

Kingdoms of Amalur

An RYG Analysis

Platform: PC (Windows only)
DRM: EA Origin
Digital Distributor: PHYSICAL COPY ONLY!!!

Developer: 38 Studios / Big Huge Games
Publisher: Electronic Arts

RYG's VERDICT

46% **BARGAIN BIN MATERIAL**
64% and Below

1. Product Info

Note: The demo can be downloaded via [EA Origin](#) or through [Steam](#). Both Origin and/or Steam clients are required to play the Kingdoms of Amalur Demo. Demo is reported to be as buggy via [PCGamingWiki](#).

Looking at how much information is provided on Kingdoms of Amalur on its website and through a distributor prior and on release.

- ✓ Base game and day-one DLCs sold as one package
- ✓ Minimum and recommended specs provided
- ✓ Demo provided
- ✓ Advised EA Origin DRM was to be used for Kingdoms of Amalur
- ✓ Advised how EA Origin DRM would activate through Kingdoms of Amalur
- ✓ Manual and Readme provided with Kingdoms of Amalur
- ✓ EULA, Privacy Policy and TOS fully accessible on [EA's Product EULA's Page](#)
- ✓ All game-related information can be found on [store.origin.com](#)

- ✗ Kingdoms of Amalur released after the sale of its console version
- ✗ Kingdoms of Amalur released with different global dates
- ✗ Available only on Windows

2. Privacy Policy

Note: 2,997 words found within [Electronic Art's Privacy Policy](#).

Looking at Kingdoms of Amalur's Privacy Policy through Electronic Arts

- ✓ Privacy Policy found on [EA's Product EULA's Page](#)
- ✓ Policy applies to Kingdoms of Amalur and EA Origin DRM
- ✓ Users can access their EA Origin user account
- ✓ Users can modify their EA Origin user account

- ✗ 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
- ✗ Doesn't define what info is specifically collected before and during gameplay
- ✗ Not advised where the info is specifically stored
- ✗ Assurances of safety and security of information not provided
- ✗ Policy not clearly defined how info is used
- ✗ Third parties not identified

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

3. EULA / TOS

Note: 4,080 Words found within Kingdoms of Amalur'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: Users removing Kingdoms of Amalur from their system should remove all EA, Origin and/or KoA files within the /AppData/, /ProgramData/ and /My Documents/ folders. Registry keys will require a search string of EA and/or Origin.

- ✗ Opt-in / opt-out process not provided
- ✗ Users have limited control over their user data
- ✗ 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 to the Policy before playing Kingdoms of Amalur

Looking at Kingdoms of Amalur's End User License Agreement via. Electronic Arts

- ✓ EULA / TOS is fully accessible on [EA's Product EULA's Page](#)
- ✓ EULA / TOS covers Kingdoms of Amalur and EA Origin DRM
- ✓ Terms and conditions for EA Origin DRM are clearly defined
- ✓ Won't blacklist specific background services or software
- ✓ 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 US
- ✗ 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 provided for a fee
- ✗ Circumvention of EA Origin DRM prohibited
- ✗ Back-ups aren't permitted
- ✗ Kingdoms of Amalur's source code isn't to be modified or reverse-engineered
- ✗ Not permitted to create "mods"
- ✗ Monitoring services / software are required to play Kingdoms of Amalur
- ✗ 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 Kingdoms of Amalur 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 registry keys provided after installation
- ✗ Extra game files found outside of intended installation directory
- ✗ Extra EA Origin DRM files found in /AppData/ and /ProgramData/

5. Updates / Patching

Note: First time users should expect a 90Mb automatic update of Kingdoms of Amalur straight after its installation. Unfortunately, there are no notes on this.

6. DRM & Activation

Note: While activations are unlimited in its many forms users are only permitted to play Kingdoms of Amalur on one active PC at a time.

Note: Kingdoms of Amalur will connect to the following servers prior and during gameplay: Electronic Arts, EA Origin, Google, AppNexus, Amazon Web Services, Facebook, X Plus One Solutions, Limelight Networks, Verisign, Level 3 Communications, Edgecast Networks and OpenX Technologies.

7. Gameplay Experience

Note: Savegame and Config files are found under the /Documents/My Games/Reckoning section.

Looking at how Kingdoms of Amalur is patched prior and after gameplay.

- ✗ Automatic updates are mandatory
- ✗ Day-one patch required
- ✗ Requires ALL patches to play Kingdoms of Amalur
- ✗ Patches only installed via. automatic updates
- ✗ Details of patches not provided prior to installation
- ✗ Notifications not provided for availability of game patches
- ✗ Changes to the Privacy Policy and/or EULA / TOS not provided
- ✗ No installation logs of files and registry keys
- ✗ Rollback option not provided
- ✗ No plans to sunset EA Origin DRM

Looking at the EA Origin DRM of Kingdoms of Amalur 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 Kingdoms of Amalur will be activated
- ✓ Username, password and email are only required
- ✓ Unlimited online activations to any one PC
- ✓ Can play single-player game offline
- ✓ Only EA Origin DRM is implemented
- ✓ Unlimited hardware activations
- ✓ Unlimited installations
- ✓ Activation is simple and hassle-free
- ✗ No instructions provided on the activation process
- ✗ Can't verify the safety and reliability of the activation process
- ✗ No offline option
- ✗ A non-transferrable user account is required
- ✗ Game is locked to specific account after activation
- ✗ No support or troubleshooting process

Looking at the gameplay aspects of Kingdoms of Amalur and how it interacts with PC Windows.

- ✓ Can play on minimum specs
- ✓ Disc not required for gameplay
- ✓ 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
- ✓ Kingdoms of Amalur will retain gamers' settings
- ✓ Will resume at the last checkpoint
- ✓ Can modify savegame and/or ini file

See Also: [PCGamingWiki's page on Kingdoms of Amalur](#), in particular to its custom graphic settings.

8. PC Checkup

- ✗ Requires original copy to play the game
- ✗ Inadequate in-game graphic settings
- ✗ Can only remap mouse/keyboard controls
- ✗ Will “phone home”
- ✗ 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 Kingdoms of Amalur 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 Kingdoms of Amalur 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: Users removing Kingdoms of Amalur from their system should remove all EA, Origin and/or KoA files within the / AppData/, /ProgramData/ and / My Documents/ folders. Registry keys will require a search string of EA and/or Origin.

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

- ✓ Backup savegames prompt provided / Savegames retained
- ✗ Will need to uninstall the game via. Control Panel
- ✗ EA Origin DRM Files and Registry Keys will remain
- ✗ Kingdoms of Amalur game files in /AppData/ will remain
- ✗ Incomplete manual instructions to remove game + DRM files provided

10. Customer Support

Looking at the customer support side of Kingdoms of Amalur through Electronic Arts

- ✓ Customer service / support found in one place at answers.ea.com
- ✓ answers.ea.com is easy to use and navigate
- ✓ Searching on answers.ea.com is direct and quick
- ✓ Info is easy to read and understand
- ✗ Customer service takes more than 24 hours to respond
- ✗ Customer service will take more than 24 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 service and quality of support

RYG's VERDICT

46%

BARGAIN BIN MATERIAL

64% and below

SHOWS PROMISE & POTENTIAL

Between 65% and 84%

WORTH SUPPORTING

85% and above

A lot of the issues we found in Kingdoms of Amalur were no different to the current EA games in 2013. What made it rate more poorly than previous EA games was reflected in its standard EA (legal) documentation, "unknown" update, instances of "phoning home" and a litany of files and registry keys that required further manual removal after its complete uninstallation. Apart from this Kingdoms of Amalur is (just) playable in the time that we spent.



Colophon

This analysis of Kingdoms of Amalur 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. Kingdoms of Amalur was bought with RYG funds through JB HiFi.

Disclaimer

These analyses are only a guide and represent RYG's perspective into Kingdoms of Amalur 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 Kingdoms of Amalur 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: Kingdoms of Amalur
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