

# *Danny's* Karaoke Secrets

A Guide To Home Karaoke



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# 1. Introduction

## Using this guide

**Because this guide is interactive it is best that you view it on your PC (rather than print it out) as many of the things I mention are available on the internet and can be accessed directly by clicking the links in the guide. These links are in [BLUE](#) and are underlined – hover your mouse over the link until “www” appears next to the little hand symbol For longer links point your mouse towards the beginning of the blue linked text.**

**As someone who has been involved with karaoke almost since its introduction to the UK in the eighties and in recent years becoming something of a computer nerd and internet junky, I am constantly asked to help people who want to enjoy home karaoke either on a machine or via their PC. I have helped people across the globe in various internet forums as well as friends and friends of friends. A couple of months ago someone I had helped (and shown how to access free unlimited karaoke tracks) suggested putting together a little mini guide to the very basic karaoke issues and to spread the word about how to go about the free downloads. So after a few months of toil, here is the result – My Karaoke Secrets. A quick guide to help you understand things like: -**

**What CDG stands for**

**Why you need echo control on your machine**

**Why your PC only plays the music when you insert a karaoke disc**

**Why normal cd burners can't copy karaoke discs**

**How to access a system which allows you to download any karaoke track ever recorded for [FREE!](#) (most people are amazed by this and some are highly suspicious that it is some sort of scam – it's not - as you are about to find out!)**

**If you want to find out about the easiest way to access this system before reading the rest of this report**

**[click here](#)**

## **2. Karaoke Jargon**

**Amplifier or Amp:** The piece of electronic kit which changes sound, usually by making it louder. For karaoke a microphone and a music player are connected to the amp which increases the output level of sound. This sound is heard via speakers connected to the output jack of the amp. In addition to amplifying the sound most karaoke amps include a mixer with controls for echo, pitch and multiplex.

**Balance:** A control on the Amplifier or Karaoke Machine which adjusts the level of sound coming from the left or right speakers.

**.bin file** A karaoke track that is derived from an mp3+g file. Bin files which are burned to a cd will play on karaoke cdg players. In simple terms a bin file is a track which has fused the 2 files of mp3+g (the mp3 and the graphics file) into one, allowing a cdg player to read it.

**cdg:** Refers to the main type of format for karaoke cd's with cd+g being the more correct term. This stands for compact disc plus graphics. These disks contain the normal audio component for producing the music (without lead vocals) plus special code written in the subchannel of the disk which produces the on screen graphics. Cdg disks will only play properly using a cdg compatible player. Ordinary cd players such as those in home stereo systems will only play the music - they will not produce the graphics. The same is true of most cd-rom drives on PC's. In order to rip, burn or play cdg disks on your computer you require a compatible cd-rom drive. All Plextor and some Sony models have this functionality. Alternatively quite a number of PC-DVD drives are capable of reading the subcode. Recently a scdg (s stands for super) format has been developed which allow hundreds of songs on the one disc.

**cdg burner:** Refers to the process of creating karaoke cd's using your PC. Special karaoke cdg burning software ensures that not only the sound but also the graphics are copied or "burned" to a blank cd.

**cdgm or cdg multiplex:** A variation to the ordinary cdg disk. Multiplex cdg's contain lead vocals which can be "cancelled" using a cdg player with the multiplex function or by using the balance function on the amplifier. The lead vocals are recorded on either the right or the left stereo channel and can be cancelled by adjusting the balance control. This helps Karaoke singers to learn songs.

**cdg player:** A cd or dvd player capable of playing both the music and the graphics on a cdg karaoke disc.

**cdg ripper:** Software which copies cdg discs to your PC. The best packages are able to rip and reformat files, but nearly all require compatible cd-rom drives capable of reading the subcode, such as drives made by Plextor. Many pc dvd drives are also compatible.

**dvd or digital versatile disc:** Recently there has been a slow shift from cdg discs to karaoke dvd's. These are capable of producing both the sound and graphics required for karaoke and in addition video sequences can be added in the background. Dvd's are also capable of holding more songs than the traditional cdg discs and can be played on a normal dvd player.

**dvd player:** A device capable of playing dvd's. Most dvd players can also play other formats such as cd's and a few can play vcd's and cdg's.

**echo:** This is an important feature which creates a more professional sound when you sing. The echo control digitally

adds repeat and delay sequences to the voice, creating an echo effect for a richer sound. All professional singers use echo.

**equalizer:** An equalizer allows you to filter the level of different sound frequencies and can produce a very professional sound. Pc's with a soundcard usually have this feature built in - try clicking the volume control icon in the task bar. Although some karaoke systems have this feature built in, many do not.

**input:** Refers to the connectors on a piece of equipment which allow other components to be connected. For example a karaoke machine will have at least one microphone input, whilst an amp may have inputs for microphone and cdg player.

**.kar files:** A midi karaoke file format not compatible with most cdg players.

**karaoke book software:** Specialist software which will allow the production of professional looking printed karaoke track lists for use by kjs.

**karaoke download:** The process of getting karaoke songs or software from the internet. Karaoke song downloads are usually in mp3+g file format.

**karaoke machine:** The term usually used to describe all-in-one systems, which integrate all or most of the components required to enjoy karaoke. Speaker(s), amplifier and cdg player are sold as one unit (in a similar way to midi hi-fi systems). Karaoke machines range from small children's versions to high end semi-professional units with an integrated TV monitor.

**karaoke software:** Computer software required to enjoy karaoke using a pc. This can be a simple karaoke player or a

more sophisticated karaoke studio package featuring recording functions.

**karaoke system:** Usually refers to a setup of separate electronic components connected by leads and cables. A basic setup would consist of an amplifier, cdg player, speakers and TV monitor. A more advanced system might include lighting effects, an equalizer or cd recorder. Most professional kj's use a system with separate components.

**key changer or key control:** This is a utility which raises or lowers the pitch of a karaoke track, making it easier for the singer to sing in their own range. In the early days of karaoke this was achieved by slowing down or speeding up the track. Thankfully we now have digital key control where only the pitch is altered and not the tempo (speed) of the track.

**kj (karaoke jockey):** The karaoke version of a disc jockey (dj), i.e. the karaoke host.

**laser disc:** A very early method of producing karaoke - more or less now extinct! Discs look like 12inch cd's and are notoriously unreliable.

**microphone or mic:** Perhaps the most important part of a karaoke system. Available wired or wireless (also known as a radio mic) and uni-directional (captures a narrow area of sound - suitable for a solo or lead singer) or omni-directional (captures a wide area of sound - suitable for a choir or backing singers).

**midi files:** Computer or synthesiser generated music file. Midi files usually have .mid as their suffix and can also be programmed with karaoke lyrics to become .kar files.

**mixer:** A piece of electronic equipment used to mix vocals and backing music, creating the correct balance. Most karaoke amps include a mixing function.

**monitor:** Usually refers to the screen on which the karaoke lyrics are shown, which is more often than not simply a portable TV. Can also refer to a small speaker which faces the singer allowing him or her to more easily hear their own voice and/or the backing track.

**mp3+g files:** A simple and effective format for playing karaoke on your pc. Essentially, 2 files - an ordinary music file in mp3 format and a graphics file - are run together to produce the music and the on screen lyrics. The name of each file (other than the extension i.e. the bit after the full s) must be identical. Karaoke playing computer software is also necessary.

**output:** The connectors on a component which allow processed sound to be passed onto another component. A Cdg player has an output which connects to the Amp which in turn has outputs for the speakers.

**speakers:** An essential component of any karaoke system. Speakers comprise a woofer (which vibrates to produce the bass (low frequency) notes and a tweeter which vibrates to produce the high (frequency) notes.

**streaming karaoke:** A method of enjoying karaoke on your pc. Instead of downloading mp3+g tracks, the music and lyrics are "streamed" to your computer by one of the specialist web sites. No other software or hardware is needed.

**subchannel:** The part of a cdg disc which contains the graphics which are seen on the screen.

**subcode:** The special code contained in the subchannel of a cdg disc containing the graphics. This produces the onscreen lyrics.

**tone:** A control which alters the balance of treble (high frequency) and bass (low frequency) sound.

**vcd:** Video Compact Disc, playable on many dvd players and a good format for karaoke, with plenty of capacity.

**vocal partner:** A facility on multiplex discs which cuts out the lead vocals once the karaoke singer starts to sing into the microphone.

**voice cancel:** A facility on multiplex which cuts out the lead vocals by cancelling the left audio channel and splitting the right channel into two with no vocals.

**voice reducer:** A facility that reduces the lead vocals on an ordinary music cd. This usually only reduces the voice without cancelling it completely. It may also reduce some of the music which is in the middle range of the audio frequencies.

**voice replace:** The same as voice cancel.

**.wav file:** The format used when you rip an ordinary music cd to your pc hard drive. This will also be the format if you rip a cdg track to your pc without either a cdg ripper or a compatible drive. There will be no lyrics on the resulting .wav track.

## **3. Karaoke Discs**

### **Choosing a Disc Format**

Clearly the capabilities of your disc player will be the main influence on the type of disc to buy. It's no use buying karaoke dvd's if your machine won't play them! But what if your machine plays 2 or more formats? Which format is best? There really is no definitive answer to this - all formats have good points and the odd drawback.

### **cdg or cd+g discs**

Still the daddy of karaoke discs and by far the most widely available format. A cdg is basically an ordinary music cd without lead vocals but with an extra graphics code written onto the subchannel of the disc in order to produce the on screen lyrics. That's why the music can be played on any cd player but you need a cdg player to get the lyrics. As the most widely available format you are bound to find a version of a particular song which is to your liking. Furthermore, as far as I know cdg is the only format for customised karaoke discs. There are though a couple of downsides to cdg's. Because of the size of each file, you can only fit a maximum of about 12 songs on each disc and some only have 6-8. This makes storage and transport of all your discs a bit of a problem and it means ejecting and inserting a disc pretty much every time you sing a different song. Of course there are company's who will customize discs for you - but this will cost about £3 PER SONG!

### **scdg**

One answer to this has been the development of scdg (the s stands for super). This allows thousands of tracks to be put on the one disc - sounds great? Well yeah but no but yeah. Again there are a couple of drawbacks. Firstly, as this format is in the very early stages, very few machines have scdg compatibility and secondly what happens if you damage, scratch or lose your one and only scdg disc. (You could of course try making a backup as described here but I am not sure that the cdg ripping software out there is capable of copying scdg's yet.) My advice would be to wait a while and see how the scdg concept develops before jumping in.

## **mp3+g**

The explosion of music on the internet resulted in thousands of mp3 download sites, giving people immediate access to millions of song tracks. It made sense then that a karaoke version of mp3 would follow. Hence we have mp3+g (you guessed it, g stands for graphics). As mp3 is to music cd's, so mp3+g is to cdg's. So it is now possible to download thousands of karaoke songs from the internet. Even better you will find that there are now quite a few players on the market which will play both mp3+g and cdg which means karaoke using mp3+g does not have to be confined to your pc.

## **dvd and vcd**

Now that nearly everyone has a dvd player, it made sense to develop karaoke songs utilising the dvd format. This also allows film sequences as well as lyrics to appear on screen. Again this format is in the early stages, so the choice of songs is limited but as this improves karaoke on dvd will I believe overtake the cdg as the main type of karaoke media.

## **midi**

Midi files are computer or synthesiser generated tracks which can be played either on your pc, a midi player or a midi compatible keyboard/synthesiser. For a discussion about midi karaoke and links to midi downloads

## **4. Computer Karaoke**

There are a number of ways to enjoy karaoke using your PC. All of them require the use of one or other type of karaoke software. If you attempt to play karaoke tracks using basic jukebox software such as windows media player, you will get the sound but no on-screen lyrics. Therefore the very first thing that you need to consider is which karaoke player software to install. Most of the karaoke software is available as freeware or shareware, so you can try before you buy. You can then either play karaoke discs or download karaoke songs from the internet.

### **Karaoke Discs**

When I first attempted to play a cdg disc on my PC, for some reason I just expected that the PC would be able to read and display the lyrics!! Not surprisingly it couldn't - the disc simply played the music via windows media player as if it were an ordinary cd. There are 2 things you need to play cdg's on your computer.

- 1) A compatible cd drive which is capable of reading the subcode.
- 2) Karaoke player software which will play the music AND display the lyrics on screen.

### **Compatible CD Drives**

It is usually not sufficient to have a simple cd-rom drive in order to play cdg's. However I discovered that although my cd-rw drive was not compatible, my dvd drive could read the subcode. Most drives manufactured by Plextor and a significant number by Yamaha, HP and Sony are compatible. It is the manufacturer who decides whether or not to support cdg. You can either check with your manufacturer, and if necessary invest in a new drive, or concentrate on other file formats such as mp3+g.

### **Karaoke Players**

There are numerous computer karaoke players on the internet. Quite a few of these are free but beware!! In my experience

there is no such thing as a free lunch -especially on the World Wide Web. I have found many of the free players are complicated to use or are too big or too small for my pc's monitor. The other main thing to bear in mind with karaoke players is the type of files that are supported. Obviously if you have cdg karaoke discs the karaoke player needs to be capable of playing these (assuming your drive is compatible). However, for a number of reasons you may want to consider a number of other formats. The system for downloading free unlimited tracks mentioned in chapter 5 provides free karaoke playing software for your PC or alternatively for a top of the range program with a host of features try [winCDG Pro](#)

**mp3+g** - if you wish to store a lot of songs on your pc, it will probably be better to use mp3+g as cdg files take up a huge amount of space. The answer to this is to convert the audio part of the cdg file to mp3 while the graphics portion remains as a cdg or g file. In order to work the 2 files (mp3 and cdg) must have exactly the same name except for the extension (the bit after the dot). Having an mp3+g player also allows you to download a massive selection of karaoke tracks from the internet – copy them to a cd and play without the need to convert to BIN first.

**.mid** - this is a karaoke version of a midi file and is sometimes in .kar format. The upside of midi files is that there are huge selections of files available on the internet. However the downside is that midi is a computer or synthesised method of producing the music. In my view the music is generally tinny and awful!! But if midi is your thing you will need a player with .mid and/or .kar capability.

Some karaoke players will also play vcd (video compact disc), although there is not such a great choice of songs available in this format.

In addition most of the main software companies have developed their own file formats which usually save on disk space, but will only work with their software.

Other things to consider....

Is the karaoke software capable of altering the pitch and the speed of the backing track? Pitch control is very important as it allows you to change the key of the song in order that it can be sung more easily. Similarly you may want to change the tempo of a track to suit your style.

**Do you want the facility to record your voice? There are quite a few software programs which have the facility to record your efforts. These are great for sending your singing masterpieces to far flung corners of the globe. On Valentine's day imagine being able to send a recording of yourself singing a tender love song via email rather than one of those hilariously unfunny e-cards!! You could if your karaoke software included a record facility.**

**A recent development has been streaming karaoke sites – this is where you subscribe to a site which allows you to stream music and lyrics to your PC.**

**The first of these (and still the best!) is at [StreamKaraoke.com](http://StreamKaraoke.com) – this site has thousands of songs which will play instantly on your PC (music and lyrics)**

**There is even a new one at [ksolo.com](http://ksolo.com) which allows you to record your efforts and get them rated by other users! But be careful – when I tried it I was unable to record and their support was less than great – they told me the software was still new and was not compatible with all browsers. I use IE6 fully updated – if it can't run with that they have got problems I would say! They have also got a very limited list of songs – but it is new so I will check them out again in a few months.**

## **5. Copying Karaoke CDG Discs**

Most karaoke lovers do not understand what is required to copy cdg tracks. Because cdg tracks have special subcode in addition to the music special cd drives are required to be able to read the special subcode. If PC's CD drive cannot read the subcode, it is unlikely that you will be able to copy the cdg track. At this point you will have 3 options

1) Change your cd drive to a cdg karaoke compatible drive - some Sony and all Plextor drives are compatible.

2) Try the free trial of Tricerasoft's CDG Ripper software. This uses a process known as de-interleave which enables most non compatible drives. Tricerasoft will also tell you whether or not your drive is compatible.

[Click to find out more about CDG Ripper](#)

The publishers of the "Computer Karaoke Guide" mentioned in Chapter 5 also produce a report on how to copy cdg tracks using compatible drives. You may have received it as a FREE bonus with this ebook.

They also produce a guide on how to copy CDG's using NON compatible drives as part of their "Computer Karaoke Guide". For more details see Chapter 5 or [Click Here](#)

So if you have a NON compatible drive on your PC these really are the only 2 options in order to be able to copy your CDG karaoke discs.

Or of course you could always change your drive to a Plextor!

## **6. Karaoke Downloads**

### **The Internet's Best Kept Secret!!**

**I am often asked whether or not it is possible to download karaoke tracks in the same way that you can download music/mp3 files. Now the simple answer is that yes there is the odd karaoke mp3+g track floating around in the likes of Napster and Kazaa – BUT I don't know about you I stopped my kids using these services because of the amount of junk that was spreading through my PC like a plague.**

SIDENOTE: (If you don't have spyware/adware protection on you PC and you are using the internet – be afraid, be VERY afraid – go to [Nuker.com](http://Nuker.com) for a free scan. If you haven't had any protection so far and have been searching the net or downloading expect to have hundreds of spyware/adware pests!)

**There is however a unique system where an unlimited number of karaoke tracks can be downloaded for free and then burned onto a disc which can be used in any karaoke player. This system utilizes Internet Relay Chat and can set this up yourself if you can work out how to do it. But setting up your PC to be able to access the system using mIRC software and then knowing what to do when you get there is not the easiest thing in the world to do. It will take you a good while to figure out and even then there would be no guarantee that everything will go smoothly. That's why I would strongly recommend getting "The Computer Karaoke Guide" – it is well worth it.**

**[Click Here](#) For More Details**

**I must admit that when I first came across this guide I was sceptical to say the least! At the time the price was \$99.95 and this seemed a bit too much to take the risk, even for research purposes. I mean – even I thought at the time there must be a catch! By the time I had just about decided to take the plunge, I was offered a one time chance to purchase the guide at half price. At 47 bucks this became a chance worth taking. I have to say in hindsight that \$99.95 would have represented a major bargain - \$47 was simply a steal! The price has since gone up to \$64.95 but this is still a fantastic deal! For the price of a couple of compilation**

## **cdg discs you WILL get access to unlimited karaoke tracks!**

For this one off fee you get a guidebook called "The Computer Karaoke Guide" which you can download instantly in pdf format (the same format as this ebook). The guide is very well written and contains step by step instructions with screenshots on how to set up your PC to be able to access the free karaoke downloads and then copy them onto a disc to play in your karaoke machine.

I know you will be having a few concerns at this point – I know I did but ALL of them proved unfounded – the system delivers exactly what is promised – the knowledge and software resources to be able to download ANY karaoke track ever published and then burn them to a blank CD which plays in a standard karaoke/cdg player. Here are the answers to the concerns I had: -

### **Is it P2P file sharing like Napster or Kazaa?**

**DEFINITELY NOT!** The system is basically a private section of the internet which utilizes IRC (Internet Relay Chat). Don't panic - this has NOTHING to do with chat rooms. IRC has been around as long as the internet and allows like minded people to meet up in a private section of the web. The guide will show you where karaoke enthusiasts utilize IRC to allow each other to download files. You could search for these IRC channels yourself and set up the system without buying the guide – but I would not recommend it. For such a low price you will get step by step instructions with screen shots and will be downloading straightaway. It could take you months or even years to learn how to do this by yourself! Anyway, unlike the MP3 P2P download sites, there is no spyware or adware and the area is supervised at all times – anyone found abusing the system is instantly banned. Let's put it this way, I use the internet for my living, I could not afford to leave myself open to viruses and the like. This system is very, very secure.

### **What programs will I need installed on my PC?**

There are a few basic pieces of software (which are FREE with "The Computer Karaoke Guide") which you will download and install on your computer. The guide shows you step by step how to do this with screen shots and the

programs are available with the guide and they are guaranteed adware and spyware free!

**Will I have to share the files on my computer with others?**

Only those files which you place in your download folder will be available to others. The guide takes you through your first few downloaded songs which you place in your shared folder. Only these and any others you choose will be accessible to others. The rest of your PC's hard drive is completely private.

### **What format are the downloads?**

You will be downloading zipped MP3+g files (effectively 2 files which you can either play on your PC or burn in .BIN format to a blank cd which will then play in a standard karaoke cdg player with the onscreen-graphics as per the original. The guide shows you how to do this.

### **What tracks are available?**

Any track that has ever been published as a karaoke track is available there is even has a new feature where you can search a database to get the exact version you want of a particular song. In addition all makes of track are available, Sound Choice, Sunfly, Chartbuster, Pocket Songs and more.

### **"I'm a real technophobe - it sounds complicated to me"**

Well it is and it isn't! It is if you try to do this on your own – it is extremely difficult to know where to start. In hindsight if I had tried to set this up myself I would most probably have failed. Do yourself a favour - if you are serious about this get the guide – it is very detailed and very straightforward. You are shown how to start downloading on a beginners system and you have to download a minimum number of tracks before being allowed into the real thing. That's how seriously these guys take this plus there is an excellent support forum which will take care of any problems you have either at the start or at any stage afterwards. So no if you use the guide it is not complicated at all!

### **Is it really a one off charge of \$64.95 to download unlimited karaoke tracks?**

You bet it is. There are no hidden fees. You buy the guide, download the free software, follow the instructions and

**that's it - free unlimited karaoke downloads all the way. You cannot lose - for the price of a couple of compilation cdg discs (half of the songs you will never use right?) you will have access to any karaoke track you fancy.**

**The bottom line is that you can either carry on buying compilation karaoke discs and never using most of the tracks, or buying custom karaoke discs at more than 3 quid (\$5) a track OR you can buy the Computer Karaoke Guide for \$64.95 and gain access to unlimited free karaoke downloads of your choice. If ever there was a no brainer decision this is it! Get it now and save yourself \$35 before the price goes back up to \$99.95!**

**[Click Here](#) To Access "The Computer Karaoke Guide"**