

Software Review –

## **Roxio Creator 2012**

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June 2012 issue, Horizons  
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It's been a while since this program suite was last reviewed in these pages. In fact, it was when the software was known as Easy Media Creator, and version 7.5 was the subject of the review. This was around 2005, and Gene Meeks did a great job with that review.

Fast forward to the present. This review will introduce you to Roxio Creator 2012, the latest and greatest in this long-running suite line.

Long running indeed - the first version of this software was bundled with my very first CD-R burner, which I bought in 1994. I have tried several other burning applications over the years, but always come back to this one, as it's an old and trusted friend.

Originally owned and sold by Adaptec, it has had a couple owners over the years, the most recent of which is Corel (as of late 2011).

Please note that there are two versions of Creator available: the standard (reviewed here) and the PRO version. The PRO version offers all the features of the standard edition, and adds additional features to enhance your projects even more. You can find out more about that version on the Roxio website at [www.roxio.com](http://www.roxio.com).

As the software has evolved, so has the size of the package. The version I used in 1994 came on a single CD-ROM disc. Subsequent versions grew to two CDs, and then moved to DVD discs when the capacity limits of CDs were reached. Indeed, Creator 2012 is so large, the download files were two 1GB archives. As the version I obtained for review came as an electronic download, I cannot tell you if the physical boxed version comes on one or two DVDs. No matter what, the package is large. If you have a slow Internet connection, you may want to opt for physical delivery.

Installation can take a bit of time to perform, especially if your machine is slower. On a dual-core 2.6 GHz system running Windows 7 here, it took about 20 minutes to install the applications package, and an additional 15 minutes for the Content files (backgrounds, music tracks, etc.). Installation is not difficult. Just answer a few questions in the Installer, and you're off and running.

So what can you do with the software?

The most basic feature of the package allows you to burn data, pictures, audio files and documents (or any other files you have on your system) to removable optical media, such as CDs, DVDs and now Blu-Ray discs. This allows you to free up hard drive space, especially if you have smaller drives in your machine. Rather than taking up space on your drives, the data can be stored on removable discs, and restored when needed.

But you can do so much more with it than just offloading files to discs.

There is basic file backup and recovery tools included in the package, giving you the ability to save your important files to disc, and restore them when needed. Please note however, that this is NOT a full-featured system backup application. For those functions, you would need the PRO version, or an external application.

With the explosion of mobile devices into the digital lifestyle, you can share and produce content for iPod, iPad, iPhone and other supported devices without the need for an external program. You can convert from one file format to another, and then output it to your selected device.

If you enjoy listening to music, you can create compilations of your favorite tracks, convert files to digital audio, and burn them to disc...or again, output to your mobile device.

Do you like to share your home movies with others, or create unique video content to share? You can do so with Creator 2012 as well. Capture video streams, convert them to DivX or DVD movies, or even to 3D features. If you want to (or need to) produce Hi-def video, you have that ability also, using the optional Blu-ray plug-in available from the Roxio store (this plug-in is part of the PRO package, and therefore only needs to be bought if you buy the standard version). NOTE: If you just need to burn data to Blu-ray discs, you do not need the plug-in. Blu-ray burning is available as an option when creating data discs. But to burn movies to Blu-ray, you DO need the plug-in.

Working with photos? There is an assortment of features in the suite for you as well. You can create slideshows complete with music to share, do basic image editing and enhancements, and so much more. When you're done, you can output them to DVD to watch on your TV, share with others, or even upload them to Facebook (as you can also do with your video projects to upload to YouTube).

Do you like to record television programs on a TiVo unit? There is now support for these devices included in the suite. You can record your programs to disc, or even transfer them to mobile devices to take on the road with you.

Once you have your project completed and ready to share, dress up those boring looking DVDs and CDs with a custom label that you can create using the included application designed just for that purpose. Add your photos, backgrounds and text to complete your project.

There are many more features to the software; you can find a complete list on the Roxio website.

With all this horsepower under the hood of the software, the system you run it on needs to be capable of running it as well. If not, then you will be unable to perform some of the tasks you may want or need to.

The following list is taken from the Roxio website. Please note that updates to the programs may add new requirements not listed here.

#### Minimum System Requirements:

Microsoft® 7 Home Premium, Professional or Ultimate (32- or 64-bit), Microsoft® Windows Vista™ SP2 (32- or 64-bit), Windows® XP SP3 (32-bit), Windows® XP SP2 (64-bit)

For data burning and copy, audio capture and editing: Intel® 1.6GHz Pentium 4 processor or AMD equivalent, 512MB RAM for windows XP and 1GB RAM for Windows Vista and Windows 7. For video editing and conversion and DVD playback Intel Pentium 4 2GHz processor or AMD equivalent and 1GB RAM. Multi-core processor with at least 2GB RAM recommended

- 1024x768 DirectX 9.0c compatible graphics card with at least 16-bit color setting, sound card, DVD-ROM drive
- ATI Stream® and CUDA™ acceleration only available with AMD ATI Stream and NVIDIA® CUDA enabled graphics cards
- Hard drive with at least 3GB free space for the installation process. DVD and BD copy, video editing and authoring may require large amount of free disk space, up to 10's of GB
- Windows Media Player version 10, 11 or 12
- Internet Explorer 7, 8 or 9
- Internet connection required for installation, registration, product updates and some features. Any Internet charges are the user's Responsibility.
- QuickTime® player version 7 required for some functionality
- iTunes® version 8 for some functionality
- TiVo® requires a TiVo® Series2™, Series3™, TiVo HD DVR or other TiVoToGo™ compatible DVR connected to your home network and TiVo Desktop. Does not work with DirecTV® provided TiVo DVRs. See [www.tivo.com](http://www.tivo.com) for more information.

For video capture: OHCI compliant IEEE 1394 FireWire card for use with DV camera or Roxio Video Capture USB for analog sources

- Blu-ray authoring requires an additional plug-in which can be purchased at [www.roxio.com](http://www.roxio.com)
- Setting up of media access server capability requires and always on PC connected to a wired network

### 3D

- 3D glasses and other 3D hardware is the user's responsibility
- 3D video input formats: over/under full and half height, side-by-side full and half width, anaglyph red/cyan, RealD, Fuji FinePix REAL 3D
- 3D video output formats: anaglyph red/cyan, side-by-side and full and half-width, over/under full and half height, RealD

### Input Formats:

- Video: AVI, DV, HDV, DV-AVI, MKV, MPEG-1/2/4, MPEG2-HD, DVD-Video, IFO/VOB, XviD, DVR-MS, TiVo, ASF, MOV, WMV, QuickTime, 3GP, MPEG2 Transport Stream, AVC (H.264), AVCHD
- Audio: Audio CD, MP3, WAV, WMA, Dolby® Digital AC-3, AAC, Ogg Vorbis, FLAC, M4A, MP4, Playlists (WPL, ASX, M3U, PLS, XSPF)
- Image: MPO, JPG, PNG, TIFF, BMP, GIF

### Output Formats:

- Video: AVI, DV-AVI, HDV, MPEG-1/2/4, MPEG2-HD, , WMV, WMV HD, AVC (H.264), MP4, 3GP
- Audio: MP3, WAV, WMA, Dolby Digital AC-3, Ogg Vorbis, FLAC, MPEG-1/2, M4A, M4B AAC, Playlists (M3U, PLS, XSPF, WPL)
- Image: JPG, PNG, TIFF, BMP, GIF
- Video disc formats: DVD, Video CD(VCD), Super Video CD (SVCD), Mini DVD

### Recordable Formats:

CD-R/RW, DVD+R/RW, DVD-R/RW, DVD-R DL, DVD+R DL, DVD-RAM, BD-R/RE, BD-R/RE DL

Disc image formats: read ISO, C2D, BIN/CUE and GI; write ISO and GI

As can be seen from the above list, it takes quite a bit to enable execution of certain operations. If your machine is more than three years old, it MAY not have enough under the hood to run parts of the suite. Such is my case and my two 'antique' machines. To do this review, I had to put it on my wife's newly built computer, which definitely meets the specs.

Most of what I have used the suite for has been to offload files from my systems, and burn it to disc for archival storage. Starting out in the 90's with CDs, it progressed to DVDs into the 80's and beyond, and now to Blu-ray discs, for increased storage capacity. Being that Tanya and I are both photographers, the 25 and 50 GB capacities of Blu-ray media will be important as we migrate image files to disc for a secondary backup of our work. At present, to burn both our image libraries to DVD would mean burning about 200 4.7GB DVD discs. Using Blu-ray, this is cut down to around 50 BD-R discs (25 GB capacity each).

Before doing the archiving, however, I need to investigate the system further. Burning a test BD-R disc took about 1.5 hours for a full 25 GB disc, and an additional 45 minutes

for verification. The writer was only burning at 1x speed, while the discs I used were rated for 6x recording. Evidently I need to upgrade the burner's firmware, or check the settings in the software.

Another area of investigation concerns the creation of DVD movies. During testing, I noticed some audio dropouts during playback of the compilations I assembled into a DVD movie. Referring to the Roxio forums brought forth some tips and tricks to try to resolve this. After applying some of those recommendations, I now have the dropouts minimized, but they still occur randomly. I will need to further test this, using different media, and perhaps trying the DVDs on different players than my own home machine.

Overall, the Creator 2012 suite is a powerful, highly useful package. There is not much you CAN'T do with it, and a lot you CAN. This package has matured as the years have gone by into one that no serious media creator should be without. Even though aimed at the home market, many small businesses looking to create rich media presentations and projects will find the power of this software to more than meet their needs.

For further details on this version, or the PRO version, please go to the Roxio website at [www.roxio.com](http://www.roxio.com). Roxio Creator 2012 is selling for \$79.99 after a \$20 mail-in rebate. The rebate also applies to the PRO version, if you decide to purchase the added power and features it offers. If you own Creator 2011, you qualify for a special upgrade price of \$69.99. However, you can't upgrade at this price from an older version. Remember, you can get delivery via electronic download, or a physical box. If your Internet connection is not a broadband one, opt for the box delivery. It will save you hours of downloading.

Would I recommend this package? Definitely YES. It has been a steady and reliable friend for almost 20 years, and not many others can come close to the features it offers.

