

# ***RIPPING' BURNING & PLAYING CDs***

Today, music is recorded, mixed and distributed digitally on discs and as audio file downloads. People have traded in their Walkman cassette players for iPods. They've stopped making mix tapes for friends in favor of cheaper, more user-friendly CD-Rs (CD-recordables). And their CD collections are gathering dust because they've moved their music onto their computers. In this class, we'll tell you how to rip your music discs, or convert your songs to audio files on your PC. We'll also walk you through reversing the process, namely burning (writing) audio files back to disc as audio tracks. Finally we'll talk about choosing file and optical disc formats that will play back in every device you own. As examples we'll use the free WMP11 (Windows Media Player 11). We'll also talk about other popular, software options, such as iTunes (*free;www.apple.com/itunes*).

## ***Ripping***

Songs on commercial music CD's come in the uncompressed CDA (CD-Audio) format. Because a typical five-minute CDA might be 50MB, users rip songs in compressed formats, such as MP3, to save storage space. **MP3** is the most universally compatible format, so it's the best choice for users planning to play audio discs that have been encrypted to prevent copying. You can name the song files manually, but it is easier to tell your music ripping software to automatically do so using an online song title database. Once you have ripped music tracks to your hard drive, you can copy the files to your portable music player; make your own playlists of songs, such as by genre or mood; play the files and playlists over your computer's speakers or on your home stereo via an audio cable or a music server device.

## ***WMP11***

To rip a CD in WMP11, click the **Rip tab**. Next, click the small arrow under the Rip tab and then select More Options. Under Format, use the drop-down menu to select MP3. Next, move the Audio Quality slider to the right. The **192Kbps**, 256Kbps, or 320Kbps settings will encode your MP3s at bit rate high enough to make them sound indistinguishable from the original CD tracks, albeit with larger file sizes than 128Kbps MP3s would have. Click **Apply** and OK. Finally click **Start Rip**. Song files will appear in

## ***Burning***

When you burn a custom music compilation as an audio CD, the song files will be converted back to CDA tracks for playback in any CD or DVD player. You might not be able to burn certain song files you have bought from an online music store such as Itunes, depending on the type of **DRM** (*digital rights management*) they carry.

## ***WMP11***

Click the burn tab and then click the little arrow under it. Chose **More Options**. Set the Burn Speed to **Slow**, as audio CD's often have fewer errors when written at slow speeds. If you plan to mix songs from different albums on your CD, check the box beside **Apply Volume Leveling Across Tracks On The CD**. Click Apply OK. Finally, find the songs or playlist(s) in the folders and categories on the left, such as Library. Drag and drop them to the Burn List panel on the right . You can drag songs up or down the list to set the play order you prefer. Click **Start Burn**.

PlayBack Compatibility

## ***Now Hear This***

*And* now the power is yours. You have the tools and the skills to help you listen to your music where you want and in what order you want. Isn't life more fun with a soundtrack that you control ?????

## **Top 10 Tips for Good Burns**

- \* Burn at slower speeds
- \* Leave your PC alone during a burn
- \* Update your burning software
- \* Update your drive's firmware
- ~~\* Make sure your drive is in DMA (direct memory access) mode~~
- \* Avoid low quality audio files
- \* Don't try to overburn (write more data than a disc's rated capacity)
- \* Store burned discs in jewel cases
- \* Avoid scratching or fingerprinting discs