Steam is one of, if not the first digital storefront to ever reach widespread consumer appeal. Created by the game studio Valve, known at the time for their hit FPS *Half-Life*, though is better known today as the company behind the hundred-million dollar esports juggernauts *Counter-Strike: Global Offensive* and *DOTA 2*, Steam revolutionized the process of games distributions in ways that are hard to explain the magnitude of to the people of today due to how obvious these innovations seem, similar to how *Half-Life*'s simple introduction of scripted story events and a basic plot radically changed how FPSs were designed, though such innovations seem almost trivial in hindsight. Launched in 2003 as a simple way of distributing automatic updates to some of their online games such as *Counter-Strike 1.6* and *Team Fortress*, Steam eventually morphed in 2005 into a platform where developers could announce, release, and update their games freely and have zero interaction with any sort of publisher, such as Sierra or EA. Users would log on, browse through the available games, purchase one they liked, and install it. In effect, Steam was what inspired the App Store and Play Store, but far more expansive, as it supports not just Windows, but Linux and MacOS as well, though the chances of any given app coming with a MacOS or Linux port is slim to none, especially with Apple’s choice to move away from x86 based architecture and chipsets, making the effort of porting computer games to userbase that is microscopic compared to Windows and Linux and full of systems of which couldn’t run the game properly anyway less and less appealing.

On mobile markets, the digital storefront that comes with the device is usually the one you’re stuck to using. There isn’t an App Store alternative on iOS, and while you can download Android APKs from the internet, there is no governing body that I am aware of that will verify the apps you download aren’t infected by a virus or some other sort of malware. PC, however, being a freer and more open platform, has many similar storefronts, some of which are required to get games purchased on Steam to play on a user’s computer (*Titanfall 2* is an example of this). Therefore, there exists the question of why bother using Steam in the first place? Put simply, other platforms, like EA’s “Oracle” and Epic’s “Epic Games Launcher” are limited in scale. Typically, those platforms only sell a small collection of games from a single publisher, totalling to usually no more than fifty items. Valve, meanwhile, have allowed third parties to use Steam to distribute their games since 2005, meaning they have thousands of games in their catalog, varying in genre, developer, art style, and everything else. But even then, Steam is known for offering massive discounts at levels seen only on black friday, offering 60, 70, 80 and even in some rare cases 90% off a given purchase, though the highest numbers are usually reserved for title’s who have long since seen their time in the spotlight, and aren’t moving a substantial amount of copies anyway. I recently purchased a package worth $60 at around $25, something which I’ve never seen done at GOG, and even then, if that wasn’t enough, Steam is, as far as I’m aware, the biggest distributor of Virtual Reality Games in terms of not just market size, but sheer volume of titles, besting all but the Oculus Quest’s built-in storefront, which sells exclusively VR titles. Furthermore, Steam goes beyond just a digital games marketspace and becomes the go-to spot for almost everything games related for the PC platform. It offers guides written by seasoned veterans to assist newbies in learning the ropes, it offers the Steam Workshop, where users can download and install mods at the press of a button, knowing that mod (usually) won’t contain any malware, it contains the in-game marketplace, where users can buy and sell in-game items, like weapon skins or cosmetics, and so, so much more. There is simply no reason to not use Steam, as it provides users with the best, easiest, and friendliest way to simply play the games they enjoy. Besides, setting up Steam is simple and completely free. All you have to do is download the client at store.steampowered.com, create an account, and you can start downloading, playing, modding, streaming, and everything else Steam offers to your games library.