

# Company of Heroes 2

An RYG Analysis

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

**Developer:** Relic Entertainment  
**Publisher:** Sega Entertainment

## RYG's VERDICT

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

### 1. Product Info

*Note:* StarForce DRM isn't notified on the packaging and/or website(s) selling Company of Heroes 2. It is known from this evaluation that StarForce is only used in protecting the game's executable file only and will not connect to any third party server.

*Looking at how much information is provided on Company of Heroes 2 on its website prior and on release.*

- ✓ Company of Heroes 2 released globally on 24.06.2013
- ✓ Minimum and recommended specs provided
- ✓ Manual and Readme found via. [Steam](#)
- ✓ EULA, Privacy Policy and TOS fully accessible on [steampowered.com](#)
  
- ✗ Available only on Windows
- ✗ Base game sold as multiple "editions" with varying selections of day-one DLCs
- ✗ No demo
- ✗ Advised only Steamworks (Steam) DRM was to be used
- ✗ StarForce DRM was to be used on Company of Heroes 2 after general release
- ✗ No advice on how StarForce DRM would affect users
- ✗ All game-related information on Steam is difficult to find and navigate

### 2. Privacy Policy

*Note:* 1,507 words found within [Steam's Privacy Policy](#).

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

*Looking at Steam's Privacy Policy through Valve (Steam)*

- ✓ Privacy Policy found on [steampowered.com](#)
- ✓ Policy applies to Steam Client, Steamworks DRM and Company of Heroes 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

**Note:** Privacy Policy was retrieved October 2013; Effective Date of Steam's Privacy Policy prior to this evaluation was August 2012.

## 3a. EULA (GAME)

**Note:** 3,293 words found in Company of Heroes 2's 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.

- ✓ Can request to have their data removed
- ✓ Can review and query changes made to the Privacy Policy
- ✗ Third parties not identified
- ✗ Users have limited control over their Steam account
- ✗ Users must accept ALL changes before playing Company of Heroes 2

*Looking at Company of Heroes 2's EULA from Sega Entertainment.*

- ✓ EULA / TOS is found on [steampowered.com](http://steampowered.com)
- ✓ 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 only covers Company of Heroes 2 & not Steam or StarForce DRM
- ✗ Difficult to read, understand and is inconsistently worded
- ✗ Drafted to only abide by the laws of the US in the state of California
- ✗ Users not visibly notified of any 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 Steam and StarForce DRM aren't clearly defined
- ✗ Circumvention of Steam and StarForce DRM prohibited
- ✗ Back-ups aren't permitted
- ✗ Company of Heroes 2's source code isn't to be modified or reverse-engineered
- ✗ Not permitted to create "mods"
- ✗ Monitoring services / software are required to play Company of Heroes 2
- ✗ Warranties waived (excluding physical merchantability warranties)
- ✗ Cover waived against any unforeseeable damages, disruptions of service
- ✗ Termination process dictated by Sega Entertainment

*Looking at Steam Subscriber's Agreement through Steam.*

- ✓ EULA / TOS is found on [steampowered.com](http://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
- ✗ Monitoring services / software are required to use Steam

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

## 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:** Users should find StarForce files, [pcnsl.exe](#) and [cyxubeqe.dll](#), within the game’s main directory. It will \*not\* install any other DRM drivers or “phone home”.

## 5. Updates / Patching

**Note:** It is recommended that (new) users should install and update Steam first before installing Company of Heroes 2.

**Note:** There is a ~1.7Gb update that will occur straight after the installation of Company of Heroes 2.

## 6. DRM & Activation

**Note:** Company of Heroes 2 will only be connected to the following servers: Amazon Web Services and Valve (Highwinds Networks, Telia.Net, Kaia Networks, QWest Communications, Limelight Networks, Level 3 Communications, Comcast & WA Internet Exchange).

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

- ✗ Cover waived against any unforeseeable damages, disruptions of service
- ✗ Arbitration process isn’t freely-provided and requested by Valve
- ✗ Legal action is waived

*Looking at how Company of Heroes 2 is installed on Windows PCs only.*

- ✓ Custom installation options are provided
- ✓ All files are installed within folders designated by users
- ✓ Currently-executing background services won’t interfere with installation
- ✓ Error-free installation
- ✓ Installation completed within 60 minutes
  
- ✗ No installation logs of files and registry keys
- ✗ Extra StarForce DRM files found in the game directory

*Looking at how Company of Heroes 2 is patched prior and after gameplay.*

- ✓ No other DRM files or registry keys are installed
- ✓ Users can be advised of game patch’s availability via. [steampowered.com](#)
  
- ✗ Automatic updates are mandatory
- ✗ Day-one patch required
- ✗ Requires ALL patches to play Company of Heroes 2
- ✗ Patches only installed via. automatic updates
- ✗ Details of patches not provided
- ✗ 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 Company of Heroes 2 and its effects on Windows PCs only.*

- ✓ Won’t interfere with currently-executing background services or software
- ✓ Firewall and AV settings aren’t modified or required to be modified
- ✓ Username, password and email are only required
- ✓ Unlimited online activations to any one PC
- ✓ Can play single-player game offline
- ✓ 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
- ✗ Activation pathway isn’t explained

*Note:* It is known from this evaluation that StarForce is only used in protecting the game's executable file only and won't connect to any third party server.

## 7. Gameplay Experience

*Note:* (Local) savegame and config files are found under the \My Documents\My Games\Company of Heroes 2 folder.

- ✗ A non-transferrable user account is required
- ✗ Game is locked to specific account after activation
- ✗ Steam and StarForce DRMs are implemented

*Looking at the gameplay aspects of Company of Heroes 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 controls
  - ✓ 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
- 
- ✗ Only playable on mouse and keyboard
  - ✗ 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 Cleanup

*Looking at whether Company of Heroes 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 Company of Heroes 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 Company of Heroes 2.

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

- ✓ Will need to uninstall the game via. Control Panel
  - ✓ All game and DRM files are removed
  - ✓ Knowledgebase provided at Steam to remove all Steam files and registry keys
- 
- ✗ Some registry keys related to Company of Heroes 2 remain

# 10. Customer Support

Looking at the customer support side of Company of Heroes 2 through Steam.

- ✓ Customer service / support found in one place at steampowered.com
- ✓ steampowered.com is easy to use and navigate
- ✓ Searching on steampowered.com is direct and quick
- ✓ Info is easy to read and understand

## RYG's VERDICT

**54%**

## BARGAIN BIN MATERIAL

**64% and below**

## SHOWS PROMISE & POTENTIAL

**Between 65% and 84%**

## WORTH SUPPORTING

**85% and above**

*Finding StarForce being used as a secondary DRM without user knowledge or notification was unexpected. However, much of the game's failings came through Sega's hard-line EULA.*



### Colophon

This analysis of Company of Heroes 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. Company of Heroes 2 was bought with RYG funds through EB Games.

### Disclaimer

These analyses are only a guide and represent RYG's perspective into Company of Heroes 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 Company of Heroes 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.

RYG Analysis: Company of Heroes 2  
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