



. . .so you don't just sit!

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Computers

These days everyone is looking for a way to cut costs and save money – even DJs. Napster and the internet brought the computer revolution to the DJ biz. Computer DJs all swear that free music isn't what drew them to playing gigs off computer. But almost nobody used computers for DJing until Napster – even though the technology was available for years before that.

I have been using computers since MSDOS 2.1 (so you don't have to do the math in your head – that's longer than most of today's computer DJs have been alive) and not just one, but two computers are essential parts of my show. But am I going to give up the CD players anytime soon? It isn't likely.

Why not? First of all because it's nearly impossible to put on a smooth and glitch-free show on a computer. Second, (and most importantly) because you can't *count* on them in the heat of battle!

A big (unseen) part of the DJ business is freight handling. Hundreds of pounds of equipment banging in and out of the truck every night. Stuff happens! Things are always going to break, wear out and malfunction. But with an "old fashioned" CD show, at the very worst you only lose one song at a time. When something happens, you switch CDs, or CD players and you're back in business in five seconds or less. There is NO computer problem that can be solved in five seconds. Computer hard drives don't fail just one song at a time. It's all or nothing. When something goes wrong, most computer DJs are toast.

OK, I've met some computer DJs who say that they carry a CD player and "some CDs" for emergencies. I'll grant they can "cover" the dead air, but their music continuity goes right out the window unless they have **all** their music "backed up" on CD – and that kinda takes the fun out of using a computer in the first place, doesn't it? Another area computer jock I've seen carries a backup laptop in the event his first one fails. But does he have it on running and ready during the show? Nope. "Sorry ladies and gentlemen, we've had a small computer problem, as soon as our spare boots up, we'll resume the party."

I say it's just not worth the risk.

DJs argue endlessly about the pros/cons of music on computer. This is MY website, however, and *I* say that DJs who play music from computer do so because either:

- a) they're lazy – and don't want to schlep "real" equipment
- b) they're cheap – and don't want to BUY "real" equipment (and music.)

Neither of those reasons puts you, the customer, first.

If you're having a "do it yourself" party for a few friends, a computer can be a handy solution, but I don't think "music on computer" is a mark of a true DJ professional. When everything works, anybody can be a DJ! A pro can put on a party even when things break down—and you probably won't even notice something was wrong.

Think about that.