

Mastering a CD – After the songs are mixed

What is the point of mastering?

Creating cohesion from song to song, file to file

Creating a consistent style or feel.

Making it warm, punchy, highlighting details

Making it sound good on all types of playback systems

Mastering activities

Song to Song: Normalizing levels, EQ consistency, balance the whole album / or set of albums / or set of files.

Adjusting overall compression and EQ

Remixing individual tracks if necessary

Adjusting the spacing on the CD

Often mixing happens at one studio, mastering at another!

Someone with experienced ears and practice.

Sometimes just fresh ears.

Bringing your files to be mastered elsewhere?

Have a good mix to start with.

-Play your mix at home, in car, everywhere, first

Don't do lots of compression. Let them do that.

Bring an example of a project you like.

If unsure, bring two versions.

Publishing a CD

Listen to the whole master before you send it.

CD (red book) or CD-R (yellow book)

CD Red Book necessary if sold in stores – lasts longer – less errors
more expensive – Glass master made. From it comes a mold.

CD-R if sold off the stage etc. – more easily damaged – you can make it on your computer – easier to update versions

DDP File – Disc Description Protocol

New standard. Common way to upload disc master for duplication.

Four parts: Audio Masters (.DAT files) + Identifier DDPID + Stream descriptor DDPMS + more

1630 Tape ¼" or ½"

Former standard still used. A few engineers still think it sounds better.

However in any case you should be able to submit a CD-R.

Bar Code

Needed in order to sell your CD through most distributors and retailers since they use bar codes for inventory control and identification. \$500 for your own or use a fee system. All bar code numbers are issued by the Uniform Code Council.

Licensing "Cover Music"

Harry Fox Agency (example) for licensing. About \$.10 per cut per CD.