

Kingdom Rush

An RYG Analysis

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

Developer: Ironhide Games
Publisher: Ironhide Games

RYG's VERDICT

65% **SHOWS PROMISE & POTENTIAL**
Between 65% and 84%

1a. Product Info

Note: All "Heroes" within Kingdom Rush are fully accessible and is based on the player's progression through the game. The iOS / Android version are supported by microtransactions.

Note: Linux port is **still in progress**.

Looking at how much information is provided on Kingdom Rush on the Steam site prior and on release.

- ✓ Kingdom Rush released globally on 07.01.2014
- ✓ Base game and day-one DLCs sold as one package
- ✓ Minimum and recommended specs provided
- ✓ Demo provided as a flash version through the [official website](#)
- ✓ Advised Steamworks (Steam) DRM was to be used for Kingdom Rush
- ✓ Advised how Steam DRM would activate the game through Kingdom Rush
- ✓ EULA, Privacy Policy and TOS fully accessible on [steampowered.com](#)
- ✓ All game-related information can be found on [steampowered.com](#)

- ✗ Available only on Windows and MacOS
- ✗ No Manual and/or Readme

1b. Digital Dwnld

Note: Refer to Section 3, [Billing, Payment & Other Subscriptions](#) in respect to pre-order refunds for users living in the EU

Note: Difference in prices for Kingdom Rush can be found via. [Steam Apps Database](#).

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 Kingdom Rush
- ✓ Advised how Steam DRM would activate Kingdom Rush
- ✓ Free and unlimited access and downloads after purchase
- ✓ Can backup purchased games "offline" (e.g. external or optical drives)
- ✓ Refunds offered for pre-orders (EU ONLY!)
- ✓ Can access personal data
- ✓ Can terminate account or request to terminate account

- ✗ Kingdom Rush is priced inconsistently across global regions
- ✗ Download / Client Manager is required, including for gameplay
- ✗ User account creation is required
- ✗ No refunds or exchanges for purchased games
- ✗ Warranties waived (excluding physical merchantability warranties)
- ✗ Cover waived against any unforeseeable damages, disruptions of service

2. 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 2014; Effective Date of Steam's Privacy Policy prior to this evaluation was August 2012.

3a. EULA (GAME)

3b. EULA (STEAM)

Note: 6,946 Words found in Steam's EULA.

EULA has been updated to July 2013.

- ✗ Account termination voids past purchases and licenses to play them
- ✗ Consumers prevented from disputing Steam TOS breaches made against them
- ✗ Can't review and question changes made to Steam TOS
- ✗ Past purchases voided after refusing to accept Steam TOS

Looking at Kingdom Rush's Privacy Policy through Steam

- ✓ Privacy Policy found on steampowered.com
- ✓ Policy applies to Steam Client, Steamworks DRM and Kingdom Rush
- ✓ 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 their Steam account
- ✗ Users must accept ALL changes before playing Kingdom Rush

Looking at Kingdom Rush's EULA from Ironhide Games.

- ✓ EULA / TOS wasn't found / wasn't required.

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

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](#))

5. Updates / Patching

Note: The latest version (~400Mb) evaluated required no patches or updates.

6. DRM & Activation

Note: It is recommended that (new) users should install and update Steam first before installing Kingdom Rush.

Note: Kingdom Rush will be connected to the following servers: Valve (Highwinds Networks, Telia.Net, Kaia Networks, QWest Communications, Limelight Networks, Level 3 Communications, Comcast & WA Internet Exchange)

- ✗ 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 Kingdom Rush 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
- ✓ Installation completed within 10 minutes (using an ADSL2+ connection)

- ✗ No installation logs of files and registry keys

Looking at how Kingdom Rush is patched prior and after gameplay.

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

- ✗ Patches only installed via. Steam's update service
- ✗ Changes to the Privacy Policy or EULA / TOS not provided until updates begin
- ✗ No installation logs of files and registry keys
- ✗ No plans to sunset Steam DRM

Looking at Steam DRM in relation to Kingdom Rush 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 Kingdom Rush 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

See Also: How to play Kingdom Rush in **offline mode**.

7. Gameplay Experience

See Also: How to play Kingdom Rush in **offline mode**.

Note: Kingdom Rush will only “phone home” in offline mode in respect to achievements only.

Note: Saves found within the / Steamapps/Kingdom Rush/ folder. No known configuration files exist.

8. PC Checkup

9. Removal Uninstall

Note: Steam does offer an option to **manually remove all Steam-related files**. It does work and will remove any remaining files and keys after uninstallation of Kingdom Rush

- ✗ 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
- ✗ Game is locked to specific account after activation

Looking at the gameplay aspects of Kingdom Rush 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
- ✓ 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

- ✗ Only changes in screen resolution are provided
- ✗ Only playable on a (fixed) mouse and keyboard configuration
- ✗ Will “phone home”
- ✗ 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

Looking at whether Kingdom Rush 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 Kingdom Rush without major errors
- ✓ Start-up settings remain unaltered
- ✓ No DRM and monitoring services running in the background
- ✓ System configuration files remain unaltered

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

- ✓ Knowledgebase provided at Steam to remove all Steam files and registry keys
- ✓ Knowledgebase in removing game + DRM files is easy to understand

- ✗ Will need to uninstall the game via. Control Panel
- ✗ Some game files and registry keys related to Steam and the game remain

10. Customer Support

Looking at the customer support side of Kingdom Rush 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

65%

BARGAIN BIN MATERIAL

64% and below

SHOWS PROMISE & POTENTIAL

Between 65% and 84%

WORTH SUPPORTING

85% and above

The people at Ironhide Games have made a respectable port of Kingdom Rush from the iOS / Android to PC (Win) with much of the (absorbing) gameplay retained. Micro-transactions are removed in the PC version, although the price point would be very similar to the iOS / Android version. The only real niggles are the phone home requirements in relation to Steam's achievement settings, fixed resolution and control settings, although playing on keyboard / mouse is highly recommended.



Colophon

This analysis of Kingdom Rush 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. Kingdom Rush was bought with RYG funds through Steam.

Disclaimer

These analyses are only a guide and represent RYG's perspective into Kingdom Rush 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 Kingdom Rush 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: Kingdom Rush
Copyright © 2010-2014, Reclaim Your Game (RYG) Pty Ltd
www.reclaimyourgame.com @projectryg
PRYG3-00103-01
28 January 2014