

Pinball FX2

An RYG Analysis

Platform: PC (Windows 7 only)
DRM: Steamworks (Steam)
Digital Distributor: Steam

Developer: Zen Studios
Publisher: Microsoft Studios

RYG's ASSESSMENT

1a. Product Info

Note: Be advised that Windows 8 is required for those playing Pinball FX2 through the Windows Store.

Note: The pinball table we looked at was [Plants vs. Zombies](#)

1b. Digital Dwnld

Note: [Alternative payment options](#) provided on Steam.

Note: Refer to Section 3, [Billing, Payment & Other Subscriptions](#) in respect to preorder refunds for Players living in the EU.

Note: Difference in prices for Pinball FX2's tables can be found via. [Steam Apps Database](#).

63% BARGAIN-BASEMENT MATERIAL 64% and below

Looking at how much information is provided on Pinball FX2 on the Steam site prior and on release.

- ✓ Pinball FX2 released globally on 11.05.2013
- ✓ Pinball FX2 sold through multiple digital vendors
- ✓ Minimum and recommended specs provided
- ✓ Demo provided on all tables as a timed demo
- ✓ Advised Steamworks (Steam) DRM was to be used for Pinball FX2
- ✓ Advised how Steam DRM would activate the game through Pinball FX2
- ✓ EULA, [Privacy Policy](#) and [TOS](#) fully accessible on [steampowered.com](#)
- ✓ All game-related information can be found on [steampowered.com](#)

- ✗ Pinball FX2 for Windows released after the sale of its console version
- ✗ Available only on Windows
- ✗ No known DRM-Free options sold for Pinball FX2
- ✗ Minimum and recommended download specs not provided through Steam
- ✗ No Manual and/or Readme

Looking at Steam as a digital distributing service for PC games.

- ✓ Available worldwide through [steampowered.com](#)
- ✓ Minimum and recommended specs provided
- ✓ Advised Steamworks (Steam) DRM was to be used for Pinball FX2
- ✓ Advised how Steam DRM would activate Pinball FX2 through Steam
- ✓ Alternative payment options provided
- ✓ Confirmation of purchase and receipt provided
- ✓ Free and unlimited access and downloads after purchase
- ✓ Can [backup purchased games "offline"](#) (e.g. external or optical drives)
- ✓ Refunds offered for pre-orders only
- ✓ Can access personal data

- ✗ Pinball FX2 on Steam is priced inconsistently across global regions
- ✗ Download / Client Manager is required, including for gameplay

Note: Downloading Pinball FX2 will take ~2.0 Gb.

Note: Refer to [Section 7\(A\): Disclaimers](#) under The Steam's Subscriber's Agreement in relation to "as is".

Note: Valve will **not delete** any Players accounts voluntarily.

Note: Please refer to Part 3b, EULA / TOS in relation to Steam's Subscriber's Agreement

2a. Privacy Policy

Note: Please note that Pinball FX2 will not connect to any Steam or Third-party servers in relation to Steam's leaderboards for Pinball FX2 if players opt to play the game offline.

2b. Privacy Policy

Note: Privacy Policy contains ~1,860 words. Last updated August 2012.

Note: Please refer to *Personally Identifiable Information* under Valve's Privacy Policy.

Note: Please refer to *Use of Personally Identifiable Information* under Valve's Privacy Policy.

Note: Accessing personal info can be found within the Players Account Settings once logged into Steam.

Note: Refer to Steam Privacy Policy's [readability scores](#).

Note: Valve, however, won't send personal info to third parties for marketing purposes.

Note: Please refer to *Use of Personally Identifiable Information* under Valve's Privacy Policy.

- ✗ Players account creation is required
- ✗ Currency conversion not provided at the time of purchase
- ✗ Minimum and recommended download specs not provided through Steam
- ✗ No refunds or exchanges for purchased games
- ✗ Pinball FX2 is provided "as is" with limited warranties
- ✗ Cover waived against any unforeseeable damages and/or disruptions of service
- ✗ No options to voluntarily terminate Steam account
- ✗ Account termination voids past purchases and licenses to play them
- ✗ Consumers prevented from disputing and validating Steam TOS breaches
- ✗ Can't review and question changes made to Steam TOS
- ✗ Past purchases voided after refusing to accept Steam TOS

Looking at Pinball FX2's Privacy Policy through Zen Studios / Microsoft Studios

- ✓ Privacy Policy not required for Pinball FX2 if playing in offline mode.

Looking at Pinball FX2's Privacy Policy through Valve

- ✓ Privacy Policy found on steampowered.com
 - ✓ Policy applies to Pinball FX2, Steam and Steam DRM
 - ✓ Privacy Policy formatted for easy reading on the web
 - ✓ "Personally-identifiable" & "non-personally identifiable" info are clearly defined
 - ✓ Policy explicitly specifies which info are collected before & during gameplay
 - ✓ Info is stored at Valve Corporation within the US
 - ✓ Data centres are 100% safe and secure
 - ✓ Policy explicitly specifies which information are used
 - ✓ Players can opt-out of marketing and/or promotional material
 - ✓ Players can access their personally-identifiable information
 - ✓ Players can modify their personally-identifiable information
 - ✓ Players have full control over their personally-identifiable information
 - ✓ Players can validate the info they've provided via Email
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- ✗ Privacy Policy was not written for easy comprehension
 - ✗ Players not visibly notified of any changes made to the Policy
 - ✗ Players not consulted on future revisions to the Privacy Policy
 - ✗ Third parties are not identified
 - ✗ Players cannot export their information
 - ✗ Players data is retained by Valve for an extended period of time
 - ✗ Can't review and query changes made to the Privacy Policy
 - ✗ Valve may transfer all players information in the event of a sale or merger
 - ✗ Players must accept ALL changes made before playing Pinball FX2

3a. EULA (GAME)

3b. EULA (STEAM)

Note: 7,431 Words found in Steam's EULA. Last updated July 2013.

Note: Steam's Video Policy can be found the [Legal Info](#) section.

Note: Refer to Steam EULA's [readability scores](#).

Note: Valve will **not delete** any Players accounts voluntarily.

See Also: Section 12, *Dispute Resolution / Binding Arbitration / Class Action Waiver*

4. Setup / Install

Note: Installing games through Steam to a different folder and drive can be done by altering the Steam shortcut to add "-dev" (via. [RPS](#))

Note: Downloading Pinball FX2 will take ~2.0 Gb.

Looking at Pinball FX2's EULA from Zen Studios.

- ✓ EULA / TOS wasn't found / wasn't required.

Looking at Steam Subscriber's Agreement through Steam.

- ✓ EULA / TOS is found on steampowered.com
- ✓ EULA / TOS covers Pinball FX2, Steam and Steam DRM
- ✓ Users visibly notified of any changes made to the EULA / TOS prior to purchase
- ✓ Terms and conditions for Steam DRM are clearly defined
- ✓ Can back-up copies of Pinball FX2
- ✓ Allows monetisation of clips relating to Steam through video-sharing sites
- ✓ Won't blacklist specific background services or software
- ✓ Users can criticise or provide criticism about the game without reprisals
- ✗ EULA / TOS was not formatted for easy reading on the web
- ✗ EULA / TOS was not written for easy comprehension
- ✗ Drafted to only abide by the laws of the US
- ✗ Players not consulted on future revisions 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
- ✗ Circumvention of Steam DRM prohibited
- ✗ Steam's source code isn't to be modified or reverse-engineered
- ✗ Not permitted to create "mods" for Steam
- ✗ Steam is provided "as is" with limited warranties
- ✗ Cover waived against any unforeseeable damages and/or disruptions of service
- ✗ Termination process dictated by Valve
- ✗ Arbitration process overseen by an external party within the US
- ✗ Limited options for players to take any legal action

Looking at how Pinball FX2 is installed on Windows PCs only.

- ✓ Custom installation options are provided
- ✓ All files are installed within folders designated by Players
- ✓ Steam DRM files installed within folders designated by Players
- ✓ Currently-executing background services won't interfere with installation
- ✓ Error-free installation
- ✓ Installation completed within 20 minutes (using an ADSL2+ connection)
- ✗ No installation logs of files and registry keys

5. Updates / Patching

Looking at how Pinball FX2 is patched prior and after gameplay.

- ✓ Can opt-in / opt-out of automatic updates
- ✓ Can play the game unpatched
- ✗ No plans to sunset Steam DRM (*See Section 1a for alternative options*)

6. DRM & Activation

Note: It is recommended that (new) Players should install and update Steam first before installing Pinball FX2.

See Also: How to play Pinball FX2 in **offline mode**.

Note: Installing, updating Steam and installing Pinball FX2 for the first time will connect to the following companies: Valve (*Highwinds Network Group, QWest Communications, Limelight Networks, Amazon Web Services, Level 3 Communications, ChinaNet, Telstra and Verisign*)

Looking at Steam DRM in relation to Pinball FX2 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
- ✓ Players are aware and advised on how Pinball FX2 will be activated
- ✓ Players name, password and email are only required
- ✓ Unlimited online activations to any one PC
- ✓ Can play single-player game offline
- ✓ Only Steam 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
- ✗ A non-transferrable Players account is required
- ✗ Game is locked to specific account after activation

7. Gameplay Experience

Looking at the gameplay aspects of Pinball FX2 and how it interacts with PC Windows.

- ✓ Can play on minimum specs
- ✓ Can play a backup copy of the game
- ✓ Disc not required for gameplay
- ✓ Can play in borderless full screen mode
- ✓ Can customise keyboard / mouse controls
- ✓ Can customise console (XBox360) controls
- ✓ Can play with console controller
- ✓ Separate Volume Controls provided
- ✓ Can play offline
- ✓ Can access purchased Pinball tables offline
- ✓ Won't "phone home"
- ✓ Can play without connectivity issues on an ADSL connection
- ✓ Can opt out of Achievements
- ✓ 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

8. PC Checkup

- ✗ Cannot play Pinball FX2 in windowed mode
- ✗ Limited video options provided
- ✗ Closed Captions not provided
- ✗ No known option for user-generated subtitles
- ✗ 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 Pinball FX2 will modify certain PC settings without Players 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 Pinball FX2 without major errors
- ✓ Start-up settings remain unaltered
- ✓ No DRM and monitoring services running in the background
- ✓ System configuration files remain unaltered

9. Removal Uninstall

Looking at how clean, efficient and effective the removal process is for Pinball FX2 (How much legacy material is there after the removal of Pinball FX2?)

- ✓ Direct uninstallation shortcut provided through Steam's client manager
- ✓ Backup savegames prompt provided / Savegames retained
- ✓ External tool provided at steampowered.com
- ✓ External tool to remove game + DRM files is easy to use
- ✗ Steam registry keys remain after the uninstallation of Steam / Pinball FX2
- ✗ Remaining Steam keys will remain after using external tool(s)

10. Customer Support

Looking at the customer support side of Pinball FX2 through Steam's Community Forums

- ✓ Customer service / support found in one place at steampowered.com
- ✓ Steam's forum is easy to use and navigate
- ✓ Searching on Steam's forum is direct and quick
- ✓ Info is easy to read and understand

RYG's VERDICT

63%

BARGAIN-BASE- MENT MATERIAL

64% and below

SHOWS PROMISE & POTENTIAL

Between 65% and 84%

WORTH SUPPORTING

85% and above

There are a number of promising features with Pinball FX2, namely the integrated timed demo on all available pinball tables, the pay-what-you-want-to-play option, genuine offline mode and custom controller settings. All files and registry keys for Pinball FX2 are self-contained and easy to remove. However, much of what brought the overall score down for Pinball FX2 lay with Steam, which isn't too surprising. On a whole playing Pinball FX2 on Steam is a worthwhile experience for pinball fans and some of their tables are quite challenging. But, otherwise, it is a game worth passing up if Steam isn't to your liking.



Colophon

This analysis of Pinball FX2 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. Pinball FX2 was bought with RYG funds through Steam.

Disclaimer

These analyses are only a guide and represent RYG's perspective into Pinball FX2 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 Pinball FX2 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 Players 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.

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