Watch Dogs

Platform: PC (Windows 7 only)
DRM: Uplay
Digital Distributor: PHYSICAL VERSION TESTED!!!

Developer: Ubisoft
Publisher: Ubisoft

RYG's ASSESSMENT

58% BARGAIN-BASEMENT MATERIAL
64% and below

1a. Product Info

Looking at how much information is provided on Watch Dogs on the Uplay site prior and on release.

- ✓ Watch Dogs released simultaneously with its console version
- ✓ Watch Dogs released globally on 27.05.2014
- ✓ Watch Dogs sold through multiple (digital) vendors
- ✓ Minimum and recommended specs provided
- ✓ Advised Uplay DRM was to be used for Watch Dogs
- ✓ Advised how Uplay DRM would activate the game through Watch Dogs
- ✓ Manual and Readme provided with the game
- ✓ EULA, Privacy Policy and TOS fully accessible on ubi.com
- ✓ All game-related information can be found on ubi.com

Note: DLC accessible by completing in-game achievements or through purchases via. the Uplay store.

- ✗ Available only on Windows
- ✗ No DRM-Free option provided for Watch Dogs
- ✗ Base game sold as multiple "editions" with varying selections of day-one DLCs
- ✗ No demo

2. Privacy Policy

Looking at Watch Dogs's Privacy Policy through Ubisoft

Note: Privacy Policy contains ~2,640 words. Last retrieved July 2014.

Note: Please refer to *When does Ubisoft collect your personal information?* under Ubisoft's Privacy Policy.

Note: Please refer to *Who is collecting my personal information and how will it be used?* under Ubisoft's Privacy Policy.

Note: Accessing personal info can be found within the Players Account Settings within Ubisoft and Uplay (Web Login).

- ✓ Privacy Policy found on ubi.com
- ✓ Policy applies to Watch Dogs and Uplay DRM / Client Manager
- ✓ "Personally-identifiable" & "non-personally identifiable" info are clearly defined
- ✓ Policy explicitly specifies which info are collected before & during gameplay
- ✓ 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

- ✗ Privacy Policy not formatted for easy reading on the web
- ✗ 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
- ✖ Not advised where the info is specifically stored
- ✖ Third parties not specifically identified
- ✖ Players cannot export their information
- ✖ Player data is retained by Ubisoft for an extended period of time
- ✖ Can't review and query changes made to the Privacy Policy
- ✖ No specific information on how info will be used in the event of a sale/merger
- ✖ Players must accept ALL changes made before playing Watch Dogs

3. EULA TOS

Looking at Watch Dogs's EULA from Ubisoft.

Note: There's 4,948 words in the Watch Dogs's EULA.

Note: Workaround in backing games downloaded through Uplay.

Note: Refer to Uplay Privacy Policy's readability scores.

Note: Ubisoft's refund / exchange policy. Note that this is different (and inconsistent) to Digital River's TOS.

Note: Both Watch Dogs's EULA and Ubisoft's TOS are exactly alike, with the exception of accessibility (with the TOS accessible via ubi.com and the EULA accessible after purchase).

- ✓ EULA / TOS covers Watch Dogs and Uplay DRM
- ✓ Terms and conditions for Uplay DRM are clearly defined
- ✓ Can back-up copies of Watch Dogs
- ✓ Allows monetisation of clips relating to Ubisoft through video-sharing sites
- ✓ Won't blacklist specific background services or software
- ✓ Players can criticise or provide criticism about the game without reprisals

- ✖ EULA / TOS for Watch Dogs found only on the game disc
- ✖ 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 UK
- ✖ Players 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
- ✖ No refunds or exchanges for purchased games
- ✖ Circumvention of Uplay DRM prohibited
- ✖ Watch Dogs's source code isn't to be modified or reverse-engineered
- ✖ Not permitted to create "mods"
- ✖ Warranties waived (excluding physical merchantability warranties)
- ✖ Cover waived against any unforeseeable damages, disruptions of service
- ✖ Termination process dictated by Ubisoft
- ✖ Arbitration process isn't freely-provided and is overseen by Ubisoft

4. Setup / Install

Looking at how Watch Dogs is installed on Windows PCs only.

Note: Ubisoft will provide real time, partial installation and uninstallation logs of Uplay's Client Manager only saved in the Ubisoft installation folder.

Note: Downloading Watch Dogs will take ~25Gb.

- ✓ Custom installation options are provided
- ✓ All files are installed within folders designated by players
- ✓ Uplay 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

- ✖ Will alter Windows Firewall Settings without Player's explicit consent
- ✖ Partial installation logs of files only

5. Updates / Patching

Looking at how Watch Dogs is patched prior and after gameplay.

- ✓ No other DRM files or registry keys are installed
- ✓ Details of patches provided via Ubisoft's Forums
- ✓ Can play Watch Dogs with the latest patch

- ✗ Automatic updates are mandatory
- ✗ Day-one patch required
- ✗ Requires ALL patches to play Watch Dogs
- ✗ Patches only installed via. automatic updates
- ✗ Notifications not provided for availability of game patches
- ✗ Rollback option not provided
- ✗ No plans to sunset Uplay DRM

6. DRM & Activation

Note: It is recommended that (new) Players should install and update Uplay first before installing Watch Dogs.

See Also: Players can create a firewall rule to block Uplay and play Watch Dogs in Offline Mode.

Note: Installing, updating Uplay and installing Watch Dogs for the first time will connect to the following companies: Ubisoft, Mark Monitor, Amazon Web Services and Limelight Networks.

Looking at Uplay DRM in relation to Watch Dogs and its effects on Windows PCs only.

- ✓ Won't interfere with currently-executing background services or software
- ✓ Players are aware and advised on how Watch Dogs will be activated
- ✓ Unlimited online activations to any one PC
- ✓ Can play single-player game offline
- ✓ Only Uplay DRM is implemented
- ✓ Unlimited hardware activations
- ✓ Unlimited installations
- ✓ Activation is simple and hassle-free

- ✗ No instructions provided on the activation process
- ✗ Firewall and AV settings are modified without request
- ✗ Can't verify the safety and reliability of the activation process
- ✗ A non-transferrable player account is required
- ✗ Player's name, Password, Email, DOB and Country are required
- ✗ Game is locked to specific account after activation
- ✗ No support or troubleshooting process

7. Gameplay Experience

Looking at the gameplay aspects of Watch Dogs 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 in windowed mode
- ✓ Extensive video settings provided in-game
- ✓ Can customise keyboard, mouse and console controller settings
- ✓ Can play with console controller
- ✓ Separate volume controls provided
- ✓ Localisations (audio and closed captions) provided
- ✓ Can play Watch Dogs 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 known option for user-generated subtitles and audio localisation
- ✘ Requires constant and tethered internet connection to access DLC
- ✘ Will "phone home"
- ✘ Won't advise players upon connecting to Ubisoft's servers
- ✘ Cannot opt out of Watch Dogs achievements
- ✘ Savegames provided at specific checkpoints within the game
- ✘ Can only play on one PC at a time per game / account
- ✘ DRM and monitoring services will operate during and after gameplay

Note: While Watch Dogs can be played offline the game will periodically connect back to Ubisoft's servers and monitor the progress of the player's gameplay.

8. PC Checkup

Looking at whether Watch Dogs will modify certain PC settings without Players permission / consent.

- ✓ PC clean after scanning for viruses
- ✓ PC clean after scanning for malware and spyware and rootkits
- ✓ Played Watch Dogs without major errors
- ✓ Start-up settings remain unaltered
- ✓ No DRM and monitoring services running in the background
- ✓ System configuration files remain unaltered

- ✘ Will alter Windows Firewall Settings without player's explicit consent

9. Removal Uninstall

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

- ✓ Direct uninstallation shortcut provided through Uplay's client manager
- ✓ Backup savegames prompt provided / Savegames retained
- ✓ Clean uninstallation

Note: Uplay will do a complete file and registry removal of any games tethered to Uplay and Uplay itself if requested.

10. Customer Support

Looking at the customer support side of Watch Dogs through Ubisoft's Community Forums

- ✓ Customer service / support found in one place at support.ubi.com
- ✓ Ubisoft's support service is easy to use and navigate
- ✓ Searching on Ubisoft's support service is direct and quick
- ✓ Info is easy to read and understand

RYG's VERDICT

58%

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

This recent iteration of Uplay, in respect to its file management and uninstallation was, by far, the cleanest we've ever come across for a DRM / Digital Distribution Service. However, their legal-heavy terms of service, privacy policy, inclusion of an automatic firewall rule applied without players consent as well as an offline mode that masks Uplay's periodic and background online chatter between its servers and its players renders Uplay a less-than-desirable service to use. We also found the current form of Watch Dogs somewhat erratic in its performance on high and low end PCs.

Colophon

This analysis of Watch Dogs 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. Watch Dogs was bought with RYG funds through EB Games.

Disclaimer

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