

# ChessBase Cafe

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## What's What in the ChessBase World

Of the big pile of questions that have stacked up in my inbox, many are based on the confusion caused by the sheer number of ChessBase products. For instance, the ChessBase section at [USCFSales.com](http://USCFSales.com) lists over 100 items. To add to the bewilderment they are all listed together alphabetically instead of by type or by release date.

The product titles and descriptions can also cause problems. Reading the “ABC of the Ruy Lopez” page doesn’t tell you that it uses the Chess Media System (CMS) and that it shows you video and a board while you watch. You get a list of chapters and times, which is quite cryptic to anyone who doesn’t already know what it is. Then there is the problem that some of the video products are on CD and others are on DVD. The new CMS products are far superior to the short video clips in some of the old training CDs, but you wouldn’t know that.

Most of the items do mention there are videos, but many people are still confused about what they need and what the various products do. There should definitely be a big headline at the top saying “Fritz Trainer DVD with four hours of Chess Media System video!” People like to know what something is and who it is for, without having to glean it from a detailed list of features.

Finally, some of the product descriptions are outdated on the boxes and on most web pages. ChessBase 9 can play CMS products, but you read just about everywhere that a Fritz 8 family product is required to play the Fritz Trainers.

Before we get to your specific questions I’ll try to clear up some of the product lines. First, I gave a description of the CMS in detail a few months ago: <http://chesscafe.com/text/mig14.pdf>. And last year we looked at the databases and encyclopedias and the differences between them: <http://chesscafe.com/text/mig08.pdf>.

Here’s a handy feature checklist:

- **Play online at Playchess.com:** Fritz 7 and Fritz 8 family programs and ChessBase 9. (The old Fritz 7 family cannot watch the online “Radio ChessBase” multimedia files.)
- **Playing against a program:** You cannot do this with ChessBase 9. You need a Fritz family program like Fritz, Junior, Shredder, HIARCS, Tiger, etc. All of the programs of the same generation have the same interface and capabilities. The only differences are the engines and the included

3D boards. Fanatics will argue forever about which engine is best, but they are all incredibly strong and will all crush you.

- **Game databases:** So you want to be able to search through and study just about every serious chess game ever played? The Mega and Big databases have the same 2.6 million games, but the Mega includes 55,000 games with annotations. Then there are the specialized databases such as correspondence games, world championship games, etc.
- ChessBase and all the Fritz family playing programs can access these databases, but you get a lot more out of them with ChessBase because of the many sophisticated features, particularly for studying openings.
- **The Playerbase:** This is the player encyclopedia that includes some 20,000 photos and 166,000 names. I can't say this is a training tool but it's loads of fun. The Megabase has it, as does ChessBase 9. Even the CB 9 starter package includes the Playerbase.
- **Instructional material:** There are many dozens of training CDs that are basically electronic books. These cover the traditional opening, middlegame, and endgame phases and are authored by GMs and trainers. They include texts, analysis, and hundreds or thousands of supplementary games. Many include quiz positions that use the special training notation. Some include video clips.
- **Fritz Trainer:** This is the name of the new series of products with the new case design, most on DVD, that use the Chess Media System to watch hours of video that is synchronized with the moves on the board. Don't confuse them with the older series called, umm, Fritz Trainer. There are three CDs with that name that are designed for you to practice your endgames against Fritz. ("Fritz Technique Trainer")

## The E-mailbag

**Question** I had a question about Playchess.com lectures. I have Fritz 8 on a high speed cable connection and have updated the Windows media player with the latest version. (I think it is up to version 10.) Whenever I follow a lecture from Dennis Monokroussos, there is a big lag sometimes in what is said and what moves appear on the board. It is not a consistent lag and sometimes things are totally out of place for several moves. He will announce a move and the pieces will not have moved there... after several seconds the board catches up by playing the moves either really fast or just skipping to the next position. This happens whether I watch his lectures live or play them back from his archive. I really enjoy his lectures but I am having a really hard time following them when the board starts to lag and I cannot follow what is going on. – Thanks, **John Tsai**

**Answer** Lag is one of the banes of the internet. There really isn't much you can do about lag if you're already on a fast computer and a fast internet connection. Even if you have broadband the information may be coming from far away. This is particularly true when you have heavy stuff like multimedia coming from Europe to the United States or visa-versa. Latency can have a lot to do with how many 'hops' it takes for the data to go from the source to you.

Just for fun you can open a command line window (Start – Run – cmd) and run

a trace route to count the hops and a ping to see how long it takes: Type “tracert chessbase.com” for a trace. It takes me 17 hops to get to playchess.com, going through New Jersey, back through New York, then to London and six servers in Germany! You can also ping yourself in Playchess.com by pressing the green ping button.

**Question** Is it possible to make the online database one’s “reference” database for CB9 (e.g. for generating opening reports)? – Thanks, **Steve Goodman**

**Answer** No. The online database is a very handy resource for looking up games via the position search, but you can’t use it for integrated functions. (In a board window go to Edit – Find position in – Find in [www.chessbase-online.com](http://www.chessbase-online.com).) You can, however, copy the games you find online to a local database.

**Question** How can I build database texts? – “**Muttley**”

**Answer** In ChessBase 8 and 9 go to File – New – Text in a database list window. You can’t create these in Fritz programs.

**Question** I am trying to edit a board that is in a ChessBase text file. I can change the position easily enough; however, I cannot edit the yellow and green arrows that are on the board. How can I accomplish this?

Background: I bought “Squares Strategy 1” by Alexander Bangiev, and while I find the ideas useful, there are a lot of errors in the text and the positions in the text file. I decided to edit the files to eliminate the errors or to make the text more readable. In any case, I can do everything I want to do except change the arrows ... and that’s important, because the material will be much more useful to me if I can see the points the author is making. So if you can help me out, I’d greatly appreciate it! – **Tom Dickerson, Michigan**

**Answer** This is a tricky one, but if you are adventurous enough to edit these texts you may as well get them right down to every detail! You can’t edit the arrows in the diagrams in texts. You’ll have to create the new diagrams from scratch. That means deleting the old ones and inserting the new ones. Create the position you want with the arrows you want in a board window. Then go to the proper spot in the text with that board window still open. Go to Format – ChessBase – Position and click okay. That will make a diagram of the position on the board, arrows and all.

**Question** ChessBase 9 does not seem to have a function to add any analysis after the end of the game. Pressing “T” on the last move played in the game does not work as it used to in ChessBase 8. Or am I missing something? – **Bill Frost, United Kingdom**

**Answer** Welcome, comrade, to the front line of the “Bring Back the T-Note” campaign! I sent this in to ChessBase with my first CB 9 bug list. It’s a normal thing to want to show how a game would continue from the final position. In CB 8 and the Fritz programs you can press T to step back a move and the next

move, even if it's the same as an existing line or main line, will be entered as a new variation.

As you noticed, this is broken in CB 9, and not just at the end of the game. (Of course there is little reason to ever start a line with the same move elsewhere.) You press T and it moves back as it should, but if you enter a move that's already present it just goes there instead of starting a new variation.

This is definitely a bug. I discovered a workaround, but it's annoying. At the last move, press T and enter any random move as a new variation. Then promote that move to be the main line. That makes the real last move of the game a variation. Now with the last move of the new (spurious) main line selected, press T and enter the real last move again. Now you will have the real last move twice as variations. Promote one of them to be the main line, delete the spurious variation and there you have it. It only takes a second.

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All the ChessBase software described by Mig in this column, as well as many more ChessBase programs, are available in the [ChessCafe Online Catalog](#).

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***Mig wants your questions!! Send it along and perhaps it will be answered in an upcoming column. Please include your name and country of residence. Yes, I have a question for Mig!***

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