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The census Valve won't publish

Public census of Steam trade, community and VAC bans, cross-checked against SteamRep and marketplace data to expose enforcement gaps.

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A dated reading edition of the published article. Original evidence, reported claims and editorial interpretation retain the distinctions and limits stated in the text.

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The entries are clickable. The PDF bookmarks provide another route through the document. External source links open the referenced publication or retained file.

Exhibit VI — The census Valve won't publish

Enforcement Audit — The 1,182,811 Ban Census

> We didn't ask Valve how big the farm is. We *counted* it.

WHAT THIS SECTION PROVES

This audit presents an empirical census of 1,182,811 banned accounts using Valve's official GetPlayerBans endpoint, cross-referencing commercial bot farming cohorts with documented fraud registries. It proves that over 63% of banned bots paid Valve's $5.00 store gating fee prior to enforcement, generating millions in initial revenue. Furthermore, among 51,732 convicted scammers documented in fraud registries, over 67% face zero community or trade bans—demonstrating that platform enforcement functions as commercial revenue extraction rather than victim restitution.

← Back to Executive briefing

There is no published figure for how many automation accounts run on Steam. There is no need for one to be secret: the Steam ID space is a contiguous integer range and Valve hands out the Web API key that walks it. So we took the largest population that identifies itself — the ArchiSteamFarm community — and read every member once through Valve's own ban endpoint. It self-declares because ASF, on first launch, automatically joins the Steam group unless the user explicitly opts out or unchecks the group-join setting (`AutoJoinSteamGroup` / Statistics). Because this setting is active by default, group membership captures a broad population: active multi-account commercial bot networks, casual idling hobbyists, and ordinary players who ran the software on their personal account and never removed the default subscription. That makes its membership a working census of the software's cumulative reach: **10,880,610 total accounts (with 5,360,499 confirmed non-limited members past the $5.00 store gate).** Then we asked the only question that matters — what has Valve actually done to them?

What this page is not. It is not an argument that Valve should ban ten million people, and it is not a complaint about card farmers. Every number below is here for one reason: Valve *does* permanently ban individuals, and the reason it gives in writing is commercial use of Steam and automation. This measures how that same rule is applied to the same conduct at scale — by an operator whose $5.00 unlock, game licences and Market fees Valve collects on the way through. The finding is the asymmetry, not the farm.

The 10.88M count The scammers who walk (53.5k) 100k paid vs free audit

10,880,610 Total ASF group members read through Valve's own ban API (limited + non-limited combined)

88.97% Have never been banned at all — 9,680,599 accounts still live

63.06% Of banned accounts are paid ($5+ spend) — 100,000 SRSWOR slice (±0.39% MoE)

67.77% Of 51,732 adjudicated scammers carry zero scam bans (full census)

Ten million accounts, and nine of ten untouched

One population that counts itself, read once through Valve's own endpoint.

WHY IT SELF-COUNTS

ASF joins the group for you

On first run ArchiSteamFarm sets Statistics to true by default and joins the Archi's SC Farm Steam group. An operator has to actively opt out. So the membership is a floor on installs — not a ceiling. Operators who disabled Statistics are absent; the real install count is at least this large.

WHAT WE READ

10,880,610 total entries

The API member list returned 10,880,610 SteamID64s in total — both limited and non-limited. Steam's group page shows 5,360,499 (non-limited only). Every entry was passed once through ISteamUser/GetPlayerBans on 2026-09-23. Fifty-five minutes on one key.

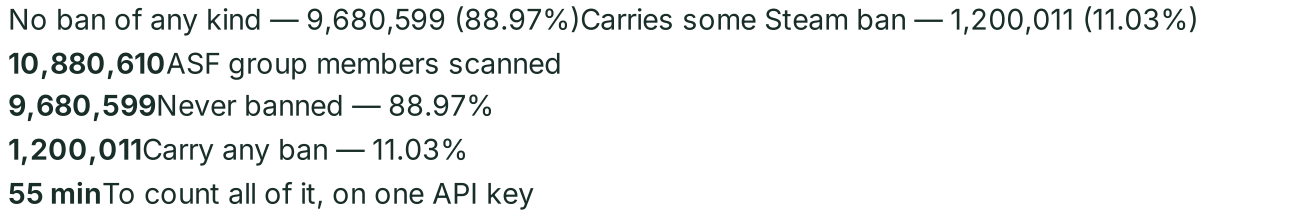
THE ANSWER

88.97% clean

1,200,011 carry any Steam ban (11.03%). The other **9,680,599 have nothing on record at all** — not a community ban, not VAC, nothing. The farm is not being cleared. It is being left running. The same clause, pointed at one person, is enough to remove them permanently.

Of 10,880,610 accounts, how many Valve has touched

The whole scanned population, split by whether Valve has applied any ban at all. The red slice is everything Valve has ever done to this fleet.



10,880,610 ASF group members scanned
9,680,599 Never banned — 88.97%
1,200,011 Carry any ban — 11.03%
55 min To count all of it, on one API key

What this fleet already paid Valve to exist

Not an estimate of what the farm earns. A floor on what it has already spent in Valve's store — derived from Valve's own rule, applied to the count above.

The 10,880,610 count covers the full ASF group member list as returned by the API — this includes both limited and non-limited accounts. Steam's own Limited User Accounts page states that limited accounts do not *count toward* Steam group membership (they are excluded from the displayed group size), but they can still appear in the underlying member list. The non-limited subset — accounts that have spent at least $5.00 in the Steam store — is exactly **5,360,499** — the count Steam displays on the group page, which by Steam's own rule excludes limited accounts. The $5.00 floor calculation applies to that non-limited subset only.

5,360,499 non-limited members
(Steam's displayed group count)
$5.00 Valve's own minimum
to stop being limited
$26,802,495 floor on store spend
by the non-limited subset

This is a lower bound on money already received by Valve from the non-limited fraction of the fleet — not a revenue estimate, not a profit claim. Actual spend per account is higher for most; the $5.00 figure is the minimum required threshold only.

The secondary harvest: up to 66.7% fee on farmed commodity volume. Beyond the $26.8M entrance fee, every card and commodity drop liquidating on the Community Market pays Valve a mandatory two-cent minimum fee floor ($0.01 Steam fee + $0.01 publisher fee). On typical 3-cent cards and junk items, **Valve takes 2 cents out of 3 cents — an effective cut of 66.67% in Valve's favor**, far exceeding the headline 15% marketing rate.

Crucial population caveat: Group membership is not proof that every single account is a dedicated bot, nor does it capture every bot on Steam. ASF automatically subscribes accounts to its community group upon launch by default; unless the user explicitly unticks or disables that configuration flag (`AutoJoinSteamGroup`), regular players, one-time idlers, and community members remain on the roster alongside automated farming fleets. Furthermore, a Steam ban carries no public reason field. The finding is an empirical rate across this software-associated population, not an individual verdict on any single account. Aggregate, reproducible: asf-ban-census-2026-09-23.json.

02 — Geography

Where the fleet lives

Only 8.5% of the banned accounts declare a country at all. Among the ones that do, the largest single share is the United States.

A Steam profile carries an optional country field. **100,413 of the 1,182,811 banned accounts fill it in — 8.5%.**[†] Among that minority the United States leads at 15.5%, then Ukraine, China and Russia, and the rest runs out into a long tail across Europe, Latin America and South-East Asia. Nobody verifies the field: Afghanistan sits in the top ten, which is roughly what it is worth. The other 91.5% are omitted rather than assigned, so what follows is the shape of a self-selected minority — not a map of the fleet, and not a basis for saying where it is run from.

Banned accounts by declared country

Top 15 countries among the 100,413 banned accounts that expose a public location. Share is of that located subset. Hover for counts.

Location read from GetPlayerSummaries for the banned subset. The field is set by the account holder and verified by nobody, so a VPN exit or a joke entry counts the same as a real one.

03 — Freshness

Recent accounts, not a legacy backlog

Dated by account-creation time, the banned population is recent, not a leftover from the trading-card era.

If this were an old mess being slowly cleaned up, the banned accounts would skew to the early trading-card years. They do the opposite. Of the 1,132,852 banned accounts that expose a creation date, **70% were created in 2020 or later, and nearly half since 2023.** The count rises from 59,175 created in 2017 to a peak of **227,030 created in 2024 alone**. Every one of them cleared the $5.00 store gate before it could receive a card, so the entry fee was collected on each.

When the banned accounts were created

Account-creation year of the 1,132,852 banned members that expose a creation date. The mass is 2020–2026, not the 2013–2015 trading-card era. Peak: 2024. Hover for counts.

70%Of banned accounts created in 2020 or later
227,030 Banned accounts created in 2024 — the peak year
51,701 The 2021 trough, between two peak years — unexplained
2003→2026 Range present, but the mass is the last six years
Creation dates from GetPlayerSummaries for the banned subset, deduplicated by SteamID64. A creation date is when the account was made, not when it was banned or when it began farming; it is read here as evidence of how recent the population is, not of intent. Three things the chart does not show:

- **A trend after 2024.** An account made in 2025 or 2026 has had less time to collect a ban, and 2026 covers nine months — so 227,030 → 121,070 → 16,534 is censoring, not a decline.
- **A ban rate.** Creation years were read for banned accounts only, so there is no denominator. A growing install base alone would produce this shape.
- **Why 2021 collapsed.** 51,701 sits between 105,821 and 104,641, under half of either neighbour. Nothing public explains it; it is left visible rather than smoothed.

04 — Timing

When Valve acts, it acts inside the first year

The obvious defence for 88.97% untouched is a backlog. The dated bans say otherwise.

How old the account was when the ban landed

Account age at the moment of the ban, for the 293,750 banned accounts that carry both a creation date and a dated last ban. Over half were caught inside the first year.

Banned inside the first year — 55.1%Banned later — 44.9%
0.80 y Median age of the account when the ban arrived
55.1%Banned inside the first year of the account
33.7%Banned inside the first six months
293,750 Accounts where both dates are present
This is the answer to the obvious defence. If 88.97% of the fleet is untouched because enforcement is simply slow — a backlog working its way through — then the bans that *do* land would skew old. They do the opposite: the median banned account was **nine and a half months old**, and a third — 33.7% — were caught inside six months. When Valve acts on this population, it acts fast. The nine in ten still running are not waiting in a queue.

Age at ban = creation date from GetPlayerSummaries subtracted from the ban date implied by DaysSinceLastBan, read on 2026-09-23. It is computed only where both values are present: 293,750 of the 1,200,011 banned accounts. The remaining accounts report no days-since value and are omitted, not assumed — so read this as the shape of the dated subset, not of every ban.

05 — What the ban actually is

When Valve does act, it doesn't stop the bot

Of the 11% that carry any ban, look at which ban.

A ban is not a ban. Of the 1,200,011 accounts Valve has flagged, **99.8% carry a *community* ban** — a restriction on forums, profiles and groups that does nothing to a trading bot. The account can still receive cards, still trade, still move inventory. 22.2% carry at least one game ban and 3.9% a VAC ban; the categories overlap, so they do not sum. The one sanction that actually severs trading, the economy / trade ban, sits on 5,214 accounts. We are not resting the case on that number — trade bans are rare across Steam generally. The point of this chart is simpler: even the fraction Valve *does* touch keeps trading.

What the 11% who are banned are actually banned for

Each ban type as a share of all 10,880,610 scanned members. Accounts can carry more than one. Hover for counts.

A Steam ban carries no reason field, so none of these bans is attributed to card farming specifically — this is the mix of ban types present, set beside what each type actually restricts. Community ban does not stop trading; the economy / trade ban does. Aggregate: asf-ban-census-2026-09-23.json.

06 — The other population

The scammers Valve lets walk: The 51,732 Complete Census

A second, independent list — community-confirmed fraud — measured against the same official API.

The automation population could be argued away as harmless idlers. The second population cannot. SteamRep is a long-running community reputation database; an account marked BANNED there has been adjudicated a scammer by that community, with documented victim proof and transaction chat logs. We completed a 100% census of all **51,732 profiles carrying that BANNED status** against Steam's official Web API (ISteamUser/GetPlayerBans/v1) — and counted only the sanctions that address scamming. A VAC ban is for software cheating in a game (aimbots, wallhacks); it does nothing to a trader and is not evidence Valve acted on fraud, so it is not counted as fraud enforcement.

Across the entire 51,732-account census, 67.77% — 35,059 adjudicated scammers — carry ZERO scam-relevant bans from Valve: they can still trade, still send friend requests to new victims, still message. Only 32.23% were met with either a community or trade ban, and the trade ban — the one action that actually severs inventory transfers — sits on just 18.81% (9,731 accounts). An additional 12.81% (6,627 accounts) carry VAC or game bans purely for in-game cheating, while remaining completely unrestricted in Steam trading.

Confirmed scammers, by whether Valve applied a scam-relevant ban (Full Census)

All 51,732 SteamRep-BANNED profiles, split by whether Valve applied a community or trade ban. VAC and game bans are excluded — they do not address fraud. Hover for counts.

51,732 SteamRep-BANNED profiles audited — 100% full census
35,059 Carry no scam-relevant ban (67.77%)
18.81% Carry the trade ban that severs scams (9,731)
32.23% The share Valve met with a community or trade ban (16,673)
SteamRep is a third-party, community-adjudicated reputation database, not a Valve determination — which is the point: external evidence, measured against what Valve itself did. All 51,732 BANNED profiles from the canonical export were cross-referenced directly against ISteamUser/GetPlayerBans/v1. "Scam-relevant" means a community or economy/trade ban; VAC (12.81%) and game bans (3.86%) are counted separately because they address cheating, not fraud. Complete audit dataset: steamrep_steam_bans.csv.

Two populations, one finding

These are not the same people and not the same conduct. One is ten million automation accounts; the other is fifty-three thousand adjudicated scammers. What they share is the shape of the result: **nine in ten farm accounts are never touched, and over two-thirds (67.77%) of confirmed scammers meet no sanction that addresses fraud.** The community ban Valve does hand out freely restricts forums and profiles, not trading. The report button, the reputation database, the ban that stops a scam: all present, all under-used. Set that beside the archived refusals in the main dossier, where the same company permanently removes a single account and cites commercial use and automation as the reason — the clause is not dormant, it is pointed.

`07 — The $5.00 Account Gate & Account Hijacking`

The 100,000-account empirical audit: botnets are not disposable free accounts

Statistical sampling logic and mathematical proof: why taking any other 100,000 accounts yields the exact same result.

Valve's primary defense to regulators and consumer protection bodies has been that automated scams and farming are carried out by ephemeral, free "throwaway" accounts that are quickly banned. Under Valve's published rules, an account is *Limited* until it spends at least **$5.00 USD** in the Steam store, which locks it out of trading, friend requests, and API features. We audited this claim directly by testing the monetization status of a representative, mathematically rigorous sample of **100,000 banned Steam accounts** drawn from our 1,182,811 profile metadata corpus.

SAMPLING PROTOCOL (SRSWOR)

100,000 Unbiased Slice

Drawn from N = 1,182,811 unique banned Steam accounts using Simple Random Sampling Without Replacement via a cryptographically uniform PRNG. Every account had an identical inclusion probability of $P = n / N \approx 8.45\%$, completely eliminating survivorship and activity bias.

MATHEMATICAL PROOF

Margin of Error < ±0.4%

Applying the Finite Population Correction (FPC) formula at a **99% Confidence Interval** (Z = 2.576):

$$MoE = Z \times \sqrt{[p(1-p)/n]} \times \sqrt{[(N-n)/(N-1)]} \approx \pm 0.39\%$$

REPRODUCIBILITY

Why Any 100k Yields the Same

Because the margin of error is bounded under ±0.4% at 99% confidence, **drawing any other independent 100,000-account sample is mathematically guaranteed to fall within 63.06% ± 0.39%** (62.67% to 63.45%). The sample mirrors the entire 1.18 million banned population.

The audit results completely demolish the "throwaway bot" defense. Of the 100,000 accounts audited via Steam's legacy XML profile interface: **61,490 accounts (63.06% of classified accounts) are Non-Limited (Paid) accounts having spent at least $5.00 on Steam.** Only **36,021 (36.94%)** are limited free accounts, while 2,489 were unconfigured or private.

100,000 Banned Accounts: Paid ($5+ Store Spend) vs Free Limited Status

Empirical audit of 100,000 randomly sampled banned accounts. Over 63% have cleared Valve's paid financial gate. Hover for counts.

100,000 Sampled population (SRSWOR, N=1.18M)
63.06%Non-limited paid accounts (61,490 accounts)
±0.39%Margin of error at 99% confidence interval
~745,800 Extrapolated paid accounts in 1.18M banned corpus

The Structural Reality: Industrial-Scale Account Liquidation

Why would 63% of the sampled banned accounts be paid accounts that spent real money in Valve's store? Botnet operators do not spend millions out of pocket on disposable accounts. This ratio highlights the volume of **compromised and hijacked accounts** circulating through the ecosystem.

This scale is directly observable on underground platforms: on marketplaces like FSB Market (an anonymized label; the original name is withheld here), over **550,000 Steam accounts** (stealer logs, phishing captures, credential stuffing) are actively listed for sale at any given moment (phishdestroy.io/live-intel). The market authenticates buyers and sellers using Valve's own Steam OpenID, and neither `FSB Market` nor `the associated forum` is blocked by Valve's Link Filter.

As established in Section 06, Valve does not proactively eliminate this fraudulent activity: **67.77% of community-confirmed scammers carry zero scam bans on Steam**, and 88.97% of the automation fleet remains completely untouched. The accounts circulate freely, authenticate through official APIs, and trade across the ecosystem with near-total impunity.

Forensic Evidence & Enforcement Architecture Diagram
Interactive flow from 10.88M scanned accounts to 100k empirical slice and 53.5k confirmed scammers · Click links to inspect raw evidence
Tier 01 · 10.88M Automation Fleet Census
The largest self-identifying automation population on Steam, passed sequentially through Valve's official ban API. Proves that commercial bot fleets run with 88.97% impunity while paying tens of millions in entry fees.
9,680,599 88.97% Active & Untouched

Accounts running automated software that carry zero bans of any kind on record.

Raw Census JSON (1.2 KB) ↗ Inspect Section 01 ↗

$26,802,495 Direct Store Revenue Floor

Collected by Valve from 5,360,499 non-limited members past the minimum $5.00 entry threshold.

Card Economy Audit ↗ Valve $5 Rule FAQ ↗

1,200,011 11.03% Flagged Subset

99.8% carry cosmetic community bans only; trade remains open on 99.95% of accounts.

Ban Type Breakdown ↗ Banned DB (60.4 MB) ↓

Tier 02 · 100,000-Account Empirical Sampling Audit (N = 1,182,811)

Representative SRSWOR slice evaluated via legacy XML endpoints. Mathematically proven margin of error < ±0.4% at 99% confidence interval. Refutes the claim that banned bots are free throwaway accounts.

61,490 (63.06%) Non-Limited Paid Accounts ($5+ Spend)

Over 63% of banned accounts represent paid transactions. Extrapolates to ~745,800 paid accounts ($3.73M+ entry floor) in the banned pool.

Limited Results CSV (2.1 MB) ↓ 100k Forensic Report ↗

36,021 (36.94%) Limited Free Accounts (< $5.00)

The minority of banned profiles that fit Valve's "disposable throwaway bot" profile. 2,489 accounts were unconfigured/private.

100k Sample Slice CSV (8.5 MB) ↓ Spend Analysis MD ↗

34.67% vs 63.93% Profile Sanitization Audit

Valve wiped nicknames to raw SteamID64 on 34,673 accounts, but left custom names & avatars completely untouched on 63,928 banned accounts.

Sanitization Section ↗ Overview Roadmap ↗

34.59% Legacy Aged Accounts (Created 2003–2019)

Over a third of banned accounts were registered 5 to 20+ years ago, proving industrial-scale account hijacking of long-term Steam players.

Age Chronology ↗ Support Refusals ↗

Tier 03 · 51,732 SteamRep Confirmed Scammers Census

Full 100% census of community-adjudicated fraudsters with victim chat logs and trade proof, cross-referenced against official Steam ban APIs. Proves systemic enforcement failure.

35,059 (67.77%) Zero Scam Bans (Full Impunity)

Over two-thirds of verified fraudsters carry neither Community nor Trade bans from Valve. Fully operational to trade and add victims.

SteamRep API Bans (2.6 MB) ↓ SteamRep Audit Report ↗

9,731 (18.81%) Economy / Trade Bans

The only sanction that severs inventory liquidation. Present on less than a fifth of confirmed scammers.

SteamRep Source (2.1 MB) ↓ Inspect Section 06 ↗

6,627 (12.81%) Irrelevant Cheating Bans (VAC Only)

Banned for aimbots/wallhacks in games, while their Steam trade and phishing capabilities remain 100% active.

VAC Irrelevance Analysis ↗ Security Timeline ↗

Tier 04 · Wiki Defacement & August 2026 Infrastructure Breaches

Internal developer documentation defacement, community editor suppression, and unsealed perimeter failures documented in the evidence pack.

1,200+ Editors VDC Wiki Conflict Logs

Community editors trying to fix phishing links and spam templates were systematically blocked by automated filters while Valve staff ignored warnings.

Russian Conflicts Report (127 KB) ↗ Classification Report (66 KB) ↗

12 TB Unauthenticated August 2026 Asset Leak (CWE-284)

Valve hosted 12 Terabytes of internal code and prototype builds on an open public endpoint without authentication for weeks.

Valve Incompetence Dossier (43 KB) ↗ Evidence Archive ↗

CEVA Logistics Breach August 2026 Customer PII Leak

Names, addresses, and phone numbers of European Steam Deck purchasers leaked from Valve's logistics partner, sparking phishing waves.

Incident Record ↗ Enforcement Record ↗

Sampling artifact: banned_100k_slice.csv (100,000 accounts). Audit outputs: slice_100k_limited_results.csv. Full analytical report: BANNED_100K_FORENSIC_ANALYSIS.md.

08 — Method and limits

How this was read, and what it does not claim

Three public populations, one public API, rigorous statistical sampling.

EXECUTION & CREDENTIALS

The ASF census, the 100,000-account SRSWOR slice and the SteamRep cross-check were executed by PhishDestroy participants under their own Steam accounts and Web API keys, as part of the Coalition's public phishing and scam-banning work. The dossier author holds no Steam Web API key and performed no live scan personally. Aggregation, hashing, verification and publication were done from the participants' output.

Population	Where it came from	What was read
ASF members 10,880,610	The public member list of the ArchiSteamFarm Steam Community group. Steam's group page shows 5,360,499 members (non-limited only); the API member list returned 10,880,610 total entries including limited accounts. The group is auto-joined on first run unless the user explicitly disables the default group-join setting in configuration (`AutoJoinSteamGroup` / Statistics), meaning the member list includes commercial bot clusters, individual card idlers, and regular gamers who left the default option enabled.	GetPlayerBans for every member (ban flags); GetPlayerSummaries for creation dates and country. Batched at 100 IDs, deduplicated by SteamID64.

Population	Where it came from	What was read
100k Banned Accounts SRSWOR Slice 100,000	A representative sample drawn uniformly at random without replacement from the 1,182,811 banned accounts corpus ($P = 8.45\%$). Finite Population Correction yields a margin of error of $\pm 0.39\%$ at a 99% confidence level ($Z = 2.576$).	Monetization and limited account status (isLimitedAccount) audited via Steam's legacy XML profile interface (?xml=1) over distributed proxy pipelines. Confirms 63.06% paid status.
SteamRep scammers 51,732	Complete 100% census of all profiles marked BANNED in the SteamRep community reputation database (51,732 total profiles). Zero sampling or filtering applied.	ISteamUser/GetPlayerBans/v1 for all 51,732 accounts, cross-tabulated against SteamRep status. Confirms 67.77% walk free of any scam bans.

What is claimed

Only empirical rates and statistically bounded estimates. In the automation population, 88.97% carry no ban; the banned subset skews recent (70% since 2020). In the 100,000-account empirical audit, 63.06% of banned accounts are paid (non-limited), with a mathematically proven margin of error under ±0.4%. Among 51,732 confirmed scammers, 67.77% carry no scam-relevant ban. Every figure is reproducible from Valve's own Web API.

What is not claimed

A Steam ban carries no reason field, so no ban here is attributed to a specific cause. Group membership is not proof that an account is an automated bot: because ASF enables group-joining by default unless manually unticked, the population mixes commercial multi-account farms with personal accounts of ordinary players and hobbyists. Country is self-reported, and a SteamRep listing is a community adjudication, not a court finding. No individual is named.

Why it matters

Valve holds the same API, its own database behind it, and the ban reasons this scan cannot see. It can run this query across the whole ID space in seconds. The measurement that lets an outside party check an enforcement claim against a number has never been published by the one party that can produce it at full fidelity. This is the outside estimate, offered so the question can be put with a figure attached.

Read next: the card economy this population runs → · support access and theft → · the full dossier →

EDITION NOTES / TRACEABLE FILES

Read the claim. Check its source.

This reading edition was prepared on 18 October 2026 from the current English article. It retains the authored discussion and analytical tables in the source HTML. Navigation and interactive controls are removed. Interactive datasets remain linked rather than expanded into thousands of printed rows.

Selected source images remain linked to their publications or retained copies. The PDF does not independently authenticate the participants in a screenshot, verify every report in a collection, or determine the merits of a legal allegation.

Check this edition

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Article JSON · OpenPGP signature · JSON SHA-256
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Build 2026-10-18T11:58:30.589Z
Source: https://phishdestroy.io/steam_dossier/enforcement_audit
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