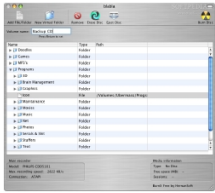


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By: Victor Mihailescu, Apple News Editor



BurnX Free, Great Free Software

Perfect if the Finder is not enough and Toast is too much...

Big name programs like Roxio's Toast Titanium are great when you have the money for them. Sometimes, you need all the functionality they offer, such as creating video CDs and the such, and will pay the price for the application. Otherwise, if you just need a simple and practical utility for burning CDs, you aren't going to need to spend all that money when freeware can do the job just fine. BurnX Free is one such program and it is both good software and free, a hard to beat combination. **Why use a dedicated burning app?** Some people are happy using the Finder to write their data to CD and DVD, other would only do it as a very last resort when all other options have failed. In terms of ends, there is little difference between using the Finder and any other program to burn your information, but in terms of means and how each handles the process, there are notable differences. It's not to say that one is better than the other, although dedicated burn programs offer lots of options and features that are not present in the Finder, it is at the end of the day a matter of taste.

The BurnX Free window Most of what goes on inside BurnX Free happens inside its one, main, window. Here you can prepare the information before burning it, organizing and sorting it as you see fit. It supports drag and drop so you can safely drag the files and folders you want into the window and they will be processed automatically, with all their content. All the organizing you do here is virtual. This means that it doesn't actually exist until you burn the information on a disk. When you drag a folder into the BurnX Free it creates a link of sorts to that folder, and, if you decide that you don't want one of the two files in that folder, you can erase it. The file will not be removed from your hard drive, it only gets deleted from the virtual CD. Folders you create from within the application do not exist and anything stored in them is not really stored inside... they are labeled 'virtual folders' to reflect this. Basically, the program lets you reorganize the information however you see fit in a virtual sandbox environment, leaving the data on your hard drive untouched. At the bottom of the BurnX Free window are two chunks of information. On the left side is the information about your writer, and on the right, the information about the writable media you currently have in the drive. If you happen to have more than one writer in your computer, the information shown is for the primary one, but you can burn to any of them by choosing from the drop down menu which appears as soon as you click the burn button. **Burning, erasing and sessions** BurnX Free can burn to both CDs and DVDs, however, sessions are not available on DVDs. It writes the information in a way that makes it readable on both Macs and PCs, however there is an issue with the way multiple partitions or sessions are handled by Apple which makes only the first partition readable on PCs, all the subsequent ones will only be viewable on a Mac. You can erase rewritable media, and you can do a full erase or a quick one. The erase is faster than in other similar programs and it even erased a small 250MB CD I use for fast transfer, which Toast choked on. Multiple sessions are supported, with the limitations that apply in place. These limitations are not in the programs, but rather the way that multiple sessions are handled causes these limitations. The first would be that only the first partition is viewable on a PC, and such CDs cannot be written any further using a PC. If it is a rewritable media, the PC can erase it, but then all data is lost. The second limitation is the number of sessions that can be viewed by the 'Classic' or Mac OS 9, which is 9. Other than these limitations which are also mentioned in the documentation, you can write as many sessions as you want on a disk, but bear in mind that the more sessions there are, the more time it takes to mount the drive and that each sessions needs a certain amount of space for the file system. Furthermore, certain devices such as traditional CD players require the session to be closed in order to read the CD properly. **The**

GoodFast, free, easy to use burn software. Has all the features needed by most of users, such as multiple sessions, erasing and multiple writer support. **The Bad**Cannot handle multiple sessions on DVDs. Whenever you write to a DVD the volume is automatically closed. **The Truth**if you need any of the advanced features offered by programs such as Toast Titanium, then go ahead and buy those, if not, you can happily use this program. Here are some screenshots, click to enlarge: