

Platform: PC (Windows 7 only)
DRM: Games For Windows Live (GFWL)
Digital Distributor: Windows / Xbox Marketplace

Developer: Hemisphere Games
Publisher: Hemisphere Games

RYG's VERDICT

49%

BARGAIN BIN MATERIAL

64% and below

1a. Product Info

Note: A cross-platform, DRM-Free version is available on [Hemisphere Games](#).

Note: The Osmos demo can be found on [Hemisphere Games](#).

Note: Osmos will be activated straight after purchase via. Windows Marketplace only.

Looking at how much information is provided on Osmos on the Windows Marketplace site prior and on release.

- ✓ Base game and day-one DLCs sold as one package
- ✓ Advised GFWL DRM was to be used for Osmos via. Windows Marketplace

- ✗ Osmos released via. Windows Marketplace with a limited global release
- ✗ Available only on Windows
- ✗ Minimum and recommended specs not provided
- ✗ No demo found on Windows Marketplace
- ✗ No advice on how GFWL DRM would activate Osmos
- ✗ Manual and Readme provided only in-game
- ✗ Game EULA is only found within the game; GFWL's terms found on-site
- ✗ All game-related information on [Windows Marketplace](#) is difficult to find

1b. Digital Dwnld

Note: Windows Marketplace and GFWL are only available in [38 countries and regions](#).

Note: Osmos is priced at \$9.99 US and \$14.99 AUD.

Note: It is best to create a GFWL account through [Xbox Live](#) rather than through Windows Live.

Looking at Windows / Xbox Marketplace as a digital distributing service for PC games.

- ✓ Advised GFWL DRM was to be used for Osmos via. Windows Marketplace
- ✓ Free and unlimited access and downloads after purchase
- ✓ Can access personal data

- ✗ Osmos is priced inconsistently via. Windows Marketplace across global regions
- ✗ Osmos is available through Windows Marketplace within specific global regions
- ✗ Download / Client Manager is required, including for gameplay
- ✗ Minimum and recommended specs not provided
- ✗ No advice on how GFWL DRM would activate Osmos
- ✗ User account creation is required
- ✗ Purchased games are backed up through Microsoft's servers
- ✗ No refunds or exchanges for pre-orders
- ✗ No refunds or exchanges for purchased games
- ✗ Warranties waived (excluding physical merchantability warranties)

Note: Account termination by request is possible, but is time consuming, cyclical and, designed in such a way to prevent users from terminating their account(s).

2. Privacy Policy

Note: Abridged version of **Microsoft's Privacy Policy** has 1,671 words; The complete version will have 7,172 words.

Note: Please refer to *Information We Collect* in Microsoft's Privacy Policy.

Note: Please refer to *How We Use Your Information* in Microsoft's Privacy Policy. Users can opt of Microsoft's Advertising service via. choice.microsoft.com.

- ✗ Cover waived against any unforeseeable damages, disruptions of service
- ✗ No options to terminate account
- ✗ Account termination voids past purchases and licenses to play them
- ✗ Consumers prevented from disputing Windows Marketplace's TOS breaches
- ✗ Can't review and question changes made to Windows Marketplace's TOS
- ✗ Past purchases voided after refusing to accept Windows Marketplace's TOS

Looking at Windows (Xbox) Live / Marketplace's Privacy Policy through Microsoft

- ✓ Privacy Policy found on Xbox Marketplace
- ✓ Policy applies to GFWL, Windows / Xbox Marketplace and Osmos
- ✓ Easy to read, understand and is worded with clear consistency
- ✓ "Personally-identifiable" & "non-personally identifiable" info are clearly defined
- ✓ Policy specifies what's collected before, during and after gameplay
- ✓ Info is stored at the US
- ✓ Data centres are 100% safe and secure
- ✓ Info is used solely for product improvement and advertising
- ✓ Microsoft identifies and lists their preferred third party (advertisers)
- ✓ Visible opt-in / opt-out process only from Microsoft's Privacy Policy
- ✓ Users can access their Windows Live account
- ✓ Users can modify their Windows Live account
- ✓ Users have full control over their Windows Live account
- ✓ Users can validate the info they've provided

- ✗ Users not visibly notified of any changes made to the Policy
- ✗ User data is retained by Microsoft 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 Osmos

3a. EULA (GAME)

Note: 1,316 words found in Osmos's EULA.

Note: The Osmos EULA was written to coincide with the DRM-Free release version sold through Hemisphere Games and NOT for GFWL.

Note: The Windows / Xbox Marketplace EULA can be found under Section 3b. EULA (GFWL)

Looking at Osmos's EULA from Hemisphere Games

- ✓ 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
- ✗ EULA / TOS only covers Osmos and not GFWL or Windows Marketplace
- ✗ Difficult to read, understand and is inconsistently worded
- ✗ Drafted to only abide by the laws of Canada
- ✗ 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
- ✗ Terms and conditions for GFWL DRM aren't clearly defined
- ✗ Back-ups aren't permitted
- ✗ Osmos's source code isn't to be modified or reverse-engineered
- ✗ Not permitted to create "mods"

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

3b. EULA (GFWL)

Note: 3,362 Words found in [Windows / Xbox Marketplace's Terms of Service](#).

Note: All warranties covered are only applicable for AUS residents as described in Section 7a of the [Xbox Terms of Service](#).

- ✗ Monitoring services / software are required to play Osmos
- ✗ Warranties waived (excluding physical merchantability warranties)
- ✗ Cover waived against any unforeseeable damages, disruptions of service
- ✗ Termination process dictated by Hemisphere Games

Looking at Windows / Xbox Marketplace Subscriber's Agreement through Microsoft.

- ✓ EULA / TOS is found on xbox.com
 - ✓ EULA / TOS covers GFWL, Windows / Xbox Marketplace and Osmos
 - ✓ Terms and conditions for GFWL DRM are clearly defined
 - ✓ Won't blacklist specific background services or software
 - ✓ All warranties provided
 - ✓ Consumers covered against any unforeseeable damages, disruptions of service
 - ✓ 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 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
 - ✗ No refunds or exchanges for purchased games
 - ✗ Circumvention of GFWL DRM prohibited
 - ✗ Monitoring services / software are required to play Osmos
 - ✗ Termination process dictated by Microsoft
 - ✗ Arbitration process isn't freely-provided and is overseen by Microsoft

Looking at how Osmos is installed on Windows PCs only.

- ✓ Custom installation options are provided
 - ✓ Installation of third party software are optional
 - ✓ Installation logs of files and registry keys provided
 - ✓ All 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
-
- ✗ Extra GFWL DRM files and libraries found in /Program Data/, /AppData/ and /System32/ and /Windows/SysWOW64/ folders.

Looking at how Osmos is patched prior and after gameplay.

- ✓ Can play the game unpatched
- ✗ No plans to sunset GFWL DRM

4. Setup / Install

Note: Users can [customise their installation path](#) through the GFWL client.

Note: Installation logs of GFWL are found under /ProgramData/Microsoft/GFWL/Install/Logs, but are difficult to read.

5. Updates / Patching

6. DRM & Activation

Note: It is recommended that (new) users should install and update GFWL Client before installing Osmos.

Note: Users will have the option to log into GFWL again after launching Osmos, but only for the purposes of accessing in-game achievements.

Note: Osmos will only be connected to the following servers: Microsoft (Microsoft Hosting, XboxLive, GFWL), Verisign, Limelight Networks and Akamai Technologies.

7. Gameplay Experience

Note: Hemisphere Games have provided an in-depth FAQ for fixing, optimising and tweaking Osmos.

Note: Osmos can be played offline and without launching GFWL client; Osmos won't "phone home".

Note: (Local) savegame files and Configuration files are found under the \My Documents\Osmos folder; Config files are found in the [Osmos installation folder](#).

Note: GFWL services will continue to run in the background even if the client is (forcibly) shutdown by the user.

8. PC Checkup

Looking at Games For Windows Live (GFWL) DRM in relation to Osmos 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
- ✓ Unlimited online activations to any one PC
- ✓ Can play single-player game offline
- ✓ Only GFWL DRM is implemented
- ✓ Unlimited hardware activations
- ✓ Unlimited installations
- ✓ Support and troubleshooting process provided
- ✓ 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
- ✗ No offline activation option
- ✗ A non-transferrable user account is required
- ✗ Full name, Date of Birth, Residences and Credit Details are required
- ✗ Game is locked to specific account after activation

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

- ✓ Can play on minimum specs
- ✓ Disc not required for gameplay
- ✓ Suitable options to modify video settings
- ✓ Can play in windowed mode
- ✓ Can play offline
- ✓ 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 modify savegame and/or ini file

- ✗ Requires original copy to play the game
- ✗ Only playable on mouse
- ✗ 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 Osmos 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 Osmos without major errors

9. Removal Uninstall

Note: All GFWL files are removed after a complete removal of GFWL and its related services.

- ✗ GFWL Client was added to Windows start-up without permission
- ✗ GFWL services remained operational after shutting down Osmos

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

- ✓ Direct uninstallation shortcut provided
- ✓ Backup savegames prompt provided / Savegames retained
- ✓ Osmos game files and registry keys are fully removed
- ✗ Two GFWL registry keys remain after uninstallation

Looking at the customer support side of Osmos through Hemisphere Games

10. Customer Support

- ✓ Customer service / support found in one place at hemispheregames.com/faq
- ✓ Their FAQ is easy to use and navigate
- ✓ Searching on Hemisphere Game's FAQ is direct and quick
- ✓ Info is easy to read and understand

RYG's VERDICT

49%

BARGAIN BIN MATERIAL

64% and below

SHOWS PROMISE & POTENTIAL

Between 65% and 84%

WORTH SUPPORTING

85% and above

The trouble of buying and playing Osmos can be saved by going through Hemisphere Game's official site and making the DRM-Free, cross-platform purchase through there. It's difficult to find or even recommend any strong points about Windows / Xbox Marketplace, along with GFWL simply because it's a service that's designed predominately for users of Xbox. The PC catalogue is bare for the 2013 period, the sign-up process is quite laborious, and there's price disparities on the same games sold through the same distributor and these are probably the best points for those who do have access to GFWL in their region. Perhaps their only strongest suits is their surprisingly honest Privacy Policy, which is intentionally stated and driven towards advertising and GFWL's ability to finally remove 99% of its components from users PCs...



Colophon

This analysis of Osmos 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. Osmos was bought with RYG funds through Windows / Xbox Marketplace.

Disclaimer

These analyses are only a guide and represent RYG's perspective into Osmos as a product. We believe everyone should perform their own research and reach their own conclusions. This is one view of many. Again, we thank you for taking the time to read our analysis of Osmos 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: Osmos
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