Getting Started with CD Burning

Before you start

There are a couple of points to attend to before you start creating CDs and/or DVDs, namely ...

1) Check to see if you have a screensaver set to activate. If so, turn it off! Having a screen saver kick in while you are burning data can ruin your day!

2) Check that any CPU intensive cron/anacron jobs have run before you start burning. (eg/. Locate updates on debian derived systems.)

3) Decide where you are going to put aside space for creating working files as required. This is best chosen as a directory on a partition where there is plenty of free disk space and where you can readily read and write.

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How fast can I burn ?

The burning speed will usually depend on the following factors ..

- The CPU speed and amount of RAM you have
- The type of CD/DVD writer installed (max. rated speed and media compatibility.)
- The blank media type and its speed rating.
- Whether you use 'on the fly' burning or create iso master files.

The general consensus, as far as I can gather, seems to be that best results are obtained with the max burning speed set to approx one half of the lesser of the burner and the media rated speeds.

For example: Max burner speed – 52 x
Max media rating – 52 x
Max burn speed = 26x

Max burner speed – 24 x
Max media speed – 32 x
Max burn speed - 12 x

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Working with .iso files

Frequently, large collections of software are delivered as “isos” . These are single files, having within them a structure suitable for use as an iso9660 file system – eg/. a CDROM. They need to be burnt to optical media by a program which can create a filesystem with the included files. A simple file copy, eg/. using a file manager, will just copy the single file to its destination, without “unpacking” the components.

We can inspect the contents of an iso file by using a loopback device, which is a block device that allows us to treat a file as a disk, and thus mount the .iso file to gain access to its' filesystem (contents).

To look inside an iso image, start an Xterminal and assume super user rights. Decide where you are going to mount the image, or create a directory in a convenient location to act as a mount point.

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Working with .iso files

Use a command of the form ..

mount -o loop -t iso9660 <iso file name> < mount point>

for example ..

```
# mount -o loop -t iso9660 dsl.3.1.iso /mnt/tmp
```

Once the iso file is mounted, we can browse the contents with our standard file managers, and display the contents of text and html files.

Unmount the iso file when you have finished your exploration with the umount command, eg/.

```
#  umount /mnt/tmp
```

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Suggested Programs

For CD/DVD burning, a good choice would generally be the **k3b** application. This is a native KDE program, but it will run quite well under the GNOME desktop.

If you prefer not to incur the KDE overheads, the **X-CDRoast** program is a good alternative, although somewhat more “manual” compared to k3b.

Demonstration of k3b

Brief demonstration of X-CDRoast