



Creating a Video CD

Although not very well known in North America, in Europe and Asia the VCD format has quickly become as popular and prolific as VHS tapes. Introduced by Philips and Sony in 1993, VCD was a predecessor to DVD. VCD uses MPEG-1 compression to store up to approximately 70 minutes of full-screen, full-motion video on a 650 MB CD or CDR.

VCDs can be played on special console VCD players (which are widely available in Europe and Asia), on some DVD video players, and on most current Mac and Windows-based computers. VCDs have all the advantages of CD-ROM delivery, but with the extra advantage of full-screen video, and more playback options. (Note that some console DVD players have a difficult time reading CDRs, whether audio or VCD. Therefore, even if your DVD player says it supports VCD, it might not support the reading of recordable CDs, meaning it will be limited to playback of commercial VCDs only.)

Creating a VCD is pretty simple. As with CD-ROM and Web delivery, you might want to do some test MPEG renderings to determine if your video needs any color correction. You might also want to experiment with de-interlacing your video, and you might need to crop the edges. After finishing your final edit and polish, you'll need to compress your video with an MPEG-1 compressor. Since QuickTime doesn't ship with a built-in MPEG-1 CODEC, you'll need to purchase one separately. If speed is of the essence, and you still have some money in your budget, consider buying a hardware MPEG-1 encoder for faster compression.

Once your video is compressed, you can write it to a CDR using a standard CD recorder. You'll need software that can write VCD format such as Roxio's Toast for Macintosh or Easy CD Creator for Windows.