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Still Not Copying?

5 Simple Questions to Get You Started

By Tony van Veen



To take advantage of new DVD duplication technology, the following six questions will help direct you to the right system and accessories.

1. What do you need to copy? Most full-sized CD-Rs can hold up to 700 MB of data. If you plan to duplicate files of less than 700 MB, or to reproduce audio-only programs, a duplicator with CD-R drives is your best bet. For larger files or video programs, choose a DVD-R duplicator. DVD-Rs can hold up to 4.7 GB of data and are perfect for video, backing up servers, and data storage. DVD-R drives also can duplicate CD-Rs, but at a lower speed than CD-R-only duplicators. Currently, most CD-R duplicators copy at 48x speed, DVD-R duplicators operate at up to 4x speed, and CD-Rs offer 16x speed.

2. Do you need a manual or automated duplicator? A manual duplicator requires an operator to load and unload the discs into the drives. If you need only to copy a few discs at a time, a manual duplicator will meet your needs. An automated duplicator, on the other hand, features robotics that load and unload the discs for unattended production.

3. How many CDs or DVDs do you plan to duplicate per day? To determine how many drives you will need, calculate the number of discs you plan to duplicate per day. One 48x CD-R drive will duplicate 20 700 MB CD-Rs per hour. One 4x DVD-R drive will duplicate four 4.7 GB DVD-Rs per hour. Shorter programs allow higher throughput.

4. Do you have a dedicated PC? Your duplicator's PC should be dedicated to the task. Only necessary software should be loaded on this PC since extra programs that consume large chunks of memory could interfere with the data being sent from the PC to the duplicator. Certain manufacturers' systems eliminate the need for a dedicated PC and include a built-in Intel PC with a monitor, keyboard, mouse and preloaded software.

5. Where will you find all this stuff? After determining what type of system you need, the next step is to find manufacturers that offer the type of system you need. Keep several criteria in mind when researching.

First, the manufacturer you choose should have a long track record of quality and reliability. There are many upstart companies out there, but a long-standing company offers the best advice about the best products.

Second, many of the top manufacturers offer complete product lines of CD and DVD duplication systems featuring the flexibility to easily upgrade to a larger system as your operations expand.

Additionally, it is important that you find a system that offer out-of-the-box setup. Many of the top manufacturers have simplified the process even further with customer service representatives at the ready to answer any questions you might have as you go. Some of the top manufacturers even offer these services for the lifetime of the product. Also, make sure the system you choose is backed by a generous warranty that covers any potential problems.

Finally, make sure your system fits into your budget. Although the costs of CD and DVD duplication systems and printers have shrunk, they still are a big investment. Don't forget you always can upgrade later.

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