

# Hitman: Absolution

An RYG Analysis

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

**Developer:** IO Interactive  
**Publisher:** Square Enix

## RYG's VERDICT

**61%** **BARGAIN BIN MATERIAL**  
**64% and Below**

### 1. Product Info

*See Also:* [Steam's Privacy Policy](#), which is separate to [Square Enix's Privacy Policy](#), [Steam's Subscriber's Agreement](#) and [Hitman: Absolution EULA](#).

*Looking at how much information is provided on Hitman: Absolution (Hitman) on its website prior and on release.*

- ✓ Hitman: Absolution (Hitman) released simultaneously with its console version
- ✓ Hitman released globally on 20 November 2012
- ✓ Minimum and recommended specs provided
- ✓ Advised Steamworks (Steam) DRM was to be used for Hitman
- ✓ Advised how Steam DRM would activate the game through Hitman
- ✓ Manual and Readme provided with Hitman
- ✓ EULA, Privacy Policy and TOS fully accessible on [steampowered.com](#)
- ✓ All game-related information can be found on [steampowered.com](#)
  
- ✗ Available only on Windows
- ✗ Base game sold as multiple "editions" with varying selections of day-one DLCs
- ✗ ([Sniper Challenge](#)) Demo provided under provisions users pre-ordered Hitman

### 2a. Privacy Policy

*Note:* 2,329 words found within [Square Enix's Privacy Policy](#).

*Note:* Steam's Privacy Policy is evaluated as a separate section [2b. Privacy Policy \(STEAM\)](#).

*Looking at Hitman's Privacy Policy through Square Enix*

- ✓ Privacy Policy found on Square Enix's website and on Hitman's EULA
- ✓ Easy to read, understand and is worded with clear consistency
- ✓ "Personally-identifiable" and "non-personally identifiable" info are defined
- ✓ Policy specifies how gameplay info are collected before and during gameplay
- ✓ Data centres are 100% safe and secure
- ✓ Info is used solely for the purposes of gameplay
- ✓ Visible opt-in / opt-out process *in respect to registering Hitman via. Publisher*
- ✓ Users can access their gameplay data
- ✓ Can review and query changes made to the Privacy Policy
  
- ✗ Policy only applies to Hitman only
- ✗ Users not visibly notified of any changes made to the Policy
- ✗ Not advised where the info is specifically stored

*Note:* Privacy Policy was retrieved January 2013; No effective date noted on Square Enix's Privacy Policy.

## 2b. 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.*

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

## 3a. EULA (GAME)

**Note:** 4,169 words found in [Hitman: Absolution EULA](#).

**Note:** Steam's Subscriber's Agreement (EULA / TOS) is evaluated as a separate section 3b. EULA (STEAM)

- × Third parties not identified
- × Little or no options to modify user's gameplay data
- × Users have limited control over their gameplay data
- × Users can't validate what they've provided
- × User data is retained by Square Enix for an extended period of time
- × Users must accept ALL changes made to the Policy before playing Hitman

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

- ✓ Privacy Policy found on [steampowered.com](#)
- ✓ Policy applies to Steam Client, Steamworks DRM and Hitman
- ✓ 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
- ✓ 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 the info they send via. their user account
- × Users must accept ALL Policy changes before playing Hitman

*Looking at Hitman's EULA from Square Enix.*

- ✓ EULA / TOS is found on [steampowered.com](#)
- ✓ EULA / TOS covers Hitman and Steam DRM
- ✓ Can replace damaged copies with a free, replacement copy
- ✓ Terms and conditions for Steam DRM are clearly defined
- ✓ 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
  
- × Difficult to read, understand and is inconsistently worded
- × Drafted to only abide by the laws of the UK
- × 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
- × Circumvention of Steam DRM prohibited
- × Back-ups aren't permitted

**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.

*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:** All Steam-related files will be installed to the main Steam directory only!

## 5. Updates / Patching

**Note:** New players will be required to install a 2.3Gb patch before playing Hitman: Absolution

- ✗ Hitman's source code isn't to be modified or reverse-engineered
- ✗ Not permitted to create "mods"
- ✗ Monitoring services / software are required to play Hitman
- ✗ Warranties waived (excluding physical merchantability warranties)
- ✗ Cover waived against any unforeseeable damages, disruptions of service
- ✗ Termination process dictated by Square Enix

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

- ✓ EULA / TOS is found on [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
- ✗ 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 Hitman is installed on Windows PCs only.*

- ✓ Custom installation options are provided
- ✓ All files are installed within folders designated by users
- ✓ Steam DRM files installed within folders designated by users
- ✓ Currently-executing background services won't interfere with installation
- ✓ Error-free installation
  
- ✗ No installation logs of files and registry keys
- ✗ Installation completed beyond 60 minutes (*excluding time spent updating*)

*Looking at how Hitman is patched prior and after gameplay.*

- ✓ No other DRM files or registry keys are installed
- ✓ Details of patches provided via [Steam](#)
- ✓ Users can be advised of game patch's availability
- ✓ Users advised of any changes to the Privacy Policy or EULA before an update

## 6. DRM & Activation

**Note:** It is recommended that (new) users should install and update Steam first before installing Hitman: Absolution.

**Note:** Hitman will only be connected to the following servers: Valve, IO Interactive, Comodo (SSL), Highwinds Networks and Limelight Networks.

**See Also:** How to play Hitman: Absolution in [offline mode](#).

**Note:** Whilst options are provided to register Hitman: Absolution via. IO Interactive, it is not a requirement.

## 7. Gameplay Experience

**Note:** There are no local save-games provided for Hitman: Absolution. They are saved via. Steam Cloud.

**Note:** There are settings which can be "modified" via. the Registry. This can be done via. Regedit within the /HKCU/ Software/IO Interactive/Hitman Absolution/ folder.

- ✗ Automatic updates are mandatory
- ✗ Requires ALL patches to play Hitman
- ✗ Patches only installed via. automatic updates
- ✗ 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 Hitman 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
  - ✓ Users are aware and advised on how Hitman will be activated
  - ✓ Username, 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 user account is required (*Registering Hitman is optional*)
  - ✗ Game is locked to specific account after activation

*Looking at the gameplay aspects of Hitman: Absolution 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 keyboard and mouse controls
  - ✓ Can play with (XBox360) console controller
  - ✓ Can play in windowed mode
  - ✓ Can play offline
  - ✓ Won't "phone home"
  - ✓ 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
  - ✓ No DRM or monitoring services running in the background
- 
- ✗ Can only play on one PC at a time per game / account
  - ✗ Can't modify savegame and/or ini file

## 8. PC Checkup

*Looking at whether Hitman 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 Hitman 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:* Some registry keys relating to Steam remaining after a complete uninstallation are as follows: /HKCR/steam/, /HKCU/Software/Valve and /HKU/Software/Wow6432Node/Valve

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

- ✓ Clean uninstallation in relation to Hitman and Steam-related files
- ✗ Will need to uninstall the game via. Control Panel
- ✗ Some registry keys related to Steam and Hitman remain

## 10. Customer Support

*Looking at the customer support side of Hitman through Square Enix*

- ✓ Customer service in respect to Square Enix is quick to respond within 24 hours
- ✓ Consumers can initiate legal action if arbitration process fails
- ✗ Customer service / support is spread out across Steam, Square Enix & IO Int.
- ✗ Customer service / support is difficult to use
- ✗ Searching specific info on Steam, Square Enix & IO Interactive is difficult

## RYG's VERDICT

# 61%

## BARGAIN BIN MATERIAL

64% and below

## SHOWS PROMISE & POTENTIAL

Between 65% and 84%

## WORTH SUPPORTING

85% and above

*It's a shame that some of the simplest things in which Square Enix and IO Interactive could've done to push the score higher were easily overlooked. Providing a free demo, simple list of instructions on activating Hitman through Steam for newbies - even providing local savegames and "ini" configuration files would've helped immensely. Other than that Hitman is a clean and playable PC game.*



### Colophon

This analysis of Hitman: Absolution 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. Hitman: Absolution was bought with RYG funds through OzGameShop.

### Disclaimer

These analyses are only a guide and represent RYG's perspective into Hitman: Absolution 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 Hitman: Absolution 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.

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