

## CD Labeling

I think one of the most overlooked and unappreciated part of today's modern computer is the CD or DVD burner. Most people use these devices on a daily basis and depend on the drives for both work and play. I use my DVD burner for storing family pictures, home movies, data backups, and even make duplicate copies of all my software for safekeeping. I have been using a CD or DVD burner on a regular basis since the late 1990's. The problem is with so many disks floating around my desk drawers identifying the correct disk has become more and more of an issue.

In the past, the only safe way to label these disks was with a felt tip marker. Sure, peel and stick labels for CD and DVD's have been around for a while, but these labels had to be adhered perfectly for the CD to work properly. A disk with an improperly affixed label can damage drives because the disk will no longer be balanced. An unbalanced disk will cause the drive to spin-up and spin-back down rapidly causing the drive to take a longer amount of time to read the CD and will eventually shorten the life of the drive.

In recent years many manufactures have been tackling this problem and many have come up with good solutions. My favorite is the ink jet printable CD. The idea is the same as printing labels with your printer however and trial and error or attaching the label is eliminated because the blank CD's come pre-labeled. You do need to have a printer capable of printing directly to CD's. Epson is probably the most popular manufacture of these printers and prices start at just \$100. If you were in the market for a new general-purpose printer anyway then you may want to consider on of these Epson capable models.

Another technology that should not be discounted is thermal printing technology. Technically, this type of printer can print to any type of glossy finish blank CD, however for best results blank CD's made specifically for thermal printing are available. The downside to this technology is that the thermal printers use a ribbon technology that can only cover parts of the CD. Because of this you will only be able to print simple graphic images and lines of text. However, unlike the inkjet technology the thermal image is waterproof.

The newest technology to enter the CD labeling market is laser technology known as LightScribe. Originally developed by HP, LightScribe technology is now available on many better brands of DVD burners including my favorite, Lite-On. In this technology the DVD Burner is able to use it's laser to actually burn an image into the label side of a LightScribe compatible disk. This technology does have some important characteristics to keep in mind. Unlike the other two technologies it can take up to 20 minutes to "burn" an image into a CD. In addition, the image only lasts for about 5 years and can start fading even earlier and lastly, the image will be monochrome in color.

If you need to further discuss your CD/DVD labeling needs or have other computer technology related problems, then I invite you to contact the professionals at Computer Depot. Call Thomas, Roger, or Aaron at 947-0749 or e-mail me at [ComputerDepotOnline@att.net](mailto:ComputerDepotOnline@att.net).