

Steve Nelson's

7 Steps to LightScribe Success

Your Definitive LightScribe Guide

Turn These... Into This...

www.LightScribeToolbox.com

The book cover features a collage of various landscape and nature photographs. A large red arrow points from the left side, labeled 'Turn These...', to the right side, labeled 'Into This...'. On the right side, a CD-ROM is shown with a circular collage of the same photographs on its surface. The background of the cover is a gradient of red and black.

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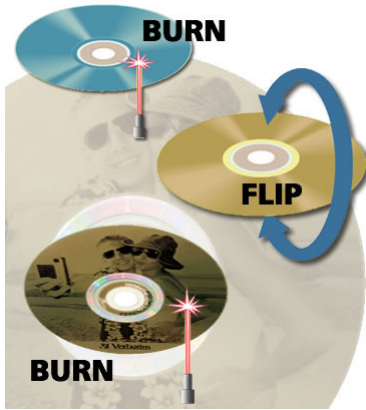
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INTRODUCTION - *Thinking Outside the Box.*



LightScribe was unveiled at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas in January 2004.

It was the brainchild of Daryl Anderson, a Hewlett Packard engineer in Corvallis, Oregon, and brought to market through the joint design efforts of HP's imaging and optical storage divisions.

At the time of the launch, Kent Henscheid, LightScribe Marketing Manager says of the invention by Project Manager and Engineer Daryl Anderson:

"We actually got frustrated with putting labels on a disc ourselves."

Any consumer who burns discs faces the problem of disc labeling. Henscheid notes:

"Consumers told us over and over again that they were grabbing a felt pen or putting an adhesive label on. Daryl's brainchild was to come up with a way we could make a label using the laser on the optical drive."

Anderson also notes that the direct-burn method avoids label clutter.

"There are no consumables like ink or ink jet cartridges; the only consumable is the disc itself," Anderson says. "The discs have a thin, laser-sensitive layer on the label side of the disc."

So, will this out-of-the-box solution to disc labeling mark the end to the sticky labels forever?

Well, its three years since that initial launch and while LightScribe has been adopted by a forward thinking few, it is still to be recognized by the majority as the best way to label your discs.

The reasons for this I believe are fourfold and they are:

- 1:** LightScribe images are only mono, not coloured.
- 2:** LightScribe media is more expensive than standard blank DVDs and CDs.
- 3:** Getting the LightScribe software to work has proven for many, myself previously included, a great problem. Understandably, people want technology that is easy to use and we have become accustomed to things being 'plug and play'.

LightScribe unfortunately has not fitted this category. This I am sure has put off all but the most determined.

4 years ago when I first started using LightScribe, there was little or no information available outside HP's official LightScribe site. It was frustratingly difficult to understand and use.

Please note:

This lack of information prompted me to put together an out-of-the-box software solution called **The LightScribe Kit**.

This underwent three revisions culminating in *The LightScribe Kit, (Vista Edition)*.

After a great deal of customer consultation I realised that a complete LightScribe Solution was called for.

One where all the digital aspects of LightScribe Label creation was possible from a single 'toolbox'.

So in October 2007 a complete digital LightScribe solution was launched called the LightScribe Toolbox available from www.LightScribeToolbox.com

Time and technology marches on, so in February 2010 the latest incarnation with the addition of a complete suite of Burning tools (for Audio, Data and Video) and a new Image Editing suite was released:



LIGHTSCRIBE TOOLBOX

The LightScribe Toolbox Contains

Software...

- 1: Labeling Software
- 2: System Software
- 3: Burning Software
- 4: Graphics Software

Bonus Extras...

- 1: Image Library
- 2: 7 Steps eBook
- 3: Training Videos

All the LightScribe tools you will ever need...

The image shows a software kit for LightScribe. It includes a box labeled 'LightScribe Toolbox' with four software categories: System Software, Graphics Software, Labeling Software, and Burning Software. A CD-ROM is also shown with the same branding. The text to the right lists the contents of the toolbox, including software and bonus extras like an image library, an eBook, and training videos.

Available from www.LightScribeToolbox.com

4: LightScribe Labeling technology, although standard in many HP systems, is not promoted by computer retailers such as PC World, Comet, etc.

Until this situation changes the majority of computer users will remain unfamiliar with the benefits of LightScribe.

You, however, because you are reading this, are one of those forward thinking few and for this, I congratulate you.

I have spent the last 5 years trying to promote the benefits of the LightScribe labelling technology. I believe it to be vastly superior to the alternative, namely sticky labels. I also feel that it is just a matter of time before the present drawbacks will be overcome, then LightScribe will then assume its rightful place as the world's leading labeling technology.

This e-Book is a further attempt on my part to accelerate this process.

Please feel free to give away copies of this e-book to anyone you believe would be interested, post it on the web even give it away to clients if you feel it will benefit them.

So much for the history and challenges facing LightScribe, now let's get to the meat of this e-Book, the **7 Steps to LightScribe Success**.

STEP 1 - *Is Your System up to the Job?*



So you are ready to trash your nasty sticky labels and want a piece of the LightScribe action, are you?

STOP RIGHT THERE!

Just before you throw your labels to the shredder, will your computer be up to the task of running LightScribe?

“But”, I hear you say, “My PC has a DVD writer and it’s not that old, so surely it will be up to the job - won’t it?”

Not so fast, I’m afraid. If you remember from the introduction, LightScribe was invented in 2004, and I know that’s 6 years ago now but HP being a forward looking company did not concern themselves with operating systems that far pre-dated that time.

Having said that, in the last 5 years I have had very few people who want to use LightScribe who were running Windows 98, for instance.

With no further ado, what exactly do you need to have to be able to consider using LightScribe?

Operating Systems

LightScribe technology can be used across all platforms, however not all versions of OS are compatible. Here is what you will need...



1: A Windows based PC.

Windows 7, Vista, XP and 2K (32-bit & 64-bit)

(There are NO LightScribe System Drivers available for Win ME or Win 98.)



2: A Mac.

Mac OS X 10.3.9 or later.



3: A Linux based PC.

x86 (requires kernel 2.6 and RPM, validated on SuSE 9.x, 10.0)

There you have it; as long as you have a machine with a reasonably recent OS for the type of system you are using then you have successfully passed **Step 1**.

Now we can move on to putting together the remaining parts of your LightScribe System. This will be covered in the next four steps.

STEP 2 - *LightScribe Hardware - Getting the Right Kit!*



One of the questions I am repeatedly asked is: **“Can I use my existing DVD Drive to print LightScribe labels?”**

I'm sorry to say, no you can not. There are basically four components to a LightScribe installation and they are:

- 1: *A LightScribe Enabled Drive.*
- 2: *LightScribe System Software.*
- 3: *LightScribe Labeling Software.*
- 4: *LightScribe Media.*

The first requirement is a DVD drive that has been specifically designed to use LightScribe Labeling Technology.

Nearly all DVD drive manufacturers now produce at least one LightScribe Enabled drive; these include:



By way of an example, my first LightScribe drive was a **LITEON SHW-16H5S**. A little old now I know, and although I also now have an **LG External** drive, the Liteon is still labeling strong!

Adding a LightScribe Drive to an existing system.

External/Internal CD/DVD Drives.

If you've already got a computer, you can add LightScribe capabilities in two ways:

- 1:** Get an external LightScribe-enabled disc drive that connects to your computer.

These can connect via USB or Firewire; both are supported.

- 2:** Get an internal drive that will replace your current CD/DVD drive.

This is by far the most popular method, and the cheapest.

A relevant question I have been asked, in fact the question I have been asked most of all, is:

“Steve, how can I tell if my drive is a **LightScribe Enabled** Drive?”

1: Desktop PC.

Printed on the front of the drive (on the drive tray) will be the LightScribe Logo.



The LightScribe Logo.

2: Notebook PC.

Slimline drives do not have enough space for a LightScribe logo on the drive tray, but a LightScribe logo sticker should be affixed to all LightScribe-enabled notebooks.

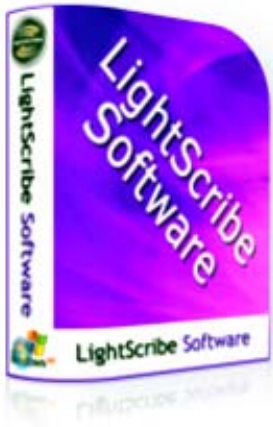
To make sure, the presence of the disc encoder sensor can verify that a drive is LightScribe-enabled.

Looking straight down on the spindle after the drive tray is opened, look for the presence of a LightScribe disc encoder sensor as an indicator of LightScribe capability.

OK, so that has covered **Step 2**, the **Hardware** required for you to enjoy LightScribe labeling.

Up to this point the problems are few, however that cannot be said of what follows. Hang on to your hat; it's time to tackle the software.

STEP 3 - *LightScribe Software - Now the Fun Begins!*



So why the dire warning ;))

Is the software required to make LightScribe work so *really difficult install and use?*

The answer lies in the fact that no operating system, even the ones that allow LightScribe to work, have built within them drivers that recognize when you have a LightScribe enabled drive installed on your computer.

Not even **Windows 7**, Microsoft's latest offering, recognizes the LightScribe capabilities of a LightScribe Drive.

Herein lies the problem. Unlike upgrading one DVD writer with another comparable drive, upgrading to LightScribe is a different matter entirely.

We have covered the easy bit, namely choosing and installing a new physical drive. What we will now be covering in the next two steps will be choosing, installing and configuring the various parts that make up the necessary LightScribe software installation.

In this step, we shall cover the relatively easy selection of labeling software. I say relatively easily, because not all proprietary LightScribe labeling software works out of the box as the manufacturers would have us believe.

LightScribe Labeling Software.

As in the case of hardware, there are a number of manufacturers who produce software to enable LightScribe labels to be printed. These include:



Please Note:

Some names you will recognize and some you may not. HP also produces two simple labelling programs which we will come back to a little later.

It is the very fact that this can be so difficult that led me over 4 years ago to produce The LightScribe Kit.

When I started, I was sent Nero 6.6 with my drive. Armed with this software, I had no reason to doubt that I would have my LightScribe drive working within minutes of installation.

The reality couldn't have been further from the truth.

I spent the next 72 hours searching the web for a solution, after installing and uninstalling various updates. I came to the conclusion that Nero 6.6, on its own at least, was not up to the job.

I eventually discovered the need to have installed prior to the labeling software, what is called LightScribe System Software, or what we may call LightScribe system drivers.

I subsequently found, as many others have, that Nero is notoriously difficult to configure for LightScribe label printing. I found in the end that I needed a different labelling solution.

Please do not misunderstand me; I have happily used Nero in the past to burn all my data and music.

However, even after upgrading to **Nero 7 Premium** I have still not been able to get Nero cover designer, which is the labelling part of the program, to recognize my LightScribe Drive as a LightScribe Drive!

My personal solution, the aforementioned **LightScribe Toolbox** includes all the necessary system software and allows someone to install and be printing labels in less than 10 minutes.

The ease of use has been remarked upon by many who have purchased it.

So, should you wish to have a LightScribe labeling solution which does it all, be sure to check out **LightScribeToolbox.com** where you can download your own copy.

With that said and done, let us look in **Step 4** at all the components necessary for a successful LightScribe installation.

STEP 4 - *Installation - Putting the Pieces Together.*



As said previously, there are four basic components to a successful LightScribe installation

- 1: A LightScribe Enabled Drive.*
- 2: LightScribe System Software.*
- 3: LightScribe Labeling Software.*
- 4: LightScribe Media.*

We are now going to look at order in which these parts should be installed and used.

Although it might seem obvious because some hardware needs its associated software installed first, nothing here is assumed or taken for granted.

- 1:** However, the first thing to do is in fact to install your new LightScribe Drive.
- 2:** The second thing, and this is most important, is the installation of the system software.

This is required to enable the LightScribe Drive to be recognized not only as a DVD/CD writer, but also as a labeling device by the LightScribe software you choose to install.

2a: Although not specifically mentioned above, incorporated in the system software is a **facility to enhance the contrast** of your finished labels.

This goes a long way to address the issues of poor contrast in the finished LightScribe label.

3: Now you can install your choice of labeling software.

4: You are now ready to print your first LightScribe labels. LightScribe Media is unlike ordinary blank media.

Remember you can not print LightScribe images onto normal blank DVDs/CDs

That neatly brings us to **Step 5**, LightScribe Media.

STEP 5 - *LightScribe Media- Not All Discs are Created Equal.*



When is a DVD not a DVD, when it's a LightScribe DVD?

LightScribe discs are available now in all these formats:

CDR

DVD+R

DVD-R

DVD+R DL

So what are the differences?

1: A thin dye coating on the label side of LightScribe discs absorbs laser light, which triggers a chemical reaction to give you a silkscreen-quality reproduction of your artwork, text or photos.

2: The discs are Gold in color, and the image formed is like a greyscale or sepia photograph.

The manufacturers of LightScribe Media include:



LightScribe Media Version 1.2

Second generation discs have been available for over 4 years now. So if you are new to lightscribe you will never have come across the original discs. The advantages of V1.2 are these:

1: **Faster Labeling.**

Full CD label now approximately 16 minutes vs. 23 minutes for media version 1.1.

2: **Lighter Gold Background.**

Allowing a higher contrast image

However, if you wish a great image on your label and don't have the need to Max your storage go for LightScribe discs every time.

What about **COLOR** I hear you ask.

Now, that's a great question.

STEP 6 - *The Future's Bright, the Future's* **COLOR**



Where are we, here is the LightScribe story so far.

1: The LightScribe technology will produce a full face label (covering the entire surface of the disc) in approximately 16 minutes.

2: LightScribe Media is now available in Color.

However, these are **Single Color** discs and produce labels that are still **MONO**. The image is still a greyscale image; it is just that the background colour is now not limited to Gold.

What does the future hold for LightScribe?

Well, for what its worth, here is my wish list:

1: Faster Labeling - I would like the speed to label a disc to be comparable to the time taken to burn the data.

2: Cheaper Discs - The present cost of discs is prohibitive. I know manufacturers have got to recover their R&D costs but until the cost comes down, the take-up by the general public will be very slow. The cost of a LightScribe Drive is comparable to a Non-LightScribe one – so come on manufacturers and sellers, let's see some serious reduction in prices!

3: Blu-Ray Labeling – We have now Blu-Ray LightScribe Burners but as of this time (February 2010) no manufacturer has produced **Blu-Ray LightScribe Discs**. My guess is the lack of demand, it took Verbatim until late 2008 to produce DVD DL discs so do not hold your breath if you are waiting for Blu-Ray media to be available soon. I predict it will not appear on the shelves until **late 2010 or early 2011**, if then.

4: Full Color Labeling – This is the Holy Grail of LightScribe.

When this is accomplished (and I believe not UNTIL this is accomplished), LightScribe will finally become the method of choice, not just among the likes of us (early adopters, I think we are called!) but among everyone wishing to have a fantastic professional looking label to accompany the data on their discs.

STEP 7 - *Help & Support*



Steve Nelson

Although I may have been affectingly called a “LightScribe guru”, the only difference between me and you (if you are new to LightScribe) is that I have 5 years experience in using this technology, coupled with a desire to help others enjoy using it as well

In that time I have solved all the problems that have stood between me and successful LightScribe Labelling.

During this time I have been privileged to help well over 5000 people also enjoy the benefits of LightScribe. This experience has culminated in:

LIGHTSCRIBE TOOLBOX



The LightScribe Toolbox Contains

Software...

- 1: Labeling Software
- 2: System Software
- 3: Burning Software
- 4: Graphics Software

Bonus Extras...

- 1: Image Library
- 2: 7 Steps eBook
- 3: Training Videos

All the LightScribe tools you will ever need...

I hope you have enjoyed, but more importantly benefited from reading this introductory guide to the world of LightScribe.

If you still have any LightScribe related questions please email me using the email address below:

questions@lightscribetoolbox.com

I wish you as always, great LightScribe success...

Steve Nelson

www.LightScribeToolbox.com

...all the LightScribe tools you will ever need.