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A personal view from Bob Toast 9

Toast from Roxio, roxio.com, is the ultimate disk burning program and one of my favorite applications. If your needs are basic, the CD/DVD burning capabilities built into OS X and iLife applications may be all you need. But, if you want to go further you need a good disk burning program and Toast is the king. There's not much it can't do.



Toast is easy to use.

1. Pick the task you want to do from the five categories (see right), Data, Music, Video, Copy and Convert
2. Choose a subcategory or type of project.
3. Add files and folders by dragging and dropping from the Finder or use Toast's media browser that gives you access to all your files and iLife libraries. The media browser gives a real-time preview of most files — music, photos, videos and DVDs.
4. Set recorder options and start burning.



Toast 9 now burns DivX, Blu-ray and HD-DVD discs, although you'll need an external drive for the latter two formats since Macs don't yet include HD (high definition) drives. Toast exports in a huge variety of formats and can import all of the standard QuickTime formats, plus many more. Toast can copy unprotected CDs and DVDs and if the original is damaged, it will do its best to recover the files. It can span large amounts of data over several discs without splitting files. A feature I really like is that I can copy an entire 8.5 GB dual layer, unprotected DVD to a standard 4.7 GB disc. Toast compresses the video and uses all available disc space while maximizing video quality. If you take a lot of short videos, Toast now has batch support that lets you merge multiple videos onto a single DVD disc.

Toast comes with 5 additional programs (see right). A couple of these can make your



purchase well worthwhile.

- CD Spin Doctor is a basic, but capable audio recorder. It helps you set up your equipment, record from vinyl records or cassettes, filter out noise, split tracks, add song information and one-click burn to CD/DVD. It doesn't save in the MP3 format so you'll need to use iTunes. New is streaming audio capture from almost any source, such as Internet radio. I used it briefly, but found it doesn't compete with [Audio Hijack Pro](#).
- Disc Cover creates attractive labels, jewel case covers and inserts from a huge collection of templates and clip art. It prints to paper labels or direct to disc as well as LightScribe and Labelflash etching with a compatible printer.
- DiscCatalogMaker creates searchable catalogs of CD/DVD contents. This is a favorite as I archive many old files on CD/DVD. After a while I have no idea where my files are stored, but the program has a fast and flexible search capability that can find, show and open a file.
- Get Backup is a handy backup program. You can selectively back up, and optionally compress, your files and folders in a full or incremental mode.
- Streamer streams TiVo and EyeTV recordings from your Mac at home over the Internet or to a WiFi-connected iPhone, iPod Touch, Mac, or PC.

TiVoToGo lets you automatically schedule shows recorded on your TiVo to transfer to your computer. Trim and remove unwanted segments from TiVo and EyeTV recordings.

Toast comes with a 144 page users guide (PDF). Because there is so much to the program I find it a bit sparse in some areas. The extra programs have their own help files. Roxio's [web site](#) has a searchable knowledgebase and an on-line discussion forum that can be very useful.

The basic burning capabilities of Toast 9, honed over the years, are mostly unchanged from Toast 8, but there are many new and advanced features. Sadly, I was not able to check them out — support for Blu-ray and HD recorders, TiVo, EyeTV, Slingbox or one of the new AVCHD (Advanced Video Codec High Definition) camcorders.

Summary: Toast is essential if your needs go beyond the basic burning provided by OS X. If you already have Toast 8, you may find it sufficient unless you need the advanced capabilities of Toast 9.

Bob Brooks Helping Beginners
310-545-8060 • DrBob@SBAMUG.com