

Recently, [Steam made the news for banning all games involving NFTs](#). Not just NFTs, though: the platform also banned all blockchain games and cryptocurrency applications. Steam's onboarding documents now explicitly outline blockchain and NFT games are disallowed, and developers who have games fitting this criteria found their titles summarily removed from the storefront. This was the case with *Age of Rust*, the NFT adventure game created by a solo developer who is now unable to generate further royalties from the platform.

Steam is the world's largest digital distribution platform for PC gaming, [with over 95 million monthly active users](#). While it has competition from GOG Galaxy, Epic, Humble Bundle, and Itch.io, none of these platforms match Steam's market share. Thus, anything Steam does will certainly have a ripple effect on the industry while hobbling blockchain game developers in making a living from their work.

If you were making a blockchain game and planned on selling on Steam, here's what you can do.

Blockchain Games Prove Direct Downloads Are Still An Option

The main appeal of crypto and blockchain is the decentralization aspect. *Axie Infinity* is one the world's largest and most successful blockchain that far outpaces what most typical North American indie games earn on Steam, GOG, and other digital distribution platforms.

The game not only has a massive player base throughout the global south, in regions that AAA developers tend to ignore and indie developers have a difficult time reaching with conventional distribution and monetization, but it was never even available on Steam. The game directly downloads to one's computer similarly to how direct downloads worked with purchase pages in the Web 1.0 era. It's the players who distribute more new copies of the game, rather than desperately trying to beat the Steam visibility algorithm and pumping more money into marketing.

Even for games that are not made with blockchain technology, it's possible to succeed with direct downloads only-- even if it is more difficult. [Jason Rohrer's *One Hour One Life*](#) is an excellent lesson in the risks and benefits of doing so.

However, blockchain games have a benefit that the experienced indie developer did not have: crypto games have a built-in fanbase that is incredibly tech-savvy and passionate about coins, while indie developers with more traditional fare need to constantly rise above the noise on social media and AAA-preferential algorithms on Steam.

Could Decentralized Distribution of PC Games Come?

Indie developers know they're reliant on Steam, but have been seeking alternatives for a long time. There could be a silver lining to the blockchain ban.

Steam's chief competitor Epic says [they're open to NFT games](#), and the company has a generous grant program for indie developers making games with Unreal Engine (Unreal 4 supports blockchain!) While Epic stresses wanting to comply with laws surrounding cryptocurrency, they want to support developers on both development and distribution fronts.

The crypto gaming community could also lead the charge to create a true alternative to Steam. The appeal for developers to use platforms like Steam are servers to host the build, order management, on-site reviews, and a simple way for players to find the game. However, Steam often leaves indie developers fighting for visibility. Their policies designed for large AAA games can also hurt the makers of small games, as was the now-infamous case with [Emika Games not getting royalties they were due](#).

A game distribution platform that benefits both players and developers is long overdue.

Decentralization through blockchain is a likely ticket to this indie dream.