

## CD? CD-R? CD-RW? DVD-R? DVD-RW?



**CD (Compact Disk)** refers to a commercially made disk with either music or a computer program pressed into it. You cannot erase or record over the contents. CD players will **play** CDs and most CD-Rs and CD-RWs. However, you cannot **record** using a CD *player*.



**CD-R** is short for "CD-Recordable." They are **WORM (Write Once, Read Many times)** media that work just like standard CDs. These inexpensive disks are used to back up data, create cheap music or game CDs, and archive your photos, music, or data. They hold 80 minutes of music or 700 megabytes of data. An entire encyclopedia can easily go on one CD. Advantages of these disks are low cost (10-20 cents apiece) and durability of the recording. A CD-R disk kept in a case away from contaminants should last for 50 years.

The biggest advantage of CD-R over other types of optical media is that recorded CD-R disks will play in almost any standard CD player or CD or DVD computer drive. The disadvantage is that you cannot reuse a CD-R disk.



**Music CD-R** is a disk with denser storage capacity, labeled "Music CD-R" and said to be better for recording music. They are also more expensive, on the order of \$.50 each.



**CD-RW (Rewriteable)** is a related technology that allows you to erase a CD and reuse it. The CD-RW disks also hold about 80 minutes of music or 700 megabytes of data. The quality of these disks varies, but generally the disks are rewritable from 40-100 times. One huge disadvantage is that CD-RW disks do not work in all players. So use them for info or music that you will play *only* in the drive used to record the disk. CD-RW *drives* are able to write both CD-R and CD-RW discs.



**DVD**, short for Digital Video Disc, are pressed and sold commercially as movies and games. **DVD-R (Recordable)** and **DVD-RW (ReWriteable)** are recordable disks that combine video with sound, and hold up to 4.37 gigabytes, up to 2 hours of very good quality video and audio and pictures that can be played by many standalone DVD Players and most computer DVD players.

As DVD technology advances, it is quite likely that many buyers will skip *both* CD recordable formats in favor of DVD-R or DVD-RW. While you can only write DVDs with a DVD-R or DVD-RW recorder, most new computers come with this drive, which will *play* both CDs and DVDs.

**COST:** If you watch the sales, a CD-R spindle of 50 disks costs about \$10, making the CD/Rs about 20 cents each. CD-RW disks are more expensive at 25-35 cents each. DVD disks on sale cost about 25 cents apiece at the present time.

Note: There is no known way to be sure that material you record on a CD-R or CD-RW or DVD-R will be able to be read on **all** players.

