

# Primera Bravo DVD Publisher

Everyone loves DVD. But burning and printing multiple discs for clients can be a long, boring process. Primera offers an automated solution with its Bravo DVD Publisher combined burner/printer

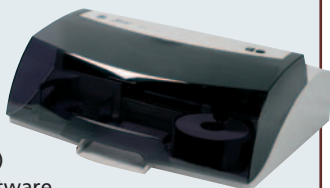


## COMBINED DVD-R DUPLICATOR AND PRINTER FOR MAC AND WINDOWS

### How much?

Mac or Windows version £1,992 (street price, inc VAT)

Mac or Windows software alone (cross-platform upgrade), £229 (inc VAT)  
Kiosk Mode Kit, £76.38 (inc Mac and Windows software, inc VAT)



### Features

Combines EIDE DVD burner (Pioneer DVR-105) and disc printer in FireWire/USB enclosure with automated duplication and printing of up to 25 discs per session (50 discs with optional Kiosk Mode Kit, consisting of 50-disc output bin, metal tray, software and instructions); Mac and Windows compatible, support for DVD-R, DVD-RW, CD-R and CD-RW discs; disc sizes – 12cm, 8cm and business card

### Dimensions and weight

184(h)x 438(w)x 406(d)mm; 8.2kg

### Supplied software

- Windows version – SureThing CD Labeller for disc-face designing/printing; Prassi PrimoDVD 2.0 for disc burning (updater for PrimoDVD included)
- Mac version – Magic Mouse's Discus 2.72 for disc face designing and printing; CharisMac's Discribe 5.1 for disc burning

### Test systems

- Windows – Windows XP Pro (with SP1); 1GHz AMD Athlon processor; 512MByte RAM; 80GByte hard drive with 30GByte partition for system and software and 50GByte partition for media; 40GByte hard drive for video; 32MByte AGP Elsa Gladiac dual-head GeForce 2 graphics card; Creative Labs SoundBlaster Audigy 2 sound card; Creative Labs 6.1 surround sound speakers; LiteOn LitePanel 150 TFT monitor
- Mac – LCD iMac running OS X 10.2; 800MHz G4 processor; 256MByte RAM; 60GByte hard drive; 32MByte Nvidia GeForce2 MX graphics card; Apple SuperDrive (Pioneer DVR-104)

Above prices from Siren Technology, 0161 796 5279; [www.sirentechnology.co.uk](http://www.sirentechnology.co.uk)  
Primera, [www.primera.com](http://www.primera.com)

What do you do when a client wants 25 copies of a DVD project by tomorrow morning? In most cases, the answer is to drink a lot of coffee while waiting around at the computer, burning discs one at a time. And, if you've promised to provide printed face labels, that's even less sleep you'll be getting. At times like this, you really are an automaton – so why not get an automaton to do the job for you? That's the logic behind Primera's Bravo DVD Publisher, and we have to admit, it's sound – promising unattended disc burning in much the same way that many of us enjoy batch capture at the beginning of a project.

The device is a large, impressive-looking machine, fronted with a dark translucent visor which lifts up to reveal two columns for discs (in and out trays, so to speak). Between these is an EIDE DVD burner and a colour inkjet printer. There's also a robotic arm to do the manual work of moving discs from one place to another. As standard, the machine supports a maximum of 25 discs – and when you consider that 25 well-packed DVDs could take over ten hours to burn, we think that's enough for most people's needs, and ideal for being left running overnight. But, if 25 discs are not

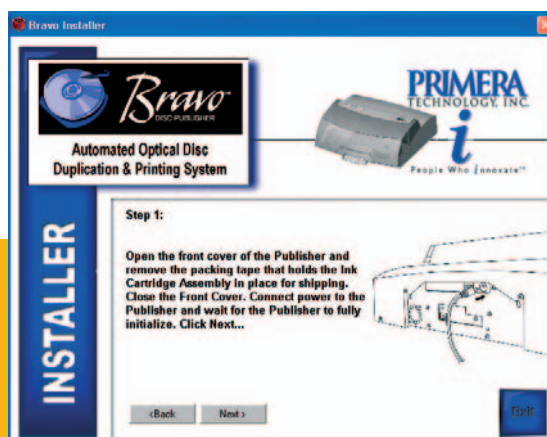
enough, an optional Kiosk Mode Kit can be used – allowing blank discs to fill both columns, with finished discs sliding out the front into an output bin supplied as part of the kit, along with a metal tray, Mac and Windows software and instructions (the kit was not included with the review model).

Bravo needs to be connected to the computer by both FireWire and USB, and is available bundled with Mac or Windows software. The drive inside is a Pioneer DVR-105 burner that can write to DVD-R/-RW and CD-R/-RW. However, we expect the internal drive to be replaced with a multi-format (+R/+RW/-R/-RW) unit in future versions. Bravo is also available in a CD-only version, or without any burner at all.

## Setting up

Installation was simple. Everything is covered by the manual on a careful step-by-step basis, including the removal of packing tape, installation of ink cartridges, and connection of the two cables – FireWire and USB. Next comes the bundled software. Under Windows, that takes the form of Prassi PrimoDVD 2.0 for general purpose

Installation was a breeze, with a surprisingly effective handholding routine for Windows users





burning, plus an updater for PrimoDVD, and SureThing CD Labeller for printing the discs. Tweaking may be required to compensate for differences in the printable surfaces of some discs, however. Accessing the Publisher's Printer Preferences calls up a hefty list of options including paper size, orientation, outer margin, resolution and ink saturation levels. Paper Size is set to Disc by default for CD and DVD projects, but other options include 8cm discs and CD business cards.

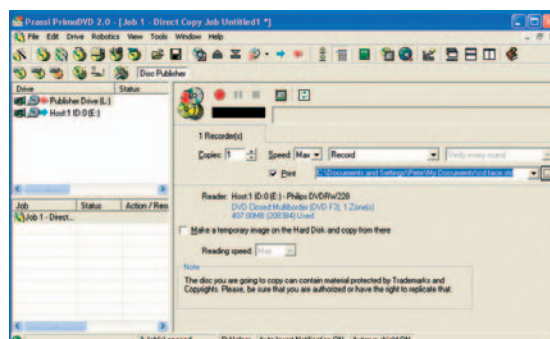
The installed software is nicely integrated with the Bravo, allowing the machine's robotic arm to be tested directly from PrimoDVD. On the downside, though, it appears that users are pretty much tied to the supplied burning software if they want integrated copying and printing – and for video makers, that means preparing a disc image in advance or copying from a DVD you made earlier. That's not to say that Bravo can't be used for burning alone – we tried Sonic's DVD Architect and it correctly identified the installed drive as a Pioneer DVR-105 and allowed a project to be burned to it. Likewise, printing can be done in a separate action if need be.

We also tested Bravo on an 800MHz LCD iMac running OS X 10.2. Installation wasn't as idiot-proof as it had been with Windows – the software CD simply adds utilities and doesn't cover the hardware setup – but the printed manual is comprehensive, and,

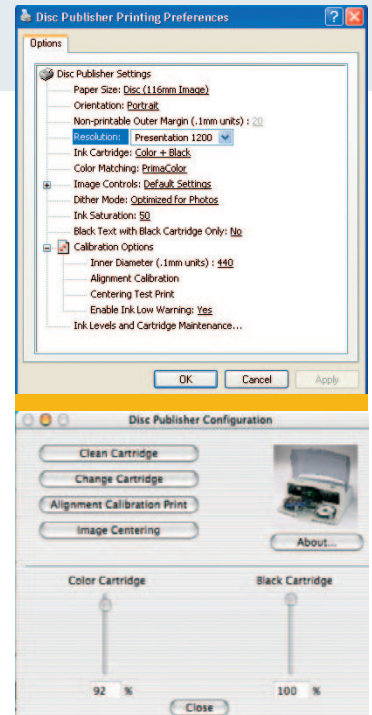
aside from the occasional difference in installation directory, it's difficult to go wrong. Configuration tools are very different between Mac and Windows installations. On the Mac, settings are tweaked in the system's Print Centre control panel, which takes on the job of helping change cartridges and cleaning print heads, as well as centring and aligning.

### Robotics

For combined burning and printing sessions, the disc's label must be designed in advance. The supplied design software for Windows is SureThing – a simple program providing visual menus for browsing backgrounds and graphics. Text can be added, and a nice selection of text effects are on offer, too. The program won't replace the likes of Photoshop or InDesign in terms of sophistication,



Prassi DVD is included for general purpose burning in Windows

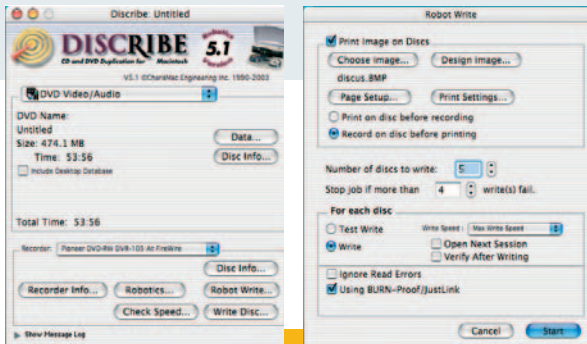


Printer properties are comprehensive under both platforms

but it's more than capable for straightforward labels and can produce some striking results. Users can also import their own backgrounds and graphics. It's possible to use other design tools, providing that the finished work is saved in PNG format.

With the face designed, we were then able to move on and burn the discs. Launching PrimoDVD calls up a dialogue box asking which recorder to use – in case more than one is present on the system. The program recognised the Primera's burner as being a Pioneer 105. The program begins with a very simple wizard, offering disc copying, audio CD creation, data disc burning and live recording of audio to CD – but no video tools. In the main application, there's a basic VideoCD option, but that won't excite video editors. The purpose of the system, though, is to make multiple copies, so we entered disc copying mode and duplicated a 4GByte DVD Video project we'd made with Adobe Encore DVD. That done, we selected a graphic for printing to the disc face and started burning.

As multiple burns from DVD-R can be unreliable on some PCs, we were pleased to see an option offering to copy media to the hard



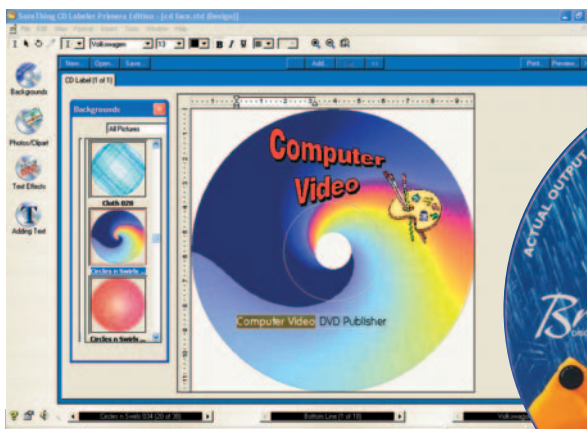
Discrite handles burning on the Mac version



For Mac users, Discus provides simple but effective disc design tools

drive first. From there on, duplication was a painless process. Taking advantage of the opportunity, we allowed the device to run overnight, coming back next morning to find a neat pile of burned and printed DVD-R discs. Printed surfaces were bright and attractive with good colour density and nice definition of detail.

On the Mac, Magic Mouse's Discus 2.72 is provided for disc face designing and printing. When designing our label, we



SureThing provides simple but effective label design tools for Windows

were given a choice of disc types upon launch – from standard CDs and DVDs to 8cm discs, Hockey Rink discs (which have two flat sides), and business card discs. The main interface is very visual and friendly, using menus to instantly apply backgrounds, graphics and text. There's an enormous array of background graphics on offer – though half of them are only available with a chargeable upgrade – and they range from very specific images, such as the cross-section of an orange, to more abstract textures.

Lightness and orientation can be changed with basic tools, but there's no initial option to import your own background design. Later in the process, though, it's possible to import images and expand them to full size. Freehand paint tools include brushes, spray cans, a rubber stamp, and various geometric shapes. Brush type, size and spacing can all be set. For text, any installed font can be used, and positioned either vertically or horizontally. Text can also be curved to follow the edges of the disc – with the radius and angle of the curve easily adjusted. There's good control over size and spacing of characters, too.

Disc burning for the Mac is done with CharisMac's Discrite 5.1. On launching, users are given a choice of making a data CD, Audio CD or disc copy. There are no video options but, as with PrimoDVD in Windows, more options are hidden under the hood, and include basic VCD projects using simple MPEG streams and no menu structure. There's also a DVD setting, which makes no attempt

to create VOB files or a folder structure familiar to DVD players. We took some DVD folders that had been exported from Apple's DVD Studio Pro 2, and added them to a project. In the final burn dialogue box, users are prompted to select an image for face printing – in this case the design we had completed earlier in Discus. As with the Windows setup, burning and printing went without a hitch and could be left unattended without any worries.

## Conclusion

The benefit of Bravo DVD Publisher in creating well-presented short runs of CD and DVD projects will be obvious to many readers, but also extends further – here at Computer Video Towers, for instance, we see a lot of electronic press packs burned to CD-R, as well as small-run software discs and driver utilities that have been created on recordable media. The machine itself is big on 'wow' factor – it's the kind of device that will be put prominently on display in editing suites to impress clients. What's more, it works extremely well. Software choice is a little limited if you want to burn and print in a single session, but this is still a very versatile machine. Documentation is good and installation procedures are utterly painless, while the compatibility with Mac and Windows systems (with the right software bundles) is a definite bonus. Our only gripe is that the price tag puts Bravo well out of reach of most home editors. But, unlike many of the more high-end products we see at Computer Video Towers, this is a genuine productivity device, intended for users for whom time is money. And if that's the case, the DVD Publisher could be worth every penny.

Peter Wells



CV RATINGS	
Features	4
Performance	5
Ease of use	5
Value for money	3
<b>Overall Rating 85%</b>	