

Tropico 4

An RYG Analysis

Platform: PC (Windows 7 only)
DRM: GamersGate / Kalypso Media DRM
Digital Distributor: GamersGate

Developer: Haemimont Games
Publisher: Kalypso Media

RYG's VERDICT

57% **BARGAIN BIN MATERIAL**
64% and below

1a. Product Info

Note: Alternate links to the Tropico 4 demo (that doesn't require a GamersGate account) can be found through [Tropico 4's official website](#).

Note: While GamersGate DRM was implemented via the installation stage, Kalypso's serial key and user-registration activation DRM was not.

1b. Digital Dwnld

Note: Prices on GamersGate are in USD.

Note: Installing Tropico 4 on other PCs using a backup copy will require an initial Internet connection. Users will be connected to GamersGate servers for verification.

Note: Terminating a GamersGate account can quickly be done by emailing their [customer support](#).

Looking at how much information is provided on Tropico 4 on the GamersGate site prior and on release.

- ✓ Minimum and recommended specs provided via. Gamesgate
- ✓ Demo provided through GamersGate
- ✓ Manual and Readme provided with the game

- ✗ Tropico 4 released with different global dates
- ✗ Available only on Windows
- ✗ Base game and DLC Pack(s) sold separately via. GamersGate
- ✗ Info provided on Kalypso Media DRM was vague
- ✗ No advice on how Kalypso Media DRM would activate Tropico 4
- ✗ EULA, Privacy Policy and TOS is only found within the game
- ✗ All game-related information on [GamersGate.com](#) is difficult to find & navigate

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

- ✓ Tropico 4 sold at one, global price
- ✓ Available worldwide through GamersGate.com
- ✓ Minimum and recommended specs provided
- ✓ Free and unlimited access and downloads after purchase
- ✓ Can backup purchased games "offline" (e.g. external or optical drives)
- ✓ Refunds and/or exchanges offered for purchased games
- ✓ Can access personal data
- ✓ Can terminate account or request to terminate account

- ✗ Download / Client Manager is required only during download and installation
- ✗ Info provided on Kalypso Media DRM was vague
- ✗ No advice on how Kalypso Media DRM would activate Tropico 4
- ✗ User account creation is required
- ✗ No refunds or exchanges for pre-orders

2. Privacy Policy

Note: 1,155 words found in GamersGate Privacy Policy.

- ✗ 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 GamersGate TOS breach
- ✗ Can't review and question changes made to GamersGate TOS
- ✗ Past purchases voided after refusing to accept GamersGate TOS

Looking at GamersGate's Privacy Policy through GamersGate

- ✓ Privacy Policy found on [GamersGate.com](https://www.gamersgate.com)
- ✓ Policy applies to Tropico 4, GamersGate and Kalypso Media DRM
- ✓ Easy to read, understand and is worded with clear consistency
- ✓ "Personally-identifiable" and "non-personally identifiable" info are defined
- ✓ Policy specifies and applies to the payment and downloading process
- ✓ Data centres are 100% safe and secure
- ✓ Info is used solely for payment processing, downloading & installation
- ✓ Visible opt-in / opt-out process
- ✓ Users can access their GamersGate account
- ✓ Users can modify their GamersGate account
- ✓ Users have full control over their GamersGate account
- ✓ Users can validate the info they've provided
- ✗ Users not visibly notified of any changes made to the Policy
- ✗ Not advised where the info is specifically stored
- ✗ Third parties not identified
- ✗ User data is retained by GamersGate for an extended period of time
- ✗ Can't review and query changes made to the Privacy Policy
- ✗ Users must accept ALL changes made to the Policy before playing Tropico 4

3a. EULA (GAME)

Note: 1,316 words found in Tropico 4's EULA.

Note: More information on GamersGate TOS can be found in Section 3b. EULA (GG).

Looking at Tropico 4's EULA from Kalypso Media

- ✓ Can back-up copies of Tropico 4
- ✓ Permitted to create free "mods" of Tropico 4
- ✓ Can opt-out of any monitoring services / software
- ✓ 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 is only found within Tropico 4
- ✗ EULA / TOS only covers Tropico 4 and not Kalypso Media DRM
- ✗ Difficult to read, understand and is inconsistently worded
- ✗ Drafted to only abide by the laws of the UK
- ✗ Users not visibly notified of any changes made 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

Note: Limited warranties, waivers of liability and indemnity are commonly found within many software EULAs and TOSs

3b. EULA (GG)

Note: 2,388 words found in GamersGate TOS.

Note: This only occurs during the installation and initial activation of Tropicó 4.

4. Setup / Install

5. Updates / Patching

Note: Details of updates are provided in the Tropicó 4 game launcher window.

Note: First-time users of Tropicó 4 should expect a 200Mb update.

- ✗ Terms and conditions for Kalypso Media DRM aren't clearly defined
- ✗ Circumvention of Kalypso Media DRM prohibited
- ✗ Tropicó 4'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 GamersGate Terms of Service through GamersGate.

- ✓ EULA / TOS is found on GamersGate.com
- ✓ Easy to read, understand and is worded with clear consistency
- ✓ Can back-up copies of Tropicó 4
- ✓ 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 only covers GamersGate
- ✗ Drafted to only abide by the laws of the US
- ✗ Users not visibly notified of any changes made to the EULA / TOS
- ✗ Can't review and query changes made to the EULA / TOS
- ✗ Terms and conditions for GamersGate DRM aren't clearly defined
- ✗ Circumvention of GamersGate DRM prohibited
- ✗ Monitoring services / software are required to play Tropicó 4
- ✗ Warranties waived (excluding physical merchantability warranties)
- ✗ Cover waived against any unforeseeable damages, disruptions of service

Looking at how Tropicó 4 is installed on Windows PCs only.

- ✓ Custom installation options are provided
- ✓ All files are installed within folders designated by users
- ✓ All DRM files installed within folders designated by users
- ✓ Currently-executing background services won't interfere with installation
- ✓ Error-free installation
- ✓ Installation completed within 10 minutes

- ✗ No installation logs of files and registry keys

Looking at how Tropicó 4 is patched prior and after gameplay.

- ✓ Can opt-in / opt-out of automatic updates
- ✓ Day-one patch optional
- ✓ Can play the game unpatched
- ✓ No other DRM files or registry keys are installed
- ✓ Details of patches provided via Tropicó 4 Game Launcher window

6. DRM & Activation

Note: GamersGate lists the third party DRM as “Other” DRM. It’s Kalypso’s serial-key, online user registration DRM.

Note: Tropico 4 will only be connected to the following servers: GamersGate (Internap), Verisign and Kalypso Media (1 and 1 Internet and NMC PlusServer AG).

7. Gameplay Experience

Note: Savegame and Config files are found in the / AppData/ Roaming/Kalypso Media/ folder.

Note: Users will need to either manually block Tropico 4 from connecting or remove the Ethernet / Wireless connection physically in order to play offline.

- ✓ Users can be advised of game patch’s availability
- ✓ Patches can be installed manually (via. the Game Launcher)

- ✗ 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 Kalypso Media DRM

Looking at Kalypso Media and GamersGate DRM in relation to Tropico 4 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
- ✓ Username, password and email are only required
- ✓ Unlimited online activations to any one PC
- ✓ Can play single-player game offline
- ✓ Unlimited hardware activations
- ✓ Unlimited installations
- ✓ Support and troubleshooting process provided

- ✗ No instructions provided on the activation process
- ✗ Can’t verify the safety and reliability of the activation process
- ✗ Activation pathway isn’t explained
- ✗ Kalypso Media (Other) DRM and GamersGate DRM implemented
- ✗ No offline option
- ✗ A non-transferrable user account is required
- ✗ Game is locked to specific account after activation
- ✗ Activating the game isn’t simple and hassle-free

Looking at the gameplay aspects of Tropico 4 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 play in windowed mode
- ✓ Can play offline
- ✓ Can access DLC offline
- ✓ 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
- ✓ No DRM or monitoring services running in the background

- ✗ Only playable on mouse and keyboard
- ✗ Will “phone home”
- ✗ Can only play on one PC at a time per game / account

8. **PC Checkup**

Looking at whether Tropico 4 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 Tropico 4 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 Tropico 4 (How much legacy material is there after the removal of Tropico 4?)

- ✓ Backup savegames prompt provided
- ✗ Will need to uninstall the game via. Control Panel
- ✗ One game file and one registry key will remain (Both are easy to remove)

10. **Customer Support**

Looking at the customer support side of Tropico 4 through GamersGate

- ✓ Customer service / support found in one place at GamersGate.com
- ✓ GamersGate.com FAQ is easy to use and navigate
- ✓ Searching on GamersGate.com FAQ is direct and quick
- ✓ Info is easy to read and understand
- ✓ Customer services is quick to respond within 24 hours
- ✓ Customer service will resolve issues within 24 hours

RYG's VERDICT

57%

BARGAIN BIN MATERIAL

64% and below

SHOWS PROMISE & POTENTIAL

Between 65% and 84%

WORTH SUPPORTING

85% and above

While much of the (technical) aspects of GamersGate was reliable and solid it was their limited capacity to explain Tropico 4's third party DRM that lowered their overall score. If improvements were made in GamersGate in providing DRM info, user documentation, legal policies and readme instructions to gamers they would become a proper competitor against the likes of Steam in mainstream PC gaming distribution. As for Tropico 4? Users will be slightly annoyed at the little info in activating the game and phone-home requirements, but otherwise the game is playable and easy to install/remove as desired.



Colophon

This analysis of Tropico 4 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. Tropico 4 was bought with RYG funds through GamersGate

Disclaimer

These analyses are only a guide and represent RYG's perspective into Tropico 4 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 Tropico 4 and hope you continue to support our work.