

ASK THE COMPUTER SURGEON

Barbara from Rittman asks, ***“Why is my document read-only when I open it from a CD that I burned?”*** Eugene from Wadsworth asks, ***“What do the letters and numbers related to CD and DVD burning mean?”***

Burning CDs and DVDs has become commonplace. Nearly every computer sold for the last several years includes a “burner.” Let’s have a little education on CDs and DVDs.

The bare bones information... The CD was invented in 1965 and patented in 1970. Throughout the 1970s the idea was perfected. Eventually Sony and other music recording companies purchased licenses to use this technology. On October 1, 1982 Sony introduced the CDP-101, the first CD player designed for the home user. The retail price was around \$900.00!

A production CD is produced on a press. The digital “code” looks like bumps along a spiral track, like a vinyl record only much narrower.

The CD player shines a laser onto the surface of the CD and the light is reflected back to a receiver which decodes the “bumps” into 0’s and 1’s.

A “writable” CD has a layer of dye into which a “burning” laser pokes very small holes. These holes simulate the bumps on a production CD. A CD-R allows for one burn. A CD-RW allows for around 1,000 burns. The 2x or 4x or 16x or 48x number is related to the speed of the burning process.

DVD stands for Digital Versatile Disc. A DVD uses a similar technology to the CD with smaller “bumps” and smaller track widths.

With a recordable DVD, there are two standards, the “-“ standard the “+” standard. This is similar to the VHS and Beta standards war of the 1980s. No one knows which DVD standard will win this war. Fortunately for users, the DVD is a standard size so many current DVD readers can read both formats.

Now, let us answer the read-only question.

When a file is opened from a CD (CD-R or CD-RW), most word processing, spreadsheet or database programs will open it as “Read-Only.” This is because the file can not be written directly back to the CD... it must be “burned” back onto the CD.

There are numerous solutions to this problem. The easiest one, from my experience, is to copy the document from the CD to the desktop, open and modify the document, and then burn it back to a CD. After you verify the contents, delete the file from your desktop to eliminate having multiple copies of the same file on your system.

DISCLAIMER: Copying certain files to CD or DVD is illegal.

For more detailed information on how CD’s and DVD’s work, check out these web site links:

<http://electronics.howstuffworks.com/cd.htm>
<http://electronics.howstuffworks.com/cd-burner.htm>
<http://electronics.howstuffworks.com/dvd.htm>

Comments? Suggestions? Questions? Please e-mail them to questions@compusurgeon.com.

NOTE: We apologize for giving the wrong e-mail address in last week’s article.