

# **Pre-Marketing Marketing**

A Guide to Games Market and Competitor  
Research



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1.

# Market Analysis

*information about conditions that affect a market*

## MARKET ANALYSIS

- ▣ State of the games industry
- ▣ Genre, pricing, trends
- ▣ Customer profiles
- ▣ Competitors



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Most Played Games		Players Now	Peak Today	Trending Games		Last 7 days	Players Now
	Counter-Strike: Gl...	768,559	780,679		DRAGON BALL Z: ...		24,955
	Dota 2	457,285	539,569		ROMANCE OF TH...		7,414
	PLAYERUNKNOWN...	237,831	508,173		PUBG: Test Server		4,956
	MONSTER HUNT ...	145,937	237,784		Z1 Battle Royale		6,608
	Tom Clancy's Rai...	138,907	136,275		Unheard		655
	Grand Theft Auto V	132,862	139,117		Darwin Project		2,099
	Rust	80,185	80,185		Forager		3,513
	Destiny 2	73,939	80,818		Wizard of Legend		1,058
	Team Fortress 2	69,207	69,791		Endless Legend		1,800
	Rocket League	66,005	72,640		Slay the Spire		19,765
	Football Manager...	65,864	67,394		Endless Space 2		3,868
	ARK: Survival Evol...	63,796	65,015		Trailmakers		1,250
	The Witcher 3: Wi...	61,997	62,426		Total War: THREE...		15,762
	Path of Exile	56,613	56,624		Ni no Kuni™ II: Re...		978
	Warframe	50,792	58,405		Assassin's Creed II		627

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**Name - Role**

*Quote that helps sum up persona.*



**Goals**  
•  
•  
•  
•

**Challenges**  
•  
•  
•

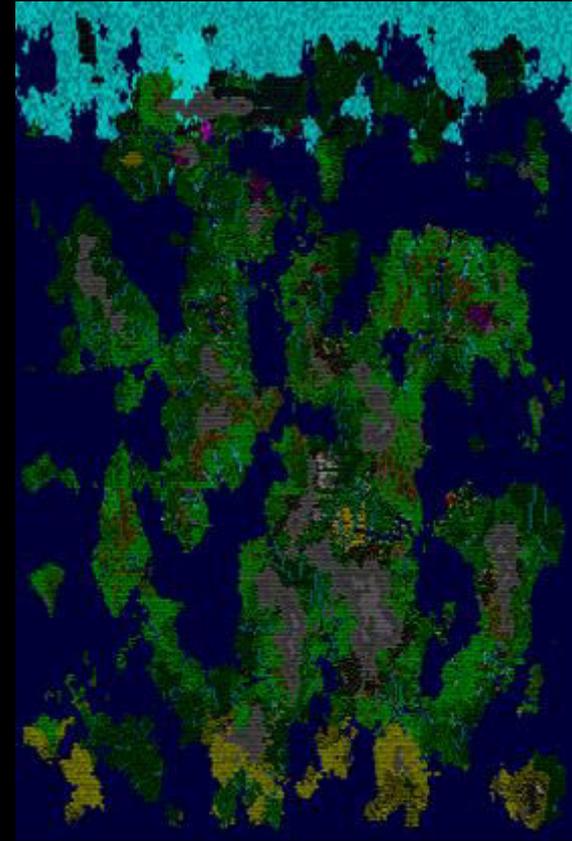
**Purchase Drivers**  
•  
•  
•

**Purchase Barriers**  
•  
•  
•

Business type—  
Job role/common titles—  
Technical literacy—  
Internal influencers—  
Purchase experience—

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# WHY IS MARKET ANALYSIS IMPORTANT?

**Viability**

**Marketing**

**Insights**

# WHY IS MARKET ANALYSIS IMPORTANT?

## Viability

- ▣ Platforms
- ▣ Genre saturation
- ▣ Audience size

## Marketing

## Insights

# WHY IS MARKET ANALYSIS IMPORTANT?

## Viability

- ▣ Platforms
- ▣ Genre saturation
- ▣ Audience size

## Marketing

- ▣ Game differentiation
- ▣ Messaging angles
- ▣ Competitors

## Insights

# WHY IS MARKET ANALYSIS IMPORTANT?

## Viability

- ▣ Platforms
- ▣ Genre saturation
- ▣ Audience size

## Marketing

- ▣ Game differentiation
- ▣ Messaging angles
- ▣ Competitors

## Insights

- ▣ Player sentiments
- ▣ Pricing
- ▣ Gameplay length

## STEAM STATS OVERVIEW

\*based on 2018 data

**47M**

DAILY  
ACTIVE  
USERS

**90M**

MONTHLY  
ACTIVE  
USERS

**18.5M**

PEAK  
CONCURRENT  
USERS

**1.6M**

NEW  
PURCHASERS  
PER MONTH

<https://steamcommunity.com/groups/steamworks/announcements/detail/1697194621363928453>

## KITFOX'S MARKET VIABILITY APPROACH\*

- ▣ Multiple recent games
- ▣ (Seemingly) recouped value
- ▣ Reachable production expectations

\*Note every studio's values and goals are different



2.

# Competitor Analysis

*context to identify opportunities and threats*



# Browsing Dating Sim

Browse the newest, top selling and discounted Dating Sim products on Steam



Recommended because it's on sale

**-50%**

CDN\$ 2.29  
CDN\$ 1.14

New and Trending

Top Selling

What's Popular

Top Rated

Upcoming

Results exclude some products based on [your preferences](#)

**쌤쌤편의점**

some some convenience store 쌤 쌤 편의점

CDN\$ 17.49

Casual, Adventure, Indie, Sexual Content

NARROW BY TAG

Visual Novel 278

Indie 273

Anime 232

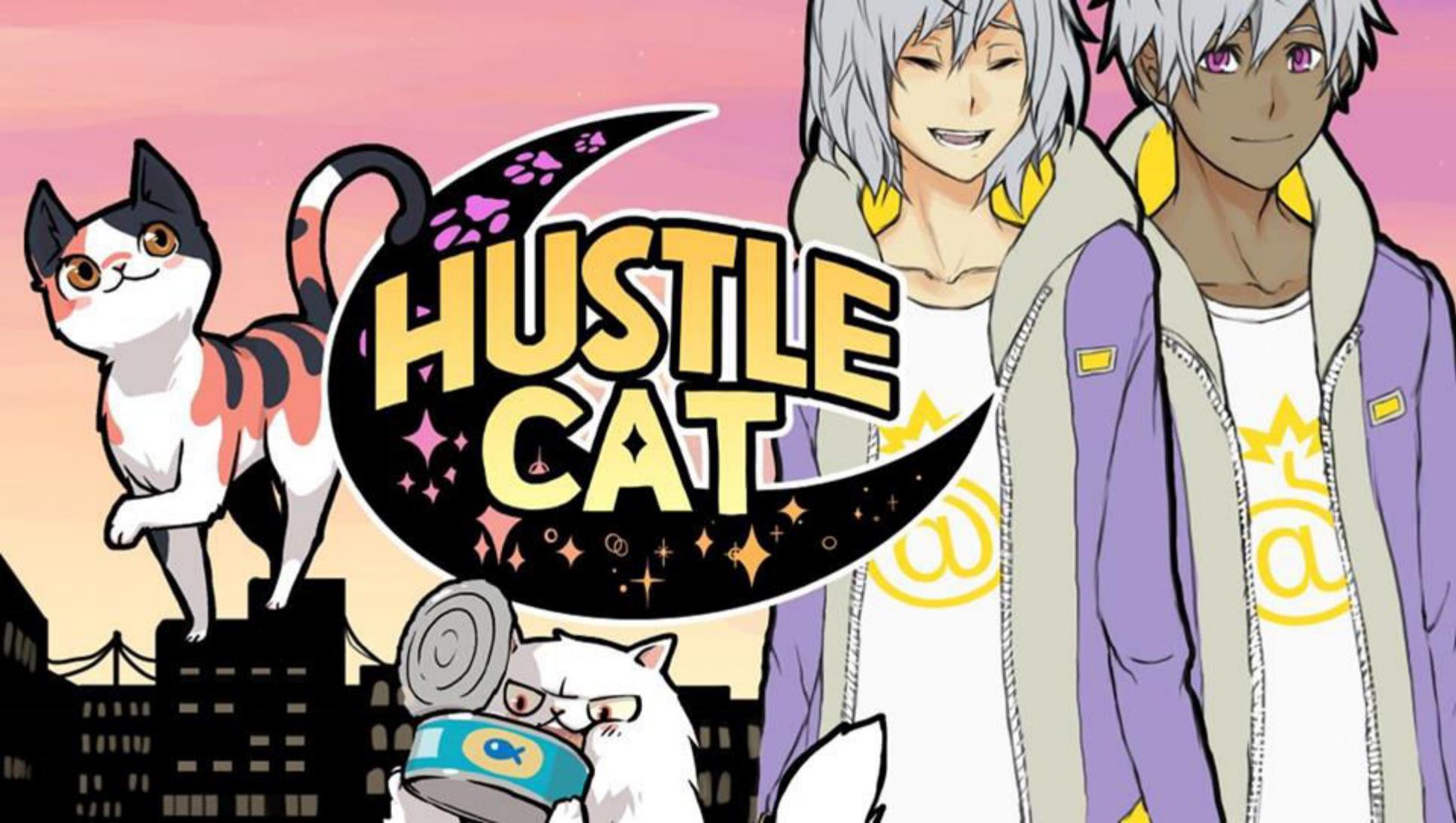
Casual 223

Simulation 207

Adventure 206

Nudity 181

Singleplayer 180



# HUSTLE CAT



PROM ★ NIGHT ♥ SOON!!

Multiplayer Monster Dating Sim with awesome art, bold unapologetic humor and hard choices. Out now on Steam. Made by [@btflglitch](#). Published by [@someawesomeguys](#)

It was clear: it had to be one of them... but who?



[LATEST](#) [VIDEO](#) [THE BESTS](#) [SPLITSCREEN](#) [HIGHLIGHT REEL](#) [COSPLAY](#) [REVIEW](#)

# Help Hot Dads Find True Love In *Dream Daddy*



Ethan Gach

6/18/17 2:30PM • Filed to: DREAM DADDY ▾



102.1K



144



15



You may also like



## DON'T FORGET...

- ▣ Setting/content
- ▣ Target audience
- ▣ Genre
- ▣ Key words





## HOW/WHERE TO FIND COMPETITOR INFO

- ❑ Steam recommendations
- ❑ By time
- ❑ Kickstarter?
- ❑ Press coverage



### LOOKING FOR SIMILAR ITEMS

What is similar to Boyfriend Dungeon?

The tags customers have most frequently applied to Boyfriend Dungeon have also been applied to these products:



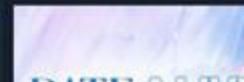
Free to Play



CDNS 17.49



Free To Play



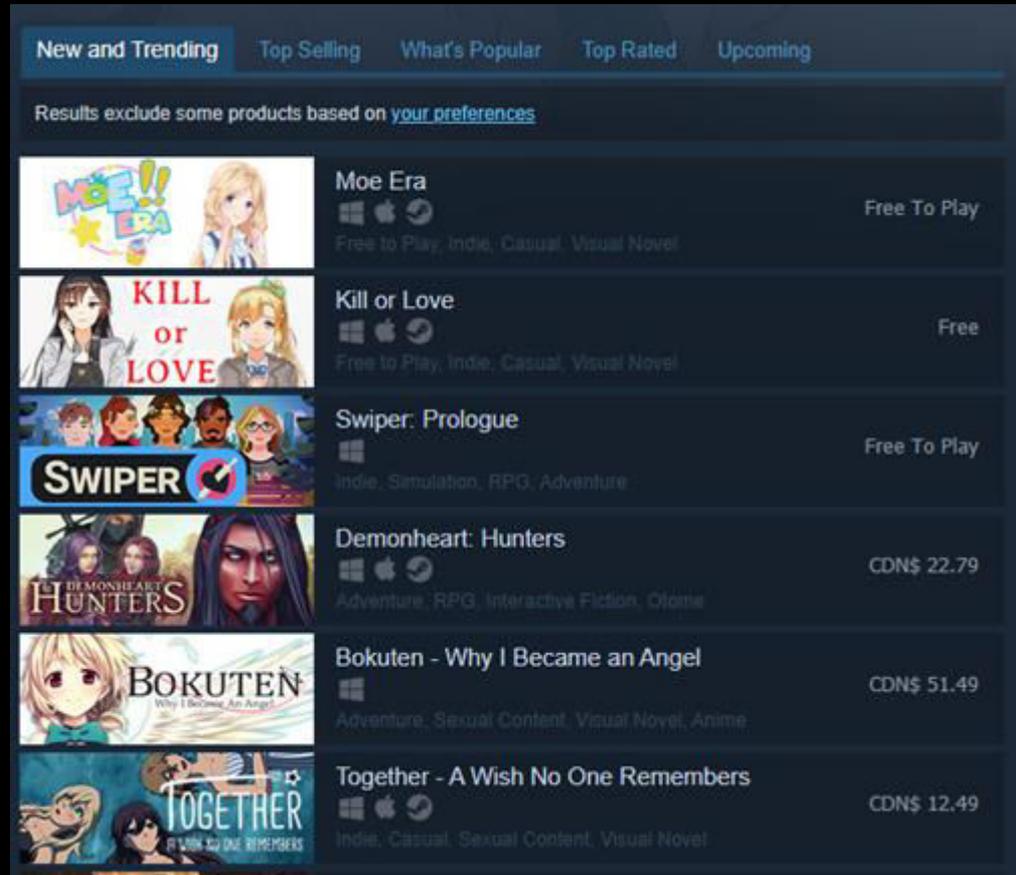
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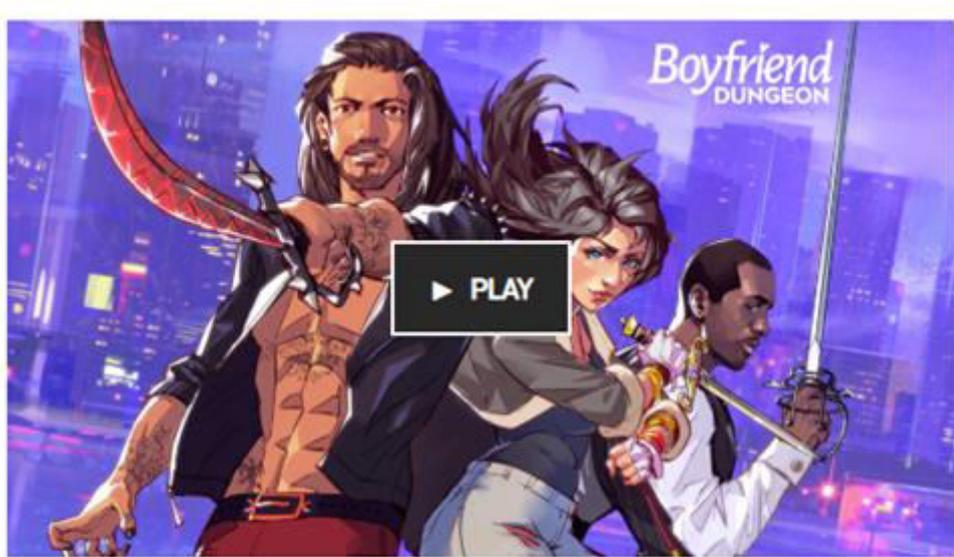


The screenshot shows a Steam search results page for visual novels. The navigation tabs at the top are 'New and Trending' (selected), 'Top Selling', 'What's Popular', 'Top Rated', and 'Upcoming'. Below the tabs, a note states 'Results exclude some products based on your preferences'. The results are listed in a table-like format with columns for game cover, title, platform icons, genres, and price.

Game Cover	Title	Platforms	Price
	Moe Era	Windows, macOS, Linux	Free To Play
	Kill or Love	Windows, macOS, Linux	Free
	Swiper: Prologue	Windows	Free To Play
	Demonheart: Hunters	Windows, macOS, Linux	CDN\$ 22.79
	Bokuten - Why I Became an Angel	Windows	CDN\$ 51.49
	Together - A Wish No One Remembers	Windows, macOS, Linux	CDN\$ 12.49

## HOW/WHERE TO FIND COMPETITOR INFO

- ▣ Steam recommendations
- ▣ By time
- ▣ Kickstarter?
- ▣ Press coverage



Boyfriend Dungeon: Date Your Weapons!

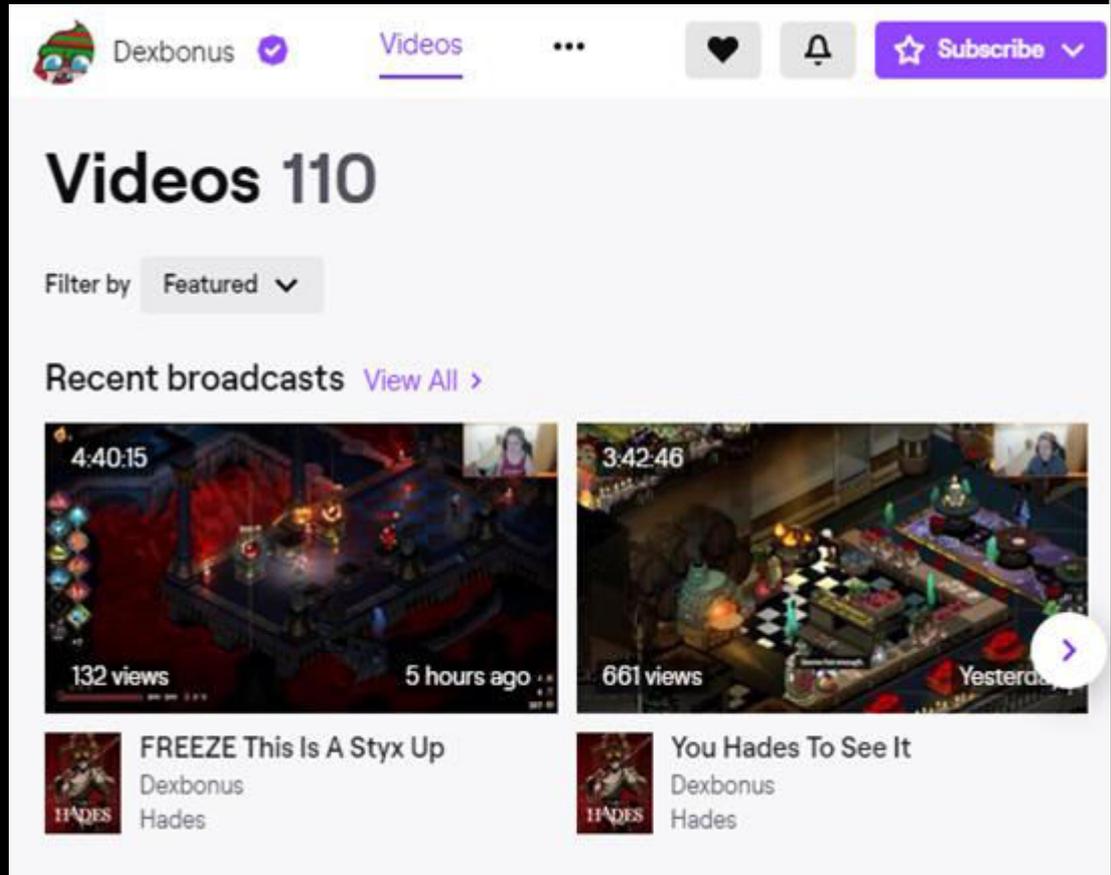
CA\$ 272,280  
pledged of CA\$ 65,579 goal

6,991 backers

Project We Love Montreal, Canada Video Games

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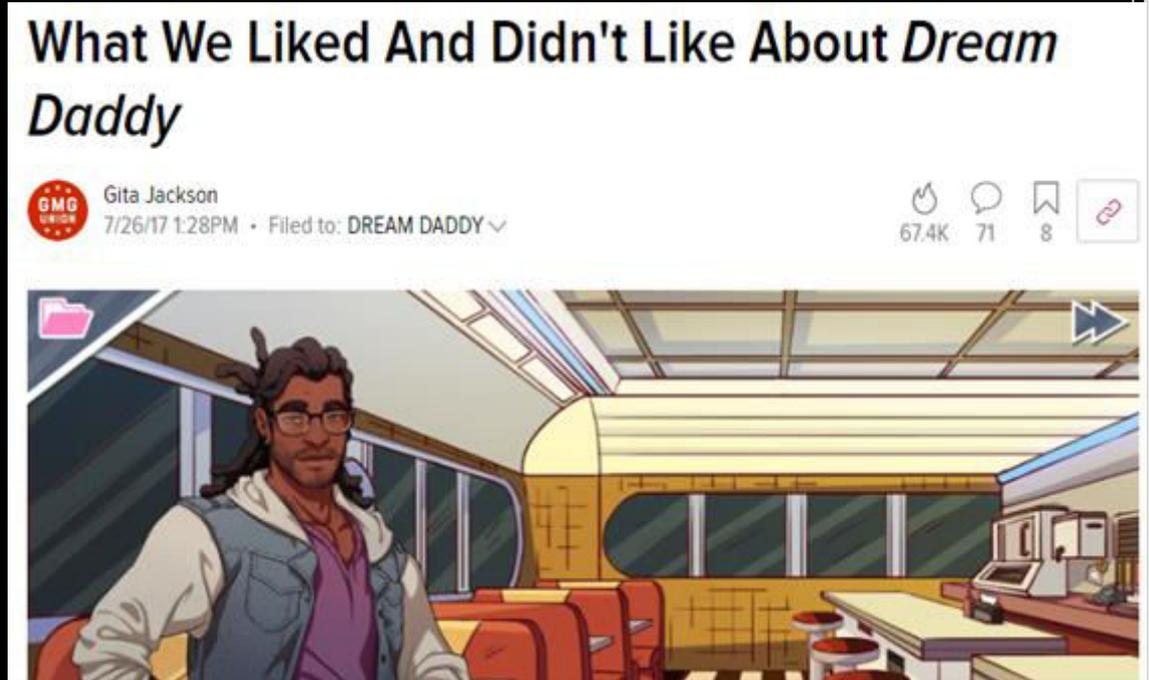
The screenshot shows the Twitch channel page for 'Dexbonus'. At the top, the channel name 'Dexbonus' is displayed with a verified badge. To the right are icons for heart, notification, and a purple 'Subscribe' button. The main heading is 'Videos 110'. Below this is a 'Filter by' dropdown menu set to 'Featured'. The section 'Recent broadcasts' includes a 'View All' link. Two video thumbnails are visible:

- Video 1:** Duration 4:40:15, 132 views, posted 5 hours ago. The thumbnail shows a dark, atmospheric scene from the game Hades.
- Video 2:** Duration 3:42:46, 661 views, posted Yesterday. The thumbnail shows a similar scene from Hades.

Below each video is a card for the game 'Hades' by 'Dexbonus'. The first card is titled 'FREEZE This Is A Styx Up' and the second is 'You Hades To See It'. Both cards feature the Hades logo and a small character icon.

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Category	Title	Release	Price	Sales*	Reviews	Score	Publisher	Avg play time	Art	Notes
Funny	Panzerma dels	2016	10.99	20 - 50k	1038	91	N	3h	2D	
	Hatoful Boyfriend	2014	10.99	200 - 500k	4053	94	Devolver	1h	2D	
	HuniePop	2015	10.99	500k - 1m	15,317	96	N	9h	2D	NSFW, match 3
	Hustle Cat	2016	21.99	50 - 100k	565	95	N	3h	2D	

## INFO

Using information from your competitor analysis,  
you can estimate...

- ▣ AVG # of reviews → Demand
- ▣ AVG review score → Quality
- ▣ AVG price → What players are expecting to pay
- ▣ Lessons (qualitative)

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	Hustle Cat	2016	21.99	50 - 100k	565	95	N	3h	2D	

## BUT WAIT

When calculating revenue, be wary of...

- ▣ Steep sales/discounts (e.g. free weekends)
- ▣ Publisher cuts/platform fees
- ▣ Bundles
- ▣ Taxes

# Boyfriend DUNGEON





- ▣ Price
- ▣ Style
- ▣ Points of difference
- ▣ Viability
- ▣ Scope



***LEWD ALERT***



+10 Pleasure

+10 Pleasure

+10 Pleasure

+10 Pleasure

+10 Pleasure

201 / 500

Lvl 0 (0%)  
Passion Level

00  
Moves

000  
Sentiment



02/10

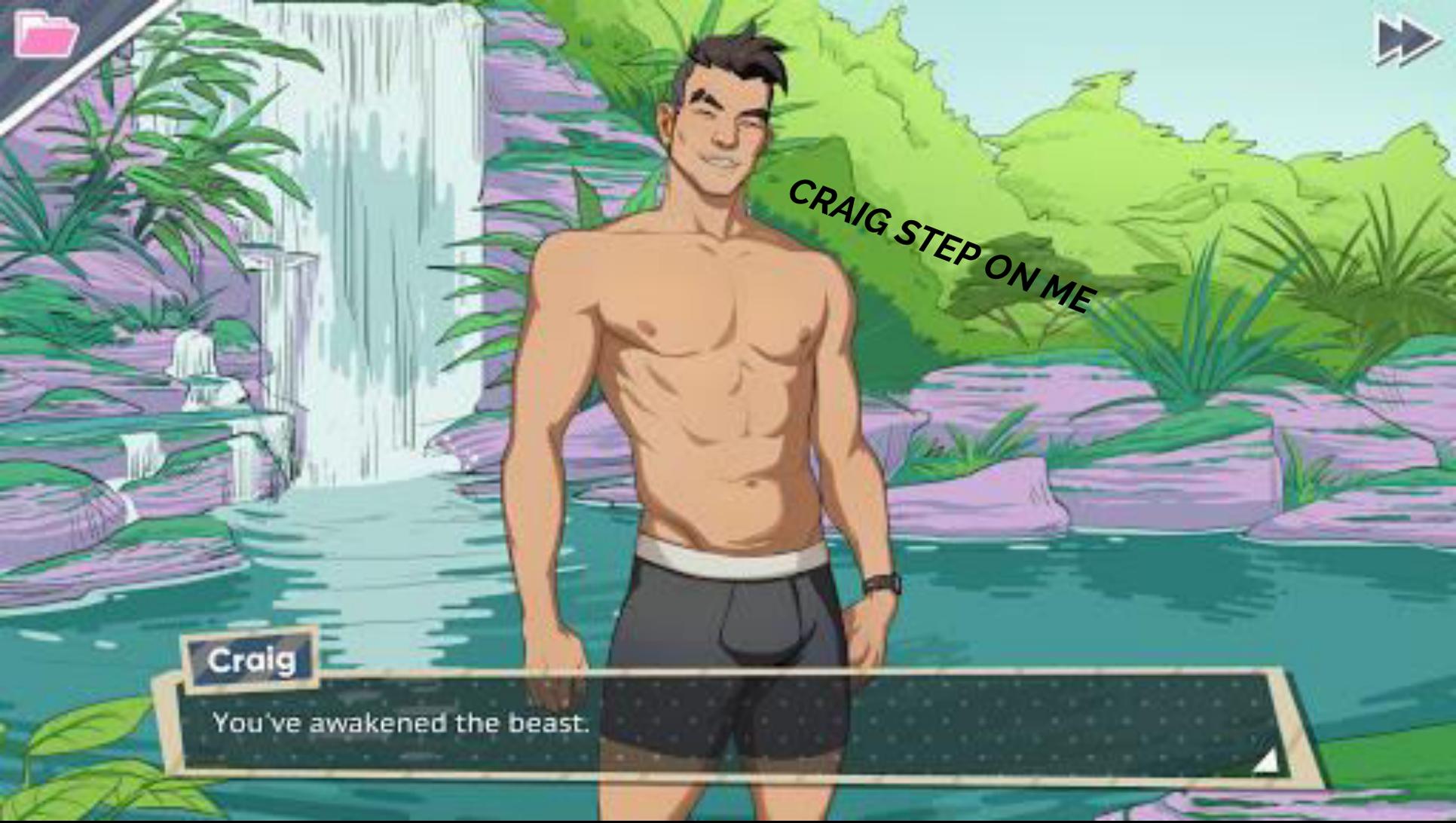


Ryouta

"I love you, Hiyoko. More than anyone else, now." 🐦

HATOFUL BOYFRIEND





*CRAIG STEP ON ME*

**Craig**

You've awakened the beast.

## EXAMPLE

- ❑ Worst case scenario
- ❑ Recoup goal
- ❑ Best case scenario (so we are less sad)

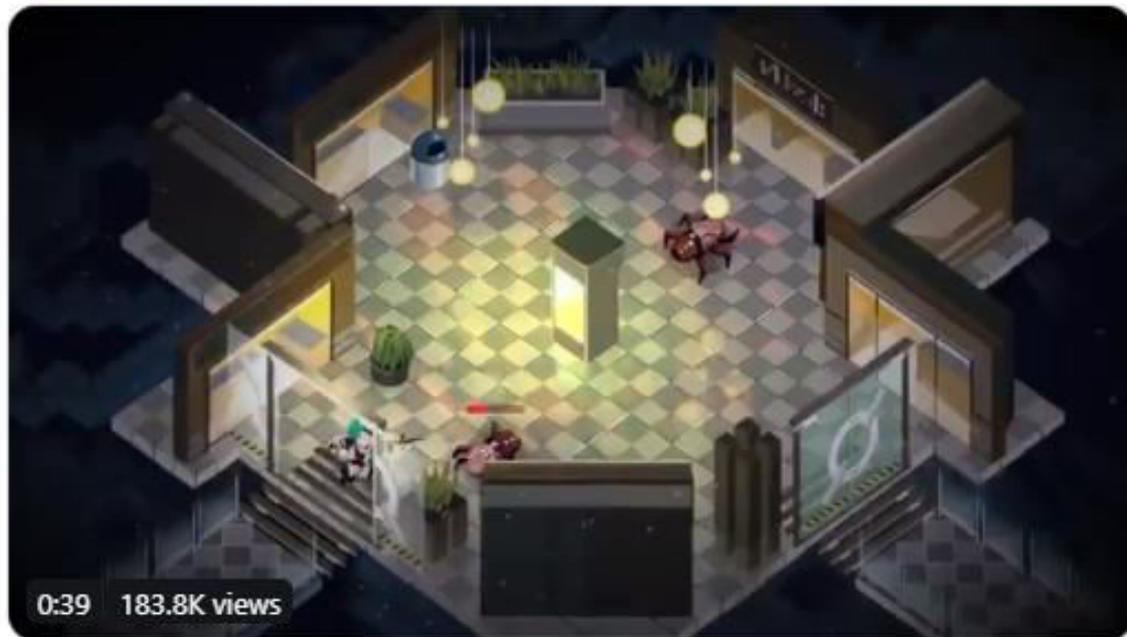




**Kitfox Games** 🦊 **PAX East** @KitfoxGames · Oct 19, 2017

Announcing our upcoming game... Romance your swords in the dating-dungeon-crawler **BOYFRIEND DUNGEON!**

🌹 [boyfrienddungeon.com](http://boyfrienddungeon.com)



🗨 281

↻ 2.7K

❤ 6K





- ▣ **Price:** \$10-\$20 USD
- ▣ **Style:** Anime/manga style → but NSFW?
- ▣ **Differences:** Focused on 1 gender, not just a visual novel
- ▣ **Viability:** \*HUMOR\*
- ▣ **Scope:** Dungeon crawling would need to be robust

## SUMMARY: WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- ▣ Similar genre/categories/ideas
- ▣ Popularity of game
- ▣ How was the game positioned?
- ▣ Competitor's reach/marketing ability
- ▣ General industry trends

# 3. SWOT Analysis

*strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats*

## WHY?

- ▣ Leverage strengths and opportunities; understand risk/threats
- ▣ Look at both internal and external factors
- ▣ Less market-focused (numbers) but more marketing focused.
- ▣ Will lead you to your game's differentiators and message which should drive your marketing strategy

## STRENGTH

- ❑ What does your game do best ?
- ❑ What is the experience players can get from only your game?
- ❑ What does your studio excel at?
- ❑ What resources and skills do you have that can showcase your strengths to the fullest?



## WEAKNESS

- ▣ What does your game not do well?
- ▣ What do competitor games and studios do better than you?
- ▣ Where are your resources limited?
- ▣ Where have you been lacking in your marketing?



## OPPORTUNITY

- Where is there a blank space in the market you can own?
  - Underserved markets
  - Few competitors in a genre
  - A new marketing approach
  - A new mechanic or crazy unique visual style
- Media coverage possibilities
- What are your goals and how can you seize unexplored opportunity to accomplish them?

## THREATS

- ▣ Emerging competitors
- ▣ Steam discoverability/algorithm changes
- ▣ Changing customer tastes by the time game releases
- ▣ A new platform releasing
- ▣ What obstacles are you facing?
  - Taking too long to make a game
  - Lack of resources
  - Something very similar already exists





## OLD MAN'S JOURNEY SWOT

### ▣ Strengths:

- Unique mechanic of moving the landscape
- Beautiful hand drawn art style
- Tells a moving story without any text; a narrative game that's accessible globally
- Encourages exploration without pressure
- Unusual main character (old man)
- Mobile + PC launch



## OLD MAN'S JOURNEY SWOT

### Weaknesses:

- Main character is an old man, doesn't often resonate as well
- Only 90 minutes with premium price
- Mechanic hard to explain in text form
- Not much replay value
- Works best on mobile



## OLD MAN'S JOURNEY SWOT

### ▣ Opportunities

- Leverage new landscape shaping mechanic
- Connect with players around the world without language barriers
- Utilize video and screenshots to showcase gameplay and evoke desired feeling



## OLD MAN'S JOURNEY SWOT

### ▣ Threats:

- App Store homepage change looming
- Designed with tablets/phone in mind (a negative with PC players)
- Another highly anticipated narrative-driven mobile game was slated for very close launch window



**Now what??**



You've identified your competitors, looked at the market to determine viability and evaluated your games SWOT but what do you DO with that?

# 4. Messaging & Value Proposition

*Merging the pieces together to position your game*

## **Crafting A Foundational Message/Elevator Pitch for Your Game!**

You have to figure out how to get the world excited about your game. But first...you have to know how to talk about it.

## Using the Competitive Analysis & SWOT

- ▣ Determine differentiators:
  - What does your game offer that competitors don't?
  - Why should someone choose to play your game instead?
  - What do your competitors NOT say about their game?
- ▣ Identify your game's value proposition; the unique experience for the player:
  - Ask what players can get from your game they can't get from anything else

## **USES FOR COMPETITOR ANALYSIS & SWOT**

**Differentiators + value proposition = how you talk about your game**



HuniePop is a unique sim experience for PC, Mac and Linux. It's a gameplay first approach that's part dating sim, part puzzle game, with light RPG elements, a visual novel style of presentation, an abrasive western writing style and plenty of "plot".



Romance your swords! Capture the hearts of weapons to level them up in this "shack-and-slash" dungeon crawling adventure.

## Resonating Focus: Tweaking Messaging For Your Audience

- ❑ Different audiences have different interests and priorities.
- ❑ Your message should be focused for each audience.
- ❑ What does the audience I am talking to actually care about (press vs. community vs. players vs. platform holder)?

## OLD MAN'S JOURNEY MESSAGE TWEAKED PER AUDIENCE

**Press:** “In *Old Man's Journey*, a soul-searching puzzle adventure about life loss and hope, uncover stories about the old man's life told through beautiful vignettes of his memories in a hand-crafted, whimsical, and sunkissed world. Shape the landscape around you, growing the hills to create his path forward.

**Mobile Players:** In *Old Man's Journey*, a soul-searching story adventure about life, loss and hope, embark on a beautifully sunkissed, contemplative, and heartfelt journey of pressure-free puzzle solving.

**Steam Players:** In *Old Man's Journey*, a soul-searching puzzle adventure about life, loss and hope, uncover stories about the old man's life as you shape the sunkissed landscape around you, growing hills to create his path forward.

# 5. Common Mistakes

*i'm so unique!*

## ONLY LOOKING AT SUCCESS STORIES

- ❑ Market moves fast! Relying on success stories is relying on info that likely is no longer relevant.
- ❑ Examining failure is crucial.
- ❑ From failure you gather insight on how you can handle challenges differently.
- ❑ If games in a similar genre, audience etc. are *consistently* failing, consider evaluating your idea and iterating



## ASSUMING YOU'RE A UNIQUE SNOWFLAKE

- ❑ There is always something similar to you
- ❑ You cannot ever assume your game is different enough to not warrant looking at competitors



## BEING TOO SHORT-SIGHTED

- ❑ Will your idea/marketing plan still be relevant by your launch time frame?
- ❑ Stay on top of all relevant platforms and games
- ❑ Project your game idea and marketing content out



## NOT DOING RESEARCH EARLY

- ▣ Doing research early gives you the ability and freedom to iterate well!

## FOCUSING ON WHAT YOU THINK IS IMPORTANT, NOT THE PLAYER

- ❑ What the player values is often different than what you THINK they value
- ❑ Combat this by watching people play your game early and often (watch what they do, not what they say)
- ❑ Look at what other people talked about about your competitors

**REVIEW**

**Viability**

**Marketing**

**Insights**

**Competitor Research, SWOT, Value Proposition**

# THANK YOU!

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