

RYG Evaluates Mind: Path To Thalamus and GOG

by

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We're changing it up a bit with the way we're putting these reports up until we can get a suitable website to index what we've done. Mind: Path To Thalamus represents what we'd like to achieve in its entirety. This is what we found with Carlos Coronado's first game.

RYG's Assessment
71%

Shows Promise and Potential
(Between 65% and 84%)

Our Thoughts

Getting a PC game released for the very first time for any indie developer (or developing team) going alone is quite daunting. What helps, in this particular case, is a digital distribution platform, such as GOG, that understands how games are packaged and sold through a visually simple and direct storefront.

We found Mind: Path To Thalamus released through GOG to be clean, well-packaged and least-invasive to players PCs. Players should be able to navigate through the file systems to determine where savegames and configuration files are and for many who are familiar with the Unreal Engine many of the files are placed within the Config section. As a game we found that many of the in-game settings were limiting (such as keyboard/mouse, sound and in-game video settings) although it is quite understandable that Mind: Path To Thalamus was designed to be played across all PC configurations, including laptops designed with an integrated GPU/CPU chip. Players shouldn't have too much issues installing, backing up and removing Mind: Path To Thalamus from their PCs.

The gameplay itself, however, might not appeal to players with a certain disdain for a simple A-to-B movement and plot structure sprinkled with a few simple puzzles along the way. We found the game to be as less fantastic and surreal as advertised on the game's official website with the main character flitting between the overly-cynical and self-loathing. Expect a good 2-3 hours of playtime out of Mind: Path To Thalamus.

Finally, when it comes to GOG and their revamped digital storefront the most appealing quality CDP have added is the ability to switch between currencies, which, in the case of those making purchases from AUS, is ideal. All prices advertised on their storefront, to our knowledge at least, is almost a \$1:\$1 ratio with the USD – the currency in which all GOG games are priced at. Of course, we don't know if the same applies to those shopping under the EUR or the GBP currency. Unfortunately, their legal, privacy and terms of service leaves a lot to be desired. Again, people shouldn't be too surprised as these terms and conditions are consistent across many video gaming storefronts, publishing and developing houses. What we would like to see is a clear, honest and evenly-balanced system that takes into account the rights and obligations players have as well as the rights they have when it comes to their privacy.

Overall we do find Mind: Path To Thalamus to show some promise and potential as a gaming product for PCs.

About Mind: Path To Thalamus

Mind: Path To Thalamus is a first-person, puzzle game that tells a story of a father trapped in his comatose mind and his journey towards consciousness. This is Carlos Coronado's first game after designing **Warcelona**, a custom Left 4 Dead 2 campaign and he is teamed up with Dani Navarro, Luka Nieto and Jose Ladislao. Please refer to each section for our results we've evaluated and our summarised thoughts to gain a better understanding of how Mind: Path To Thalamus affects PCs and plays as a PC Game.

RYG Disclaimer

This Windows version of Mind: Path To Thalamus (Version: 2.004) was purchased through GOG independently with RYG funds for the purposes of evaluation and product testing. Mind: Path To Thalamus was evaluated on the following system specs: Windows 7, Intel i5-4460, 16Gb RAM, AMD Radeon R9 290 as well as an i7-3517U, 8Gb RAM and Intel HD Graphics 4000.

Availability

GOG: http://www.gog.com/game/mind_path_to_thalamus

Humble: https://www.humblebundle.com/store/p...mus_storefront

Steam: <http://store.steampowered.com/app/296070>

Gamersgate: <http://www.gamersgate.com/DD-MINDPT/...th-to-thalamus>

Green Man Gaming: <http://www.greenmangaming.com/s/au/e...path-thalamus/>

Desura: <http://www.desura.com/games/mind-path-to-thalamus>

Get Games Go: <http://www.getgamesgo.com/product/mind-path-to-thalamus>

Recommended System Specs

OS: Windows 7 or above (*Windows Version Tested*)

CPU: Intel i5-3570 or above (*Chipset released in 2012*)

GPU: NVIDIA GeForce GTX 660 or AMD HD 7850 and above (*GPUs released in 2012*)

RAM: 2Gb or above

HDD: 2Gb (~2Gb was used in this evaluation)

Source: [GOG](#)

Section 1 - Content Strategy and Product Marketing

- + Mind: Path To Thalamus released globally on 05.08.2014
- + Mind: Path To Thalamus sold through multiple vendors (See Availability Section)
- + DRM Free Options of Mind: Path To Thalamus provided through GOG and Humble

- Available only on Windows
- Minimum and recommended specs not provided through official website
- Complete download specs not provided through official website
- No demo
- Players required to search for DRM-Free options outside of official website
- No Manual and/or Readme provided
- EULA and TOS is only found within the game through GOG
- All game-related information on Mind: Path To Thalamus is difficult to find on official website

Our Thoughts: While much of the information required for players to accurately gauge and assess their purchasing decisions can be derived from GOG's storefront, it is somewhat inconsistent when it comes to the information displayed on the developer's official website. Players may have little knowledge of where to best purchase Mind: Path To Thalamus (especially during a weekend sale) or what specs are required to play this game (no matter how low or insignificant they may be).

Section 2 - Digital Distribution

- + Mind: Path To Thalamus is sold at one, global price (USD and AUD are \$1:\$1 as at 06.10.2014)
- + Available worldwide through GOG
- + [GOG Downloader](#) is not required for download and gameplay
- + Minimum and recommended specs provided
- + Advised DRM Free on 05.08.2014
- + Only Username, Email and Password are required to create a GOG account
- + Alternative payment options provided by Credit Card or Paypal
- + Currency Notification provided prior, during and after purchase
- + Confirmation of purchase and receipt provided
- + Free and unlimited access and downloads after purchase
- + Complete download specs provided on GOG after purchase

- + Can play Mind: Path To Thalamus without the 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** (See GOG's 30 Day Money Back Guarantee and **Payment, Pricing and Promos**)
- + Can access personal data
- + Can terminate account or request to terminate account
- Warranties waived (excluding physical merchantability warranties)
- Cover waived against any unforeseeable damages, disruptions of service failures
- Account termination voids past purchases and licenses to play them
- Consumers prevented from disputing and validating GOG TOS breaches made against them
- Can't review and question changes made to **GOG TOS**
- Past purchases voided after refusing to accept GOG TOS

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 account 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 Mind: Path To Thalamus will not connect to any servers during gameplay!
- + Privacy Policy found on **GOG** (Last updated 29.07.2008 at 1,379 words)
- + 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: Mind: Path To Thalamus will attempt to connect to an Epic Games server prior to the first-time launch. However, players can block this particular IP address (199.255.40.200) and can still play Mind: Path To Thalamus in single player, offline mode, which is good.

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 Mind: Path To Thalamus 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 Mind: Path To Thalamus
- + Permitted to create free "mods" of Mind: Path To Thalamus
- + 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
- Mind: Path To Thalamus'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 Mind: Path To Thalamus 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.

Section 5 - Installation

- + Custom installation options are provided
 - + All game files are installed within folders designated by users
 - + Currently-executing background services won't interfere with installation
 - + Error-free installation
 - + Installation completed within 30 minutes (2Gb was required to install and play Mind: Path To Thalamus)
- No installation logs of files and registry keys

Our Thoughts: A lack of a comprehensive installation log to document what/where files and registry keys are installed is the only blemish found in this evaluation. A partial installation log for can be found on /AppData/Local/Temp/Setup Log.txt.

However, GOG-packaged games are self-contained to where players want to install their games and will not install any rogue or foreign files outside of their intended destination. There is, of course, two third-party packages that are required to play Mind: Path To Thalamus, which is included in the game's package. They include Microsoft's VC 2010 Redistributable and Microsoft's DirectX June 2010 Redistributable. For those playing Mind: Path To Thalamus with the Oculus Rift there is a separate installation package provided in-game.

Section 6 - Automatic and/or Manual Patching

- + Can opt-in / opt-out of automatic updates
 - + Can play the game unpatched (Version Tested: 2.004)
 - + Can install patches manually without the GOG Downloader
 - + Users can be advised of game patch's availability
- Details of patches not provided / provided prior to installation

Our Thoughts: GOG has both a manual and an automated update function for players as well as a detailed section on what/which updates are required. To date, Mind: Path To Thalamus through GOG is up to date in spite of the lack of updates in its changelog since August 2014. (Version Tested: 2.004)

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 Mind: Path To Thalamus
- + Can play single-player game offline
- + Unlimited hardware activations
- + Unlimited installations
- + Activation is simple and hassle-free

Our Thoughts: This version of Mind: Path To Thalamus 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 game in fullscreen mode
 - + Can play game in windowed mode
 - + Can play with an (XBox360) console controller (remapping not provided)
 - + English subtitles provided
 - + Can play Mind: Path To Thalamus in offline mode
 - + Won't "phone home"
 - + 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
 - + Can play on more than one PC simultaneously
 - + Can modify configuration files
 - + No DRM or monitoring services running in the background
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- Very limited video settings provided (such as Resolution, VSync, Post Processing and Draw Distance)
 - Only playable on fixed keyboard and mouse settings (tutorial provided in Prologue gameplay of Mind: Path To Thalamus)
 - Volume / audio controls not provided
 - Only English Audio is provided in-game
 - No option for players to provide custom subtitles and/or localisation
 - Manual save options not provided in-game

Our Thoughts: Mind: Path To Thalamus is playable across many PC configurations (provided that the player's GPU is new than the 2006 GeForce 7600 GS models).

Players can play offline with a clear knowledge that it won't connect to any third-party server (See Section 3: Privacy for the exception rule) and players can play Mind: Path To Thalamus with a keyboard/mouse, console controller and/or with the Oculus Rift. However, many of its in-game settings are very limiting with any manually-configured option(s) to be set outside of the game. Those who are comfortable in tweaking Mind: Path To Thalamus to their choosing outside of the game shouldn't have too much issues, particularly for those who are well-accustomed with the Unreal Engine framework.

Section 9 - General PC Maintenance

- + 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 Mind: Path To Thalamus without major errors
- + Start-up settings remain unaltered
- + No DRM and monitoring services running in the background after shutting down Mind: Path To Thalamus
- + System configuration files remain unaltered

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

Section 10 - Uninstallation

- + Direct uninstallation shortcut provided
- + Backup savegames prompt provided / Savegames retained
- + Clean uninstallation

Our Thoughts: Removing Mind: Path To Thalamus, along with a genuine opportunity to back up any savegames is above standard and is fairly common among GOG-packaged games. All files and registry keys found in Section 5, Installation and Setup in this assessment were removed through GOG's uninstaller shortcut.

Section 11 - Customer and Technical Support

- + From The Official Website: <http://mindpaththalamus.com/about>
- + From GOG: http://www.gog.com/support/mind_path_to_thalamus
- + From Steam: <http://steamcommunity.com/app/296070/discussions/>
- + From SteamDB: <https://steamdb.info/app/296070/>

If you would like to discuss this report, you can do so here on our [forum](#) (membership is required), or via our [Twitter](#) page.

Changelog

07.10.2014 – Report published on RYG