

eMEDIA™

THE DIGITAL STUDIO MAGAZINE



reviews

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hunger, bravery, or curiosity drove one of our ancestors to eat a creepy, alien sea-bug. Thanks to that person, we're quite comfortable when we find ourselves confronted by surf 'n' turf, the leg of a king crab, or a slab of urchin atop a sticky wad of rice and mustard.

Rimage 2000i

Josh McDaniel

There was also that person, deep in the Amazon Basin, who licked a toad's fundament, thereby discovering the most

powerful hallucinogen this side of rock 'n' roll stardom.

The great thing about the Toad Licker is it cannot be dispelled in the face of technology; there's no ragged old trickster or stick-figure paternal imago in his company. In fact, it is technology and invention, the spirit of science—inquiry and discovery. So, in the name of science, I lick a lot of things (one thing not to lick is an iguana—I got really sick doing that). Today, when I licked the first disc printed in the Rimage 2000i, I expected it to blur beneath my tongue, causing me slight stomach upset. What else would you expect from fresh ink on a disc? Maybe inkjet technology is more lick-proof than I imagined, or maybe there's



Rimage 2000i

synopsis:

The Rimage 2000i is the coolest thing to roll through McDaniel Labs in at least two years. It boasts deft and dashing robotics, two unpeachable Plector Premium 52X CD recorders (8X Pioneer A07s in the DVD version), and Rimage's well-nigh smudge-proof 480i thermal ink printer, as well as a disc mastering application called QuickDisc that makes multiple-project management and prioritizing *a priori* easy.

for more information, contact:

Rimage Corporation
www.rimage.com

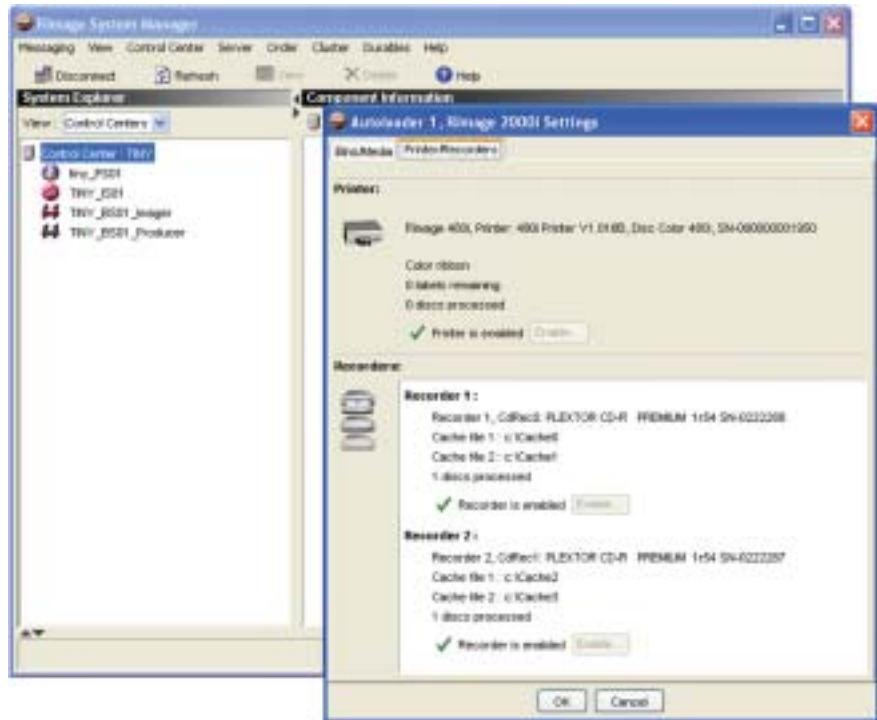
price
\$2779
(DVD version \$3179)

something to this Thermal Ink Transfer, the notion behind the new printer upstairs (it's the 480i, Rimage's new 4800dpi model boasting 3-picoliter droplet size to wow the Visine crowd). Is it really a thing apart from "traditional" inkjet? Opinions vary, clearly, but as for the lick test on the 2000i, I'll say this: The ink does blur, but only after licking a disc and rubbing your index finger hard and vigorously across the ink.

That's one of four problems I had with the Rimage 2000i, and it doesn't really count, as I imagine most of my readers aren't pure scientists like me, preferring neither to lick a disc nor get sick from it. The other three problems don't really count either, so let's get those out of the way and get on with the glowing review—truly, the Rimage 2000i is the coolest thing to roll through McDaniel Labs in at least two years. Problem two: it's heavy and I'm old, almost as old as Steve Nathans, but whereas he kicked the Chef Boyardee and took his dietary and vitamin supplements, I neglected my body and now suffer the consequences. Problem three: XP Pro fights you for the drives in the 2000i, claiming them for its own, but Rimage provides a quick solution in the form of a little command-line search and seizure. Problem four: it won't copy my DeCSS'd *Un Chien Andalou* redux DVD, but that's because the model I received doesn't contain any DVD writable drives—surely an oversight, and easy enough to forgive after watching the 2000i fling out CDs in nystagmic awe (the eval unit shipped with a couple of those killer 52/32/52 Plextor PlexWriter Premium CD-R/RWs).

Trust Your Mechanic

The out-of-the-box experience has been improved greatly. Years ago, heaving the Cedar/Rimage duplicator out of its packaging and plastic up onto my desktop (the product changed allegiances mid-review when Rimage acquired Cedar), I noticed a single sheet of white paper floating gently on a small springtime breeze, eventually alighting



Rimage System Manager lets you know what kind of hardware you're packing—in this case, two PlexWriter Premiums and the 480i printer—and it also lets you do all the fun robotic stuff, like sending the arm out probing, ejecting things, etc.

on the floor, next to the coils of cable and sample media. Those were the unpacking instructions. The 2000i, on the other hand, has the unpacking instructions pasted on top of the box. That's a nice touch, I thought.

So, what, about a microwave-size desktop footprint, 2-2 1/2 feet tall, 58 pounds? That's what my personal ad in the papers reads.

My personal also goes on to say I'm extraordinarily attractive, good around the house, heavy smoker, hates kids and dogs—all half-truths; or, reading top to bottom, blatant lie, flagrant lie, true, categorically true, respectively. The 2000i could honestly boast the extraordinarily handsome part: it's the coolest looking thing in McDaniel Labs at the moment, with the possible exception of Mom's "Accidental Expressionism" pieces (severely water-damaged framed photos of us the day Nixon resigned). Rimage's bad boy looks all business, clad in silver and black; even if it didn't run, I'd still make it the centerpiece of



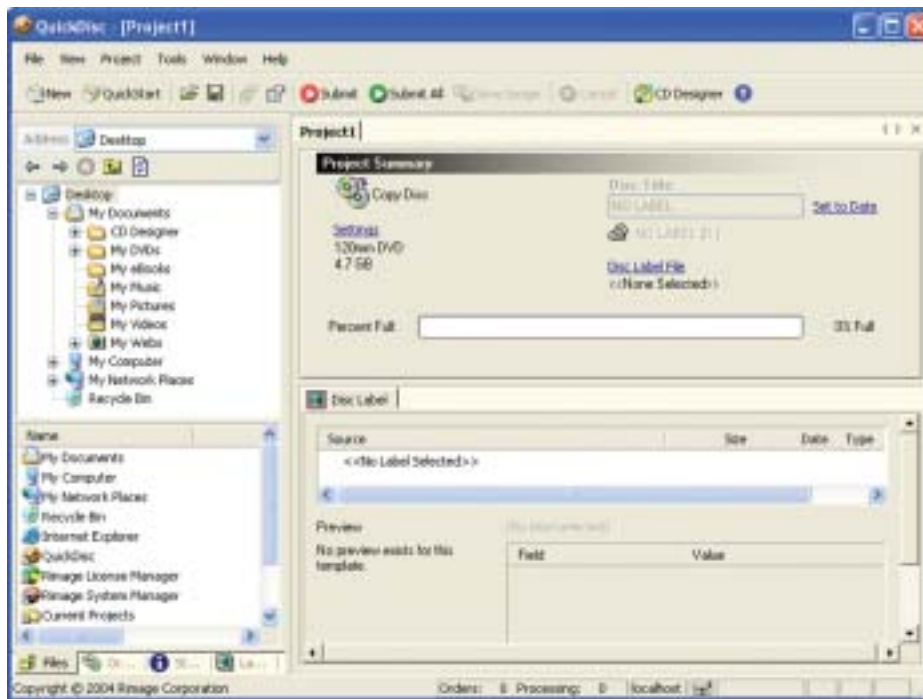
System Requirements:

- 2.0GHz Celeron (2.4GHz Pentium 4 recommended)
- 256MB RAM (512MB recommended)
- PC running Windows 2000 (XP recommended)
- 35GB available HDD space
- Serial ATA hardware
- USB and FireWire ports



I know all duplication software does this kind of thing, but it's particularly easy to do with QuickDisc: you can work on multiple projects and submit them all simultaneously on completion, assigning whatever priority you like to the assortment of jobs.

The disc mastering software, QuickDisc, is just what you'd expect: standard-issue duplicator software, and very good at its job.



my corporate empire. Out front you've got your pick arm, three buttons you don't really need after installing the software, a reset button, a small LCD status readout, and, best of all...

Bins! See, it's not that hard, spindle folks, seriously. It's cheaper than a spindle, too, I'm guessing. A simple but awesome mechanical innova-

tion governs media input and output: a hinged horseshoe-shaped piece of plastic angled upwards at about 45 degrees over the input bin directs finished discs—and botched discs, theoretically, though I couldn't get it to produce one—to the output bin, where a foam cushion absorbs the very slight impact after the slide down. The pick arm—a plain-old, practical up-and-down screw type—travels down through the empty arc, grabs a blank from the input bin (using a squid-beak picker, by the by), and lifts it upward, causing the horseshoe to lean back slightly on its hinge. The horseshoe then falls back into place to await the finished products.

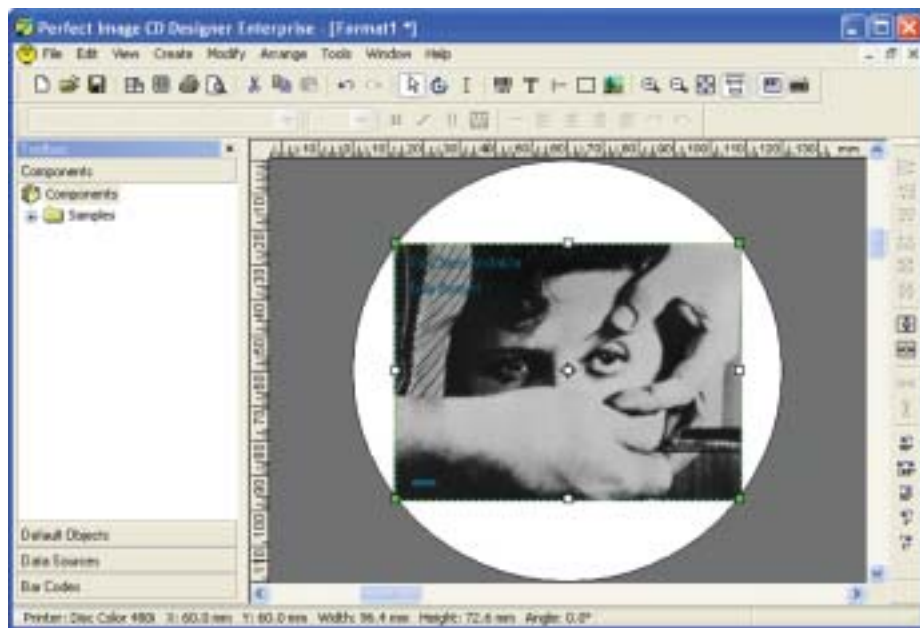
The days of the parallel cable are finally behind us: the printer hooks up via USB, and, as I mentioned, is of the Thermal Ink Transfer variety. I'm still not exactly clear on the difference between Thermal Transfer and Thermal Ink Transfer, but Rimage has some cool illustrations of Thermal Ink Transfer on their Web site. Fresh out of the printer, a disc won't smudge if you rub a dry thumb across it—it takes hard science to smudge it. (480i Cartridge Pricing: Color, \$59.95; Monochrome, \$49.95; Photo, \$49.95)

The drives and robotics hook up via FahrWahr (don't know about you, but I'm sick of saying IEEE 1394, so my secret cabal of associates at MIT and I developed the non-trademarked phrase "FahrWahr" for all of us to use in signifying the IEEE 1394 interface and IEEE 1394 cable). A FahrWahr PCI card comes with the 2000i, so not to worry if you're lacking that particular

interface. You get your set of cables too: standard power, standard USB, standard FahrWahr.

We've Got a Bigger Problem Now

Now comes the irritation, and it's all Windows' fault: it's easy to



Then there's the Perfect Image CD Design Enterprise, which tells the 480i when to jump, and how high. It's as network-optimized as it sounds, rounding out the 2000i's rousing résumé of front-office credentials.

install the software (it goes by "OfficeNet"—I don't recognize it as being anything else incognito), but Windows wants to brawl over a couple of items—first the printer driver, then the drives in the duplicator. Fortunately, Rimage anticipated these bouts and gives you the upper hand. As far as the printer goes, you simply ignore the admonition not to proceed with driver installation for lack of digital signing; easy enough.

The big problem comes after the requisite reboot (OfficeNet uses Microsoft Services, and is consequently a resource hog, but nothing last year's or the year before's machine can't handle). You'll be warned during software installation that some .dll or another couldn't be put where it wanted to go. It seems innocuous at the time, but upon rebooting, you'll see the 2000i's Plextor drives are part of My Computer, greedy little OS. It took me a second to find it, but in the Rimage startup group, there's a utility that fixes the problem (look for the "Proper Driver Installer"). After that, it's smooth sailing.

Straight A's

The sinew and collagen strands of the OfficeNet software bundle are the traditional two programs, the disc-mastering program and the calibration/information program. The latter, called Rimage System Manager, informed me I had only those Plextor CD-R drives—at that precise moment, I quit trying to dupe my DVD and re-examined my thoughts on the 2000i. Loading the input bin with blank CD-Rs, then successfully duping and printing the McDaniel Labs Test CD-R Image (pat. pending), transformed what could have been an excoriating con-

demnation of the 2000i into what you've read so far.

And let me reiterate: this 2000i can and should have DVD writers in it, it's just a little mistake over at Rimage PR that they sent me the CD-only version. But we all know what DVD drives can do; it's the robotics and mechanics and three-pico print technology that tells the story here. If the spectacular CD duping is any indication, I'm sure the DVD-stocked 2000i (which features 8X Pioneer DVR-A07 recorders and sells for \$400 more) works great with DVD±R drives and media. Rimage System Manager also lets you do all the fun robotic stuff: sending the arm out probing, ejecting things, etc.

The disc mastering software, QuickDisc, is just what you'd expect: standard-issue duplicator software. It's not CD Net or DiscJuggler; it doesn't

look like anything Umberto or Paolo would issue; I'm at a loss. It works good, though.

I know all duplication software does this kind of thing, but it's particularly easy to do with QuickDisc: you can work on multiple projects and submit them all simultaneously on completion, assigning whatever priority you like to the assortment of jobs. The whole reason I'm a freelance writer is to avoid being on a network, sitting in my little cube next to Mumbley's cube where he draws little pictures of his elf ranger doing battle with various mythical beasts all day, but I imagine priority assignments come in handy in network situations.

Then there's the Perfect Image CD Design Enterprise, which tells the 480i when to jump, and how high. I don't cotton to that kind of talk, anymore than I like being reduced to a network node. That said I'm happy to report that CD Design Enterprise is as network-optimized as it sounds, rounding out the 2000i's rousing résumé of front-office credentials.

So, in sum, if the Rimage 2000i doesn't get Editor's Choice [*Editor's Note: It does*], it gets Josh's choice for Product of the 2004 Fiscal Year (that's the opposite of the gold-plated Nine Iron of Justice award which goes to, um, nah, that'll get pulled if I say it). Its sheer beauty, efficiency, and just all-around coolness add up to the finest piece of equipment that's come through here in a great long while.

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Comments? Email us at emletters@infotoday.com, or check the masthead for other ways to contact us.