

# Fable 3

An RYG Analysis

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

**Developer:** Lionhead Studios  
**Publisher:** Microsoft Games Studios

## RYG's VERDICT

**49%** **BARGAIN BIN MATERIAL**  
**64% and Below**

### 1. Product Info

**Note:** Games For Windows Live was implemented with a Zero Day Protection layer with an optional user-account layer; SecuROM was implemented as a serial-key online activation limited to 5 machine activations per month. More info can be found on [Flibit's SteamDRM Page](#).

**Note:** There was miscommunication from Lionhead Studios back in May 2011 between the (non) release of the Fable 3 demo for PC.

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

- ✓ Minimum and recommended specs provided
- ✓ Advised Games For Windows Live and SecuROM DRM was to be used
- ✓ Advised how Games For Windows Live and SecuROM DRM would be used
- ✓ Manual and Readme provided on disc
  
- ✗ Fable 3 released 7 months after the sale of its console version
- ✗ Fable 3 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
- ✗ EULA, Privacy Policy and TOS is only found within the game
- ✗ All game-related information on Fable 3 is difficult to find

### 2. Privacy Policy

**Note:** 3,847 words found within Microsoft's Privacy Policy.

**See Also:** Highlights of Microsoft's Privacy Policy as provided by [Microsoft](#).

*Looking at Fable 3's Privacy Policy found only through Microsoft's official website.*

- ✓ Policy applies to Fable 3, Games For Windows Live and SecuROM DRM
- ✓ 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 which info are collected before and during gameplay
- ✓ Data centres are 100% safe and secure
- ✓ Info is used solely for customer support, service improvements and advertising
- ✓ Visible opt-in / opt-out process
- ✓ Users can access their Games For Windows Live account
- ✓ Users can modify their Games For Windows Live account
- ✓ Users can validate the info they've provided
  
- ✗ Privacy Policy only found on [privacy.microsoft.com](http://privacy.microsoft.com)

**See Also:** [Microsoft's Privacy Policy](#), retrieved 1 January 2013

**Note:** In respect to Fable 3 there were no third parties involved in the transmission of online data other than Microsoft and Sony DADC (SecuROM).

## 3. EULA / TOS

**Note:** 2,620 Words found within Fable 3's EULA.

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

**Note:** Fable 3's Readme will provide further details on how SecuROM will affect users.

## 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:** Fable 3 will also install Will install xlive.dll + related files in /Windows/System32/SysWOW64/

- ✗ Third parties *partially* identified
- ✗ Users have limited control over their Games For Windows Live account
- ✗ User data is retained by Microsoft 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 Fable 3

*Looking at Fable 3's End User License Agreement.*

- ✓ EULA / TOS covers Fable 3, Games For Windows Live and SecuROM DRM
  - ✓ Refunds and/or exchanges offered for purchased games
  - ✓ Can replace damaged copies with a free, replacement copy
  - ✓ Can create 1 backup copy of Fable 3
  - ✓ Won't blacklist specific background services or software
  - ✓ All warranties provided
  - ✓ Users can initiate legal action if the arbitration process fails
  - ✓ Users can criticise or provide criticism about the game without reprisals
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- ✗ EULA / TOS is only found within Fable 3
  - ✗ Difficult to read, understand and is inconsistently worded
  - ✗ Drafted to only abide by the laws of USA within the state of Washington
  - ✗ 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
  - ✗ Terms and conditions for SecuROM DRM aren't clearly defined
  - ✗ Circumvention of Games For Windows Live and SecuROM DRM prohibited
  - ✗ Fable 3's source code isn't to be modified or reverse-engineered
  - ✗ Not permitted to create "mods"
  - ✗ Monitoring services / software are required to play Fable 3
  - ✗ Cover waived against any unforeseeable damages, disruptions of service
  - ✗ Termination process dictated by Microsoft Games Studios

*Looking at how Fable 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
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- ✗ No installation logs of files and registry keys
  - ✗ Extra Fable 3 files found outside of gaming directory
  - ✗ Extra Games For Windows Live and SecuROM DRM files found outside of gaming directory

## 5. Updates / Patching

*Looking at how Fable 3 is patched prior and after gameplay.*

- ✓ Can play the game unpatched
- ✗ No plans to sunset Games For Windows Live and SecuROM DRM

## 6. DRM & Activation

**Note:** Fable 3 will connect to the following servers: Microsoft, Sony DADC (SecuROM) and Verisign

**Notes:** The PC interface for Games For Windows Live will “lead” users into creating a Live account even though the option to create a local offline account is found amongst text which users might not find. Such methods can be considered to contain “Dark Pattern”-like traits.

*Looking at Games For Windows Live and SecuROM DRM in relation to Fable 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
- ✓ Can opt out of tying Fable 3 to a Games For Windows Live user account
- ✓ Can play single-player game offline
- ✗ 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 to one PC per month
- ✗ Game is locked to specific Games For Windows Live user account if desired
- ✗ Games For Windows Live and SecuROM DRM are implemented
- ✗ Limited to 5 installations on one PC per month
- ✗ No support or troubleshooting process
- ✗ Activating the game isn't simple and hassle-free

## 7. Gameplay Experience

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

**Note:** Users can create a Local offline Games For Windows Live account, which allows users to play Fable 3 offline.

**Note:** Savegame found in /User Documents/Save Games/Lionhead Studios/Fable 3/

**Note:** VideoOptionsConfig.xml found within the Fable 3 game folder is the only file that can make further graphical edits only!

- ✓ 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 with console controller
- ✓ 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 Windows
- ✗ Cannot modify console controller settings
- ✗ Requires constant and tethered internet connection to access DLC
- ✗ Will “phone home”
- ✗ Can only play on one PC at a time per game / account
- ✗ DRM services running in the background after gameplay

## 8. PC Checkup

*Looking at whether Fable 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 Fable 3 without major errors
- ✓ System configuration files remain unaltered
  
- ✗ Startup altered to include DRM services (Games For Windows Live)
- ✗ DRM services running in the background after shutdown

## 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

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

## 10. Customer Support

*Looking at the customer support side of Fable 3 through Lionhead Studios and Microsoft Games Studios*

- ✗ Customer service / support is spread out between Lionhead and Microsoft
- ✗ Microsoft Support is difficult to use
- ✗ Searching on Microsoft Support about Fable 3 is non-existent
- ✗ No option provided for giving feedback on the service and quality of customer support

## RYG's VERDICT

# 49%

## BARGAIN BIN MATERIAL

64% and below

## SHOWS PROMISE & POTENTIAL

Between 65% and 84%

## WORTH SUPPORTING

85% and above

*What saved Fable 3 from receiving a lower score even though it was using double-DRM protection scheme one of which kept files and registry keys hidden as system files was Microsoft's detailed and upfront Privacy Policy and EULA. Fable 3 is a messy game to clean up after a relatively tame and painless gameplay experience. Consider this a bargain-bin title.*



### Colophon

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

### Disclaimer

These analyses are only a guide and represent RYG's perspective into Fable 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 Fable 3 and hope you continue to support our work.