

# **Developing for RealArcade: Getting Started**

*By RealNetworks®*

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# Game Submission and Release

The following manual will give you a global picture on qualification criteria and acceptance of games for RealArcade. It is not intended to answer all questions, although it should answer the most pertinent. Once your game has been accepted by RealNetworks, your RN Producer will give you all the information you need to integrate your game into RealArcade and to prepare your game for release. For more information and answers to any specific issues not mentioned in this manual, please contact the appropriate producer for your project.

What follows are the steps for submitting your game for review and approval. If you have questions or need additional information about the submittal process, send an e-mail message to [gamesubmission@real.com](mailto:gamesubmission@real.com).

- 1.) **Game Development** – Develop your game or game prototype. (That’s the tough part!) Review the “Content Guidelines” for general information about the types of games RealNetworks would like to see.
- 2.) **Game Submittal** – To submit the game, fill out the Game Info form completely and e-mail it along with the location of a single zip file containing your game files, install instructions, and design documents (if necessary) to [gamesubmission@real.com](mailto:gamesubmission@real.com). Note that the Game Info form must be included with your game submission, **or it will be deleted and discarded**. For details on the URL, contact [gamesubmission@real.com](mailto:gamesubmission@real.com). If the product is not feature complete, the developer should include a complete design document or at least a design overview.
- 3.) **Quick Review** – You will be contacted within 3-5 business days by a RealNetworks Business Development Manager to complete a quick review process. A RealNetworks Business Development Manager will contact the Publisher/Developer for a cursory check to be sure all needed elements are in and can be used/opened by Real. First contacts and introductions are made. RealNetworks will work with you to ensure that your Game Info is complete and that your game or game prototype meets the general Content Guidelines listed below for games sold and distributed by RealNetworks. (If your game does not meet those guidelines, the Business Development Manager will discuss what aspects of your game need to change in order to meet the requirements. At a later date, you may resubmit your game for review.) If your game looks promising, RN will next move into the Evaluation Phase. If RN is not interested in your game, we will contact you to let you know why your game was not accepted.
- 4.) **Evaluation Phase** – RN goes over all aspects of the product with QA and others at RN involved with RealArcade.
- 5.) **Recommendations to Publisher/Developer** – If RN has any recommendations, these are given to the Publisher/Developer, and once RN and the Publisher/Developer agree on what changes should be made, the acceptance process may continue.
- 6.) **Biz-Dev** – A RealNetworks Business Development Manager department will contact the Publisher/Developer to work out all the legal details.
- 7.) **Producer Works with Publisher/Developer** – A Producer from RN is assigned to this product and he/she will work with the Publisher/Developer through all the milestones (if applicable) towards the final release of the product.

## IMPORTANT. PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING COMPLETELY:

- Games must be in playable form in order to be reviewed. RealNetworks will **not** accept any pen-and-paper-only submissions.
- You represent and warrant to RealNetworks that all information you provide regarding the game is true and accurate.
- You represent and warrant to RealNetworks that you are the developer of the game with all rights, title and interest in the game and/or have the legal right to submit the game to RealNetworks.
- RealNetworks receives numerous submissions each week, and consequently does not guarantee acceptance or even review of any game submission.
- You acknowledge and agree that it is possible that similar or identical games or ideas may already be in development or under consideration by RealNetworks, and that RealNetworks may continue with such development or consideration without any obligation whatsoever to you.
- RealNetworks shall have no responsibility or liability whatsoever to you if RealNetworks chooses to develop or publish a game similar or identical to the game submitted by you, subject to any copyright, trademark or patents rights, if any, you may have in your game.

- A non-disclosure agreement (NDA) is neither implied nor agreed to by RealNetworks as a condition or result of your game submission. If you would like a formal NDA be signed before submission, please contact RealNetworks at [gamesubmission@real.com](mailto:gamesubmission@real.com).
- RealNetworks reserves the right to disapprove any game submission for any reason or no reason, even if you and your game meet all of the requirements as specified herein.

These requirements are provided for convenience to you so you can better understand the processing of submitting a game to RealNetworks for possible approval and distribution and through the RealArcade system.

If you agree to these terms, complete the “Game Info” form and include it with your game submission. RealNetworks does not accept and will not review your submission without a completed “Game Info” form. All submissions that do not include a “Game Info” form will be erased. If you do not agree to these terms, please do not submit your game to RealNetworks.

# Release Guidelines

During the review process, RealNetworks will look at the following areas of a game before releasing it as a featured title:

- 1.) RealArcade Integration
- 2.) Content Guidelines
- 3.) Privacy Protection
- 4.) COPPA
- 5.) ESRB rating
- 6.) QA Acceptance Testing

These areas will be discussed below.

## RealArcade Integration

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Once your game has passed the initial content review process, your RN Producer will give you information about the technical requirements for RealArcade integration to help you finish your game development. The purpose of this information is to help ensure consistent and high quality game play for all games released within RealArcade. The requirements generally cover things like:

- Standards for game size and game footprints
- Install and uninstall process
- Game launch and run-time behavior
- Patching, mods, and game updates
- Serial numbers and ecommerce
- Upgrading from free to full versions of your game
- Localization
- RN logo usage
- Product information and artwork required
- RealArcade API usage
- Etc.

## Content Guidelines

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If you can answer “Yes” to any of these questions, your title will require special review and consideration before approval for release to the RealArcade player communities. Remember that the below guidelines are just that...guidelines, and do not necessarily exclude a title for distribution in the RealArcade system.

- Is the free version of your game more than 10MB in size (compressed for download)?
- Does the full version of your game require download of more than 20MB after purchase (stand-alone or additional bits)?
- Does the full version of your game require repeat download of free version bits?
- Has your game previously been available for sale and play on any platform (PC, Mac, or Console)?
- Is your game currently available for sale as a PC CD-ROM or Game Console Cartridge or is it planned to be available on these platforms prior to ESD release?
- If your game carries an ESRB rating, does the game have a rating of Mature or Adults Only?
- Could a user find your game offensive either racially, religiously, ethnically, or otherwise?

- Does your game allow/involve killing of humans or human like characters?
- Is your game exceptionally violent or gory?
- Does your game contain foul language?
- Does your game contain any humanoid nudity or sexually explicit material (graphics, sound, or text)?

## **Privacy Protection**

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RealNetworks wants to make sure that the user knows that they are dealing with a third party product and are aware of all of the data collection elements surrounding that product. Consequently, all titles will go through a formal privacy review. The rules for privacy follow these basic guidelines:

- If any private customer information is gathered from the user, and this information is not passed to RealNetworks, the developer/sponsor must make it very clear that the information is solely governed by the privacy policy of that developer/sponsor, and is in no way protected by the RealNetworks privacy policy, nor is the maintenance or control of the data supervised by RealNetworks. This must be made clear to the user.
- If any private customer information is given to RealNetworks in any way, either from a console or web based game, RN would have to review the privacy policy for that game or site. Most likely, that game or site would have to adhere to RealNetworks privacy policy, which can be accessed from RN's main website: <http://www.real.com/>. The user must be informed what and how much information is being passed to RealNetworks, and what is being passed to the developer/sponsor.

Here are some issues that are covered under RealNetworks privacy policy:

- Data Transmission
- Personal Information (including GUID)
- Storage and Logging of Data
- Use of Data
- Use of Encryption
- Info Sent to User
- Use of Cookies
- Email Addresses (i.e. collection and option to unsubscribe)
- User Experience (i.e. Is everything above-board?)
- Privacy Policy (obtainable by user)

## **COPPA**

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All RealPartners must also adhere to all COPPA regulations. Note that a developer's adherence to RN's privacy policy does not, de facto, mean that COPPA regulations are being adhered to. Consequently, all games will be evaluated for COPPA adherence, especially if those games are oriented for children. COPPA (Children's Online Privacy Protection Act) governs what information can be gathered from children under the age of 13. A standard method for adherence to COPPA regulations is a simple Yes/No box asking if the user is 13 or over. For a complete text of the COPPA of 1988, please go to <http://www.ftc.gov/ogc/coppa1.htm>.

## **ESRB Rating**

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Before releasing a game, RealNetworks requires the game be ESRB rated. The ESRB (Entertainment Software Ratings Board) will rate the content of your game based on its appropriateness for different segments of the population. It is important to note that **RealNetworks will not release any game/site rated as AOI**. For more information about the ESRB, as well as submission information, please go to: <http://www.esrb.org/>.

## Summary of QA Requirements

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RealNetworks will perform some formal QA on every title, but it is ultimately up to the developer to test his/her game. Furthermore, **we will not do any testing of a product until it is at least an Alpha candidate**. Once a product is accepted, RN will only provide some cursory QA testing at various milestones (if applicable). However, the onus is on the developer to thoroughly test the product before it is a release candidate. As soon as RN and the developer feel they have a release candidate, RealNetworks will perform the final and acceptance QA testing according to the Universal Final Acceptance Criteria below.

### Universal Final Acceptance Criteria

Although every title is different, what follow are the RealNetworks QA acceptance criteria that will be applied to all titles prior to release.

- The assigned RN Producer has received, in an agreed upon location, all files related to the release build. This file set should be made up of files in their "final format" i.e. - **no raw data**, and **no debug versions** are acceptable at the release stage. In the case of a downloadable product, this should be in the form of a single, compressed, self-extracting installer that is **100%** ready to be incorporated into our e-commerce system for distribution. In the case of an Online or Web game, a "live" server should be made accessible to our QA team for final testing as if they were end-users. In this case the server should function in every way **identically** to the final product, and if possible be the same server that will be made live upon acceptance and approval.
  - All elements and features defined under the license agreement are present and functional.
  - RealNetworks QA has completed their final test pass with now showstopper bugs reported.
  - All known bugs are addressed individually via conversation between the RN producer and the assigned game development project manager. These bugs are all "resolved" in one of the following ways:
    - A · Fixed by developer, verified fixed by RN QA, and closed
    - B · Resolved and closed as "Can't/Won't fix" or "As designed"
    - C · Tagged to be fixed in at a future time, in this case the bug remains "open"
- It is important to note that, ultimately, it is up to RealNetworks QA to determine if a particular bug is a show-stopper or not.
- RN Producer and assigned development contact have agreed in writing that the product is ready for release.

Once these elements have been taken care of, a game has passed the QA requirements.

### QA Responsibilities

In general the breakdown of QA responsibilities between the developer/publisher and RN is as follows (subject to the terms of the license agreement).

#### Game Developer/Publisher Responsibilities

- Ensures thorough and comprehensive functionality and compatibility testing prior to the Alpha submittal to RealNetworks and before each subsequent milestone (i.e. beta and final release)
- Ensures that the game meets RN defect density requirements prior to the Alpha submittal and before each subsequent milestone.
- Delivers bits in their final format for each major milestone, starting at Alpha (i.e. no raw data, debug versions, special setup required, etc.).
- Ensures defects found during Final QA Acceptance testing are resolved in a timely fashion prior to release.

#### RealNetworks QA Team Responsibilites

- Evaluates games for milestone acceptance, starting at Alpha (if applicable).

- Runs single-pass stability and functionality test at each milestone, starting at Alpha.
- Runs comprehensive final acceptance and release test pass when the final bits are delivered.

# Licensing Options

The most important variable when deciding how to license through us is determining if you want to have an **exclusive** distribution or a **standard** distribution with us. An exclusive distribution means that your game will be sold exclusively through RealArcade. You may not sell the game through any other outlet. With a standard agreement, you may also distribute the game through other channels. While this may offer you more freedom in marketing your product yourself, it severely limits the promotional benefits through RealNetworks. Exclusive titles receive much better promotional benefits immediately upon release, and all top converting games receive the highest promotional exposure. A **top-converting** game is not something you can choose in advance as it can only be merited through game sales or high conversion rates. Whether you started out as exclusive or standard, if your game exceeds expectations for conversion, RealNetworks may offer extra promotional benefits as well.

## Benefits

Below we have outlined some of the benefits you may receive for exclusive vs. standard titles. We've also outlined benefits for a title that is overwhelmingly successful after its initial launch. Initial success will be determined after 2 to 4 weeks from release. The success of the game will be reviewed again every week after that. Thus, the review process is really an ongoing procedure. Success is based primarily on conversion rates of free to full version, but also on total downloads, overall revenues, consumer popularity, and user reviews. Keep in mind that **you can reap the benefits of a top converting game whether you started out as a standard or an exclusive title**. If your title's conversion rate exceeds expectations, we will increase your benefits. (**Note:** The promotional and marketing benefits are subject to change at any time by RealNetworks.)

Some of the benefits you may receive are:

- Genre "Featured Game"
- Game featured, distributed, and sold in the Game Catalog
- Streaming Preview created for your game
- Acceptance testing paid for by RealNetworks
- Dedicated RN Producer
- Useful game info and links to developer game sites from console
- Included in RealPlayer Games Channel
- Matching Marketing Funds
- "Take5" Feature to all RealPlayer users. (Take5 is the e-magazine that regularly features the latest news and entertainment for the RealPlayer user base.)
- Submission to reviewers on external sites
- Submission to top 5 download sites
- Search Engine Submission

# Miscellaneous

## Use of LithTech

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The LithTech Development System is one of the industry's finest development systems on the market today. This is not a stripped down or older version of what LithTech has offered in the past. This is the latest version with special extensions not previously included in earlier versions. These extensions include support for RealAudio/RealVideo playback, RealArcade integration, graphics benchmarking tools, and a software renderer for playing 3D games on systems that do not have 3D graphics cards.

Through a special partnership between RealNetworks and LithTech, Inc., RealNetworks can offer you a distribution license for this development system at no charge for all games approved and distributed exclusively by RealNetworks. What do you have to do to take advantage of this deal?

1. Go to <http://www.real.com/games/developer/develop.html> to understand what's involved in making games for RealNetworks.
2. Register with LithTech. Contact LithTech at [sales@lithtech.com](mailto:sales@lithtech.com). By signing and faxing them a copy of their SDK and Non-Disclosure Agreement, you will be able to get developer support at no additional charge. Remember, unless you register with LithTech, they will not provide support.
3. Contact RealNetworks at [gamesubmission@real.com](mailto:gamesubmission@real.com). RealNetworks to discuss your game concept, the game production process, and possible licensing terms for your game.
4. Develop your game.
5. Submit your game to RealNetworks for final review and distribution in RealArcade.

## Benefits of LithTech

**Access to a state-of-the-art 3D game development system**—You get to use one of the premier game development systems for the construction of your game; perhaps saving thousands of dollars and months of time and development effort. Plus, by distributing your game exclusively through RealNetworks, you won't have to pay the usual license fee of \$250,000+, which means great savings for you.

**Instantly start building your game**—You can immediately start creating art/sound/and game assets since your system for development is already taken care of. Most developers can have functional prototypes in under 8-weeks (depending on the game).

**Easy RealArcade integration**—Because the LithTech Development System for ESD was created with hooks into RealArcade, you will get the optimum RealArcade integration.

**Smaller game size**—Because the LithTech Development System will be distributed as part of RealArcade, the download size of your game can be greatly reduced.

**RealAudio and RealVideo support for your game**—The "LithTech Development System for ESD" makes it easy to integrate RealAudio and RealVideo support into your game. You can also reduce the size of your audio files by taking advantage of RealAudio compression.

**Fewer compatibility issues**—LithTech has already been tested to function on most major 3D cards and hardware. Consequently, less compatibility-related bugs will occur in the product vs. a product developed on a made-from-scratch engine. Also, because the LithTech Development System has been thoroughly tested through general market use, the overall stability is far greater than if you created your own engine.

**Access to the LithTech support infrastructure**—LithTech offers you access to experienced game developers who can help you learn the LithTech Development System and provide support in the design and construction of your game.

## Contacts

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### **RealNetworks business development (Game submissions, approvals, release):**

Contact [gamesubmission@real.com](mailto:gamesubmission@real.com) for questions and more information.

### **LithTech developer support (LithTech SDK questions and problems):**

You will need to register with LithTech. Contact LithTech at [sales@lithtech.com](mailto:sales@lithtech.com). By signing and faxing them a copy of their SDK and Non-Disclosure Agreement, you will be able to get developer support at no additional charge. Remember, unless you register with LithTech, they will not provide support.

## Forms

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The forms you'll need during the course of development and release are:

- **Game Info Form** - This information must accompany any proposal or game submission that you wish to submit for review by RealNetworks. This applies to all titles that will be published by the RealArcade console as a featured title.