



A Step-by-Step Guide to Building Steam Wishlists

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No More Robots

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE

AUGUST 4-6, 2020 | #GDC20



Plenty of PC developers and publishers talk about Steam wishlists

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But why are they important,
and how do you even build wishlists?



Who is this guy?

- Hello! My name is Mike Rose
- I was previously Editor at Gamasutra
- I started publishing label **No More Robots** in 2017
- We've had a fair amount of success in our first three years
- Enjoy this **entirely natural** photo of me





What is No More Robots?

- No More Robots is yet another publishing label
- ...but we like to think we do things differently
- We've had a bunch of successes, including **Descenders**, **Yes, Your Grace**, **Hypnospace Outlaw**, **Not Tonight**, and more
- We use real data to work out why people buy games
- We also focus on games that don't follow trends, and carve their own paths and genres



Why No More Robots focuses on wishlists

1. Wishlists are an easily trackable value
2. A portion of wishlists represent a solid intent to buy
3. You'll be able to very roughly estimate how many sales you're going to achieve
4. People who wishlist your game, will be emailed when your game goes on sale post-launch



Your first week sales, will be roughly equal to
20% of your pre-launch wishlists numbers
(This figure keeps getting smaller and smaller,
but right now it's around 20%)



What about wishlists on other stores?

- It is possible for users to wishlist your game on other platforms, including Nintendo Switch and Xbox One...
- But it's not actually possible to track those, or use them in a meaningful way
- For console, you'll want to focus on **pre-orders**
- On Steam, pre-orders don't class as day one sales!



The goal is around
12,000 wishlists at launch
So let's work out how to get there!



Your announcement is **everything**

- I cannot stress enough how important your announcement is
- This is the moment you show *the holy Steam algorithm* that you mean business
- Your announcement sets the tone for the rest of your campaign
- **Do not “soft” launch your Steam page**



Hang on, “holy Steam algorithm”?

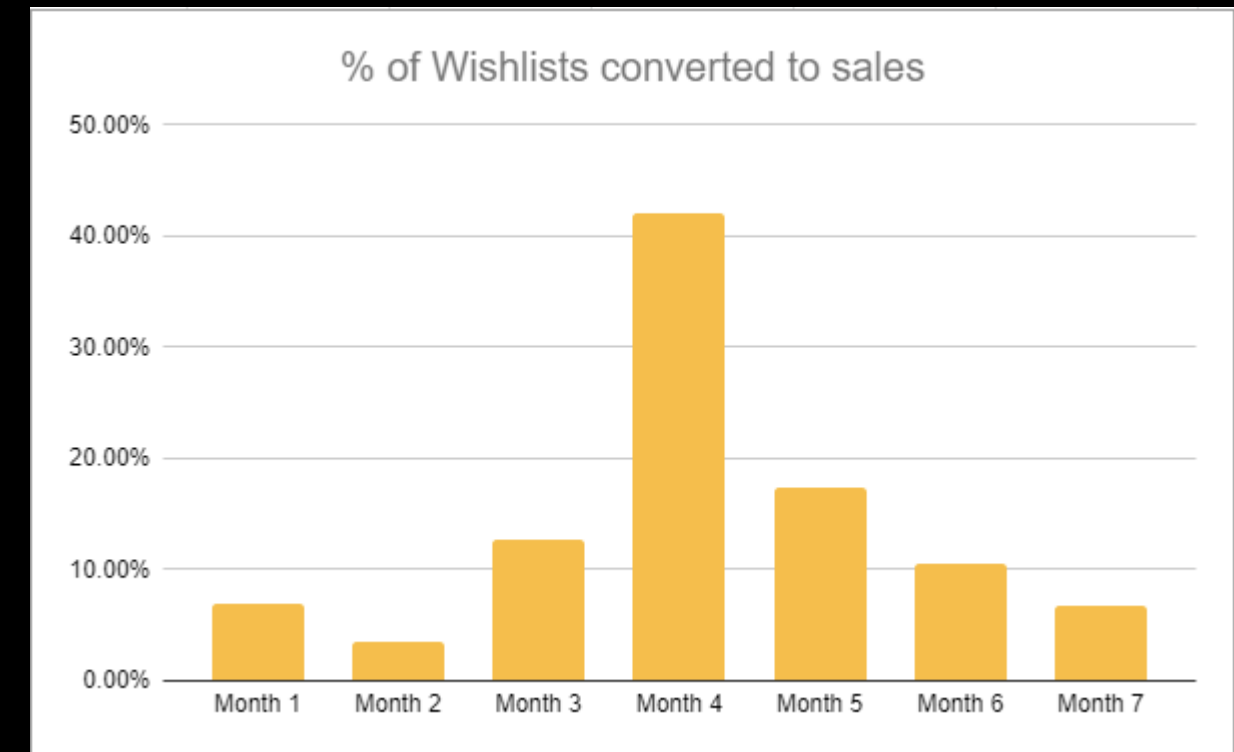
Your game is shown to Steam users based on **various hidden algorithms**, which respond well to:

- External link traffic
- Lots of people searching for your game on Steam itself
- People clicking your game through other games
- **You want to funnel people to your page all in one go**



When should you announce?

- For most games, aim to announce around **4-6 months before launch**
- This allows enough time to build hype...
- ...but not too long that you're struggling to keep that momentum going
- **The older the wishlist, the less likely it is to convert to a sale**



Data from Alina Cebula, Brave at Night




Announcement checklist

- ✓ Steam page is set up and approved by Valve
- ✓ Eye-catching trailer is ready to go live
- ✓ Appropriate press contacted prior to announcement
- ✓ Demo build ready to send to YouTubers
- ✓ Discord server set up
- ✓ Steam tags are added
- ✓ Striking key art



Driving wishlists through beta signups

- The best way to get people to wishlist your game...
- is to **give them a tangible reason** to do so
- We run “**betas**” for each of our games, which are **essentially demos**
- We ask people to wishlist the game as part of the sign-up process
- These wishlists aren't worth as much...
- **but help to turn the algorithm in our favor**



AAAAARRRGH!

Sign up to the Yes, Your Grace beta

Hey there! If you've managed to find this page, it probably means you're looking to sign up to the upcoming beta for Yes, Your Grace.

The beta is coming sometime in November! To be involved, simply pop your name and email address below, and we'll send you a Steam beta code the moment it drops.

We're looking forward to you checking out the game :)
No More Robots and Brave at Night

Email address *

Valid email address

This form is collecting email addresses. [Change settings](#)

Name

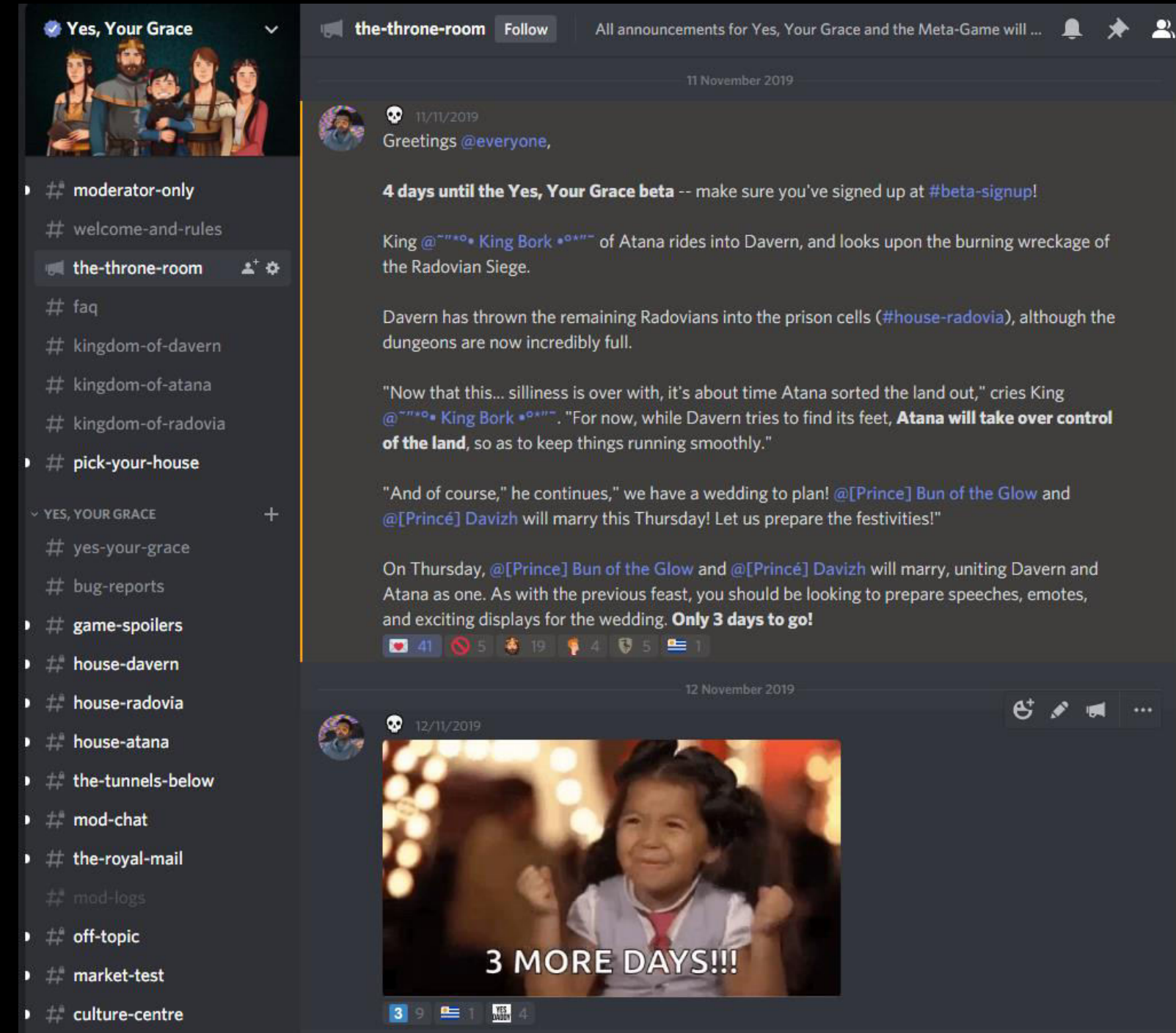
Short-answer text

Wishlist Yes, Your Grace on

https://store.steampowered.com/app/1115690/Yes_Your_Grace/

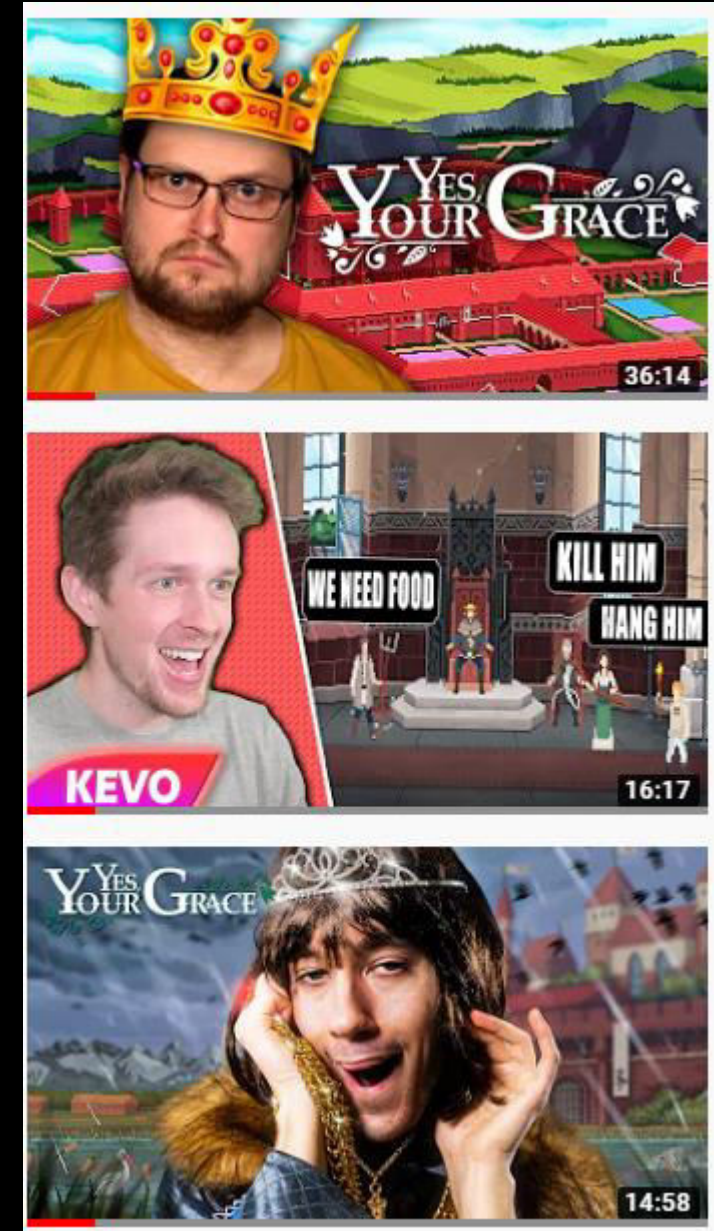
Driving wishlists through community

- No More Robots uses Discord servers to bring together communities for our games
- We drive wishlists through these communities, and run **meta-games** to keep the community happy while our dev teams finish off their games
- Community-building is particularly important in **the beginning**, and during **the launch**



Driving wishlists through YouTubers

- To keep the Steam algorithm entertained, we try to pepper videos from YouTubers throughout the pre-launch months
- Use the demo build you gave to the “beta” participants
- You can also drive wishlists through your own videos! Make sure you put a “Wishlist Now!” link at the top of every and all YouTube video you upload about your game



Driving wishlists through localization

- Steam is more likely to show your game to people, **if your game is available in their language**
- Rather than waiting until near launch to list the languages, **make localization decisions before announcement**
- Translate the store page into those languages, and make sure the correct languages are selected for the side bar



Driving wishlists through Steam tags

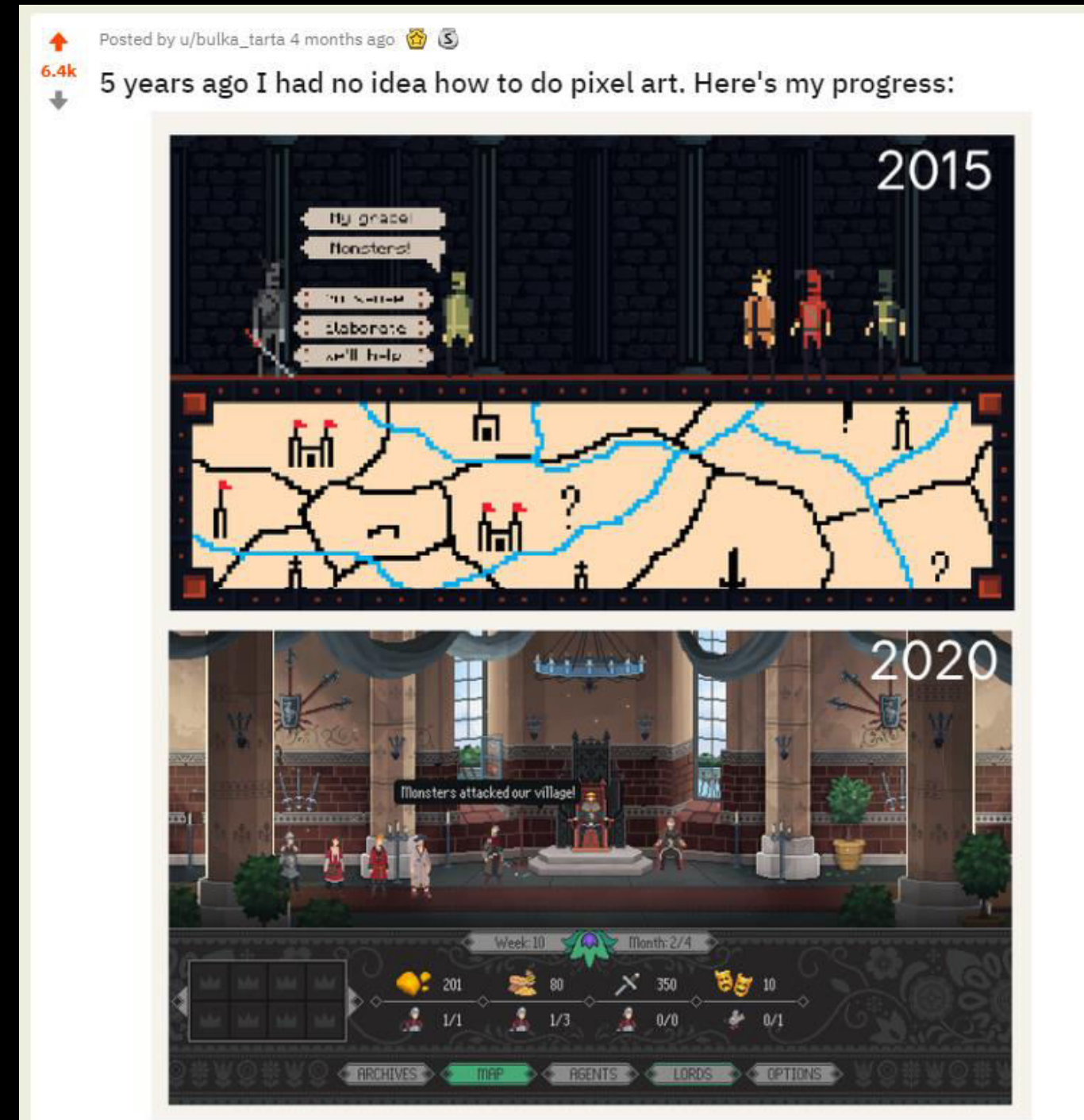
- You can pick up to 20 “tags” for your game – essentially genres and terms that fit your game
- These tags heavily drive when and where Steam features your game, including on other store pages
- **Pick non-generic tags!** Don’t choose “indie”
- Check games that you would like to be associated with, and **pick similar tags to those games**

RPG	✓
Simulation	✓
Pixel Graphics	✓
Choices Matter	+
Medieval	✓
Strategy	✓
Management	✓
Interactive Fiction	+
Fantasy	✓
Resource Management	✓
Singleplayer	✓
Adventure	✓
Multiple Endings	✓
Political	✓
War	✓
Great Soundtrack	✓
Point & Click	✓
Historical	✓
Inventory Management	✓
Puzzle	✓



Driving wishlists through Reddit posts

- Reddit can be a massive source of wishlists...
- ...if you can navigate the various subreddit guidelines, rules and silliness
- Picking the right subreddits for your game is key
- Don't "sell" your game on Reddit – make it a conversation, or an achievement



Driving wishlists through Reddit ads

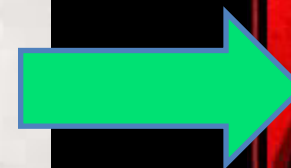
- Reddit ads are the only paid advertising option that No More Robots fiddles with
- You're able to choose the exact amount you want to pay for clicks...
- Couple this with your store page's visit-to-wishlist ratio, and the 20% wishlist-to-first week sales ratio...
- And you can work out roughly what cost-per-click you need to break even!



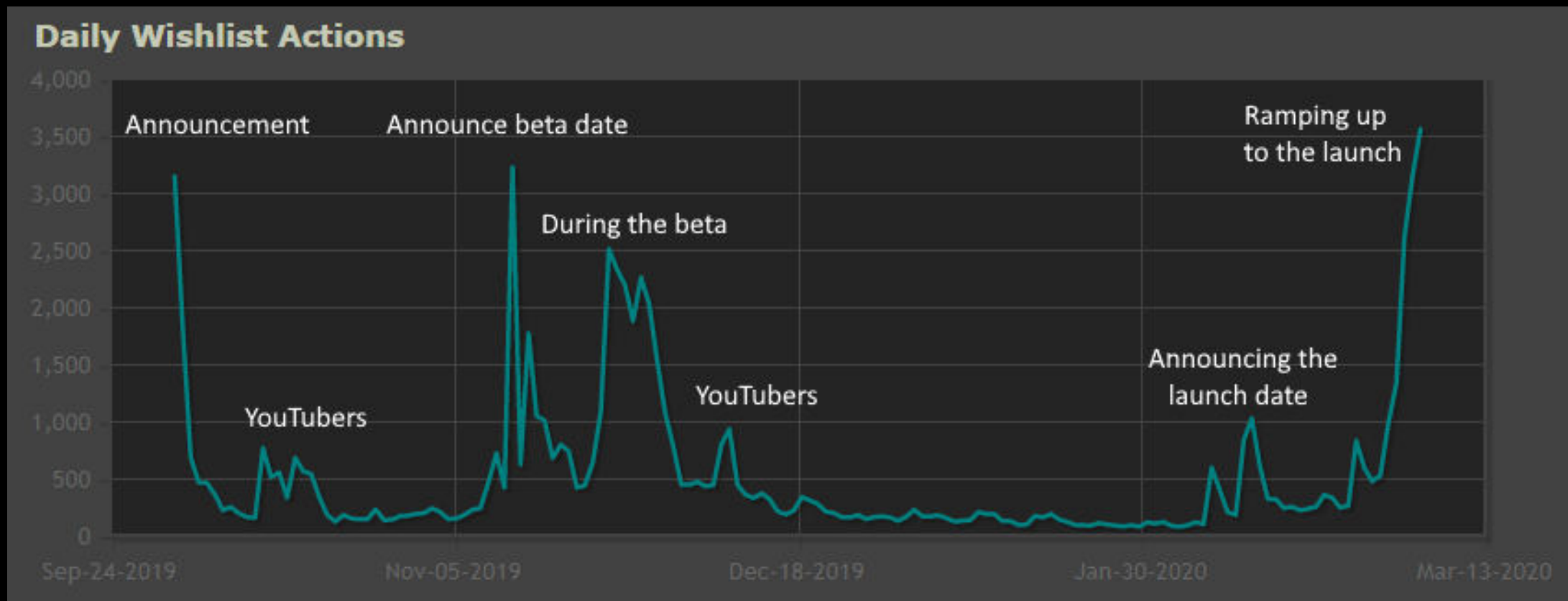
NO
MORE
ROBOTS

Improving your ratio through good key art

- Your store images and key art are so much more important than you might expect
- Good key art, with strong characters and imagery in the banner, can pull in a lot more people
- Don't be scared to change your banners multiple times until you see some positive change!
- Aim for a 15% click-thru rate, and a 10% wishlist rate



Bring all of this together to keep the Steam algorithm excited



From your launch wishlists, you should be able to work out **very** rough sales figures

Launch wishlists / 5 = first week sales
first week sales x 1.5 = first month sales
first month sales x 3 = first year sales
(all incredibly rough estimates)



Thanks for listening!

If you have any additional / specific questions,
tweet at me – I respond to everything!

@RaveofRavendale

Mike Rose
No More Robots

