

Darksiders 2

An RYG Analysis

Platform: PC (Windows 7 only)
DRM: Steamworks (Steam)
Digital Distributor: Steam

Developer: Vigil Games
Publisher: THQ (Defunct) / Nordic Games

RYG's ASSESSMENT

58%

BARGAIN-BASEMENT MATERIAL

64% and below

1a. Product Info

Looking at how much information is provided on Darksiders 2 on the Steam site prior and on release.

- ✓ Darksiders 2 released simultaneously with its console version
- ✓ Darksiders 2 sold through multiple (digital) vendors
- ✓ Minimum and recommended specs provided
- ✓ Advised Steamworks (Steam) DRM was to be used for Darksiders 2
- ✓ Advised how Steam DRM would activate the game through Darksiders 2
- ✓ Readme provided
- ✓ EULA, Privacy Policy and TOS fully accessible on steampowered.com
- ✓ All game-related information can be found on steampowered.com

- ✗ Darksiders 2 for PC released with different global dates
- ✗ Available only on Windows
- ✗ No known DRM-Free option provided
- ✗ Base game sold as multiple "editions"
- ✗ Complete download specs provided prior to purchase
- ✗ No demo

1b. Digital Dwnld

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

- ✓ Available worldwide through steampowered.com
- ✓ Minimum and recommended specs provided
- ✓ Advised Steamworks (Steam) DRM was to be used for Darksiders 2
- ✓ Advised how Steam DRM would activate Darksiders 2 through Steam
- ✓ Alternative payment options provided
- ✓ 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)
- ✓ Refunds offered for pre-orders only
- ✓ Can access personal data

- ✗ Darksiders 2 on Steam is priced inconsistently across global regions
- ✗ Download / Client Manager is required, including for gameplay

Note: Alternative payment options provided on Steam.

Note: Refer to Section 3, *Billing, Payment & Other Subscriptions* in respect to preorder refunds for Players living in the EU.

Note: Downloading Darksiders 2 will take ~5.3 Gb.

Note: Refer to [Section 7\(A\): Disclaimers](#) under The Steam's Subscriber's Agreement in relation to "as is".

Note: Valve will **not delete** any Players accounts voluntarily.

Note: Please refer to Part 3b, EULA / TOS in relation to Steam's Subscriber's Agreement

2b. Privacy Policy

Note: Privacy Policy contains ~1,860 words. Last updated August 2012.

Note: Please refer to *Personally Identifiable Information* under Valve's Privacy Policy.

Note: Please refer to *Use of Personally Identifiable Information* under Valve's Privacy Policy.

Note: Accessing personal info can be found within the Players Account Settings once logged into Steam.

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

Note: Valve, however, won't send personal info to third parties for marketing purposes.

Note: Please refer to *Use of Personally Identifiable Information* under Valve's Privacy Policy.

3. EULA (STEAM)

Note: 7,431 Words found in Steam's EULA. Last updated July 2013.

Note: Steam's Video Policy can be found the [Legal Info](#) section.

- ✗ Players account creation is required
- ✗ Currency conversion not provided at the time of purchase
- ✗ Minimum and recommended download specs not provided through Steam
- ✗ No refunds or exchanges for purchased games
- ✗ Darksiders 2 is provided "as is" with limited warranties
- ✗ Cover waived against any unforeseeable damages and/or disruptions of service
- ✗ No options to voluntarily terminate Steam account
- ✗ Account termination voids past purchases and licenses to play them
- ✗ Consumers prevented from disputing and validating Steam TOS breaches
- ✗ Can't review and question changes made to Steam TOS
- ✗ Past purchases voided after refusing to accept Steam TOS

Looking at Darksiders 2's Privacy Policy through Valve

- ✓ Privacy Policy found on [steampowered.com](#)
 - ✓ Policy applies to Darksiders 2, Steam and Steam DRM
 - ✓ Privacy Policy formatted for easy reading on the web
 - ✓ "Personally-identifiable" & "non-personally identifiable" info are clearly defined
 - ✓ Policy explicitly specifies which info are collected before & during gameplay
 - ✓ Info is stored at Valve Corporation within the US
 - ✓ 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
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- ✗ 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
 - ✗ Third parties are not identified
 - ✗ Players cannot export their information
 - ✗ Players data is retained by Valve for an extended period of time
 - ✗ Can't review and query changes made to the Privacy Policy
 - ✗ Valve may transfer all players information in the event of a sale or merger
 - ✗ Players must accept ALL changes made before playing Darksiders 2

Looking at Steam Subscriber's Agreement through Steam.

- ✓ EULA / TOS is found on [steampowered.com](#)
- ✓ EULA / TOS covers Darksiders 2, Steam and Steam DRM
- ✓ Users visibly notified of any changes made to the EULA / TOS prior to purchase
- ✓ Terms and conditions for Steam DRM are clearly defined
- ✓ Can back-up copies of Darksiders 2
- ✓ Allows monetisation of clips relating to Steam through video-sharing sites
- ✓ Won't blacklist specific background services or software
- ✓ Users can criticise or provide criticism about the game without reprisals

Note: Refer to Steam EULA's [readability scores](#).

Note: Valve will **not delete** any Players accounts voluntarily.

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: Downloading Darksiders 2 will take ~5.3 Gb.

5. Updates / Patching

- ✗ 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 US
- ✗ 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 Steam DRM prohibited
- ✗ Steam's source code isn't to be modified or reverse-engineered
- ✗ Not permitted to create "mods" for Steam
- ✗ Steam is provided "as is" with limited warranties
- ✗ Cover waived against any unforeseeable damages and/or disruptions of service
- ✗ Termination process dictated by Valve
- ✗ Arbitration process overseen by an external party within the US
- ✗ Limited options for players to take any legal action

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

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

- ✗ No installation logs of files and registry keys

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

- ✓ Can opt-in / opt-out of automatic updates
- ✓ 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
- ✓ Can play Darksiders 2 with the most recent patch

- ✗ Requires ALL patches to play Darksiders 2
- ✗ Patches only installed via. 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 Steam DRM

6. DRM & Activation

Note: It is recommended that (new) Players should install and update Steam first before installing Darksiders 2.

See Also: How to play Darksiders 2 in **offline mode**.

Note: Installing, updating Steam and installing Darksiders 2 for the first time will connect to the following companies: Valve (*Highwinds Network Group, QWest Communications, Limelight Networks, Amazon Web Services, Level 3 Communications, ChinaNet, Telstra and Verisign*)

7. Gameplay Experience

Looking at Steam DRM in relation to Darksiders 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
- ✓ Players are aware and advised on how Darksiders 2 will be activated
- ✓ Players name, 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 Players account is required
- ✗ Game is locked to specific account after activation

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

- ✓ Can play on minimum specs
- ✓ Can play a backup copy of the game
- ✓ Can play in borderless full screen mode
- ✓ Can play in windowed mode
- ✓ Can play with console (Xbox 360) controller
- ✓ Separate volume controls provided
- ✓ Can play offline
- ✓ Can access DLC offline
- ✓ Can play without connectivity issues on an ADSL connection
- ✓ Can Opt out of Achievements
- ✓ Can play error-free for more than 5hrs
- ✓ Won't interfere with services and background software
- ✓ Will resume at the last checkpoint
- ✓ Can manually save game progress

- ✗ Limited in-game video options
- ✗ Partial remapping / customisation of Keyboard / Mouse controllers
- ✗ No known option for user-generated subtitles and audio localisation
- ✗ Will periodically "phone home" back to Valve and THQ (Defunct)
- ✗ Won't advise players upon connecting to Valve and THQ's servers
- ✗ Can only play on one PC at a time per game / account
- ✗ Can't modify savegame and/or ini file
- ✗ DRM and monitoring services will operate during and after gameplay

8. **PC Checkup**

Looking at whether Darksiders 2 will modify certain PC settings without Players 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 Darksiders 2 without major errors
- ✓ Start-up settings remain unaltered
- ✓ No DRM and monitoring services running in the background
- ✓ System configuration files remain unaltered

9. **Removal Uninstall**

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

- ✓ Direct uninstallation shortcut provided through Steam's client manager
- ✓ Backup savegames prompt provided / Savegames retained
- ✓ External tool provided at steampowered.com
- ✓ External tool to remove game + DRM files is easy to use

- ✗ Steam registry keys remain after the uninstallation of Steam / Darksiders 2
- ✗ Remaining Steam keys will remain after using external tool(s)

10. **Customer Support**

Looking at the customer support side of Darksiders 2 through Steam's Community Forums

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

RYG's VERDICT

58%

BARGAIN-BASE- MENT MATERIAL

64% and below

SHOWS PROMISE & POTENTIAL

Between 65% and 84%

WORTH SUPPORTING

85% and above

In spite of the relative stability in its gameplay and affordability through Steam (during the Summer Sale), we did find a few things about Darksiders 2 that brought the score down to a sub-60 score: Periodic online checks even in offline mode to Steam and THQ (an oddity), Limited remapping of keyboard / mouse configuration and limited graphical settings both in-game and without a manual configuration game file.



Colophon

This analysis of Darksiders 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. Darksiders 2 was bought with RYG funds through Steam.

Disclaimer

These analyses are only a guide and represent RYG's perspective into Darksiders 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 Darksiders 2 and hope you continue to support our work.