

Twitter Thread by One Rob And His Blog



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[@retroremakes](#)



I've been banging this drum for years now so do excuse Round 5,796,877 of it but the issue of smaller games only finding a relatively small audience is one the trad games press has been pointing out for a very long time now.

I don't think it hurts to do this one over again but with [whatever media], just it absolutely is a fundamental of the games industry and one an algorithm, sexy presentation or whatever can only ever make a limited change to.

Obviously, this is not a reason to not make that change. Usual Twitter/nuance/context loss disclaimer applies here.

So, anything that can help and doesn't make anyone's life worse in any way, go go go. Fully behind it.

Before everything was "influencer" led (Molyneux save me, I hate that term) - magazine staff knew and dedicating space to indies was something that was done knowing it wasn't what people buying were reading in big numbers.

When things shifted to the web at scale, articles on indies often turned the kind of metrics that exposed this same phenomena in the starkest of terms.

The rather unfortunate answer to this problem was, well, you publish this stuff anyway because it's the right thing to do to keep games vibrant, to keep things moving along etc etc etc

It's interesting! It's stuff folks believed needed to be seen. It's funny! It's sad! Whatever.

Partly the ad economy wages war on this sort of coverage. Partly big box spends to suck the oxygen from the room. Partly some stuff just doesn't do it for a lot of people. It's messy.

Austerity, poverty, compounds all this.

People don't just turn to writing and selling games because it's fun. It's a hope of stability for many.

The past decade has been a super obvious exercise in this.

Where it becomes especially stark is in the huge disparity between big sellers and small. It's the widest I've known in my lifetime.

So, you have absolutely ballsed up expectations of what games can and do sell, you have people needing cash to live and then the audience numbers.

It's proper grim and this is the bulk of experiences in games. It's rigged.

It's rigged for gamers who get blasted with a narrow selection of what games are - and also are increasingly struggling for money themselves.

It's rigged for the people who try and get this stuff out there because the effort is financially better spent elsewhere.

And obv, it's rigged for everyone who contributed to making a videogame happen too.

I'm not being defeatist when I say an algorithm won't solve this, press and streamers working harder won't solve this, "you need to learn to market yer game" won't solve this.

If this worked, it'd be working now because we're all busting a gut to make things happen.

Again! This is not a call to not do stuff to improve things incrementally - just a call to remember that anything over and above incremental needs systemic changes not just within games. Not just working harder.

There's only so much fucking around in the margins can gain.

Also, importantly - realising that those small gains matter for people. 7 copies sold is 7 more than the 0 they might have sold without coverage. That's still food money or whatever. It helps.

This is the really invisible part, no metrics are going to show how an article, a tweet, a video bailed someone out and got them cat litter, pie, 5 minutes respite from a hellscape but it is the legit real thing that happens.

So if you, say, did a thing and it sold 4 more copies of a small game - you did a good thing. If you can get 8 sold? Fantastic. But this is 2021 and every little bit helps.

Seriously, it's something to be proud of.

It shouldn't be necessary for everyone to have to grind, it's an awful situation we're all in and lifting one person out of shit, even if it's just for five minutes, is the good work.