours of music on one disc
- Archive business or personal data
- Backup limited amounts of data (Tape drives and second hard drives are still the best option for performing daily backups as these devices can be pre-programmed to run automatically at designated times. CDs and DVDs require user intervention.)

Looking to the Future

In the next year or so, DVD burners will get much faster reaching speeds of 16x. Basically, this means you will be able to write a 4.7GB disc in under four minutes.

Storage capacity will also increase. Manufacturers are currently working on drives that will be able to write 27 GB to one disc.

Need Storage: Check out DVDs

If you are using a computer that is relatively new, say 2-3 years old, then you are probably taking advantage of some of the latest technologies like CD-RW drives and 20+ GB hard drives. It seems like most people crave storage space and these drives help to address the issue. They do not satisfy all requirements however, and that's where DVD fills in the gaps.

At first, DVD recording devices were expensive, geared only for high end users. With supply and demand, though, prices for DVD burners have come down considerably making them a viable option for both business and personal use. Researching DVD burners could potentially make your head spin since there are so many competing standards. This newsletter will hopefully cover the basics and give you an organized outline from which to start planning your next purchase.

DVD Drives vs. CD Drives

Current DVDs can hold up to 4.7 GB of data, a significant increase over the 700 MB of CDs. DVD burners write faster than CD burners – currently 2.4x and 4x speeds are being manufactured (see the tip of the month for where the industry is headed). Probably the best reason to buy a DVD burner is that they are CD and DVD compatible - you can read and write CDs on a DVD burner while CD burners can only read and write CDs. (Note: the speed at which DVD burners can write CDs is slower than some of the faster CD burners – you'll have to weigh your needs for versatility against performance issues.)

WWW (Websites Worth Watching)

1. www.dvdforum.org - For more info on the DVD-RW and DVD-RAM formats.
2. www.dvdrw.com - For more info on the DVD+RW format.
3. www.dvdcreation.com - DVD resource center with reviews, tutorials and a forum to share information and ask questions.
4. www.revenue.state.pa.us - Don't forget your taxes ...

DVD Standards

Whereas CD burners have one format for writing data to discs and two types of media (CD-R and CD-RW), there are 5 different standards for DVD burners:

Write Once (Good for copying and re-playing video; better compatibility with DVD set-top players-hooked up to your TV)

1a) DVD-R – compatible with DVD-RW; least expensive disc to purchase - about \$4 each

2b) DVD+R – compatible with DVD+RW

Re-writable (Good for storing data – like small to medium size backups or archived data)

3a) DVD-RW – compatible with DVD-R; can re-write discs 1,000 times.

4b) DVD+RW – more than twice as fast as DVD-RW; can re-write discs 1,000 times.

5) DVD-RAM – can only be read in DVD-RAM and some DVD-ROM drives. High capacity discs can hold 9.4 GB of data. Has data verification capabilities and can re-write discs 100,000 times. Most expensive disc to purchase - about \$15 each.

Choose the Best Drive

Since there are two primary competing standards (the **a's** versus the **b's** in the box above) you may want to buy a multi-format drive (one that can read all of these formats). Multi-format drives are more expensive but if one of the standards loses the battle over time and you have that particular drive, you may be stuck with some unreadable discs.

DVD drives come in both internal and external models but there is no performance difference between the two. The only real difference is cost – as usual, external models are more expensive.

Most DVD burners come with video and data authoring software. Just like CD burners, each DVD burner uses software that may be more compatible with its format. There are quite a few programs currently on the market and some are better than others so do a little homework before you buy a drive that has pre-loaded software to get the best program for your needs. And, if you decide to purchase a third party program, make sure it is compatible with your particular drive by going to your DVD manufacturer's website first.

Finally, if time is a major factor in your decision process, you'll be interested in this last statistic. DVD rewritable media needs to be formatted before data can be copied to it. DVD+RW drives take less time to format rewritable media than DVD-RW drives. The comparison is striking with DVD-RW taking close to an hour while DVD+RW takes a few minutes.