

INSIDE TRACK

Primera Bravo Disc Publisher

Rating: ★★★★★



PAUL TAYLOR
PERSONAL TECHNOLOGY

When I first saw the Primera Bravo Disc Publisher I was intrigued. Could this machine that looks like an inkjet printer with a compact disc drive and an odd-looking robotic arm copy and print CDs automatically? The answer is an emphatic Yes.

At \$1,995, the Bravo by Minnesota-based Primera Technology (www.primera-technology.com) is a low-cost CD production workstation. Instead of copying and labelling discs one at a time, the Bravo is designed for automated production of up to 25 CDs when connected to a host personal computer running Primera's publishing software. (Primera also sells a \$2,495 version designed to duplicate and print DVDs.) The Bravo is clearly aimed at small businesses that need to produce multiple copies of CD-Roms or DVDs containing marketing material, photographs, music, video and so on.

Despite the relative sophistication of the equipment, I found it easy to set up on a standard PC. The only requirement

is that the PC is running Windows 2000 or XP and that the machine has both a USB port and a fast IEEE-1394 (FireWire) card. While most modern PCs come with USB ports, you may have to install a FireWire card – a relatively easy job for anyone who is not afraid to crack open a PC case.

In use, the Bravo was straightforward and reliable. The bundled Prassi Primo disc-mastering software and SureThing CD Labeler graphics editor both worked well. Once you have loaded the disc to be copied into the PC, dropped a stack of blank CDs into the Bravo and chosen the graphics, the Bravo and its robotic arm go to work picking up a blank disc, loading it into the CD recorder, printing the label and then depositing the completed disc into the output stack.

Burning a 70-minute audio disc took about four minutes and the 2,400 x 1,200 dpi colour inkjet printer produced crisp, clear graphics on the supplied white-coated blank CD-R discs in about an



extra two minutes – all unattended. Printable CD-R discs are more expensive than standard blanks, but 100-unit spindles now sell for \$25 to \$50.

Primera's high-capacity CMY and black ink cartridges, which sell for about \$35, are good for about 100 discs, relatively cheap when compared to commercial duplication services. Primera also sells a \$199 add-on kit that lets you record mini-CDs and business card-size media.

Bottom Line: The Bravo delivers on its promise. For small organisations that need to produce short CD or DVD publishing runs, it is a good choice.