

Platform: PC (Windows 7 only)
DRM: Games For Windows Live and SecuROM
Digital Distributor: PHYSICAL COPY ONLY!

Developer: Codemasters
Publisher: Codemasters

RYG's VERDICT

44% **BARGAIN BIN MATERIAL**
64% and Below

1. Product Info

Note: Games For Windows Live was implemented with a mandatory and persistent-online user account; SecuROM was implemented as a disc verification and hardware binding DRM. More info can be found on [Flibit's SteamDRM Page](#).

Looking at how much information is provided on DiRT 3 on its website prior and on release.

- ✓ DiRT 3 (PC) released simultaneously with its console version
- ✓ Base game sold as one package
- ✓ Minimum and recommended specs provided
- ✓ Manual and Readme found on [DiRT 3's official website](#).
- ✓ All game-related information can be found on [codemasters.com](#)

- ✗ DiRT 3 (PC) released with different global dates
- ✗ Available only on Windows
- ✗ No demo
- ✗ Games For Windows Live (GFWL) was mentioned (SecuROM was overlooked)
- ✗ No advice on how SecuROM DRM would affect users
- ✗ EULA is only found within the game

2. Privacy Policy

Note: Codemaster's Privacy Policy only applied to its website(s).

Looking at DiRT 3's Privacy Policy found only through Codemaster's website.

- ✗ Privacy Policy only found on [codemasters.com](#)
- ✗ Policy only applies to Codemaster's websites (and not their PC games)

3. EULA TOS

Note: 1,059 Words found within DiRT 3's EULA.

Looking at DiRT 3's End User License Agreement.

- ✓ Can replace damaged copies with a free, replacement copy
- ✓ 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

See Also: Limited Warranty within DiRT 3's EULA, specifically under Section B, *Terms of Warranty* and Section D, *Remedy For Breach of Warranty*.

4. Setup / Install

Note: SecuROM will install hidden files and profile these files as *system hidden files* within /Program Data/SecuROM/DSS/Content Activation

Note: DiRT will also install Will install xlive.dll + related files in /Windows/System32/Sys-WOW64/

5. Updates / Patching

Note: DiRT 3's latest known patch is version 1.2.

- ✗ EULA / TOS is only found within DiRT 3's disc
- ✗ EULA / TOS only covers DiRT 3 and not Games For Windows Live / SecuROM
- ✗ Difficult to read, understand and is inconsistently worded
- ✗ Drafted to only abide by the laws of England
- ✗ 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
- ✗ Terms & conditions for GFWL / SecuROM DRM aren't defined
- ✗ Circumvention of Games For Windows Live / SecuROM DRM prohibited
- ✗ Back-ups aren't permitted
- ✗ DiRT 3's source code isn't to be modified or reverse-engineered
- ✗ Not permitted to create "mods"
- ✗ Monitoring services / software are required to play DiRT 3
- ✗ Warranties waived (excluding physical merchantability warranties)
- ✗ Cover waived against any unforeseeable damages, disruptions of service
- ✗ Termination process dictated by Codemasters

Looking at how DiRT 3 is installed on Windows PCs only.

- ✓ Custom installation options are provided
- ✓ 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 DiRT 3 files found outside of gaming directory
- ✗ Extra GFWL and SecuROM DRM files found outside of gaming directory

Looking at how DiRT 3 is patched prior and after gameplay.

- ✓ Can opt-in / opt-out of automatic updates
- ✓ Day-one patch optional
- ✓ Can play the game unpatched
- ✓ Details of patches provided via. [Gamefront](#)
- ✓ No other DRM files or registry keys are installed
- ✓ Can install patches manually

- ✗ Notifications not provided for availability of game patches
- ✗ No installation logs of files and registry keys
- ✗ Rollback option not provided
- ✗ No plans to sunset Games For Windows Live and SecuROM DRM

6. DRM & Activation

Note: DiRT 3 will connect to the following servers: Microsoft, Facebook, Akamai Technologies, Cloudflare and Verisign.

Note: SecuROM DRM implemented in DiRT 3 is a hardware-binding, disc-verification DRM.

Notes: Users will need to create a GFWL account in order to save their DiRT 3 games. There is an option to create a local account, but game progress won't be saved. As such, DiRT 3 requires a persistent-online connection in order for users to save their game.

7. Gameplay Experience

Notes: It is advisable that users should update their Games For Windows Live software and set up a user account before installing and activating DiRT 3.

Note: Configuration file found in \My Documents\My Games\Dirt 3\Hardware Settings\

8. PC Checkup

Looking at Games For Windows Live and SecuROM DRM in relation to DiRT 3 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
- ✓ Unlimited online activations to any one PC

- ✗ No instructions provided on the activation process
- ✗ Can't verify the safety and reliability of the activation process
- ✗ Activation pathway isn't explained
- ✗ Date of Birth, Location, Postcode, First and Last names are required
- ✗ Constant and tethered Internet connection required to play single-player game
- ✗ A non-transferrable user account is required
- ✗ Game is locked to specific account after activation
- ✗ Games For Windows Live and SecuROM DRM are implemented
- ✗ Unknown hardware activations in relation to SecuROM DRM only
- ✗ Unknown limit of installations in relation to SecuROM DRM only
- ✗ No support or troubleshooting process
- ✗ Activating the game isn't simple and hassle-free

Looking at the gameplay aspects of DiRT 3 and how it interacts with PC Windows.

- ✓ Can play on minimum specs
- ✓ Suitable options to modify video settings
- ✓ Can customise keyboard, mouse and console controls
- ✓ Can play with console controller
- ✓ Can play in windowed mode
- ✓ Can play without connectivity issues on an ADSL connection
- ✓ Can play error-free for more than 5hrs *after activating DiRT 3*
- ✓ Won't interfere with services and background software
- ✓ Will resume at the last checkpoint
- ✓ Can modify ini file only

- ✗ Requires original copy to play the game
- ✗ Constant disc verification
- ✗ Requires constant and tethered Internet connection for single-player gameplay
- ✗ Can only play on one PC at a time per game / account
- ✗ DRM and monitoring services will operate during and after gameplay

Looking at whether DiRT 3 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 DiRT 3 without major errors
- ✓ System configuration files remain unaltered

9. Removal Uninstall

Note: For GFWL: 8 Files in /Appdata/Local/Microsoft/XLive/, 4 Files in /ProgramData/Microsoft/GFWL/ and 2 Files in /Appdata/Roaming/Lionhead Studios/ will remain

Note: For SecuROM: 8 Files in /Appdata/Local/Temp/F3Secu_Data_DFE/ and 2 Files in /ProgramData/DSS/Content Activation will remain

Note: The following registry keys will remain: /HKCR/Software/Microsoft/XLive /HKCU/Software/Classes/Software/Microsoft/XLive and /HKCU/Software/DSS/Product Activation

10. Customer Support

- ✗ Startup altered to include DRM services (Games For Windows Live)
- ✗ DRM services running in the background after shutdown

Looking at how clean, efficient and effective the removal process is for DiRT 3 (How much legacy material is there after the removal of DiRT 3?)

- ✓ Backup savegames prompt provided / Savegames retained
- ✗ Will need to uninstall the game via. Control Panel
- ✗ Games For Windows Live registry keys will remain
- ✗ SecuROM files and registry keys will remain
- ✗ No External tools to remove game + DRM files provided

Looking at the customer support side of DiRT 3 through Codemasters FAQ section

- ✓ Customer service / support found in one place at [Codemasters FAQ section](#)
- ✓ Codemaster's FAQ section is easy to use and navigate
- ✓ Searching is direct and quick (in relation to saving DiRT 3 only)
- ✓ Info is easy to read and understand
- ✓ Consumers can initiate legal action if customer service process fails
- ✗ No arbitration / resolution service for unresolved customer service queries
- ✗ No option provided for giving feedback on the service of customer support

RYG's VERDICT

44%

BARGAIN BIN MATERIAL

64% and below

SHOWS PROMISE & POTENTIAL

Between 65% and 84%

WORTH SUPPORTING

85% and above

While DiRT 3 was playable in both a non-saveable offline mode and via a persistent-online mode, the game was marred by a failed updating service for Games For Windows Live as well as SecuROM "working in secret" in one hardware-binding form or another. The usual "lacking consumer rights" documentation also applies in DiRT 3. A bargain bin material if users are ever interested in playing this rally racing game.



Colophon

This analysis of DiRT 3 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. DiRT 3 was bought with RYG funds through EB Games.

Disclaimer

These analyses are only a guide and represent RYG's perspective into DiRT 3 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 DiRT 3 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: DiRT 3
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