

# How well are PC games selling in 2019?

(Spoiler: Not Great)



# Where are these numbers coming from?

Everything you're about to read is based on rough estimates that come from:

- Years of experience selling games on Steam
- Years of experience analysing sales data for video games
- Years of cross-referencing estimates with other developers
- All calculations are based on publicly available stats, including Steam group numbers, store page review numbers, prices, algorithms for calculating year one revenue from month one revenue, and more
- All data is from Steam, since Steam makes up roughly 95% of PC sales

Regardless, these are still all **estimates**, and should be treated as such.



# The data

- Around 900 games were released on Steam **between July 5 – August 6, 2019**
- **Any game that did not achieve 10+ user reviews was removed** (around 700 titles removed, i.e. around 78% of released titles will make less than \$5,000 in their first year)
- **AAA titles removed** (not particularly useful knowing how Wolfenstein sold)
- Then, **the top and bottom 5%** (ranked by revenue made) were removed, to reduce noise from outliers
- The data left contains roughly **170 games** released between these dates

Regardless, these are still all **estimates**, and should be treated as such.



# How games were selling on Steam a year ago

In 2018, the average game on Steam:

- Sold 5,000 copies (5,000 median, 25,000 mean)
- Made \$30,000 in revenue (\$30,000 median, \$275,000 mean)

In the first year on sale

At an average price point of \$12 (\$12 median, \$13 mean)

(See my previous GDC talk [Let's Be Realistic: A Deep Dive into How Games Are Selling on Steam](#) for more info)



# How games are selling on Steam now

According to the 2019 data, currently the average game on Steam:

- Sells 1,500 copies (1,500 median, 3,000 mean) (Down 70% yoy)
- Makes \$16,000 in revenue (\$16,000 median, \$46,000 mean) (Down 47% yoy)

## In the first year on sale

At an average price point of \$10 (\$10 median, \$11 mean)

(Note that “revenue” here means money that hit the developer’s bank account, after Valve’s cut, refunds, chargebacks, estimated taxes etc)



# Does price point make a difference?

## Games priced \$10 or less

- 1,000 copies (median)
- \$6,000 in revenue (median)

## Games priced \$11-15

- 2,000 copies (median)
- \$35,000 in revenue (median)

## Games priced \$16-20

- 2,500 copies (median)
- \$55,000 in revenue (median)

## Games priced \$21+

- 5,000 copies (median)
- \$200,000 in revenue (median)

(In the first year on sale)



# tl;dr

Key takeaways from this number dump:

- The average, at least semi-marketed game on Steam currently makes roughly \$16,000 revenue (across 1,500 units) in its first year on sale
- Games released in 2019, are making around half as much money as games released in 2018
- Developers are pricing their games too low – higher prices are, on average, resulting in better sales, and much better revenues



# What the heck is going on?

It's tricky to pin down exactly why this is happening, but:

- The average developer is **pricing their game lower**, which definitely isn't helping them
- You could argue **more people are playing free games** like Fortnite, LoL and Apex Legends
- The number of games coming out is **still rising month by month**
- **Subscription services** could be eroding perception of value in games
- **Player backlogs** are filling up thanks in part to these services





# What can devs do to be in the top 1%?

- Build communities around your games!  
See GDC talk “Building a Community for Your Game from Scratch”
- Understand better why people might choose to buy your game!  
See GDC talk “Making the World Give a Damn About Your Game”
- Price your game appropriately! Going for a lower price does not increase sales. Your game is worth more than you believe.
- Please stop thinking that your game is going to sell itself. Have a marketing plan, otherwise no-one will hear about your game.



Got more questions?  
Tweet at me!

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