

Assassin's Creed 2

An RYG Analysis

Platform: PC (Windows 7 only)
DRM: UPlay (Online Services Platform)
Digital Distributor: PHYSICAL COPY ONLY!

Developer: Ubisoft Montreal
Publisher: Ubisoft Entertainment

RYG's VERDICT

37% **BARGAIN BIN MATERIAL**
64% and below

1. Product Info

See Also: Minimum and recommended specs can be found through [PCGamingWiki](#).

See Also: More info on Uplay or Online Services Platform can be found through [Ubisoft's website](#).

Note: PC version of AC2 was released on March 2010; Console version released on November 2009.

Note: Multiple editions described on [Wikipedia](#).

Looking at how much information is provided on Assassin's Creed 2 (AC2) on its website prior to release.

- ✓ Minimum and recommended specs provided
- ✓ Advised Uplay DRM was to be used for Assassin's Creed 2 (AC2)
- ✓ Advised how Uplay DRM would activate the game through AC2
- ✓ Manual and Readme found on AC2

- ✗ PC version of AC2 released 4 months after the sale of its console version
- ✗ AC2 released with different global dates
- ✗ Available only on Windows and MacOS
- ✗ Base game sold as multiple "editions" with varying selections of day-one DLCs
- ✗ No demo
- ✗ EULA, Privacy Policy and TOS are located across several websites and in-game
- ✗ All game-related info on AC2 is difficult to find and navigate

2. Privacy Policy

Note: 1,998 words found within Ubisoft's "Global" Privacy Policy.

Note: Safety & reliability of their data centres cited under "What Safeguards Does Ubisoft Use to Protect My Personal Information?"

See Also: [Ubisoft's Privacy Policy](#), retrieved 10 November 2012.

Looking at Assassin's Creed 2's Privacy Policy found only through Ubisoft's official website.

- ✓ Data centres are 100% safe and secure
- ✓ Users can access their Uplay / User account
- ✓ Users can modify their non-essential details within their Uplay account

- ✗ Privacy Policy only found through Ubisoft's website
- ✗ Policy only applies mainly to Ubisoft's websites rather than AC2 specifically
- ✗ Difficult to read, understand and is inconsistently worded
- ✗ Users not visibly notified of any changes made to the Policy
- ✗ "Personally-identifiable" and "non-personally identifiable" info are intertwined
- ✗ Doesn't define what info is specifically collected before and during gameplay
- ✗ Not advised where the info is specifically stored
- ✗ Not specifically defined how info is used
- ✗ Third parties not identified

Note: Users can choose to opt-out of their Uplay account and/or services via. **Email**.

3. EULA TOS

Note: 6,376 Words found within AC2's EULA and Ubisoft's TOS.

Note: Ubisoft's TOS, found through the registration process, isn't formatted for legibility and readability.

Note: Replacement copies are conditional on the basis that users do not activate their copy of AC2

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

4. Setup / Install

Note: Uplay DRM will install within /Ubisoft/ folder alongside Assassin's Creed 2

- ✗ Opt-out process provided via. email only.
- ✗ Users have limited control over the info they send to Ubisoft during gameplay
- ✗ Users can't validate what they've provided
- ✗ User data is retained by Ubisoft for an extended period of time
- ✗ Can't review and query changes made to the Privacy Policy
- ✗ Users must accept ALL changes made to the Policy before playing AC2

Looking at Assassin's Creed 2's End User License Agreement and Terms of Service.

- ✓ EULA / TOS covers AC2 and Uplay DRM
- ✓ Terms and conditions for Uplay DRM are clearly defined
- ✓ Users can initiate legal action if the arbitration process fails
- ✓ Users can criticise or provide criticism about the game without reprisals

- ✗ EULA / TOS is only found within AC2
- ✗ Difficult to read, understand and is inconsistently worded
- ✗ Drafted to only abide by the laws of USA
- ✗ Users not visibly notified of any changes made to the EULA / TOS
- ✗ 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
- ✗ Replacement copies provided for a fee & within 30 days of purchase
- ✗ Circumvention of Uplay DRM prohibited
- ✗ Physical back-ups aren't permitted
- ✗ AC2's source code isn't to be modified or reverse-engineered
- ✗ Not permitted to create "mods"
- ✗ AV and/or firewall software may require modification before gameplay
- ✗ Warranties waived (excluding physical merchantability warranties)
- ✗ Cover waived against any unforeseeable damages or disruptions of service
- ✗ Termination process dictated by Ubisoft

Looking at how Assassin's Creed 2 is installed on Windows PCs only.

- ✓ Custom installation options are provided
- ✓ All files are installed within folders designated by users
- ✓ Background services and software won't interfere with installation
- ✓ Error-free installation
- ✓ Installation completed within 30 minutes (20 mins + 10 mins for updates)

- ✗ No AC2 installation logs of files and registry keys
- ✗ Uplay DRM files found in /Ubisoft/Ubisoft Game Launcher/

5. Updates / Patching

Note: First-time installation and update of AC2 and Uplay DRM will require 200Mb.

Note: Uplay DRM will perform multiple updates for first-time users.

Note: Uplay DRM and its services form a part of Ubisoft's DRM, distribution and PC gameplay policy.

6. DRM & Activation

Note: Unlimited activations to any one PC, **BUT** gameplay is limited to one active PC.

See Also: More info on Uplay or Online Services Platform can be found through [Ubisoft's website](#).

Note: AC2 will connect to both Ubisoft Entertainment servers and Limelight Networks in relation to patching process.

Note: User account creation can be done prior to activating AC2 or through Ubisoft's website.

7. Gameplay Experience

Note: Downloadable copies provided after activating AC2 through Uplay.

Looking at how Assassin's Creed 2 is patched prior and after gameplay.

- ✓ No other DRM files or registry keys are installed
- ✓ Details of patches provided via [Ubisoft's Support Site](#)
- ✗ Automatic updates are mandatory
- ✗ Day-one patch required before gameplay
- ✗ Requires ALL patches to play AC2
- ✗ Patches only installed via. automatic updates
- ✗ Uplay DRM updates required
- ✗ Notifications not provided prior to automatic updates
- ✗ Changes to the Privacy Policy and/or EULA not provided until updates begin
- ✗ No installation logs of files and registry keys
- ✗ Rollback option not provided
- ✗ No plans to sunset Uplay DRM
- ✗ Uplay DRM remains after patches

Looking at Uplay DRM in relation to Assassin's Creed 2 and its effects on Windows PCs only.

- ✓ Won't interfere with non-AV background services or software
- ✓ Unlimited online activations to any one PC
- ✓ Can play single-player game offline after initial activation
- ✓ Only Uplay DRM is implemented
- ✓ Unlimited hardware activations
- ✓ Unlimited installations
- ✓ Online activation is simple and hassle-free
- ✗ No instructions provided on the activation process
- ✗ Firewall & AV settings may require modification prior to activation & gameplay
- ✗ Cannot verify the safety and reliability of the activation process
- ✗ Activation pathway isn't explained
- ✗ No offline activation option
- ✗ A non-transferrable user account is required
- ✗ Username, password, email, DOB and first + last names are required
- ✗ Game is locked to specific Uplay account after activation
- ✗ No support or troubleshooting process

Looking at the gameplay aspects of Assassin's Creed 2 and how it interacts with PC Windows.

- ✓ Can play on minimum specs
- ✓ Can play an online backup copy of the game
- ✓ Disc not required for gameplay
- ✓ Suitable options to modify video settings (DX9 Mode only!)
- ✓ Can play with console controller (Xbox 360 controller tested)
- ✓ Can play offline

Note: Savegames can be found in /Ubisoft/Ubisoft Game Launcher/savegames/ folder.

Note: AC2's ini file found in /UserFolder/AppData/Roaming/Ubisoft/Assassin's Creed 2/ folder.

Note: AC2 will periodically connect to Ubisoft Entertainment's server whilst in offline play.

8. PC Checkup

- ✓ 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 in offline mode
- ✓ Will resume at the last checkpoint
- ✓ Can modify AC2's ini file

- ✗ Keys and buttons bound to default settings (in respect to console controller)
- ✗ Full screen mode only
- ✗ Requires constant and tethered internet connection to access DLCs
- ✗ 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

Looking at whether Assassin's Creed 2 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 AC2 without major errors
- ✓ Start-up settings remain unaltered
- ✓ No DRM / monitoring services running in the background after shutting down
- ✓ System configuration files remain unaltered

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

- ✓ Backup savegames prompt provided

- ✗ Will need to uninstall AC2 via. Control Panel (or equivalent program)
- ✗ Notifications on deactivating the game not provided
- ✗ Uplay and AC2 registry keys will remain

Looking at the customer support side of Assassin's Creed 2 through Ubisoft's Support Services.

- ✓ Customer service / support found in one place at cs.ubi.com

- ✗ Ubisoft's support service is difficult to use
- ✗ Searching on AC2 is difficult to find
- ✗ Info is hard to read and understand
- ✗ Customer service takes more than 24 hours to respond
- ✗ Customer service will not attempt to resolve issues
- ✗ Tone and language used is distant, robotic and impersonal
- ✗ No option provided for giving feedback on the service and quality of support

Note: Registry keys relating to AC2 and npuplaypc.dll will remain.

10. Customer Support

Note: Tone and language is written to ensure non-response from customers. This enables the support teams to "close" customer-initiated within company-directed timelines.

RYG's VERDICT

37%

BARGAIN BIN MATERIAL

64% and below

SHOWS PROMISE & POTENTIAL

Between 65% and 84%

WORTH SUPPORTING

85% and above

Irrespective of Ubisoft's "lenient" stance against their persistent-online DRM policy, their game is marred by vaguely-written privacy policies & EULAs, as well as their abysmal customer support service driven by the need to resolve support tickets regardless of the quality of the customer's outcome. Those interested in purchasing AC2, a game released in 2010, might consider shopping around for cheaper options and prices.



Colophon

This analysis of Assassin's Creed 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. Assassin's Creed 2 was bought with RYG funds through PlayAsia.

Disclaimer

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