

Dead Space 2

An RYG Analysis

Platform: PC (Windows 7 only)
DRM: SolidShield and SecuROM (EA Core is inert)
Digital Distributor: PHYSICAL COPY ONLY!

Developer: Visceral Games
Publisher: Electronic Arts

RYG's VERDICT

47%

BARGAIN BIN MATERIAL

64% and Below

1. Product Info

Looking at how much information is provided on Dead Space 2 on its website prior and on release.

- ✓ Minimum and recommended specs provided
- ✓ Manual and Readme provided with Dead Space 2
- ✓ EULA, Privacy Policy and TOS fully accessible on www.ea.com/1/product-eulas
- ✓ All game-related information can be found on www.ea.com/dead-space-2
- ✗ Dead Space 2 released after the sale of its console version
- ✗ Dead Space 2 on PC released with different global dates
- ✗ Available only on Windows
- ✗ Base game sold as multiple "editions" with varying selections of day-one DLCs
- ✗ No demo
- ✗ Didn't openly advise SecuROM was implemented with SolidShield DRM
- ✗ No advice on how SecuROM would activate Dead Space 2

Note: SecuROM was implemented as a Release Date Check mechanism prior to the launch of EA Origin.

2. Privacy Policy

Looking at Dead Space 2's Privacy Policy found only through Electronic Art's official website.

- ✓ Privacy Policy found on www.ea.com and on the game
- ✓ Policy specifies what info's collected before and during gameplay
- ✓ Info is used solely for customer support, internal research and advertising
- ✓ Visible opt-in / opt-out process
- ✓ Users can access their EA Origin account (*Optional with Dead Space 2*)
- ✓ Users can modify their personal details on their EA Origin Account (*Optional*)
- ✗ Policy only applies to EA Origin & Dead Space 2 (not SolidShield or SecuROM)
- ✗ 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
- ✗ Not advised where the info is specifically stored
- ✗ Assurances of safety and security of information not provided

Note: 2,997 words found within Electronic Art's Privacy Policy.

See Also: Section 1, *Introduction* and Section 7, *Where The Information Is Held?* where a level of care is described by EA, but later waived in respect to the level of security they have with the user info they possess.

Note: Privacy Policy was retrieved January 2013; Effective Date of EA's Privacy Policy prior to this evaluation was September 2012.

3. EULA / TOS

Note: 2,997 words found in Dead Space 2's EULA.

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

Note: Binding Arbitration is designed to support and defend EA's policies and processes.

4. Setup / Install

Note: You can find evidence of SecuROM implemented in Dead Space 2 within the /AppData/Local/Temp/mtka_tmp/

- ✗ Third parties not identified
- ✗ Users have limited control over their gameplay info
- ✗ Users can't validate what they've provided
- ✗ User data is retained by Electronic Arts 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 Dead Space 2

Looking at Dead Space 2's End User License Agreement.

- ✓ EULA / TOS is found on www.ea.com/1/product-eulas
- ✓ Terms and conditions for Solidshield DRM only are clearly defined
- ✓ Won't blacklist specific background services or software
- ✓ Users can criticise or provide criticism about the game without reprisals

- ✗ EULA / TOS only covers Dead Space 2 and SolidShield (and not SecuROM)
- ✗ Difficult to read, understand and is inconsistently worded
- ✗ Drafted to only abide by the laws of USA 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
- ✗ License to play the game only provided
- ✗ No refunds or exchanges for purchased games
- ✗ Replacement copies not provided OR replacement copies provided for a fee
- ✗ Circumvention of SolidShield and SecuROM DRM prohibited
- ✗ Back-ups aren't permitted
- ✗ Dead Space 2's source code isn't to be modified or reverse-engineered
- ✗ Not permitted to create "mods"
- ✗ Monitoring services / software are required to play Dead Space 2
- ✗ Warranties waived (excluding physical merchantability warranties)
- ✗ Cover waived against any unforeseeable damages, disruptions of service
- ✗ Termination process dictated by Electronic Arts
- ✗ Arbitration process isn't freely-provided and is overseen by Electronic Arts
- ✗ Legal action is waived

Looking at how Dead Space 2 is installed on Windows PCs only.

- ✓ Custom installation options are provided
- ✓ All game files are 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
- ✗ Extra SecuROM and SolidShield DRM files found in /AppData/ and /Program Data/ folders

5. Updates / Patching

Looking at how Dead Space 2 is patched prior and after gameplay.

- ✓ Can opt-in / opt-out of automatic updates
- ✓ Can play the game unpatched

- ✗ No plans to sunset SolidShield and SecuROM DRM

6. DRM & Activation

Looking at SolidShield and SecuROM DRM in relation to Dead Space 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
- ✓ User account not required
- ✓ Can play single-player game offline
- ✓ Can transfer activation/game *under the provision it's not registered via. Origin*
- ✓ 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
- ✗ Limited to 5 online activations / deactivations in respect to SolidShield
- ✗ SolidShield and SecuROM DRM are implemented
- ✗ Limited to 5 installations across 5 PCs

Note: Dead Space 2 will connect to the following servers prior and during gameplay: Verisign, SolidShield and SecuROM (Sony DADC)

Note: As described in Section 1, Product Info, SecuROM is implemented in Dead Space 2 as a Release Date Checker.

7. Gameplay Experience

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

- ✓ Can play on minimum specs
- ✓ Disc not required for gameplay
- ✓ Suitable options to modify video settings
- ✓ Can play in windowed mode
- ✓ Can play offline
- ✓ Can play error-free for more than 5hrs
- ✓ Won't interfere with services and background software
- ✓ Will resume at the last checkpoint
- ✓ Can play on more than one PC simultaneously
- ✓ Can modify savegame and/or ini file
- ✓ No DRM or monitoring services running in the background

- ✗ Requires original copy to play the game
- ✗ Difficulties in setting XBox360 Controller settings
- ✗ Only playable on mouse and keyboard
- ✗ Will "phone home"

Note: Savegames are found in /Documents/EA Games/Dead Space 2/

Note: Game "ini" settings can be found in /Appdata/Local/EA Games/Dead Space 2/Settings.txt

8. PC Checkup

Looking at whether Dead Space 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 Dead Space 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

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

- ✓ Users provided notification / options to deactivate Dead Space 2
- ✓ Savegames retained
- ✗ Will need to uninstall the game via. Control Panel
- ✗ SecuROM and SolidShield files remain
- ✗ No External tools to remove game + DRM files provided

Note: Please see Section 4. Setup / Install for further details on where SecuROM and SolidShield are installed.

10. Customer Support

Looking at the customer support side of Dead Space 2 through EA's Support

- ✓ Customer service / support found in one place through EA Origin client
- ✓ Help through EA Support is easy to use and navigate
- ✓ Info is easy to read and understand
- ✓ Customer services is quick to respond within 24 hours
- ✓ Arbitration / resolution service is available
- ✓ Arbitration / resolution process is easy to follow / understand
- ✗ Customer service will take more than 72 hours to resolve issues
- ✗ Tone and language used is distant, robotic and impersonal
- ✗ Focused on generic suggestions and solutions within their FAQ
- ✗ Arbitration / resolution process favours Electronic Arts
- ✗ Legal action waived once arbitration process is initiated
- ✗ No option provided for giving feedback on the quality of customer support

RYG's VERDICT

47%

BARGAIN BIN MATERIAL

64% and below

SHOWS PROMISE & POTENTIAL

Between 65% and 84%

WORTH SUPPORTING

85% and above

The important thing here is that Dead Space 2 is playable from start to finish. For what Dead Space 2 is (and the time taken to finish it) it's a rather enjoyable game. However, it does come with a certain level of tolerance for poor documentation, support, legacy data and, yes, DRMs, one of which was implemented without proper advice.



Colophon

This analysis of Dead Space 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. Dead Space 2 was bought with RYG funds through OzGameShop.

Disclaimer

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