

AC: Liberation HD

An RYG Analysis

Platform: PC (Windows 7 only)

DRM: Uplay

Digital Distributor: Uplay

Developer: Ubisoft

Publisher: Ubisoft

RYG's ASSESSMENT

51% **BARGAIN-BASEMENT MATERIAL**
64% and below

1a. Product Info

Note: AC: Liberation HD is a remastered port from the PS: Vita version, released for PSN, XBLA and PC (Windows).

Note: **Alternative digital vendors** in which AC: Liberation HD's sold. Be advised that each vendor will bundle their unique DRM system in addition to Uplay.

Note: DLC accessible by completing in-game achievements or through purchases via. the Uplay store.

1b. Digital Dwnld

Note: **Alternative payment options** provided on Uplay.

Note: **Procedures** on backing games downloaded through the Uplay client manager.

Note: At the time of purchase, the AUD and EU prices were \$7 dearer than the US version.

Looking at how much information is provided on AC: Liberation HD on the Uplay site prior and on release.

- ✓ AC: Liberation HD released simultaneously with its console version
- ✓ AC: Liberation HD released globally on 15.01.2014
- ✓ AC: Liberation HD sold through multiple digital ventors
- ✓ Minimum and recommended specs provided
- ✓ Advised Uplay DRM was to be used for AC: Liberation HD on Uplay
- ✓ Advised how Uplay DRM would activate the game through AC: Liberation HD
- ✓ Manual and Readme provided with the digital version of AC: Liberation HD
- ✓ EULA, **Privacy Policy** and **TOS** fully accessible on ubi.com
- ✓ All game-related information can be found on **shop.ubi.com**

- ✗ Available only on Windows
- ✗ No DRM-Free option provided for AC: Liberation HD
- ✗ Base game sold as multiple "editions" with varying selections of day-one DLCs
- ✗ No demo

Looking at Uplay as a digital distributing service for PC games.

- ✓ Available worldwide through **shop.ubi.com**
- ✓ Minimum and recommended specs provided
- ✓ Advised Uplay DRM was to be used for AC: Liberation HD on Uplay
- ✓ Advised how Uplay DRM would activate the game through AC: Liberation HD
- ✓ Alternative payment options provided
- ✓ Correct currency confirmation provided prior, during and after purchase
- ✓ Confirmation of purchase and receipt provided
- ✓ Free and unlimited access and downloads after purchase
- ✓ Can backup purchased games "offline" (e.g. external or optical drives)
- ✓ Can access personal data
- ✓ Can terminate account or **request to terminate account**

- ✗ AC: Liberation HD on Uplay is priced inconsistently across global regions
- ✗ Download / Client Manager is required, including for gameplay

Note: Downloading AC: Liberation HD will take ~3.2Gb.

Note: Refer to [Section 15: Liability, Indemnity & Compensation](#), under The Uplay's Subscriber's Agreement in relation to "as is".

2. Privacy Policy

Note: Privacy Policy contains ~2,640 words. Last retrieved February 2014.

Note: Please refer to *When does Ubisoft collect your personal information?* under Ubisoft's Privacy Policy.

Note: Please refer to *Who is collecting my personal information and how will it be used?* under Ubisoft's Privacy Policy.

Note: Accessing personal info can be found within the Players Account Settings within Ubisoft and Uplay (Web Login).

Note: Refer to Uplay Privacy Policy's [readability scores](#).

Note: Aside from Digital River, Ubisoft won't identify the list of third parties they work with in relation to how player's personal (and non-personal) information is used.

3a. EULA (GAME & Uplay)

Note: There's 1,190 words in the AC: Liberation HD's EULA and 11,915 words in Ubisoft's / Uplay's TOS.

Note: [Workaround](#) in backing games downloaded through Uplay.

- ✗ Player account creation is required
- ✗ Minimum and recommended download specs not provided through Uplay
- ✗ No refunds or exchanges for pre-orders
- ✗ No refunds or exchanges for purchased games
- ✗ Warranties waived (excluding physical merchantability warranties)
- ✗ Cover waived against any unforeseeable damages, disruptions of service
- ✗ Account termination voids past purchases and licenses to play them
- ✗ Consumers prevented from disputing and validating Uplay TOS breaches
- ✗ Can't review and question changes made to Uplay TOS
- ✗ Past purchases voided after refusing to accept Uplay TOS

Looking at AC: Liberation HD's Privacy Policy through Ubisoft

- ✓ Privacy Policy found on [ubi.com](#)
- ✓ Policy applies to AC: Liberation HD and Uplay DRM / Client Manager
- ✓ "Personally-identifiable" & "non-personally identifiable" info are clearly defined
- ✓ Policy explicitly specifies which info are collected before & during gameplay
- ✓ Data centres are 100% safe and secure
- ✓ Policy explicitly specifies which information are used
- ✓ Players can opt-out of marketing and/or promotional material
- ✓ Players can access their personally-identifiable information
- ✓ Players can modify their personally-identifiable information
- ✓ Players have full control over their personally-identifiable information
- ✓ Players can validate the info they've provided via Email

- ✗ Privacy Policy not formatted for easy reading on the web
- ✗ Privacy Policy was not written for easy comprehension
- ✗ Players not visibly notified of any changes made to the Policy
- ✗ Players not consulted on future revisions to the Privacy Policy
- ✗ Not advised where the info is specifically stored
- ✗ Third parties not specifically identified
- ✗ Players cannot export their information
- ✗ Player data is retained by Ubisoft for an extended period of time
- ✗ Can't review and query changes made to the Privacy Policy
- ✗ No specific information on how info will be used in the event of a sale/merger
- ✗ Players must accept ALL changes made before playing AC: Liberation HD

Looking at AC: Liberation HD's EULA from Ubisoft.

- ✓ EULA / TOS covers AC: Liberation HD and Uplay DRM
- ✓ Terms and conditions for Uplay DRM are clearly defined
- ✓ Can [back-up copies of AC: Liberation HD](#)
- ✓ Allows [monetisation of clips](#) relating to Ubisoft through video-sharing sites
- ✓ Won't blacklist specific background services or software
- ✓ Players can criticise or provide criticism about the game without reprisals

- ✗ EULA / TOS for AC: Liberation HD found once download of the game begins

Note: Refer to Uplay Privacy Policy's [readability scores](#).

Note: [Ubisoft's refund / exchange policy](#). Note that this is different (and inconsistent) to [Digital River's TOS](#).

Note: Both AC: Liberation HD's EULA and Ubisoft's TOS are exactly alike, with the exception of accessibility (with the TOS accessible via [ubi.com](#) and the EULA accessible after purchase).

4. Setup / Install

Note: Ubisoft will provide real time, partial installation and uninstallation logs of Uplay's Client Manager only saved in the Ubisoft installation folder.

Note: Downloading AC: Liberation HD will take ~3.4Gb.

5. Updates / Patching

Note: The version of AC: Liberation HD evaluated was up to date and required no updates.

6. DRM & Activation

Note: It is recommended that (new) Players should install and update Uplay first before installing AC: Liberation HD.

See Also: Players can [create a firewall rule](#) to block Uplay and play AC: Liberation HD in Offline Mode.

- ✗ EULA / TOS was not formatted for easy reading on the web
- ✗ EULA / TOS was not written for easy comprehension
- ✗ Drafted to only abide by the laws of the UK
- ✗ Players not visibly notified of any changes made to the EULA / TOS
- ✗ Players not consulted on future revisions 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
- ✗ Circumvention of Uplay DRM prohibited
- ✗ AC: Liberation HD's source code isn't to be modified or reverse-engineered
- ✗ Not permitted to create "mods"
- ✗ Warranties waived (excluding physical merchantability warranties)
- ✗ Cover waived against any unforeseeable damages, disruptions of service
- ✗ Termination process dictated by Ubisoft
- ✗ Arbitration process isn't freely-provided and is overseen by Ubisoft

Looking at how AC: Liberation HD is installed on Windows PCs only.

- ✓ Custom installation options are provided
- ✓ All files are installed within folders designated by players
- ✓ Uplay DRM files installed within folders designated by players
- ✓ Currently-executing background services won't interfere with installation
- ✓ Error-free installation
- ✓ Installation completed within 30 minutes on an ADSL2+ Connection

- ✗ Will alter Windows Firewall Settings without Player's explicit consent
- ✗ Partial installation logs of files only

Looking at how AC: Liberation HD is patched prior and after gameplay.

- ✓ Can play the game unpatched

- ✗ No plans to sunset Uplay DRM

Looking at Uplay DRM in relation to AC: Liberation HD and its effects on Windows PCs only.

- ✓ Won't interfere with currently-executing background services or software
- ✓ Players are aware and advised on how AC: Liberation HD will be activated
- ✓ Unlimited online activations to any one PC
- ✓ Can play single-player game offline
- ✓ Only Uplay DRM is implemented
- ✓ Unlimited hardware activations
- ✓ Unlimited installations
- ✓ Activation is simple and hassle-free

Note: Installing, updating Uplay and installing AC: Liberation HD for the first time will connect to the following companies: Ubisoft, AOL, Amazon Web Services and Limelight Networks.

7. Gameplay Experience

Note: Configuration files found under /My Documents/Assassins Creed Liberation HD/

Note: Environment, textures and shadow settings are provided in the form of "Normal, High and Very High settings".

Note: While AC: Liberation HD can be played offline the game will periodically connect back to Ubisoft's servers and monitor the progress of the player's gameplay.

- ✗ No instructions provided on the activation process
- ✗ Firewall and AV settings are modified without request
- ✗ Can't verify the safety and reliability of the activation process
- ✗ A non-transferrable player account is required
- ✗ Player's name, Password, Email, DOB and Country are required
- ✗ Game is locked to specific account after activation
- ✗ No support or troubleshooting process

Looking at the gameplay aspects of AC: Liberation HD and how it interacts with PC Windows.

- ✓ Can play on minimum specs
 - ✓ Can play a backup copy of the game
 - ✓ Can remap keyboard controls
 - ✓ Can remap mouse controls
 - ✓ Can play with console controller
 - ✓ Separate volume controls provided
 - ✓ Subtitles provided in-game (Eng, Fra, Ita, Ger, Spa, Rus, Dutch & Portugese)
 - ✓ Localisation provided in-game (Eng, Fra, Ita, Ger and Spa)
 - ✓ Can play AC: Liberation HD 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
-
- ✗ Borderless full screen mode not provided
 - ✗ Windows mode not provided
 - ✗ Limited video settings (anti-aliasing and vsync)
 - ✗ No options for player-generated audio and/or closed captions / subtitles
 - ✗ Requires constant and tethered internet connection to access DLC
 - ✗ Will "phone home" to Ubisoft's servers via Uplay
 - ✗ Will not advise Players that it connects to third-party servers in offline mode
 - ✗ Cannot opt out of AC: Liberation HD / Uplay achievements
 - ✗ No options for manually saving the game during gameplay
 - ✗ 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 AC: Liberation HD will modify certain PC settings without Players permission / consent.

- ✓ PC clean after scanning for viruses
 - ✓ PC clean after scanning for malware and spyware and rootkits
 - ✓ Played AC: Liberation HD without major errors
 - ✓ Start-up settings remain unaltered
 - ✓ No DRM and monitoring services running in the background
 - ✓ System configuration files remain unaltered
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- ✗ Will alter Windows Firewall Settings without player's explicit consent

9. Removal Uninstall

Note: Uplay will do a complete file and registry removal of any games tethered to Uplay and Uplay itself if requested.

10. Customer Support

Note: Ubisoft's support service is accessible via the forum, Twitter and through emails.

Note: This is only in relation to Uplay. See Section 3b. EULA (Uplay).

Looking at how clean, efficient and effective the removal process is for AC: Liberation HD (How much legacy material is there after the removal of AC: Liberation HD?)

- ✓ Direct uninstallation shortcut provided through Uplay's client manager
- ✓ Backup savegames prompt provided / Savegames retained
- ✓ Clean uninstallation

Looking at the customer support side of AC: Liberation HD through Ubisoft's Community Forums

- ✓ Customer service / support found in one place at support.ubi.com
- ✓ Ubisoft's support service is easy to use and navigate
- ✓ Searching on Ubisoft's support service is direct and quick
- ✓ Info is easy to read and understand
- ✓ Customer service will resolve issues within 72 hours
- ✓ Focused on understanding problems and providing an effective solution

- ✗ Customer service takes more than 24 hours to respond
- ✗ Tone and language used is distant, robotic and impersonal
- ✗ No arbitration / resolution service for unresolved customer service queries
- ✗ No option provided for giving feedback on the service of customer support

RYG'S VERDICT

51%

BARGAIN-BASE- MENT MATERIAL

64% and below

SHOWS PROMISE & POTENTIAL

Between 65% and 84%

WORTH SUPPORTING

85% and above

This recent iteration of Uplay, in respect to its file management and uninstallation was, by far, the cleanest we've ever come across for a DRM / Digital Distribution Service. However, their legal-heavy terms of service, privacy policy, inclusion of an automatic firewall rule applied without players consent as well as an offline mode that masks Uplay's periodic and background online chatter between its servers and its players renders Uplay a less-than-desirable service to use.

AC: Liberation HD feels like a step up from its origins from the PS Vita version, but otherwise it is a game that has sufficient PC options for players to customise with very little opportunity for players to explore outside the "checkpoint-driven" open game world.



Colophon

This analysis of AC: Liberation HD 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. AC: Liberation HD was bought with RYG funds through Uplay.

Disclaimer

These analyses are only a guide and represent RYG's perspective into AC: Liberation HD 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 AC: Liberation HD 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 Players 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.

RYG Analysis: Assassin's Creed: Liberation HD
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