

Epic Games Store: Understanding Player Acquisition and Retention

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As someone who's been following the Epic Games Store (EGS) closely, I wanted to dig deeper into how its mix of free games, exclusives, sales, and social features affects who joins the platform and how they spend. I've analyzed publicly available data from Epic's own reports and third-party investigations to piece together a picture of EGS's player base. My goal here is to highlight which strategies actually bring players in, which ones get them to spend, and how developer incentives tie into the store's growth.

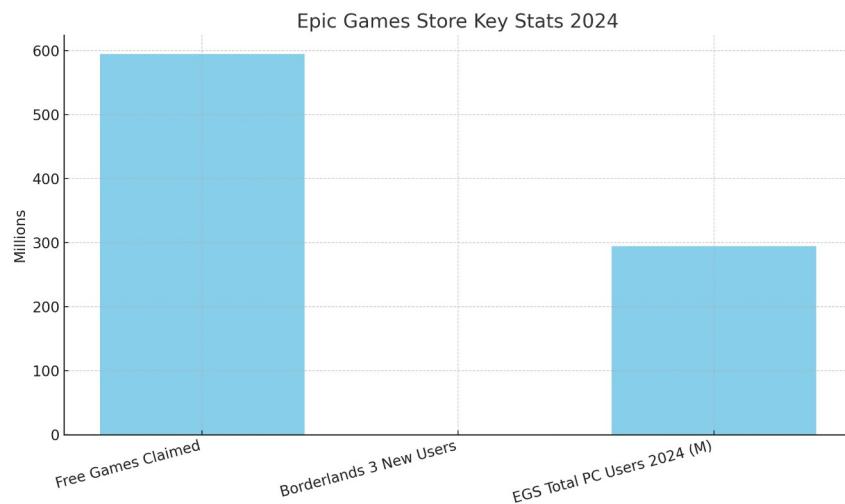


Figure 1: Epic Games Store – Key 2024 Metrics from public reports

1 INTRODUCTION

The main question I wanted to answer was simple: What actually works for Epic when it comes to bringing in new players and turning them into paying customers? EGS has given away hundreds of dollars' worth of free games to each user, signed big-ticket exclusives, and run seasonal sales that mirror Steam's famous events. But which of these really move the needle?

2 USER PURCHASING DECISIONS

From my review of Epic's data, the free games program is the ultimate top-of-funnel play. In 2024 alone, Epic gave away 89 games worth about \$2,200 per player, which were claimed nearly 600 million times. The idea is to get as many people in the door as possible – and it works for account creation – but only around 7% of those users ever make a purchase afterward.

Timed exclusives like Borderlands 3 are another lever. Epic reportedly paid \$146 million for that deal, and within two weeks, the game had brought in 750,000 new users and recouped

most of that spend. For fans, exclusivity creates urgency, you either play it now on EGS or wait months to get it elsewhere.

Seasonal sales (Holiday, Summer, Lunar New Year) round out the strategy. They tap into the same FOMO-driven buying behavior that's common across the industry, pulling in bargain hunters and nudging indecisive players over the line.

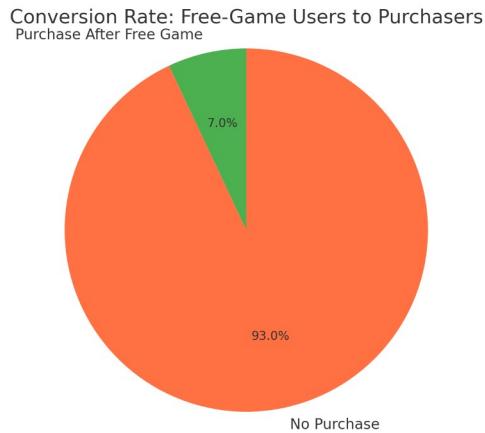


Figure 2: Share of free-game users who make a purchase afterward.

3 SOCIAL & NETWORK EFFECTS

Epic's biggest hidden asset is the 898 million accounts tied into Fortnite, Unreal Engine, and other parts of its ecosystem. I've seen Epic slowly port Fortnite's strong social features over to the store: friend lists, cross-platform invites, and party chat. If all your friends are already there, the store becomes the natural place to buy.

Peer influence is real, gamers are far more likely to buy a title if their friends recommend it or are playing it. By integrating rewards, webshops, and shared codes into its social layer, Epic is betting on viral loops inside its own network.

4 DEVELOPER INCENTIVES

The 88/12 revenue split has been a developer magnet since EGS launched in 2018. Add in waived Unreal Engine royalties and programs like First Run (100% of revenue for six months) and you've got a strong case for launching on Epic first. In 2025, they sweetened the deal even more with 0% fees on the first \$1M per game per year.

For small studios, this is huge – it can mean the difference between surviving launch year or not. It also gives developers more flexibility on pricing and promotions without losing as much to platform fees.

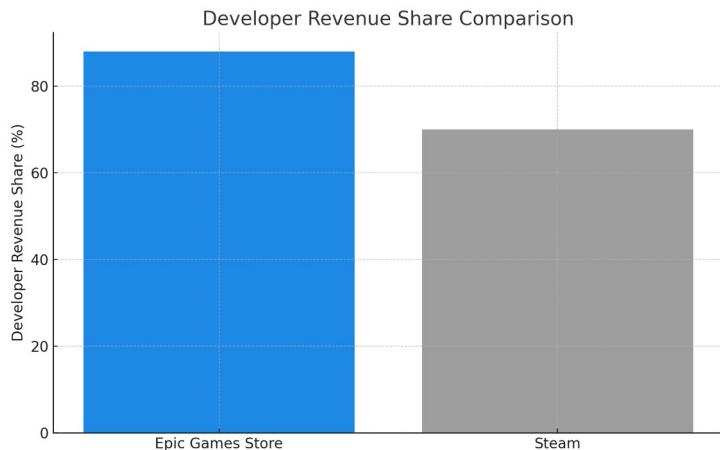


Figure 3: Developer revenue share – Epic vs Steam.

5 CONCLUSION

Looking at the data, Epic is playing a long game: hook players with freebies, reel in spenders with exclusives and sales, keep them around with social ties, and grow the catalog by treating developers well. Not every user will convert, but those who do are more likely to stick because their friends are there and the games they want keep showing up first on EGS.

If Epic can keep improving its store features and discovery tools, these strategies could help it carve out a sustainable share of the PC market.

6 FUTURE STRATEGIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

Looking ahead, I think Epic could take a few key steps to strengthen the Epic Games Store experience:

Expand social identity features – Steam's custom profile pages are a big deal for players who want to show off their collections, achievements, and personality. EGS could introduce customizable profile themes, personal libraries visible to friends, and even player-generated showcases. People love expressing who they are, and adding those layers can make the store feel more like a social hub than a transaction page.

Deeper community integration – Social spaces, in-game event tie-ins, and content-sharing hubs could help EGS tap into user-generated creativity. Imagine if fan art, mods, and highlight clips were natively visible and shareable right from the store.

In short, it's about giving players and developers more ways to interact, share, and create within the Epic ecosystem. One hub that allows them to be apart of a community