

Transistor

An RYG Analysis

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

Developer: Super Giant Games
Publisher: Super Giant Games

RYG's ASSESSMENT

63% **BARGAIN-BASEMENT MATERIAL**
64% and below

1a. Product Info

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

- ✓ Transistor released simultaneously with its console version (PS4)
- ✓ Transistor released globally on 20.05.2014
- ✓ Transistor sold through **multiple vendors** outside of Steam
- ✓ Minimum and recommended specs provided
- ✓ Advised Steamworks (Steam) DRM was to be used for Transistor
- ✓ Advised how Steam DRM would activate the game through Transistor
- ✓ EULA, **Privacy Policy** and **TOS** fully accessible on steampowered.com
- ✓ All game-related information can be found on steampowered.com
- ✗ Available only on Windows
- ✗ No known DRM-Free options sold for Transistor
- ✗ Minimum and recommended download specs not provided through Steam
- ✗ No (known) demo
- ✗ No Manual and/or Readme

1b. Digital Dwnld

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 Transistor
- ✓ Advised how Steam DRM would activate Transistor 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
- ✗ Transistor on Steam is priced inconsistently across global regions
- ✗ Download / Client Manager is required, including for gameplay

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 Transistor's tables can be found via. **Steam Apps Database**.

Note: Downloading Transistor will take ~2.5 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

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.

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.

- ✗ 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
- ✗ Transistor 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 Transistor's Privacy Policy through Valve

- ✓ Privacy Policy found on [steampowered.com](#)
 - ✓ Policy applies to Transistor, 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 Transistor

Looking at Steam Subscriber's Agreement through Steam.

- ✓ EULA / TOS is found on [steampowered.com](#)
- ✓ EULA / TOS covers Transistor, 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 Transistor
- ✓ 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

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 Transistor will take ~2.5 Gb.

5. Updates / Patching

- ✗ 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 Transistor 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

Looking at how Transistor is patched prior and after gameplay.

- ✓ Can opt-in / opt-out of automatic updates
- ✓ Can play the game unpatched
- ✓ 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
- ✓ Can play the game unpatched

- ✗ Patches only installed via. automatic updates
- ✗ Changes to the Privacy Policy or EULA / TOS 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 Transistor.

See Also: How to play Transistor in **offline mode**.

Note: Installing, updating Steam and installing Transistor 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*)

7. Gameplay Experience

Looking at Steam DRM in relation to Transistor 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 Transistor 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

Looking at the gameplay aspects of Transistor 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
- ✓ Closed captions and subtitles provided in **8 languages**
- ✓ Can access soundtrack 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
- ✓ Can modify settings manually through **launch commands**

- ✗ Limited video options provided
- ✗ English audio provided only
- ✗ No known option for user-generated subtitles
- ✗ No option to manually save in-game progress other than specific checkpoints
- ✗ 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 Transistor 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 Transistor 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 Transistor (How much legacy material is there after the removal of Transistor?)

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

10. **Customer Support**

Looking at the customer support side of Transistor 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

Transistor was one of the few games released through Steam that genuinely played in offline mode (if selected) and restrained itself from unlocking any achievements (again, if selected). However, much of what brought the overall score down for Transistor lay with the other usual quirks of Steam (see other reports we've done on Steam-based games), which isn't too surprising.



Colophon

This analysis of Transistor 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. Transistor was bought with RYG funds through Steam.

Disclaimer

These analyses are only a guide and represent RYG's perspective into Transistor 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 Transistor 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.

RYG Analysis: Transistor
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PRYG3-00126-01
26 May 2014