Project Name: Indie Games and Drivers of Popularity

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The problem: Game development is extremely time consuming, especially for independent or small development teams. When compared to AAA releases, indie releases have an even more diverse landscape; ranging wildly in pricing, scope, genre, and release timing. Researching the attributes that correspond with game popularity can provide insights for developers concerned with their game's commercial viability. Put simply, this project seeks to uncover what genres, tags, and pricing models correlate most strongly with popularity on Itch.io.

Data Collection: For data collection, this project will use the Itch.io API. This tool is free and provides metadata on the games hosted on Itch.io. My target variables are game title, developer name, tags, genre, price, download count, view count, ratings score, # of comments, and release date. I plan to collect 300-500 games to analyze as part of this project, but may adjust that based on API restrictions.

Analysis/Visualizations: After cleaning my data (standardizing values, removing missing variables, converting variable types, etc), I'll perform descriptive statistics on distribution of prices, ratings, downloads, tags, and genres. Then, I will look for correlational relationships that positively predict downloads by first visualizing these relationships (scatterplots, bar charts, heat map): comparing price, rating, and views. I also want to identify the impact of genre and tags, comparing downloads and ratings across different categories. The project will reveal which genres, tags, and pricing models tend to drive higher downloads; whether ratings predict popularity; and what characteristics define successful indie games on Itch.io.