

# CD ROM

## Information for Your Business

Welcome to the world of CD ROM. A terrific way to impart information, introduce a new product, catalog your products, or train a new employee. This information packet is designed to answer many questions people have about this medium. Some of it may be familiar and parts of it may be new. We trust it will help you in your search for better marketing methods. We at Production Services / AZ are anxious to help you with your project. Just ask if we can be of assistance.



### **What is CD ROM (and what can it do for me?)**

CD ROM is a compact disk made of polycarbonate substrate that stores data combined with ROM (Read Only Memory). This means that you can read but not record data.

CD ROM has the ability to combine all the properties of a music CD, laser disc, video, and computer data all on a single disc. This means that CD ROM is a combination of printed words, visual arts and sound recording.

CD ROM provides:

- In depth analysis of text materials.
- Visual impact of full motion video.
- The enhancement of sound.
- Compact size – one CD Rom can equal 1500 floppy discs. This means that several miles of information signals can be combined on a single 4 ½ inch disc.
- A sturdy, durable, portable data format.
- An accurate method to record and distribute information. Absolute data integrity is insured by an “etching” process. This means that once recorded, data can’t be altered.
- Freedom from worries about tape wearing out or tearing.
- The ability to access additional support files or background information about the program being viewed – at the option of the viewer, somewhat like footnotes on a research paper. This supplemental data can be in the form of text, graphs, animation, sound, artwork or graphs. As well as still or motion pictures. This ability is what makes CD ROM a true multi-media product.



## What can I use CD ROM For?

CD ROM is an excellent medium for storage of information. Its compact size allows for better utilization of space and archiving of information. Some common uses for CD ROM include:

- Data Base source. Did you know you can get a phone directory for an entire city on one CD disc?
- Lists of organizations, interest groups, corporations.
- Catalog discs. This feature can showcase your entire product line for potential customers, and at the option of the viewer, product demonstrations can be accessed simply with a click of the mouse.
- Book substitute – especially software manuals and other reference materials such as dictionaries, encyclopedias, professional journals and equipment service manuals.
- Film libraries
- Games and motion pictures as well as other entertainment uses. Even now, work is in progress to make motion pictures more fluid and get away from the “creature feature” effect that has been a problem.
- Educational programs. Some CD ROMs are programmed to be interactive with the user. Examples are math, grammar and other educational programs used to reinforce learning in the classroom and at home.
- Documentation imaging such as customer service records for health care providers, where data may pass through long periods of dormancy, yet must remain readily accessible. Other uses for document imaging would include “dead” documents such as company’s tax records or “active” imaging such as check imaging for bank records.



And then we get to the **marketing** uses of CD ROM.

More and more companies are expanding their marketing and training efforts in the area of CD ROM. CD’s make an excellent medium for a company’s catalog of services and products. Special security features can be added for multilevel pricing lists, expiration dates, and restricted information for particular clients or employees.

Catalogs on CD are a terrific savings over printed materials. We’ve received catalogs at our own offices that weigh in excess of 5 lbs. And postage savings alone can go a long way to making the conversion to CD ROM. Also, there’s an important fact that smaller more convenient, easy to use catalogs remain on a customer’s desk more often than a larger printed one that gets stored away from his workspace. With CD ROM you can add a tour of your facility, a live message from your president, a demonstration of a special installation procedures or value added items such as calculators, tables and work sheets, order forms and more. We can tie the CD into your web page or set up faxing capabilities.

Sending out CD's for marketing can be a more unique way of reaching new customers or clients than using the old "four color brochure" method. Of course a combination of mediums can make a nice presentation—you just have to analyze your needs and what you can accomplish through this medium.

When working with a production company such as PS/A, expect input from us. We're not out to tell you how to run your business, but it's our responsibility to give you ideas, alternatives and options that will make your project more effective. In most cases we not only want to know what you want in your program, but want you want to spend. Why? Because, as a source of many options for your project, we need to know what "ballpark" we're all playing in. If you want to educate, inform and entertain the world and you only have \$3,000 to do it – we'll probably give you some alternative methods. If on the other hand you have a reasonable budget planned to achieve your goals, we can offer different and more interesting elements such as animation, value added items, unique graphics and more to enhance your presentation and make the money you do spend go further.

There are many activities that go into creating your CD ROM and your understanding of those elements will help you to know why certain actions, changes and additions to your project will cost you and how much.

For specific information on what goes into a CD ROM, download or review our second info packet called: CD ROM Info 2 from our web site.



### **Getting started with your project**

First, you need to decide if the finished CD ROM project is to be for a single platform use. I.E. Windows, MAC, UNIX. Or maybe your project will be a hybrid or dual platform program which is a combination of all. You need to know what is the end use of the data, and what is your target system. Each platform uses the same files, but those files are accessed by different means.

A starting point for your plan is to do a flow chart – similar to those used by computer programmers, it gives you a feeling – a "flow" – of the information from one page to the next and makes your plan more logical in an easy way.

The customer's raw data which is supplied to the production company may be in many different forms including floppys, hard drive, photos, video, audio or written text.

Ideally the client's data will be submitted in the form of a CD-R, which has pulled together all the raw data. CD-R's are also called CD-Recordables or sometimes are also called "one-offs."

If data is submitted in any source other than a CD-R, it must be transferred to a CD-R for the programming process. All source information must be formatted, compressed and converted to a CD-R in a pre-mastering step. Video and audio must be digitized and photos and text converted.

**CONVERSION:** If the material is submitted as analog information, it must be converted into a digital format. This involves slicing the analog wave into pieces, which are then quantized according to the number of bits available in the system. This is accomplished using a binary system of 0's and 1's.

**COMPRESSION:** Any visual image or video material must be compressed in order to fit on the screen available for your program. There are varying degrees of compression resulting in different sizes of viewable material. Many factors come into play when considering how large you want to see this material on the viewer's screen. We'll discuss those later.

**FORMATTING:** Source material must be presented in a format that is acceptable for your target system/s. For example, Apple systems usually use HFS (Hierarchical File System). Of course there are other choices (EX: MAC only) it all depends on the end use of your material.

Most CD ROM's are in the ISO 9660 format, sometime called the "Universal File" which has been accepted by the International Standards Organization. The ISO 9660 format ensures that your program will be able to run on most target systems. (EX: IBM, MAC, Windows, etc.) Use of the ISO 9660 format allows your CD ROM project complete interchange on any platform that supports the ISO 9660 standard.

Also consider – Will there be support material and additional backup information available to the user and what form will that be in? If the CD ROM is to be interactive, it will require custom software to be created for your specific project. Items such as indexes, depending on the need of the moment. Links to connect media files to text and the placement of pictures, sound and general instructions. And, does your program take advantage of a system's equipment like modems, printers and web browsers? All of this has to be programmed into the project.

When developing a program for your company, there are several factors to consider when programming your material. Without taking these elements into consideration, it would be like sending out DVD discs to someone who only had an old record player. (When did you last see one of those?)

Consider: The speed of their CD ROM Player on their system. 2X/4X/8X?  
Their probably processor speed I.E. 386/486/586? 120/230/350?  
Their probably amount of RAM available.  
Their video settings for their monitor and what video card might they have in their system.

Programs should be made for the lowest common user.

Consider: Do you want the program to auto start or does the viewer start it?  
What corporate information do you want to present?  
Want your corporate logo animated?  
What graphics treatments are used elsewhere in your marketing program and how can they be incorporated here?  
Have TV commercials or other video material already produced?  
What charts, graphs, pictures, forms and files do you need?

As you can see, the transfer of material to CD ROM is not simple but certainly achievable and very effective when done right. Please feel free to ask us anything that will aid in the development of your plan.



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**This file: CD ROM Info 1**  
**Also see: CD ROM Info 2**

