



# Know Your Market Making Indie Games that Sell

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Infinite Monkeys Entertainment



# Background





~~For Page of 13~~  
Crown Princess Eliza Fouch, Expert











**William Chyr**

@WilliamChyr

Following



only go into indie game development if your  
passions are spreadsheets and browsing  
steamspy

RETWEETS

14

LIKES

112



11:41 AM - 10 Apr 2017



8



14



112





# Why Does this Matter?

- It's not all about the money
  - But being able to pay your rent is nice
- It's about having realistic expectations







# Make Something People Want





# Selling Indie Games on Steam Right Now







# Techniques



**Steam Spy**

@Steam\_Spy

[Follow](#)

I need to set up a Twitter bot that will search tweets with “Steam Spy” and “sales” in them and reply with “Owners != Sales” :)

10:17 AM - 22 Oct 2017







# Steam Reviews

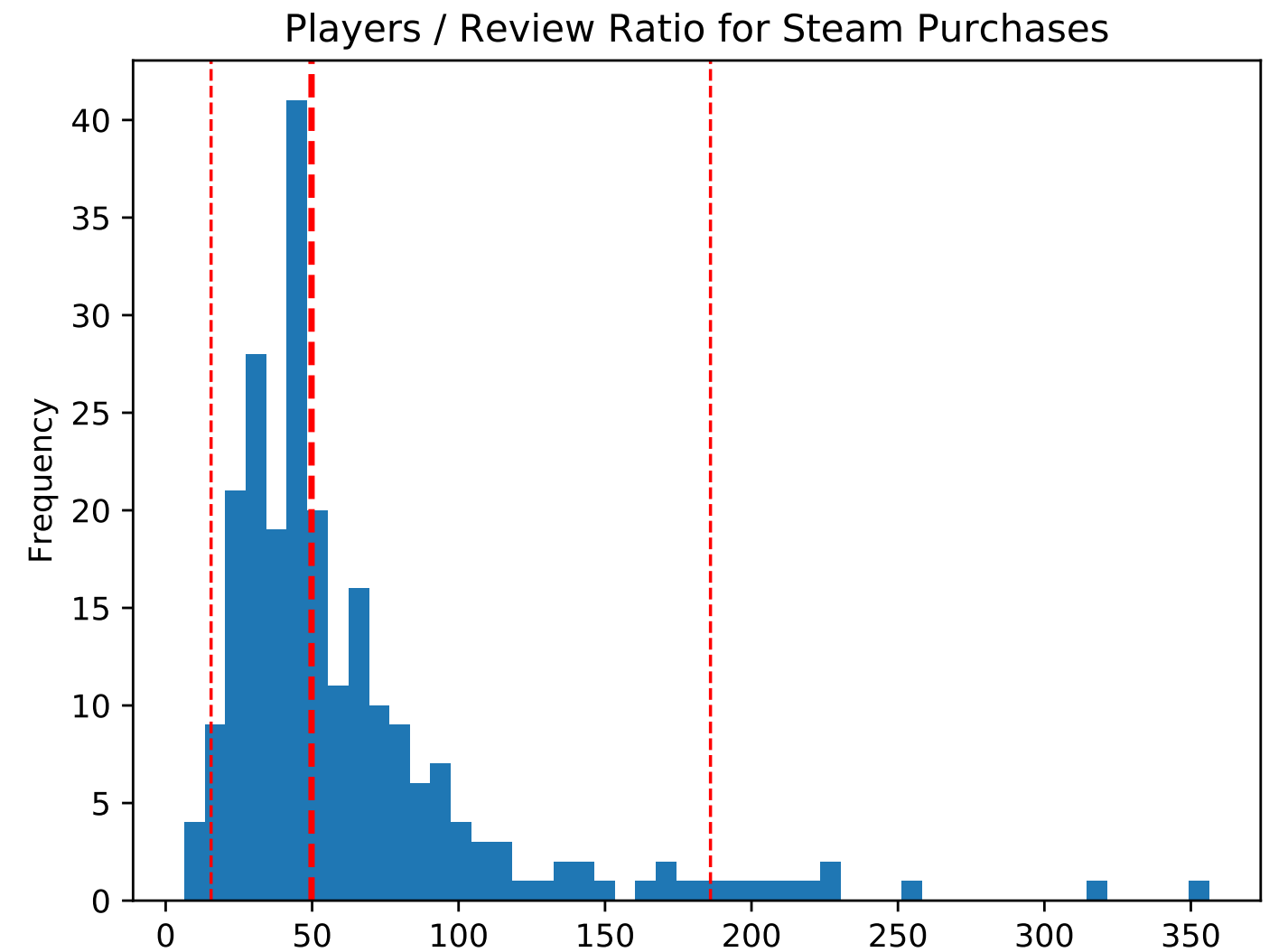
- Purchase Type
  - Steam Purchasers
  - Other
- Language
- Positive / Negative





# Boxleiter Method

- $\text{Players} \approx \text{Reviews} * 50$
- 95% interval is 17 to 158







# Resources

- Steam Reviews - [store.steampowered.com](https://store.steampowered.com)
- Steam Spy - [steamspy.com](https://steamspy.com)
- Is There Any Deal? - [isthereanydeal.com](https://isthereanydeal.com)
- Steam Charts - [steamcharts.com](https://steamcharts.com)
- SteamDB - [steamdb.info](https://steamdb.info)





# Trends & Factors





# Quality

“Just make a good game!”



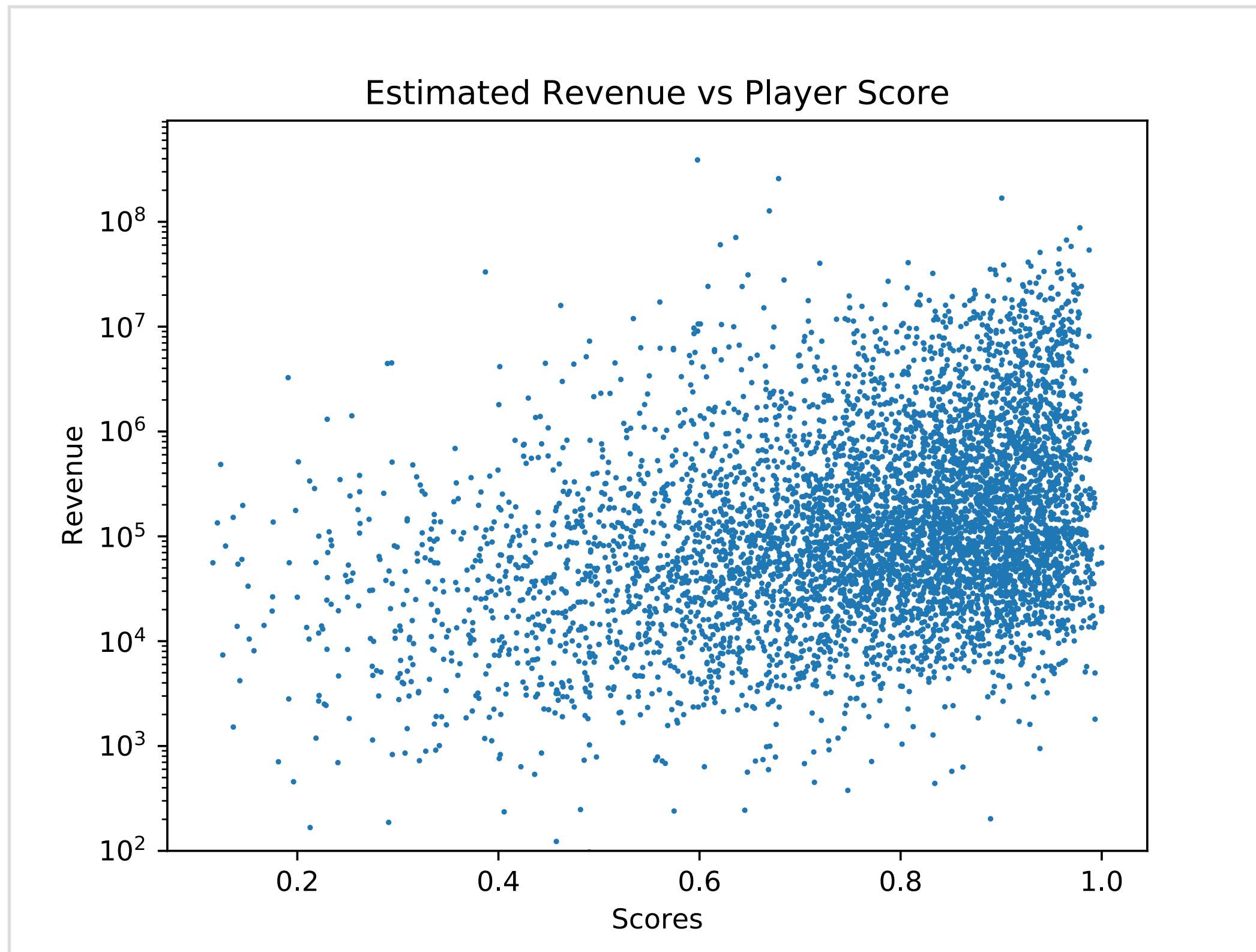


# Quality - Life Goes On

- Awards include:
  - PAX 10 Selection
  - Famitsu Magazine Gold Award
- 96% positive Steam user score
- 77 Metacritic
- Significant quality bump from Done to Death update







**Spearman's  $\rho = 0.31$**





GTA Online: The Doomsday Heist Now Available. The risks are colossal, the enemies all but unstoppable... but the rewards are mouth-watering and a massive adrenaline spike is absolutely guaranteed. Assemble your crew for the biggest Online adventure yet, across 3 sprawling acts.

RECENT REVIEWS: **Mostly Positive** (7,326)

ALL REVIEWS: **Mixed** (313,937)

RELEASE DATE: 14 Apr, 2015



PLAYERUNKNOWN'S BATTLEGROUNDS is a last-man-standing shooter being developed with community feedback. Players must fight to locate weapons and supplies in a massive 8x8 km island to be the lone survivor. This is BATTLE ROYALE.

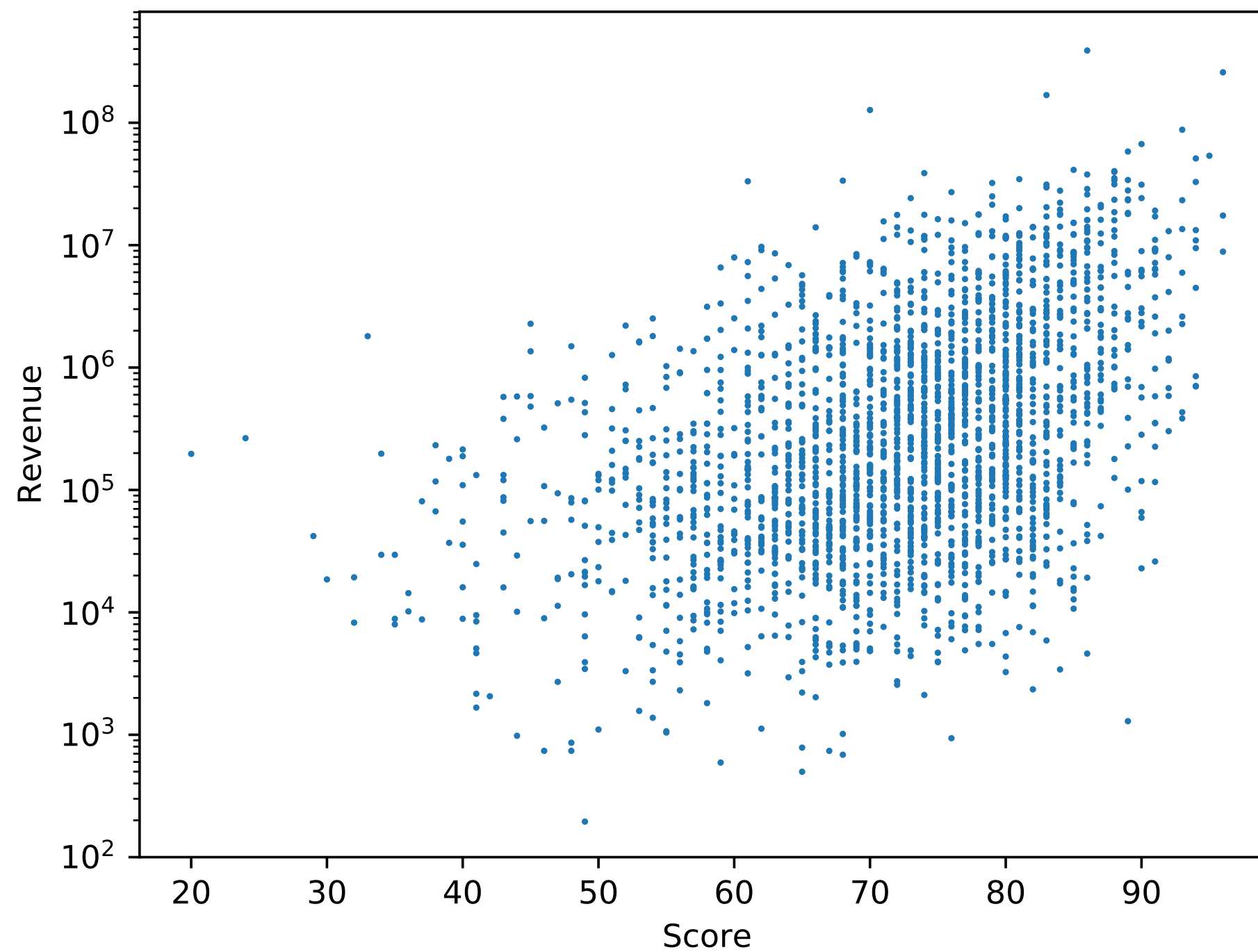
RECENT REVIEWS: **Mixed** (53,301)

ALL REVIEWS: **Mixed** (529,976)

RELEASE DATE: 21 Dec, 2017



Estimated Revenue vs Metacritic Score



$$\rho = 0.44$$

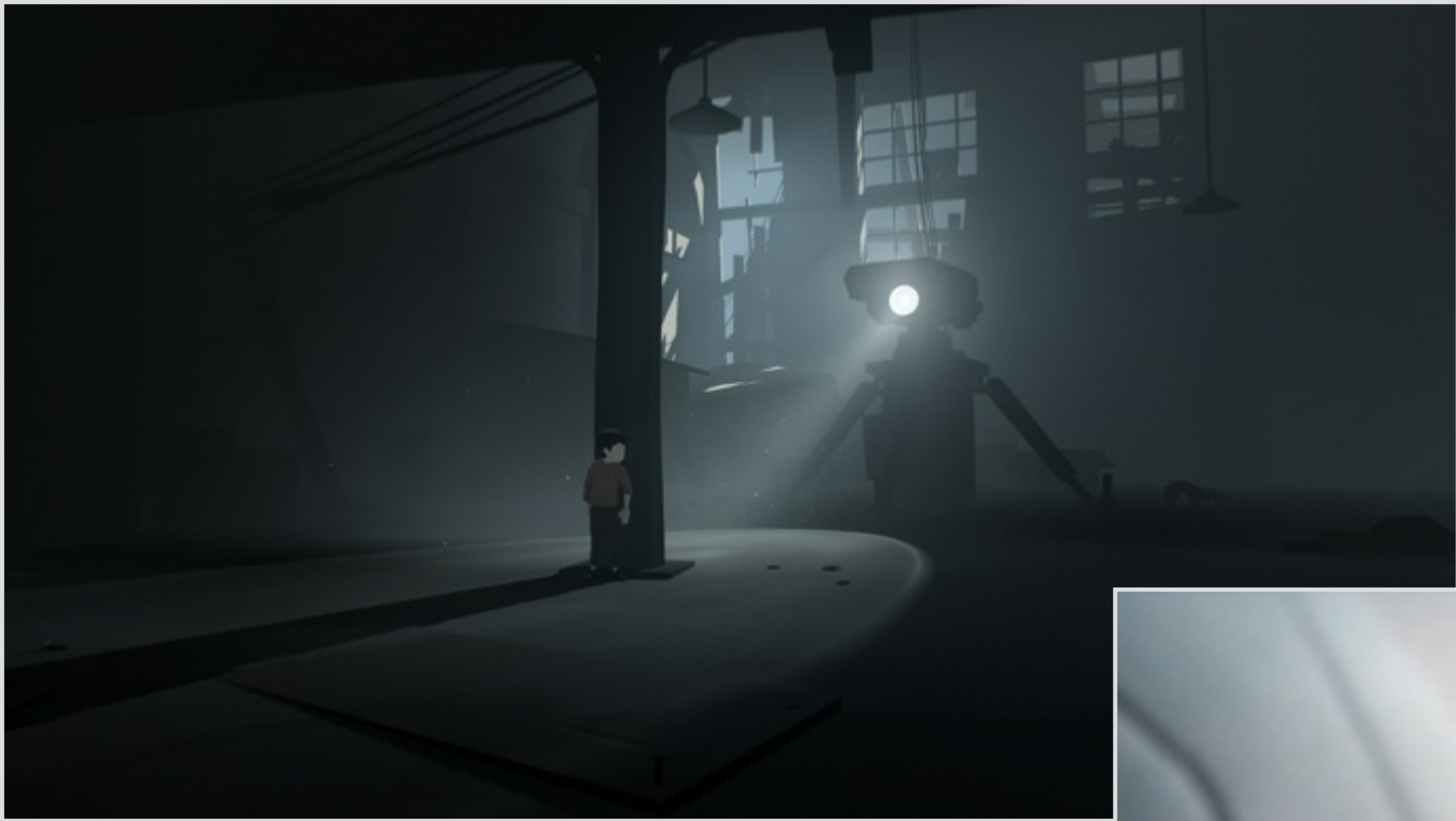


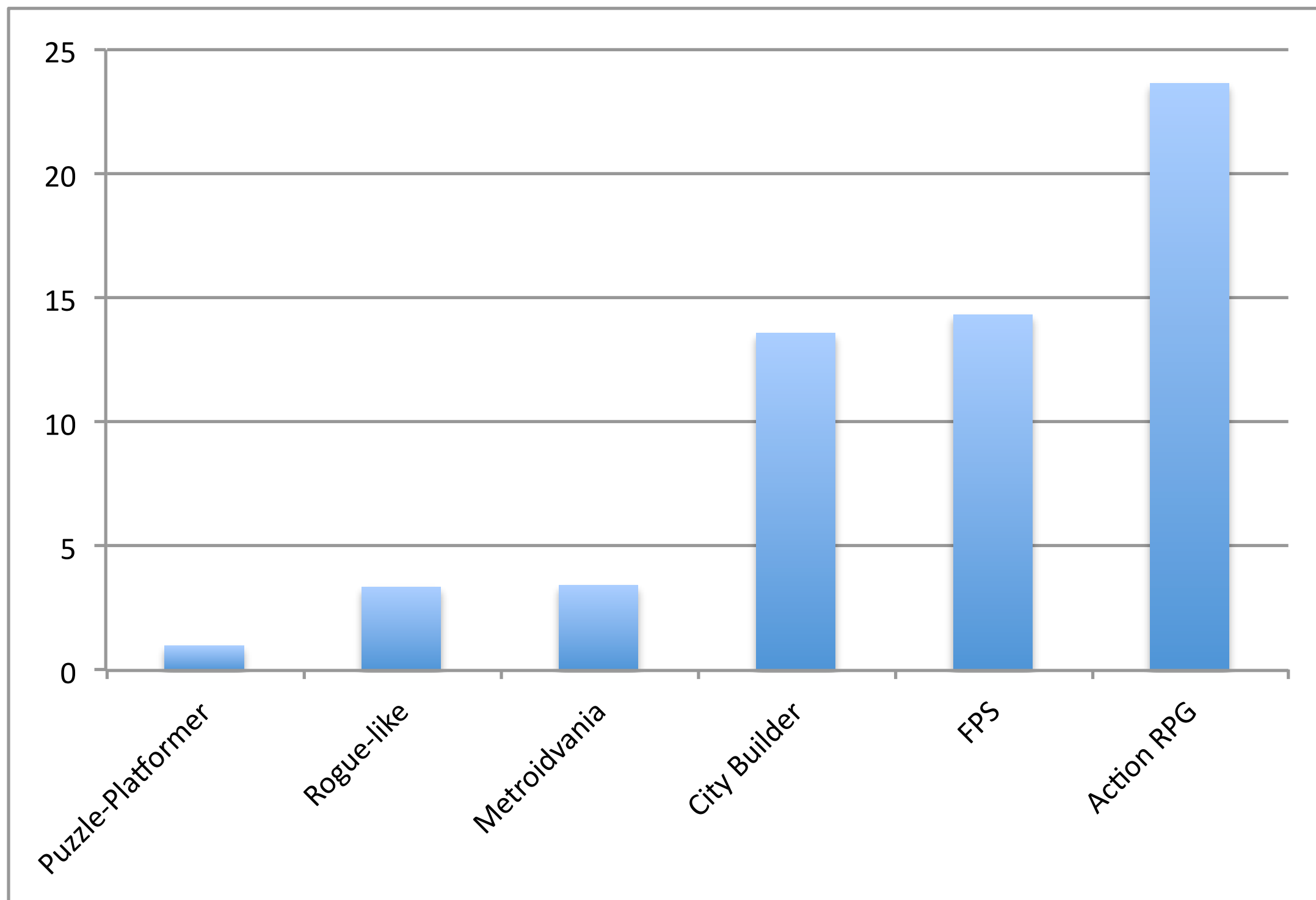
# Genre

Or: Should You Make a  
Puzzle-Platformer in 2018?









Multiples of Estimated Median Revenue



# Visuals

- Graphics and art define a game's first impression
- Visuals really matter to a lot of players















# Visual Distinctiveness

- Michal Trněný's masters thesis research:
  - Used machine learning to predict market success from a game's Steam store page
  - The average saturation and number of distinct colours of a game's screenshots were one of the top factors in predicting success





# Tone

Does the Steam audience prefer darker and grittier games?

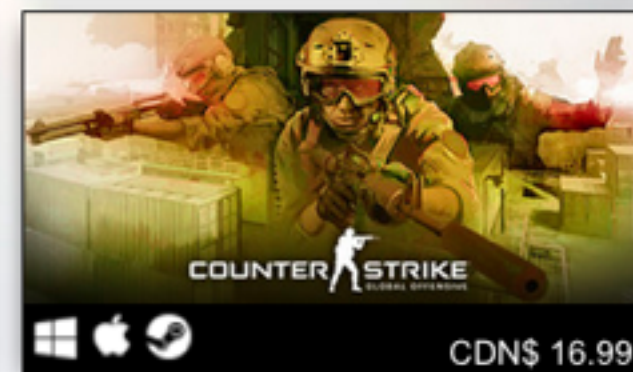
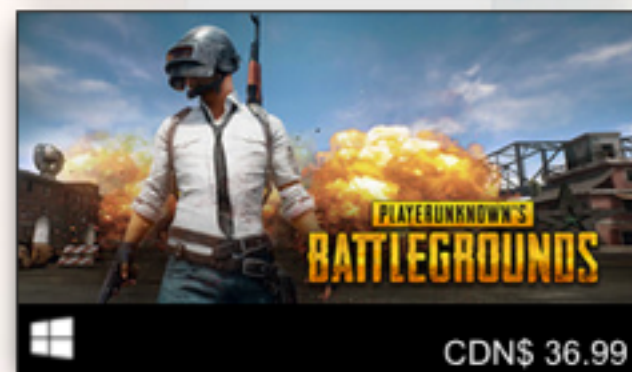
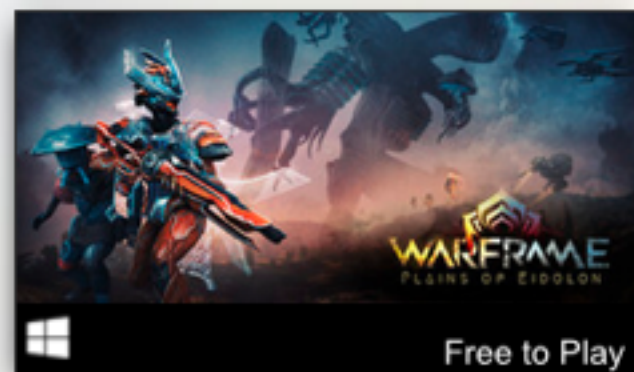
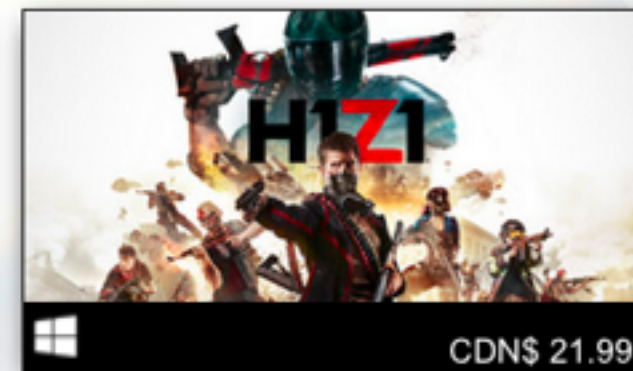
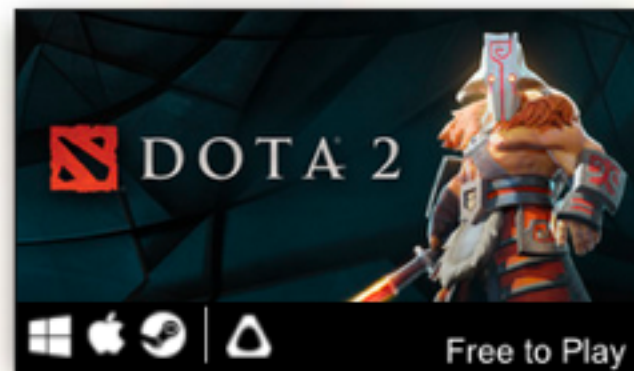


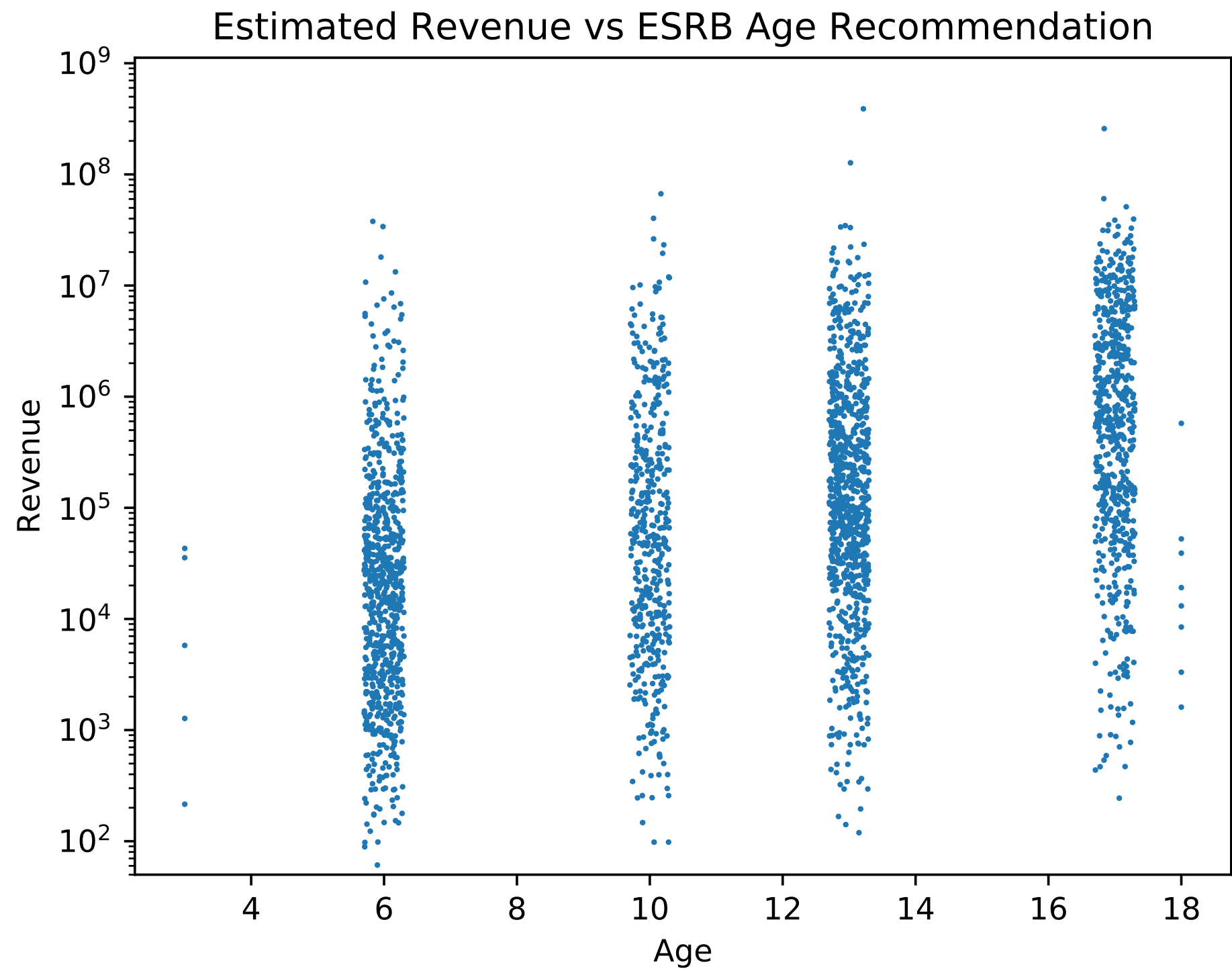


# BEST OF 2017 TOP SELLERS

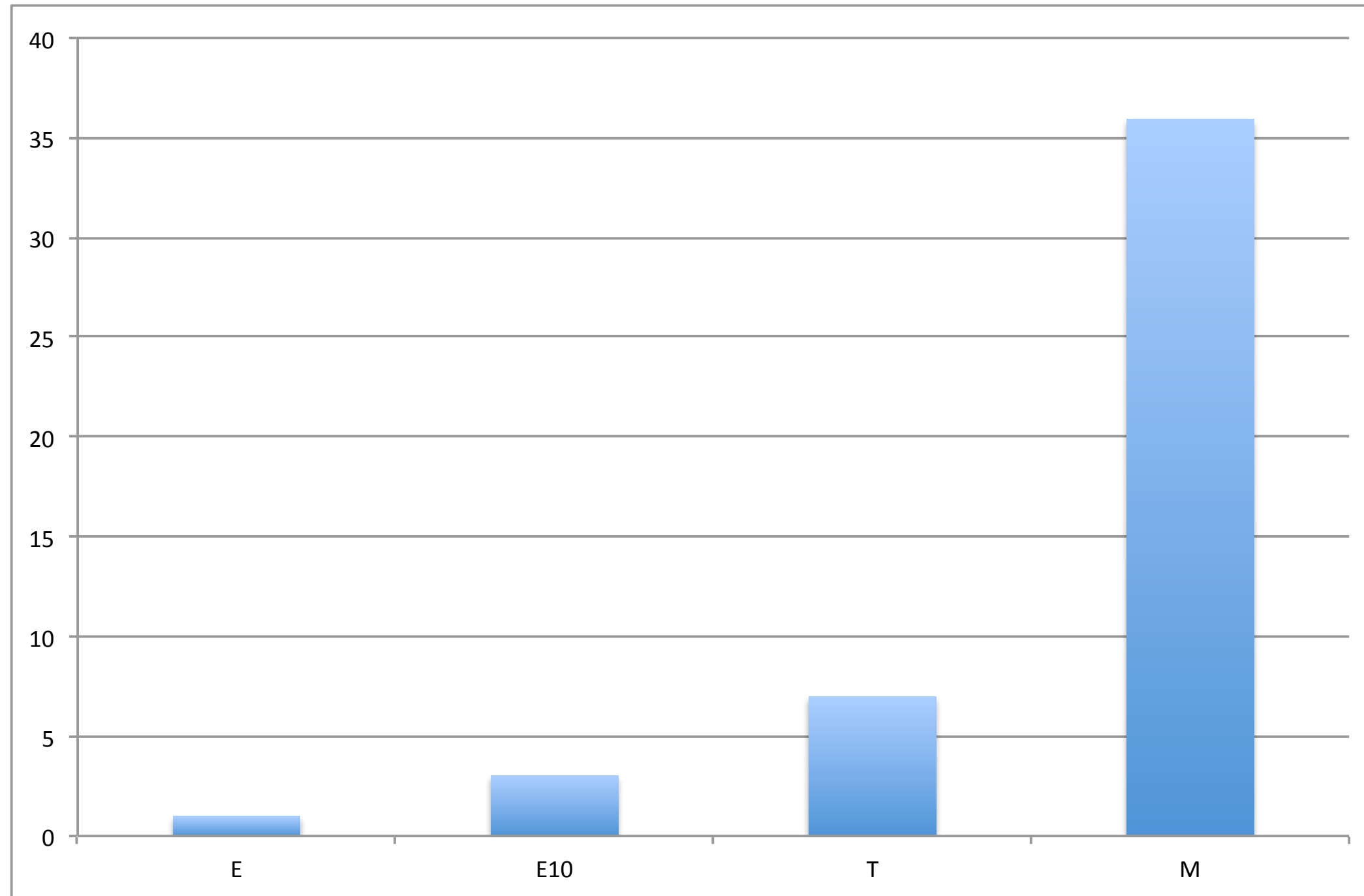
The top 100 games as measured by gross revenue this year

## PLATINUM

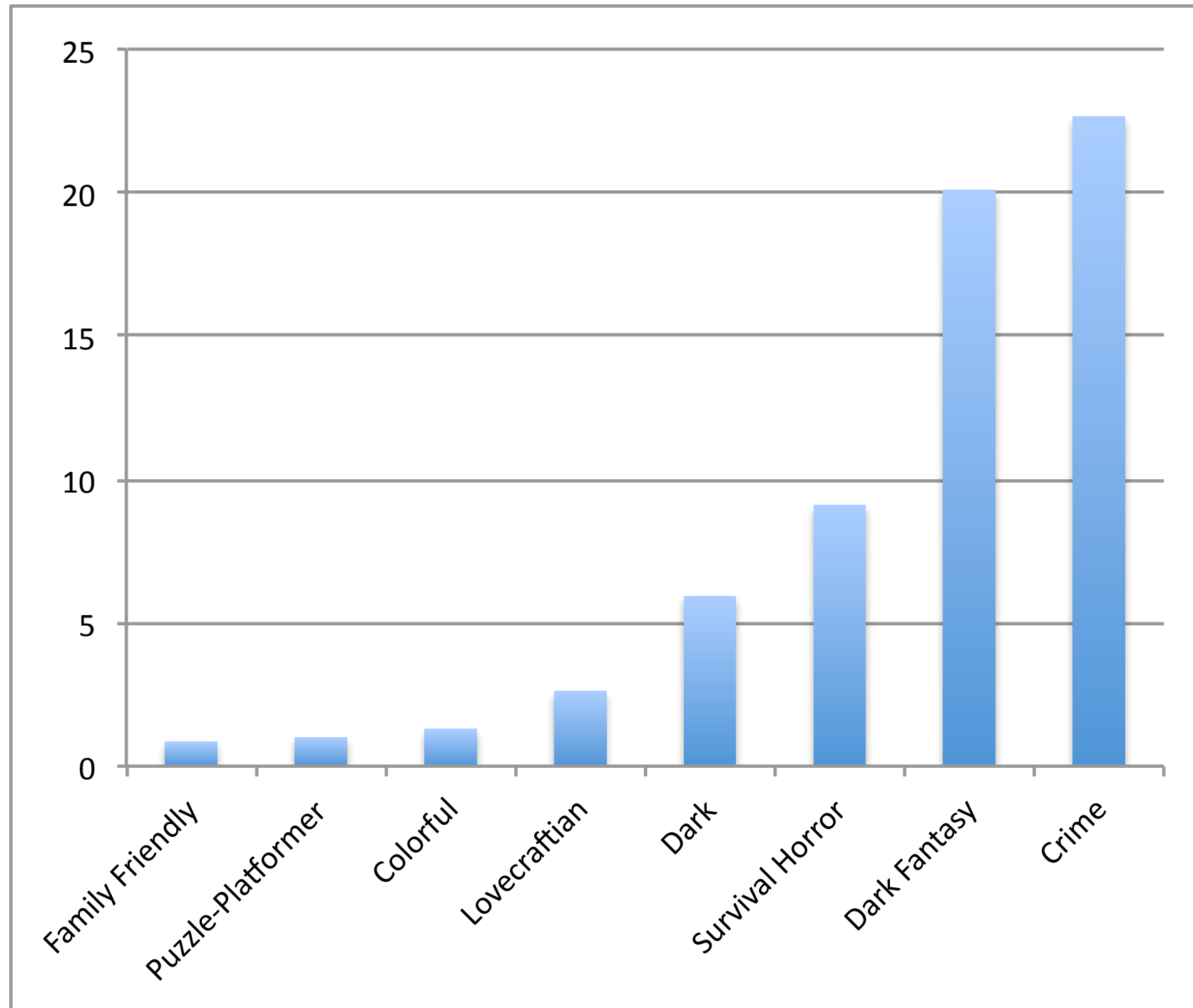




$\rho = 0.45$



**Multiples of Estimated Median Revenue  
for Games with ESRB Ratings**



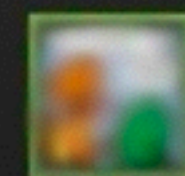
Multiples of Estimated Median Revenue





# Playtime

- Long average playtimes are surprisingly valuable!
- Contributing factors:
  - Seeing what your friends are playing
  - Steam's discovery systems
  - Streamers playing a game



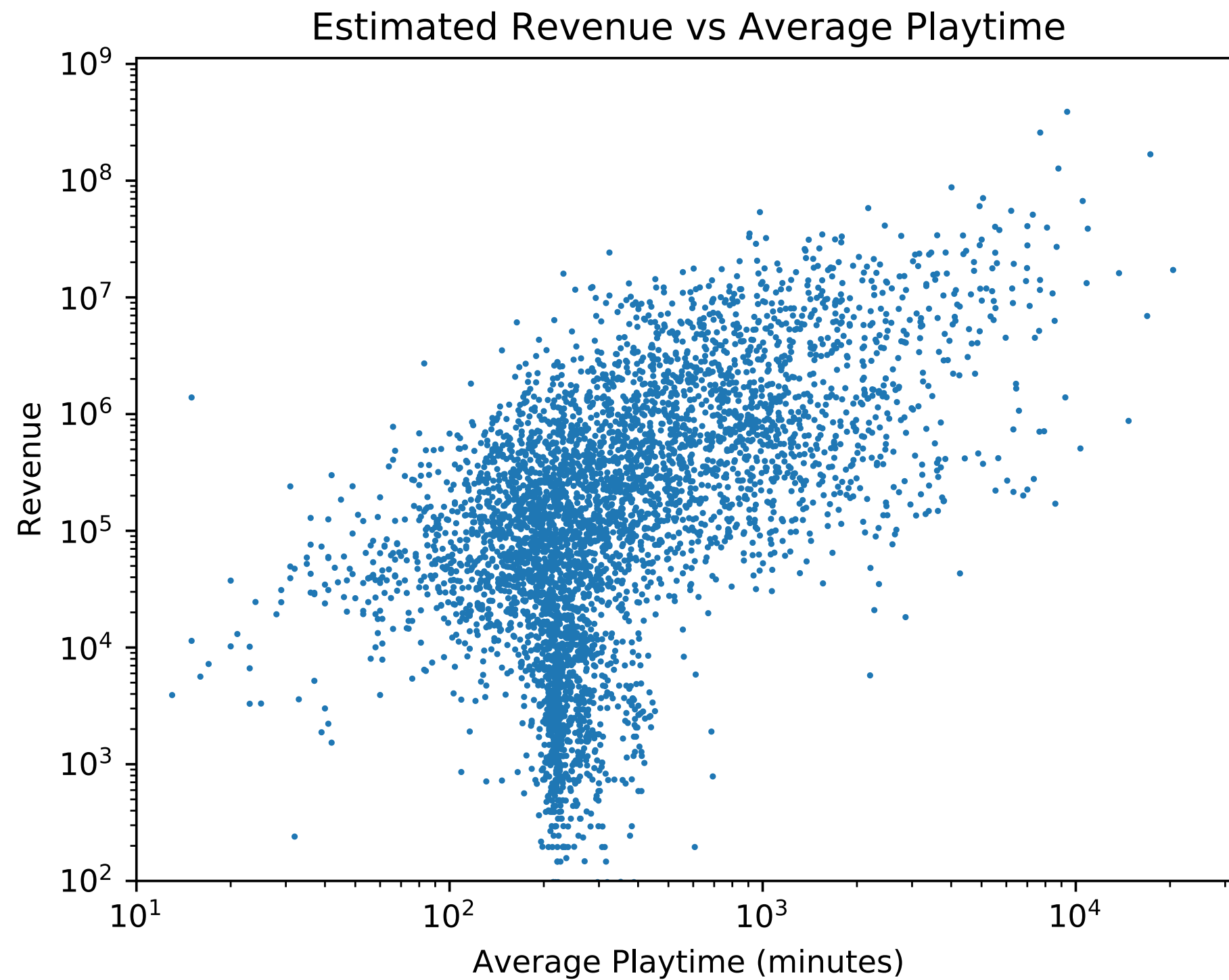
is now playing  
**Spelunky**



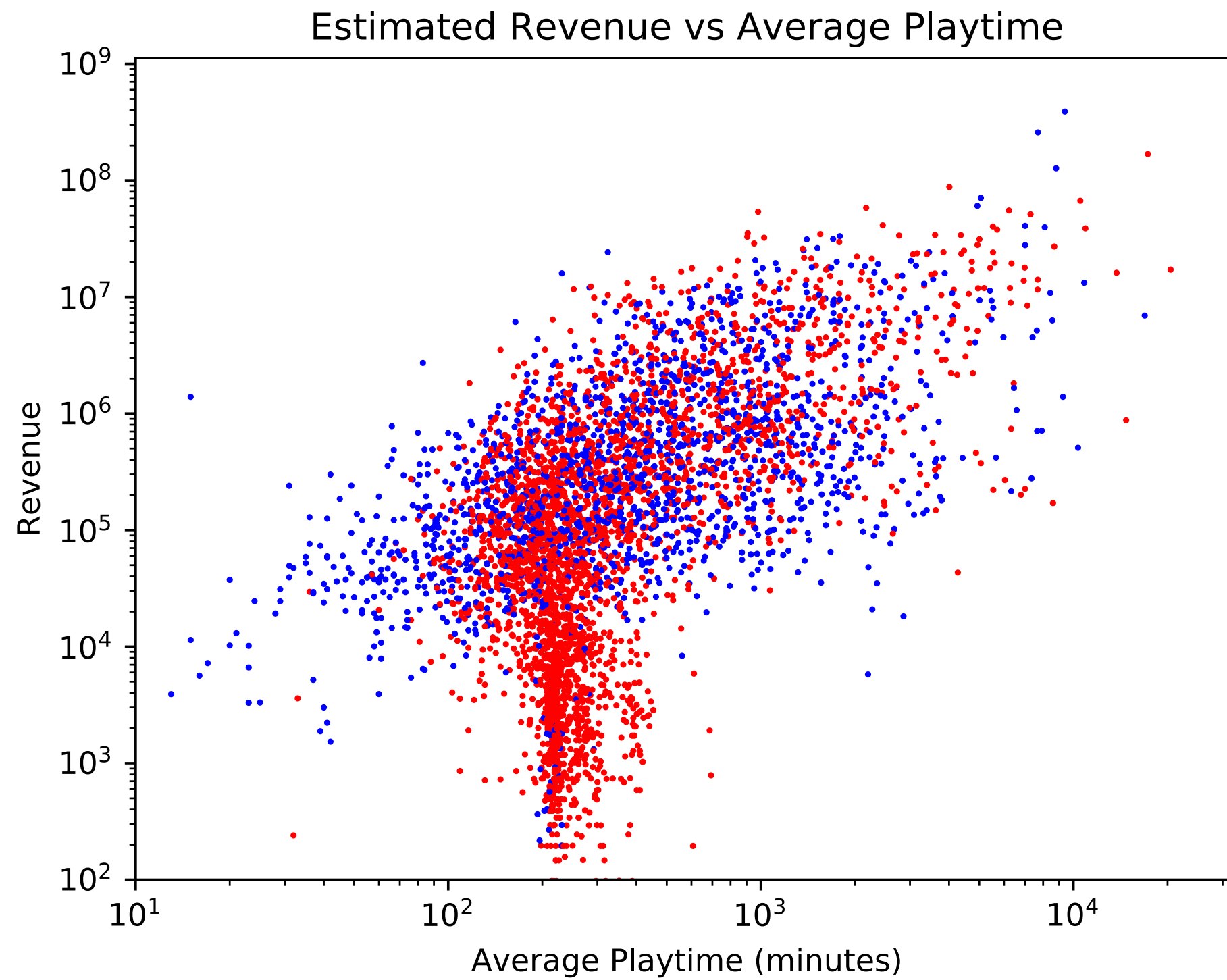
Estimated playtimes, in hours and minutes, of popular games. via Steamspy

<b>Classic Indie Hits</b>	<b>Average Playtime</b>	<b>Median Playtime</b>
<i>Limbo</i>	03:04	01:44
<i>Fez</i>	03:18	01:11
<i>Braid</i>	03:40	01:36
<b>2016 Indie Hits</b>	<b>Average Playtime</b>	<b>Median Playtime</b>
<i>Stardew Valley</i>	46:10	25:19
<i>Rimworld</i>	61:25	28:47
<i>Factorio</i>	62:45	26:29





$\rho = 0.55$



$$\rho = 0.55$$

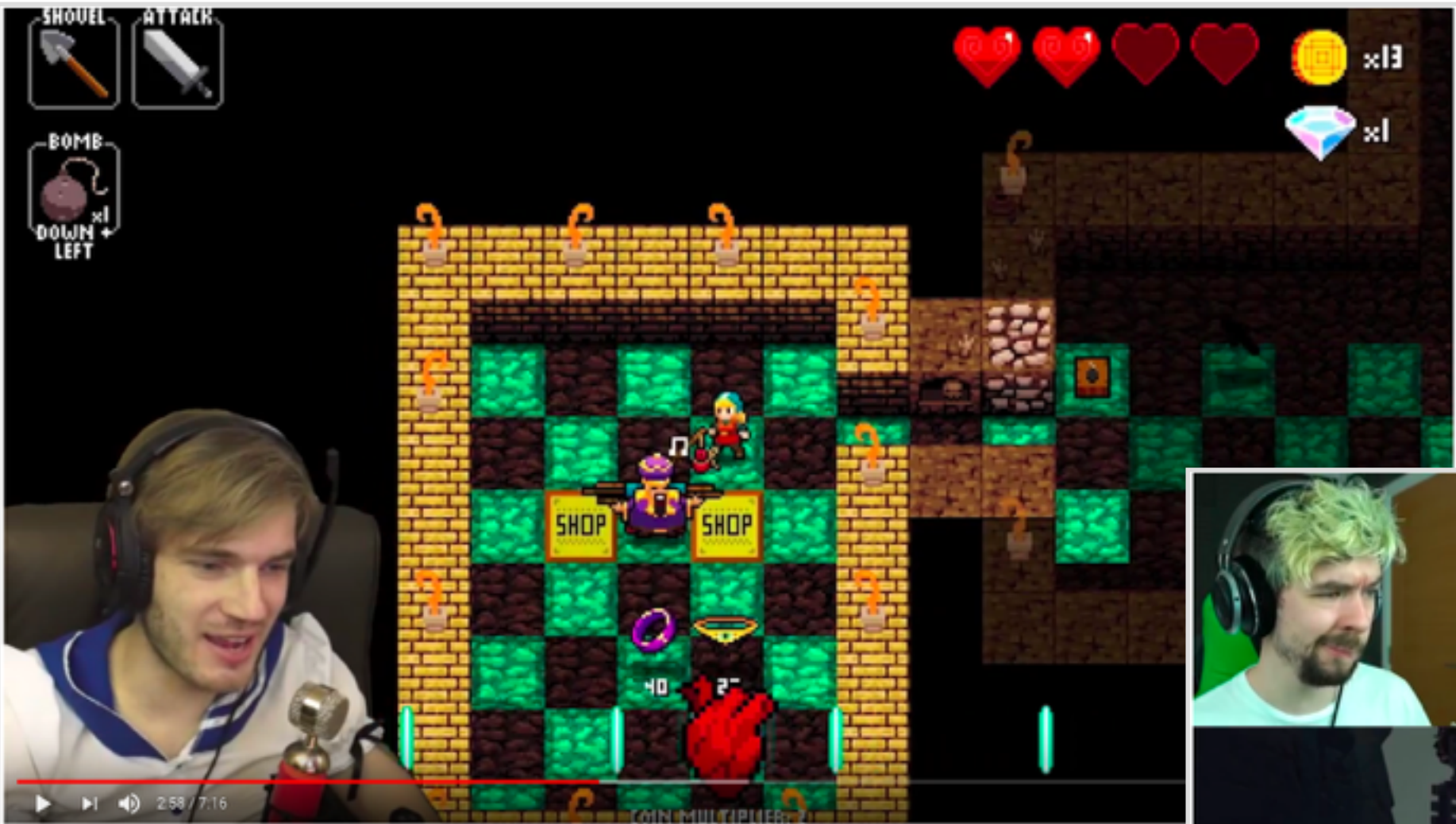




# Streaming – Player Response

- YouTube and Twitch are huge
- But value isn't universal





AMAZING RYTHM GAME! – Crypt Of The Necrodancer

2,371,567 views

104K



PewDiePie

Published on 5 Aug 2015



LIVE.DIE.REPEAT | Life Goes On

1,791,614 views

49K

621

SHARE

...




jacksepticeye

Published on 19 Jul 2017

SUBSCRIBE 17M





A screenshot of a live stream of the game 'Back to Mars'. The game is in a mining level with a red, rocky terrain and dark, jagged cave openings. A small robot character is visible on the left, and a large, glowing green cube is in the center. The streamer's face is visible in the top right corner, wearing headphones. The video player interface shows a progress bar at 8:51 / 15:31.


BACK TO MARS - Super Motherload

460,113 views

7K 307 SHARE

MattShea  
Published on 7 Apr 2016

SPONSOR SUBSCRIBE 1.8M



A screenshot of a live stream of the game 'Back to Mars'. The game is in a workshop level with a green, rocky terrain and various tools and equipment. Two characters, a man and a woman, are standing in the center. The streamer's face is visible in the top right corner, wearing headphones. The video player interface shows a progress bar at 45:08 / 2:48:59.

Hab: As long as you stay persistent, you're sure to find your guy!

Shhhhhh

80,316 views

3K 77 SHARE

MattShea  
Streamed live on 19 Jan 2018

SPONSOR SUBSCRIBE 1.8M

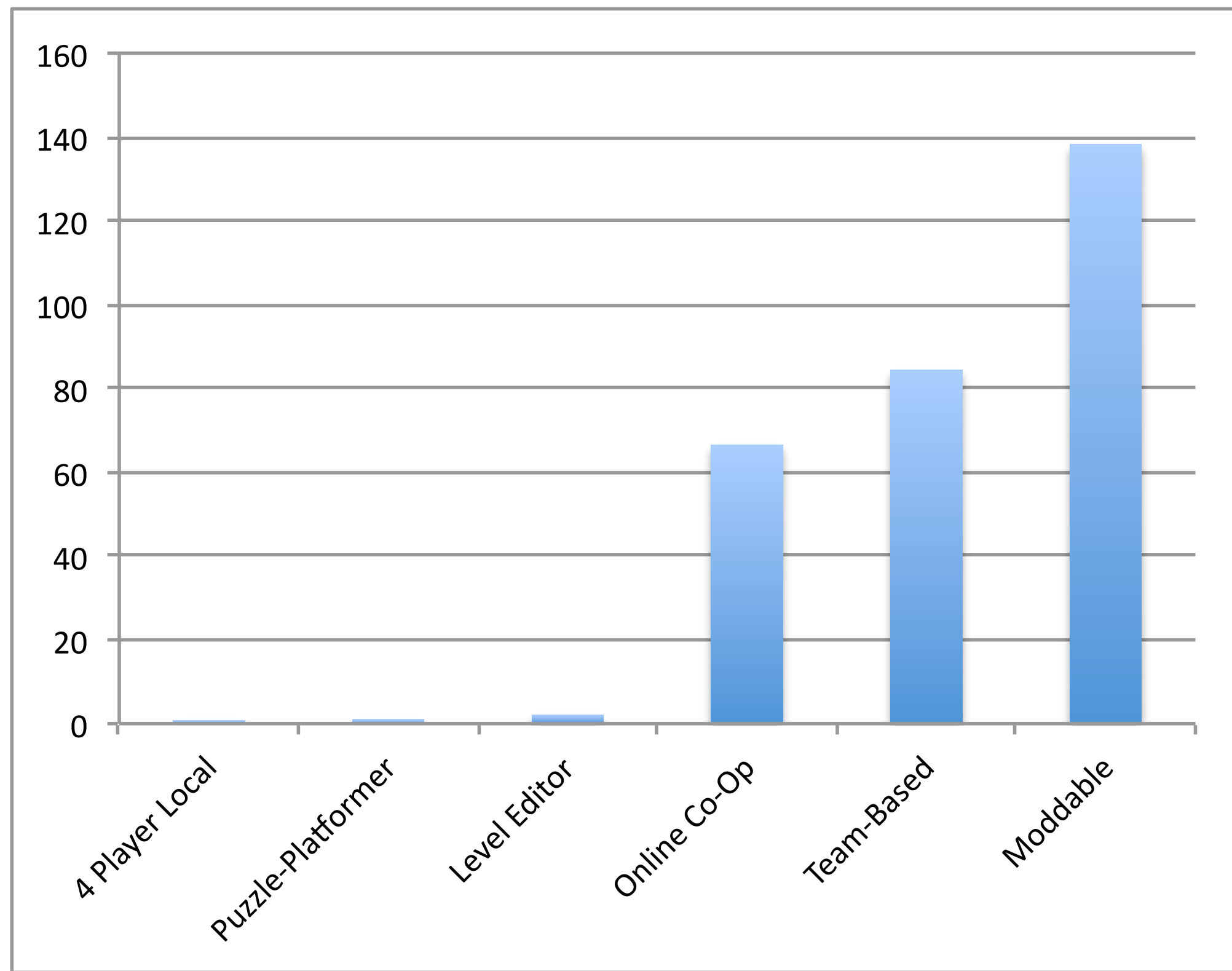


# Multiplayer & Community

- Can a community get involved?
  - Level editors, mod support, leaderboards?
- Do your players spread your game?
  - Multiplayer?







**Multiples of Estimated Median Revenue**



# Takeaways

- These are only broad trends to consider
- But you should be aware of them!
- Are you making something that people want?
- Is it a fit for the marketplace?



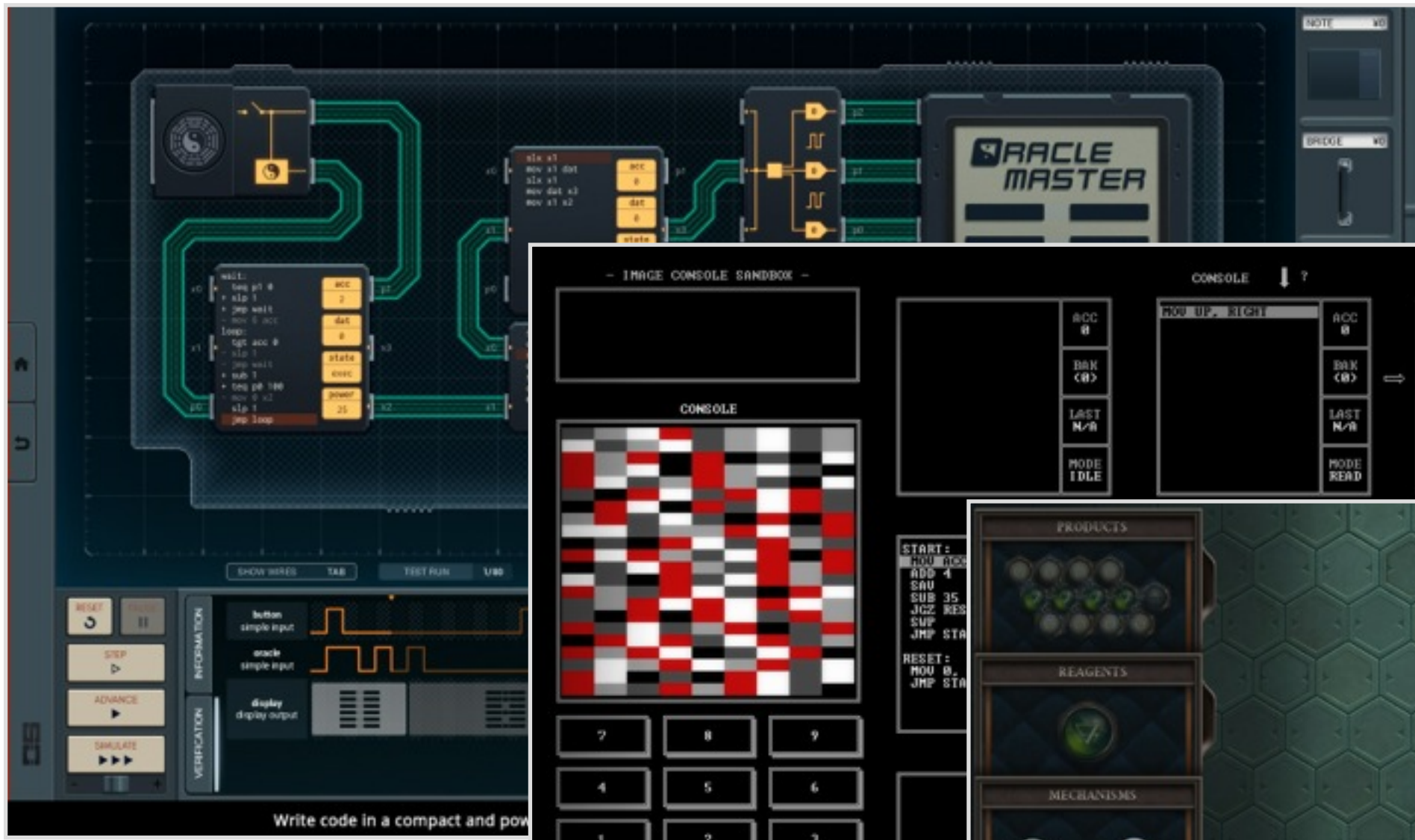


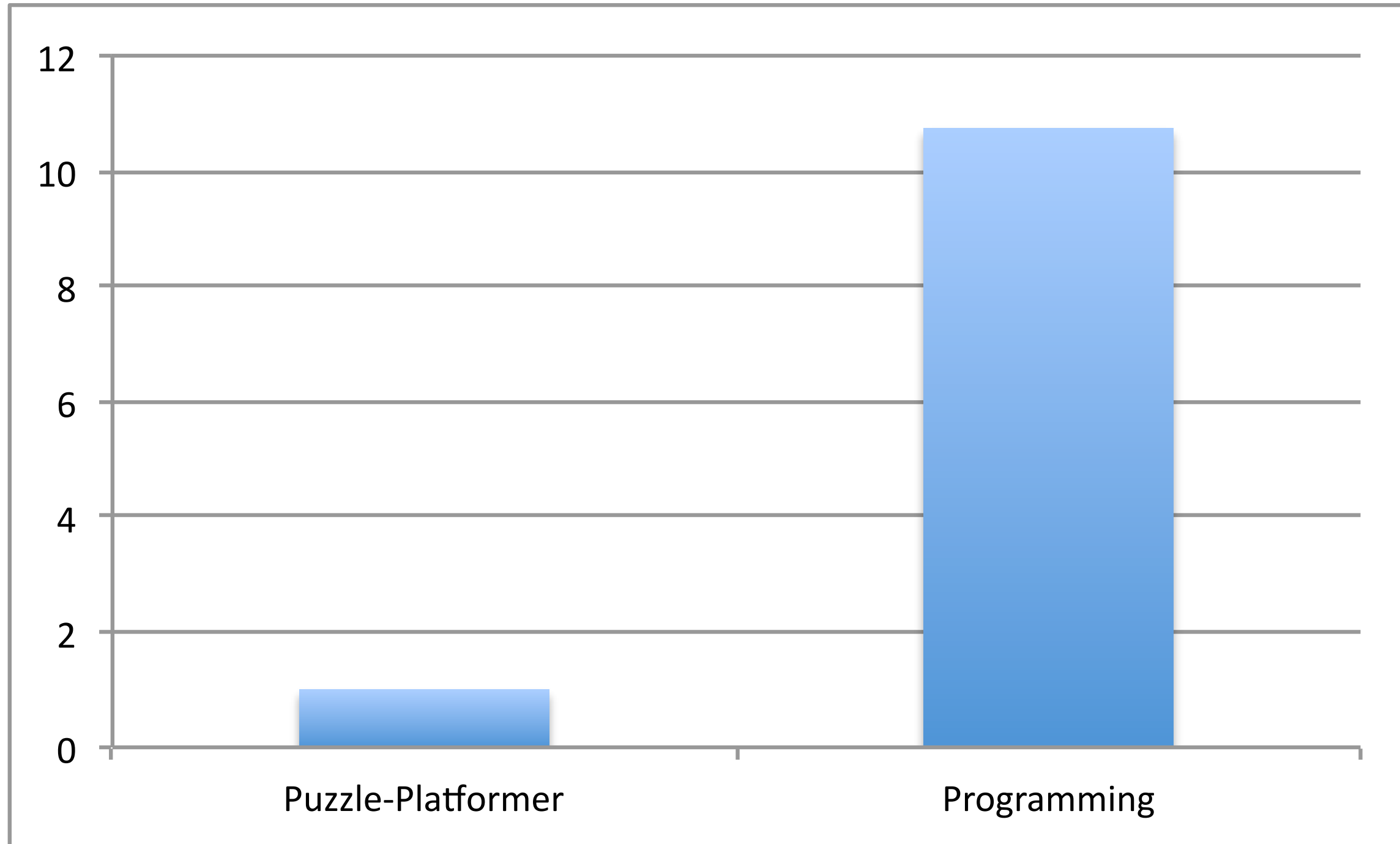
# What About Targeting a Niche?

- Yes, find an audience that wants what you are making!
- Be sure it is big enough to meet your commercial goals
- Is your niche saturated?









Multiples of Estimated Median Revenue



# It's Not About Cloning

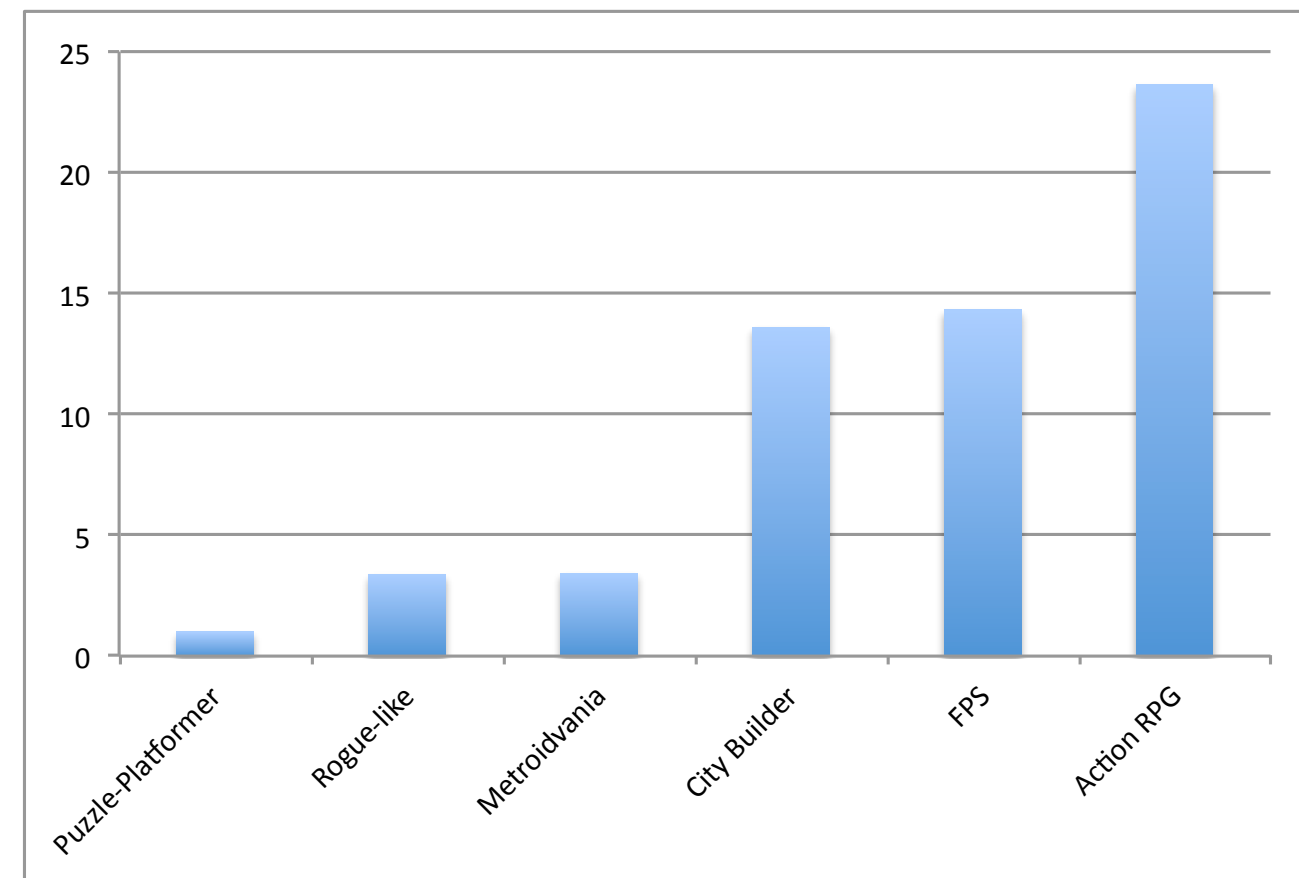
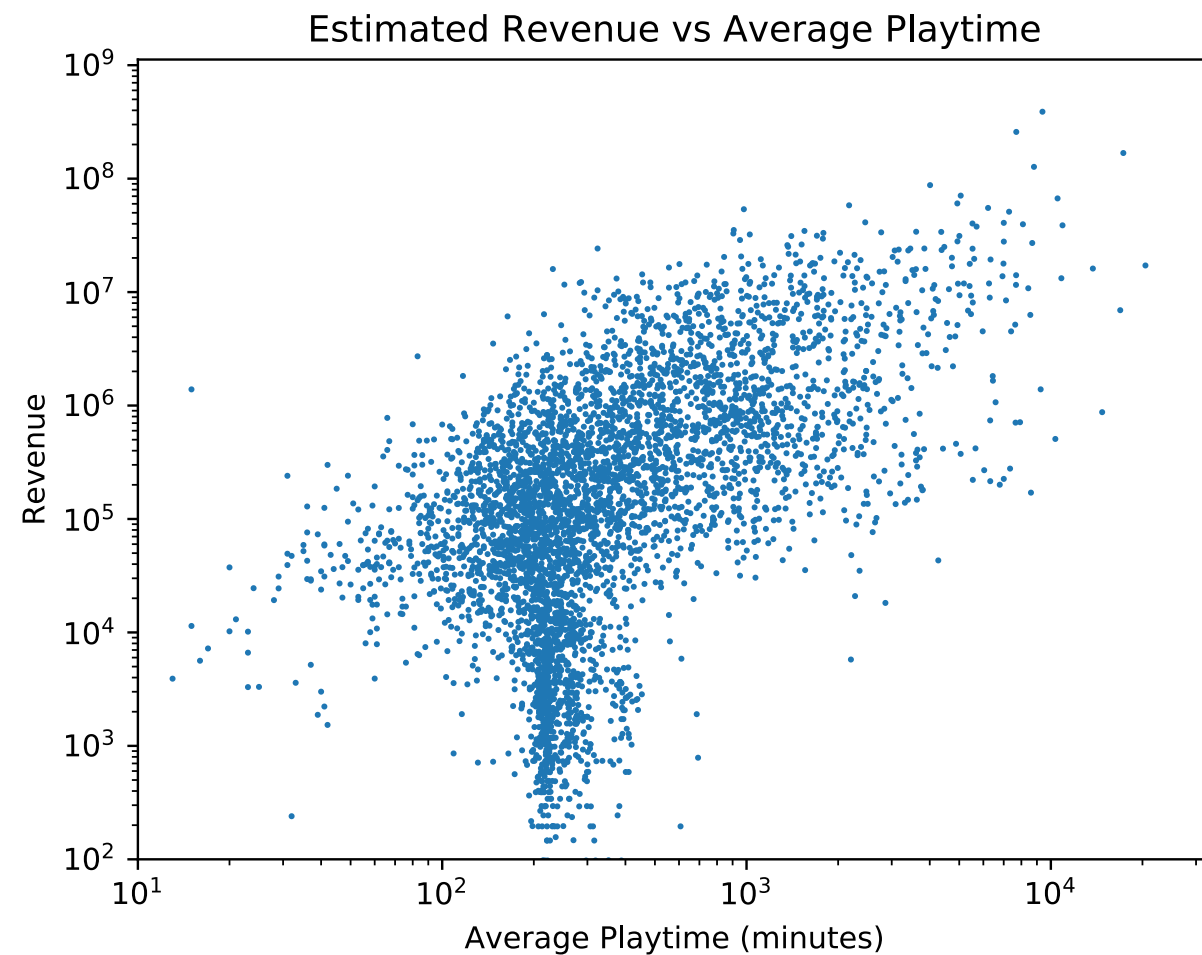
- This is not the path to success!
- Lots of room to appeal to the market creatively







# Be Aware of Market Trends





# Questions to Ask

- Are there recent examples of successful games in your genre?
- Have you looked at unsuccessful games in your genre?





# Epilogue for Life Goes On

- We've continued to support the game
- Localizations have helped a lot
- Constantly looked for opportunities







# Learn More!

- The Clark Tank on YouTube
- SteamProphet.com
- The Co-Optional Podcast on YouTube





# Thank You!

- Twitter: @erikejohnson
- Reach out, I'd love to talk!

