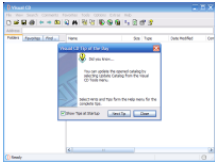


21 February 2007

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Catalog All Your Files

CDs, DVDs, drives, they can all be stuffed in a very small file

Sometimes making a software different is the best way to gain your customers. Releasing a software free of charge will definitely attract more users and the tendency is to compare it to a similar commercial application. This results in making the testing very exigent. However good a freeware is, if it does not rise above the standards imposed by commercial programs, it will definitely be discarded as useless. And yet a number of freewares have gained the general public, movie and audio players in general, but other areas have also their stars: instant messaging softwares, movie collection databases, system utilities, web browsing, security, etc. One problem today is finding what you need on your computer or in the CD/DVD collection. For this issue there is a simple solution called indexing. The process consists in reading all the details of the files and storing them in a catalog or collection. Indexing the data on your computer and CD/DVD discs is extremely useful because the search is lightning fast and the acquiring of the details takes an incredible short time (for a DVD5 it took about 2 seconds). Visual CD is a free tool that indexes the data you feed it and allows fast finding of a certain file. The only problem you can possibly have is locating the disc in your collection. But this is mainly an organizational problem of the personal physical collection. The interface is plain and simple and should not pose any problems to the users, even less skilled ones. The ease of use is also due to the Windows Explorer-like interface. The flexibility of the software allows you to move the catalogs from one directory to another, import/export them, update the collections, index volumes on your hard disk, CDs, DVDs, floppy discs, indexing of ZIP, CAB or RAR archive format, searching possibilities, renaming, splitting the files etc. The three tabs available in the left hand panel allow the user to view the folders of a catalog, the favorite catalogs and to perform a search within the catalogs. Note: each catalog contains files indexed from a single storage unit or folder; i.e. if you choose to index a DVD movie the catalog will contain the VIDEO_TS folder that stores the DVD files. The Favorites tab permits adding as many catalogs as the user desires with no restrictions applied. To move a catalog from one category folder to another you should simply drag it from the Catalog window in the right and drop it in the desired folder. Finding a certain file supports defining search criteria like looking for the filename, in a comment, search the ZIP/RAR/CAB archives and in MP3 tags. Going for an advanced search allows more criteria to be selected and you can also select the catalogs you want the piece of data to be looked in. In addition to this the file size and date can be defined (at least, at most, between and equal to). In order to extend the search and find what it is looked for, the software allows adding all the catalogs created or selecting the ones in the Favorites section. As files are moved, deleted and added to disks, you will have to make regular updates of your hard disk catalogs. The operation is awfully short and accurate and at the end you can view the log and see what files have been modified. Immediately after learning about some modifications of the files on the disk an update is necessary. This way all the catalogs will reflect 100% the files on the disks. The verification of the catalogs can be done in two ways: automatic or manual. Automatic checking remembers the drive letter of the initial indexing and will compare it to that. Manual checking allows the user to select the drive that the software should compare the existent catalog to. A security feature lets the user restrict the displaying of the files in a certain catalog to unauthorized persons. Each catalog can be protected with a different password and if you enable loading the last used catalog option and this is protected then no one will be able to use Visual CD but you, as every time it is launched it will prompt the user for the password. **The Good** The application is freeware, which means that you can use it and distribute it freely, no questions asked.

The indexing is done in a very short time. Searching for one file supports enabling certain criteria for accuracy reasons. The verification and updating of the catalogs is done fast and error less. **The Bad** encountered a few problems after the first launch of the application. My CPU usage went beserk and reached 90% because of Visual CD. After a restart everything went back to normal and I had absolutely no problems. I wish there was a finer way to see my indexed files and not create a catalog for every performed indexing of the files. Gathering all the files under the same catalog would be a brighter idea and the user will not have to take care of a myriad of catalogs scattered on the disk. Also, I could not find one backup option. Considering that the catalogs are saved on drive C:/ by default, I think there should be a backup plan available through the program and not a simple copying of the catalogs from the default folder to another location on the hard disk. **The Truth** Despite the aforementioned baddies the software is worth using and it rises and even outruns the standards of many commercial cataloging applications. *Here are some snapshots of the application in action:*