

For my presentation, I used a loaded Swiss army knife as my desktop, Toast has many features and many extras.

There was so much it was overwhelming. I have put at least 20 hours into exploring Toast and it's extras and reading what I can find in the documentation. I still have a long way to go. And I thought I knew Toast, apparently not. With your purchase of Toast, you get Lots of extra programs which, individually, cost (Déjà Vu \$25, Disc Cover \$35, Disk Catalog \$20, CD Spin Doctor® \$40, Motion Pictures \$50) \$170

Starting with Toast

There are many options in 'Data' including, spanning discs, non-proprietary compression (creating a dmg file is a breeze with Toast when compared to Disk Utility), encryption, and legacy formats.

In 'Audio', it was by accident I discovered what the drop-down menu had in store, with all those effects choices. I wish there was more to read to get more out of the Audio part. Music DVD's were a new concept to me. I made one and am not sure of their utility.

'Video' posed the greatest challenge to me, because I don't do much video. I was impressed with being able to edit clips. I was able to try EyeTV and it moved from EyeTV over to Toast just fine. It seems to be able to handle many different formats, the few I have, except .flv, worked fine.

'Copy' I tried the disc recovery on a bad disc I have, it was disappointing. I was able to recreate the same 'freezing' disc I had before, I did not get the anticipated quiet gaps where the files were bad.

A part of Toast I find very useful is 'Compare'. As I have used back-up programs, I've found 'Compare' very useful for checking how well, or poorly a back-up has been.

As the prices of BluRay equipment and media come down, Toast will be very helpful for archiving large files.

The extras.....

DeJaVu is fairly easy to understand and worked better than other backups I've bought. It's interface is simple and straightforward. The help file seems to cover what is needed. It also has a link to the website for more info.

SpinDoctor, the help redirects to the Roxio website. For folks new to using it, it would be helpful to have some kind of manual and tutorial, which SpinDoctor, sadly,

does not have.

MotionPictures I found tutorials for it at <http://www.lqgraphics.com/software/phototomovietutorials.php> . The help file has lots of good info. It seems to be very powerful for making slide shows with a great amount of control of the 'Ken Burns effect'. If you want to make well-crafted slide shows, this seems to be the program to use.

DiscCover You will save a LOT of time if you take the time to read through the first third of the help file. The interface is subtle and it's easy to miss important things in it.

Disc Catalog Good program. Simple clear interface, good help file, straightforward. Seems to work well.

TivoToast Not having Tivo, there is nothing I can say about this

Toast Video Player

I wasn't sure why that was included, unless it can play stuff Quicktime might not touch

Navigation through the features available in older versions of toast were similar to the new and most was intuitive. A very helpful feature, which has been around for a while, is 'save as a disk image'. With this, it's possible to see what the results of doing a project were. It is nice to see how good the outcome is before burning a potential coaster.

The self-contained slide shows are a nice feature, but I never was able to find by exploring or reading how to add music to them.

I encountered some annoying, and as far as I could figure, unavoidable problems. In burning an audio CD from a podcast, the name on the file, and in the program agreed, the name of the disc, title, artist, and album on the first CD try were wrong, and something I already had in iTunes. The second try gave me info I'd never seen before. The name of the disc in Finder is something different than both iTunes and Toast. I tried to make a disc image to see what I got there and only got a sound file. The 'Help' just opens a pdf.

During my demonstration of spanning discs, I had a file folder ready to drag 'n drop for spanning two discs, it showed up as just needing one CD. It had worked fine in my trial at home, but at the presentation, well, after quitting, then restarting Toast, it worked fine.

All in all, the basics are good, and work well, if you don't have Toast, it is well worth purchasing. If you are into video and/or audio, there are many, many features which

should meet your needs, and then some. Be prepared to figure some of it out on your own. The documentation leaves much to be desired. You need to be willing to dig into the many features of Toast to get the most out of it. The pdf-help covers the basics well, but seems to assume the user will discover the depth of the package on their own. Given the issues I encountered, (as you use it, double check what it produces, not only info structure, but see how the quality of your product stacks up), I give it an A- for new users (unless you want to learn the depths of the program(s)), and a C for returning users. Your mileage may vary