

your own VCDs and SVCDs.

The Datavideo VDR 3000 is a stand-alone video disc recorder. It looks almost like a VCR, but it records directly onto CD rather than onto a VHS cassette. There are no PC associated hassles such as having to digitize the material, enough hard drive space and lengthy rendering times etc. etc. As you are playing video, either analogue or digital into the VDR 3000, the CD is being cut.

The Datavideo VDR 3000 is capable of various quality settings – recording 80 minutes of VCD quality, 40 minutes of SVCD quality, and 20 minutes of CD-DVD quality video and audio onto a cheap R7 disc.

Many people today are looking for a high quality, low cost CD creation solution for corporate promotions, educational presentations, personal video use and broadcasting post-production. Commercial and educational institutions need a way to distribute promotional materials in large volumes at a low cost.

A large portion of businesses will need a disc to be produced at a much lower cost than a DVD. It is also not feasible for a small business to give away an expensive disc. The unit is ideal for home or corporate use, fulfilling the need to store or archive short programmes on disc or distribute programmes on an inexpensive media, specifically aimed at PC playback. The Datavideo VDR 3000 has proved to be a firm favourite in the medical field.

Discs created on the VDR 3000 have

integrated MPEG-1 and MPEG-2 decoding software recorded onto all of its video formats, and will therefore autorun on any PC.

RECORDING DVDS (DIGITAL VERSATILE DISCS)

Recording your own DVDs is possible only by using a specific DVD writer or burner.

You can create your own DVDs using three types of equipment (hardware):

- a DVD writer, which fits into a PC;
- a stand-alone DVD writer; or
- a DVD writer that is an integral part of a video editing system such as the Casablanca Kron.

To complicate matters, the different makes of hardware use different types of blank media, which are expensive and not that readily available. The 4 basic different types of blank discs are DVD-R (minus R), DVD+R (plus R), DVD+RW and DVD RAM.

THE DIFFERENT FORMATS

DVD-R

Easy to use. Compatible with most players. Has multi-platform support from Panasonic (DVD-RAM) as well as Pioneer (DVD-RW). Has few editing functions as it is writable, not rewritable media. Recording time dependent on quality, between one and up to about two hours with excellent quality on a 4.7 GB disc. Blank media is the cheapest of all formats

DVD-RW

Rewritable discs work with disc drives

without specialised transport mechanisms. Picture quality is adjustable. Complex to use. Expensive media. Can confuse players on playback.

DVD RAM

Rewritable, durable disc housed in a plastic cassette, and thus perfect for archiving purposes, but not compatible with any other system. Flexible recording.

DVD+RW

Easy to use. Expensive, rewritable archiving medium.

THE FORMAT WAR

The DVD Forum is responsible for setting standards with regard to recordable DVD systems. A new format employed by Philips is known as DVD+RW, which provides new competition to the established DVD-RW system, but has not received recognition from the DVD Forum.

Philips also intends to launch a format in the near future called DVD+R, which will no doubt cause even more confusion regarding compatibility. The only difference with the new format is that the process of finalising the disc is more complicated than the existing formats. This slightly more complicated process should however not preclude the DVD+RW and the DVD+R formats from penetrating the market.

STAND-ALONE DVD RECORDERS

There are three stand-alone DVD recorders on the market at present. These have been

