

# Mass Effect 3

An RYG Analysis

**Platform:** PC (Windows 7 only)  
**DRM:** EA Origin and SecuROM  
**Digital Distributor:** PHYSICAL COPY ONLY!

**Developer:** BioWare  
**Publisher:** Electronic Arts

## RYG's VERDICT

**42%** **BARGAIN BIN MATERIAL**  
**64% and Below**

### 1. Product Info

*See Also:* Demo can be found at [BioWare](#), which will redirect users to [EA Origin's website](#).

*Note:* SecuROM is implemented in all games released through EA Origin as a Release Date Check mechanism.

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

- ✓ Mass Effect 3 released simultaneously with its console version
- ✓ Mass Effect 3 released globally on 6 March 2012
- ✓ Minimum and recommended specs provided
- ✓ Demo provided
- ✓ EULA, Privacy Policy and TOS fully accessible on [www.ea.com/1/product-eulas](http://www.ea.com/1/product-eulas)
- ✓ All game-related information can be found on [www.ea.com/mass-effect-3](http://www.ea.com/mass-effect-3)
  
- ✗ Available only on Windows
- ✗ Base game sold as multiple "editions" with varying selections of day-one DLCs
- ✗ EA Origin (and SecuROM) was to be used after general notification & release
- ✗ No advice on how SecuROM would activate Mass Effect 3
- ✗ "Bare-bones" manual provided

### 2. Privacy Policy

*Note:* 7,888 words found within [Electronic Art's Privacy Policy](#).

*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.

*Looking at Mass Effect 3's Privacy Policy found only through Electronic Art's official website.*

- ✓ Privacy Policy found on [www.ea.com](http://www.ea.com) and on the game
- ✓ Policy specifies what info's collected before and during gameplay
- ✓ Info is used solely for customer support, internal research and advertising
- ✓ Visible opt-in / opt-out process
- ✓ Users can access their EA Origin account
- ✓ Users can modify their personal details on their EA Origin Account
  
- ✗ Policy only applies to EA Origin and Mass Effect 3 (not SecuROM)
- ✗ 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
- ✗ Not advised where the info is specifically stored
- ✗ Assurances of safety and security of information not provided

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

## 3. EULA / TOS

**Note:** 6,942 words found in Mass Effect 3's and EA Origin'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:** It is recommended that users install and update Origin first before installing Mass Effect 3 as opposed to installing Origin from the game disc.

**Note:** All SecuROM files will be removed once the Release Date Checker verifies Mass Effect 3.

- ✗ Third parties not identified
- ✗ Users have limited control over their gameplay info
- ✗ 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 made to the Policy before playing Mass Effect 3

*Looking at Mass Effect 3's and EA Origin's End User License Agreement.*

- ✓ EULA / TOS is found on [www.ea.com/1/product-eulas](http://www.ea.com/1/product-eulas)
- ✓ Terms and conditions for EA Origin DRM only are clearly defined
- ✓ Won't blacklist specific background services or software
- ✓ Users can criticise or provide criticism about the game without reprisals
  
- ✗ EULA / TOS only covers Mass Effect 3 and EA Origin (and not SecuROM)
- ✗ Difficult to read, understand and is inconsistently worded
- ✗ Drafted to only abide by the laws of USA 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
- ✗ License to play the game only provided
- ✗ No refunds or exchanges for purchased games
- ✗ Replacement copies not provided OR replacement copies provided for a fee
- ✗ Circumvention of EA Origin and SecuROM DRM prohibited
- ✗ Back-ups aren't permitted
- ✗ Mass Effect 3's source code isn't to be modified or reverse-engineered
- ✗ Not permitted to create "mods"
- ✗ Monitoring services / software are required to play Mass Effect 3
- ✗ 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 Mass Effect 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 game files found in /Program Data/ and /Common Files/
- ✗ Extra EA Origin DRM files found in /AppData/ folders

## 5. Updates / Patching

**Note:** Day-one patch is required to activate Mass Effect 3.

**Note:** The patch is roughly 43 Mb

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

- ✓ No other DRM files or registry keys are installed
- ✗ Automatic updates are mandatory
- ✗ Day-one patch required
- ✗ Requires ALL patches to play Mass Effect 3
- ✗ 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 not provided until updates begin
- ✗ No installation logs of files and registry keys
- ✗ Rollback option not provided
- ✗ No plans to sunset EA Origin and SecuROM DRM

## 6. DRM & Activation

**Note:** Mass Effect 3 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 and SecuROM (Sony DADC)

**Note:** As described in Section 1, Product Info, SecuROM is implemented in EA Origin as a Release Date Checker.

*Looking at EA Origin and SecuROM DRM in relation to Mass Effect 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
- ✓ Username, password and email are only required
- ✓ Unlimited online activations to any one PC
- ✓ Can play single-player game offline
- ✓ 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
- ✗ Activation pathway isn't explained
- ✗ A non-transferrable user account is required
- ✗ Game is locked to specific account after activation
- ✗ EA Origin and SecuROM DRM are implemented
- ✗ No support or troubleshooting process

## 7. Gameplay Experience

**See Also:** How to import your savegames from Mass Effect 1 and 2 from [PCGamingWiki](#).

**Note:** gamersettings.ini within / Documents/Bioware/Mass Effect 3//Biogame/Config folder

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

- ✓ Can play on minimum specs
- ✓ Disc not required for gameplay
- ✓ Suitable options to modify video settings
- ✓ Can customise keyboard and controls
- ✓ 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
- ✓ Will resume at the last checkpoint

*See Also:* [PCGamingWiki](#) has also provided a section on how to “hack” your preferred controller to Mass Effect 3.

## 8. PC Checkup

- ✓ Will resume at the last checkpoint
- ✗ Requires original copy to play the game
- ✗ Only playable on mouse and keyboard
- ✗ Requires constant and tethered internet connection to access DLC
- ✗ Will “phone home”
- ✗ AV and Firewall settings needs to be disabled before play
- ✗ 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 Mass Effect 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 Mass Effect 3 without major errors
- ✓ Start-up settings remain unaltered
- ✓ No DRM / monitoring services running in the background after shutting down
- ✓ System configuration files remain unaltered

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

- ✗ Will need to uninstall the game via. Control Panel
- ✗ No prompt to backup savegames provided
- ✗ EA Origin files and registry keys will remain after uninstallation

*Looking at the customer support side of Mass Effect 3 through EA Origin’s Support*

- ✓ Customer service / support found in one place through EA Origin client
- ✓ Help through EA Origin’s FAQ is easy to use and navigate
- ✓ Info is easy to read and understand
- ✓ Customer services is quick to respond within 24 hours
- ✓ Arbitration / resolution service is available
- ✓ Arbitration / resolution process is easy to follow / understand

- ✗ Customer service will take more than 72 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 quality of customer support

**Note:** EA Origin files will remain in /AppData/ and /Program Data/ folders. EA Origin and Electronic can be found and removed via. a registry search through RegEdit.

## 9. Removal Uninstall

**Note:** EA’s chat service will respond within 30 seconds to user-specific service-related issues.

**Note:** The language and tone from EA’s customer service department is suggestive of a department that is outsourced and is foreign from some of the issues that plague EA Origin.

## 10. Customer Support

## RYG's VERDICT

# 42%

## BARGAIN BIN MATERIAL

64% and below

## SHOWS PROMISE & POTENTIAL

Between 65% and 84%

## WORTH SUPPORTING

85% and above

*What ultimately hurts Mass Effect 3 is its documentation, coupled with its customer support and mimicry of its DRM-cum-Digital-Distribution Service to Valve's Steam. It'll make sense once we publish a Steam-related title on January 12. Yes, EA Origin also uses SecuROM in its integrated DRM plan, which, to our knowledge, they have yet to acknowledge. Best to purchase this game at a discounted rate or as a Mass Effect bundle which EA had released not too long ago.*



### Colophon

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

### Disclaimer

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