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The New Media: CD-ROM

The CD-ROM (Compact Disc-Read-Only Memory) looks like an ordinary audio CD in your hand, but packs a wealth of visible/audible content when inserted in the disc drive. Some consumers are more familiar with the CD-ROM's other cousin, the "laser disc," approximately the size of an old vinyl LP record, on which feature length motion pictures are recorded for playback in "home theatres."

A CD-ROM is typically the physical medium for Multimedia.

Advantages

- Compresses huge amounts of data into a small, easy-to-store-and-handle disc.
- Inserts and plays in the computer with the relative ease of a cassette tape.
- Most computers sold today come with a CD-ROM device as standard equipment.
- Gives the storyteller, the educator and the trainer an incredible tool that overcomes many of the barriers inherent with other means of sending a message.

Disadvantages

- If you thought desktop publishing software was a chore to master, the multimedia authoring software you'll need to create your own CD-ROM is tougher still. Just as DTP software does not make the user a graphic artist, multimedia application software, in the hands of someone who doesn't have an aptitude for it, can create

an unintelligible jumble. It really requires inspiration from left and right sides of the brain! Plus a dash of showbiz.

- If you bought your computer recently, you're probably OK from a hardware limitation standpoint. But if your computer is older, you may not be OK. CD-ROMs are memory hogs!
- As with most software, there are different platforms for which the programs must be written: PCs and Macintoshes, to name two. Which platform does your audience use?

CD-ROM at Work

Universal Instruments sought to publish a voluminous report on laboratory research concerning automatic assembly of ultra-fine pitch components to printed circuit boards. They knew their huge file of data, photos, charts, etc., would be best compiled in CD-ROM format. Fred Riger Advertising lent graphic design assistance in the labeling and packaging of the disc.

In another application, the Riger Agency assisted Hardinge Inc., the precision machine tool maker, to include its advertising message in a CD-ROM version of the Thomas Register for 1996, a reference work that, in traditional hard copy form, occupies several book shelves.



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