

Computer Bits by Mark Eggert of Raad One Network Solutions, Inc.

Welcome to Computer Bits, a series of articles on computers and network information. This month's question is: "I burned a CD-RW from an audio CD-R following the procedure by Adaptec Easy CD Creator 4. I cannot play the music on this CD, what's wrong?"

The problem here is a rather straight forward one of using the wrong media for the job. Blank CDs come in two varieties, CD-R (recordable) and CD-RW (rewritable).

CD-Rs can only be written to once and therefore the format of the CD is one that is almost universally read by all CD Players. Although, they are rare there are some older CD Players that may not read CD-Rs. These are most in home stereo systems or in car stereos. CD-Rs are used for long term storage such as, music, photographs, or archived data.

CD-RWs are made to be written to many times like a floppy disk or a hard drive. They need to be formatted for the CD-RW Drive to be able to write to them. This formatting makes them unreadable by other CD Players. Although, generally these CDs can be read by CD-RW Drives of the same make as the one that created them. CD-RWs are used for short term storage such as backup media. Many backup applications can use CD-RW Drives as the backup device. With the ability to hold 500MBs, CD-RWs can hold quite a lot of data.

As a quick summary, I have a rhyme I like to use for CDs and DVDs: "If you need it portable, make sure to use recordable." It should be noted that DVD use the same notation, DVD-Rs are recordable and DVD-RWs are rewritable. DVDs do have two types, DVD- and DVD+ which come into play mainly with the rewritable as a DVD- drive cannot read a DVD+RW disk and vis-versa. Within the past year DVD drives that read and write both types have become available, so this is less of a problem now.

If you have a computer or network question you'd like answered and you think others would like to know the answer too, please forward them to me. My email address is meggert@wi.rr.com, my phone number is 262-679-7704 and my fax number is 262-679-7664.