

Video Game Insights
by  SensorTower

The importance of wishlists in 2025

Do wishlists matter - what does the data say?

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01

**How many wishlists do
games typically get?**

Using wishlist data as a metric is essential for predicting game success whilst playing a key role in an effective launch strategy

Overview of the Report

Overview:

This report explores Steam wishlists and their importance to games launch performance.

Summary:

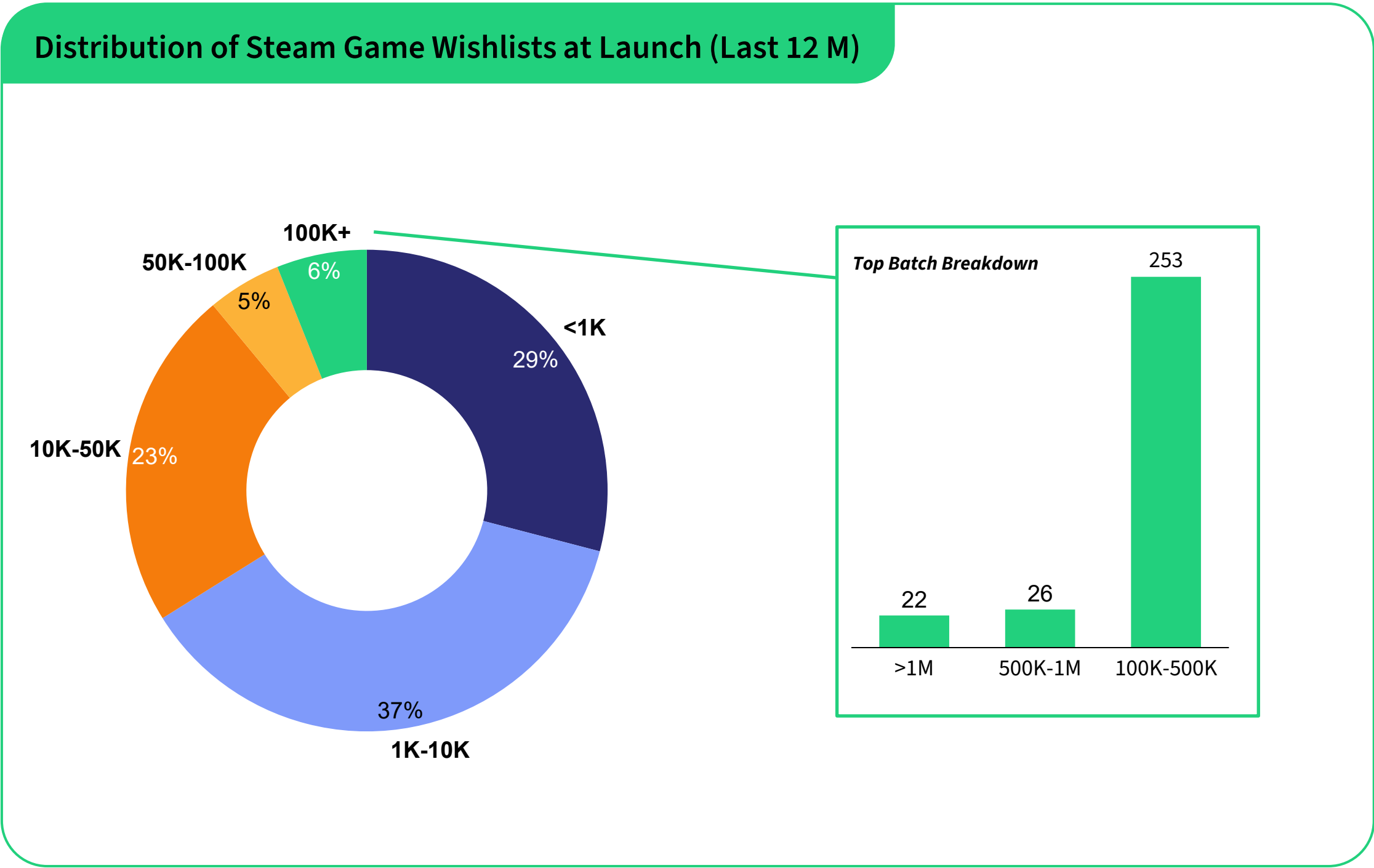
- Only a small percentage of games surpass 100k wishlists at launch.
- Not all genres are able to garner huge wishlists with action and adventure titles outperforming all other genres.
- Wishlist momentum is a strong indicator of success with games with its snowball effect almost a guarantee of a commercial success, but ONLY for games that achieve at least 100k wishlists pre launch.
- There is a direct correlation with the early launch of a Steam page and wishlist growth.

Methodology:






The methodology relies on VGI's estimations and looks at games launched from the March 2024.

Steam wishlist distribution is top-heavy, with a few breakout hits surpassing 1M wishlists while the majority of games launch with under 10K

Game Wishlist Overview



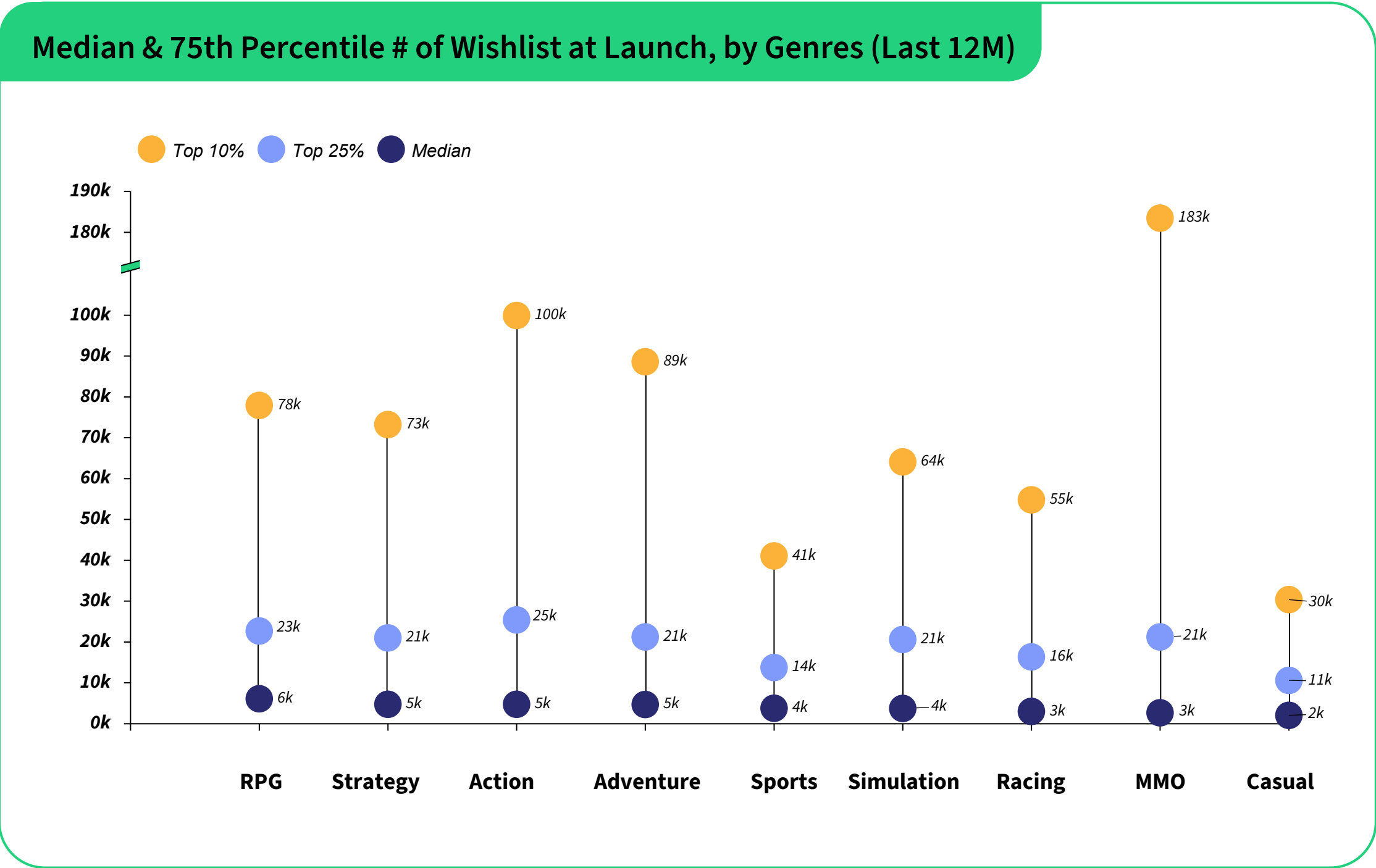
Wishlist at Launch Leaders (Last 12M)

	Black Myth: Wukong 4.3M Wishlists
	Monster Hunter Wilds 2.9M Wishlists
	Hades II 2.8M Wishlists
	Manor Lords 2.8M Wishlists
	inZOI 2.6M Wishlists

Notes: Games launched after 03/06/2024, with over 20 Steam Reviews
Sources: VGI data, Team Analysis

RPGs, strategy, and action lead wishlists, while casual and MMOs lag, highlighting genre-driven differences in pre-release hype

Game Wishlist by Main Genres



Key Insights:

The “Core” Genres: Leaders in Pre-Release Buzz

- Core genres like Action and Adventure, often published by AAA/AA publishers with big budgets and strong brand equity generate robust pre-release buzz.

The Underdogs: Casual and MMO Titles

- Their success often hinges on strong post-launch tactics—performance marketing, word-of-mouth, live updates, and community engagement—rather than just pre-release hype.
- MMO games show a significant gap between the median and 75th percentile, suggesting that player interest is focused on a few major releases.

Notes: Top 50 games with wishlist @ launch, launched after 07/28/2024, with over 20 Steam Reviews

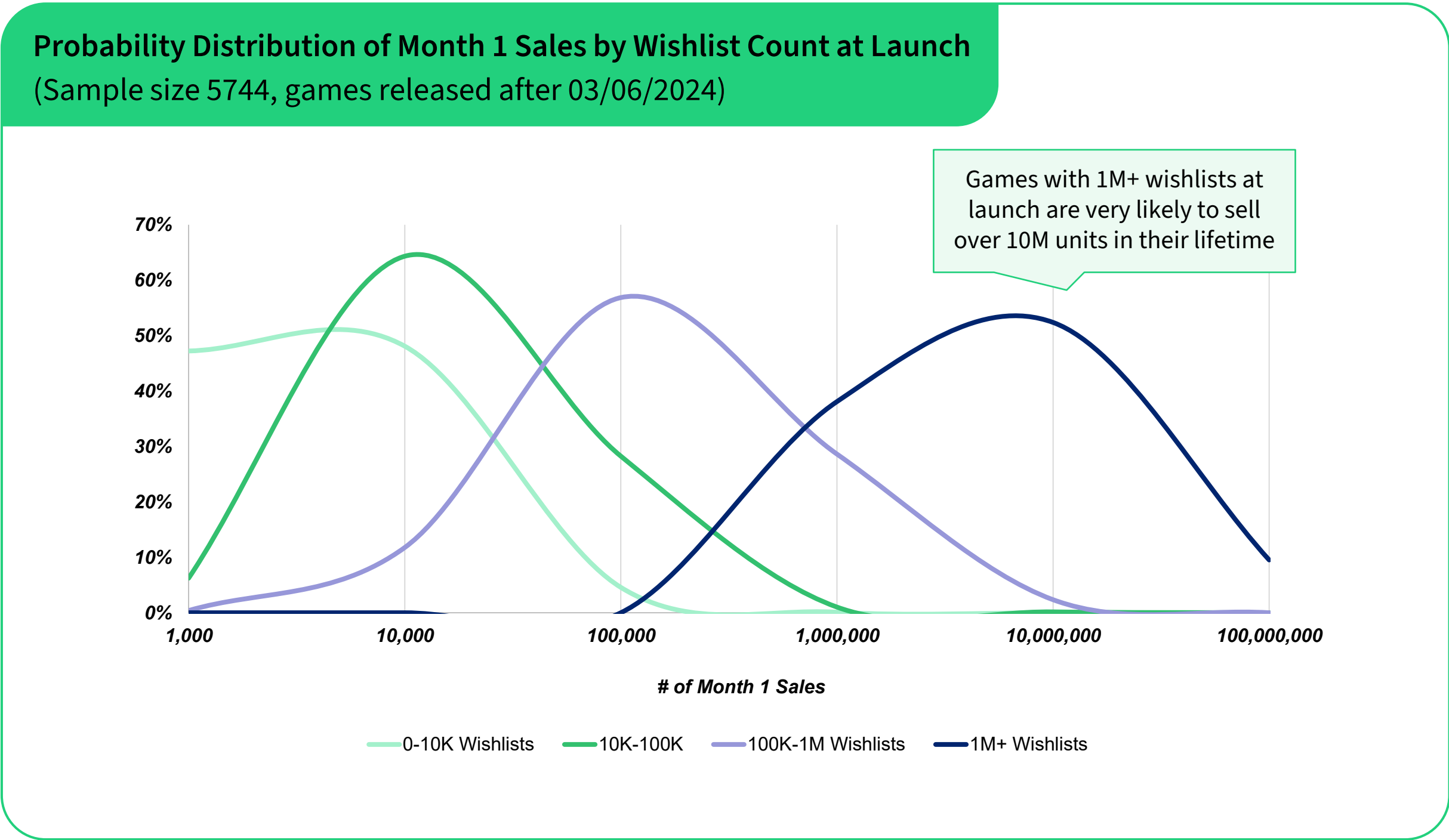
Source: VGI data, Team Analysis

02

Importance of wishlists

Wishlist momentum acts as a crystal ball for launch success—games with few wishlists rarely break out, while large ones almost guarantee a strong start

Wishlist at Launch x Month 1 Sales Distributions



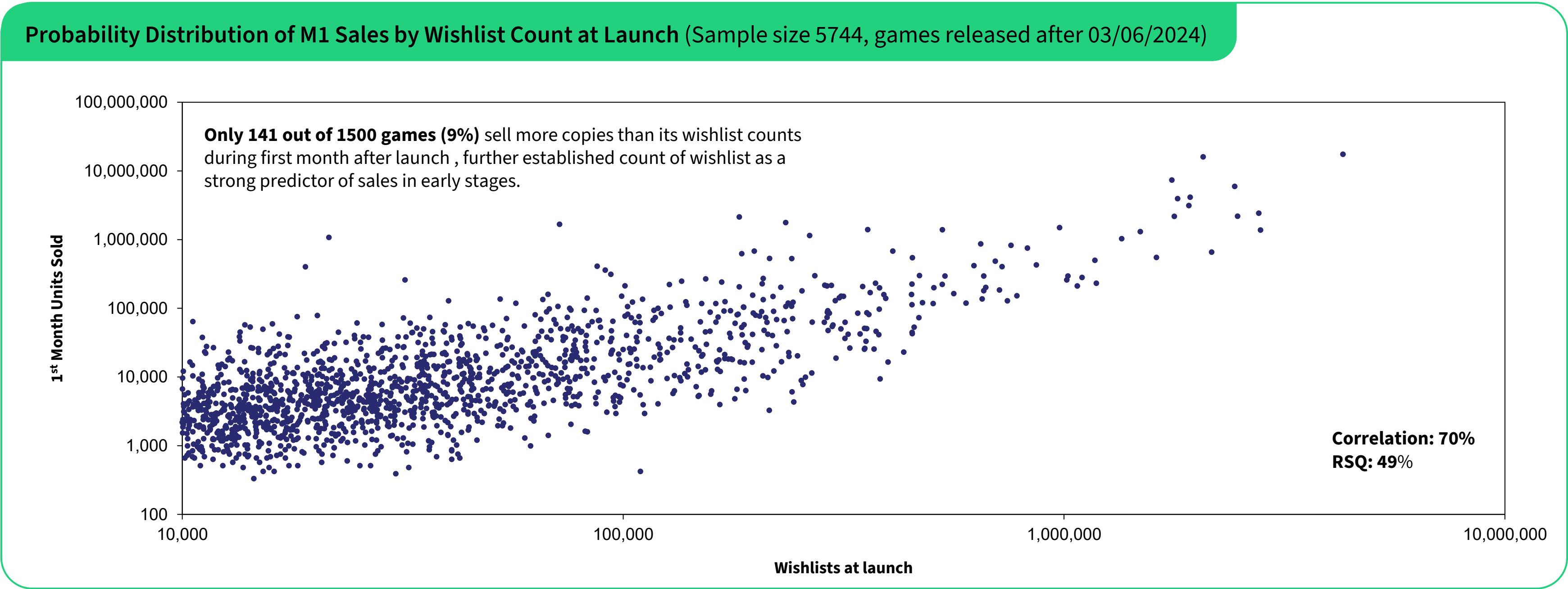
Key Insights

- Larger wishlists at launch correlate strongly with higher first-month sales, emphasizing the need for robust pre-release marketing.
- While small wishlists don't doom a title, they significantly lower the odds of a breakout, underlining the importance of building an audience early.
- Hitting higher wishlist tiers—especially above 100k—dramatically boosts the likelihood of a blockbuster start, offering a clear goal for studios aiming for strong initial sales.

Notes: Top 50 games with wishlist @ launch, launched after H2 2024, with over 20 Steam Reviews
Sources: VGI data, Team Analysis

Overall, the correlation between launch success and pre-launch wishlists is relatively strong, at 70%...

Wishlist at Launch VS Month 1 Unit Sales

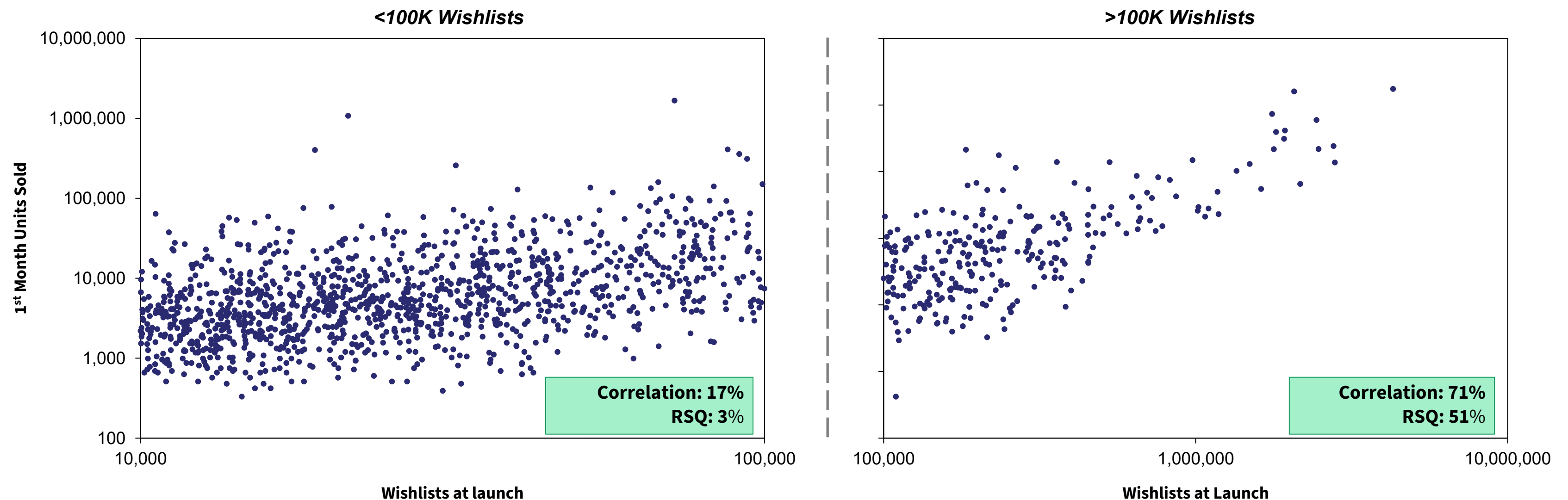


Notes: Games launched after H2 2024, with over 20 Steam Reviews **Sources:** VGI data, Team Analysis

...however, games with 100K+ wishlists show stronger predictive power for launch sales, while at lower volume of wishlists, correlations are not as evident

Wishlist at Launch VS Month 1 Unit Sales

Probability Distribution of M1 Sales by Wishlist Count at Launch (Sample size 5744, games released after 03/06/2024)



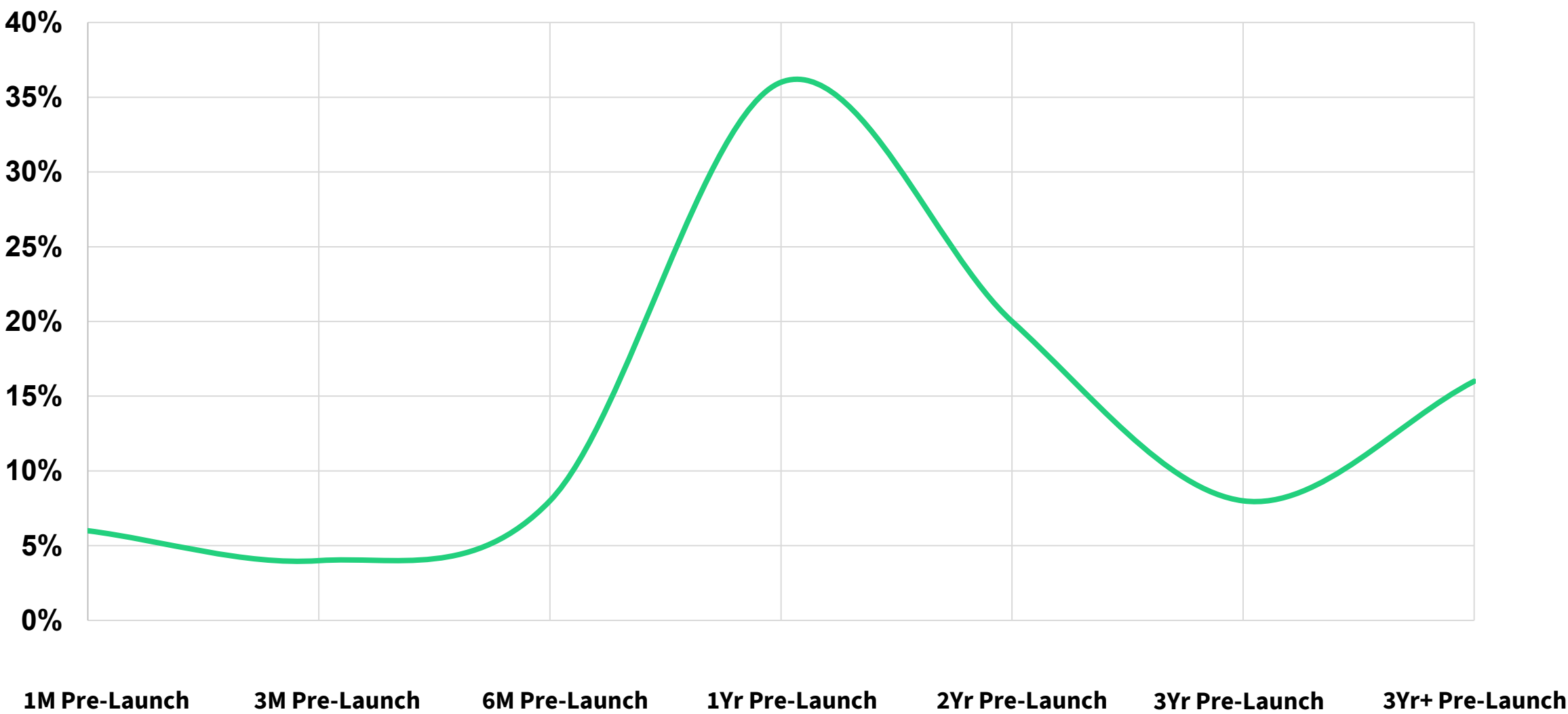
Notes: Games launched after H2 2024, with over 20 Steam Reviews **Sources:** VGI data, Team Analysis

03

How games accumulate wishlists

Top-performing games typically create Steam pages around a year before launch, optimizing visibility and wishlist growth

Distribution of Steam Page Creation Time



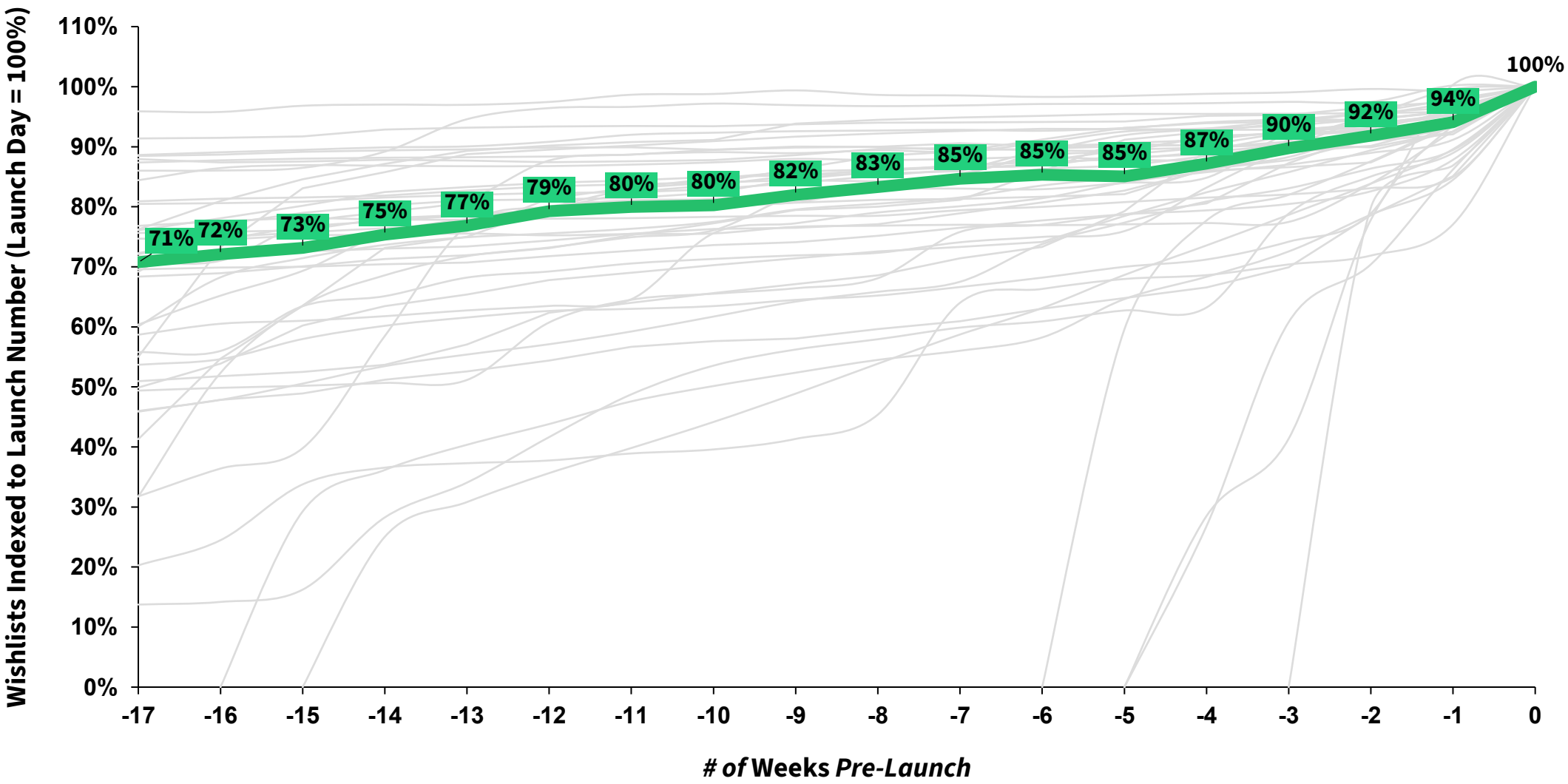
Key Insights

- Many top-performing games launch their Steam pages about 0.5-1 years before release, striking a balance between early visibility and sustained interest.
- Gradual reveals—screenshots, trailers, and dev updates—maintain momentum and convert casual observers into committed wishlists.

Notes: Top 50 games with wishlist @ launch, launched after H2 2024, with over 20 Steam Reviews
Sources: VGI data, Team Analysis

Top-performing games typically create Steam pages around a year before launch, optimizing visibility and wishlist growth

Growth of Wishlist 17 Weeks Pre-Launch



Key Insights

- Most successful games accumulate the majority of their wishlists well before the four-month pre-launch mark, highlighting the value of an early Steam page and sustained visibility.
- Some high-profile titles, like Indiana Jones and the Great Circle, Marvel’s Spider-Man 2, and Final Fantasy XVI, have relied on short-notice reveals.
- They might have generated even stronger momentum by establishing a Steam presence earlier.

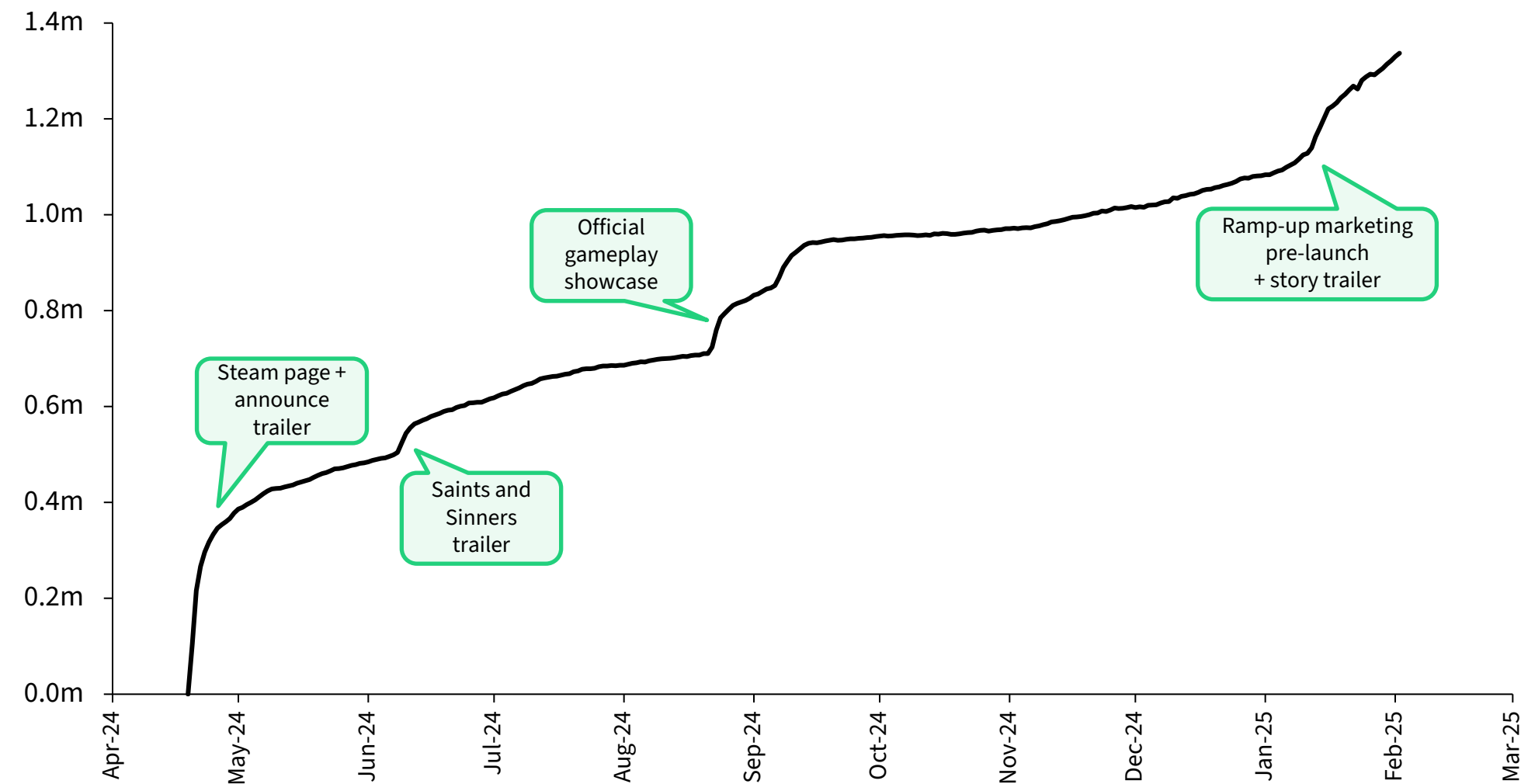
Notes: Top 50 games with wishlist @ launch, launched after H2 2024, with over 20 Steam Reviews
Sources: VGI data, Team Analysis

Case Study: KCD 2 saw significant ramp-ups in wishlist with every trailer launch and had accumulated 72% of its wishlists 3 months pre-launch

Kingdom Come Deliverance 2 – Wishlists Pre-Launch



Kingdom Come Deliverance 2 – Wishlists Pre-Launch (Millions)



Sources: VGI data, Team Analysis

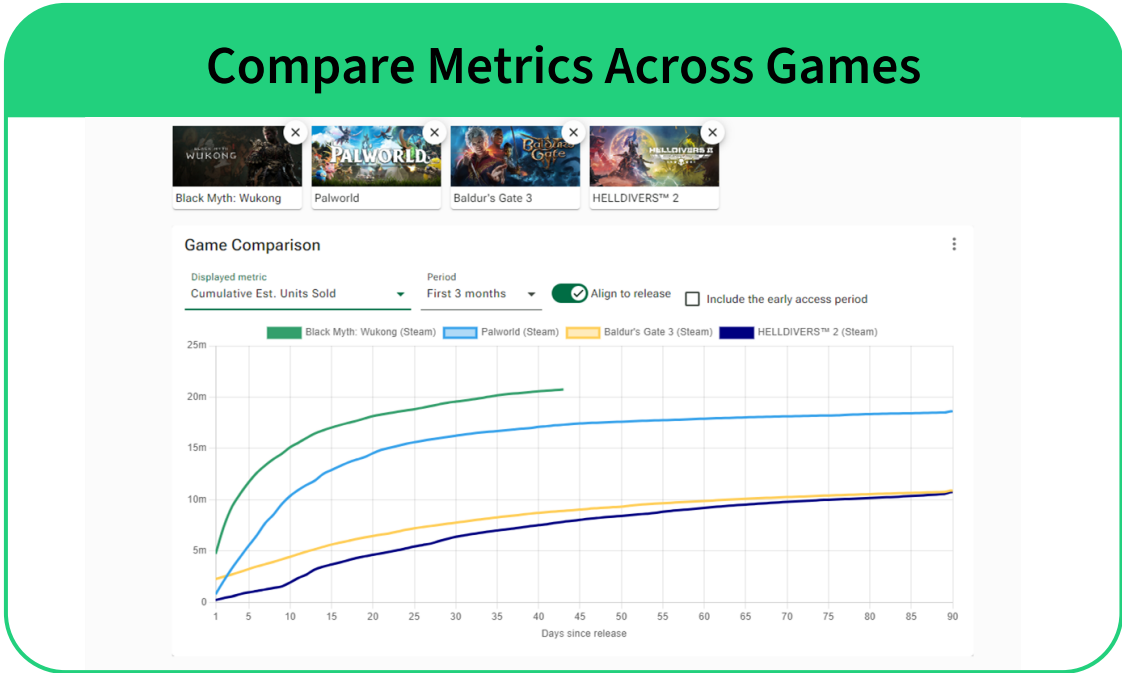
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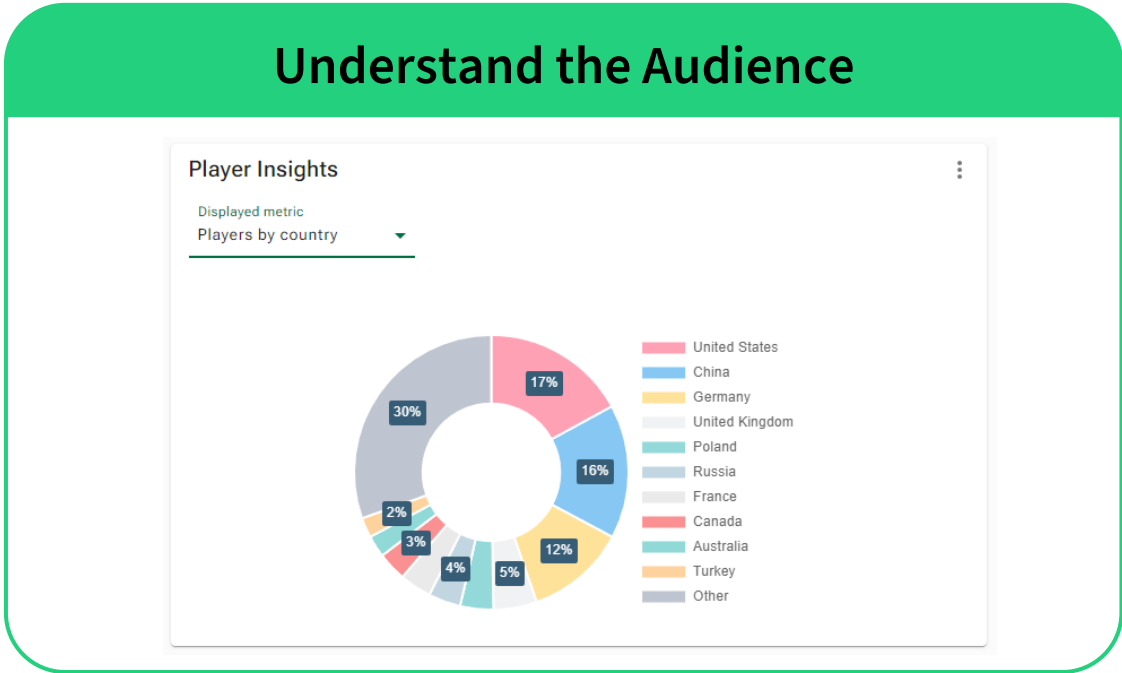


Look at Overlapping Players

Player Overlap

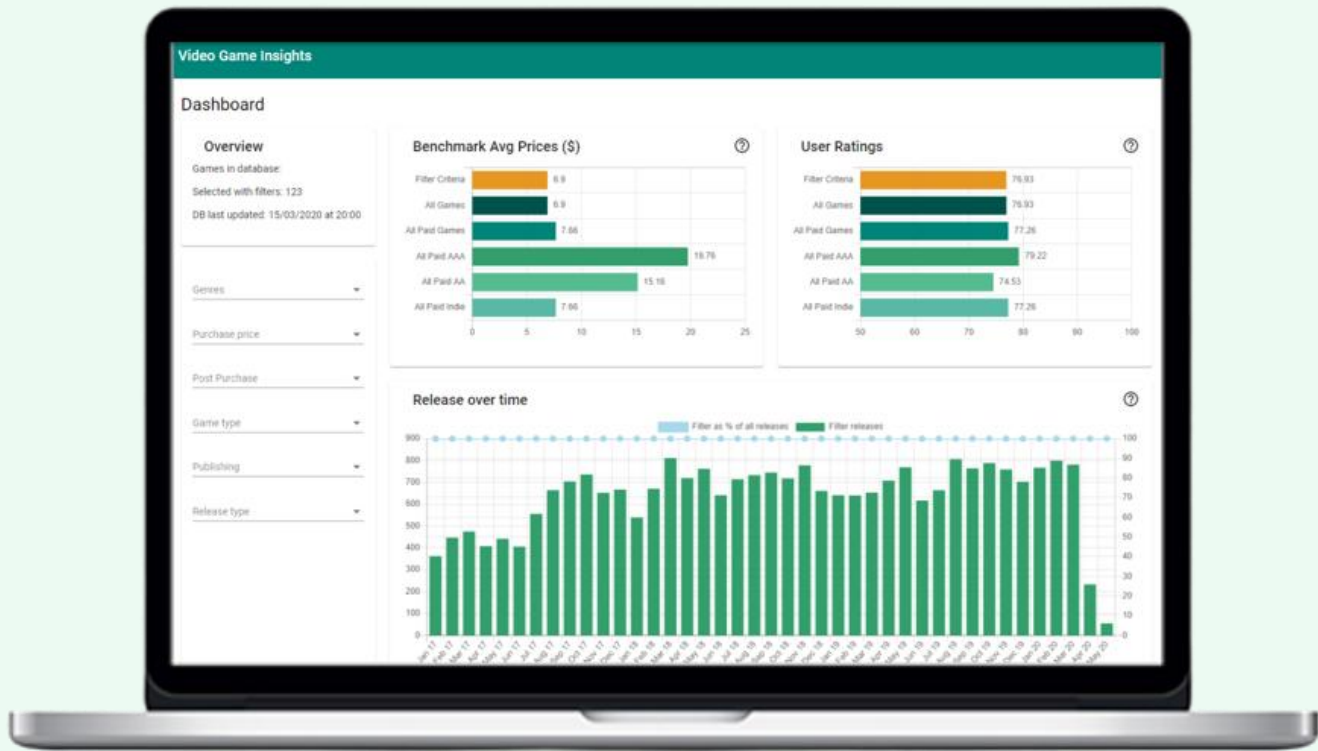
Search by name

#	Logo	Name	First released	Genres	LTD Units Sold Overlap			
					Overlap	Overlap %	Overlap Index	Median Playtime
1		Lords of the Fallen	Oct 13, 2023	Action, Adventure, RPG	436k	3.1%	9.8	200h
2		Lies of P	Sep 18, 2023	Action, Adventure, RPG	694k	5%	9.7	185.2h
3		Thymesia	Aug 18, 2022	Action	225k	1.6%	9.2	206.8h
4		Wo Long: Fallen Dynasty	Mar 3, 2023	Action, Adventure, RPG	430k	3.1%	9.2	169.6h
5		Returnal™	Feb 15, 2023	Action	193k	1.4%	8.6	133.4h
6		ARMORED CORE™ VI FIRE RISING	Aug 24, 2023	Action	910k	6.5%	8.6	167.9h
7		FINAL FANTASY XVI	Sep 17, 2024	Action, RPG	179k	1.3%	8.4	107h
8		Lunacy	Mar 15, 2022	Indie, RPG	146k	1%	8.3	176.6h
9		Another Crab's Treasure	Apr 25, 2024	Action, Adventure, Indie	227k	1.6%	8.2	147.2h



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Appendix

Definitions and methodology

Glossary

Terms	Definitions
AA/AAA games	Large budget games developed by massive teams and companies. AAA game budgets are typically over \$100M to develop
CAGR	Compound annual growth rate
CCU	Concurrent users – active players in-game
FtP	Free to play games
Full Game Revenue	Revenue from the direct sale of a game, excluding any DLC and MTX revenues
IAP	In-app purchases
Indie games	Games developed by independent studios. This covers a large range of studios from 1 person hobby projects to larger studios of a few hundred employees, but budgets still fall far short of the AAA game levels
MTX	Microtransactions
Unit Sales Estimate	Using different estimation methods, including an algorithm based on our internal database of actual sales and the Boxleiter method to get from Steam review numbers to estimated sales. Detailed overview of the method is highlighted in the section below
Revenue Estimate	Estimated units sold multiplied by the price at the time. This is gross revenue, including the Steam cut, but adjusted for local currencies, returned products and discounts

More information:

Definitions and Methodology: <https://vginsights.zendesk.com/hc/en-us>

Email: Support@sensortower.com

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