

# Cities XL 2012

An RYG Analysis

**Platform:** PC (Windows 7 only)  
**DRM:** SecuROM  
**Digital Distributor:** PHYSICAL COPY ONLY!

**Developer:** Focus Home Interactive  
**Publisher:** Focus Home Interactive

## RYG's VERDICT

**54%** **BARGAIN BIN MATERIAL**  
**64% and Below**

### 1. Product Info

*Looking at how much information is provided on Cities XL 2012 on its website prior and on release.*

- ✓ Cities XL 2012 was released globally on 20.10.2011
- ✓ Base game and day-one DLCs sold as one package
- ✓ Minimum and recommended specs provided
- ✓ Manual and Readme provided with the game
  
- ✗ Available only on Windows
- ✗ No demo OR Closed alpha/beta access only
- ✗ Not advised SecuROM DRM was to be used on Cities XL 2012
- ✗ No advice on how SecuROM DRM would activate Cities XL 2012
- ✗ EULA, Privacy Policy and TOS is only found within the game
- ✗ All game-related information on Cities XL 2012 is difficult to find and navigate

*Note:* SecuROM used in this physical version of Cities XL 2012 is a 5-machine limit, online activation.

### 2. Privacy Policy

*Looking at Cities XL 2012's Privacy Policy found only through Focus Home Interactive official website.*

- ✗ Privacy Policy not found

### 3. EULA TOS

*Looking at Cities XL 2012's End User License Agreement.*

*Note:* 3,037 words found in Cities XL 2012's EULA.

*Note:* Official modding information on Cities XL 2012 can be found on the [official website](#).

- ✓ Permitted to create free "mods" of Cities XL 2012
- ✓ Can opt-out of any monitoring services / software
- ✓ Won't blacklist specific background services or software
- ✓ 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 game disc (not through EA's website)
- ✗ EULA / TOS only covers Cities XL 2012 only.

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

## 4. Setup / Install

**Note:** All SecuROM files are retained to the game directory of the user's choice.

**Note:** Savegame information are found in /AppData/Local/Focus Home Interactive/

## 5. Updates / Patching

## 6. DRM & Activation

**Note:** Activating Cities XL 2012 offline can be found via [activation.focus-home.com](http://activation.focus-home.com). However, Cities XL 2012 will connect to Sony DADC servers at the first launch if the game hasn't been activated.

- ✗ Difficult to read, understand and is inconsistently worded
- ✗ Drafted to only abide by the laws of France
- ✗ 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 not provided
- ✗ Terms and conditions for SecuROM DRM aren't clearly defined
- ✗ Circumvention of SecuROM DRM prohibited
- ✗ Back-ups aren't permitted
- ✗ Cities XL 2012's source code isn't to be modified or reverse-engineered
- ✗ Warranties waived (excluding physical merchantability warranties)
- ✗ Cover waived against any unforeseeable damages, disruptions of service
- ✗ Termination process dictated by Focus Home Interactive.

*Looking at how Cities XL 2012 is installed on Windows PCs only.*

- ✓ Custom installation options are provided
- ✓ SecuROM DRM files installed within folders designated by users
- ✓ Currently-executing background services won't interfere with installation
- ✓ Error-free installation
- ✓ Installation completed within 30 minutes
- ✗ No installation logs of files and registry keys

*Looking at how Cities XL 2012 is patched prior, during and after gameplay.*

- ✓ Can opt-in / opt-out of automatic updates
- ✓ Day-one patch optional
- ✓ Can play the game unpatched
- ✗ No plans to sunset SecuROM DRM

*Looking at SecuROM DRM in relation to Cities XL 2012 and its effects on Windows PCs only.*

- ✓ Won't interfere with currently-executing background services or software
- ✓ Hassle-free offline option to activating the game is provided
- ✓ User account not required
- ✓ Can play single-player game offline
- ✓ Only SecuROM DRM is implemented
- ✓ Support and troubleshooting process provided
- ✓ Activation is simple and hassle-free
- ✗ Little instructions provided on the activation process

**Note:** Cities XL 2012 will connect to the following servers prior and during gameplay: Sony DADC (SecuROM)

**Note:** There is a revocation tool, which should retain the activation limits provided.

## 7. Gameplay Experience

**Note:** Please visit the [Cities XL Wiki](#) if you're having issues playing Cities XL 2012.

**Note:** Savegame information are found in /AppData/Local/Focus Home Interactive/

- ✗ Firewall and AV settings are modified without request
- ✗ Can't verify the safety and reliability of the activation process
- ✗ Activation pathway isn't explained
- ✗ Limited to 5 online activations to one PC
- ✗ Limited to 5 hardware activations
- ✗ Limited to 5 installations on one PC

*Looking at the gameplay aspects of Cities XL 2012 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 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
- ✓ No DRM or monitoring services running in the background
  
- ✗ Only playable on mouse and keyboard
- ✗ Will "phone home" to Sony DADC during the first launch
- ✗ Can only play on one PC at a time per game / account

## 8. PC Cleanup

*Looking at whether Cities XL 2012 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 Cities XL 2012 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

*Looking at how clean, efficient and effective the removal process is for Cities XL 2012 (How much legacy material is there after the removal of Cities XL 2012?)*

- ✓ Direct uninstallation shortcut provided
- ✓ Users provided notification / options to deactivate Cities XL 2012
- ✓ Backup savegames prompt provided / Savegames retained
  
- ✗ Cities XL 2012 files in /AppData/Local/ will remain only.

# 10. Customer Support

Looking at the customer support side of Cities XL 2012 through Focus Home's Forums.

- ✓ Customer service / support found in one place at forum.citiesxl.com
- ✓ Info is easy to read and understand
- ✗ Searching info on forum.citiesxl.com is difficult at times

## RYG's VERDICT

54%

## BARGAIN BIN MATERIAL

64% and below

## SHOWS PROMISE & POTENTIAL

Between 65% and 84%

## WORTH SUPPORTING

85% and above

Unfortunately, the overall score could have been increased had Focus Home Interactive mentioned the what and how SecuROM was implemented. From our tests it is by far the cleanest implementation to date. The game itself was playable and is relatively self-contained within the PC's filesystems. Apart from this their EULA, lack of DRM information and their customer support had failed them in reaching what could've been a positive outlook.



### Colophon

This analysis of Cities XL 2012 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. Cities XL 2012 was bought with RYG funds through EB Games.

### Disclaimer

These analyses are only a guide and represent RYG's perspective into Cities XL 2012 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 Cities XL 2012 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.

RYG Analysis: Cities XL 2012  
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