



Answer Quest Tip Sheet

April 2001 -- We Answer Your Technology Questions



MAKE YOUR OWN "THE BEST OF ..." CD COLLECTIONS

So, you wanna rip some CDs ... and burn your own BEST OF collection?

You are asking, what do you mean "rip" and "burn"; I thought CDs were hard to break.

Well, what I'm talking about is the ability to take the music CDs you already own and copy all of the music to your hard drive (rip) and then write (burn) your own "Best Of ..." CD for your listening pleasure.

It's really easy. All you need is a CD Writer, blank recordable CDs (CDRs), and your favorite music.

IMPORTANT – remember it is **STILL ILLEGAL** to borrow someone else's CD and make a copy of it. And it's also illegal to download music from the Internet that is copyright protected (meaning you should be paying for it).

But don't fret. You can still take your own favorite CDs and combine them into one **GREAT CD**. Or even add in some free music that isn't illegal to download.

There are several software programs out there that will allow you to accomplish this. I tested out two programs: Musicmatch Jukebox Plus v6.0 and Roxio's Easy CD Creator v5.0 (Roxio used to be Adaptec).

MUSICMATCH JUKEBOX PLUS

Musicmatch Jukebox came with my computer. It has really nice sound quality and the thing that made me look at it further was the ability to be player, ripper, and burner.

That means I don't have to listen with Windows Media Player or Winamp, then use something such as Rapid Ripper to copy my CDs to my hard drive, then finish with Nero which will allow me create my own audio CD.

There is a free version of MusicMatch, the Plus version for \$19.95 and for an additional \$29.95, you can get free lifetime upgrades. Go to www.musicmatch.com and download it straight from the web.

When you install Musicmatch Jukebox Plus, make sure it associates all music files with itself. This way, you can simply double-click on an MP3 file (you know this

because it's the file's extension, i.e., bach.mp3) and Musicmatch Jukebox Plus will open automatically. Follow their instructions for installation.

To test this software, I decided to download some free music from MP3.com. Simply go to www.mp3.com and search for your favorite music. The site will indicate whether it is free or not.

I decided on classical music that was relaxing to play at the end of those hard days at the office. I downloaded about 7 songs into a subdirectory I named c:\mp3 (you can name it whatever you want to).

Open up Musicmatch Jukebox Plus (if it's not already open) and click on **FILE -- OPEN**. Click on the **MY COMPUTER** icon on the left. Navigate to your directory full of songs (c:\mp3) and click **PLAY** in the lower right corner.

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It will add the songs to your PLAYLIST window and start playing them. You can listen to them again and decide if they are indeed what you want to write to your new CD. If you decide that there is something there you do not want, simply right-click and delete it from the playlist, or click CLEAR at bottom of the window to clear them all.

When you are satisfied with your selections, click CDR at the bottom of the PLAYLIST dialog box. Another window (CREATE CD FROM PLAYLIST) will open showing you your selection of songs and how much space they will take. You can add more songs. Or if you decide you don't like something, remove a song by un-x'ing it.

Also notice that CD FORMAT is set to AUDIO. This is what you need to play your new CD in a regular CD player like in your car. DATA format is for PCs or MP3 players. Leave it set to AUDIO.

At this point, you might as well print your CD insert. Click on PRINT CD INSERT at the bottom of the window. You can preview the different styles they have and print it. After printing, it will return you to the CREATE CD FROM PLAYLIST dialog box.

Make sure your blank CDR CD is inserted.

WARNING!!! With faster CD writers coming out, make sure your CDRs can run with the faster CD writer. The new CDRs will say on their container something like "write from 1x up to 16x multi speed." You can use an older slower CDRs but you must tell your software to slow down and not write as fast.

For example, I have to tell my 8x speed writer to slow down to 4x speed in order to write older CDRs.

ROXIO'S EASY CD CREATOR

Now onto Roxio's Easy CD Creator. This software is not a music player (although you can preview songs); it is a ripper and burner.

I tested the most recent version 5.0 -- it's a little more expensive (\$99 plus a rebate for it) than Musicmatch Jukebox Plus but I didn't buy it for the music capabilities. That was just a little extra.

You can purchase the software online but you can not download it (or go to your local computer store and purchase it). Install it according to installation instructions from Roxio.

If I don't, it doesn't write anything and gives me strange errors like something is wrong with the CDR. Make sure your blank CDR CD is in and click CREATE CD. It will start the process of creating your new music CD.

TA DA! Your first music CD from MP3.com music is done!

Now to rip your favorite CD! With Musicmatch Jukebox Plus open, insert your music CD. It should automatically try to identify the tracks (if you are connected to the Internet).

How does it know what song the track is? It gathers the information about the tracks from the CDDb (www.cddb.com), a Music Recognition Service owned by Gracenote. Basically, it's a really, really big database of all the CDs out there. When you want information about a specific track, it searches the CDDb database to find information about it (to learn more, go to www.gracenote.com/about.html).

If you are not connected to the Internet, it may behave differently than described when you are ripping.

To continue, click REC in the RECORDER window and it will add the tracks to your MY LIBRARY window. At the same time, it is saving the tracks to your default library (usually c:\my document\my music) in MP3 format.

That's it! To create the CD you would follow the directions at the beginning of this newsletter except you don't download from the Internet. You already have them on your hard drive by ripping them!

The first time you run Roxio's Easy CD Creator, you will see the Project Selector (this is a new feature from older versions). Click on MAKE A MUSIC CD in the top left corner, and then click on SOUND STREAM (I found this to be the easiest way).

With SOUND STREAM, you simply tell it what you want to copy from and where to copy it to. So if I want to rip a CD, with my music CD in the drive, I select SOURCE to be my CD drive. It will display all the tracks on the left-hand side.

Now, select the DESTINATION to be a new folder on my hard drive (the last button on right). You should

always create a NEW FOLDER so all your CD tracks don't get mixed together. Also, make sure you select type as MP3 not WAV or WMA (this is important!!!) It should now display the name of the directory and MP3 at the of the right-side window.

To select all the tracks on the CD, in the middle of the window, click the 2nd button (ADD ALL) and it will display all the tracks on the right-hand side also (the first time you run it, the software will test your CD-ROM for compatibility). Click RECORD (the red

button) and then click RECORD on the left-hand side. It will copy each track to your hard drive.

When it is finished, it will prompt "Record Successful" and click OK.

Using Roxio's Easy CD Creator to write your own CD, you simply put all the MP3's you want on one CD into a new folder. Then, reverse what we just did :) Tell it the SOURCE is the new folder on your hard drive, and the DESTINATION is a CD.

For more information about MP3s, ripping and burning, try these sites or search for MP3 on your favorite search engine:

Daily MP3 - <http://www.dailymp3.com/>

Musicmatch Jukebox Plus - <http://www.musicmatch.com/home/>

CNET review of Musicmatch -

<http://www.cnet.com/internet/0-4004-8-3743722-1.html?tag=st.int.3814.txt.4004-8-3743722-1>

Roxio's Easy CD Creator - <http://www.roxio.com>

MP3.com - <http://www.mp3.com>

Real Player and Real Jukebox - <http://www.real.com>

Winamp - <http://www.winamp.com>

Yahoo MP3 Web Directories -

http://dir.yahoo.com/Computers_and_Internet/Multimedia/Audio/Formats/MP3/Web_Directories/

Lycos MP3 search - <http://music.lycos.com/downloads/>

MP3 Newswire - <http://www.mp3newswire.net/>

EXCITING NEWS!

ANSWER QUEST is partnering with another company and will have a new training center in Towson, Maryland by this June!

(more details to follow)

Your Total Solutions Provider in the Mid-Atlantic area:

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