

Tips for Excellent Oral Presentations

Data Projector

Guidelines for Making a Compatible CD-ROM

Reason for writing

At the 2002 ASA-CSSA-SSSA Annual Meetings, some PowerPoint presenters were unable to use the CD-ROM drives in the computers provided. This was not due to malfunctioning equipment, but rather to the fact that some special types of discs need special software or hardware to read them. In order to minimize the risk of a repeat experience, we are providing this primer on how to create a CD-ROM that will be compatible with all CD-ROM drives.

Novice users will benefit from having an understanding of some key terms and concepts, and should read this document carefully. Expert users may skip to the summary at the end for specific details on what type of CD-ROM they should make.

Terms & Concepts

Most people are familiar with the CD-ROM format. In recent years, it has become very inexpensive to use this format to transport a users own data from one location to another in a way that is highly reliable.

It is important not to confuse CD-ROM's with DVD's. DVD's look similar, but have a much higher capacity. DVD recorders are becoming more and more common, but it is critical to note that this type of disc requires a DVD drive to use and cannot be read in a standard CD-ROM drive! Many DVD recorders are capable of making standard CD-ROM's, however you should check your user.s manual for details.

Making a CD-ROM is commonly called "burning", or "writing". A laser is used to "burn" a pattern of 1's and 0's on a chemical surface. This changes the reflective properties of the surface so that it can be "read" with another laser.

The machine that makes it possible to record data or music onto a disc is called a "CD-burner". It may also be referred to as a "writer" or "recorder".

Burning a CD requires specialized software. This would normally be included with the drive at the time of sale, or pre-installed on a computer that features a CD burner.

The type of disc that is least expensive and most likely to work in a variety of drives is called a CD-R. It can be recorded upon, but once it has been written, it cannot be re-used.

Some burners allow one to re-use special types of discs called "re-writable" discs, or CD-RW's. In general, this type of "media" should **not** be used for presentations at the ASA-CSSA-SSSA Annual Meetings. **Instead, please use CD-R's.**

When purchasing media for use in a CD burning drive, it is important to consider the speed ratings usually found on the packaging.

High-quality, easy-to-use burning drives and burning software are available for both PC-compatible computers and Macintosh computers. In general, the drives are often interchangeable, but the software is not.

For the PC, the most popular software packages are Ahead Nero, and Roxio (formerly Adaptec) Easy CD Creator. These programs are designed to suit the needs of casual novice users as well as the advanced user. There are other programs available, but chances are if you own a name brand CD recorder, you will have one of these two programs.

Your burning software may use a "wizard" to help guide you through the process of creating a CD "compilation". During this process, you are likely to be able to choose most, if not all of the options you will need in order to produce a standard CD-ROM.

In Nero and Easy CD Creator, you would first choose the type disc you are going to make before you can add files. In Nero, for instance, this is simply called "CD-ROM". In Easy CD Creator, it is called "DataCD Project".

You may be presented with some other options as to how the disc will be laid out. Acceptable choices for .file system. are .Joliet. or "ISO9660". You may have a choice as to the physical format of the disc, as in "Mode 1 CDRom", or "Mode 2 CDRom-XA". Mode 1 is preferred. Most other options can be ignored or left as they are, except for one.

Your primary goal is to tell the software to burn your disc in one pass, or "session". It is possible to create a disc that can have more data added later ("multi-session"), but this is not recommended. **In order for this disc to be readable in the greatest number of other CD-ROM drives, the disc should be "closed", "finalized" or "finished" so that no further writing is possible. You may need to deliberately specify this in the software, or the disc will not be closed. An "open" disc may be readable in your CD burning drive, but it may not be readable in standard CD-ROM reader drives.**

The name of the recording method may vary depending on your software, but in both Nero and Easy CD Creator, the term "Track-at-Once" and "Disc-at-Once" are used. **We are recommending that you use the Disc-at-Once method, and be sure that any options to close, finish, or finalize the disc are checked.**

Summary

To ensure compatibility with the largest number of PC CD-ROM readers, please create your presentation and your disc with the following specifications:

Presentation Should Be:

- **Created in Windows format only (no Mac or Linux)**
- **Compatible with PowerPoint 2000**
- **Saved in .pps (slide show) format; not as .ppt (PowerPoint document) format**

Disc Specifications:

- **Media type: CD-R (no CD-RWs)**
- **File System: Joliet or ISO9660**
- **Disc Format: Mode 1**
- **Recording Method: Disk-at-Once, finalize disc**

Sound files and animation are not encouraged as the size of the files can hinder the performance of your presentation. Here are some links that you will find to be very helpful in the preparation of your presentation:

For information on how to prepare an effective presentation using a data projector, click on www.PresentersUniversity.com. Click on Courses and then Content, Delivery, or Visual Aids and you will be directed to a library full of presentation tips. You can also sign up for a complimentary subscription to their newsletter, Presentation Pointers.

Practice

Make sure you practice your presentation several times before going to the annual meetings. Practice runs allow you to time your talk and receive constructive comments from your colleagues. Plan on making a 10-12 minute presentation. Allow a few minutes for your introduction and any questions from the audience. Be sure to visit the slide review/speaker ready room at the annual meetings. Here's your chance to run through your presentation one more time. Extra slide trays may be borrowed here for authors who forget to bring a tray for their slides.

Meeting Room

Know where your presentation will take place and arrive at the meeting room 30 minutes before the start of the session. Introduce yourself to the presiding officer and give your slides to the projectionist. Familiarize yourself with the room. Note the distance from the podium to the screen. Know where the pointer and the remote control for the projector are located. Know how the microphone operates and use it! Remember, you are allowed only 15 minutes for your presentation. Keep your presentation simple and effective. Your presentation is a reflection of your organizational abilities and yourself.

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