



LG CD-RW
Drive (670MB)

CD-RW (Compact Disc - ReWritable)

Recent generation computers have been equipped with CD-ROM (Compact Disc - Read Only Memory) drives for both data delivery and playback of music CDs. As the size of computer programs grew CDs, as a result of their large storage capacity, replaced the ubiquitous 1.44 MB floppy disk as the distribution media of choice for software publishers. The major limitation of CD-ROM drives is that they can only “read” information from CDs, they can’t “write” information back.

CD-RW (Compact Disc - ReWritable) is a CD-ROM drive that has the ability to both “read” information from, and write information to a CD. There are two types of blank CD media that can be written to by a CD-ROM “burner”; CD-R, CDs that can only be written to once, and CD-RW, CDs that can be written to many times. CD-R discs are cheaper and data can be written to them more quickly than to their CD-RW counterparts. CD-RW drives can be used for data backup but each CD (whether CD-R or CD-RW) can only hold about 670 MB of data. With standard hard disk drives of 40+ gigabytes capacity installed on most new computers the use of CDs as an effective total backup solution is not recommended. As with floppy disk backups of a few years ago the need to monitor the backup and constantly switch CDs to accomplish a full backup makes the choice of CDs a poor one – keeping in mind that the most important component of an effective backup solution is that it be consistently completed. While CD-R may not be a good choice for a full backup solution it can be a useful addition to other forms of data backup. The advantage of CD-R is that the media itself is relatively rugged, not prone to data loss and is highly transportable. Most computers, both desktop and notebook, come equipped with CD-ROM drives so utilizing CD-R for transporting data to other systems or as a convenient form of data backup while travelling can be very effective.

As the price of CD-RW drives has fallen it is timely to consider acquiring one in place of the traditional CD-ROM drive. The latest generation of CD-RW drives combine CD-ROM, CD-RW and DVD playback into a single, relatively inexpensive device.



LG DVD-RAM
Drive (4.77 GB)

DVD-R (Digital Video Disc - Recordable)

In a similar evolutionary pattern CD-ROMs are now being replaced with DVD drives that have the ability to read both CD-ROM and DVD data. DVD discs increase the data storage capability of a single disc from 670 MB to 4.7 GB – 9.4 GB on a double sided DVD disc. DVD-R is a write-once medium that contains any type of information normally stored on mass produced DVD discs – video, audio, images, data files, multimedia programs, and so on. Depending on the type of information recorded, DVD-R discs are usable on virtually any compatible DVD playback device, including DVD-ROM drives and DVD Video players. Life expectancy is a key issue when considering the use of DVD-R for document imaging and other archival applications. Although each disc media manufacturer has its own life expectancy rating generally the media is rated at better than 100 years. Although the storage capacity is significantly greater than CD the fact that each side can only hold 4.7 GB before being manually “flipped” limits the effectiveness of DVD-R as a primary full system backup solution. Currently the cost of these drives and the DVD media is high enough that having one would generally be dictated by specific need. As they drop in price they will become a very attractive option to CD-R as the standard in PCs.

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