

Survey says: readers pick the right write media. (CD-R and CD-RW media) 2

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Marla Misek
2,591 words
1 October 1998
EMedia Professional
LP
38
Vol. 11, No. 10, ISSN: 1090-946X
English
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Since the early 1990s, the markets for CD-Recordable and CD-ReWritable hardware and software have been awash in confusion over standards, specifications, and the longevity, pricing, and value of these technologies. Complicating matters, not only for consumers, but for the vendors themselves, is the high number of manufacturers/distributors competing in the ever-evolving recordable media market.

In light of the quantity of branded CD-R and CD-RW media types available to today's end-user--and out of sheer curiosity--EMedia Professional conducted a CD-R media usage survey on its Web site from the beginning of March through mid-May 1998. Up for grabs: 100 free blank CD-R discs, courtesy of ProSource Sales & Marketing, to the winner of a random drawing of respondents completing the survey before May 15.

Consisting of five questions covering everything from favorite CD-R and CD-RW media to interest in DVD-Recordable, the ten-week survey gives us a clearer picture of which companies and media brand types are having most impact on the market, and a glimpse into the public's perceptions and interest level in both CD-RW and DVD-Recordable technologies.

QUESTION #1: What Brand of CD-R Media Is Your #1 Choice?

Among our respondents, Sony's 74-minute CD-R disc proved to be the most popular, with 26 people--15 percent of those responding--naming it as their first choice of CD-R media. Second to the Sony disc in terms of brand identity popularity was Verbatim's DataLife Plus CD-R disc, with 9 percent--or 18 voters--identifying it as their top preference. Third was Philips' 74-minute CD-R disc, with 7.5 percent of the votes.

The "top-pick" picture is complicated somewhat, however, by the variety of media brand types offered by each of the companies manufacturing and distributing CD-R media. For example, Eastman Kodak Corporation received 23 votes in all, a number which easily bumps the company into second place from a "company popularity," rather than "brand popularity," perspective. However, those 23 votes are divided among five media brand types, among them Kodak Writable CD Media with INFOGUARD, with 8 votes, and Kodak Gold, with 7 votes. Likewise, TDK's numerous offerings garnered 21 votes (10.6 percent), a number which could merit a third-place "company-preference" ranking. TDK's votes were broken up over six media types, including the TDK CD-R74 disc, with 13 votes.

QUESTION #2: What Brand of CD-RW Media Is Your #1 Choice?

Given CD-RW's relatively new status in the industry, it's not all that surprising that nearly 20 percent of our respondents failed to select a preferred CD-RW media brand. Three CD-RW brands split the lion's share of votes fairly evenly. Verbatim's DataLife Plus 74-minute CD-RW disc gathered 42 votes (21 percent of the survey population), followed closely by Hewlett-Packard with 38 votes and Ricoh, with 34. Once the availability of CD-RW media from various manufacturers swells--much as CD-R already has--these numbers will more than likely shift and disperse more evenly among the competitors.

QUESTION 3: How Many Blank CD-R Discs Does Your Department/ Company Use Per Year?

Far more diverse were the answers to question three. Responses, in fact, ranged from zero CD-R discs used per year to more than 1,000,000 discs per year. The majority of respondents--46.7 percent--use between 101 and 500 blank CD-R discs per year. Another 17.6 percent said they burn between one and 50 discs per year. And despite the perception that companies are publishing discs in bulk quantities, only four respondents in our survey claimed to record more than 100,000 discs per year, with only two indicating more than 1,000,000 per year.

QUESTION 4: Do You Have or Plan to Purchase Within 12 Months a CD-RW Drive?

On this question, the ratio of respondents owning or planning to own a CD-RW drive versus those not interested in one was roughly two to one, with 133 expressing a favorable response and 61 suggesting that they do not own, nor plan to purchase, a drive within the next year. As with CD-RW media, the growing awareness of CD-RW might enlarge hardware sales expectations in 1999.

QUESTION #5: Are You Interested in DVD-Recordable?

Despite the hype that surrounds DVD, our survey showed that two-thirds of the respondents are not interested in purchasing a DVD-Recordable drive for at least another year. Twenty percent of those participating in the survey indicated a general lack of interest in DVD-R, while another 46.7 percent showed some interest in purchasing a drive within the next 12 to 18 months. Roughly one-third of those surveyed said they would buy a DVD-R drive as soon as it is available. The survey did not gauge how much respondents were willing to pay, or how their interest would change if significant price reductions made DVD-Recorders available to a mass market.

WHAT IT MEANS, FOR NOW

What we can gather from this brief survey is that CD-R, CD-RW, and DVD-R technologies have impacted the consciousness of a select group of electronic media professionals and independent and amateur users. Unfortunately, it is impossible to determine from the results gathered here what factors currently drive purchasing decisions, levels of interest, and even usage. Nonetheless, surveys like this, and others, can certainly help those in this industry figure out what the next move should be, and when to make it.

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GEOMATICS INTERNATIONAL HITS THE CD-R JACKPOT

Peter Ferwerda, IT manager for Burlington, Ontario's Geomatics International, Inc., was randomly selected as the winner of 100 free, blank CD-R discs from ProSource Sales & Marketing. Given the nature of its business, there's no doubt Geomatics can make good use of those CDs.

Since 1989, Geomatics has helped clients from all industries manage their spatial data through its consulting, hardware analysis and management, and software development services. The company specializes in the use and application of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Remote Sensing (RS) technology in the areas of natural resource assessment and management, with expertise in forestry management and mineral exploration. Specifically, it helps clients from all types of industries—including fast food, law enforcement, and foreign government—visualize the geographic layout of regions in which they are interested in conducting business through GIS, remote sensing, and global positioning systems.

Geomatics has been using CD-R technology for the past four years, says Ferwerda, and recently purchased a Yamaha 4X CD-R drive for recording and an Affex Hardcopy CD Printer for labeling the roughly 100 CD-R discs it burns per month. Those CDs—which are, for the most part, produced on a one-off, per-client basis—hold geographic spatial data specific to the needs of individual users. For instance, Geomatics recently developed a standalone software product called CrimeMAPPER for the London, Ontario police department that analyzes crime occurrences to identify patterns in and regions of particularly high criminal activity. The information generated in CrimeMAPPER is then used by the police department to better patrol these high-crime "hot spots."

For Ferwerda, who has spent the past several years overseeing Geomatics' IT department and visited EMedia's Web site on the recommendation of a Verbatim sales representative, new technologies are the heart of his business. By evaluating new technologies, such as CD-RW and DVD, assisting clients in making systems decisions, and participating in product purchases and installations, Ferwerda helps clients get the information they want in the manner best-suited to their needs.

In recent years, Ferwerda says, Geomatics has distributed most of its data and software to clients on CD-R, mainly because CD is virtually universal. "One question we always have to ask ourselves is: Are our clients using this technology?" he explains. Because CD is a standard that is readily available and relatively inexpensive, it has proven to be a valuable means of storage and distribution in all types of industries. "With CD-R," he continues, "you can ship data to a remote office without worrying about whether it will be tampered with. Our clients can easily view that data—from anywhere in the world—without modifying it or fearing that it has been corrupted."

RELATED ARTICLE: The People Have Spoken: SURVEY RESULTS

QUESTION ONE: What brand of CD-R media is your #1 choice?

Eastman Kodak Corporation Kodak Writable CD Media with INFOGUARD -- 8
Kodak Gold -- 7 Kodak Digital Science CD-R Media Printable Write -- 6
Kodak Digital Science CD-R Media Type S -- 1 Kodak Printable CD Media
with INFOGUARD, Aerial applications -- 1

Fuji Photo Film USA Fuji CD-R74 -- 2

Hewlett-Packard Company HP-CD-R -- 14

HHB Communications HHB CDR 74 Gold P -- 1

Hi-Val Hi-Val Gold -- 1

Imation Corporation Imation CD-R 74 -- 4

Kao Infosystems Company Kao Infosystems CD-R -- 4

Laser Optic Group USA LOG CD-R -- 1

Maxell Corporation of America Maxell CD-R74 -- 6

Memtek Products Memorex 74-minute CD-R -- 7

Mitsui Advanced Media Mitsui Gold -- 12 Mitsui White Surface -- 1

NO RESPONSE GIVEN -- 1

OTHER "Cheapest nongeneric" -- 1 Microboards Print Write -- 1
Pinnacle Micro -- 1 "Whatever is on sale" -- 1

Philips Philips CD-R 74 -- 15

Pioneer Pioneer CDM-V74S -- 5 Pioneer CDM-B74S -- 1 Pioneer
CDM-N74A600 -- 1

Plasmon Plasmon PCD-R74 -- 1

Ricoh Ricoh Gold -- 9

Ritek Corporation Ritek CD-R74 -- 1

Smart and Friendly Smart and Friendly CD-R -- 5

Sony Sony CD-R 74-26 (Most popular respondents) Sony CD-R 63 -- 1

Taiyo Yuden Taiyo Yuden Gold -- 5 Taiyo Yuden Printable -- 1

TDK TDK CD-R74 -- 13 TDK CD-RXG74 -- 2 TDK CD-R74B -- 2 TDK CD-R74L -- 2 TDK D-R74P -- 1 TDK 80-minute audio CD-R -- 1

Traxdata Traxdata Gold CD-R -- 3 Traxdata Silver CD-R -- 1

Verbatim Verbatim DataLife Plus CD-R -- 18 Verbatim CD-R -- 2

QUESTION TWO: What brand of CD-RW media is your #1 choice?

Hewlett-Packard Company HP CD-RW -- 38

Laser Optic Group USA LOG CD-RW -- 2

Memtek Products Memorex 74-minute CD-RW -- 14

NO RESPONSE GIVEN -- 38

Ricoh Ricoh CD-RW -- 34

TDK TDK CD-RW 74 -- 26

Traxdata Traxdata CD-RW -- 5

Verbatim Verbatim DataLife Plus 74-minute CD-RW -- 42 (Most popular among respondents)

QUESTION THREE: How many blank CD-R discs does your department/company use per year?

? -- 2

0 -- 11

1-50 -- 35

51-100 -- 4

101-500 -- 93

501-1,000 -- 17

1,001-10,000 -- 26

10,001-100,000 -- 7

100,001-1,000,000 -- 2

More than 1,000,000 -- 2

QUESTION FOUR: Do you have or plan to purchase within 12 months a CD-RW drive?

Yes -- 133

No -- 61

NO RESPONSE GIVEN -- 5

QUESTION FIVE: Are you interested in DVD-Recordable?

Not very interested -- 40

Somewhat interested; I'll buy one within 12-18 months -- 93

Highly interested; I'll be buying one as soon as available -- 65

NO RESPONSE GIVEN -- 1

NUMBER OF SURVEYS COLLECTED: 199

RELATED ARTICLE: Companies Mentioned in This Article

Eastman Kodak Company 460 Buffalo Road, Building 800, Rochester, NY 14652; 800/353-4751; Fax 716/722-0838;

<http://www.kodak.com>;

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Fuji Photo Film USA, Inc. 555 Taxter Road, Elmsford, NY 10523; 800/755-3854;

<http://www.fujifilm.com>;

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Geomatics International, Inc. 3370 South Service Road, Burlington, Ontario L7N 3M6 CANADA; 905/632-4259; Fax 905/333-0798;

<http://www.geomatics.com>;

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Hewlett-Packard Company 800 South Taft Avenue, Loveland, CO 80537; 800/826-4111; Fax 970/679-5933;

<http://www.hp.com>;

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800/274-5520, 508/747-5520; Fax 508/747-5521;
<http://www.kaoinfo.com>;
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Laser Optic Group USA 1445 Huntington Drive, Suite 250, South
Pasadena, CA 91030; 888/564-2371, 626/799-9018; Fax 626/799-6035;
<http://www.cdrlog.com>;
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Chanhassen, MN 55317; 800/646-8881, 612/470-1848; Fax 612/470-1805;
<http://www.microboards.com>;
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Mitsui Advanced Media, Inc. 2500 Westchester Avenue, Suite 110,
Purchase, NY 10577; 800/682-2377, 914/253-0777; Fax 914/253-0790;
<http://www.mitsuigold.com>;
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Atlanta, GA 30346-6401; 770/821-2945; Fax 770/821-2298;
<http://www.philips.com>;
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714/789-3074; Fax 714/789-3155;
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Pioneer New Media Technologies, Inc. 2265 East 220th Street, P.O. Box
1720, Long Beach, CA 90810; 310/952-2111; Fax 310/952-2990;
<http://www.pioneerusa.com>; InfoLink #421

Plasmon Data, Inc. 9625 West 76th Street, Eden Prairie, MN 55344;
612/946-4100; Fax 612/946-4141;
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Sparks, NV 89431; 800/903-1234, 702/359-1500; Fax 702/359-0500;
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714/263-2065; Fax 714/263-2150;
<http://www.ricoh-usa.com>;
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Ritek Corporation No. 42 Kuangfu N. Road, Hsin Chu Industrial Park,
TAIWAN, R.O.C. 30316; +886 3 598 5696; Fax +886 3 598 3023;
<http://www.ritек-cd.com>;
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800/598-7001, 818/772-8001; Fax 818/772-2888;
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<http://www.sony.com/storagebysony>;
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Taiyo Yuden USA, Inc. Arlington Center, 714 West Algonquin Road,
Arlington Heights, IL 60005; 800/368-2496; Fax 847/925-0899;
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TDK Electronics Corporation 12 Harbor Park Drive, Port Washington, NY
11050; 516/625-0100; Fax 516/625-0171;
<http://www.tdk.com>;
InfoLink
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Traxdata Limited The Title Barn, Tithe Court, Langley, Berkshire SL3
8AS UNITED KINGDOM; +44 0 1753 586655; Fax +44 0 1753 595547;
<http://www.traxdata.com>;
InfoLink #434

Verbatim Corporation 1200 W.T. Harris Boulevard, Charlotte, NC 28262;
704/547-6500; Fax 704/547-6609;
<http://www.verbatimcorp.com>;
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Marla Misek is assistant editor of EMedia Professional.

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