



Testing Your Game on Steam

Nice to meet you.

Erik Peterson, Valve
Steam Business Team

**So, you're thinking
about running a beta
on Steam...**

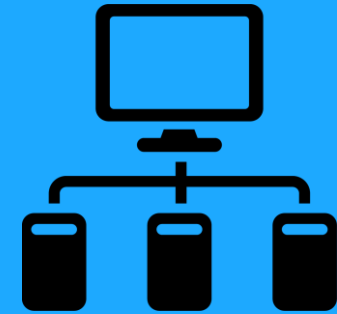
When testing your game, you may be looking for



**PLAYER
FEEDBACK**



**BUG
REPORTS**



**SERVER STRESS
TESTING**

**Steam offers a variety
of features and options
to run a beta**

Think about your needs

***How many players
do I want in the beta?***

Think about your needs

***Do I want my beta
to be open or closed?***

Think about your needs

***Do I want my beta
to be scalable in size?***

Think about your needs

***Is my beta for the public
or just friends and family?***

Think about your goals



Have a plan
for gathering feedback.



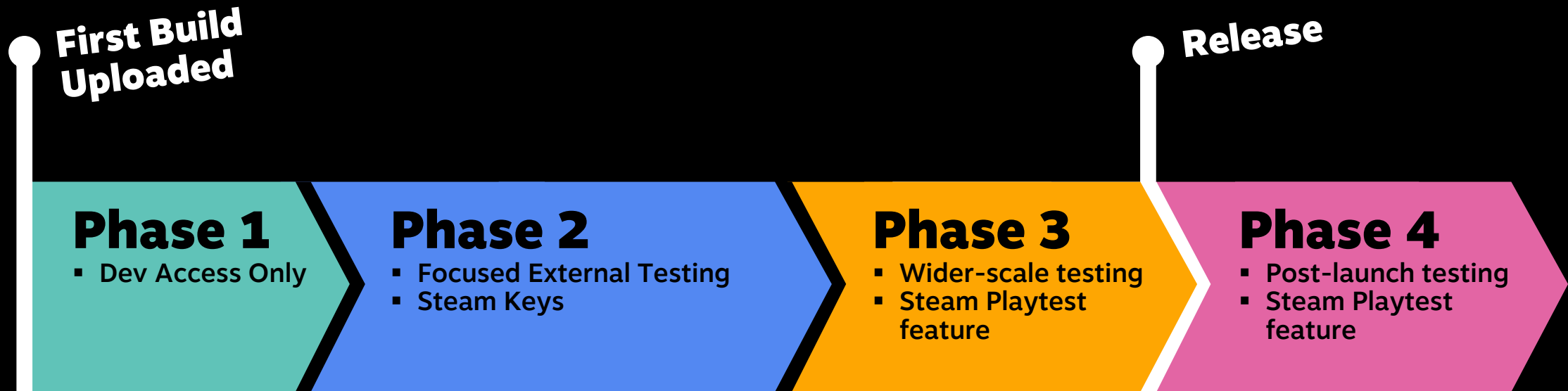
Be serious
about implementing feedback.



Give yourself time
to implement feedback.

**Let's start by talking about
the phases of a game's
development lifecycle.**

Development Lifecycle of a Game





Development Lifecycle of a Game

Phase 1

WHAT

Dev Access Only

HOW

**Build Uploaded
to Steamworks**



Development Lifecycle of a Game

Phase 1

Anyone with the correct permissions in your Steamworks partner group will have access to your build through autogrants

During this phase, you may want to upload multiple builds



Development Lifecycle of a Game

Phase 1

**CHECK OUT OUR
OTHER TALK ON
MANAGING BUILDS,
BRANCHES AND
DEPOTS**



Development Lifecycle of a Game

Phase 2

WHAT

**Focused External
Testing**

HOW

Steam Keys



Development Lifecycle of a Game

Phase 2

Steam keys offer you a way to grant specific user access to your development build

Great for friends & family beta or other small betas



**Release State
Override Keys.
What are they?**

A type of Steam key that **overrides the release state** of your game.

It grants immediate access to the default branch of your game, even if your game isn't released yet.

Release State Override Steam Keys


Select Type > Select Tag > Select Package > Enter Quantity > Confirmation


Select the type of key to request. This will determine how the key behaves when activated by users.


Default Release Key


Select this option if you want to request keys that will be used for retail or other distribution outside Steam. These keys can be redeemed by users anytime, but they will only allow users to play the game once it has been released on Steam.


PICK YOUR INTENDED USE:

DIGITAL STORE

RETAIL STORE

BUNDLE


GIVEAWAY


CROWDFUNDING


Release State Override

Select this option if you need keys that will allow immediate access to play the game, even if the game is not yet released on Steam. Release Override keys are intended for small beta tests and press/influencer access. Requests will be reviewed on a case by basis, and in general less than 1000 keys work well for this purpose. Release State Override keys should never be sold.

PICK YOUR INTENDED USE:

PRESS / REVIEW

BETA TEST


CROWDFUNDING REWARD

CLICK HERE

Developer Autogrant

Select this option to request keys for your own use in developing your game. These keys are intended for developer use only. They are used to automatically provide developers with immediate access to the product. Note: you should not need more than a few dozen Developer Autogrant keys.

PICK YOUR INTENDED USE:

EXTERNAL DEV TEAM



Release State Override Steam Keys

**A feature Steam
offers to help you
test your game
before launch**

**Requested for your
main AppID**

**Suitable for smaller
scale closed betas**

**Not revoked at
launch**



Release State Override Steam Keys

Limited to
**2,500
KEYS
TOTAL**

This includes keys for testing,
betas, publishers, media,
influencers, crowdfunding, etc.



Release State Override Steam Keys

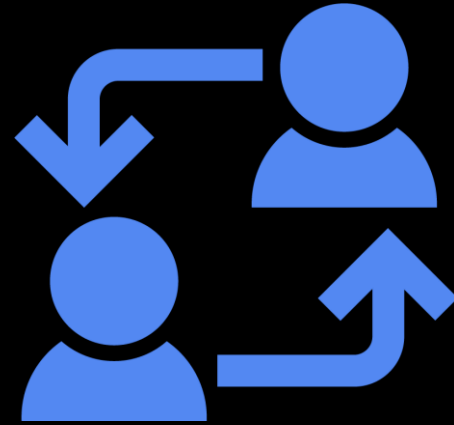


**You can't toggle access
on or off like you can
with Steam Playtest
(more on that later)**

Users with these keys can play
your default branch build
anytime—it's always on



Release State Override Steam Keys



Steam keys have value and are easily transferrable before they are redeemed



**Do you need your
beta to be secret
during testing?**

**Release State Override
Steam Keys for your
main AppID could be
an answer...**

Before release, store presence
and app configuration aren't
detectable

Friends aren't able to see players
launching, playing, or even
owning the game



**Your playtest is only
as secret as your
least-trustworthy
playtester**



**We recommend
announcing your game
before running any
non-internal playtests**



The Development Lifecycle of a Game

Phase 3

WHAT
Wider-scale
testing

HOW
Steam Playtest
feature



**Steam Playtest is designed to
help you run a **successful beta**
on Steam**

**Big or small,
open or closed**



Playtest [See Playtest documentation](#)

Add Playtest app

You can make one with a click



Steam Playtest is low-risk

- ✓ **Separate AppID**
- ✓ **Separate build and build review**
- ✓ **Playtime does not count towards the actual game**
- ✓ **No user reviews on Playtest apps**




**Easy to manage
and gate access**

**Store page signup,
Steam key access,
or both**

**Add players who have
requested access with
one click**

**Enable or end access
with a click**



Technical Tools



Edit Steamworks Settings

Define Achievements, manage Workshop, upload Trading Card assets, etc.



Manage your Steam Playtest

View your current tester pool, add more testers, and control visibility



Request Steam Product Keys

Request keys to distribute your application wherever you like



View Errors

See errors logged via Steam for this application



Steam Deck Compatibility Review **NEW!**

Submit your game to be reviewed for compatibility with Steam Deck

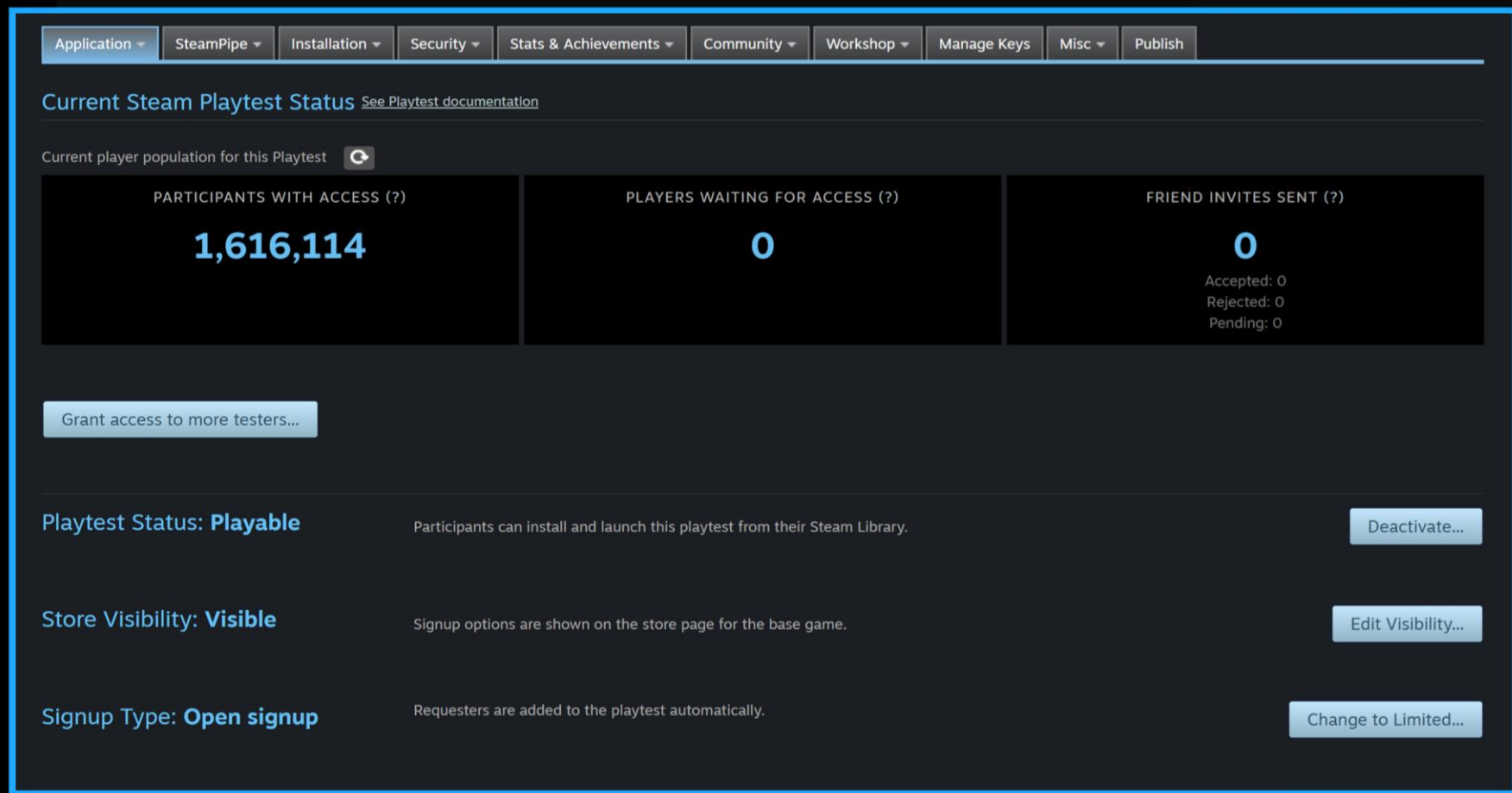
It's **easy** to manage your Steam Playtest

One central
control center

Configuration in
a few clicks

Flexibility and options
not available with
main AppID

Steam Playtest Dashboard

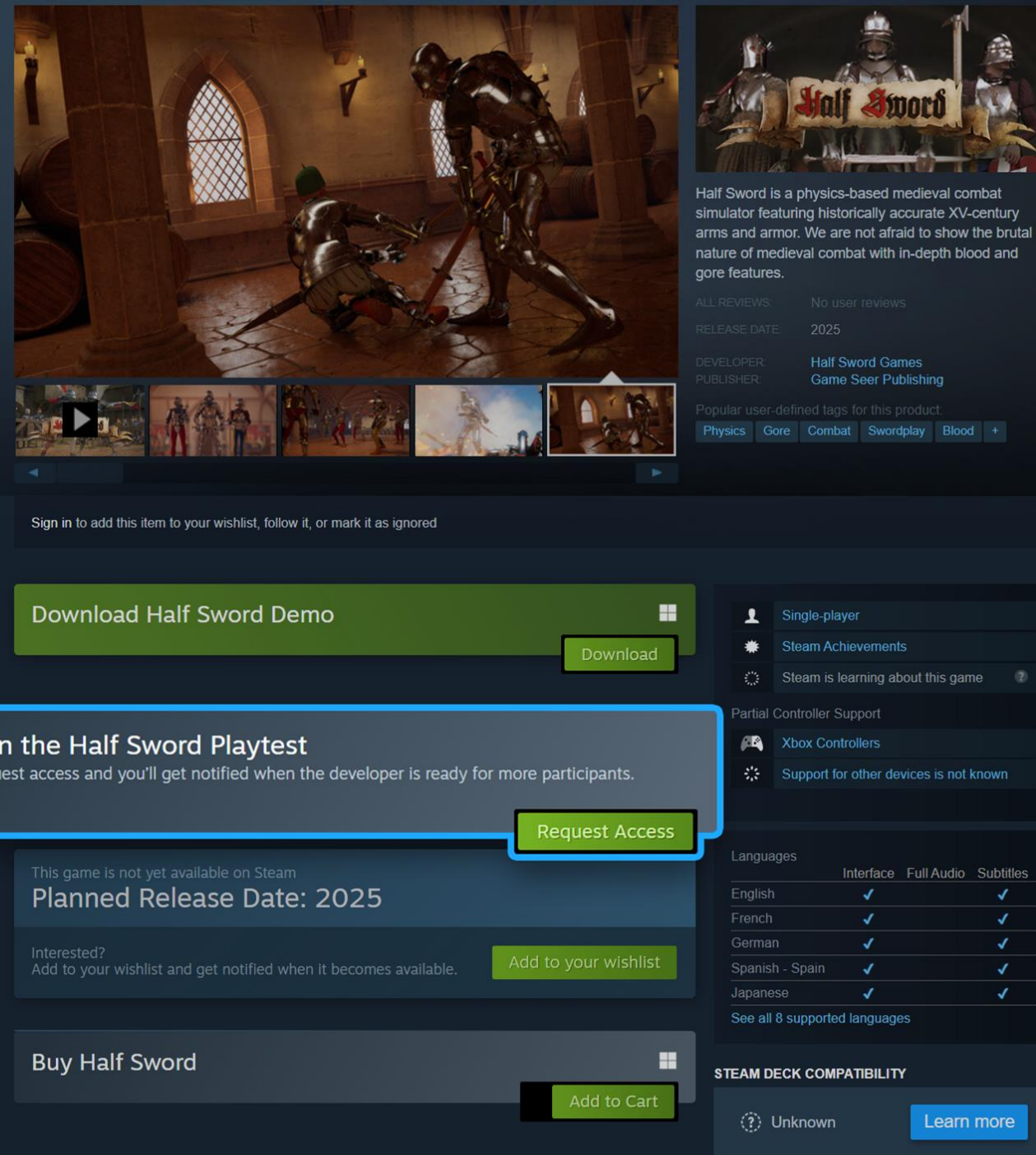


The screenshot displays the Steam Playtest Dashboard. At the top is a navigation bar with tabs: Application, SteamPipe, Installation, Security, Stats & Achievements, Community, Workshop, Manage Keys, Misc, and Publish. Below this, the 'Current Steam Playtest Status' section is highlighted, with a link to 'See Playtest documentation'. It shows the 'Current player population for this Playtest' with a refresh icon. Three key metrics are presented in a grid: 'PARTICIPANTS WITH ACCESS (?)' at 1,616,114, 'PLAYERS WAITING FOR ACCESS (?)' at 0, and 'FRIEND INVITES SENT (?)' at 0. The invite section also lists 'Accepted: 0', 'Rejected: 0', and 'Pending: 0'. A 'Grant access to more testers...' button is located below the metrics. The bottom section contains three configuration rows: 'Playtest Status: Playable' (with a description and a 'Deactivate...' button), 'Store Visibility: Visible' (with a description and an 'Edit Visibility...' button), and 'Signup Type: Open signup' (with a description and a 'Change to Limited...' button).

Application	SteamPipe	Installation	Security	Stats & Achievements	Community	Workshop	Manage Keys	Misc	Publish
Current Steam Playtest Status See Playtest documentation									
Current player population for this Playtest									
PARTICIPANTS WITH ACCESS (?)			PLAYERS WAITING FOR ACCESS (?)			FRIEND INVITES SENT (?)			
1,616,114			0			0			
						Accepted: 0 Rejected: 0 Pending: 0			
Grant access to more testers...									
Playtest Status: Playable					Participants can install and launch this playtest from their Steam Library.				Deactivate...
Store Visibility: Visible					Signup options are shown on the store page for the base game.				Edit Visibility...
Signup Type: Open signup					Requesters are added to the playtest automatically.				Change to Limited...

You can add a
Request Access button
for your playtest
on your store page

**Store
Visibility**



The screenshot shows the Steam store page for the game 'Half Sword'. The main header features a large image of two knights in combat, with a smaller image of three knights holding a banner that reads 'Half Sword'. Below the header, there is a description of the game as a physics-based medieval combat simulator. The page includes a 'Download Half Sword Demo' button, a 'Join the Half Sword Playtest' section with a 'Request Access' button highlighted by a blue box, and a 'Buy Half Sword' button. The 'Request Access' button is a green rectangle with white text. The 'Join the Half Sword Playtest' section also includes a description of the playtest and a 'Request Access' button. The 'Buy Half Sword' section includes a description of the game's availability and an 'Add to your wishlist' button. The right sidebar contains information about single-player mode, Steam Achievements, and Partial Controller Support. The bottom right corner shows the Steam Deck compatibility status as 'Unknown'.

Half Sword is a physics-based medieval combat simulator featuring historically accurate XV-century arms and armor. We are not afraid to show the brutal nature of medieval combat with in-depth blood and gore features.

ALL REVIEWS: No user reviews
RELEASE DATE: 2025
DEVELOPER: Half Sword Games
PUBLISHER: Game Seer Publishing

Popular user-defined tags for this product:
Physics Gore Combat Swordplay Blood +

Sign in to add this item to your wishlist, follow it, or mark it as ignored

Download Half Sword Demo Download

Join the Half Sword Playtest
Request access and you'll get notified when the developer is ready for more participants.
Request Access

This game is not yet available on Steam
Planned Release Date: 2025

Interested?
Add to your wishlist and get notified when it becomes available. Add to your wishlist

Buy Half Sword Add to Cart

Single-player
Steam Achievements
Steam is learning about this game

Partial Controller Support
Xbox Controllers
Support for other devices is not known

Languages

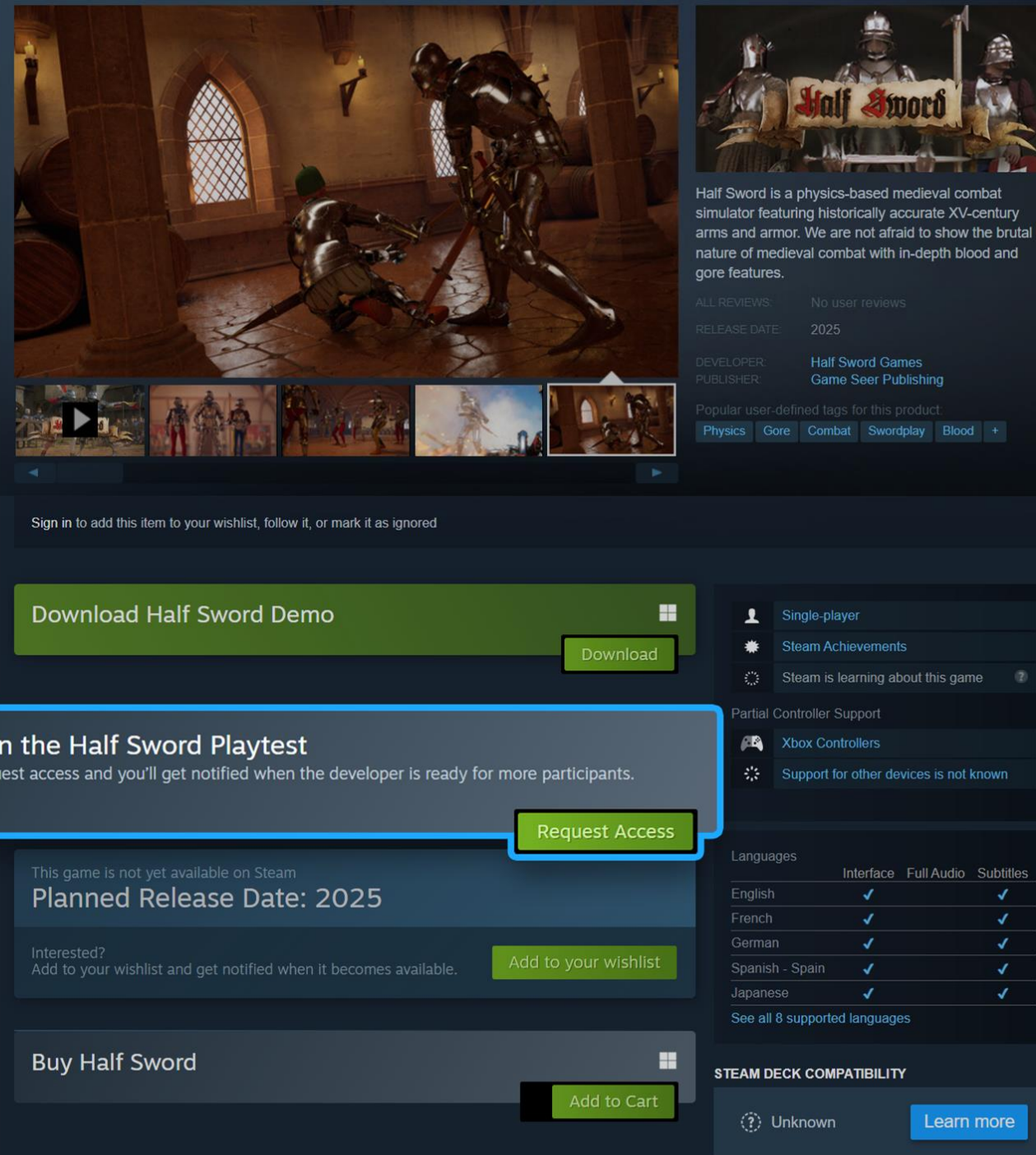
	Interface	Full Audio	Subtitles
English	✓		✓
French	✓		✓
German	✓		✓
Spanish - Spain	✓		✓
Japanese	✓		✓

See all 8 supported languages

STEAM DECK COMPATIBILITY
Unknown Learn more

By default, playtests are set to Limited. Anyone can click **Request Access** and get added to a pool of players waiting to get in.

Signup Type



The screenshot shows the Steam page for the game 'Half Sword'. The main image depicts a medieval combat scene. Below the image is a video player with several thumbnails. To the right of the video, there is a description of the game, its release date (2025), developer (Half Sword Games), and publisher (Game Seer Publishing). Below this, there are user-defined tags: Physics, Gore, Combat, Swordplay, Blood, and a plus sign for more. A sign-in prompt is visible below the tags. The 'Download Half Sword Demo' button is present, with a 'Download' button next to it. A blue box highlights the 'Request Access' button, which is located below the demo button. Below the 'Request Access' button, there is a section for the game's availability on Steam, stating 'This game is not yet available on Steam' and 'Planned Release Date: 2025'. Below this, there is a section for the game's wishlist, with an 'Add to your wishlist' button. At the bottom, there is a 'Buy Half Sword' button with an 'Add to Cart' button next to it. On the right side of the page, there are sections for 'Single-player', 'Steam Achievements', 'Steam is learning about this game', 'Partial Controller Support', 'Xbox Controllers', 'Support for other devices is not known', 'Languages', and 'STEAM DECK COMPATIBILITY'.

Half Sword is a physics-based medieval combat simulator featuring historically accurate XV-century arms and armor. We are not afraid to show the brutal nature of medieval combat with in-depth blood and gore features.

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Popular user-defined tags for this product:
Physics Gore Combat Swordplay Blood +

Sign in to add this item to your wishlist, follow it, or mark it as ignored

Download Half Sword Demo Download

Join the Half Sword Playtest
Request access and you'll get notified when the developer is ready for more participants.

Request Access

This game is not yet available on Steam
Planned Release Date: 2025

Interested?
Add to your wishlist and get notified when it becomes available. Add to your wishlist

Buy Half Sword Add to Cart

Single-player
Steam Achievements
Steam is learning about this game ?

Partial Controller Support
Xbox Controllers
Support for other devices is not known


Languages

	Interface	Full Audio	Subtitles
English	✓		✓
French	✓		✓
German	✓		✓
Spanish - Spain	✓		✓
Japanese	✓		✓

See all 8 supported languages

STEAM DECK COMPATIBILITY
Unknown Learn more

Current Steam Playtest status [See Playtest documentation](#)

Current player population for this Playtest 

PARTICIPANTS WITH ACCESS (?)

0

PLAYERS WAITING FOR ACCESS (?)

8,411

Grant access to more testers

Specify the number of players to grant access. If you need to limit by country, you may choose to invite players from one of the countries with the most waiting players.

Number to grant access:

☒ Next eligible testers from any country - 8411 waiting

☐ US - 437 waiting

☐ RU - 325 waiting

☐ GB - 138 waiting

☐ DE - 121 waiting

☐ CA - 70 waiting

☐ PL - 52 waiting

☐ FR - 50 waiting

☐ AU - 49 waiting

☐ BR - 46 waiting

☐ CN - 41 waiting


Add testers

**Add groups of players
when you're ready**

**Players are selected randomly
from the pool of signups**

**Managing Steam
Playtest Access**

Current Steam Playtest status [See Playtest documentation](#)

Current player population for this Playtest 

PARTICIPANTS WITH ACCESS (?)

0

PLAYERS WAITING FOR ACCESS (?)

8,411

Grant access to more testers

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Number to grant access:

☒ Next eligible testers from any country - 8411 waiting

- ☐ US - 437 waiting
- ☐ RU - 325 waiting
- ☐ GB - 138 waiting
- ☐ DE - 121 waiting
- ☐ CA - 70 waiting
- ☐ PL - 52 waiting
- ☐ FR - 50 waiting
- ☐ AU - 49 waiting
- ☐ BR - 46 waiting
- ☐ CN - 41 waiting

Add testers

**If you have server limitations,
you can choose to add users
from specific countries**

**Managing Steam
Playtest Access**



Hello Glados,

Guitar Billionaire Playtest is now available in your library!



Visit your Steam Library to start installing and to see more information about this playtest from the developers.

You can also grant your friends access to the playtest by [inviting them](#).

You are receiving this e-mail because you requested access to the Steam Playtest for Guitar Billionaire.

Cheers,
The Steam Team

Players receive an email from Steam when they are added to a playtest

Playtest is also added to their Library

Managing Steam Playtest Access

LIMITED*

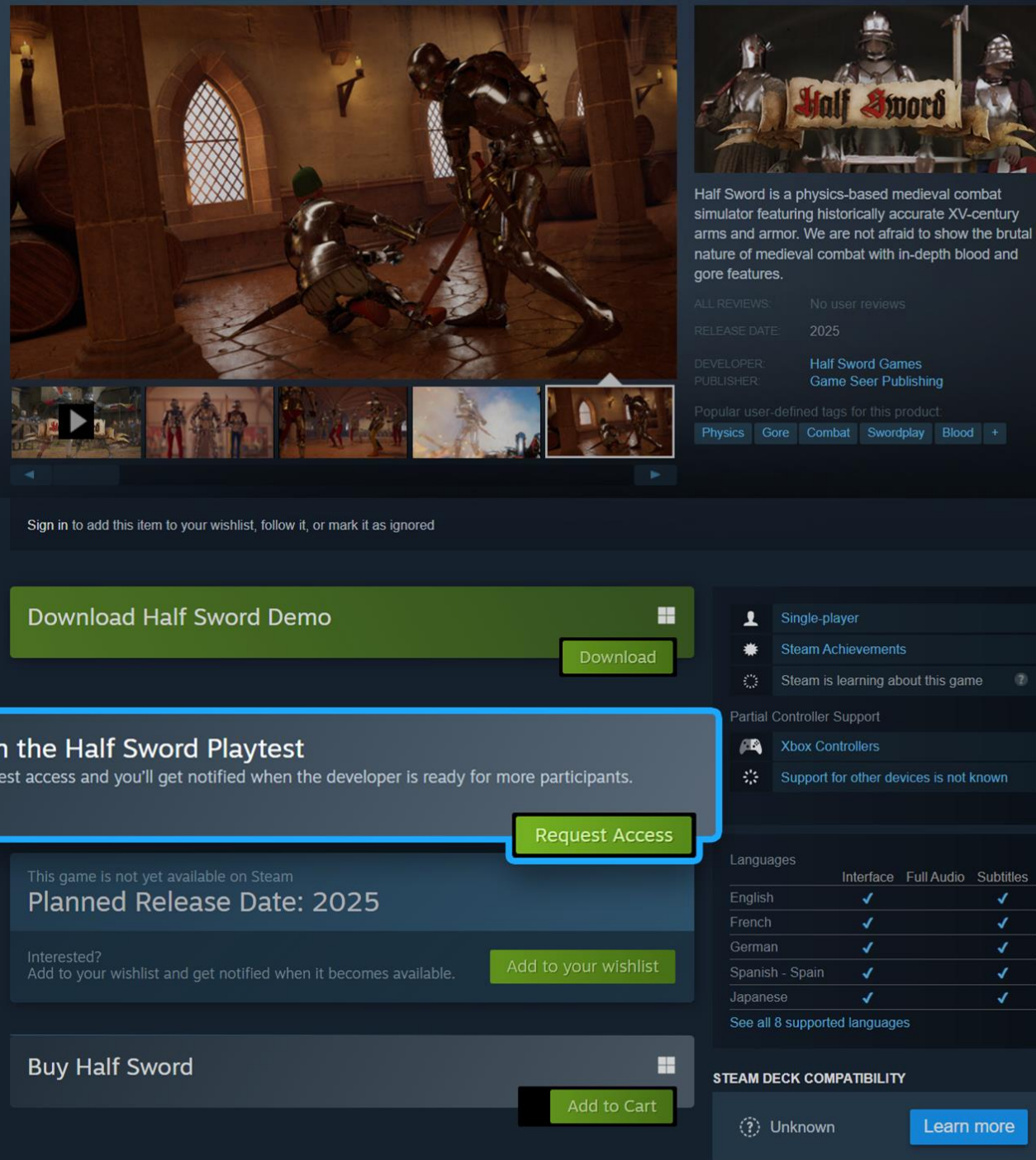
Anyone can click **Request Access** and get added to a pool of players waiting to get in

OPEN SIGNUP

Players who click **Request Access** are immediately let in

*By default, playtests are set to Limited

Signup Type



The screenshot shows the Steam page for the game 'Half Sword'. The main image depicts two knights in a medieval setting. To the right, there is a description of the game as a physics-based medieval combat simulator. Below the description, there are tabs for 'Physics', 'Gore', 'Combat', 'Swordplay', and 'Blood'. A 'Request Access' button is highlighted with a blue box. Below this, there is a section for 'Join the Half Sword Playtest' with a 'Request Access' button. At the bottom, there is a 'Buy Half Sword' section with an 'Add to Cart' button. The page also includes a 'Planned Release Date: 2025' and a 'Languages' table.

Half Sword is a physics-based medieval combat simulator featuring historically accurate XV-century arms and armor. We are not afraid to show the brutal nature of medieval combat with in-depth blood and gore features.

ALL REVIEWS: No user reviews
RELEASE DATE: 2025
DEVELOPER: Half Sword Games
PUBLISHER: Game Seer Publishing

Popular user-defined tags for this product:
[Physics](#) [Gore](#) [Combat](#) [Swordplay](#) [Blood](#) +

Sign in to add this item to your wishlist, follow it, or mark it as ignored

Download Half Sword Demo [Download](#)

Join the Half Sword Playtest
Request access and you'll get notified when the developer is ready for more participants. [Request Access](#)

This game is not yet available on Steam
Planned Release Date: 2025

Interested?
Add to your wishlist and get notified when it becomes available. [Add to your wishlist](#)

Buy Half Sword [Add to Cart](#)

Languages

	Interface	Full Audio	Subtitles
English	✓		✓
French	✓		✓
German	✓		✓
Spanish - Spain	✓		✓
Japanese	✓		✓

See all 8 supported languages

STEAM DECK COMPATIBILITY

[Unknown](#) [Learn more](#)

PLAYABLE

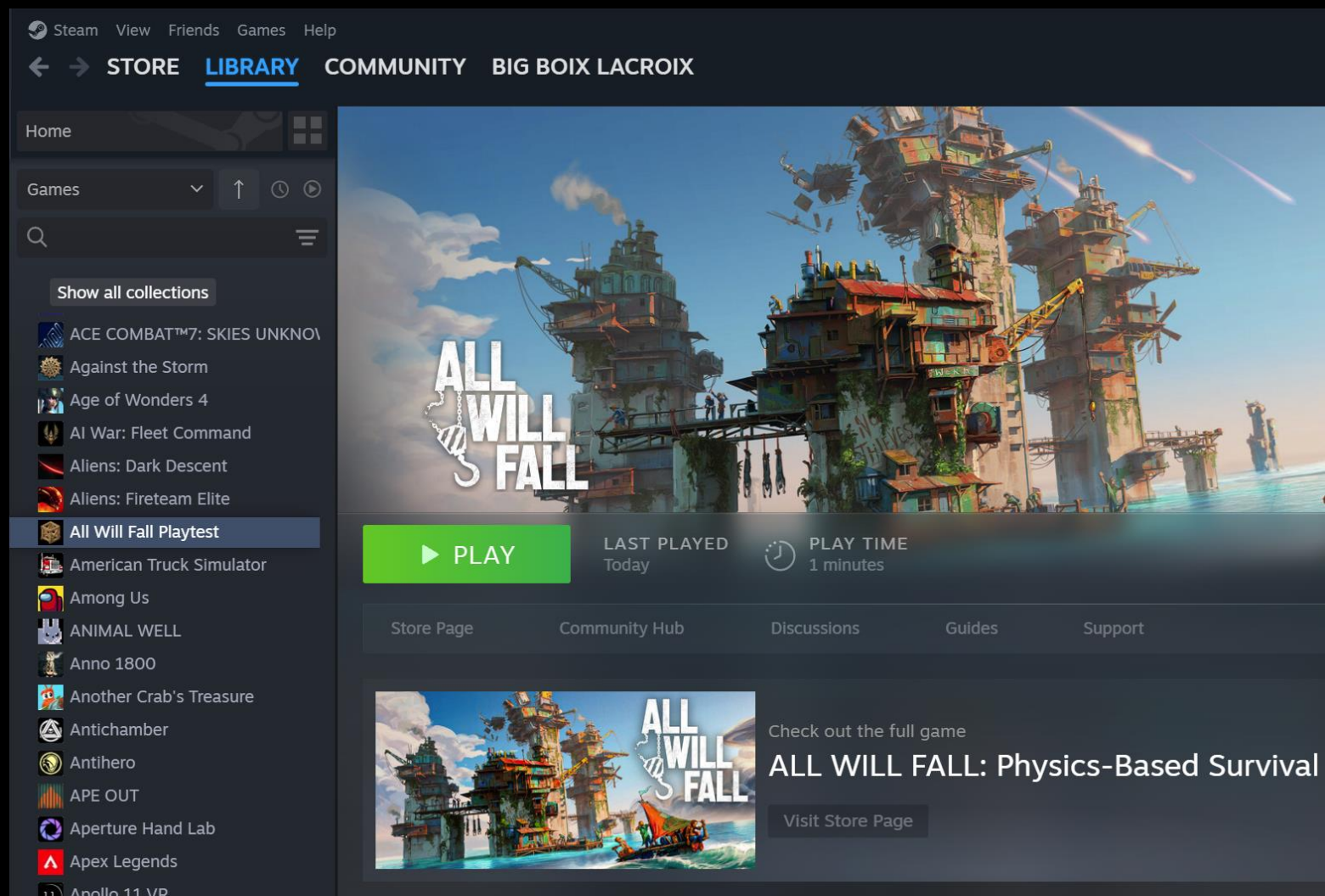
Players with access can launch this playtest from their library

NOT PLAYABLE

Players are not able to launch this playtest

Not possible with your main AppID

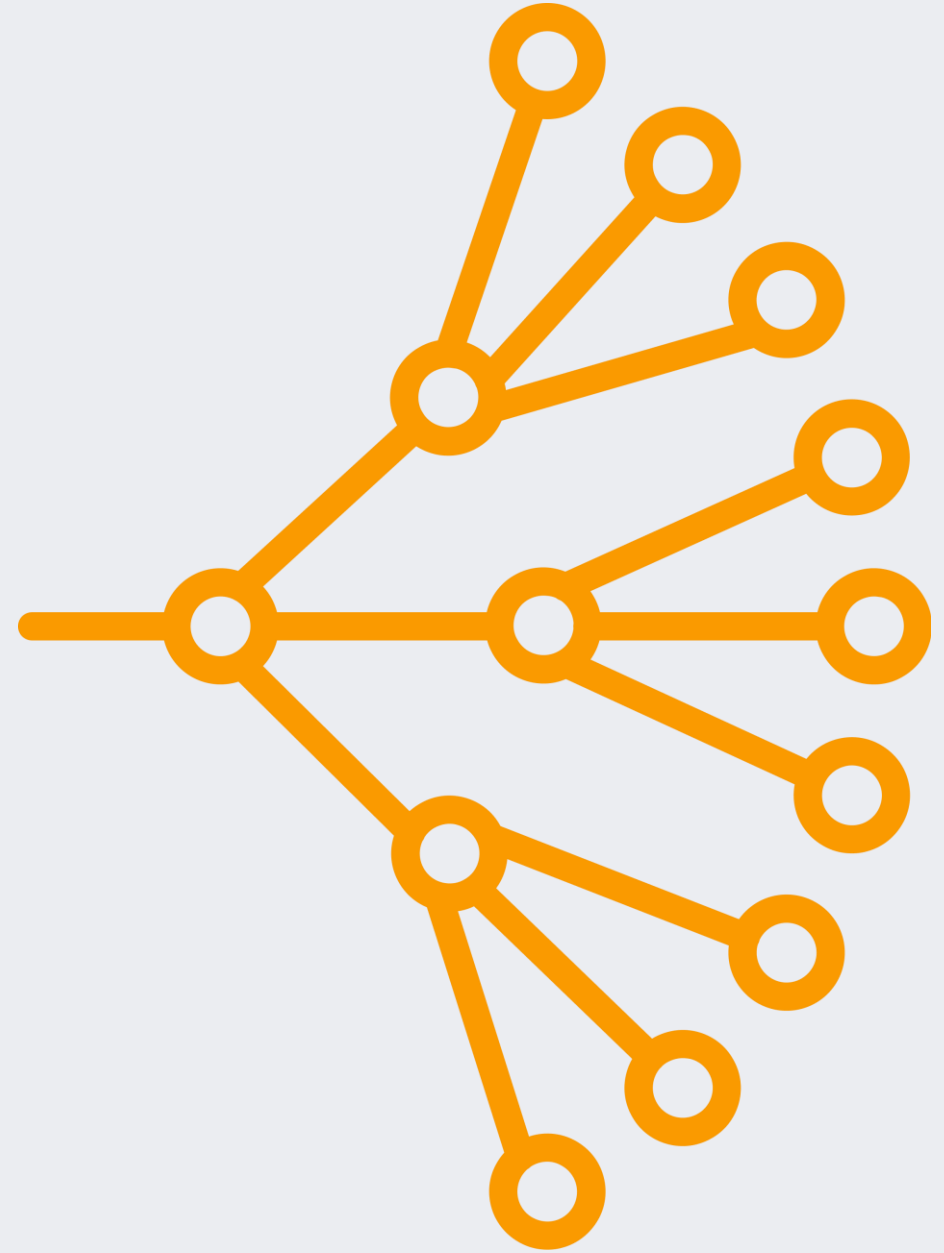
Playtest Status





**Introducing the
newest Steam
Playtest option...**

**Friend
Invites**



BETA

Friend Invites


An experimental new way
to add players to your
Steam playtest

When enabled, users with
access can invite friends,
and those friends can
invite their friends

Designed for games that
benefit from playing with
friends

Application ▾SteamPipe ▾Installation ▾Security ▾Stats & Achievements ▾Community ▾Workshop ▾Keys ▾Misc ▾Publish

Current Steam Playtest Status [See Playtest documentation](#)

Current player population for this Playtest 

PARTICIPANTS WITH ACCESS (?)
3

PLAYERS WAITING FOR ACCESS (?)
0

FRIEND INVITES SENT (?)
6
Accepted: 1
Rejected: 4
Pending: 1

Grant access to more testers...

Playtest Status: Playable

Participants can install and launch this playtest from their Steam Library.

Deactivate...

Store Visibility: Visible

Signup options are shown on the store page for the base game.

Edit Visibility...

Signup Type: Open signup

Requesters are added to the playtest automatically.

Change to Limited...

Friend Invites: 3 per playtester

Playtesters that were granted access before February 24 GMT may invite up to 3 of their friends **until July 14** GMT. The friend gets access to the playtest when they accept the invite. Playtesters can only invite people they have been friends with for 30 days.

Edit Invites

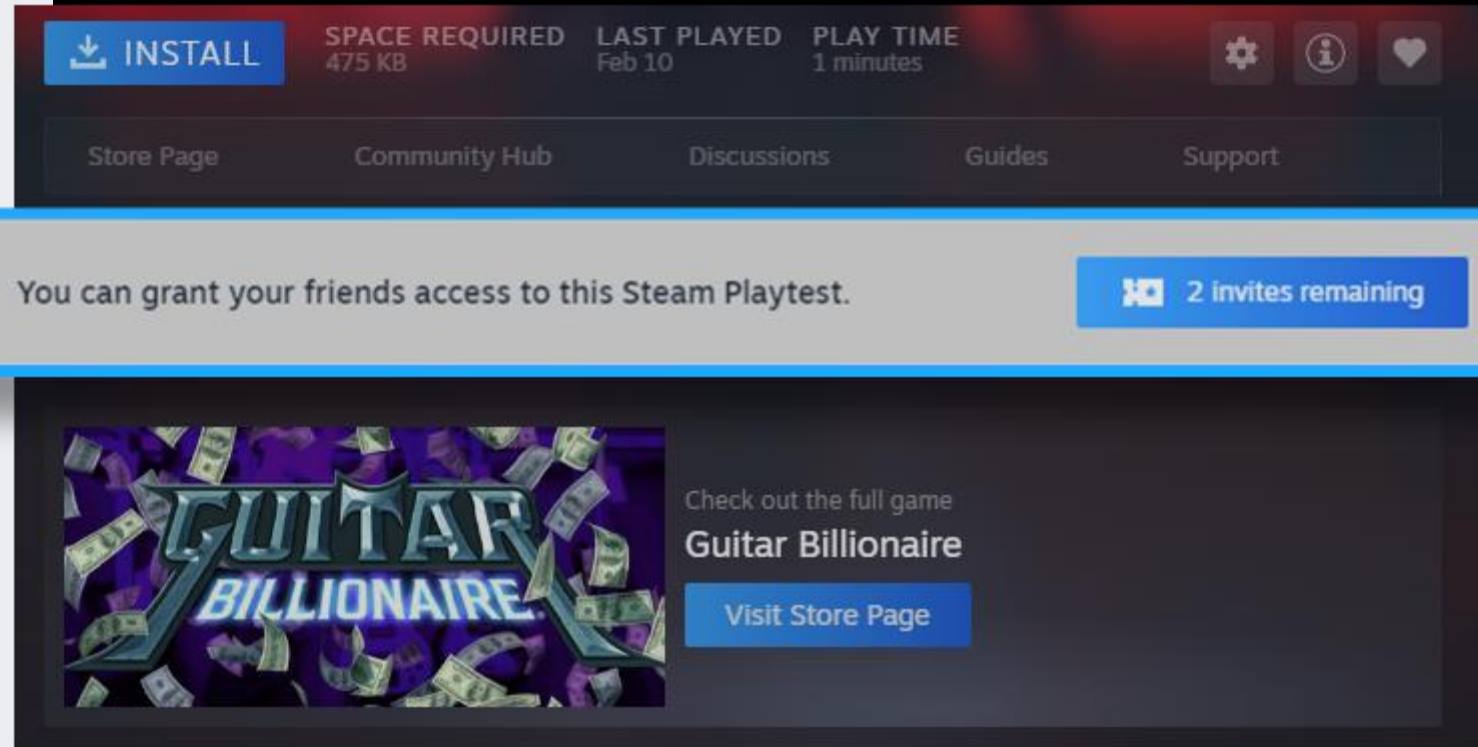
Pause Invites

BETA

Friend Invites

You specify the number of invites each player gets: 1, 2, or 3

Enable or pause anytime with a few clicks from the Playtest dashboard





BETA

Friend Invites

Growth can
compound quickly

Best for games with
robust server capacity

Beta feature—talk to
us if you're interested





You can **also request
Steam keys for your
Steam Playtest AppID**

This can be **in addition to
or **instead of** store page signups**



**You can request Steam keys
for your Steam Playtest AppID
even if your signup isn't live
on your store page**



Steam Keys for your Steam Playtest AppID

**You have some flexibility
with how you distribute
keys**

**Steam keys are useful for
adding specific users to
your beta**

**Steam Playtest keys can be
revoked to remove access,
but **be thoughtful** and
communicate with players**



***How many Steam keys
can I get for my Steam
Playtest AppID?***



**50,000+
STEAM
KEYS**

**for your Steam Playtest AppID,
and potentially more**

Talk to us for more info



Important things
to keep in mind
about Steam Playtest



Steam Playtests aren't featured on the Steam store

They can appear on your game's
store page and, if popular, on
Steam Charts Most Played

They also appear on a player's
friends list when playing

MOST PLAYED

Top 100 played games By Current Players





**Betas using Steam
Playtest are designed
to grow in size over
time, not shrink**

**You can't remove
players who signed up
via store page**

**You can revoke Steam
keys for playtests, but that
isn't a good experience**



Steam Playtests are free for players & can't be monetized

- ✗ Directly selling access to your playtest**
- ✗ In-game purchases (they won't work)**
- ✓ Playtest access included with a pre-purchase***
- ✓ Playtest access as a reward for your time-limited crowdfunding campaign***

****Talk to us in advance***



The Development Lifecycle of a Game

Phase 4

WHAT
**Post-launch
testing**

HOW
**Steam Playtest
feature**



**Steam Playtest
isn't just for
unreleased games**



**You can use Steam
Playtest as a public
test realm for
features or updates**

**Helpful for testing new
content for your game**

Turn on or off at any time

**Playtests are free, so if
your game is paid be
thoughtful about how you
offer players access**

Case Study: The Riftbreaker

- ✓ Using Steam Playtest for multiplayer update closed beta
- ✓ Signups via Discord, access controlled with Steam keys
- ✓ Open beta with Store page signup planned

The Riftbreaker

Community Hub



The Riftbreaker™ is a base-building, survival game with Action-RPG elements. You are an elite scientist/commando inside an advanced Mecha-Suit capable of dimensional rift travel. Hack & slash countless enemies. Build up your base, collect samples and research new inventions to survive.

RECENT REVIEWS: **Very Positive** (113)
ALL REVIEWS: **Very Positive** (16,236)

RELEASE DATE: Oct 14, 2021

DEVELOPER: EXOR Studios
PUBLISHER: EXOR Studios, Surefire Games

Popular user-defined tags for this product:

[Base Building](#) [Tower Defense](#) [Survival](#) [Strategy](#) +

Add to your wishlist

Follow

Ignore

View Your Queue ↗



Survive until you can open a rift back to Earth 01:13:55
Prepare for an incoming rift 0:56

4/4
-28 ↓ 68/95 548/548
+0 ↑ 0/0 1050/1050
+0 ↑ 0/0 345/1000


“We moved our closed multiplayer beta for The Riftbreaker entirely to Steam Playtest. I think it's a great tool both pre and post release.”

—Pawel Lekki, Exor Studios

Case Study: The Riftbreaker

Solid Material Storage
Automatically gathers and stores solid materials. It expands the global storage space.
Build cost: 100 Carbonium, 100 Steel

Day: 2 08:48



“The Playtest App is well integrated within the Steam ecosystem, other players can see that their friends are playing it which gives us additional visibility and exposure.”

“Thanks to the fact that the build upload and management process is separated from the main application, we can set up additional experimental and development branches within the Playtest itself.”

Case Study: The Riftbreaker



Survive until you can open a rift back to Earth 01:13:55
Prepare for an incoming... 0:56

4/4
-28 ↓ 68/95 548/548
+0 ↑ 0/0 1050/1050
+0 ↑ 0/0 345/1000

***“It's a great tool for
maintaining a closed beta
with fine grain controls.”***

—Pawel Lekki, Exor Studios

Case Study: The Riftbreaker

Solid Material Storage
Automatically gathers and stores
solid materials. It expands the global
storage space.
Build Cost: 100
Carbonium 100
Steel 100

Day: 2 08:48

192



Thank you.



Talk to us



**Resources and links
from all the talks**