RYG Evaluates Miasmata

by
Martin Pham
10th December 2014 10:00 PM

Our thoughts on Miasmata are noted below. It's an interesting game that requires some (re)learning in an open world FPS environment, but otherwise a genuine challenge and end-game satisfaction for all interested players.

RYG's Assessment

71%

Shows Promise & Potential

(Between 65% and 84%)

About Miasmata

Miasmata is a first-person survival game that challenges the players wits in developing a medical cure on a remote island. Please refer to each section for our results we've evaluated and our summarised thoughts to gain a better understanding of how Miasmata affects PCs and plays as a PC Game.

RYG Disclaimer

This Windows version of Miasmata (Build: 2.1.0) was obtained through GOG independently with RYG funds for the purposes of evaluation and product testing. Miasmata was evaluated on the following system specs: Windows 7, Intel i5-4460, 16Gb RAM, AMD Radeon R9 290 as well as on a system bearing an Intel HD 4600 Integrated Graphics.

Availability

Developer's Website: http://ionfx.com/product_pc_Miasmata.php
GOG: http://www.gog.com/gamecard/miasmata
Steam: http://store.steampowered.com/app/223510/

Recommended System Specs

OS: Windows XP SP3 or above *(Windows 7 Version Tested)*
CPU: 2.5Ghz single core processor or above
GPU: OpenGL 2.0 compatible card
RAM: 4 Gb
HDD: 5 Gb

Source: GOG

Section 1 - Content Strategy and Product Marketing

+ Was released globally on 28.11.2012
+ Is available through GOG and Steam
+ DRM Free versions sold through GOG
+ EULA, Privacy Policy and Terms of Service accessible through GOG
+ All game-related info is conveniently found on ionfx.com

- Is only available for Windows
- No known available demo
- Minimum / Recommended specs provided through ionfx.com
- Complete download size not provided through ionfx.com

Our Thoughts: While most of the information can be found through GOG (a plus) we would've liked to have seen more information on the developer's website both in terms of availability of purchase, system specs and the like. We did find some graphical issues (at times) but only because some aspects of the game weren't optimised that well for AMD cards (as noted on GOG).

Section 2 - Digital Distribution

+ Is sold at one, global price through GOG
+ Is available worldwide through GOG
+ Download / Client Manager is optional for download of Miasmata
+ Minimum / Recommended specs provided through GOG
+ Released DRM Free through GOG
+ Only Username, Email and Password are required to create a GOG account
+ Alternative payment options provided by Visa, Mastercard and AMEX
+ Currency Notification provided prior, during and after purchase
+ Confirmation of purchase and receipt provided
+ Free and unlimited access and downloads after purchase
+ Can play Miasmata without Download / Client Manager
+ Can backup purchased games 'offline' (e.g. external or optical drives)
+ Refunds and/or exchanges offered for purchased games under specific provisions
+ Can access personal data
+ Can terminate account with relative ease

- Complete download size not provided
- All players warranties waived whenever they use GOG
- Cover waived against any unforseeable damage and/or service disruptions within GOG
- Account termination voids past purchases and licenses to play Miasmata
- Players prevented from disputing / validating Terms of Service breaches made against them
- Can't review and question changes made in Terms of Service
- Past purchases voided after refusing to accept Terms of Service

Our Thoughts: Notwithstanding its DRM Free proposition, GOG has a number of features that distinguishes itself from other competitors, such as a genuine USD to AUD dollar-for-dollar conversion rate, a less-intrusive count creation and payment system, money back guarantees for hard-to-troubleshoot games only and informative gamecards to better inform potential customers. However, its Terms of Service in relation to its disclaimer of warranties and liability waivers are an industry-wide standard.

Section 3 - Privacy Policy

+ Privacy Policy not required as Miasmata will not connect to any servers during gameplay!

+ Privacy Policy found on GOG
+ Policy applies to GOG's website and digital distribution platform
+ Policy's formatted for easy reading on the web
+ Policy's written for easy comprehension
+ "Personally-identifiable" & "non-personally identifiable" info are clearly defined
+ Policy specifies what information are collected at specific areas of the platform
+ Data centres are 100% safe and secure
+ Info is used solely for payments, opt-in email campaigns & acct management
+ Visible opt-in / opt-out process in respect to email campaigns and marketing
+ Players can access their GOG account
+ Players can modify their GOG account
+ Players have full control over their GOG account
+ Players can validate the info they've provided
+ Can review and query changes made to the Privacy Policy

- Players not visibly notified of any changes made to the Policy
- Players not consulted on future revisions to the Privacy Policy
- Not advised where the info is specifically stored
- Third parties not identified
- Players cannot export their information tied to their GOG account
- Player data is retained by GOG / CD Projekt for an extended period of time
- No specific information on how info will be used in the event of a sale/merger
- Players must accept ALL changes made to the Policy before using GOG

Our Thoughts: GOG's Privacy Policy is fairly easy to read, comprehend and players are guided to an actionable outcome in respect to any account-related queries. This is well-supported by GOG's easy-to-use and minimalistic distribution platform, which then leads to a trustworthy and honestly-worded privacy policy. Most of the pertinent issues found in GOG's Privacy Policy are written within "Information Collected By GOG, Points (1) and (2). Players, however, will not be advised on specific events, such as general changes to the Policy Wording (even though the last change was made in 2008) or if information is handed over as a requirement to the proper authorities.

Section 4 - EULA and GOG's TOS

+ EULA / TOS covers Miasmata and GOG's Distribution Platform (There are 907 words in GOG's standard EULA barring third party EULAs)
+ Drafted to coincide with relevant copyright and consumer laws at the point of purchase
+ Refunds and/or exchanges offered for purchased games
+ DRM-Free terms and conditions are defined in their "About Us" page
+ Can back-up copies of Miasmata
+ Permitted to create free "mods" of Miasmata
+ 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

- EULA / TOS is only found within the game itself
- GOG EULA and TOS was not formatted for easy reading
- GOG EULA and TOS was not written for easy reading
- Users not visibly notified of any changes made to the EULA / TOS
- Players not consulted on future revisions to GOG EULA and TOS
- Can't review and query changes made to the EULA / TOS
- License to play the game only provided
- Miasmata's source code isn't to be modified or reverse-engineered
- Warranties waived (excluding physical merchantability warranties)
- Cover waived against any unforeseeable damages, disruptions of service failures
- Termination process dictated by GOG

Our Thoughts: While GOG's EULA and TOS are short and straight to the point, we did find that these binding agreements keep players contained to specifically playing Miasmata with little warranties and provisions outside of the cooling off period and/or restricted refunds / exchanges offer. Please bear in mind that most of the wordings found in the EULA and TOS are similarly-worded in comparison to other EULAs and TOSes found in other games and distribution platforms.

With respect to IonFX's tailored EULA we felt they were similarly worded to GOG's standard EULA with a few exceptions to some wordings in relation to DRM (presumably for Steam users), which wasn't applicable in this particular GOG version.

Section 5 - Installation

+ Custom installation options provided through a compressed file
+ No third party software required
+ All game files installed in main installation directory
+ Currently-executing background services won't interfere with installation
+ Error-free installation

- No installation logs of registry keys

Our Thoughts: As expected, players shouldn't expect too many issues installing and uninstalling Miasmata from their system as it won't leave any remnant files and registry keys behind.

Section 6 - Automatic and/or Manual Patching

+ Automatic updates are optional
+ Can play Miasmata unpatched and with minimal bugs
+ Can download patches manually and/or through other portals
+ Detailed list of changes provided prior to installation
+ Alternate notifications provided for existence of new patches via. Steam
+ Miasmata is playable with latest patches

- Changes / Amendments to Privacy Policy, EULA and/or TOS not provided prior to installation of patches
- No installation logs of files and registry keys
- Rollback option not provided

Our Thoughts: This version of Miasmata on GOG was the latest version released on behalf of IonFX Studios and, as such, we treated it as if it was an unpatched game in our run of tests. With exceptions to a few graphical issues (AMD related) the game played relatively well on recent systems.

Section 7 - DRM and Activation

+ Firewall and AV settings aren't modified or required to be modified
+ Additional user account(s) not required in activating and playing Miasmata
+ Can play single-player game offline
+ Unlimited hardware activations
+ Unlimited installations
+ Activation is simple and hassle-free

Our Thoughts: This version of Miasmata won't need an activation, extra user account or won't connect to any third-party server to validate and verify the player's copy. As far as GOG-packaged games go this is a standard feature of DRM Free gaming.

Section 8 - Gameplay

+ Can play on minimum specs (tested on Intel HD 4000)
+ Can play a backup copy of the game
+ Can play in full screen mode
+ Can play in windowed mode
+ Can play in multiple resolutions up to 1920 x 1080
+ Can remap keyboard and mouse controls
+ Separate volume controls provided for music and sound
+ Full subtitles and/or captions provided
+ Can play Miasmata in offline mode
+ Won't 'phone home' during gameplay
+ No known connectivity issues during gameplay
+ Can play Miasmata error-free
+ Miasmata won't blacklist specific background services or software
+ Can play game at last save checkpoint
+ Can manually save gameplay
+ Can play on multiple machines simultaneously
+ Can modify savegame and/or configuration file

- No options in remapping console controls
- Only English Audio is supported
- No option for players to provide custom subtitles and/or localisation

Our Thoughts: To get the very best out of Miasmata players will need to download the unofficial patch from Steam's community forums, which will fix some visual and gameplay-related issues in the vanilla version (namely the field of view). Beyond this the game demands you to adjust how you normally play FPS games and, for us, the many frustrations we took in keeping the main character alive was the only motivation in figuring out how to master Miasmata. Definitely a recommend buy in respect to gameplay.

Section 9 - General PC Maintenance

+ PC clean of viruses, malware, spyware and rootkits after installation and gameplay of Miasmata
+ HOSTS was clean
+ Windows Startup was clean
+ GOG isn't running after gameplay of Miasmata
+ No other PC settings were modified after gameplay of Miasmata

Our Thoughts: Miasmata is a clean game and won't impact on players PCs nor alter its settings outside of its gameplay.

Section 10 - Uninstallation

+ Clean uninstallation

Our Thoughts: This is a pretty clean installation of the game and so it shouldn't impact player's PCs too much.

Changelog

02.12.2014 – Report published on RYG