

[How to transfer old files to a new Vista computer](#)

April 7th, 2009, 7:52 am · [2 Comments](#) · posted by [Tamara Chuang, a.k.a. The Gadgetress](#)

Hey readers, the Gadgetress is off this week, but not the PC Club. In her absence, check out all the fun stuff at the official [Stump the PC Club page](#).



*Stump the PC Club is a free tech-advice column written by members of the **North Orange County Computer Club**, which has been in existence since 1976. Visit the club's site at noccc.org. And don't forget to stop by the Gadgetress' home for the PC Club, at ocregister.com/link/pcclub, to find out how to ask a question and read past answers.*

QUESTION: I cannot transfer data from my old computer (Windows XP) to my new Windows Vista computer. I tried burning a CD on the old computer, but the new computer's operating system doesn't recognize it. What am I doing wrong? The Vista system tells me the CD is blank, but I can read it on the XP system. Any help would be appreciated. ~ Janet

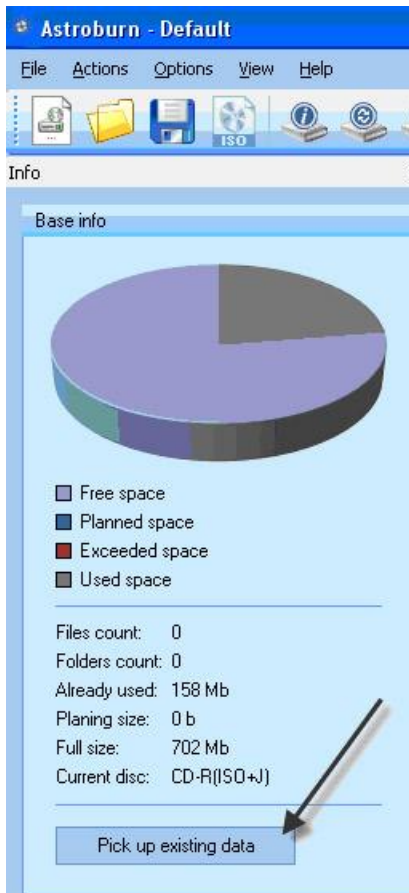
PC CLUB: I run into this situation frequently and the cause is usually related to the method that was used to burn the CD. The method does not matter as much if the CDs are burned and read on the same computer, but to make the CDs totally compatible with most computers requires one simple step, which will be described below.

First of all, there are several methods for transferring data from an old computer to a new one. This includes using CDs, DVDs or external hard drives. The easiest method by far is to use an external hard drive.

Before discussing external hard drives, let's discuss your problem first. Most likely, your new Vista computer can't read the CD because of the method it was burned on a Windows XP machine.

I can't tell how you burned the CD but I'll cover several scenarios.

1. If you used the Windows XP built-in CD burning capability, the CD becomes a multi-session CD or in other words, the CD is not finalized or closed. A CD that is created in this way can be difficult for another computer to recognize.



2. If you used third party software to burn the CD, you may have not told the program to finalize the CD. One way to check the CD is to download the free CD software program **Astroburn** from www.astroburn.com.

- Click the “Download” button at the top of its site and look for the link to download the free version.
- After installing the program, launch it and insert the CD.
- You should see a button labeled “Pick up existing data” if the CD contains any files. Click this and then click the menu labeled “Actions” and select “Burn Project.”
- You will be asked if you are sure you want to continue even if you didn’t add any additional files. Select “Yes.”
- In the next window, be sure to place a check on the box labeled “Finalize.”
- Click “Start” to complete the burning process. You should now be able to read the CD on any machine since it has been “closed” or “finalized.”

3. Another method to try is to use the XP computer to copy the files from the CD onto an external hard drive or flash drive. External drives with several hundred gigabytes of storage can be purchased for approximately \$80 and flash drives for \$25 for a 4 gigabyte

version. You can also discard the CD and copy the files directly to an external drive using XP and then copy them from the external drive directly to the Vista machine.

4. And one more alternative, a special cable. A feature called the “Windows Easy Transfer” offers a step-by-step method to move files and settings from an XP computer to a new Vista machine. IOGEAR in Irvine is one company that makes a cable just for this task. Its [Vista Smartlink adapter](#) works with Windows Easy Transfer. Here is Microsoft’s page on the transfer feature: www.microsoft.com/windows/windows-vista/get/easy-transfer.aspx

- *Ed Schwartz, NOCCC member. View his blog at www.edwardns.com/blog.*