

Portal 2

An RYG Analysis

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

Developer: Valve
Publisher: Valve

RYG's ASSESSMENT

1a. Product Info

Note: The single-player portion of Portal 2 (excluding user-generated levels) was evaluated only.

2. 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.

65% SHOWS PROMISE & POTENTIAL Between 65% and 84%

Looking at how much information is provided on Portal 2 on the Steam site prior and on release.

- ✓ Portal 2 released simultaneously with its console versions
- ✓ Portal 2 released globally on 19.04.2011
- ✓ Available on Windows, MacOS and Linux (Linux in **Beta Development**)
- ✓ Portal 2 sold through multiple physical and digital vendors
- ✓ Base game and **(Free) DLCs** sold as one package
- ✓ Minimum and recommended specs provided
- ✓ Advised Steamworks (Steam) DRM was to be used for Portal 2
- ✓ Advised how Steam DRM would activate the game through Portal 2
- ✓ EULA, **Privacy Policy** and **TOS** fully accessible on **steampowered.com**
- ✓ All game-related information can be found on **Portal's official website**

- ✗ No known DRM-Free option found for Portal 2
- ✗ No publicly-available demo
- ✗ No Manual and/or Readme provided

Looking at Portal 2's Privacy Policy through Valve.

- ✓ Privacy Policy found on **steampowered.com**
- ✓ Policy applies to Portal 2, 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

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.

3. TOS EULA

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: Installing Portal 2 will take ~9.5 Gb with a ~1.2 Gb first-time Update.

- ✗ 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 Portal 2

Looking at Portal 2's EULA from Valve.

- ✓ EULA / TOS is found on steampowered.com
 - ✓ EULA / TOS covers Portal 2, Steam and Steam DRM
 - ✓ Players visibly notified of any changes made to the TOS prior to purchase
 - ✓ Terms and conditions for Steam DRM are clearly defined
 - ✓ Can back-up copies of Portal 2
 - ✓ Allows monetisation of clips relating to Steam through video-sharing sites
 - ✓ Won't blacklist specific background services or software
 - ✓ Players can criticise or provide criticism about the game without reprisals
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- ✗ 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 Portal 2 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 30 minutes
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- ✗ No installation logs of files and registry keys

5. Updates / Patching

Note: For first-time players, a ~1.2 Gb update is required prior to playing Portal 2.

Note: It is also recommend to update Portal 2 to the latest version in order to play user-generated levels via. Steam Workshop.

Looking at how Portal 2 is patched prior and after gameplay.

- ✓ No other DRM files or registry keys are installed
- ✓ Details of patches provided via steampowered.com
- ✓ Players can be advised of game patch's availability through the Steam Client
- ✓ Can play Portal 2 with the most recent patches and updates

- ✗ Automatic updates are mandatory
- ✗ Requires ALL patches to play Portal 2
- ✗ Patches only installed via. automatic updates
- ✗ 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 Steam DRM

6. DRM & Activation

Note: It is recommended that (new) Players should install and update Steam first before installing Portal 2.

See Also: How to play Portal 2 in [offline mode](#).

Note: Installing, updating Steam and installing Portal 2 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 Portal 2 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 Portal 2 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 Portal 2 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 full screen mode
- ✓ Can play in borderless windowed screen mode
- ✓ Anisotropic Filtering, Anti-Aliasing, Shaders, Textures & Vsync settings provided
- ✓ Can customise keyboard and mouse controls
- ✓ Can customise console (XBox360) controls
- ✓ Can play with console controller
- ✓ Separate Volume Controls provided

Note: Steam will still connect to Steam Achievements in offline mode.

- ✓ Closed captions & subtitles provided in 22 languages, including English
- ✓ Localisations provided in 5 languages other than English
- ✓ Can play Portal 2 offline
- ✓ Can access (free and user-generated) DLC offline after registration
- ✓ 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 manually save gameplay progress in-game
- ✓ Can modify savegame and/or ini file

- ✗ No options for user-generated audio and/or closed captions / subtitles
- ✗ Will "phone home"
- ✗ Will not advise users that it connects to third-party servers in offline mode
- ✗ Cannot opt out of Steam achievements
- ✗ Can only play on one PC at a time per game / account
- ✗ DRM and monitoring services will operate during and after gameplay

8. **PC Checkup**

Looking at whether Portal 2 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 Portal 2 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 Portal 2 (How much legacy material is there after the removal of Portal 2?)

- ✓ 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 / Portal 2
- ✗ Remaining Steam keys will remain after using external tool(s)

10. **Customer Support**

Looking at the customer support side of Portal 2 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 Eidos's forum is direct and quick
- ✓ Info is easy to read and understand

RYG's VERDICT

65%

BARGAIN-BASE- MENT MATERIAL

SHOWS PROMISE & POTENTIAL

64% and below

Between 65% and 84%

WORTH SUPPORTING

85% and above

We're surprised we didn't look at Portal 2 back in 2011 because the game is still one of the well-developed, designed and PC-ported titles to come through Steam with every intention of making Steam as less invasive as possible. The way Portal 2 updates through Steam the integration of user-generated mods / levels, the settings and file structure all adds up to how Portal 2 plays, even after 3 years since its release. However, the "under the hood" features that make Steam a sore point to use remain. Its densely-worded and one-sided EULA and Privacy Policy remains a consistently sore point, but it's the thinly-veiled "offline" play, forced achievements, mandatory integration and difficult removal of both the game and Steam Client itself that can be irksome to deal with. Still, we do feel this is Valve's best game that can bring the best out of Steam in spite of its flaws.



Colophon

This analysis of Portal 2 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. Portal 2 was bought with RYG funds through EB Games.

Disclaimer

These analyses are only a guide and represent RYG's perspective into Portal 2 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 Portal 2 and hope you continue to support our work.