

They Breathe

An RYG Analysis

Platform: PC (Windows 7 only)
DRM: IndieCity Client Service
Digital Distributor: IndieCity

Developer: Working Parts
Publisher: Working Parts

RYG's ASSESSMENT

58% **BARGAIN BASEMENT MATERIAL**
64% and Below

1a. Product Info

Note: While IndieCity's Client Manager is required for download, it is possible to play They Breathe without launching the client manager.

Note: Working Parts will also provide their own EULA for They Breathe, but is similar to IndieCity's boilerplate EULA.

Note: All games tied to a client manager and requires the client manager to play the game constitutes a DRM.

1b. Digital Dwnld

Note: The dollar conversions for USD and GBR were very close.

Note: While IndieCity's Client Manager is required for download, it is possible to play They Breathe without launching the client manager.

Note: Refer to Section 5, Licensing, within IndieCity's TOS.

Looking at how much information is provided on They Breathe on the IndieCity site prior and on release.

- ✓ They Breathe released simultaneously with its console version (XBox 360)
- ✓ They Breathe released globally in 2012 across **multiple vendors**
- ✓ Minimum and recommended specs provided
- ✓ Demo provided via **Desura** (will require Desura Client to play demo)
- ✓ Advised **IndieCity Client DRM** was to be used for They Breathe
- ✓ Game's **EULA**, **Privacy Policy** and **TOS** fully accessible on indiecity.com
- ✓ All game-related information can be found on **indiecity.com**

- ✗ Available only on Windows
- ✗ No known DRM Free options
- ✗ No Manual and/or Readme

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

- ✓ They Breathe sold at one, global price
- ✓ Available worldwide through **indiecity.com**
- ✓ Download / Client Manager is optional; not required for gameplay
- ✓ Minimum and recommended specs provided
- ✓ Advised **IndieCity Client DRM** was to be used for They Breathe
- ✓ User account creation required with very minimal details (email and password)
- ✓ Correct currency confirmation provided prior, during and after purchase
- ✓ Confirmation of purchase and receipt provided
- ✓ Free and unlimited access and downloads after purchase
- ✓ Can play They Breathe without the client manager
- ✓ Can backup purchased games "offline" (e.g. external or optical drives)
- ✓ Refunds and/or exchanges offered under specific provisions
- ✓ Can access personal data

- ✗ Payment options limited to PayPal (PayPal account required)
- ✗ Download specs for They Breathe not provided

Note: They Breathe is a small game and a small executable file (95Mb).

2. Privacy Policy

Note: This applies to the IndieCity's Privacy Policy only.

Note: They Breathe **will not connect** to any third party server during and after gameplay and does not require a Privacy Policy.

Note: There's 2,118 words within IndieCity's Privacy Policy.

Note: IndieCity's Privacy Policy has a list of third party partners in which they are used to analyse and monitor the traffic coming through IndieCity.

- ✗ 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 and validating IndieCity TOS breaches
- ✗ No known option available for
- ✗ Can't review and question changes made to IndieCity TOS
- ✗ Past purchases voided after refusing to accept IndieCity TOS

Looking at IndieCity Privacy Policy through the IndieCity

- ✓ Privacy Policy found on **IndieCity** and not required for They Breathe
- ✓ Policy applies to indiecity.com
- ✓ Privacy Policy is formatted for easy reading for the web
- ✓ Privacy Policy is **written for easy comprehension**
- ✓ "Personally-identifiable" & "non-personally identifiable" info are clearly defined
- ✓ Policy specifies which info are collected during purchase & download
- ✓ Data centres are 100% safe and secure
- ✓ Policy explicitly specifies which information are used
- ✓ Crazy Egg, Google Analytics, Mixpanel & GoSquared identified as third parties
- ✓ Visible opt-in / opt-out process
- ✓ Players can access their personal information
- ✓ Players can modify their personal information
- ✓ Players have full control over their personal information
- ✓ 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
- ✗ Players cannot export their information
- ✗ User data is retained by IndieCity for an extended period of time
- ✗ IndieCity may transfer all players information in the event of a sale or merger
- ✗ Users must accept ALL changes made to the Policy before playing They Breathe

Looking at IndieCity's Standard EULA and IndieCity's Terms of Service

3. EULA (IndieCity)

Note: There's 4,838 words in the IndieCity Terms of Service.

- ✓ EULA / TOS covers IndieCity and They Breathe
- ✓ Refunds and/or exchanges offered for purchased games under provisions
- ✓ Can replace damaged copies with a free, replacement copy
- ✓ Terms and conditions for IndieCity's Client DRM are clearly defined
- ✓ Can back-up copies of They Breathe
- ✓ Allow monetisation of clips relating to Banished through video sharing sites
- ✓ Won't blacklist specific background services or software
- ✓ Termination process is clear and transparent
- ✓ Users can initiate legal action if the arbitration process fails
- ✓ Users can criticise or provide criticism about the game without reprisals

- ✗ EULA / TOS was not formatted for easy reading on the web

4. Setup / Install

Note: They Breathe is a very small game to download (~90Mb) and install on Player's PCs.

Note: A lot of manual deletion of IndieCity files and registry keys will be required to fully remove IndieCity from player's PCs.

5. Updates / Patching

Note: The version of They Breathe evaluated was up to date and required no updates.

Note: While automatic updates for both They Breathe and IndieCity's client manager can be disabled, it will run an automatic update for first-time players or first-time users of IndieCity.

6. DRM & Activation

Note: IndieCity will connect to Amazon, Google Analytics, Mixpanel & GoSquared in respect to downloading They Breathe and using IndieCity client manager.

- ✗ Drafted to only abide by the laws of the UK
- ✗ Users not visibly notified of any changes made to the EULA / TOS
- ✗ 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
- ✗ They Breathe'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

Looking at how They Breathe is installed on Windows PCs only.

- ✓ Custom installation options are provided
- ✓ All files are installed within folders designated by users
- ✓ Currently-executing background services won't interfere with installation
- ✓ Error-free installation and completed within 5 minutes

- ✗ No installation logs of files and registry keys
- ✗ Extra IndieCity DRM and Client files found in /ProgramData/ and /AppData/

Looking at how They Breathe is patched prior and after gameplay.

- ✓ Can play the game unpatched
- ✓ Users can be advised of game patch's availability through IndieCity

- ✗ Automatic updates are mandatory
- ✗ Patches only installed via. automatic updates
- ✗ Details of patches not provided / provided prior to installation
- ✗ No installation logs of files and registry keys
- ✗ No plans to sunset IndieCity client DRM

Looking at IndieCity in relation to They Breathe and its effects on Windows PCs only.

- ✓ Won't interfere with currently-executing background services or software
- ✓ User account not specifically required to activate They Breathe
- ✓ Username, password & email are only required to create an IndieCity account
- ✓ Unlimited online activations to any one PC
- ✓ Can play single-player game offline
- ✓ Only IndieCity DRM is implemented
- ✓ Unlimited hardware activations and installations
- ✓ Activation is simple and hassle-free

- ✗ Firewall and AV settings are modified without request
- ✗ Can't verify the safety and reliability of the activation process
- ✗ No support or troubleshooting process

7. Gameplay Experience

Note: While the website specifically states that IndieCity Client Manager is required to play They Breathe, we found that players can play the game without the need to use the client manager as if it was a "DRM Free" game.

Note: Players will need to be aware that They Breathe was designed with very fixed parameters and will take ~15-20 minutes to finish the game.

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

- ✓ Can play on minimum specs
- ✓ Can play a backup copy of the game
- ✓ Can play in borderless full screen 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
- ✓ Can play on more than one PC simultaneously
- ✓ No DRM or monitoring services running in the background

- ✗ Can only play in fixed full screen mode
- ✗ No in-game and/or manually configurable video settings
- ✗ Only playable on mouse/keyboard and console controller with fixed settings
- ✗ No Separate Volume Controls
- ✗ Closed Captions not provided
- ✗ No known option for user-generated Closed Captions
- ✗ Will restart the game at every re-launch of They Breathe
- ✗ No in-game manual save option
- ✗ Can't modify savegame and/or ini file

8. PC Checkup

Looking at whether They Breathe 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 They Breathe 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

Note: A considerable amount of time is required to remove all files and keys relating to IndieCity, ICELib and ICEBridge.

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

- ✓ Direct uninstallation shortcut provided

- ✗ IndieCity files and registry keys remain after automatic uninstallation
- ✗ No External tools to remove game + DRM files provided

10. Customer Support

Looking at the customer support side of *They Breathe* through the IndieCity

- ✓ Customer service / support found in one place at IndieCity
- ✗ IndieCity's forum is difficult to use
- ✗ Searching for specific things within IndieCity's forum is difficult
- ✗ Information found can be vague and is not regularly updated

RYG's VERDICT

58%

BARGAIN-BASE-MENT MATERIAL

64% and below

SHOWS PROMISE & POTENTIAL

Between 65% and 84%

WORTH SUPPORTING

85% and above

*While we were impressed with both *They Breathe* as a (claustrophobic, horrifying and unsettling) game and IndieCity in terms of its level of detail in presenting its information on all its gamecards, we were somewhat disappointed with some of IndieCity's inconsistent qualities. This included the forced autoupdates to the game, the auto-download of games purchased through the store along with its initial opt-in capability of setting IndieCity's client service as a P2P service. All of this occurred prior to any real input from players in turning these settings off. We also found that IndieCity was not required to install and play *They Breathe* as users can easily bypass their service(s). However, this is not widely known on their gamecard. In addition to this is the level of difficulty we had in effectively removing IndieCity from our systems. *They Breathe*, in our opinion, is a game worth supporting in spite of its severe in-game constraints, but we suggest finding alternate distributors apart from IndieCity.*



Colophon

This analysis of *They Breathe* 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. *They Breathe* was bought with RYG funds through IndieCity.

Disclaimer

These analyses are only a guide and represent RYG's perspective into *They Breathe* 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 *They Breathe* 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.

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