

Borderlands 2

An RYG Analysis

Platform: PC (Windows 7 only)
DRM: Steamworks (Steam)
Digital Distributor: PHYSICAL COPY ONLY!!!

Developer: Gearbox Software
Publisher: 2K Games

RYG's VERDICT

65% **SHOWS PROMISE & POTENTIAL**
Between 65% and 84%

1. Product Info

See Also: More info on Borderlands 2 can be found through [Gearbox's Forums](#) and through Claptrap's "Love Letter" to PC Gamers.

See Also: [Steam's EULA](#), [Steam's Privacy Policy](#) and [Borderlands 2 EULA](#).

Looking at how much information is provided on Borderlands 2 on its website prior and on release.

- ✓ Minimum and recommended specs provided
- ✓ Base game sold as one package
- ✓ Advised Steamworks (Steam) DRM was to be used for Borderlands 2
- ✓ Advised how Steam DRM would activate the game through Borderlands 2
- ✓ Manual and Readme provided with the game
- ✓ EULA, Privacy Policy and TOS fully accessible on [steampowered.com](#)
- ✓ All game-related information can be found on [steampowered.com](#)

- ✗ Borderlands 2 released after the sale of its console version
- ✗ Borderlands 2 released with different global dates
- ✗ Available only on Windows and MacOS
- ✗ No demo

2. Privacy Policy

Note: 1,507 words found within [Steam's Privacy Policy](#). Last update: August 2012.

See Also: Relevant Sections: [Collection of Information](#), [Personally Identifiable Information](#) and [Use of Personally Identifiable Information](#).

Looking at Borderlands 2's Privacy Policy through Steam

- ✓ Privacy Policy found on [steampowered.com](#)
- ✓ Policy applies to Steam Client, Steamworks DRM and Borderlands 2
- ✓ Easy to read, understand and is worded with clear consistency
- ✓ Users visibly notified of any changes made to the Policy
- ✓ "Personally-identifiable" and "non-personally identifiable" info are defined
- ✓ Policy specifies what's are collected before and during gameplay
- ✓ Info is stored in the US
- ✓ Data centres are 100% safe and secure
- ✓ Info is used solely for improving Steam's services only!
- ✓ Visible opt-in / opt-out process
- ✓ Users can access and modify their user account
- ✓ Users can modify their user account
- ✓ Users can validate the info they've provided

3a. EULA (GAME)

Note: 2,995 words found in [Borderlands 2 EULA](#).

Note: Steam's Subscriber's Agreement (EULA / TOS) is evaluated as a separate section 3b. EULA (STEAM)

Note: Limited warranties, waivers of liability and indemnity are commonly found within many software EULAs and TOSs

3b. EULA (STEAM)

Note: 6,286 Words found in Steam's EULA.

See Also: Section 12, *Dispute Resolution / Binding Arbitration / Class Action Waiver*

- ✗ Third parties not identified
- ✗ Users have limited control over their Steam user account
- ✗ Users must accept all changes made to the Policy before playing Borderlands 2

Looking at Borderlands 2 EULA from 2k Games.

- ✓ EULA / TOS is found on [2K Games's website](#).
- ✓ EULA / TOS covers Borderlands 2 and Steam DRM
- ✓ Users visibly notified of any changes made to the EULA / TOS
- ✓ Can replace damaged copies with a free, replacement copy
- ✓ Terms and conditions for Steam DRM are clearly defined
- ✓ Won't blacklist specific background services or software
- ✓ Users can initiate legal action **with** 2K Games if the arbitration process fails
- ✓ Users can criticise or provide criticism about the game without reprisals

- ✗ Difficult to read, understand and is inconsistently worded
- ✗ Drafted to only abide by the laws of the US in the state of New York
- ✗ Can't review and query changes made to the EULA / TOS
- ✗ License to play the game only provided
- ✗ No refunds or exchanges for purchased games
- ✗ Circumvention of Steam DRM prohibited
- ✗ Back-ups aren't permitted
- ✗ Borderlands 2 source code isn't to be modified or reverse-engineered
- ✗ Not permitted to create "mods"
- ✗ Monitoring services / software are required to play Borderlands 2
- ✗ Warranties waived (excluding physical merchantability warranties)
- ✗ Cover waived against any unforeseeable damages, disruptions of service
- ✗ Termination process dictated by 2K Games

Looking at Steam Subscriber's Agreement through Steam.

- ✓ EULA / TOS is found on [steampowered.com](#)
- ✓ EULA / TOS covers Steam DRM
- ✓ Terms and conditions for Steam DRM are clearly defined
- ✓ Can back-up copies of Steam Client
- ✓ Permitted to create free "mods" of Valve's Source Code Engine
- ✓ Won't blacklist specific background services or software
- ✓ Termination process is clear and transparent

- ✗ Difficult to read and understand
- ✗ Drafted to only abide by the laws of US in the state of California
- ✗ Users not visibly notified of any changes made to the EULA / TOS
- ✗ Can't review and query changes made to the EULA / TOS
- ✗ Circumvention of Steam DRM prohibited

4. Setup / Install

Note: Installing games through Steam to a different folder and drive can be done by altering the Steam shortcut to add “-dev” (via. [RPS](#))

Note: All Steam-related files will be installed to the main Steam directory only!

5. Updates / Patching

Note: First-time users will need to download an 800Mb update through Steam.

6. DRM & Activation

Note: Borderlands 2 will only be connected to the following servers: Valve, Limelight Networks, Highwinds Networks, Cloudfront and Entrust (SSL)

See Also: How to play Borderlands 2 in [offline mode](#).

Note: It is recommended that (new) users should install and update Steam first before installing Borderlands.

Looking at how Borderlands 2 is installed on Windows PCs only.

- ✓ Custom installation options are provided
- ✓ All files are installed within folders designated by users
- ✓ Steam DRM files installed within folders designated by users
- ✓ Currently-executing background services won't interfere with installation
- ✓ Error-free installation
- ✓ Installation completed within 20 minutes (Based on an ADSL2+ Connection)

- ✗ No installation logs of files and registry keys

Looking at how Borderlands 2 is patched prior and after gameplay.

- ✓ No other DRM files or registry keys are installed
- ✓ Details of patches provided via [steampowered.com](#)
- ✓ Users can be advised of game patch's availability
- ✓ Users advised of any changes to the Privacy Policy or EULA before an update

- ✗ Automatic updates are mandatory
- ✗ Day-one patch required
- ✗ Requires ALL patches to play Borderlands 2
- ✗ Patches only installed via. automatic updates
- ✗ No installation logs of files and registry keys
- ✗ Rollback option not provided
- ✗ No plans to sunset Steam DRM

Looking at Steamworks (Steam) DRM in relation to Borderlands 2 and its effects on Windows PCs only.

- ✓ Firewall and AV settings aren't modified or required to be modified
- ✓ Users are aware and advised on how Borderlands 2 will be activated
- ✓ Username, password and email are only required
- ✓ Unlimited online activations to any one PC
- ✓ Can play single-player game offline
- ✓ Only Steam DRM is implemented
- ✓ Unlimited hardware activations
- ✓ Unlimited installations
- ✓ Support and troubleshooting process provided
- ✓ Activation is simple and hassle-free

- ✗ No instructions provided on the activation process
- ✗ Can't verify the safety and reliability of the activation process
- ✗ A non-transferrable user account is required
- ✗ Game is locked to specific account after activation

7. Gameplay Experience

See Also: [PCGamingWiki](#) has a huge repository of "ini" tweaks for Borderlands 2.

Note: Configuration settings can be found within My Documents\My Games\Borderlands 2\WillowGame\Config\

Note: Savegame files can be found within MyDocuments\My Games\Borderlands 2\Willow-Game\SaveData\

Looking at the gameplay aspects of Borderlands 2 and how it interacts with PC Windows.

- ✓ Can play on minimum specs
- ✓ Can play a backup copy of the game
- ✓ Disc not required for gameplay
- ✓ Suitable options to modify video settings
- ✓ Can customise keyboard and mouse controls only
- ✓ Can play with console controller
- ✓ Can play in windowed mode
- ✓ Can play offline
- ✓ Can play without connectivity issues on an ADSL connection
- ✓ Can play error-free for more than 5hrs
- ✓ Won't interfere with services and background software
- ✓ Will resume at the last checkpoint
- ✓ Can modify savegame and/or ini file

- ✗ Will "phone home"
- ✗ Can only play on one PC at a time per game / account
- ✗ DRM and monitoring services will operate during and after gameplay

8. PC Checkup

Looking at whether Borderlands will modify certain PC settings without users permission / consent

- ✓ PC clean after scanning for viruses
- ✓ PC clean after scanning for malware and spyware
- ✓ PC clean after scanning for rootkits
- ✓ HOSTS wasn't modified
- ✓ Played Borderlands 2 without major errors
- ✓ Start-up settings remain unaltered
- ✓ No DRM / monitoring services running in the background after shutting down
- ✓ System configuration files remain unaltered

9. Removal Uninstall

Note: Steam does offer an option to **manually remove all Steam-related files**. It does work and will remove any remaining files and keys after uninstallation of Borderlands 2.

Looking at how clean, efficient and effective the removal process is for Borderlands 2 (How much legacy material is there after the removal of Borderlands 2?)

- ✓ Backup savegames prompt provided / Savegames retained
- ✓ Clean uninstallation
- ✓ External tool provided at support.steampowered.com
- ✓ Manual instructions to remove game & DRM files is easy to follow
- ✓ Manual instructions removes all game & DRM files and registry keys

- ✗ Will need to uninstall the game via. Control Panel

10. Customer Support

See Also: [Gearbox](#) has a directory of places to go in the event users need customer service for Borderlands 2.

Looking at the customer support side of Borderlands 2 through Steam.

- ✓ Customer service / support found in one place at support.steampowered.com
- ✓ support.steampowered.com is easy to use and navigate
- ✓ Searching on support.steampowered.com is direct and quick
- ✓ Info is easy to read and understand
- ✓ Arbitration / resolution service is available
- ✓ Arbitration / resolution process is easy to follow / understand
- ✓ Options provided for giving feedback on the service of customer support

- ✗ Arbitration / resolution process may favour towards Valve
- ✗ Legal action (including class action) waived once arbitration process is initiated

RYG's VERDICT

65%

BARGAIN BIN MATERIAL

64% and below

SHOWS PROMISE & POTENTIAL

Between 65% and 84%

WORTH SUPPORTING

85% and above

Apart from the usual negatives found within Borderlands 2's legal and compliance side of things, the game is otherwise playable on a consistent and reliable level. There are enough settings for PC gamers to fiddle around with Borderlands 2 (and Steam) and Borderlands 2 is a clean PC game both installing and uninstalling.



Colophon

This analysis of Borderlands 2 was compiled by Lisa and Martin Pham. Typeface used is ITC Stone Sans. RYG thanks Anna Henriksson, [Josh Bush](#), [Ethan Lee](#), [Adam Ames](#) and [David Hatch](#) for their insights and suggestions in the design of this analysis. Borderlands 2 was bought with RYG funds through OzGameShop.

Disclaimer

These analyses are only a guide and represent RYG's perspective into Borderlands 2 as a product. We believe everyone should perform their own research and reach their own conclusions. This is one view of many. Again, we thank you for taking the time to read our analysis of Borderlands 2 and hope you continue to support our work.

RYG is a user research and design studio for video game developers and publishers. Our focus is planning and designing games with a gamers'-first mentality through user and product research. RYG is led by a husband-and-wife team of Lisa and Martin Pham. RYG is operated in the heart of Sydney.

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