CD-Maker 2000 Professional

by NewTech Infosystems

reviewed by Steve Weinberg

Burn Your Own CD's; yes! ... quickly, easily and cheaply. This no-hassle program allowed me to easily use my newly purchased CD "burner" to create backups of my data files from my 30 gigabyte hard drive almost as easily as using Windows Explorer to copy files from one folder to another. I can create custom CDs with audio, data, video or mixtures of data types.

Installation was a snap, no manual required. However, the manual I found on the CD is quite extensive. It explores the technology of CD-ROM, CD-R, CD-RW in great detail. There's quite a lot to it (160 pages). There are data types, multi-session CD's, types of CD drives, etc. The list of compatible CD drives is quite extensive and probably covers most of the drives out there today. An on-line list brings you an up-t- the-minute list in case you have a newly released drive. It covers the program and its options quite well (except that I found it difficult to understand how to create a custom music CD consisting of specific selections from music I have on a variety of other CDs.)

With the FileCD program, I was able to format a CD-RW and drag and drop data to it just as I would a standard Windows folder. At various times during this procedure, I was told to click "OK" to eject and re-insert the CD I had just written. But, when I was done, I had nicely backed up my 20 megabytes of data using the same directory structure that I had on my hard drive. I then erased it and re-formatted it. Now, I wrote it all over again. The second write is much easier as the first one on a fresh CD-RW requires a 40 minute format. The second time, I used the "quick format," which took less than a minute. One caution: the files that you may have to retrieve from the CD after it is made will be restored as "Read-Only." This means that you have to change the archive bit via Windows Explorer if you want to be able to modify it. Another noteworthy item is that the CDs created using FileCD can only be read on a computer with FileCD. That's not as big a

deal as you might imagine because there are other programs included that you can use to create a data CD.

The main program, CD Maker 2000 Professional, has a very simple interface with most operations taking two steps. Usually, step one consists of selecting the source data; this can be an audio CD, data CD or files on your hard drive. There is a good explanation of the format of various files that can be created or copied.

Less than 15 minutes after installation, I had copied my first audio CD to a CD-R. The copy was perfect until I ruined it by writing on the back label side with a marker that had too hard a point and somewhat affected the tracks on the other side. Whoops! Making direct audio and data copies of complete CDs is a real snap. This is true even though I have only the CD-RW drive on my system. It is a three step process. First, select the source of the data to be copied (the CD-RW has the original CD at this point). Second, one-click to start the copy (this copies the data to the hard drive). Third, the original CD is automatically ejected and a dialog box asks for the CD-R to be inserted. This is now written showing a buffer cache as the writing proceeds. If you should have a slow hard drive or some other reason that the data stream slows down so as not to keep the buffer cache full, the CD may be ruined. It is advisable to turn off all other resident programs, suvch as screen savers, virus-detection, etc.

There's lots of other software here to explore. I could mix various types of data on a CD and even record Live Audio from any source I wanted. Along with that, there was a way to improve the characteristics of the audio data and reduce hiss, noise, pops, etc. As a bonus, there is a Jewel Case Maker. Fashion and print your own and make as elaborate as you like.

The graphical interface is easy to understand and use. Conversions for WAV files, MP3 files, CD-DA tracks are handled easily. AVI and MPEG file conversion are handled for those

who are video interested. Just hit, "record" when you want to start recording and, "stop" when you are finished and you'll have the "line-in" and microphone inputs recorded live to the CD.

*Performance was very good on Windows *2000* Professional on my Pentium III, 1 Ghz with *256* mb RAM using a Goldstar CD burner. This is much more than is required to run CD-Maker *2000* Professional, though. 100Mhz CPU and *16* mb RAM will do the trick.

There is toll-free tech support, and a money- back guarantee if you are not happy during the first 30 days of use (less shipping and handling).

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by NewTech Infosystems
[*http://www.nticdmaker.com/*]
$69.99, but much cheaper if you download it from the web

System Requirements:
*See Steve's notes, above. * 1 did not find system requirements listed at NTI's web site.*

There is a downloadable trial version.
- (editor)