Steam Visibility

How games get surfaced to players

Nice to meet you.

Erik Peterson, Valve
Steam Business Team

VALUES

Our goal with Steam is to **match games with the players who will love them.**

VALUES

We work hard to build long-term relationships with players and developers.

It’s important to us that players trust that the games they’re seeing are relevant and interesting to them.

VALUES

We don’t sell advertising or placement

VALUES

We don’t think Steam should be pay to win.

Not selling ads levels the playing field and makes recommendations better for players.

VALUES

You don't need to work with an editor to get featured.

You don’t need a **secret handshake or know the right person on the inside.**

Most visibility on Steam happens automatically.

VALUES

We’re surprised all the time by the games that are hugely successful.

VALUES

Instead of predicting success, we've learned to follow **player interest**—the games they are excited to get into and play, right now.

So how do we figure out what to show?

Visibility on Steam is a mix:

ALGORITHMIC + CURATED

All visibility on Steam is driven by player interest.

Algorithmic visibility is personalized.

Curated featuring is not.
(It’s shown to everyone.)

WISHLIST (86)

Your Store | New & Noteworthy | Categories | Points Shop | News | Labs | search

FEATURED & RECOMMENDED

STEAM DECK
Get Yours Now

STEAM GIFT CARDS
Give the Gift of Game

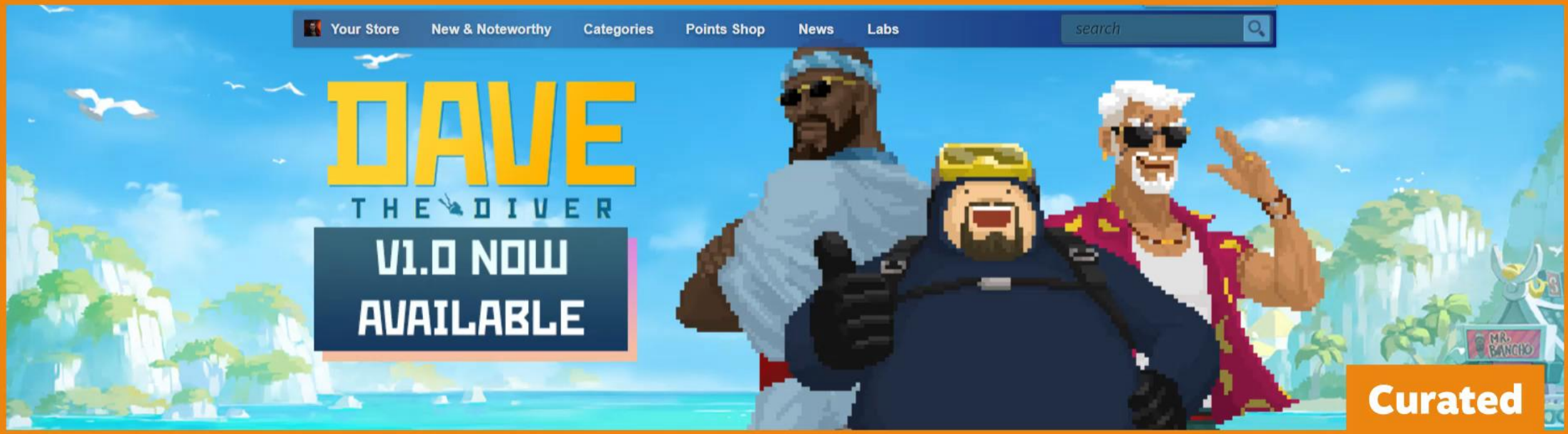
RECENTLY VIEWED
New World
Remnant II
Breakout 13

Necesse

Recommended because you played games tagged with

Class-Based | Stealth | Combat | Online Co-Op

$9.99



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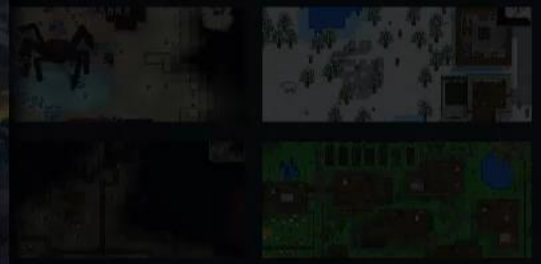

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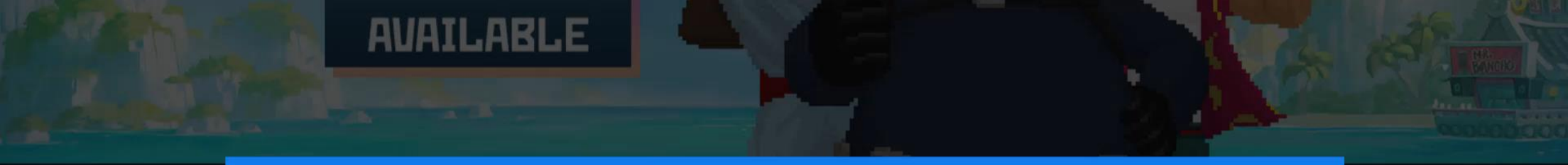

STEAM DECK
Get Yours Now

STEAM GIFT CARDS
Give the Gift of Game

RECENTLY VIEWED
New World
Remnant II
Breakout 13
Overwatch® 2

YOUR TAGS
Class-Based
Third-Person Shooter
Stealth
Combat
Online Co-Op

RECOMMENDED
By Friends
By Curators
Tags

BROWSE CATEGORIES

FEATURED & RECOMMENDED

Necesse

Recommended because you played games tagged with

Class-Based | Stealth | Combat | Online Co-Op

$9.99

Algorithmic

SPECIAL OFFERS

BROWSE MORE

Today's deal! -55% $26.97

Give the Gift of Game

RECENTLY VIEWED
New World
Remnant II
Breakout 13
Overwatch® 2

YOUR TAGS
Class-Based
Third-Person Shooter
Stealth
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RECOMMENDED
By Friends
By Curators
Tags

BROWSE CATEGORIES
Top Sellers
New Releases
Upcoming
Specials
VR Titles
Controller-Friendly
Great on Deck

HARDWARE
Steam Deck
Steam Deck Dock
VR Hardware

BROWSE BY GENRE
Free to Play
Early Access
Action
Adventure
Casual
Indie
Massively Multiplayer
Racing
RPG

Recommended because you played games tagged with

Class-Based | Stealth | Combat | Online Co-Op

$9.99

SPECIAL OFFERS

BROWSE MORE

MIDWEEK DEAL

Offer ends Aug 17 @ 10:00am.

Up to -85%

MIDWEEK DEAL

Offer ends Aug 10 @ 10:00am.

Up to -70%

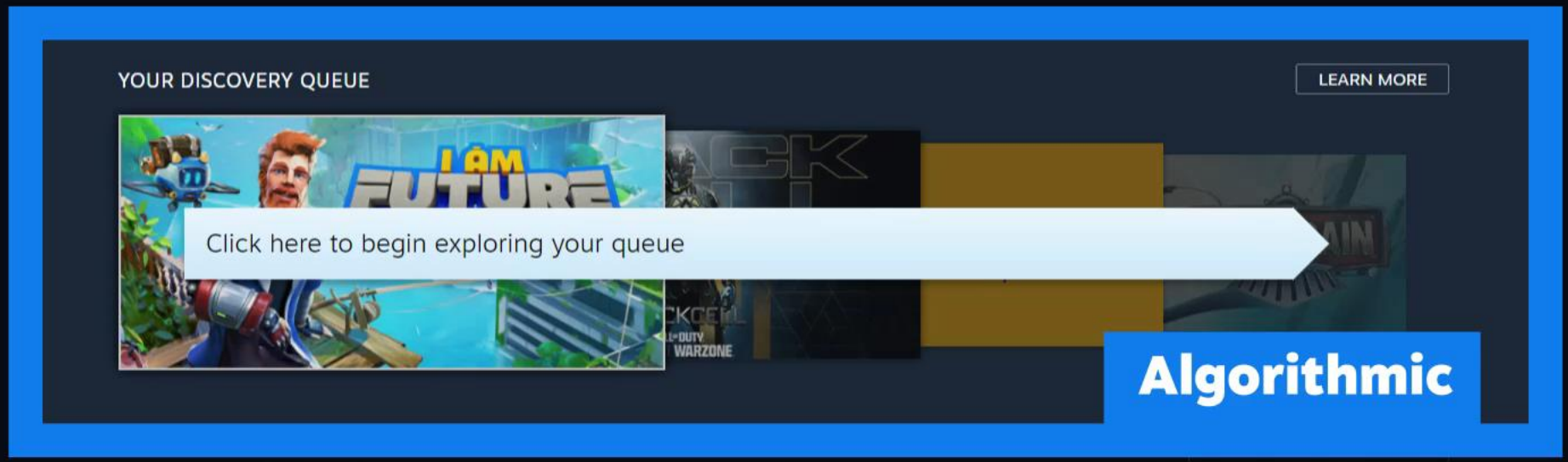
Today's deal! -55% ~~$59.97~~ $26.97

Today's deal!

Curated

STEAM DECK
All-in-one portable PC gaming

VALVE INDEX



ANIME

CO-OPERATIVE

ROGUE-LIKE

OPEN WORLD

PENTIMENT
$19.99

CHIVALRY II
$39.99

THE MORTUARY ASSISTANT
$24.99

I EXPECT YOU TO DIE 2
$24.99

BROWSE STEAM

NEW RELEASES

SPECIALS

FREE GAMES

BY USER TAGS

ANIME

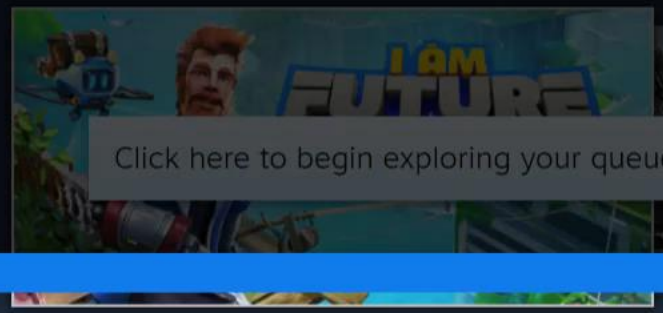
CO-OPERATIVE

ROGUE-LIKE

OPEN WORLD

YOUR DISCOVERY QUEUE

LEARN MORE



Click here to begin exploring your queue

RECOMMENDED BASED ON THE GAMES YOU PLAY

EXPLORE AND CUSTOMIZE

$19.99

$39.99

$24.99

$24.99

Algorithmic

BROWSE STEAM

NEW RELEASES

SPECIALS

FREE GAMES

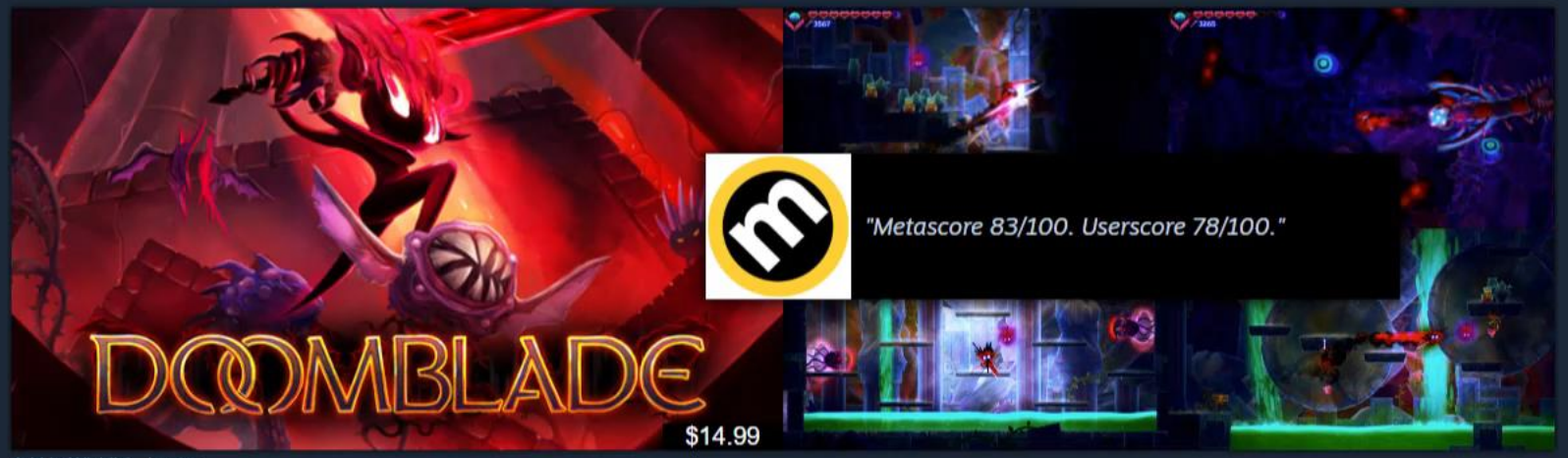
BY USER TAGS

BROWSE STEAM

NEW RELEASES | SPECIALS | FREE GAMES | BY USER TAGS

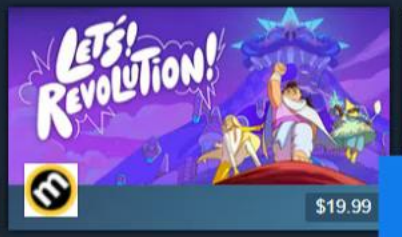
CURATOR RECOMMENDATION

SEE MORE



Add to Wishlist Ignore

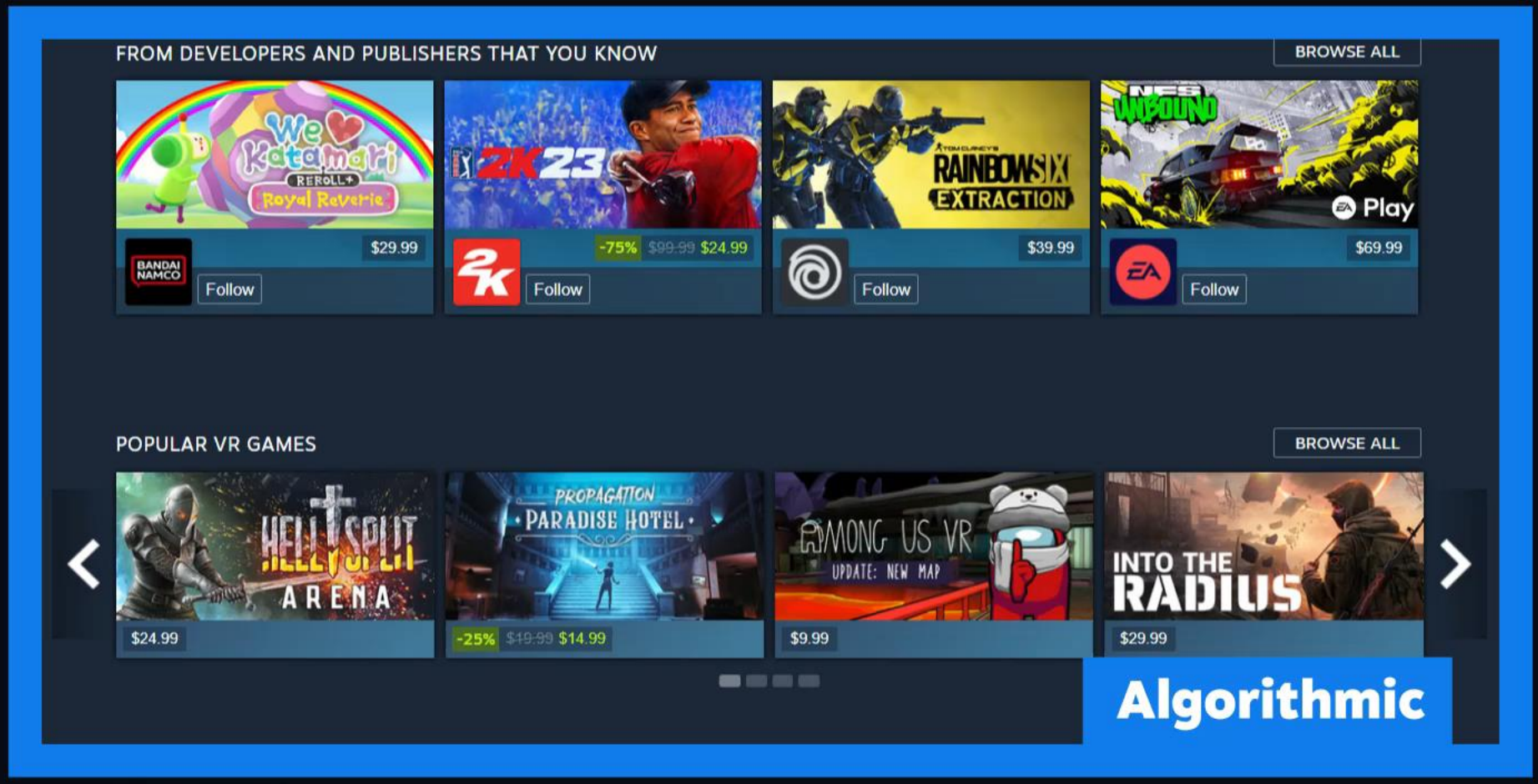
MORE CURATOR RECOMMENDATIONS



Algorithmic

FROM DEVELOPERS AND PUBLISHERS THAT YOU KNOW

BROWSE ALL



New & Trending | Top Sellers | Popular Upcoming | Specials

See more: New Releases

30XX

-20% $15.99

Action Roguelike, Side Scroller, 2D Platformer, Rog

Brawlhalla - Battle Pass Season 8

30XX

Overall user reviews:
Very Positive (1,123)

Action Roguelike | Side Scroller | 2D Platformer

New & Trending | Top Sellers | Popular Upcoming | Specials

See more: New Releases

30XX
-20% $19.99 $15.99
Action Roguelike, Side Scroller, 2D Platformer, Rog

Brawlhalla - Battle Pass Season 8
$9.99
Action, Free to Play, Indie

Mondealy
-15% $11.99 $10.19
Story Rich, Singleplayer, Multiple Endings, Choices

Deathbulge: Battle of the Bands
-15% $19.99 $16.99
RPG, Indie, 2D, Comedy

Call of Duty®: Modern Warfare® II - BlackCell (S…
$29.99
Action, Gore, Violent

Beecarbonize
Free
Strategy, Simulation, Card Game, Resource Management

Rise of the Triad: Ludicrous Edition
-20% $19.99 $15.99
Old School, FPS, Retro, Arena Shooter

Pseudoregalia
$5.99
Metroidvania, 3D Platformer, Exploration, Parkour

Deadlink
-25% $19.99 $14.99
Cyberpunk, FPS, Class-Based, Action Roguelike

Disfigure
Free To Play
Action Roguelike, Bullet Hell, 2D, Twin Stick Shooter

30XX

Overall user reviews:
Very Positive (1,123)

Action Roguelike | Side Scroller | 2D Platformer

Algorithmic

Let’s take a look:
New & Trending
Top Sellers
Popular Upcoming
Specials

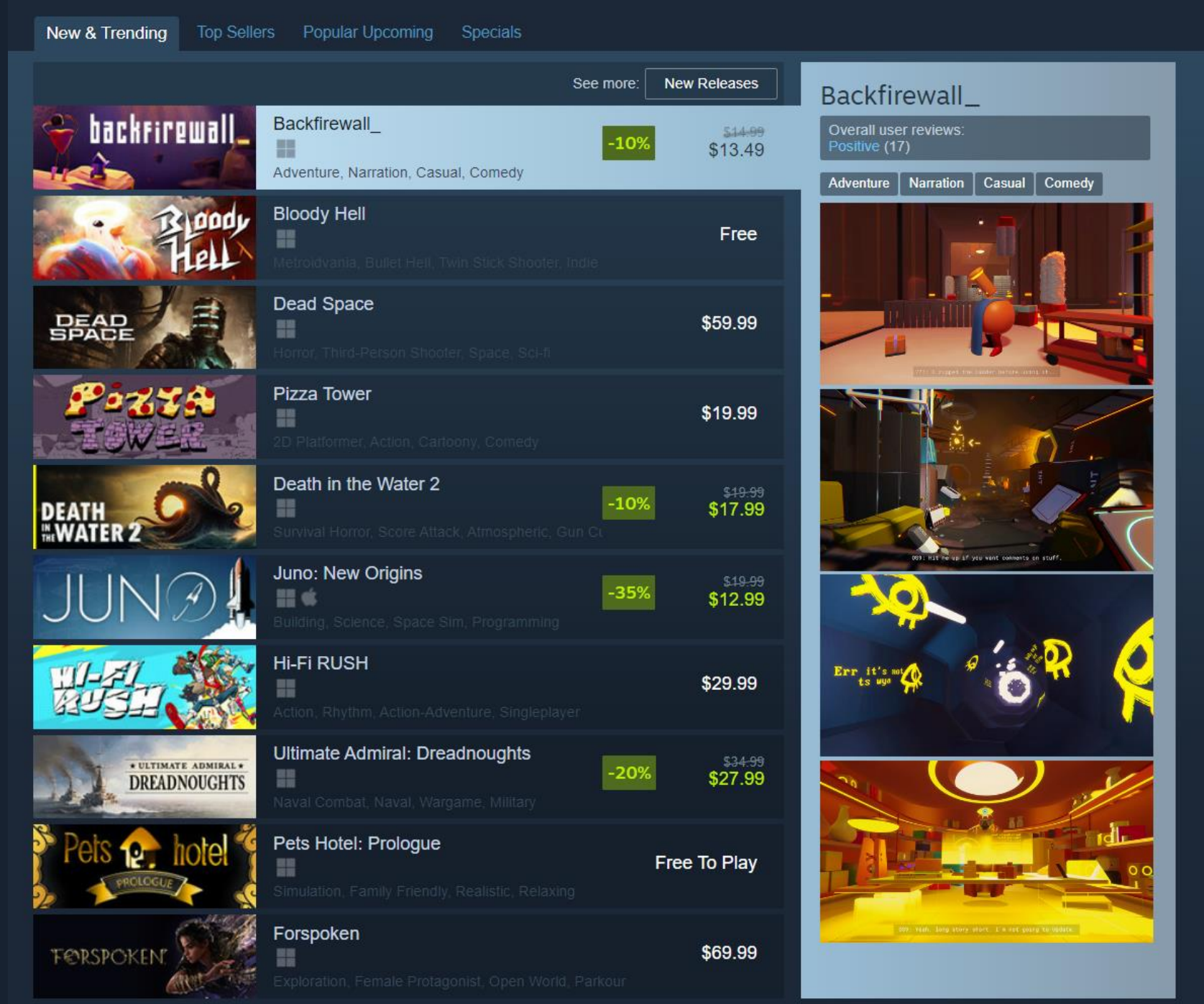
New & Trending Algorithmic

Regional list of popular games that have recently released.

When a new game is released and meets a certain threshold it will appear here automatically and starts at the top.

It will get pushed down, and eventually off of the list as new and trending games are released.

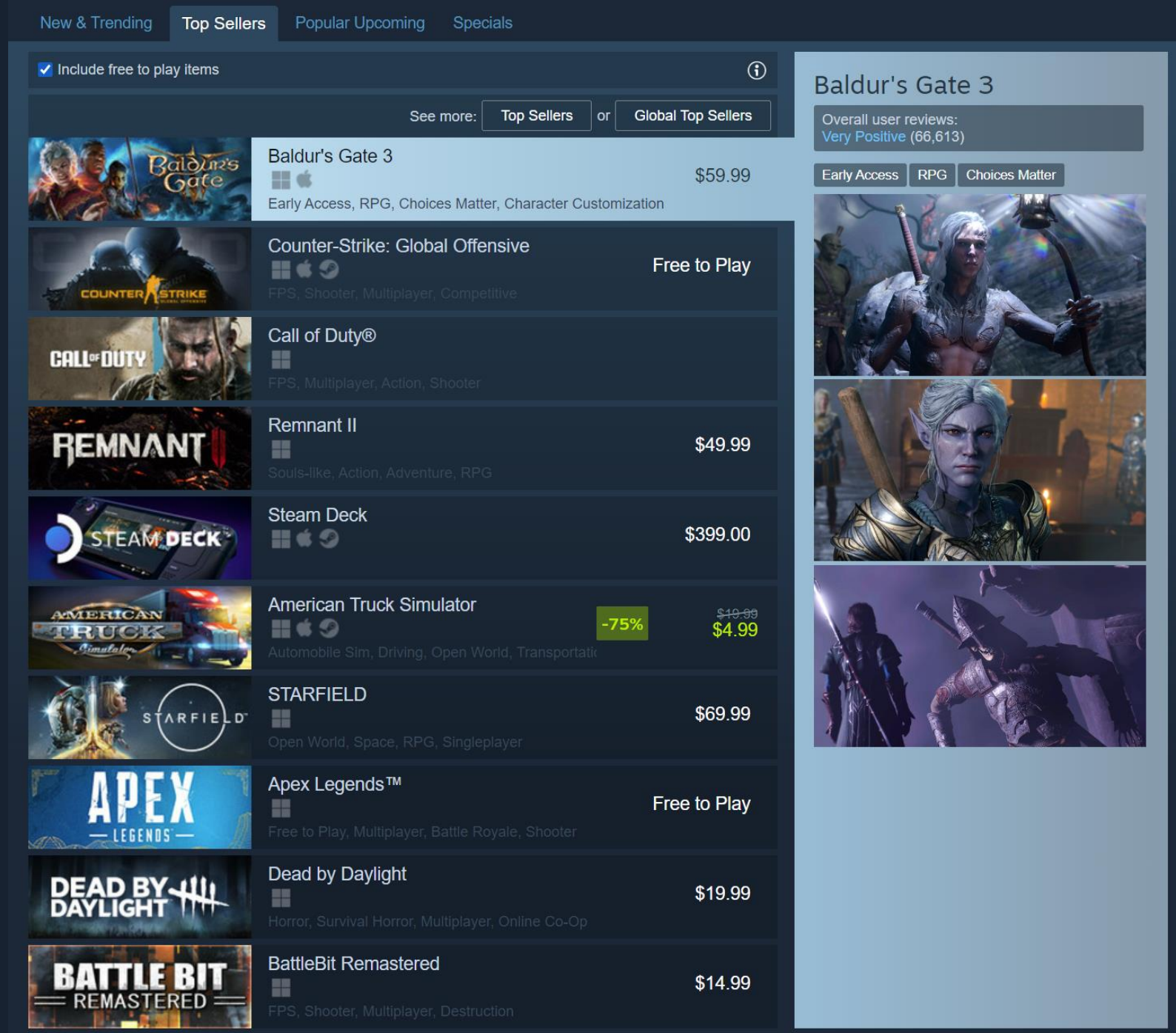
Early Access games are excluded (until they go 1.0).



Top Sellers
Algorithmic

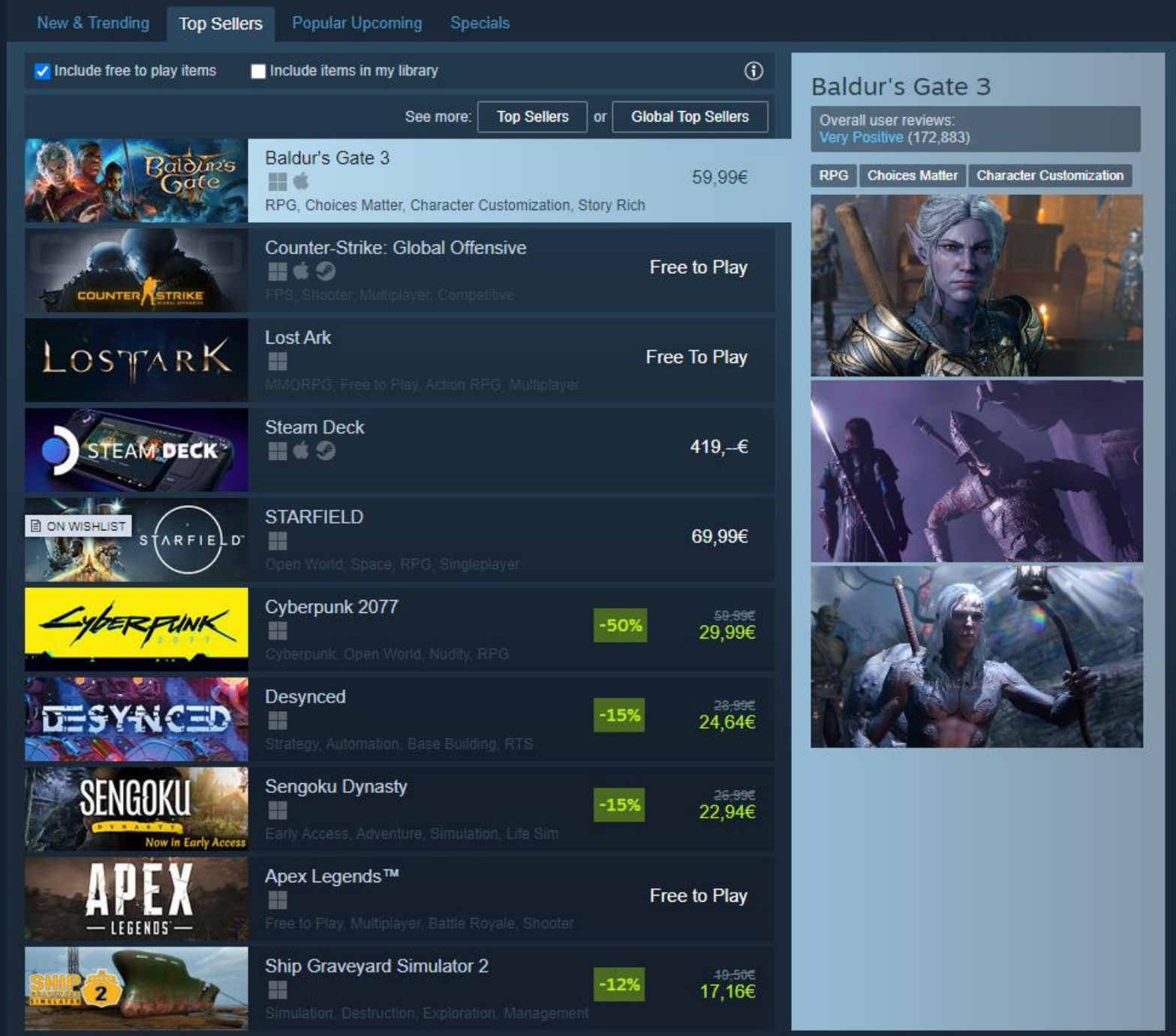
Based on total revenue, including all sources such as DLC and in-game transactions so we can get a more complete picture.

The list is localized for your region.



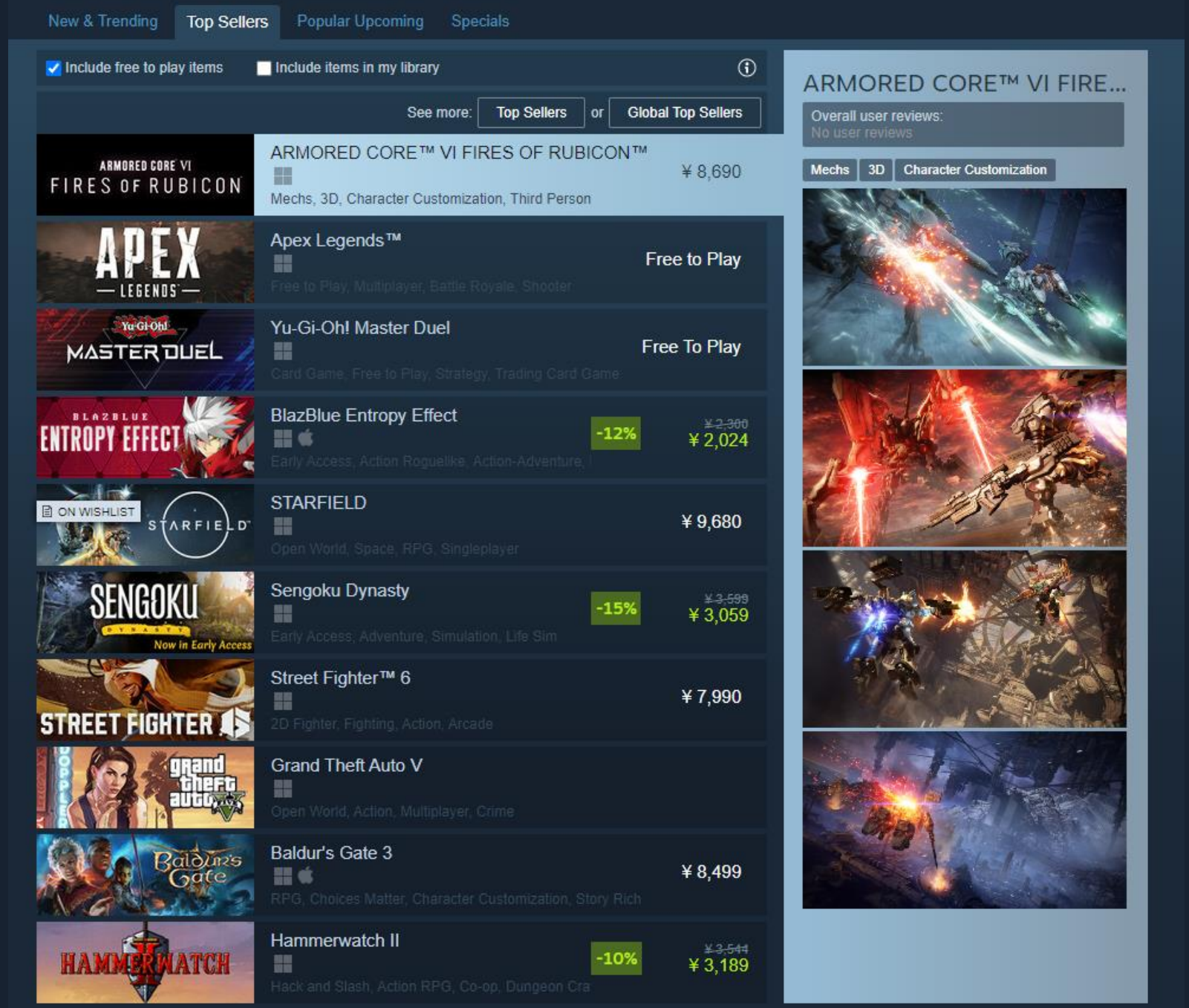
Top Sellers
Algorithmic

Here's what it looks like in **Germany**.



Top Sellers
Algorithmic

Here's what it looks like in **Japan**.



Popular Upcoming Algorithmic

This is a list of the most Wishlisted upcoming games, sorted by release date.

New & Trending | Top Sellers | **Popular Upcoming** | Specials

See more: Upcoming Releases

A Guidebook of Babel
Adventure, Story Rich, Time Manipulation, Puzzle

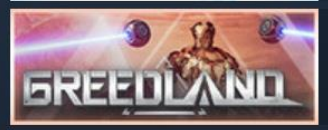
Flutter Away
Exploration, Hidden Object, Creature Collector, Phc

Project F — Free To Play
FPS, Action, PvP, Shooter

Canvas of Kings
Software, Hand-drawn, Procedural Generation, Le

Word Factori
Puzzle, Programming, Logic, Automation

WHITE ALBUM: Memories like Falling…
1990's, Romance, Visual Novel, Dating Sim



Greedland
Action Roguelike, Bullet Hell, Roguelite, Action

Super Space Club
Action, Indie, Bullet Hell, Action Roguelike

Sclash
2D Fighter, Fighting, Casual, Hand-drawn

Soul Stalker
Action Roguelike, Bullet Hell, Roguelite, Roguelike

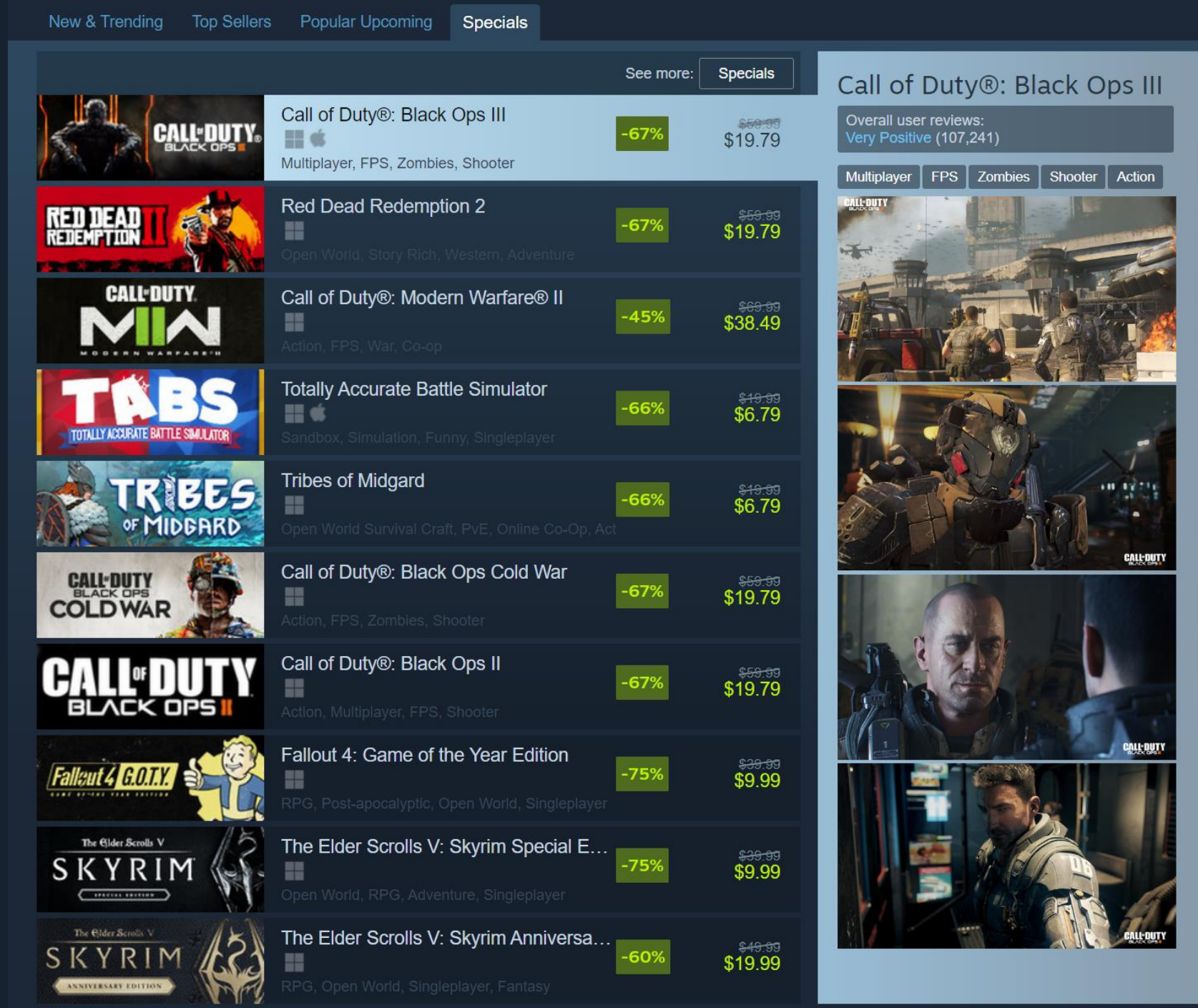
A Guidebook of Babel

Overall user reviews:
No user reviews

Adventure | Story Rich | Time Manipulation | Puzzle

Specials
Algorithmic

The most popular discounted games, sorted by sales.



How does Steam select which games are featured in the **algorithmic** and **curated** areas of the store?

We hear a lot about “The Algorithm,” but **there is no one algorithm.**

1. Steam is **personalized for you**
2. **Player interest** drives visibility

Steam automatically customizes elements of the store for every user.

We let player preferences drive the visibility to make recommendations relevant.

As Steam has gotten bigger,
it's gotten more diverse.

We think that's cool.

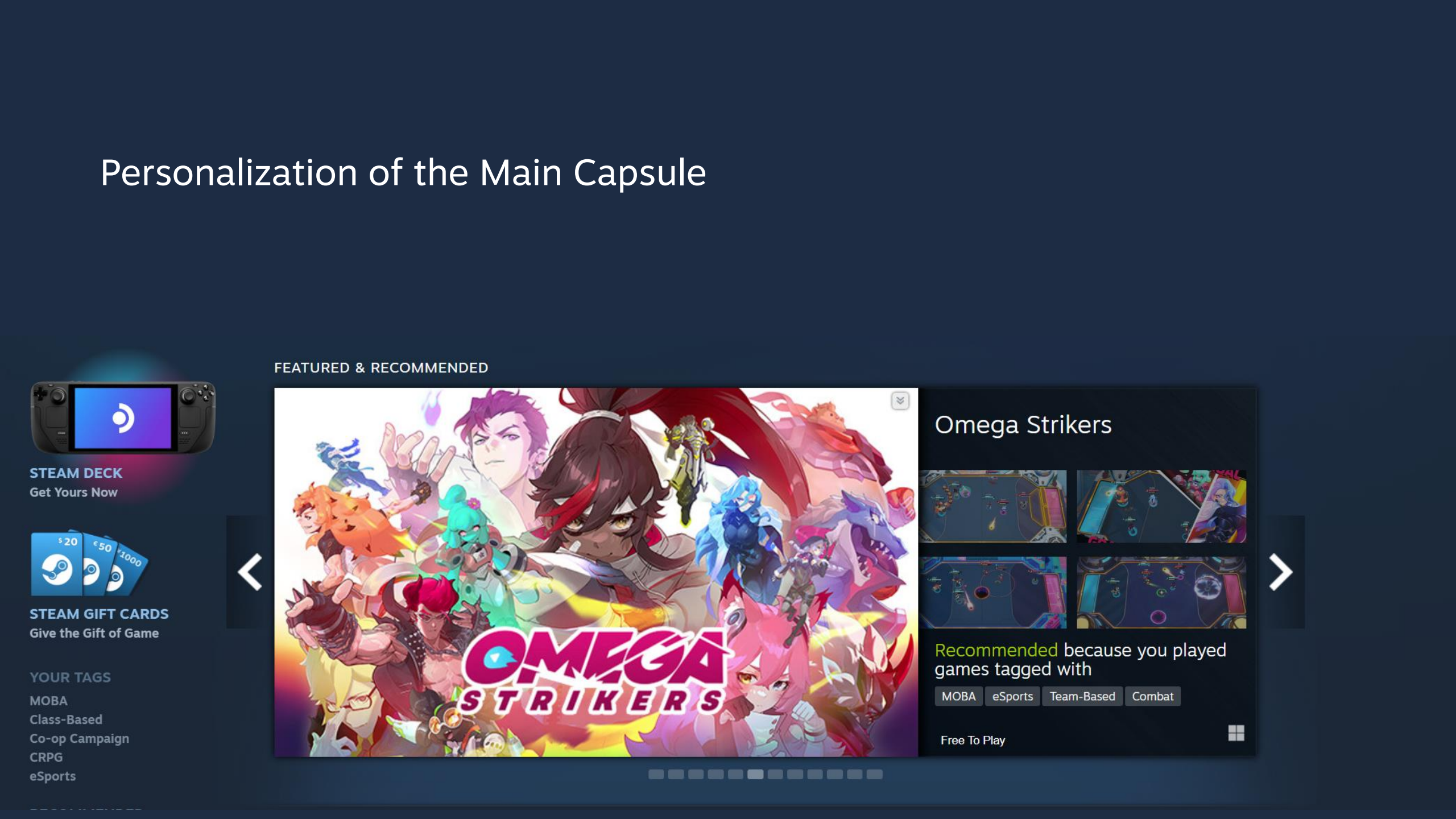
Action
Arcade & Rhythm
Fighting & Martial Arts
First-Person Shooter
Hack & Slash
Platformer & Runner
Third-Person Shooter
shmup
Adventure RPG
Casual
Hidden Object
Metroidvania
Puzzle
Story-Rich
Visual Novel
RPG
Adventure RPG
JRPG
Party-Based
Rogue-like
Strategy RPG

The more you interact with Steam, **the better it gets** at recommendations.

Tags!

(They’re important.)

Personalization of the Main Capsule



Personalization of the Main Capsule is based on:

The games you've played or wishlisted
The games your friends are playing or have Wishlisted
Games your friends have recommended
Top sellers (regionalized)
New releases and updates
Curators you follow

Personalized Recommendations on the Front Page

BECAUSE YOU PLAYED **THE RIFTBREAKER**

$19.99

Base Building
Strategy
Automation
Sandbox

$29.99

Base Building
Sci-fi
Exploration
Sandbox

$19.99

Base Building
Atmospheric
Sci-fi
Story Rich

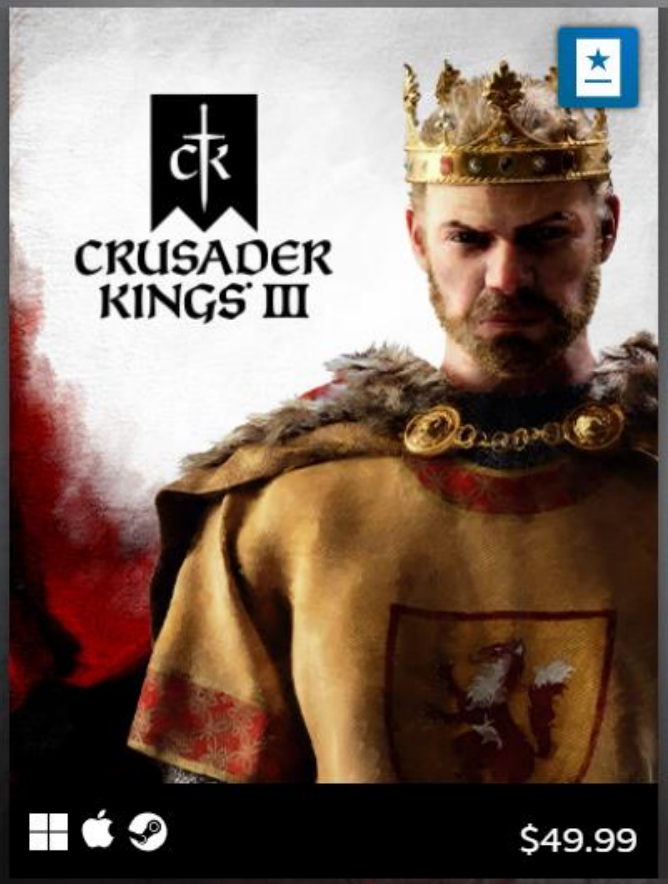
$29.99

Strategy
Base Building
Sci-fi
Automation

Content hubs are a big source of traffic.

They are like mini-versions of the front page, scoped to a genre that are also personalized.

SIMULATION



Crusader Kings III

Release date: Sep 1, 2020

Very Positive | 61,767 User Reviews

Strategy | Simulation | RPG | Grand Strategy | Medieval | Historical | Management | RTS | Character Customization | Life Sim | Singleplayer | 4X | Sandbox | Choices Matter | War

Why this game is relevant to you:

- ✓ Similar to games you've played

- ✓ Recommended by **2 friend**
- ✓ Owned by **3 friends**
- ✓ Wishlisted by **5 friends**

Player interest drives visibility

One of the most reliable and accurate ways we've figured out to measure player interest is revenue.

When players spend time and money on your game, it's a strong signal to Steam it could be interesting to other players, too.

Steam's **algorithms** react to player interest quickly and automatically, and it can happen any time during the life cycle of a game.

Curated featuring and promotions are earned with player interest.

This includes

Daily Deals

Midweek and Weekend Deals

Front page takeovers

Content hub takeovers

What does it take to qualify for a **curated** promotion?

They are earned, and it’s competitive. They’re also based on a mix of sales and other customer signals.

If your goal is to qualify for a **curated** promotion, think about ways to make your game appeal to a broad audience.

Localization
Regional pricing
Marketing assets
Controller support

Even if your launch doesn’t go as planned, you can recover.

Steam never makes a permanent decision about your game.

Every game has a chance to be successful. **That’s by design.**

Demystifying what drives **algorithmic** visibility on Steam

VISIBILITY ON STEAM

Store page traffic

VISIBILITY ON STEAM

Store page traffic

NOT A FACTOR!

VISIBILITY ON STEAM

Store page traffic
Review Score

NOT A FACTOR!

VISIBILITY ON STEAM

Store page traffic

NOT A FACTOR!

Review Score

NOT A FACTOR!*

*Usually!

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Wishlists

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Early Access

VISIBILITY ON STEAM

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Review Score

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VISIBILITY ON STEAM

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Review Score
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Wishlists
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Early Access
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Localization

VISIBILITY ON STEAM

Store page traffic

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Review Score

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Wishlists

NOT A FACTOR!*

*Usually!

Early Access

NOT A FACTOR!*

*Usually!

Localization

IT'S A FACTOR!

There is no magical number to get featured by our algorithms.

Steam is reacting to player interest. But there are things you can do to generate that interest.

Steam is designed to help your game find your audience and snowball to success, but you'll need to get the ball rolling.

Launching a store page and hoping for the best is not a marketing plan.

It’s important to do the work to build a community and generate interest in your game. Launch with momentum.

Discord, forums, social media
Press and influencers
Paid marketing
Local tradeshows, meetups, and groups

Focus energy around big events—launch, a major update, or a healthy discount.

Think about ways to create the biggest burst of sales and players possible.

Learn from other developers.

They'll have innovative and effective ways to build your snowball.

We’re always working to improve Steam for both players and developers.

Visibility on Steam is driven by fans and the games they buy and play.

Our goal with Steam is to match games with the players who will love them.

All kinds of games can find an audience, and success, on Steam.

There’s room for everyone.

Want to help us make Steam better?

Apply to work at Valve
https://www.valvesoftware.com/

Questions?

Helpful links and a downloadable PDF of this presentation.