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Macintosh CD-ROM: Using as a Jukebox (4/97)

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TOPIC -----

If your Macintosh computer is equipped with a CD-ROM player, you probably already know about the thousands of CD-ROM titles on the market for conducting research, learning about dinosaurs, or trying new recipes. You have probably also learned to use your Macintosh to play audio compact discs while you work.

DISCUSSION -----

You can take the functionality of your Macintosh as a CD player much further. Along with being able to skip tracks, fast forward or reverse songs, you can set the AppleCD Audio Player to play your whole CD, repeat it continuously, play it in random order, or select and sort only some of the songs to play. This last feature, accessed by pressing the Program button, is very convenient because it lets you omit songs you don't like. And your Macintosh actually "remembers" which tracks not to play the next time you insert the CD. You can also drag and drop songs "on the fly" and rearrange their play order.

AppleCD Audio Player can tell you how long the given track or disc has been playing and how much time is remaining. If you use the program button to rearrange or omit tracks, the time window automatically recalculates to account for the changes you have made. To the right of the CD Title window, the total time for the selections you have chosen displays; this is a handy feature when making recordings from your Macintosh and trying to fit your music on a given length of audio tape.

The AppleCD Audio Player application lets you enter the titles and track list of all your CDs. It is a very simple process. If you need help, in System 7 or later, click on the balloon or "?" menu in the upper right corner of your screen and choose Show Balloons. As you move your mouse over the different areas of the AppleCD Audio Player window, Balloon Help describes each button's function and shows where to enter your CD titles.

Your Macintosh stores all CD specific information in a file called CD Remote Programs in the Preferences Folder of your System Folder. The entry in the CD Remote Programs file is cross-referenced against total time of audio, number of tracks, length of tracks, and various other unique characteristics of individual audio compact discs. This means each Audio CD release has a unique "signature" so if you have two copies of the same CD, the Macintosh recognizes either copy and displays its title and song list if only one of them has already been entered.

Your CD Remote Programs file can also be used on other Macintosh computers. This means you can copy this file to the Preferences Folder of other Macintosh computers and they too would recognize any previously entered CDs. There are other software programs that take this functionality even further.

The freeware program Audio CD Mover by Trygve Isaacson lets you open the CD Remote Programs file and view all your compact discs and their song lists. It also lets you merge your file with files from other computers. This way, you have a greater database of compact discs your Macintosh can recognize and list.

Another piece of freeware software, called CD Coyote by Esa Ristila, not only lets you merge and edit your CD Remote Programs files, but also lets you sort and export your listings for printing a permanent hard copy of your collection. If you get organized with your friends and neighbors in the Macintosh community, you can all share and merge your Audio CD databases and, theoretically, create one huge complete database of all the compact discs on the market! It is really cool to bring home a CD from the store and put it in your computer and have the Macintosh list for you the songs before you have even read the liner notes!

Using your CD-ROM equipped Macintosh, a few software programs, and your friends, you can have a Digital Jukebox that lists, organizes, and plays your favorite songs and even some that you have yet to discover! Do not forget to dress up your AppleCD Audio Player for your next party by personalizing its display colors in the Options menu!

Audio CD Mover and CD Coyote are freeware available on many online services.

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