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Apacer Disc Steno CP-200 review

The Apacer Disc Steno CP-200 is an update to the [CP-100 we've already reviewed](#) and besides writing to CDs it can also read seven types of memory card and display photos on your TV. Have Apacer improved on the CP-100 and is this a worthwhile backup solution? Read on to find out.



Specification

- Card Reader - Reads SD / MMC / MS / MS PRO / SM / CF / CF II
- CD-RW - Max 24x (CD-R), Max 10x (CD-RW). Reads Max 24x
- 2mb Buffer memory
- Just link buffer under run error protection system
- Reads - CD-DA, CD-ROM, CD-ROM XA, CD-RW, Photo-CD, Video CD, CD Text, DVD
- USB 2.0 Interface
- 7.4v, 1800mAH Li-ion Battery
- OLED Monitor
- CD Spanning technology
- Television out
- Remote Control
- Dimensions: 184x175x33mm

The specification of the CP-100 has been improved on by the CP-200. Noticeable new features are the OLED Monitor, DVD playback, CD Spanning Technology, Television-out, the ability to read MS Pro and a remote control.

Operation

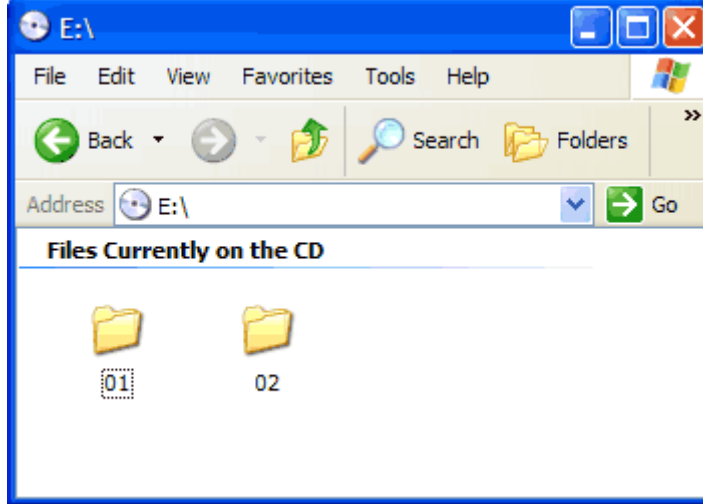
One of the things that stood out to us on the CP-100 was ease of use and thankfully Apacer haven't made things worse in the CP-200, in fact they've made things even better. The OLED display (shown right) gives a good visual indicator of what is going on and lets you choose which operation you want to start.



The two main uses this device is designed for are memory card back-up and viewing of your photos on TV. There are other functions it can do too, like acting as a card-reader and CD-writer when connected to your PC, but we're going to concentrate on the first two main uses.

Memory card back-up

The memory card back-up procedure is very straightforward. First you check on the OLED display that the "Copy" mode is selected, then insert your memory card and CD-R/RW. After you've done that it's just a case of choosing between the fast or secure copy modes. Performance varied between 3mins 35seconds to backup a 256mb card in fast mode, to 6min 7seconds in secure mode. The secure mode verifies the files after they are written, a useful feature if the photos are very important to you.



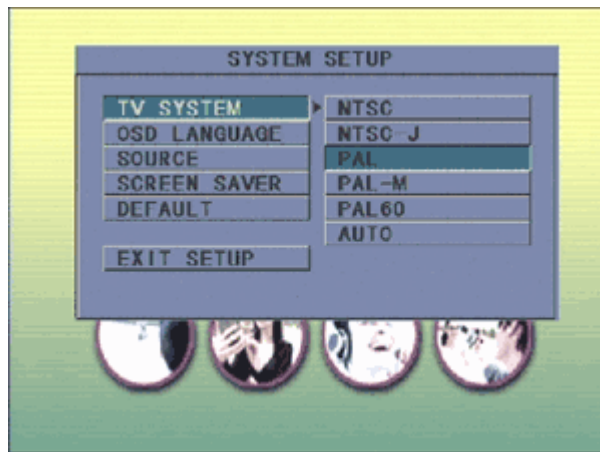
The Disc Steno creates a new folder for each memory-card backup you do. Any files or folders on the memory card are copied into these folders, it doesn't discriminate against non-image files. So if you had a memory card of MP3 files for your music player, or some files from your PDA you could also back these up onto CD.

Normally in a review, we'd analyse the usability of a device in some detail. However, the beauty of the Apacer Disc Steno is it is just so simple we didn't have any problems using it. This is quite a contrast to some other memory-card backup devices we've used which had a much steeper learning curve.

Although our performance test was carried out using a Sandisk Ultra CompactFlash card, we also tried the Disc Steno with other card types and had no problems. The capability of the card reader to read seven different card types is very useful. Whether writing CDs for friends, or if you change cameras a year later, the wide compatibility of the card-reader can only be welcomed.

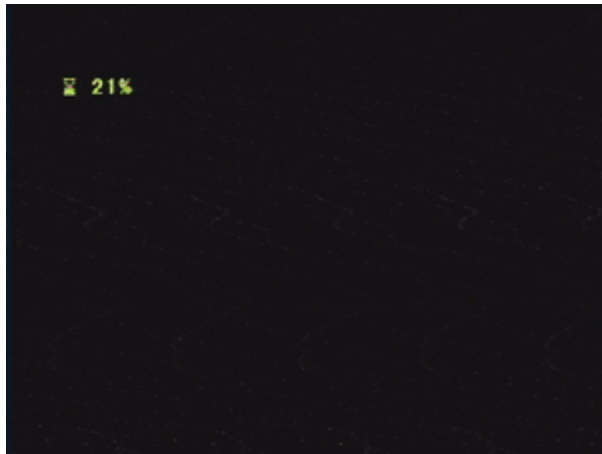
TV-OUT

Although most digital cameras these days come with a video-out function, the Disc Steno does offer a little more functionality.



A simple setup menu lets you select the TV system you'll be using, Language, Source (CD or memory card) and the screen saver.

The file browsing system is simple and quick to operate. There is a small thumbnail of the file selected in the lower left of the screen.



Not so quick is the loading time when you are actually loading an image. This is a shame as otherwise the browsing of photos is a good facility.



Once the image has actually loaded, you are able to view limited information about the file.

Although this feature may not seem incredibly useful to people using their digital camera video-out, remember that it will allow you to view your photos that have been backed-up to CD on a TV screen. So if you want to go and show some photos to a relative, you won't need to take over your computer, or print them all out. It also lets you verify 100% that the images are safely backed up on the CD when you are away from your computer, on holiday for example.

VERDICT

Apacer have added some nice features to the CP-200 whilst retaining all the features on the CP-100 that made us like it. It provides a very effective back-up tool that will suit professional and amateur photographers alike.

The CP-200 is currently selling for around £120 more than the CP-100. Whilst you do get some useful extra features in the CP-200, many people may find that they can live happily with the CP-100.

In summary the main positive points of the Apacer CP-200 Disc Steno are:

- ▣ Excellent memory-card compatability
- ▣ Useful OLED display
- ▣ DVD Playback
- ▣ Good battery-life
- ▣ Average recording speed
- ▣ Secure record mode option
- ▣ Remote control supplied
- ▣ Can be used as external CD-Writer/Reader with your PC/Laptop

Negative points are:

- ▣ xD cards need an adapter to be read
- ▣ No CD-RW erasing function
- ▣ Slow to read photos in TV-mode
- ▣ No carry-case supplied as with CP-100
- ▣ Large size might put some people off

For the latest price on the Apacer Disc Steno CP-200, check out Davoom.com.

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