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Copy protection/Activation

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Author

Althernai

Game Owner



NWN

NWN: SoU

NWN: HotU

SW: KotOR PC

Jade Empire

NWN 2

NWN 2: MotB

Joined: 25 Feb 2002

From: Batavia

Copy protection/Activation

Posted: Saturday, 03 May 2008 06:41PM

Quote: Posted 05/03/08

18:27 (GMT) by Derek

French

When you run
MassEffect.exe.

There are no external
programs with SecuROM.
It is completely contained
in the wrap of the
executable. There are no
other programs or
processes that run, other
than was is with
MassEffect.exe

Alright, thanks for the clarification. If the authentication is relatively painless (i.e. it does not take more than a few seconds, conflict with wireless connections, care about what country you're connecting from, etc.), I consider this an improvement over having to place the DVD in the drive all the time. The only downside is that now you pretty much need internet access for single player, but things were headed this way in any case so it's no big deal.

profile message

Derek French

Technical Producer



Joined: 16 Oct 2001

From: Euphoria

Posted: Saturday, 03 May 2008 06:44PM

Quote: Posted 05/03/08

18:04 (GMT) by

aries1001

I certainly hope your or
the EA servers are readu
for the massive influx of
people trying to activate
the game all at once.

Forums

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Yes, EA is ready for us and getting ready for Spore, which will use the same system.

Quote: Some students have internet connections but are behind a college firewall that will block any attempt of them downloading anything that is not approved by the tech and IT department of the college.

Well, its not a download and its a conversation on a normal port. We haven't had anything special to do to get the game working for any of our testers, including places that have very restricted network access.

Quote: At least I hope the *this game requires internet activation to install* to install will be clearly marked on the box and in bigger letter than on Bioshock's box.

Yes, we have been told that there will be clear labeling on the package.

For clarity, though, an internet connection is not required to install, just to activate the first time, and every 10 days after. You can be completely connectionless for 9 days and encounter no problems playing Mass Effect. And you don't need the disk in the drive to play.

edit-typos

DISCLAIMER: The above statement was made with the currently available information. Its true right now (check the time stamp on the post) but may not be in the future. Relax. Chill. Enjoy life. Thanks!

Edited By Derek French on 05/03/08 18:47

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Posted: Saturday, 03 May 2008 06:54PM

mutan
Game Owner



SW: KotOR PC
Jade Empire:SE

Joined: 31 Dec 2003
From: The Netherlands

Jtow

Joined: 07 Mar 2008

jflare
Game Owner



SW: KotOR PC
Jade Empire:SE
Mass Effect

argh i never understand these things. It will not prevent pirating anyway(i.e. See bioshock). The people who buy games will do so even if there is no protection at all! Because for pirating it doesn't matter which protection is used, its always simple.

I buy it because the game is top quality and because of good experience in the past.

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Posted: Saturday, 03 May 2008 07:54PM

The PC vs. console sales dynamic recently leaves no doubt whatsoever in my mind about the necessity of a DRM regime for PC games; the community is just too savvy for the honor system to work. I think a Steam-like system run by a consortium of gaming companies would probably really help things out.

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Posted: Saturday, 03 May 2008 07:56PM

Quote: Posted 05/03/08 19:54 (GMT) by Jtow

The PC vs. console sales dynamic recently leaves

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Joined: 07 Mar
2007

no doubt whatsoever in
my mind about the
necessity of a DRM
regime for PC games; the
community is just too
savvy for the honor
system to work. I think a
Steam-like system run by
a consortium of gaming
companies would
probably really help
things out.

Yeah, give Steam a real challenge for once so they
can feel like they're actually competing for their
users ;O

Got Flare? No? Didn't think so.

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Posted: Saturday, 03 May 2008 08:00PM

Hmm, what information specifically is transmitted
here, Derek? Is it just the CD key or are things
like system information also transmitted?

Now on a personal note I do think this is a broken
system to begin with, since it's the same "treat
your users as criminals, they will act like
criminals" mentality that plagued the music
industry for so long. The game will probably get
cracked after three weeks or so - that's how long
it took for Bioshock, and all the people who have
issues with the copy protection(issues in any
form) will probably go to the internet groups so
they don't have to deal with it. Sorry for the
slight-rant.

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Posted: Saturday, 03 May 2008 08:07PM

Quote: Posted 05/03/08
20:00 (GMT) by
Delerius_Jedi

Now on a personal note I
do think this is a broken
system to begin with,
since it's the same "treat
your users as criminals,
they will act like
criminals" mentality that
plagued the music
industry for so long.

Well yeah -- but the video game industry has
been doing this for decades (remember those old
games that made you input the third word of
paragraph two on page 31 of the manual?) so it is
not really unexpected that they would continue to
do so. The real question is whether this new
method is a greater or lesser pain in the neck than
the previously tried alternatives. It *sounds* like it
should be less of a nuisance, but of course I'd
actually have to try it to be sure.

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Posted: Saturday, 03 May 2008 08:11PM

Quote: Posted 05/03/08
20:00 (GMT) by
Delerius_Jedi

Hmm, what information
specifically is transmitted
here, Derek? Is it just the

Delerius_Jedi
Game Owner
NWN
NWN: SoU
NWN: HotU
SW: KotOR Xbox
SW: KotOR PC
Jade Empire
Jade Empire:SE
NWN 2
Mass Effect

Joined: 22 Sep
2003
From: Denmark

Althernai
Game Owner
NWN
NWN: SoU
NWN: HotU
SW: KotOR PC
Jade Empire
NWN 2
NWN 2: MotB

Joined: 25 Feb
2002
From: Batavia

Derek French
Technical Producer



Joined: 16 Oct
2001
From: Euphoria

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CD key or are things like system information also transmitted?

Off hand, I do not know. Its the CD Key and a unique machine identifier of some type. Its the same system that SecuROM has been using for digital activation for years (if you have purchased through Direct2Drive, etc, they all use this same SecuROM system). We used the exact same system for Jade Empire PC when purchased through the BioWare Store.

Quote: all the people who have issues with the copy protection(issues in any form) will probably go to the internet groups so they don't have to deal with it. Sorry for the slight-rant.

Its a perfectly legitimate concern. EA has assured us that they have their auth systems and customer support staff in place and ready for the launch of Mass Effect PC. Anyone having issues with getting MEPC activated will be able to contact EA Support and get their problem resolved.

DISCLAIMER: The above statement was made with the currently available information. Its true right now (check the time stamp on the post) but may not be in the future. Relax. Chill. Enjoy life. Thanks!

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Jtow

Posted: Saturday, 03 May 2008 08:14PM

Joined: 07 Mar 2008

I don't have a lot of patience with the whole "DRM criminalizes the innocents" line. However it happened, the PC gaming base obviously *is* a piracy cesspool now. Of the gamers I know, all of them know the 5 or six websites that, in tandem with a high speed connection, will have most games running for free within hours. In that environment a latchkey system is absurd.

Now, it's very different to have obnoxious copy protection - but effective and obnoxious aren't the same thing. It needs to be seamless, and it needs to be client side.

Do people think that server side game data for multiplayer games and MMOs is "untrusting of the players?" Of course not. Same with copy protection: go server side, do it politely, and let those who can't handle paying how along with those who can't play COD without wallhacks.

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Delerius_Jedi
Game Owner



NWN
NWN: SoU
NWN: HotU
SW: KotOR Xbox
SW: KotOR PC
Jade Empire
Jade Empire:SE
NWN 2
Mass Effect

Joined: 22 Sep 2003
From: Denmark

Posted: Saturday, 03 May 2008 08:16PM

Quote: Posted 05/03/08 20:07 (GMT) by Althernai

Well yeah -- but the video game industry has been doing this for decades (remember those old games that made you input the third word of paragraph two on page 31 of the manual?) so it is not really unexpected that they would continue to do so. The real question is whether this new method is a greater or lesser pain in the neck



than the previously tried alternatives. It *sounds* like it should be less of a nuisance, but of course I'd actually have to try it to be sure.

Well the fact that they've been doing it so long doesn't mean it's a good idea, though. At least not from a consumer perspective. The music industry actually realised that once they dropped DRM and started releasing downloadable music at reasonable prices, people were more than willing to pay for the albums.

Having to input a CD key is perfectly acceptable to me, I just don't see the need for continuous internet connections for singleplayer games. Especially not since a lot of people who buy single player games might not have a ready internet connection, hence why I say I think this system is fundamentally flawed and will ultimately just drive users towards bootleg copies, just to avoid it.

Edited By Delerius_Jedi on 05/03/08 20:19

 

Posted: Saturday, 03 May 2008 09:28PM

There are two issues I see with this protection/activation setup.

The first is the activation key, which I hope they get right and make sure it's actually printed where it's supposed to be printed. I own several games where there have been a lot of problems with missing or broken keys (The Witcher was the most recent although it was just a registration key). It'd be great if their publishing QA is on the job so there's no fiasco over this.

Quote:

For clarity, though, an internet connection is not required to install, just to activate the first time, and every 10 days after. You can be completely connectionless for 9 days and encounter no problems playing Mass Effect.

The second issue is the whole "every 10 day check". Seriously, if I wanted to play an online game, I'd buy an online game. Once is okay to activate. Two checks...well, I can deal. But constant checks for as long as I own and play the game, every 10 days? That's gotten a tad excessive. Sure, I have an always-on net connection but what happens if I don't play for 11 days and the moment I want to play my connection is down? Are you saying I'm not going to be able to play my perfectly legitimate purchased copy of the game, even the retail version, until I get permission? That's the kind of idiocy that annoys customers.

I'd much rather have to put the DVD in the drive when I play than be forced to do more than one activation. At least I can guarantee that I'll always have the DVD, but there's no way I'll believe any guarantees that my net connection will be there and/or EA's servers won't mess it up.

I may not have any problems whatsoever, and the whole process may be smooth for as long as I play ME, but it's the principle that matters. My perception is that the repetitive activation scheme is a hassle that legitimate players don't need. Hopefully it doesn't last long and is halted by a patch shortly after.

Kevin Lynch

Moderator

Game Owner



NWN

NWN: SoU

NWN: HotU

SW: KotOR PC

Jade Empire: SE

NWN 2

Joined: 17 Oct 2001

From: NS, Canada

It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done. It is a far, far better rest that I go to, than I have ever known.

-- Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities*

Edited By Kevin Lynch on 05/03/08 21:29

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Posted: Saturday, 03 May 2008 09:39PM

Derek French
Technical Producer



Joined: 16 Oct 2001
From: Euphoria

Quote: Posted 05/03/08 21:28 (GMT) by Kevin Lynch

Sure, I have an always-on net connection but what happens if I don't play for 11 days and the moment I want to play my connection is down? Are you saying I'm not going to be able to play my perfectly legitimate purchased copy of the game, even the retail version, until I get permission?

That is correct. And I would suggest that you contact EA Support the moment this happens (once you get your internet back) to report the issue. If there are people having problems with the system as designed, then Support needs to hear about it so they can help us evaluate it for the next game title.

DISCLAIMER: The above statement was made with the currently available information. Its true right now (check the time stamp on the post) but may not be in the future. Relax. Chill. Enjoy life. Thanks!

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Darth Wraith
Game Owner



NWN
NWN: SoU
NWN: HotU
SW: KotOR PC
Jade Empire: SE
NWN 2
NWN 2: MotB

Posted: Saturday, 03 May 2008 09:40PM

I'm a little confused here. Will the game require a re-check 10 days after original install and then no more, or will it require regular re-checks every 10 days for as long as the game is installed?

Joined: 05 Oct 2003
From: Norway

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Delerius_Jedi
Game Owner



NWN
NWN: SoU
NWN: HotU
SW: KotOR Xbox
SW: KotOR PC
Jade Empire
Jade Empire: SE
NWN 2
Mass Effect

Posted: Saturday, 03 May 2008 10:04PM

Quote: Posted 05/03/08 21:39 (GMT) by Derek French

That is correct. And I would suggest that you contact EA Support the moment this happens (once you get your internet back) to report the issue. If there are people having problems with the system as designed, then Support needs to hear about it so

Joined: 22 Sep 2003
From: Denmark

they can help us evaluate
it for the next game title.

This is exactly what I was afraid of, and what I was arguing against in my earlier posts. I have to agree with Kevin when he calls it idiocy, I'm sorry. But this is precisely what I mean when I say that overzealous copy protections end up alienating legitimate users. Gamesindustry.biz ran a rather excellent editorial about this issue a few months back where they made the case that the users will pick the experience that is less hassle-ridden to their experience. It sounds like EA and Bioware with ME PC are dangerously close to being second in this regard compared to the pirate groups. Which I think is a crying shame to be perfectly honest. You could argue that this is a problem with the industry, not just EA and Bioware, but that would be going off topic.

That being said, this kind of scheme has not led to me wantonly pirating games in the past and Mass Effect certainly won't get me started. Chances are, though that I won't be purchasing the PC version now, but I have played it on 360. Still, it is a shame that the PC version has to be saddled with schemes like this that end up lessening the user-experience.

Quote: Off hand, I do not know. Its the CD Key and a unique machine identifier of some type. Its the same system that SecuROM has been using for digital activation for years (if you have purchased through Direct2Drive, etc, they all use this same SecuROM system). We used the exact same system for Jade Empire PC when purchased through the BioWare Store.

I'm afraid I haven't purchased games via either online system. I've stuck with Steam for my digital distribution needs. It would be great if you could find more details on this particular issue for though, Derek.

*Edited By Delerius_Jedi on
05/03/08 22:18*

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Posted: Saturday, 03 May 2008 10:10PM

Kevin Lynch

Moderator

Game Owner



NWN

NWN: SoU

NWN: HotU

SW: KotOR PC

Jade Empire: SE

NWN 2

Joined: 17 Oct
2001

From: NS,
Canada

Quote: Posted 05/03/08
21:40 (GMT) by Darth
Wraith

I'm a little confused here.
Will the game require a
re-check 10 days after
original install and then
no more, or will it require
regular re-checks every
10 days for as long as
the game is installed?

According to the following, it's every 10 days, not just once.

Quote: Posted 05/03/08

18:44 (GMT) by Derek French

For clarity, though, an internet connection is not required to install, just to activate the first time, and every 10 days after.

Just to clarify, while I think the activation definitely is "idiocy", I'll never pirate a game because of it. I simply won't buy/play at all if it becomes too much of a hassle. I've stopped buying products for less than that, just on principle, and I have no qualms about doing it for a game. I have plenty of other entertainment products to while away my time at, if I wish. Right now, I'm in "evaluate" mode, which means I'll go with what I feel is right when it comes time to buy and, when I buy, will re-evaluate the outcome.

*And I find it kind of funny, I find it kind of sad
These dreams in which I'm dying, are the best
I've ever had*

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