State of Decay

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

Developer: Undead Labs
Publisher: Microsoft Game Studios

RYG's VERDICT

64% **BARGAIN BIN MATERIAL**
64% and below

1a. Product Info

Looking at how much information is provided on State of Decay on the Steam site prior and on release.

- ✔ State of Decay released globally on Steam on 21.09.2013
- ✔ Minimum and recommended specs provided
- ✔ Advised Steamworks (Steam) DRM was to be used for State of Decay
- ✔ Advised how Steam DRM would activate the game through State of Decay
- ✔ EULA, Privacy Policy and TOS fully accessible on steampowered.com
- ✔ All game-related information can be found on steampowered.com

- ✘ State of Decay released after the sale of its console version
- ✘ Available only on Windows
- ✘ No demo
- ✘ No Manual and/or Readme

1b. Digital Dwnld

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

Note: Backing up Steam games "offline" can be found via. PC-GamingWiki.

Note: Refer to Section 3, *Billing, Payment & Other Subcriptions* in respect to pre-order refunds for users living in the EU

Note: Difference in prices for State of Decay can be found via. Steam Apps Database.

- ✔ Available worldwide through steampowered.com
- ✔ Minimum and recommended specs provided
- ✔ Advised Steamworks (Steam) DRM was to be used for State of Decay
- ✔ Advised how Steam DRM would activate State of Decay
- ✔ Free and unlimited access and downloads after purchase
- ✔ Can backup purchased games "offline" (e.g. external or optical drives)
- ✔ Refunds offered for pre-orders (EU ONLY!)
- ✔ Can access personal data
- ✔ Can terminate account or request to terminate account

- ✘ State of Decay is priced inconsistently across global regions
- ✘ Download / Client Manager is required, including for gameplay
- ✘ User account creation is required
- ✘ No refunds or exchanges for purchased games
- ✘ Warranties waived (excluding physical merchantability warranties)
- ✘ Cover waived against any unforeseeable damages, disruptions of service

- ✖ Account termination voids past purchases and licenses to play them
- ✖ Consumers prevented from disputing Steam TOS breaches made against them
- ✖ Can't review and question changes made to Steam TOS
- ✖ Past purchases voided after refusing to accept Steam TOS

2. Privacy Policy

Note: 1,507 words found within Steam's Privacy Policy.

See Also: Relevant Sections: *Collection of Information, Personally Identifiable Information* and *Use of Personally Identifiable Information.*

Looking at State of Decay's Privacy Policy through Steam

- ✓ Privacy Policy found on steampowered.com
- ✓ Policy applies to Steam Client, Steamworks DRM and State of Decay
- ✓ Easy to read, understand and is worded with clear consistency
- ✓ Users visibly notified of any changes made to the Policy
- ✓ "Personally-identifiable" and "non-personally identifiable" info are defined
- ✓ Policy specifies what's are collected before and during gameplay
- ✓ Info is stored in the US
- ✓ Data centres are 100% safe and secure
- ✓ Info is used solely for improving Steam's services only!
- ✓ Visible opt-in / opt-out process
- ✓ Users can access and modify their user account
- ✓ Users can modify their user account
- ✓ Users can validate the info they've provided
- ✓ Can request to have their data removed
- ✓ Can review and query changes made to the Privacy Policy

Note: Privacy Policy was retrieved December 2013; Effective Date of Steam's Privacy Policy prior to this evaluation was August 2012.

- ✖ Third parties not identified
- ✖ Users have limited control over their Steam account
- ✖ Users must accept ALL changes before playing State of Decay

3a. EULA (GAME)

Looking at State of Decay's EULA from Undead Labs.

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

3b. EULA (STEAM)

Note: 6,946 Words found in Steam's EULA.

Looking at Steam Subscriber's Agreement through Steam.

- ✓ EULA / TOS is found on steampowered.com
- ✓ EULA / TOS covers Steam DRM
- ✓ Terms and conditions for Steam DRM are clearly defined
- ✓ Can back-up copies of Steam Client
- ✓ Permitted to create free "mods" of Valve's Source Code Engine
- ✓ Won't blacklist specific background services or software
- ✓ Termination process is clear and transparent

EULA has been updated to July 2013.

- ✖ Difficult to read and understand
- ✖ Drafted to only abide by the laws of US in the state of California
- ✖ Users not visibly notified of any changes made to the EULA / TOS

- ✖ Can't review and query changes made to the EULA / TOS
- ✖ Circumvention of Steam DRM prohibited
- ✖ Monitoring services / software are required to use Steam
- ✖ Cover waived against any unforeseeable damages, disruptions of service
- ✖ Arbitration process isn't freely-provided and requested by Valve
- ✖ Legal action is waived

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

4. Setup / Install

Looking at how State of Decay is installed on Windows PCs only.

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

- ✓ Custom installation options are provided
- ✓ All files are installed within folders designated by users
- ✓ Steam DRM files installed within folders designated by users
- ✓ Currently-executing background services won't interfere with installation
- ✓ Error-free installation
- ✓ Installation completed within 30 minutes (using an ADSL2+ connection)

- ✖ No installation logs of files and registry keys

5. Updates / Patching

Looking at how State of Decay is patched prior and after gameplay.

Note: The earliest version evaluated required no patches or updates.

- ✓ No other DRM files or registry keys are installed
- ✓ Details of patches provided via steampowered.com
- ✓ Users can be advised of game patch's availability

- ✖ Automatic updates are mandatory
- ✖ Day-one patch required
- ✖ Requires ALL patches to play State of Decay
- ✖ Patches only installed via. automatic updates
- ✖ Changes to the Privacy Policy and/or EULA / TOS not provided
- ✖ No installation logs of files and registry keys
- ✖ Rollback option not provided
- ✖ No plans to sunset Steam DRM

6. DRM & Activation

Looking at Steam DRM in relation to State of Decay and its effects on Windows PCs only.

Note: It is recommended that (new) users should install and update Steam first before installing State of Decay.

Note: State of Decay will be connected to the following servers: Valve (Highwinds Networks, Telia.Net, Kaia Networks, QWest Communications, Limelight Networks, Level 3 Communications, Comcast & WA Internet Exchange)

- ✓ Won't interfere with currently-executing background services or software
- ✓ Firewall and AV settings aren't modified or required to be modified
- ✓ Users are aware and advised on how State of Decay will be activated
- ✓ Username, 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 user account is required
✗ Game is locked to specific account after activation

7. Gameplay Experience

Looking at the gameplay aspects of State of Decay 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
✓ Suitable options to modify video settings
✓ Can customise controls
✓ Can play with console controller
✓ 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

✗ 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 State of Decay 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 State of Decay 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 State of Decay (How much legacy material is there after the removal of State of Decay?)

✓ Knowledgebase provided at Steam to remove all Steam files and registry keys
✓ Knowledgebase in removing game + DRM files is easy to understand

✗ Will need to uninstall the game via. Control Panel
✗ Some game files and registry keys related to Steam and the game remain

See Also: How to play State of Decay in offline mode.

See Also: How to play State of Decay in offline mode.

Note: Saves are automated through a checkpoint system. Savegames and Config files are found in the Steam\userdata\ and Steam\steamapps\common\State of Decay folder.

Note: Steam does offer an option to manually remove all Steam-related files. It does work and will remove any remaining files and keys after uninstallation of State of Decay

10. Customer Support

- ✓ 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

64%

BARGAIN BIN MATERIAL	SHOWS PROMISE & POTENTIAL	WORTH SUPPORTING
64% and below	Between 65% and 84%	85% and above

A required auto-update at the first instance of installation through Steam, Steam itself, and other minor titbits may have contributed to the overall score. But 64% isn't reflective of what a clean, simple and well-structured game State of Decay is. We do feel that it's worth purchasing and playing if you're comfortable with using Steam.

Colophon

This analysis of State of Decay 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. State of Decay was bought with RYG funds through Steam.

Disclaimer

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