

Computers now sold come with CD-RW drives or DVD-RW drives. These CD-'Burners', as they're commonly called, greatly increase the amount of storage capacity available to the computer user. A single blank CD can hold as much data as 500 3-1/2" floppy disks. Note that the following discussion, for the most part, also is applicable for DVD-RW drives and recordable DVD media. Note that DVD-RW drives can burn not only DVDs but also CDs.

There are 2 kinds of blank CD media: CD-R ('R' stands for Recordable) and CD-RW ('RW' stands for ReWritable). CD-R's can only be written to once and CD-RW can be written to up to about a thousand times. Although CD-R's can only be written to only once, additional files can be added to any files already on the CD-R. For example, if you back up your user folder on a CD-R and it takes 50Mb of space on the CD-R, you can never use that 50Mb again, i.e. you cannot erase or format the CD-R and then reuse that space. You can, however, keep adding additional files to the CD-R until the CD-R is full. CD-R's are useful for archiving material on a permanent basis. CD-RW's works much the same way a 3-1/2" floppy diskette does, allowing you to reuse the space over and over again.

No application software, such as Quickbooks, Microsoft Word, AristoCAT, etc. can write to either a CD-R or CD-RW without some 3rd party CD burning software being installed on the computer (except for Windows XP which we'll talk about later.) Examples of 3rd party CD burning software include Roxio's Easy CD Creator and Nero. And with the use of this 3rd party CD burning software, there are two methods of burning information on a CD. One method uses 'projects' and the second method uses a method called UDF (we won't worry about what UDF stands for.) Writing to a CD using the project method is analogous to building a job dictionary. You would start your CD burning software and tell it what files you want to add to the project. After you have told it all of the files, you then burn the CD. The advantage of this method is that the CD is readable on virtually all computers with a CD drive. The second method treats your CD burner just like a floppy diskette. You can copy, erase and rename files through the AristoCAT File Management program (and any other program). The disadvantage of this method is that you have to have additional CD-burning software installed on your computer and the CD's created this way may not be readable on other computers unless they have the UDF reader software installed on them. This may sound complicated, but the good news is that this additional software usually comes with the 3rd party CD-burning software and once installed, you can use your CD-burner just like a floppy diskette. The most popular software using this second method (UDF) is called DirectCD which comes with Easy CD Creator from Roxio (formerly Adaptec). A detailed description of DirectCD and how it works can be found on [www.roxio.com \(link: www.roxio.de/english/products/ecdc5/dcdfaqs.html#q1\)](http://www.roxio.com/english/products/ecdc5/dcdfaqs.html#q1).

If you are using a version of Windows other than Windows XP (i.e. 95/98/Me/NT/2000), then if your computer came with a CD-burner then it most likely came with 3rd party CD-burning software and that software was probably installed on the computer. If you purchased a CD-burner (internal or external) to add to a computer, then the CD-burner probably came with a CD which has 3rd party CD-burning software and you will have to install this software after you have successfully installed CD-burner. If you are using CD-burning software other than Easy CD Creator, then contact the manufacturer of that software to make sure that their software supports UDF if you want to be able to use your CD-burner just as if it were a floppy diskette. If you cannot locate CD burning software on your computer

then check the packet of material you received when you purchased the computer or CD-burner. Please take time to review the manual that comes with this software.

The Windows XP operating system has limited CD-burning capabilities built-in to the operating system (assuming you have a CD-burner installed on your computer). With this limited, built-in capabilities, you can read and write files to your CD-burner without the need for 3rd party CD-burning software. Note that you can read and write files, but you cannot erase or rename them. To use your CD-burner like a floppy diskette under Windows XP, you will need 3rd party CD-burning software.

The built-in CD-burning capabilities of Windows XP involves first copying the files to a 'Staging Area'. After a few seconds, Windows XP will see these files in the 'Staging Area' and pop up a balloon in the lower right corner of your computer screen, asking you if you want to burn these files on a CD. Note that with the latest AristoCAT update currently being shipped, when you try to copy files to your CD-burner under Windows XP, the File Management program will try to copy these files directly to your CD-burner. If it can't (because you don't have any 3rd party CD-burning software), then the File Management program will copy the files to this 'Staging Area'. After a few moments, Windows XP will prompt you as to whether or not you want to burn the material onto the CD from the Staging Area. Essentially, if you're not using 3rd party software, it becomes a 2-step process with AristoCAT's File Management Program sending the files to the Staging Area and then Windows XP burning the files on the CD. The good news is that the CD created this way is readable on most CD drives.

Note: If you decide to use a different method of writing files to your CD-R's and CD-RW's other than AristoCAT's File Management program, such as Windows Explorer, then create a folder on the CD with the same name as your user folder and copy the files to this folder. That way you can still use the file management program to copy the files from the CD to your hard drive.

For a more detailed explanation please visit the '**Tips & Tricks**' section of our web site: www.aristocat.com.