Waveform

Platform: PC (Windows 7 only)
DRM: Desura
Digital Distributor: Desura

Developer: Eden Industries
Publisher: Eden Industries

RYG's VERDICT

70% SHOWS PROMISE & POTENTIAL
Between 65% and 84%

1a. Product Info

Note: Waveform was released without any third-party DRM via. Desura.

Note: More info on Desura's DRM Client and how they notify third party DRMs can be found on their support page.

Note: Visit Waveform's page via. Steam for minimum and recommended specs.

Looking at how much information is provided on Waveform on its website prior and on release.

- ✓ Waveform released globally via. Desura on 21.03.2013
- ✓ Available on Windows, MacOS and Linux
- ✓ Base game and day-one DLCs sold as one package
- ✓ Advised Desura DRM was to be used for Waveform
- ✓ Advised how Desura DRM would activate Waveform
- ✓ Demo provided (via. Steam)
- ✓ EULA, Privacy Policy and TOS fully accessible on desura.com
- ✓ All game-related information can be found on desura.com

- ✗ Minimum and recommended specs not provided
- ✗ No Manual or Readme

1b. Digital Dwnld

Note: Games sold through Desura are priced in AUD.

Note: Waveform will tie to the user's account only.

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

- ✓ Waveform sold at one, global price
- ✓ Available worldwide through Desura
- ✓ Minimum and recommended specs provided
- ✓ Advised Desura DRM was to be used for Waveform
- ✓ Advised how Desura DRM would activate Waveform
- ✓ Free and unlimited access and downloads after purchase
- ✓ Can access personal data
- ✓ Can terminate account or request to terminate account
- ✓ Can review and dispute and validate breaches in Desura TOS

- ✗ Download / Client Manager is required, including for gameplay
- ✗ Minimum and recommended specs not provided
- ✗ User account creation is required
- ✗ Purchased games are backed up through Desura's servers
- ✗ No refunds or exchanges for pre-orders

- ✖ 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
- ✖ Can't review and question changes made to Desura TOS
- ✖ Past purchases voided after refusing to accept Desura TOS

2. Privacy Policy

Note: 729 words found within Desura's Privacy Policy.

Note: Much of Desura's Privacy Policy entails more with how users are affected during the payment service and user-generated content rather than gameplay.

Note: Purchases made via. Desura will simply make a payment transaction and will not provide users with a final confirmation or notice of what's purchased and/or what info was inputted.

Note: Privacy Policy was retrieved April 2013. Policy first drafted in 2010.

Looking at Waveform's Privacy Policy through Desura

- ✓ Privacy Policy found on desura.com
- ✓ Policy applies to Waveform and Desura
- ✓ Easy to read, understand and is worded with clear consistency
- ✓ "Personally-identifiable" &"non-personally identifiable" info are clearly defined
- ✓ Policy specifies only payment and purchasing info are collected
- ✓ Data centres are 100% safe and secure
- ✓ Info is used solely for payment & purchasing in respect to Waveform
- ✓ Users can access their Desura account
- ✓ Users can modify their Desura account
- ✓ Users can validate the info they've provided

- ✖ Users not visibly notified of any changes made to the Policy
- ✖ Third parties not identified
- ✖ Not advised where the info is specifically stored
- ✖ Opt-in / opt-out process not provided
- ✖ User data is retained by Desura 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 Waveform

3. EULA TOS

Note: 2,864 words found in Desura's TOS.

Note: Desura's arbitration process will go through the Courts of Victoria in Australia.

Note: Users are permitted to create and distribute game mods and games via. the Desura service / network

Looking at Desura's Terms of Service (Waveform has no EULA)

- ✓ EULA / TOS is found on desura.com
- ✓ EULA / TOS covers Waveform and Desura
- ✓ Easy to read, understand and is worded with clear consistency
- ✓ Drafted to coincide with relevant consumer laws at point of purchase (AUS)
- ✓ Terms and conditions for Desura DRM are clearly defined
- ✓ Won't blacklist specific background services or software
- ✓ Termination process is clear and transparent
- ✓ Fair, impartial and freely-provided arbitration process is provided
- ✓ Users can initiate legal action if the arbitration process fails
- ✓ Users can criticise or provide criticism about the game without reprisals

- ✖ Users not visibly notified of any changes made to the EULA / TOS
- ✖ Can't review and query changes made to the EULA / TOS
- ✖ No refunds or exchanges for purchased games
- ✖ Circumvention of Desura DRM prohibited
- ✖ Back-ups aren't permitted
- ✖ Desura's source code isn't to be modified or reverse-engineered

✖ Not permitted to create "mods"
✖ Monitoring services / software are required to play Waveform
✖ Warranties waived (excluding physical merchantability warranties)
✖ Cover waived against any unforeseeable damages, disruptions of service

4. Setup / Install

Looking at how Waveform is installed on Windows PCs only.

Note: Installing Desura (and any games within Desura) is no different to the way Steam installs its client service and its games. Please refer to RYG's analysis of games distributed / protected with Steam on RYG for more information.

✔ 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
✔ Installation completed within 20 minutes (on a Broadband connection)

✖ No installation logs of files and registry keys
✖ Desura DRM files are found within the /Program Data/ folders only

5. Updates / Patching

Looking at how Waveform is patched prior and after gameplay.

Note: Users can purchase Waveform DRM Free via. Eden Industries.

✔ Can play Waveform unpatched.

✖ No plans to sunset Desura DRM

6. DRM & Activation

Looking at Desura DRM in relation to Waveform and its effects on Windows PCs only.

Note: Once Waveform is purchased users can immediately download and play Waveform.

✔ Instructions provided on the activation process
✔ Won't interfere with currently-executing background services or software
✔ Firewall and AV settings aren't modified or required to be modified
✔ Can validate the safety and reliability of the activation process
✔ Users are aware and advised on how Waveform will be activated
✔ Hassle-free offline option to activating the game is provided
✔ Username, password and email are only required
✔ Unlimited online activations to any one PC
✔ Can play single-player game offline
✔ Only Desura DRM is implemented
✔ Unlimited hardware activations
✔ Unlimited installations
✔ Support and troubleshooting process provided
✔ Activation is simple and hassle-free

Note: Desura will only be connected to the following servers: Google, Desura, Quantcast and Verisign.

✖ A non-transferrable user account is required
✖ Game is locked to specific account after activation

7. Gameplay Experience

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

Note: Waveform can be played offline and won't connect to any servers, including Desura's.

Note: (Local) savegame files are found within the /AppData/ Roaming/Desura folder.

- ✓ Can play on minimum specs
- ✓ Disc not required for gameplay
- ✓ Suitable options to modify video settings
- ✓ Can play in windowed mode
- ✓ Can play offline
- ✓ Can access DLC 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

Note: Waveform is only playable with a mouse.

- ✘ Requires original copy to play the game
- ✘ Can't play Waveform with a console controller
- ✘ Only playable on mouse and keyboard
- ✘ Can only play on one PC at a time per game / account
- ✘ Can't modify savegame and/or ini file
- ✘ DRM and monitoring services will operate during and after gameplay

8. PC Checkup

Looking at whether Waveform 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 Waveform without major errors
- ✓ Start-up settings remain unaltered
- ✓ No DRM / monitoring services running in the background after shutting down
- ✓ System configuration files remain unaltered

9. Removal Uninstall

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

Note: All files and registry keys of Waveform and Desura will be removed.

- ✓ Direct uninstallation shortcut provided within Desura
- ✓ Backup savegames prompt provided / Savegames retained
- ✓ Clean uninstallation

10. Customer Support

Looking at the customer support side of Waveform through Desura's Forums.

- ✓ Customer service / support found in one place at desura.com/support
- ✓ desura.com/support is easy to use and navigate

- ✓ Searching on desura.com/support is direct and quick
- ✓ Info is easy to read and understand
- ✓ Arbitration / resolution service is available
- ✓ Arbitration / resolution process is easy to follow / understand
- ✓ Consumers can initiate legal action if arbitration process fails
- ✓ Options provided for giving feedback on the service of customer support

RYG's VERDICT

70%

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

If Steam had an upstart (indie) sibling that allowed cross platform support, distribution of (free) mods, offline mode(s) that won't connect to any servers and treats users PCs with exceptional ranges of respect, then Desura would be it. As for Waveform the only gripe that might exist for some is the lack of console controller support although PCGamingWiki would be able to provide some third party solutions to that. Aside from that Waveform has that "DRM-Free" feel to it wrapped around the Desura service.

Disclosure: We are good friends with Ethan Lee, who was contracted to port Waveform to MacOS and Linux.

Colophon

This analysis of Waveform 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. Waveform was bought with RYG funds through Desura.

Disclaimer

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