7.7 Optical Disks

- Optical disks provide large storage capacities very inexpensively.
- They come in a number of varieties including CD-ROM, DVD, and WORM.
- Many large computer installations produce document output on optical disk rather than on paper. This idea is called COLD-- *Computer Output Laser Disk*.
- It is estimated that optical disks can endure for a hundred years. Other media are good for only a decade-- at best.

7.7.1 CD-ROM

- CD-ROMs were designed by the music industry in the 1980s, and later adapted to data.
- This history is reflected by the fact that data is recorded in a single spiral track, starting from the center of the disk and spanning outward.
- Binary ones and zeros are delineated by bumps in the polycarbonate disk substrate. The transitions between pits and lands define binary ones.
- If you could unravel a full CD-ROM track, it would be nearly five miles long!
- The logical data format for a CD-ROM is much more complex than that of a magnetic disk. (See the text for details.)
- Different formats are provided for data and music.
- Two levels of error correction are provided for the data format.
- Because of this, a CD holds at most 650MB of data, but can contain as much as 742MB of music.

7.7.2 DVD

- DVDs can be thought of as quad-density CDs.
- Varieties include single sided, single layer, single sided double layer, double sided double layer, and double sided double layer.
- Where a CD-ROM can hold at most 650MB of data, DVDs can hold as much as 17GB.
- One of the reasons for this is that DVD employs a laser that has a shorter wavelength than the CD's laser.
- This allows pits and lands to be closer together and the spiral track to be wound tighter.

7.7.3 Blue-Violet Laser Disks

- A shorter wavelength light can read and write bytes in greater densities than can be done by a longer wavelength laser.
- This is one reason that DVD's density is greater than that of CD.
- The 405 nm wavelength of blue-violet light is much shorter than either red (750 nm) or orange (650 nm).
- The manufacture of blue-violet lasers can now be done economically, bringing about the next generation of laser disks.

- The Blu-Ray disc format won market dominance over HD-CD owing mainly to the influence of Sony.
  - HD-CDs are backward compatible with DVD, but hold less data.

- Blu-Ray was developed by a consortium of nine companies that includes Sony, Samsung, and Pioneer.
  - Maximum capacity of a single layer Blu-Ray disk is 25GB.
  - Multiple layers can be "stacked" up to six deep.
  - Only double-layer disks are available for home use.
- Blue-violet laser disks are also used in the data center.
- The intention is to provide a means for long term data storage and retrieval.
- Two types are now dominant:
  - Sony's Professional Disk for Data (PDD) that can store 23GB on one disk and
  - Plasmon's Ultra Density Optical (UDO) that can hold up to 30GB.
- It is too soon to tell which of these technologies will emerge as the winner.

7.7.4 Optical Disk Recording Methods