

Computer Tips

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How to Copy a DVD—Part 1

With the DVD becoming more popular both for movies and for home uses, the need to copy a DVD disk will no doubt arise. While it is illegal to copy a commercial DVD and sell or give it to someone else, you are allowed to make a backup copy of your own DVD's.

To copy a DVD, you will need 3 things: a computer which has a DVD burner installed, DVD copying software, and a blank DVD writeable disk.

Before we go through the steps to copy a DVD, let's have a brief overview of DVD disks, as this will help you in selecting your blank DVD disks.

Commercially produced DVD's such as movies, games, etc, have two layers of data, known as dual layer, and contain up to 9.4GB of data. All current DVD players and burners can read and copy these commercial DVD's. While there are both single and dual layer blank DVD's available, we will deal with the single layer blank DVD's. Single layer writeable (blank) DVD disks hold only 4.7GB of data. This poses a problem, in that when copying a commercial DVD, all the data will not fit onto the blank DVD disk.

This problem is overcome through DVD copying software. The two most common software programs are DVD Shrink and Nero Burning. DVD Shrink is a free program downloadable from the Internet. Nero Burning is usually bundled free with your DVD burner. If it is not, Nero can be purchased either online or from computer stores. Version 6.3 or above supports DVD copying.

Not only do writeable DVD disks have two layer types, they also have two formats: DVD-R and DVD+R. The two formats are nearly identical, except some DVD players have problems reading the DVD+R format. For your regular copying needs, the DVD-R disks are the most compatible, and are also cheaper to buy. (Note: If you are making a copy of an already copied DVD, it is essential to use a blank DVD with the same format; that is, if the copied DVD is a DVD-R, you must copy it to a blank DVD-R. If you use a DVD+R instead, your DVD disk may become unreadable).

In the following steps to copy a DVD, we will assume you are using the DVD Shrink program and the Nero Burning software. Here we go:

- 1) Insert the DVD you wish to copy into the DVD burner.
- 2) Open your DVD Shrink program, and click on Open Disk.
- 3) Select the DVD drive where the source disk is located, and click OK.
- 4) Wait while DVD Shrink does an analysis of your original DVD.
- 5) Click on Main Movie, shown in the left panel of the DVD Shrink window.
- 6) Click Backup! from the top main menu.
- 7) Select Image Recorder as the backup destination.
- 8) Click OK to begin. This process will take up to an hour to complete. You can repeat the above steps for all the DVD's you want to copy. Next issue we will show you how to copy to blank DVD's. Stay tuned...

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