Max Payne 3

Platform: PC (Windows 7 only)
DRM: Rockstar Social Club and Gameshield
Digital Distributor: PHYSICAL COPY ONLY!

Developer: Rockstar Games
Publisher: Rockstar Games

RYG's VERDICT

42% BARGAIN BIN MATERIAL
64% and Below

1. Product Info

Looking at how much information is provided on Max Payne 3 on its website prior and on release.

See Also: Further details on Gameshield DRM used in Max Payne 3 can be found on RYG.

See Also: Max Payne 3's EULA and Privacy Policy.

Note: There's little information on how many activation limits a user would have in relation to Gameshield DRM.

- ✓ Minimum and recommended specs provided
- ✓ Advised Rockstar Social Club & Gameshield DRM to be used for Max Payne 3
- ✓ Manual and Readme provided
- ✓ EULA, Privacy Policy and TOS fully accessible on rockstargames.com
- ✓ All game-related information can be found on rockstargames.com

- ✗ Max Payne 3 for PC released 2 weeks after the sale of its console version
- ✗ Max Payne 3 released with different global dates
- ✗ Available only on Windows
- ✗ Base game sold as multiple "editions" with varying selections of day-one DLCs
- ✗ No demo
- ✗ No advice on how Rockstar Social Club & Gameshield DRM would affect users

2. Privacy Policy

Looking at Max Payne 3's Privacy Policy found only through Rockstar Game's official website.

Note: 5,386 words found within Rockstar Game's Privacy Policy.

See Also: *"Who is collecting my information and how is it used?"* within Rockstar Game's Privacy Policy.

See Also: Rockstar Game's Privacy Policy, retrieved 8 December 2012

- ✓ Policy specifies how user's info is collected before and during gameplay
- ✓ Info is used solely to access Rockstar's services, confirm purchases, tech support and internal research (demographics, marketing and gaming stats)
- ✓ Users can access their Rockstar Social Club account
- ✓ Users can modify their Rockstar Social Club account
- ✓ Users can validate the info they've provided
- ✓ Can review and query changes made to the Privacy Policy

- ✗ Privacy Policy only found on rockstargames.com
- ✗ Policy only applies to Rockstar Social Club
- ✗ 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

Note: Some third parties are identified. They include Arvato Digital Services, Mediaplex, Yahoo, DoubleClick, Nielsen, Omniture and ATLAS

Note: Users can choose to opt-out of their Rockstar Social Club account and/or services via. Email.

- ✘ "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
- ✘ Third parties not fully identified
- ✘ Opt-in / opt-out process not provided
- ✘ Users have limited control over the info they send to Rockstar during gameplay
- ✘ User data is retained by Rockstar Games for an extended period of time
- ✘ Users must accept ALL changes made to the Policy before playing Max Payne 3

3. EULA TOS

Note: 2,995 Words found within Max Payne 3's EULA.

See Also: Section 2, *"Information, Collection and Usage"*, within Max Payne 3's EULA, which also ties to Rockstar's Privacy Policy.

Looking at Max Payne 3's End User License Agreement.

- ✓ EULA / TOS is found on rockstargames.com
- ✓ EULA / TOS covers Max Payne 3, Rockstar Social Club & Gameshield DRM
- ✓ Can review and query changes made to the EULA / TOS
- ✓ Can replace damaged copies with a free, replacement copy
- ✓ Terms and conditions for Rockstar Social Club & Gameshield DRM are defined
- ✓ 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 USA in the state of New York
- ✘ Users not visibly notified of any changes made to the EULA / TOS
- ✘ License to play the game only provided
- ✘ No refunds or exchanges for purchased games
- ✘ Circumvention of Rockstar Social Club & Gameshield DRM prohibited
- ✘ Back-ups aren't permitted
- ✘ Max Payne 3's source code isn't to be modified or reverse-engineered
- ✘ Not permitted to create "mods"
- ✘ Monitoring services / software are required to play Max Payne 3
- ✘ AV and Firewall software require shutdown before gameplay
- ✘ Warranties waived (excluding physical merchantability warranties)
- ✘ Cover waived against any unforeseeable damages, disruptions of service
- ✘ Termination process dictated by Rockstar Games

Note: Users are "requested" to disable or shutdown their AV or Firewall settings/software prior to installation.

Note: Limited warranties, waivers of liability and indemnity are commonly found within many software EULAs and TOSs

4. Setup / Install

Note: Users are "requested" by Rockstar Games to disable or shutdown their AV or Firewall settings/software prior to installation.

Note: 35Gb is required to play Max Payne 3.

Note: Completed installation time (dependent on the connection speed at the time of evaluation) was 2+ hours.

Looking at how Max Payne 3 is installed on Windows PCs only.

- ✓ Custom installation options are provided
- ✓ Currently-executing background services won't interfere with installation
- ✓ Error-free installation

- ✘ No installation logs of files and registry keys
- ✘ Extra files found in /Program Data/ in relation to Rockstar Social Club
- ✘ Extra DRM files found in /Program Data/ in relation to Rockstar Social Club
- ✘ Installation completed just under 70 minutes (excluding ~1 hour of updates)

5. Updates / Patching

Looking at how Max Payne 3 is patched prior and after gameplay.

Note: Day-one patch is required to activate Max Payne 3.

See Also: Complete patch notes supplied by PCGamingWiki.

Note: Manual patches are found through Rockstar Support, however, updating Max Payne 3 automatically is preferred by Rockstar Games.

✓ No other DRM files or registry keys are installed

✗ Automatic updates are mandatory
✗ Day-one patch required
✗ Requires ALL patches to play Max Payne 3
✗ Patches only installed *successfully* 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 Rockstar Social Club and Gameshield DRM

6. DRM & Activation

Looking at Rockstar Social Club and Gameshield DRM in relation to Max Payne 3 and its effects on Windows PCs only.

Note: Unlimited online activations is in respect to Rockstar Social Club only!

Note: Max Payne 3 will connect to the following servers: IGN Entertainment, Google, Rockstar Social Club, Twitter, Entrust (SSL), Verisign, Limelight Networks

See Also: Unknown quantity of instalation and/or hardware activations in relation to Gameshield DRM was noted by Dean Rosolen.

✓ Username, password and email are only required
✓ Unlimited online activations to any one PC
✓ Can play single-player game offline after initially activating Max Payne 3

✗ No instructions provided on the activation process
✗ Will interfere with current AV and/or Firewall settings/software
✗ Can't verify the safety and reliability of the activation process
✗ Activation pathway isn't properly explained
✗ A non-transferrable user account is required
✗ Game is locked to specific Rockstar Social Club account after activation
✗ Rockstar Social Club and Gameshield DRM are implemented
✗ Limited to "unknown number of" hardware activations
✗ Limited to "unknown number of" installations on one PC
✗ No support or troubleshooting process
✗ Activating the game isn't simple and hassle-free

7. Gameplay Experience

Looking at the gameplay aspects of Max Payne 3 and how it interacts with PC Windows.

See Also: GeForce has provided a lengthy tutorial on how to graphically optimise Max Payne 3 on PCs with NVIDIA GPUs.

Note: The equivalent of Max Payne 3's "ini" file is *command-line.txt*. More info at GeForce.

✓ Can play on minimum specs
✓ Disc not required for gameplay
✓ Suitable options to modify video settings
✓ Can customise controls
✓ 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
✓ Will resume at the last checkpoint
✓ Can modify savegame and/or ini file

- ✘ Requires original copy to play the game
- ✘ Requires constant and tethered internet connection to access DLC
- ✘ Will "phone home"
- ✘ AV and Firewall software needs to be shutdown before play
- ✘ Can only play on one PC at a time per game / account
- ✘ DRM and monitoring services will operate during and after gameplay

Note: AV and/or Firewall settings must be disabled before playing Max Payne 3 through Rockstar Social Club.

8. PC Checkup

Looking at whether Max Payne 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 Max Payne 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

9. Removal Uninstall

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

- ✓ Direct uninstallation shortcut provided
- ✓ Backup savegames prompt provided / Savegames retained

- ✘ Rockstar Social Club registry keys will remain

Note: Uninstallation logs of Rockstar Social Club files are provided.

10. Customer Support

Looking at the customer support side of Max Payne 3 through Rockstar Support

- ✓ Customer service / support found in one place at support.rockstargames.com
- ✓ Rockstar Games Support is easy to use and navigate
- ✓ Searching on Rockstar Games Support is direct and quick
- ✓ Info is easy to read and understand
- ✓ Consumers can initiate legal action if arbitration process fails

- ✘ Customer service takes more than 24 hours to respond
- ✘ 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
- ✘ No option provided for giving feedback on the quality of customer support

Note: Tone and language is written to ensure non-response from customers. This enables the support teams to "close" customer-initiated within company-directed timelines.

RYG's VERDICT

42%

BARGAIN BIN MATERIAL

64% and below

Getting Max Payne 3 to launch and play in single-player mode wasn't without difficulties or frustrations. Having to disable AV and/or Firewall settings and software(s) to play Max Payne 3 was the major per-requisite for playing the game. This raises questions on how Rockstar Games had chosen to integrate both Gameshield and Rockstar Social Club into the game. In any case, it's hard to pay full price for the many frustrations that ensued or will ensue for other PC Gamers.

Colophon

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

Disclaimer

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