



Game Market Copilot

STEAM 2025-2026

Steam's new releases are surging How widespread is generative AI use, and how do players rate games that disclose it?

Of the 21,513 new games released on Steam in January-September 2026, 38.1% disclose AI use.

We compared their review counts, review scores and negative reviews with those of games with no AI disclosure.



— The questions this report answers

Six questions about making games with AI, answered

1. How much have AI-disclosed games increased?

38.1% of new games released in Jan-Sep 2026 disclose AI use. Their monthly count jumped again from July, and they account for 4,807 of the 6,627 additional releases. [page 5](#)

2. Do AI-disclosed games get fewer reviews?

28.5% of AI-disclosed games reached 10 reviews, vs 45.4% of games with no AI disclosure. Within each release-history group, the share is still lower for AI-disclosed games. [page 8](#)

3. How are AI-disclosed games rated?

Among AI-disclosed games with 10+ reviews, only **6.5%** are below 50% positive. But 57.6% are rated 80% positive or higher, vs 70.4% of games with no AI disclosure. [page 9](#)

4. Does the gap close among games with many reviews?

No. Among games with 50+ or 100+ reviews, the gap in the share rated 80% positive or higher remains, at **14.0 and 15.8 percentage points**. [page 10](#)

5. Do ratings differ by what AI is used for?

When games are split by the uses their disclosures mention, the share rated 80% positive or higher shows no gap, and the gap in reaching 10 reviews depends on how the uses are classified. Nothing clearly shows that using AI for images is a particular disadvantage. [page 12](#)

6. What are players unhappy about?

In one negative review sampled per AI-disclosed game, **12.9%** criticize generative AI. Gameplay and bugs come up more often, and AI-disclosed games get more negative reviews about the game itself than games with no AI disclosure. [page 13](#)

Taken together, the six answers suggest that **what counts is polish, more than whether AI is used**. [page 16](#)

— Before you read

Caveats and contents



Shuntaro Nakajima

Founder, Game Market Copilot

Generative AI is improving at a startling pace, and my social feeds are full of posts about using it in game development, along with stories of announced games being copied with AI. It can make development easier, but it is also tied to misuse and online controversy. So I looked at what is actually happening to games on Steam.

Three caveats

1. On Steam, AI-use disclosure is the developer’s self-report. A game with no disclosure may still use AI.
2. The figures show associations. They do not show that AI use is the cause.
3. Review counts and review scores record how games were received, not how they sold.

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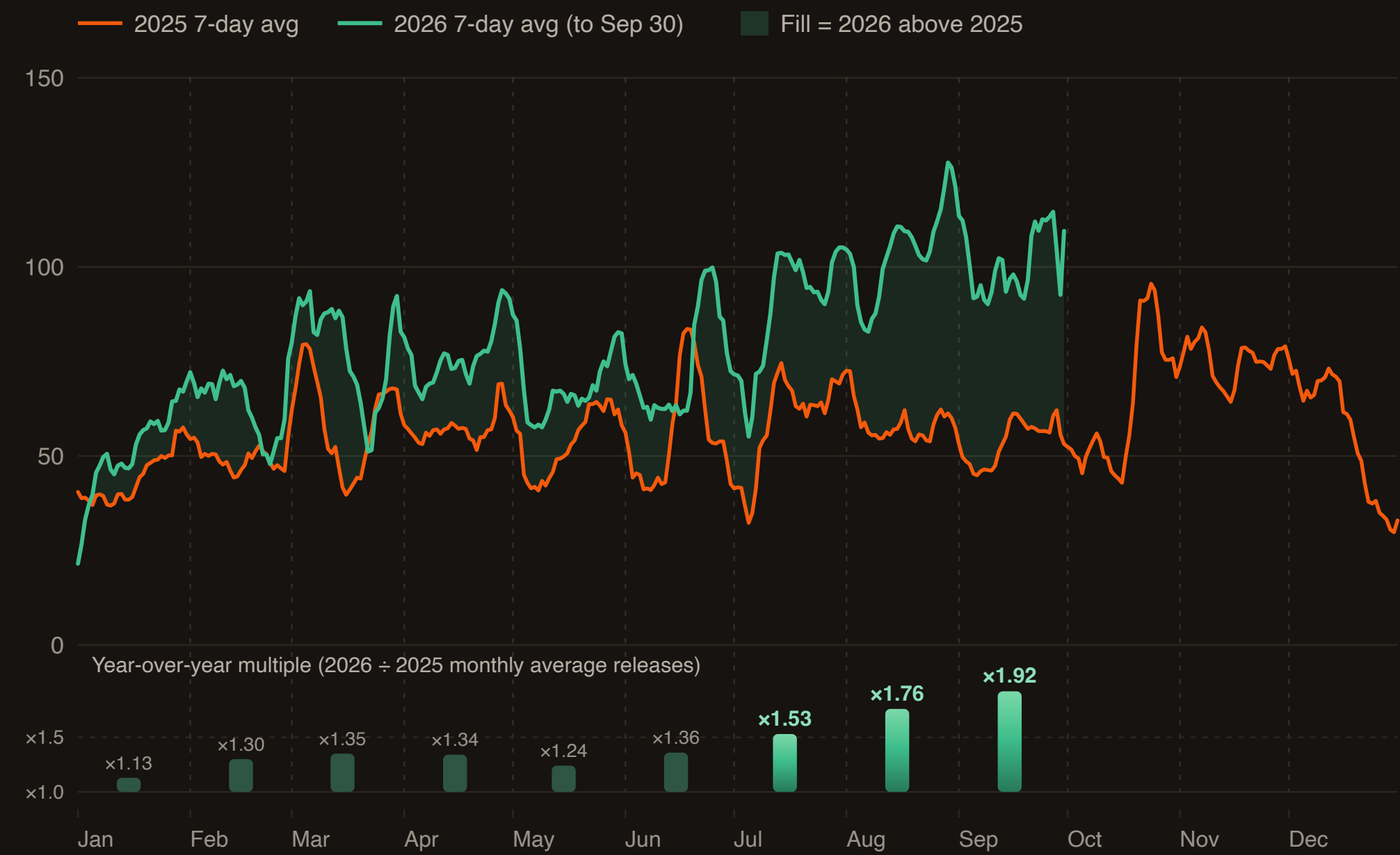
17 Scope, method and definitions

Charts that compare years use orange for 2025 and green for 2026. Bars that compare AI disclosure use green for AI-disclosed games and gray for games with no AI disclosure, and every row is labeled. Choosing a release date is covered in our previous report, “How should you pick a Steam release date?”

Background: How much releases grew, and who made them

Steam release counts over time: the acceleration since July

From January to June, monthly releases in 2026 were 1.13 to 1.36 times the same month of 2025. July, August and September reached 1.53, 1.76 and 1.92 times, averaging 91.3, 100.1 and 103.6 releases a day. Excluding games whose release date moved to 2026 when they left Early Access (about 4% each month), the multiples are still 1.47, 1.69 and 1.83, so the July-September increase is larger than January-June.



69% of the 6,627 additional releases came from first-time developers

Both years cover January-September.

	2025 → 2026	
Share of games from first-time developers 4,592 of the 6,627 additional releases	58.9 → 62.1%	First-release share is up
Share of games from developers with 5+ releases in the past year No increase confirmed at thresholds of 3 or 10 either	7.8 → 6.9%	High-volume share is not up
Share of self-published games Developer and publisher names match	75.3 → 78.6%	Self-published share is up
Share of free games Free to Play vs paid games	14.7 → 11.7%	Paid-game share is up
Share of AI-disclosed games Details on the next page (page 5)	22.8 → 38.1%	AI-disclosed share is up

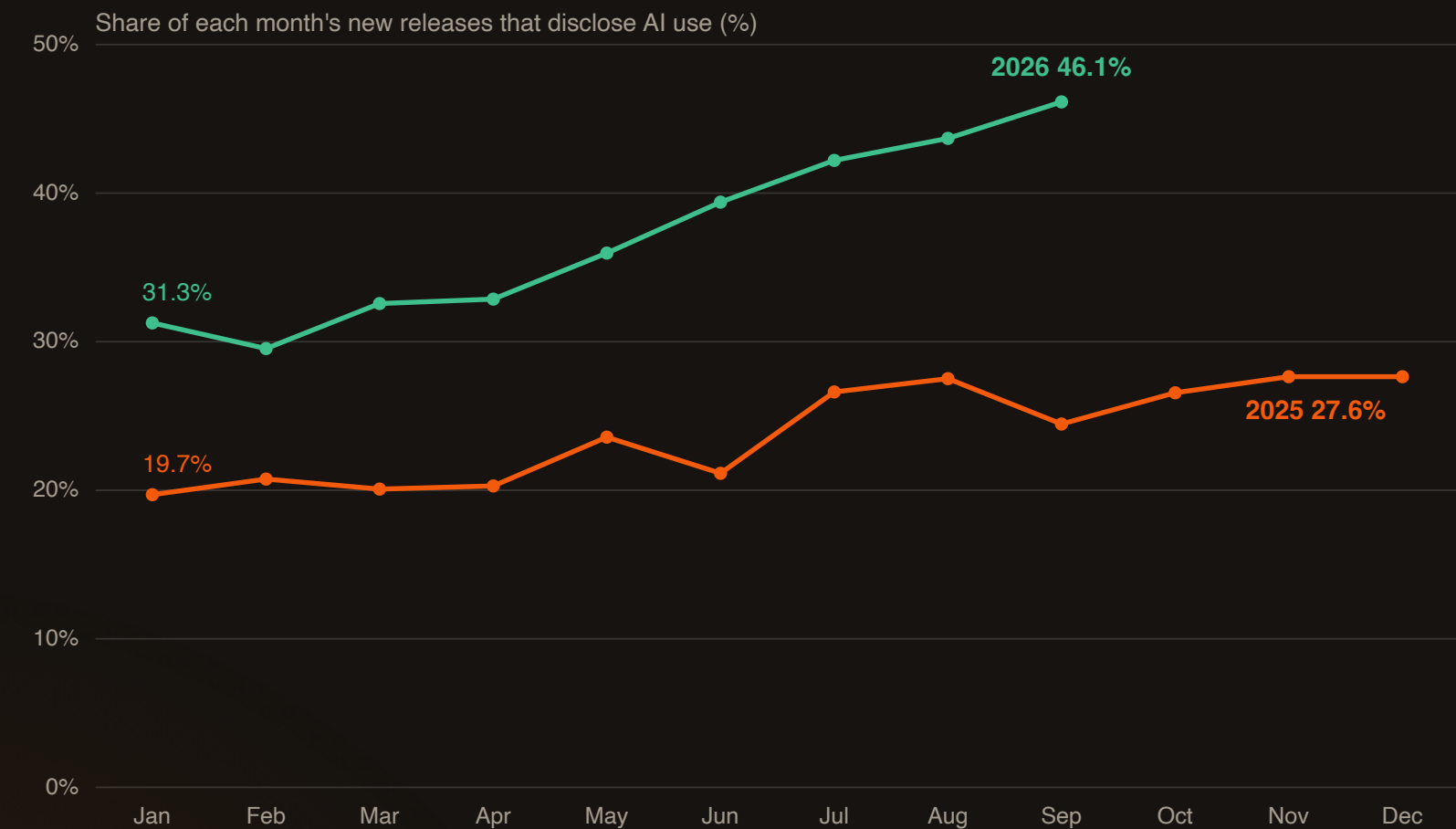
Developer names are matched as text. A developer who deleted earlier games or changed their name counts as first-time, so read the change from 2025 rather than the level itself.

Source: Game Market Copilot / Scope: 20,837 new games of 2025 and 21,513 new games released Jan 1-Sep 30, 2026 (developer comparisons use 14,886 games from Jan-Sep 2025 and 21,513 from Jan-Sep 2026) / Data as of 2026-10-18 (the shape of the 2025 daily line uses data from our previous report) / Multiple = ratio of average daily releases in each month / "5+ releases in the past year" = any developer name on the game released 5 or more other games in the 366 days up to its release date / The share of AI-disclosed games covers 14,886 games from Jan-Sep 2025 and 21,513 from Jan-Sep 2026 (details on page 5)

Question 1: How much have AI-disclosed games increased?

The share of AI-disclosed games rose from 24.5% to 46.1% in one year

The share of each month's new releases that disclose AI use on the store was 19.7% in January 2025 and 24.5% in September 2025, then climbed to 46.1% a year later, in September 2026. Disclosure is the developer's self-report, so a game with no disclosure may still use AI. This is our guess, but the share of games that actually use AI may be higher.



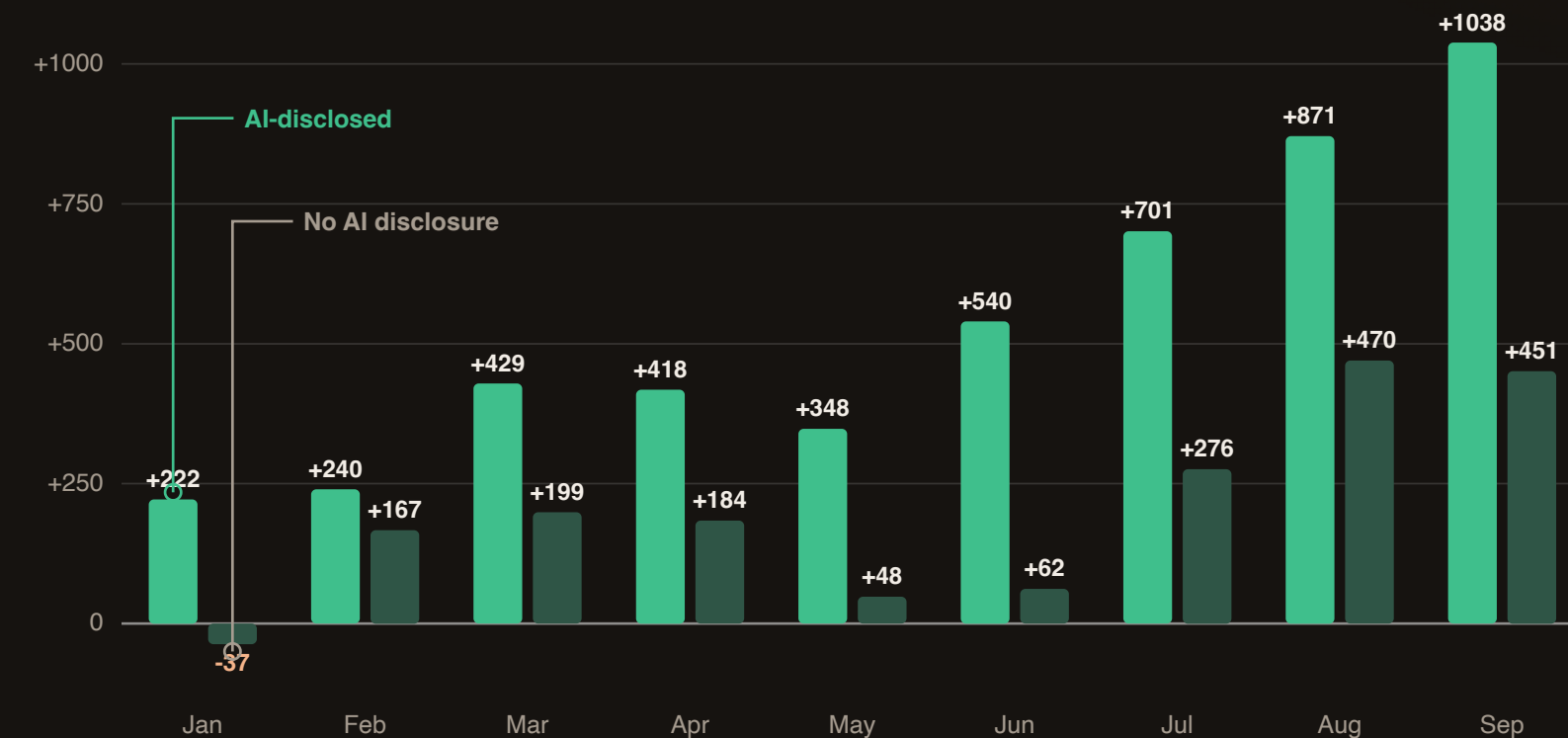
The disclosure rules narrowed in January 2026: use as a development tool, such as coding assistance, no longer has to be disclosed. Even so, the 2026 share is above the 2025 share.

Source: Game Market Copilot / Scope: monthly totals of 42,350 new Steam games released Jan 2025-Sep 2026 (1,364 to 3,108 per month) / Data as of 2026-10-18 / The 95% margin of error for each month's share is at most ±2.3 percentage points

Question 1: Breaking down the increase

Of the 6,627 additional releases, 4,807 disclose AI use

Each bar is the change from the same month a year earlier, split by AI disclosure. September had the largest increase: +1,038 AI-disclosed games and +451 with no AI disclosure. In January, AI-disclosed releases rose by 222 while releases with no AI disclosure fell by 37.



4,807/6,627 AI-disclosed

The Jan-Sep increase and the AI-disclosed part of it (72.5%). Games with no AI disclosure: +1,820.

AI-disclosed share 22.8 → 38.1%

Share of AI-disclosed games, Jan-Sep 2025 vs Jan-Sep 2026

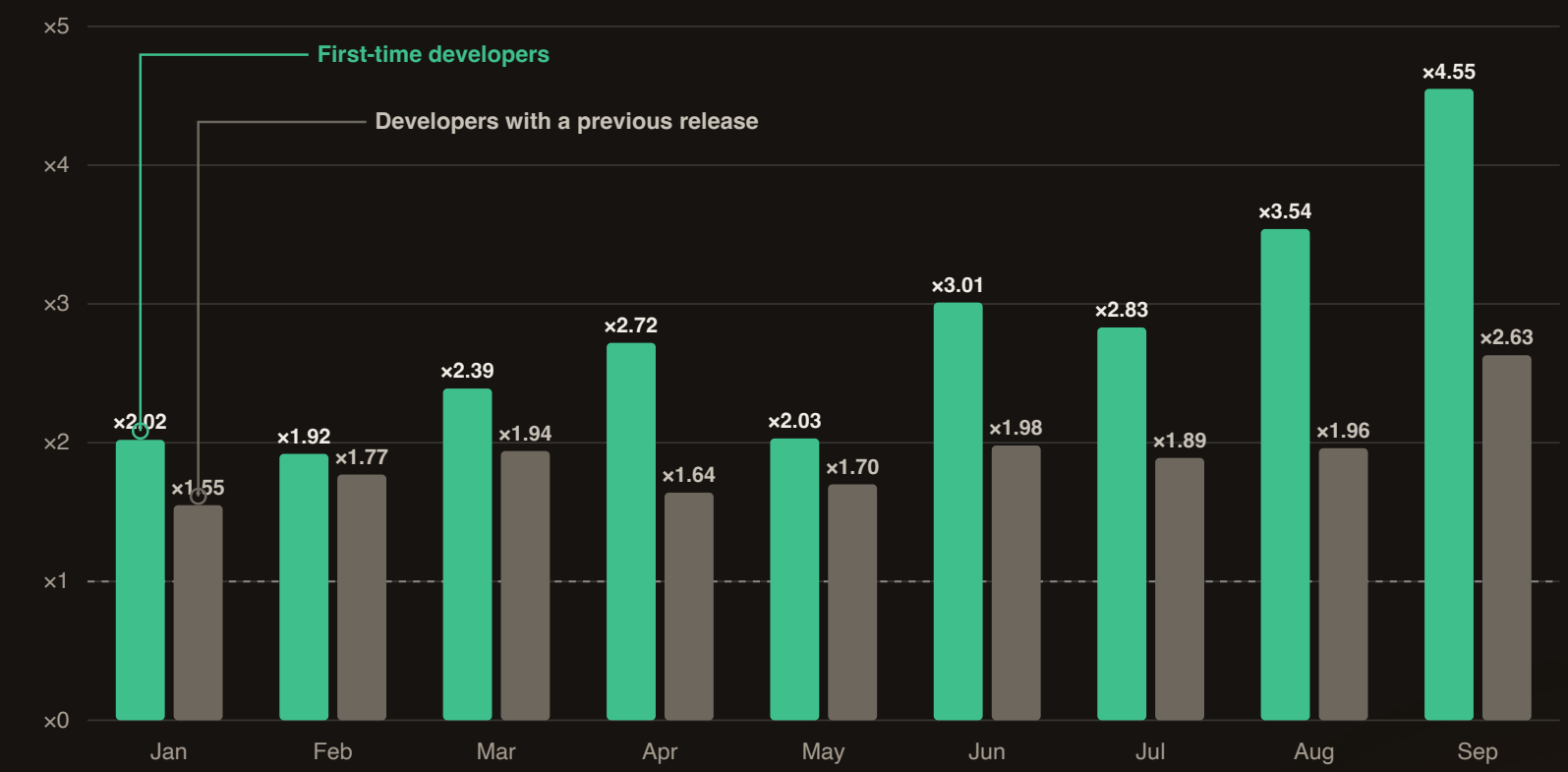
This only splits the added games by disclosure. It does not show what caused the increase, or how many games actually used AI.

Source: Game Market Copilot / Scope: difference between each month of Jan-Sep 2026 and the same month of 2025 (total +6,627) / Data as of 2026-10-18

Question 1: Whose games are increasing?

AI-disclosed releases vs the same month a year earlier, by developer release history

Each month's count of AI-disclosed games as a multiple of the same month a year earlier, split by the developer's release history. For first-time developers the multiple ranges from 1.92 to 4.55; for developers with a previous release, from 1.55 to 2.63. In June, August and September, AI-disclosed releases from first-time developers were more than three times the number a year earlier.



The data shows only that the counts rose. The idea that AI lets people who wanted to make games, but could not, now make them is a hypothesis that Steam data alone cannot confirm.

What pages 8 and 9 check

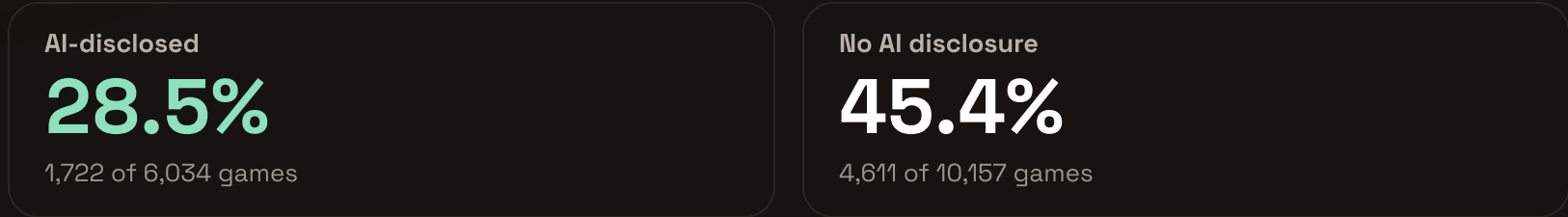
If first releases are rising this fast among AI-disclosed games, could the gaps in review counts and review scores come from being a first release rather than from AI disclosure? We split games by the developer's release history and compare.

Source: Game Market Copilot / Scope: new games released Jan 2025-Sep 2026 (extracted 2026-10-18) / "First-time developer" = a game whose release date matches the earliest release date in the catalog for that developer name / Multiple = each month's AI-disclosed count, 2026 ÷ 2025

Question 2: Do AI-disclosed games get fewer reviews?

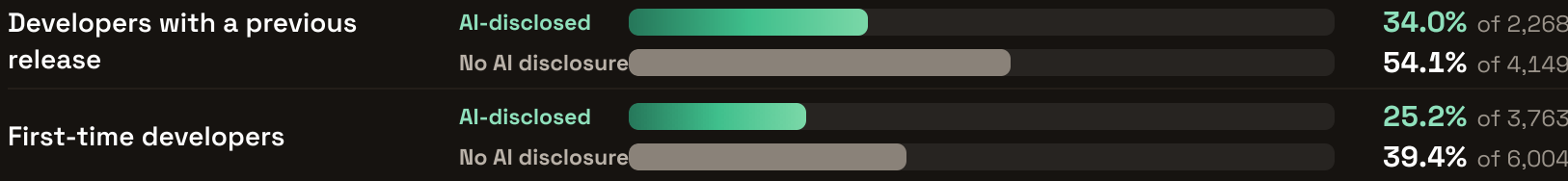
With or without a previous release, AI-disclosed games reach 10 reviews less often

Once a game has 10 reviews, Steam shows its review score (the percentage of positive reviews) on the store page. Among 16,191 paid new games released January-August 2026, 28.5% of AI-disclosed games reached 10 reviews, vs 45.4% of games with no AI disclosure. Games from first-time developers reach 10 reviews less often whether or not they disclose AI. Even so, when we compare developers with the same release history, a smaller share of AI-disclosed games reached 10 reviews in both groups.



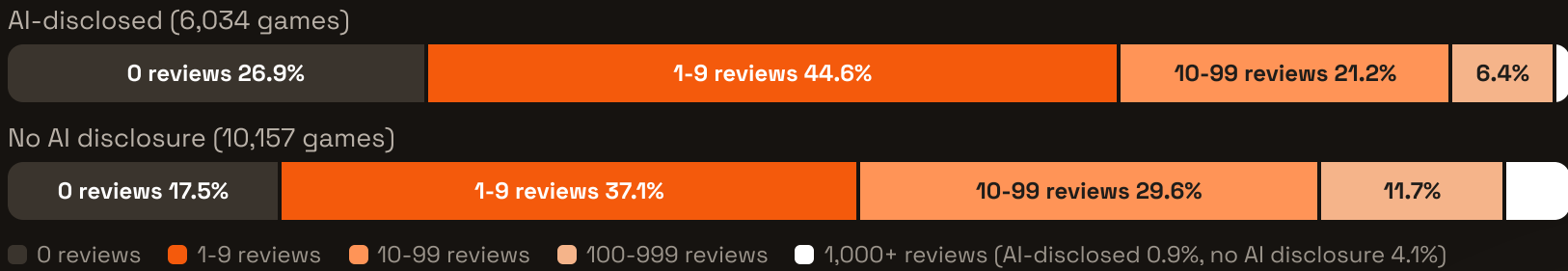
Share with 10+ reviews, by developer release history

Games from first-time developers make up 62.4% of AI-disclosed games and 59.1% of games with no AI disclosure, a similar mix.



Each full bar is every game in that group (100%). The colored part is the share that reached 10 or more reviews.

Distribution of review counts Median: 2 for AI-disclosed games, 7 for games with no AI disclosure



Source: Game Market Copilot / Scope: 16,191 paid new Steam games released Jan 1-Aug 31, 2026 (6,034 AI-disclosed, 10,157 with no AI disclosure) / Data as of 2026-10-18 (every game at least 48 days past release). The release-history split excludes 7 games with no developer name (6,031 AI-disclosed, 10,153 with no AI disclosure) / Review count = cumulative reviews from Steam purchasers. The 2,213 free new games are excluded because nearly all of them have 0 on this count.

Question 3: How are AI-disclosed games rated?

Only 6.5% of AI-disclosed games score below 50%.
The gap in the 80%-positive share stays near 13 percentage points by release history

This page covers games with 10 or more reviews, which have a review score on the store. Scores below 50% positive are rare in both groups: 6.5% of AI-disclosed games and 3.1% of games with no AI disclosure. The larger gap is in the share rated 80% positive or higher: 57.6% vs 70.4%. Within each release-history group, that gap is 12.7 percentage points for developers with a previous release and 13.1 for first-time developers. Games from first-time developers are no less likely to be rated 80% positive or higher than games from developers with a previous release.

Distribution of review scores shown on the store

AI-disclosed (1,692 games with 10+ reviews, median 83%)



No AI disclosure (4,573 games with 10+ reviews, median 88%)



80%+ positive 50-79% positive Below 50% positive (AI-disclosed 6.5%, no AI disclosure 3.1%)

Share rated 80% positive or higher, by release history



Each full bar is all games in that group with 10+ reviews and a review score shown (100%). The colored part is the share rated 80% positive or higher. Comparing review scores 30 days after release shows the same pattern.

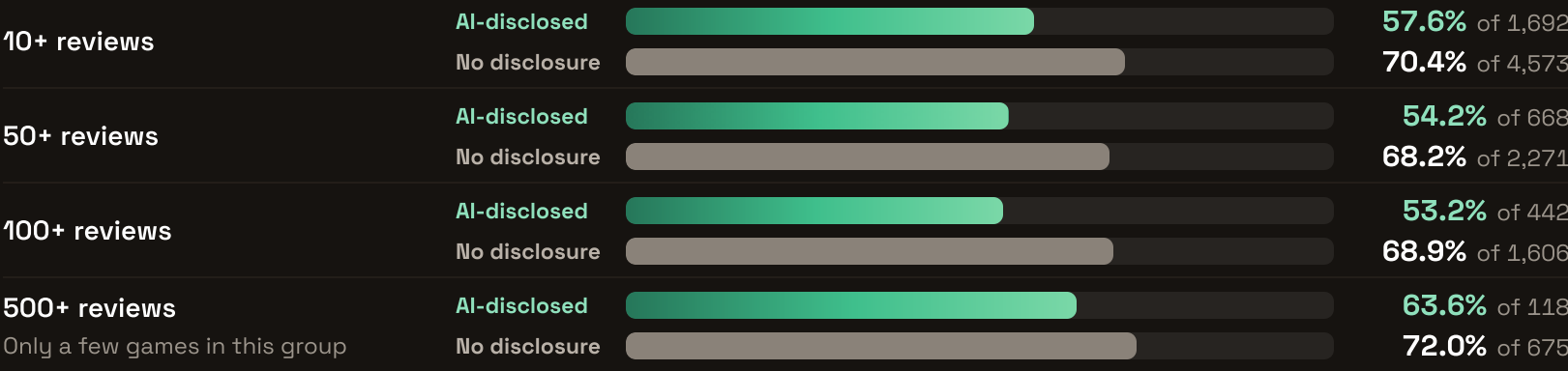
Source: Game Market Copilot / Scope: paid new releases of Jan-Aug 2026 with 10+ reviews and a review score shown on the store, 1,692 AI-disclosed and 4,573 with no AI disclosure / Data as of 2026-10-18. The release-history split excludes 3 games with no developer name (1,691 AI-disclosed, 4,571 with no AI disclosure) / Review score = the percentage of positive reviews shown on the store page / Every game was at least 48 days past release

Question 4: Does the gap close among games with many reviews?

Even among games with many reviews, the gap in the 80%-positive share remains

A review score based on 10 reviews reflects only a few players. Among games reviewed by more players, a smaller share of AI-disclosed games is still rated 80% positive or higher. The gap is 14.0 percentage points at 50+ reviews and 15.8 at 100+ reviews. Few games have 500+ reviews, so read that row for direction only. The lower chart counts every released game, including those with no review score yet: 16.1% of AI-disclosed games and 31.7% of games with no AI disclosure show 80% positive or higher on the store.

Share rated 80% positive or higher, by review-count threshold



Each full bar is all games at or above that review count with a review score shown (100%). The colored part is the share rated 80% positive or higher.

Counting every released game

AI-disclosed (all 6,034 games)



No AI disclosure (all 10,157 games)



80%+ positive Below 80% positive (10+ reviews) Under 10 reviews, or no review score shown

Source: Game Market Copilot / Scope: the same 16,191 paid new releases of Jan-Aug 2026 as the left page. Threshold rows count games at or above each review count with a review score shown on the store / Data as of 2026-10-18 / Review scores are compared only among games that reached 10 reviews, and that share differs between the two groups. The review-count gap and the review-score gap cannot be added together or compared in size

Question 5: What do the disclosures say?

Two disclosure categories, and the uses developers describe

Developers declare AI use in the content survey they fill out when submitting a game, and the answer appears on the store page. There are two categories, "pre-generated" and "live-generated." Here are two disclosures, quoted as they appear on the store (the second is shortened).



Category 1: Pre-generated

Certain artistic assets in this work were produced using Stable Diffusion, including but not limited to: scene images, loading images, and select item icons.

The developer says art assets such as scene images, loading images and some item icons were made with Stable Diffusion.

BidKing (released April 15, 2026). Image and disclosure text from the Steam store



Category 2: Includes live-generated

None of the art assets in the game are AI-generated. ... In-game chat is dynamically generated using LLM and text-to-speech technology.

The developer states that no art assets are AI-generated, and that in-game chat is generated on the spot with a large language model and text-to-speech.

AI2U: With You 'Til The End (full release August 12, 2026; in Early Access since January 2025). Image and disclosure text from the Steam store

Nearly all disclosures are pre-generated only



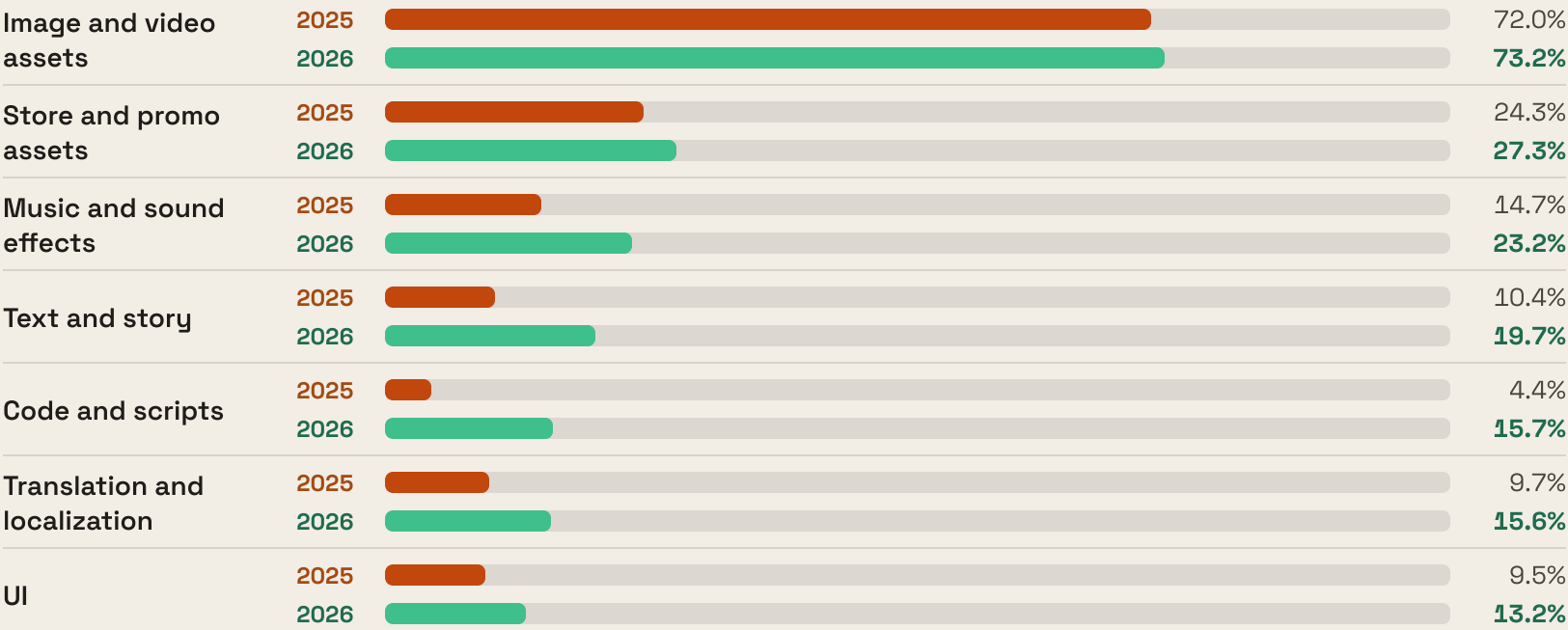
Disclosure category of the 13,218 games released January 2025 to September 2026 that disclose AI use (counted 2026-10-19). Green = 396 games whose disclosure includes live-generated content

Source: Game Market Copilot / Quotes are store-page disclosure texts observed 2026-09-12 to 2026-09-20 (verbatim; the second is shortened) / Category definitions from Valve’s official documentation / These are examples and do not show the overall pattern

Question 5: Do ratings differ by what AI is used for?

Over 70% of disclosures mention images or video

Share of disclosure texts that mention each use. One text can mention several uses, so the shares add up to more than 100%.



Each full bar is all disclosure texts for that year (3,165 for Jan-Sep 2025, 8,068 for Jan-Sep 2026). The colored part is the share of texts that mention the use.

No clear difference by whether disclosures mention images, music, voice or text

We compared 4,948 games whose disclosures mention assets (images, music, voice, text) with 523 that mention only other uses. The share rated 80% positive or higher was 57.2% vs 56.9%. The share that reached 10 reviews was 5.1 percentage points lower for games that mention assets, but under a stricter classification of uses the gap shrinks to 1.3, so the difference is unclear. In 2026, more disclosures also mention other uses such as code and translation.

A January 2026 revision dropped code assistance from the disclosure requirement, yet mentions of code have grown. Disclosure is self-reported, so some games likely use AI without disclosing it.

Source: Game Market Copilot / Scope: disclosure texts on store pages (3,165 for Jan-Sep 2025, 8,068 for Jan-Sep 2026); the use comparison covers the 5,471 of 5,923 paid Jan-Aug 2026 releases with a disclosure text whose uses could be classified / Store pages observed 2026-09-12 to 2026-10-18; reviews as of 2026-10-18 / Uses are machine-classified from the wording; in a manual check of 80 texts, 86% of labels were correct and about 96% of mentions were caught

Question 6: What are players unhappy about?

In negative reviews of AI-disclosed games, 12.9% criticize generative AI, behind gameplay and bugs

We examined the complaints in 1,518 "Not Recommended" reviews (negative reviews from here on), one picked at random per AI-disclosed game. Gameplay is the most common, in over half. 12.9% of them criticize generative AI.

Complaints in negative reviews of AI-disclosed games



Each full bar is all 1,518 negative reviews (100%). One review can fall into several categories. Reviews giving no reason were 7.6%. Complaints about the "AI" of in-game enemies or NPCs are not counted as criticism of generative AI.

Types of criticism of generative AI, with example reviews (translated or paraphrased)

Opposition to AI use itself

5.6% 85 reviews

(As a downside) The art, the other visuals and even the store images are AI-generated.

Paraphrased from an English review

Low-effort criticism tied to AI

5.2% 79 reviews

20 AI-generated pictures. The whole "game" is clicking through them to the very end. 5 minutes of content.

Translated from Russian

Quality of generated content

4.8% 73 reviews

Reading the dialogue made me want to bang my head against a wall. I checked, and AI was used. That explains it.

Paraphrased from an English review

Shares are of all 1,518 negative reviews, and one review can fall into several types. The three-way split is less reliable, so treat it as a rough guide.

Low-effort criticism of any kind appears in 8.7% of these negative reviews; about 60% of it links the low effort to AI. Even among games with no AI disclosure, 2.2% of negative reviews point out or criticize AI use.

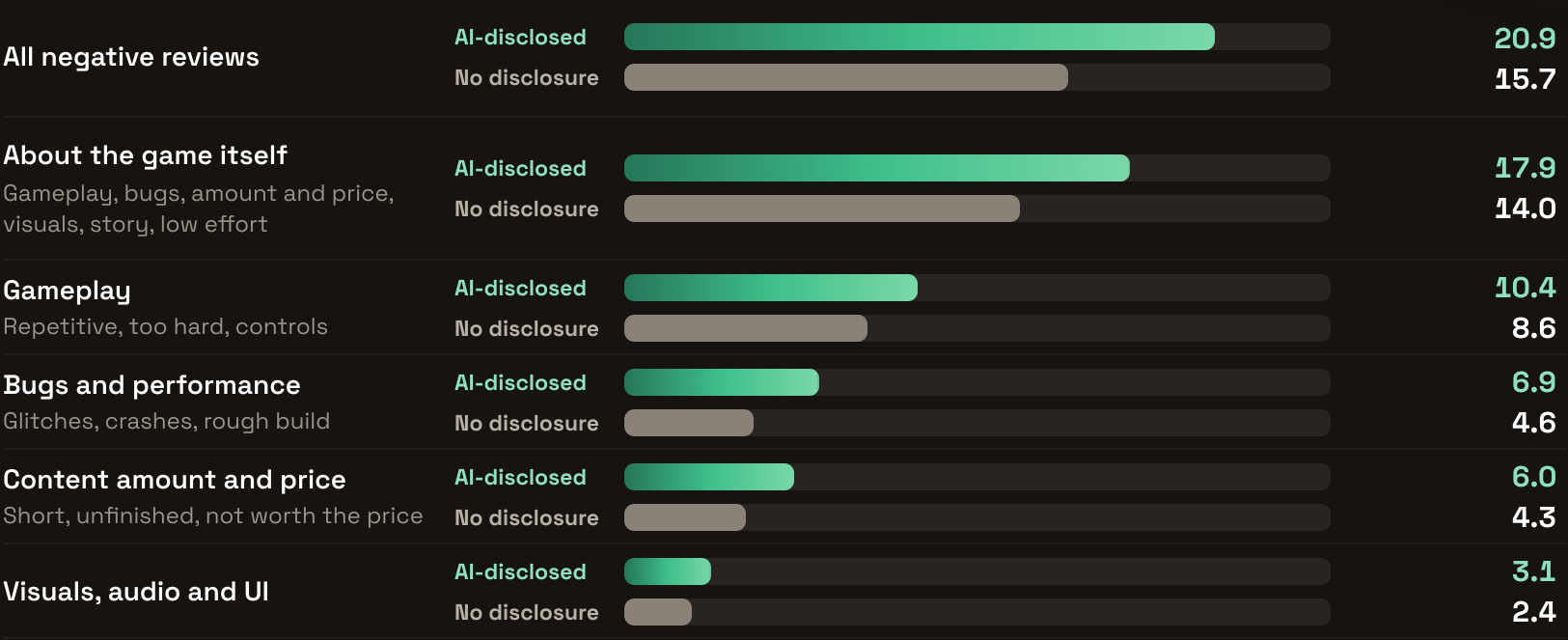
Source: Game Market Copilot / Scope: one negative review from each of 1,518 paid Jan-Aug 2026 releases with 10+ reviews; posted through Oct 11, all languages / Against 120 human-read reviews: 86% of flagged criticism of generative AI correct, 4% missed. Examples are from those 120, not representative, titles and reviewers omitted / Data as of 2026-10-18

Question 6: Compared with games with no AI disclosure

Negative reviews about the game itself are more common for AI-disclosed games

Complaint shares differ by about 6 percentage points at most (gameplay). The volume differs more: per 100 reviews, negative reviews about the game itself average 17.9 for AI-disclosed games vs 14.0 for games with no AI disclosure. For bugs and performance the rate is 1.5 times as high, and for content amount and price 1.4 times.

Negative reviews per 100 reviews (average across games)



Full bar = 25 per 100 reviews. One review can carry several complaints, so the rows below sum to more than the row above. Not shown: story, writing and translation 2.4 vs 2.0; low effort without AI mention 0.8 vs 0.4; criticism of generative AI 2.5 vs 0.4.

Hypothesis

Many AI-disclosed games may have been released before they were finished enough. Rather than worrying about AI use itself, developers may do better to focus on polish: how complete the game is and how much care goes into it.

These are complaints from players who wrote reviews. Review text cannot tell us why AI-disclosed games reach 10 reviews less often (page 8), such as whether players miss them or avoid buying them.

Source: Game Market Copilot / Scope: games with 10+ reviews (1,721 AI-disclosed, 4,609 with no AI disclosure). Each game's share of negative reviews (Steam-purchase reviews through October 11) times the complaints in its one sampled negative review (left page), averaged across games; games with no negative reviews count as 0, and the no-disclosure figure is estimated from 1,518 games / Data as of 2026-10-18

Conclusion: Answers to the six questions

AI-disclosed games have surged. A smaller share reaches 10 reviews or a high rating

Q1 How much have AI-disclosed games increased?

A **Nearly 40% of new releases disclose AI use, with a further jump since July**

38.1% in Jan-Sep 2026. AI-disclosed games went from about 500-900 a month in Jan-Jun to about 1,200-1,400 a month in Jul-Sep, and make up 72.5% of the added releases. [Pages 5-7](#)

Q2 Do AI-disclosed games get fewer reviews?

A **Yes. With or without a previous release, a smaller share reaches 10 reviews**

Share that reached 10 reviews: 28.5% vs 45.4%. [Page 8](#)

Q3 How are AI-disclosed games rated?

A **Few score below 50%, but a smaller share reaches 80% positive**

Below 50% positive (10+ reviews): 6.5%. Rated 80% positive or higher: 57.6% vs 70.4%, about 13 percentage points apart within each release-history group. [Page 9](#)

Q4 Does the gap close among games with many reviews?

A **No**

Among games with 100+ reviews, the gap in the share rated 80% positive or higher is 15.8 percentage points. [Page 10](#)

Q5 Do ratings differ by what AI is used for?

A **Any difference by use is unclear**

Over 70% of disclosures mention image or video assets. [Page 12](#)

Q6 What are players unhappy about?

A **More complaints are about the game itself than about AI**

Of negative reviews (one per game), 12.9% criticize generative AI. AI-disclosed games get more negative reviews about the game itself. [Pages 13-14](#)

These gaps do not show that AI use is the direct cause. They are patterns in Steam data associated with AI-use disclosure.

Using this in development decisions

Whether or not you use AI, polish is what matters

Three points hold across the six questions.

1 Criticism of generative AI exists, but it is not the main complaint

Of the negative reviews sampled one per game, 1 in 8 (12.9%) criticizes generative AI. Among games with 10+ reviews, only 6.5% of AI-disclosed games are below 50% positive (3.1% with no AI disclosure).

2 Fewer AI-disclosed games get reviews in the first place

28.5% of AI-disclosed games reach 10 reviews, vs 45.4% of games with no AI disclosure, and the gap holds within each release-history group. This data cannot tell us why.

3 When reviews come, more of them criticize the game itself

Negative reviews center on gameplay, bugs, and content amount and price. Per 100 reviews, AI-disclosed games receive 17.9 negative reviews about the game itself on average, vs 14.0 for games with no AI disclosure. Page 14 has a hypothesis about how finished these games are.

Polish comes before the AI question

It may sound obvious, but whether or not you use AI, what matters is a polished game: gameplay that feels good, few bugs, and enough content for the price. My own view as the author is that AI-disclosed games may get fewer reviews because games that "look AI-made" tend to be passed over on the store; this data does not confirm it. With that in mind, if you don't raise your game's polish further, you won't even get a chance to compete.

— Scope and method

What we included and what we left out

Games covered

The 42,350 released titles registered as games on Steam with a release date of January 1, 2025 to September 30, 2026. Demos, DLC, soundtracks and tools are excluded. Each game counts once, on its recorded release date.

Games in the review comparison

The 16,191 paid games released January 1 to August 31, 2026 (6,034 AI-disclosed, 10,157 with no AI disclosure), each at least 48 days past release. September releases are left out: too little time to collect reviews.

Review counts and review scores

Cumulative Steam-purchase reviews (no key activations). The review score is the store’s percentage of positive reviews, compared only among games with 10+ reviews. Scores at 30 days show the same pattern.

Why free games are left out

Counting purchase reviews only, the 2,213 free new releases have almost none, so they cannot be compared. Including them, the gap in the share with 10+ reviews is -14.2 percentage points, in the same direction.

Data date and catalog lag

Newly released games can take some days to appear in the catalog. The data date, October 18, 2026, is 18 days after the end of September, so the September count may still rise slightly.

Breakdown of negative reviews

One random negative review per game (10+ reviews, at least one negative), so a few big games cannot dominate: among AI-disclosed games, the top 10 hold 53% of all negative reviews. An AI model classified them, checked against 120 human-judged reviews (extra ones with AI-related words).

Classifying uses in disclosure texts

Disclosure texts are machine-classified by the uses they describe; one text can have several. Unwritten uses are not ruled out, and the amount of AI use is not measured.

What we did not study

Comparisons within matched genres and price bands, the effect of the choice to disclose, purchase decisions, and what positive reviews say.

January 2024: AI-use disclosure begins

Steam began allowing games that use generative AI and required disclosure at the same time.

January 2026: Disclosure scope revised

Use as a development tool, such as code assistance, was taken out of scope, narrowing disclosure to content players experience. This report’s 2025 vs 2026 comparison spans this revision.

— Definitions

Terms used in this report

AI-disclosed / no AI disclosure

A game’s current AI-use disclosure in the Steam catalog, self-reported by the developer; no disclosure does not mean no AI use. Store-page disclosure sections show the same rise, 21.3% to 37.5%.

Pre-generated / live-generated

Valve’s two disclosure categories. Pre-generated: content made with AI during development and shipped in the game. Live-generated: AI creates content on the spot during play.

How release history is split

”First-time developer”: the game is the first catalog release for every developer name on it; otherwise ”developer with a previous release.” Names are matched as text, so delisted games or renamed developers count as first-time.

Developers with 5+ releases in the past year

Games where any credited developer name released 5+ other games in the 366 days up to and including the release date. Cutoffs of 3 and 10 were also checked.

Self-published

Games whose developer and publisher names match. It says nothing about company size, ownership or contract type.

Vs the same month a year earlier

Each 2026 month’s value divided by the same month’s value in 2025. Page 4 uses release counts, and page 7 uses counts of AI-disclosed games.

10 reviews, high rating, below 50%

Steam shows a review score (the percentage of positive reviews) once a game has 10 reviews. We use that as the line for ”has reviews,” call 80% positive or higher a high rating, and look at below 50% separately.

Negative reviews and criticism of generative AI

Reviews marked ”Not Recommended.” Criticism of generative AI has three types: opposing AI use (including missing disclosure), low-effort criticism tied to AI, and complaints about generated content. Enemy or NPC ”AI” complaints count as gameplay.

Game Market Copilot collects Steam catalog and purchase-review data to support developers’ and publishers’ decisions with numbers and AI tools. You may quote and reproduce this report’s numbers and charts, crediting ”Game Market Copilot.” Quoted disclosure texts and game images are from the Steam store.

Cover images: Crimson Desert Enhanced / Librarian: Tidy Up the Arcane Library! / DragonSword: Awakening / EA SPORTS FC 27 (four AI-disclosed games released Jan-Sep 2026 with high review counts)

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