



White paper: How to use the MSDN-enabled* Disc Stakka to protect and manage your MSDN discs

A truly efficient, simple, and cost effective solution for managing your MSDN discs has arrived.

Microsoft and Imation have collaborated to bring you the revolutionary *new* MSDN-enabled Disc Stakka CD and DVD Manager. This comprehensive disc management solution, designed specifically for MSDN developers, includes an automated process for exporting disc information from your MSDN subscription index into OpdiTracker (which manages the CDs and DVDs stored in the Disc Stakka unit).



Once your MSDN disc details are stored in the OpdiTracker database, simply insert your MSDN discs into the Disc Stakka unit to complete their indexing and archiving. You can then use Windows Explorer to browse your MSDN discs “virtually online” for quick and easy access to any disc. No more digging through boxes or shuffling through filing cabinets!

“I was very skeptical at first—I didn’t think I’d like a storage unit that didn’t have a drive built in. But after playing with it for just 10 minutes, I love it and would recommend it.. I dare you to try to take it away from me.” (James van Eaton, MSDN Subscriptions)

The issue

Depending on the level of your subscription, you can have over 500 MSDN discs. It takes valuable time and effort to manage and keep track of that number of discs. Just consider the time spent

- searching for the right disc
- downloading or replacing lost or damaged discs
- finding the person who has the disc you need
- filing monthly subscription updates



You get the idea ... this is time that would be better spent developing.

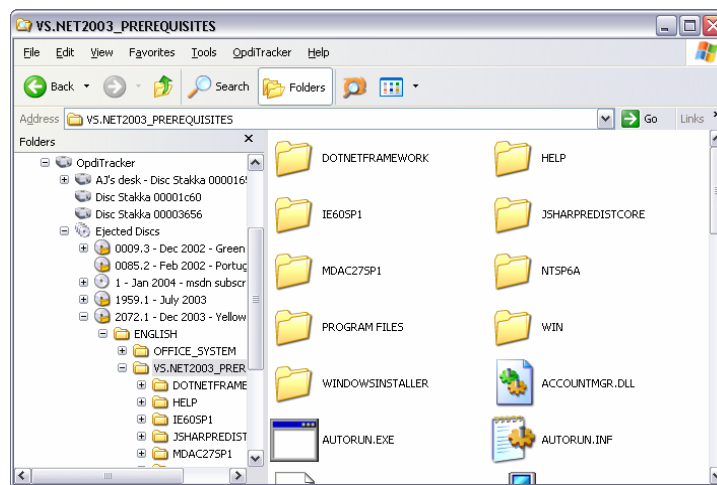
The solution

The MSDN-enabled Disc Stakka CD and DVD Manager from Imation!

How does the Disc Stakka solution work?

Disc Stakka is an automated carousel that stores, protects, and retrieves your CD and DVD optical discs. Each Disc Stakka unit holds up to 100 discs, and links to your computer via a single USB connection that supplies both power and data. Built-in connectors allow you to stack units up to five high to create a tower that holds up to 500 discs without needing additional cables or desk space.

The OpdiTracker software, database and search engine come bundled with each Disc Stakka unit. OpdiTracker automatically recognizes whenever you insert a new disc into your computer's CD or DVD drive, and gives you the option to add the disc's details to your database, including folder structure and file names. You can then store that disc in your Disc Stakka unit knowing that when you need it again, a simple search will retrieve it. OpdiTracker also provides you with database reports and automated management tools.



Use Windows Explorer to browse your MSDN discs "virtually online"

What does MSDN-enabled* mean?

It means that most of the work involved in setting up a Disc Stakka CD and DVD Manager for your MSDN discs is already done for you.

All you need to do is search your MSDN subscription index to select the discs you want to store in your Disc Stakka unit. The processes of exporting your MSDN disc details, and importing those details into the OpdiTracker database, have been automated. Once the disc details are in the OpdiTracker database, simply insert the discs into your Disc Stakka CD and DVD Manager.

The details stored for each MSDN disc include the following:

- disc name
- disc number
- release date
- keywords (the description printed on the disc's label)

Once your discs are stored in your Disc Stakka unit(s), you're ready to start taking advantage of this powerful disc and content management tool.

What benefits does this solution provide?

An MSDN-enabled* Disc Stakka is the perfect tool for managing your MSDN discs and their content. When you spend less time managing your discs, you can focus on more important things.

Benefits of storing your MSDN discs “virtually online” include the following:

- Fast access -- It takes only a few seconds to locate any disc you want: regardless of whether that disc is stored in a Disc Stakka unit or checked out and sitting on someone's desk.
- Powerful search engine -- You can locate discs by searching for disc name, disc number, release date or keyword (that is, the description printed on each disc's label). These details are all captured automatically by the export function.
- Manages content usage -- When someone ejects a disc from Disc Stakka, you can capture their name in the OpdiTracker database so that you always know who has the disc.
- Security functionality -- You can password protect a Disc Stakka unit to prevent access by unauthorized persons.
- Responsible -- Your investment in your discs is protected by keeping them safe from dirt, UV, loss, theft, and improper handling.
- Scalable solution -- Multiple Disc Stakka units can be connected using powered USB hubs so that you can manage over 500 Disc Stakkas—that's over 50,000 discs—all from a single computer!
- Easy to use software -- The intuitive OpdiTracker software is integrated with Windows Explorer and uses wizards to automate common tasks. It's so easy to use, you'll be storing and managing discs in no time.

Exactly how does the MSDN-enabled* Disc Stakka work?

It takes just four simple steps to put your MSDN discs “virtually online”:

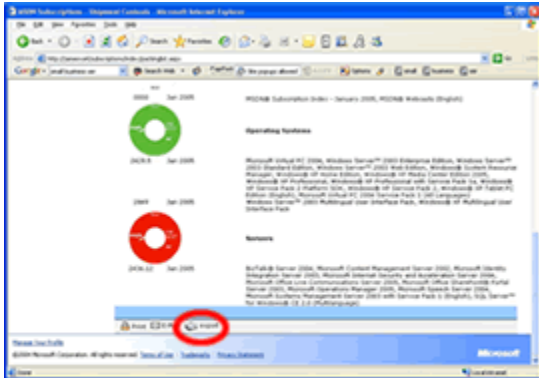
1. Set up your new Disc Stakka CD and DVD Managers.
2. Export the disc details from your MSDN subscription index.
3. Import the MSDN disc details to your OpdiTracker database.
4. Insert the MSDN discs into your Disc Stakka units.

Setting up your first Disc Stakka CD and DVD Manager is as simple as installing the OpdiTracker software, and then connecting the Disc Stakka unit to your computer's USB port. There's no need for a power supply—the Disc Stakka CD and DVD Manager is powered by USB!

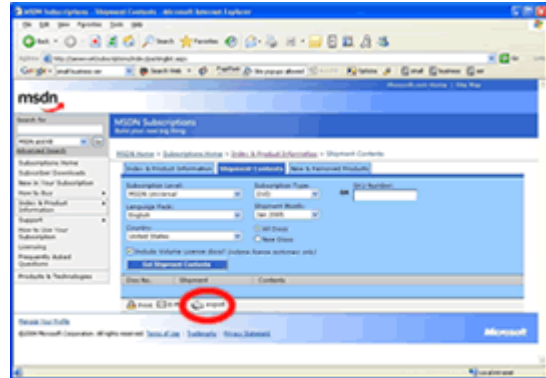
Exporting your MSDN catalog is just as easy. Microsoft has enhanced the MSDN subscription index so that disc information can be automatically exported at the click of a button. The details that are exported include each disc's name, number, release date, and keywords (that is, the description printed on each disc's label).

When you search the MSDN subscription index (online in December 2004, with the on disc version coming soon after), you'll notice that a "Disc Stakka Export" icon has been added as shown below. Simply click this icon to export your search results.

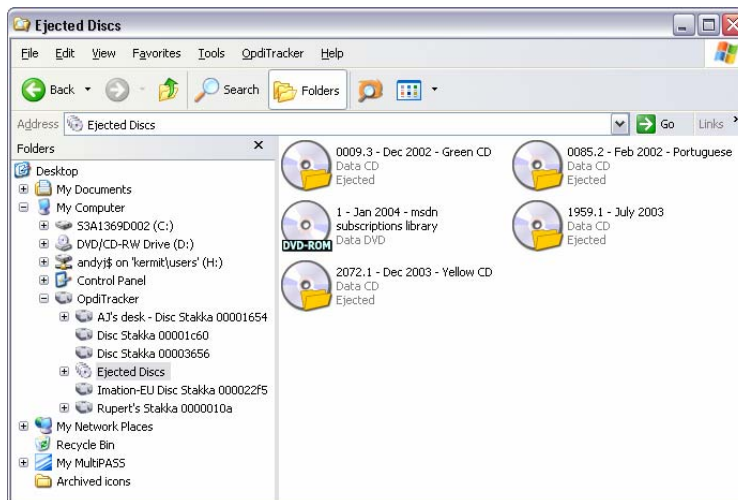
Online index



On disc index



After you export the selected MSDN discs, you'll notice an "Import MSDN content" icon has been added to your computer's desktop. Double-click this icon to start the automated process that copies the MSDN disc details into the OpediTracker database and stores them in the "Ejected Discs" folder. (The "Ejected Discs" folder lists all discs recorded in OpediTracker's database that aren't physically stored in a Disc Stakka unit.)



To finish the process, insert your discs into the Disc Stakka CD and DVD Manager one at a time. As you insert each disc, OpdiTracker displays a list of all MSDN discs that have not yet stored in the Disc Stakka units. All you need to do is select the disc you are inserting from the list, and then click OK to associate the correct database record with each disc.



Once all of the discs are stored, you're ready to start taking advantage of this powerful disc and content management tool. Your MSDN discs are now "virtually online".

You're also helping to protect your discs by storing them vertically and from environmental contaminants such as dirt and UV. Plus, Disc Stakka is designed so that you handle your discs by their outer edge and center hole when you insert them or remove them after they are ejected. These features follow recommendations made by the CLIR (Council on Library and Information Resources) and NIST (National Institute of Standards and Technology) in their "Care and Handling Guide for the Preservation of CDs and DVDs". See <http://www.itl.nist.gov/div895/carefordisc/> for a copy of this guide.

An MSDN subscription provides you with important resources to ensure quality results from your development efforts. An MSDN-enabled* Disc Stakka gives you the best solution for managing this asset.

* The automated MSDN export functionality will be available from the online version of the MSDN Index in early December 2004, and available from the on disc MSDN Index soon after that.



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