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[CyberLink Knows It Is Christmas](#)

PowerDVD's mightiness strikes again

I have recently seen a statistic showing that DVD playing softwares are among the top ten most searched applications. Of course everybody knows the leading applications in this field are PowerDVD and [WinDVD](#). And they are in top for a good reason. Everything you need for creating a home cinema environment is to be found in them. I even read somewhere that they are the only really good DVD players out there. Developed by Cyberlink Power DVD is a well-known application among millions of users around the world. The installer is about 33MB and the price for the application is \$29.95 for the Standard release. But the producer makes available a trial version that is fully featured for a period of 30 days. To be frank, for DVD playing, I generally used the competition ([WinDVD](#)), as it seemed more comfortable; so trying this application could make me come to my senses and change my options. As both softwares are extremely well equipped, at a first glance one reason to use PowerDVD would be the fact that the loading time is a bit shorter than in WinDVD. As you open the application for the first time, you will be displayed with the supported features of PowerDVD. If you already have a disc in the DVD media and the default source is selected, then all there is to do is press the Play button. The Configuration is where all the settings are made and really bring into the open the capabilities of the software. Player tab deals with choosing the default CD/DVD-ROM drive and further there are the Player Options and Auto-Resume Setting. These are but superficial options, as the core is in the Advanced Settings. Here you can enable or disable the On Screen Display, the position and font, as well as the colors. As the application is able to take snapshots from the movie picture, you can specify the settings for that. The Default Capture mode offers four options (capture to clipboard, to wallpaper – center, to wallpaper – tile and to file). The last option in here lets the user set the default folder, as well as the file format. These are not the only aspects to be taken into consideration and the aspect ratio is also an issue which can be solved by selecting Original video source size, Current video size or Custom size (you can keep the aspect ratio). In order to demonstrate its universality of use, the software can play a myriad of different formats, from .wav, .vob or MPEG4AVC files to .ac3, .avi, .dts, .mid or .mp3. The interface supports customizing with skins, although by default, the software comes equipped only with Mercury skin. Video settings include the screen control and the video enhancing options (CyberLink Eagle Vision-2 or Use Color profile). The Advanced in this section includes Smart De-Interlacing Mode, Dual Display Mode, Color, Aspect ratio and Display Device. The Audio's general option window is not too rich as it allows you to choose the speaker environment and the output mode. But going Advanced lets you set the mode for Dolby Virtual Speaker (reference, wide 1 and wide 2) and CyberLink Virtual Speaker (living room, theater or stadium). In Miscellaneous, things are a little more complicated than that, as you get to select the Dynamic Range Compression (manipulates the dynamic range of an audio signal) and enable/disable the Low Frequency Effect (LFE). After all the video, audio and software settings have been made, the Player Panel at the bottom of the movie window will suffice for everything you need from the application. From here, you can switch between subtitles, audio streams and even change the audio/video configuration. When I first saw the buttons aligned I thought that it would be pretty difficult for me to remember what each of them does. But, after taking a look at them, I realized that the first seven are the player controls (stop, play, pause, chapter navigation, step backward and forward) while the others are menu related (title, root, subtitle, audio and chapter), switching between the subtitles and the audio streams and for capturing the frames. So the intuitive buttons posed no problem and they are also equipped with tooltips

that show the users what they do. I undocked the player panel “by mistake” and I was pleasantly surprised to see that I can have access to the A/V settings from here as well by enabling the A/V Options Pad. The audio output mode, equalizer and video enhancement options come in handy when you want to change the environment during a playing movie.

The Good The software moves very quickly, even if it is playing from the DVD drive. The capturing options are extremely flexible and the quality is quite good. The software launches fast and the navigation is also quick. And if you add these to the special Christmas offer, then you've got yourself a deal.

The Bad I thought I would leave this section blank for this software's review, but it looks like I found a few baddies. No shortcuts are displayed for speed control or volume control. The volume control keyboard shortcut is intuitive enough and I thought that if the arrows do not work, then NumLock +/- have to be the way. For speed control I was not so intuitive and I could not find a fast key. A little more concern about the looks of the software (for the configuration menu) could attract even more.

The Truth All in all, the PowerDVD is indeed a very good software that deserves to be at least checked out. *Here are some snapshots of the application in action:*