

Does Greenlight really mean go?

→ With indie games now taking up a sizeable portion of the Steam store, we look at whether Greenlight really works

The Indie scene has blown up in recent years with Steam becoming a popular platform for those without big publishers

to sell their games. The Steam Greenlight system launched back in 2012 to a mix of optimism and criticism in its early days. But, almost 4 years on, how easy is it really to be Greenlit? There are plenty of opinions on whether the system works or not but what do the people who actually use Greenlight for their games have to say?

"I think Greenlight is really the means by which Indie games on PC have gained real market share. We are side by side with games like Fallout 4, and Call of Duty. Years ago there would have been no chance to be in a box store next to those titles." Explains Larry Martin Jr – developer of Violent Sol, a recently Greenlit title – when we asked him about his opinion on the Greenlight process. "Steam is quickly becoming a home to find those indie titles that are great games. From my point of view we are watching the AAA studio separation slowly disappear from Steam, now there are just games. Indie is basically a badge of honour, not a barrier anymore. Steam is driving that change with their store, and their Greenlight process."

Martin explained to us that it was simple to put together a Greenlight project. However the part that becomes difficult is after the game is Greenlit, where forms require you to have a company setup and goes more in depth into the legality of everything. Once you are Greenlit you are free to launch your game on Steam when you deem appropriate. Steam don't pressure you to release your game in an unfinished state.

Having your game successfully Greenlit isn't an exact science. Your game must be in the top rankings of Greenlight,



Above After over 60 days Violent Sol's greenlight campaign was a success with 76% of those voting yes to have the game Greenlit.

however the number of games released seems to vary every time a batch goes through the system. Back in 2014 it was a rough estimate of the top 50-100 games, but with around 1,500 titles on the Greenlight at any one time there's plenty of competition. In order to get into the top tier of games you're going to need plenty of 'Yes' votes, which means you're going to need a lot of attention from Steam users.

"THERE IS NO magic bullet for awareness. You have to drive awareness. If you want a 'Yes' vote today you have to go get that vote," Martin explains "After you fall off the new Greenlight releases page you get near enough zero traffic as people focus on the new and not on the older projects. So you have 3 days of good traffic then down to zero. So I found Facebook and Twitter extremely useful to driving votes per day."

"I think Greenlight is really the means by which Indie games on PC have gained real market share. We're alongside games like Fallout 4"


Once you've acquired a decent audience the next step is making sure you actually gain their vote" Martin continues, "Our initial launch brought a lot of questions as to if we were

ready for the store or not. To us it was clear we were not ready for the store, that was the point. We were in early development, but wanted people to let us know if they wanted a game like ours. The problem is we didn't state that. So initially we had 33% yes vote percentage. We quickly put a video out stating why we wanted to be Greenlit. Once we posted that our yes vote percentage went up into the 70's. We learned that we need to tell people why we want to be in the store, not just what our game is or will be."

Some have expressed distaste for the system finding it ineffectual with the seemingly random Greenlight times and Steam's secrecy about the intricacies of the process. We asked developer Erik Asmussen his opinion on the system. "I think it's a very helpful test of how marketable your game is and good practice for getting

people excited about it. If you can't get people to vote for your game on Greenlight, then you probably won't have much success getting people to buy it."

Asmussen, whose game Disco Dodgeball was successfully Greenlit after 3 months, discussed his views further, "I think before Greenlight existed I was pretty bitter about favouritism in the industry, but I think now having gone through it and watching many other games go through it I think it's a relatively fair filter"

While the jury still seems to be out for Steam users about whether the system is effective for indie developers, at least, it seems to be working well. If you're planning on making an indie game maybe give Greenlight a chance. For the time being it seems to be working well for these developers, so it's safe to say you're in good hands. 



RECENTLY GREENLIT GAMES

→ So many games have been Greenlit in the past year alone, here's a few examples of games recently released through Greenlight

STAR VIKINGS



■ This single player puzzle solver includes RPG elements to mix things up. With the beta releasing later this month expect to see this in store later this summer.

PARTY PANIC



■ A multiplayer mini-game based casual arcade game. Featuring local co-op the game was Greenlit at the end of May and looking to release mid June.

CIPHER PUSHER

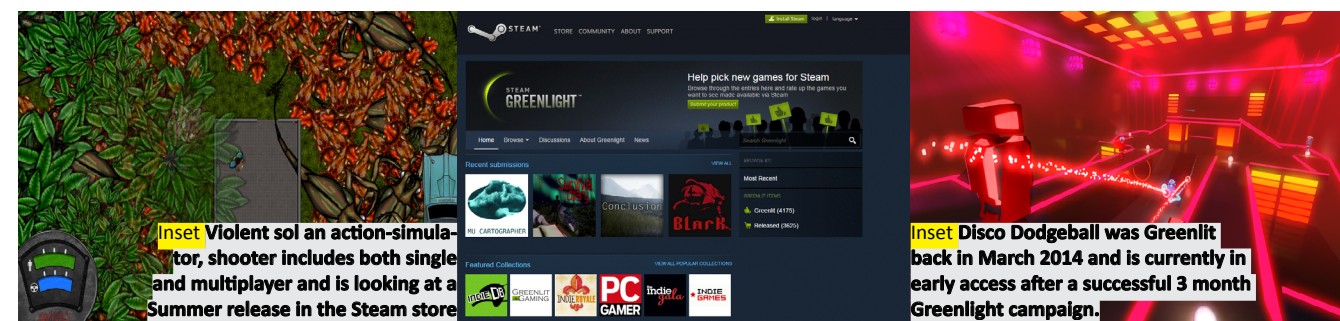


■ A single player action puzzle solver featuring local co-op. Developed by just one man, keep an eye out for this when it fully releases onto Steam in the coming months.

HEAD SHOT



■ Having now officially released on Steam, this successfully Greenlit game is a cartoon styled action shooter. Reminiscent of Team Fortress this game is worth a look.



Inset Violent sol an action-simulator, shooter includes both single and multiplayer and is looking at a Summer release in the Steam store

Inset Disco Dodgeball was Greenlit back in March 2014 and is currently in early access after a successful 3 month Greenlight campaign.

→ CONTROVERSIAL GAME HATRED HAS BEEN GIVEN AN ADULTS ONLY (AO) RATING BY THE ESRB IN THE STATES

→ AS OF THIS MONTH YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CHANGE YOUR CHARACTER NAME IN MINECRAFT FOR FREE