

Final Report: Historical Steampowered.com Versions (2002-2009) - Detailed Analysis

This report provides a detailed analysis of the historical versions of steampowered.com from 2002 to 2009, with a focus on the HTML structure and CSS to inform the development of a CMS backend.

Methodology

Raw HTML files for each year were downloaded directly from the Internet Archive using `wget`. This provided the necessary source code to analyze the site's structure, styling, and content.

Year-by-Year Analysis

2002

- **HTML Structure:** The site is built with a simple table-based layout. A main table with a single row and column contains all the content. The content itself is not heavily structured, with simple `<p>` and `<a>` tags.
- **CSS:** No external stylesheet is used. All styling is done inline with `` tags for font size and color, and `bgcolor` attributes on the `<body>` tag.
- **Layout:** A single-column layout with a dark grey background. The content is centered on the page.
- **Key Content:** Primarily text-based, with a focus on explaining the Steam platform to a technical audience.

2003

- **HTML Structure:** Still uses a table-based layout, but with more complexity. A main table is used to create a two-column layout, with a left-hand navigation bar and a main content area.
- **CSS:** No external stylesheet. Styling is a mix of inline styles and `` tags.
- **Layout:** A two-column layout with a dark background. The left column contains navigation links, and the right column contains the main content.
- **Key Content:** More consumer-focused content, with news about game updates and a clearer explanation of Steam's benefits for gamers.

2004

- **HTML Structure:** The table-based layout becomes more complex, with nested tables used to create a multi-column layout with promotional banners.
- **CSS:** Still no external stylesheet. Heavy use of inline styles and `` tags for layout and branding.
- **Layout:** A multi-column layout with a prominent header and footer. The main content area is divided into sections for news and promotions.
- **Key Content:** Dominated by the release of Half-Life 2, with large promotional images and links to purchase the game.

2005

- **HTML Structure:** The table-based layout is refined, with a cleaner separation of content areas.
- **CSS:** Still no external stylesheet, but more consistent use of inline styles.
- **Layout:** A refined multi-column layout with a clear news section and promotional areas.
- **Key Content:** A wider range of games are featured, with news about updates to the Source engine and other titles.

2006-2008

- **HTML Structure:** The HTML for these years shows a redirect to `store.steampowered.com`. This is a significant change, indicating the separation of the storefront from the main informational site. The store itself uses a more modern, CSS-based layout.
- **CSS:** The store uses external stylesheets, with a much more complex and sophisticated design.
- **Layout:** The store has a multi-column layout with a prominent search bar, featured games, and special offers.

2009

- **HTML Structure:** The redirect to `store.steampowered.com` is still in place. The store's HTML is more semantic, with `<div>` tags used for layout instead of tables.
- **CSS:** The store's CSS is well-structured and organized, with different stylesheets for different sections of the site.
- **Layout:** The store's layout is similar to the previous years, but with a more polished and refined design.

Summary of Evolution

- **2002-2005:** The site evolved from a simple, text-based page to a more complex, visually-driven promotional site, all built with table-based layouts and inline styling.
- **2006-2008:** The most significant change was the move to a dedicated storefront at `store.steampowered.com`, which used modern, CSS-based layouts.
- **2009:** The store's design and code became more refined and semantic, laying the groundwork for the modern Steam store.

Conclusion

This analysis of the raw HTML provides a clear roadmap for developing historical themes for the CMS backend. The evolution from simple, table-based layouts to a modern, CSS-driven storefront is evident in the code. The extracted HTML files can now be used as a direct reference for recreating the look and feel of each era of steampowered.com.