



Small Storage Gets Big

Also: 20 cent DVDR = \$20 Rolex

By Miles Weston

CD, DVD Gotchas
People love bargains.

My wife loves to tell me how much she saved at Nordy's, Bloomies and Macy's. OK, those may be legitimate.

But a spindle of CDs for \$5 or spindle of DVDRs for \$15 at Fry's, Best Buy or on-line? We know the BOM (bill of materials), manufacturing costs, shipping expenses, and don't forget all of those royalty payments. And that is before anyone makes one cent in profit!

It reminds us of once on Times Square when we bought two "Rolex" watches for \$20 each for our brother-in-law who plays a decent game of golf. He's good but no Tiger Woods. We gave them to him and said when he had a really bad shot he could rip off his Rolex in a fit of rage and heave it into the pond. He did it once and his playing partners were aghast.

He knew it was a fake.

But there is a lot of unbranded and tier two/three bargain basement media that isn't worth getting...at any cost. Quality varies all over the map. If it can be written without producing a coaster it often may not be playable in certain DVD players, game consoles or ROM drives. Or, the data can disappear in a few days, weeks or months (usually right after it has been eliminated from the hard drive).

The bargain producers usually "borrow" the media identifier code (the information the burner/player needs to recognize the media and access the contents) and punch out their discs. They pass it along to the people who relabel/sell this stuff.

The folks at CDRLabs.com, CD-Info.com, Anandtech, Tom's, CDFreaks.com and other dedicated sites have long known and tracked these issues for their readers.

It may cost a little more than the \$15 spindle but there is high quality, reasonably priced media available. Firms like Verbatim, Mitsubishi Kagaku and a few others regularly deliver media content developers depend on and regular/casual users can count on.

The discs may cost a little more initially but if you spend hours or days/weeks developing superb video content or developing the perfect audio mix why would you "save" on the media that is going to hold this valuable work? What about totally irreplaceable family photos and videos? Your personal records or tax returns? And unless you were an executive at Enron, Adelphi or MCI email and financial transaction archives would seem to be pretty important!

Our brother-in-law knew the real value of his Rolexes because no one really tried to hide the fact and the prices reflected the quality. For the bargain CD/ DVD media buyers we agree with Forrest Gump... "Stupid is as stupid does."

Author Miles Weston has spent more than 15 years in the optical storage, software and video industry, indulging in, among other things, marketing activities in promoting MO, CD, DVD technology and its applications.