



THE UNREAL RADAR • MARKET RADAR

The AI Game-Buildability Radar

Which game types a small team can now build with AI, which still need real systems craft, and which remain expert-only — 30 genres graded, and placed by what makes each one hard.

Market Radar • Edition 2026.1

2026-06-24

Edited by Phil, MythicLemon

mythicmon.com/radar

Editor's note

This radar grades 30 game types by how much of the build you can hand to AI tools today. It is the opinionated companion to our Games-as-Recipes study: same model, but read as a verdict rather than a chart.

Two halves to every placement. The **ring** is the buildability band — AI-buildable, AI-assisted, systems craft, or expert-only — taken from each genre's score on our 45-ingredient recipe model. The **quadrant** is **why** it lands where it does: whether the genre is gated by content, by systems and economy, by feel and design craft, or by real-time netcode. A genre can be easy and content-bound, or hard and netcode-bound; the quadrant tells you which wall you'd hit.

Read the rings honestly. **AI-build difficulty is our own editorial assessment of current tooling, not a measurement** — it tracks where the labour collapses, not whether the result is fun. Demand sits beside it for context, drawn from the MythicLemon Games Catalogue (our own compiled dataset of ~82,000 released games); owner figures are banded estimates, not sales. This is a first edition — no movement arrows yet; later editions will track which genres shift as the tools move.

— Phil, MythicLemon

This is our view, not a measurement. The rings are a considered production-readiness opinion — not a quality score. We rate Epic's engine, asset categories and practices, never a named third-party product. Where a category overlaps something we sell, we say so.

The radar at a glance

● Content & Writing ● Systems & Economy ● Feel & Design Craft ● Real-time & Netcode

AI-buildable A generalist with AI tools can ship this. Every core ingredient is in AI's strong zone (difficulty under 2.4). The remaining job is taste.

- 1 Visual Novel
- 2 Interactive Fiction
- 3 Point & Click
- 4 Hidden Object
- 5 Clicker / Idle
- 6 Farming Sim

AI-assisted One skilled human directs; AI fills in most of the production (2.4–3.0). Systems-light, content-heavy.

- 7 Walking Simulator
- 8 Card Game
- 9 JRPG
- 10 Management
- 11 Colony Sim
- 12 2D Platformer
- 13 Match 3

Systems craft Real systems work — AI is a force-multiplier, not an author (3.0–3.6). The assets are cheap; the design is not.

- 14 Tower Defense
- 16 City Builder
- 19 Deckbuilding
- 20 Roguelike
- 21 Survival
- 15 Metroidvania
- 17 Horror
- 18 Puzzle

Expert only Expert, multi-discipline craft (over 3.6). AI saves labour, not difficulty; none of the hard cores collapse.

- 22 Action RPG
- 23 Racing
- 25 Immersive Sim
- 26 Souls-like
- 27 Open World
- 24 MOBA
- 28 FPS / Shooter
- 29 Fighting
- 30 Battle Royale

The board as a table — all 30 genres

Genre	Ring	Gated by	AI difficulty	Titles	% since 2023
Visual Novel	AI-buildable	Content & writing	1.80	5,481	37%
Interactive Fiction	AI-buildable	Content & writing	1.83	3,137	48%
Point & Click	AI-buildable	Content & writing	1.94	5,198	37%
Hidden Object	AI-buildable	Content & writing	2.07	4,172	45%
Clicker / Idle	AI-buildable	Systems & economy	2.23	2,174	47%
Farming Sim	AI-buildable	Systems & economy	2.38	835	59%
Walking Simulator	AI-assisted	Content & writing	2.59	3,171	51%
Card Game	AI-assisted	Content & writing	2.62	2,180	45%
JRPG	AI-assisted	Content & writing	2.77	2,609	36%
Management	AI-assisted	Systems & economy	2.80	4,107	45%
Colony Sim	AI-assisted	Systems & economy	2.83	739	50%
2D Platformer	AI-assisted	Feel & design craft	2.91	6,081	47%
Match 3	AI-assisted	Feel & design craft	2.93	1,006	28%
Tower Defense	Systems craft	Systems & economy	3.12	1,964	44%
Metroidvania	Systems craft	Feel & design craft	3.12	1,282	37%
City Builder	Systems craft	Systems & economy	3.12	1,585	47%
Horror	Systems craft	Feel & design craft	3.14	9,373	43%
Puzzle	Systems craft	Feel & design craft	3.17	15,485	36%
Deckbuilding	Systems craft	Systems & economy	3.18	1,265	64%
Roguelike	Systems craft	Systems & economy	3.25	2,727	45%
Survival	Systems craft	Systems & economy	3.38	6,462	40%
Action RPG	Expert only	Feel & design craft	3.61	4,004	48%
Racing	Expert only	Feel & design craft	3.73	3,251	32%

Genre	Ring	Gated by	AI difficulty	Titles	% since 2023
MOBA	Expert only	Real-time & netcode	3.82	324	28%
Immersive Sim	Expert only	Feel & design craft	3.87	3,258	61%
Souls-like	Expert only	Feel & design craft	3.89	1,236	49%
Open World	Expert only	Feel & design craft	3.89	6,009	36%
FPS / Shooter	Expert only	Real-time & netcode	3.93	8,917	36%
Fighting	Expert only	Real-time & netcode	4.09	1,146	17%
Battle Royale	Expert only	Real-time & netcode	4.17	599	36%

AI-build difficulty is our editorial assessment of current tooling (lower = more automatable). Titles, owners and momentum are from the MythicLemon Games Catalogue; owners are banded estimates, not sales.

The evidence (live online)

AS OF MAY 2026

The actionable signal isn't buildability alone — it's where easy-to-build overlaps recent demand. Every genre placed by buildability (left = easier) against momentum, sized by proven demand. The bottom-left cluster is AI-easy and still growing.

↗ Live, interactive figure (with downloadable data): <https://www.mythic lemon.com/data/studies/games-as-recipes-what-ai-can-build>

AS OF MAY 2026

Longer bar = harder for AI. The buildability ranking that sets the rings on this radar.

↗ Live, interactive figure (with downloadable data): <https://www.mythic lemon.com/data/studies/games-as-recipes-what-ai-can-build>

The verdicts

■ Content & Writing

Gated by art, writing and atmosphere — exactly the work AI has near-solved. The easiest corner to ship from.

1 Visual Novel AI-BUILDABLE

The most completely automatable commercial game format there is.

Score 1.80 — the lowest of any genre. Style-locked illustration, backgrounds, branching dialogue, worldbuilding, voice and music are all in AI's strong zone, and there's no real-time feel, netcode or level design to gate it. A single non-specialist can generate the art, voice and prose of a competent visual novel in a weekend.

Which is exactly why the remaining work is editorial, not technical: which 50 of 500 generated portraits to keep, and whether the writing has a soul. Build it for the taste, not the production.

Sources: [Games Catalogue · buildability score](#)

2 Interactive Fiction AI-BUILDABLE

A pure-writing genre — AI's strongest domain meets a growing audience.

Score 1.83, with no art pipeline at all: writing, worldbuilding, flavour text and a text shell. The bottleneck is narrative quality, which is editorial, not technical. With 48% of the catalogue released since 2023, the audience is live and arriving.

Sources: [Games Catalogue · buildability score](#)

3 Point & Click AI-BUILDABLE

Art and dialogue generate themselves; the puzzles are where you earn your keep.

Score 1.94 — visual-novel-easy on art and writing, held just off the floor by one ingredient: puzzle design, a 4. Let AI build the scenes and the script, and spend your effort on solvable, fair, escalating puzzles.

Sources: [Games Catalogue · buildability score](#)

4 Hidden Object AI-BUILDABLE

Trivially generable art over a thin systems layer, for an evergreen casual base.

Score 2.07. The art and scenes are exactly what image generation does best, and the systems are light. An evergreen casual buyer base with 45% of titles recent — easy to build and still bought.

Sources: [Games Catalogue · buildability score](#)

7 Walking Simulator AI-ASSISTED

Atmosphere, writing and environment — over half the genre is new.

Score 2.59. An environment-and-writing genre: AI handles the prose, the ambience and a good share of the props, while a human directs the environmental storytelling. With 51% of titles recent, it's one of the live ones.

Sources: [Games Catalogue · buildability score](#)

8 Card Game AI-ASSISTED

Card art generates instantly; the systems are well understood.

Score 2.62. The card art — the visible bulk of the work — is instant, and the rules systems are well-trodden. The craft that remains is encounter balance, light here but the seed of what makes deckbuilders hard.

Sources: [Games Catalogue · buildability score](#)

9 JRPG AI-ASSISTED

A writing/art/music genre wearing a hard-RPG costume.

Score 2.77 — far easier than its "RPG" reputation. Strip it down and a JRPG is writing, worldbuilding, quests, character art and music over a simple turn-based combat skeleton: all four of those are AI's home turf. The turn-based structure is what spares it the combat-feel wall that action RPGs hit.

Sources: [Games Catalogue · buildability score](#)

■ Systems & Economy

Gated by loops, progression and balance. AI scaffolds the systems fast; the tuning is human.

5 Clicker / Idle AI-BUILDABLE

Almost no art — the only real craft is economy tuning, which AI can iterate on.

Score 2.23. Clickers carry almost no art burden; their one genuine craft is economy and progression tuning (a 3), and that's a spreadsheet-and-iterate problem AI is a strong assistant for. The catalogue keeps growing — 47% recent.

Sources: [Games Catalogue · buildability score](#)

6 Farming Sim AI-BUILDABLE

The cozy surge rides exactly on AI's strengths — except the months of balance.

Score 2.38, and the single hottest momentum among easy genres: 59% of farming sims are recent. Pixel art, cozy writing, inventory/crafting and economy loops are all AI's home turf. The Stardew recipe is now largely automatable — except the long balance pass that makes the loop feel good.

Sources: [Games Catalogue · buildability score](#)

10 Management AI-ASSISTED

Systems-light to scaffold; the balance is the slow part.

Score 2.80. Core loops, economy and UI scaffold quickly with AI; the genuine work is QA and balancing the numbers until the simulation is satisfying. A large, steady audience (655M owner-estimate band).

Sources: [Games Catalogue · buildability score](#)

11 Colony Sim AI-ASSISTED

AI assembles the systems; emergent balance is the human job.

Score 2.83. NPC AI, economy and procgen are solved patterns AI assembles well, but a colony sim lives or dies on emergent balance and the QA loop — heavily human. Half the genre is recent.

Sources: [Games Catalogue · buildability score](#)

14 Tower Defense SYSTEMS CRAFT

Cheap assets, but the whole game is encounter balance.

Score 3.12. The art and the tower/enemy systems are inexpensive to generate; the genre *is* encounter balance — wave pacing and the difficulty curve — which is among the AI-hardest content work. Build the content with AI, tune the waves yourself.

Sources: [Games Catalogue · buildability score](#)

16 City Builder SYSTEMS CRAFT

Systems scaffold fast; balance and performance are the gates.

Score 3.12. Props and core systems are cheap, but a city builder is an economy-balancing and performance problem at scale — the simulation has to stay satisfying and stay fast as the city grows. Both are sustained human work.

Sources: [Games Catalogue · buildability score](#)

19 Deckbuilding SYSTEMS CRAFT

The catalogue's fastest-growing genre, and its core resists automation.

Score 3.18, despite trivially generable card art, because the score is dragged up by encounter balance and economy — a great deckbuilder is a balancing achievement (Slay-the-Spire-class tuning), the AI-hardest narrative-adjacent work.

And it's the loudest demand signal on the board: 64% of deckbuilders are recent, the highest momentum of any genre. Highest demand × hardest-resisting core is the defensible niche — let AI generate every card, and spend your whole human budget on making the numbers sing.

Sources: [Games Catalogue · momentum & buildability](#)

20 Roguelike SYSTEMS CRAFT

Progen is solved; the balance across a thousand runs is not.

Score 3.25. AI implements the procedural generation and the combat code readily, but a roguelike's quality is encounter balance and economy across endless permutations — the kind of tuning that only emerges from playtest data. Strong, recent demand.

Sources: [Games Catalogue · buildability score](#)

21 Survival SYSTEMS CRAFT

Cheap to assemble, expensive to balance — and often dragging netcode behind it.

Score 3.38. Environment, crafting and core loops are inexpensive, but survival is a long balance problem, frequently with multiplayer attached — and the moment netcode enters, the difficulty jumps. The largest owner-estimate band of any systems-craft genre.

Sources: [Games Catalogue · buildability score](#)

■ Feel & Design Craft

Gated by game feel, level/encounter design and combat — the things judged in motion, against a player.

12 2D Platformer AI-ASSISTED

The trap genre: it looks AI-friendly, but its soul is feel.

Score 2.91, and the most deceptive on the board. Art, music and enemy AI all generate easily — so it **looks** AI-friendly — but the genre's entire identity is character-controller feel, level design and game-feel juice, the three things AI is worst at. A jump that doesn't feel good kills the game regardless of how the art looks.

Sources: [Games Catalogue · buildability score](#)

13 Match 3 AI-ASSISTED

Cheap to assemble; the juice and the difficulty curve are the craft.

Score 2.93. The board, the art and the loop are easy; what separates a good match-3 from a dead one is game-feel juice and a fair, escalating puzzle curve — both human. The lowest momentum among the assisted genres (28% recent).

Sources: [Games Catalogue](#) · [buildability score](#)

15 Metroidvania SYSTEMS CRAFT

Platformer feel plus interconnected level design plus combat — three AI-hard cores.

Score 3.12. Everything the 2D platformer struggles with, raised: character feel, an interconnected world that must be designed to teach and gate, and readable combat. The art generates; the architecture doesn't.

Sources: [Games Catalogue](#) · [buildability score](#)

17 Horror SYSTEMS CRAFT

Atmosphere is cheap; the timing of a scare is craft.

Score 3.14. AI generates the environment, the ambience and the props beautifully, and the catalogue is huge (9,373 titles). But horror is pacing — the level design and moment-to-moment timing that turn assets into dread — and that's human. The biggest audience of any systems-craft genre.

Sources: [Games Catalogue](#) · [buildability score](#)

18 Puzzle SYSTEMS CRAFT

The largest catalogue on the board — and the design is the whole game.

Score 3.17, and the biggest genre we track (15,485 titles). The art and the engine are trivial; a puzzle game is *puzzle design* — solvable, fair, escalating — which AI drafts but cannot tune. The content looks done and plays hollow without the human pass.

Sources: [Games Catalogue](#) · [buildability score](#)

22 Action RPG EXPERT ONLY

Stacks every hard ingredient: 3D characters, animation, combat, feel.

Score 3.61. An action RPG layers 3D characters, skeletal animation, combat, environment art, level design, performance and game feel — AI shaves the edges of each, but none of the cores collapse. The contrast with the JRPG (2.77) is the whole thesis: real-time combat feel is the wall.

Sources: [Games Catalogue](#) · [buildability score](#)

23 Racing EXPERT ONLY

Handling feel and performance are the genre — and AI tunes neither.

Score 3.73. Cars and tracks can be generated, but a racing game is handling feel and a rock-solid frame rate, with networking on top for multiplayer. The lowest momentum here (32% recent) — a mature, expertise-gated niche.

Sources: [Games Catalogue · buildability score](#)

25 Immersive Sim EXPERT ONLY

Interlocking systems plus level design plus feel — depth AI can't direct.

Score 3.87. The genre's identity is deep, interacting systems wrapped in hand-built level design with responsive feel and a punishing QA load. AI assembles the parts; the emergent whole is expert craft. Notably, 61% of titles are recent — a genre in revival.

Sources: [Games Catalogue · buildability score](#)

26 Souls-like EXPERT ONLY

Combat feel and encounter design are the entire point — and both are human.

Score 3.89. Stack 3D characters, animation, readable combat, encounter balance and deliberate level design, and you have a genre defined by exactly the ingredients AI scores 4 and 5 on. The assets help; the fight doesn't tune itself.

Sources: [Games Catalogue · buildability score](#)

27 Open World EXPERT ONLY

Every hard ingredient at scale — AI changes the cost, not the difficulty.

Score 3.89. An open world stacks 3D environment and character art, level and quest design, NPC AI, combat, performance and game feel — and then multiplies all of it by sheer scale. The largest owner-estimate band of any genre (3.3B), but the least tractable for a small team.

Sources: [Games Catalogue · buildability score](#)

■ Real-time & Netcode

Gated by authoritative real-time sync and frame-perfect play. The last frontier; AI barely helps.

24 MOBA EXPERT ONLY

Netcode plus live-ops plus balance — a genre that punishes small teams.

Score 3.82. A MOBA is authoritative netcode, sustained live-ops infrastructure, and competitive balance, all at once — three of the things AI helps with least. The smallest catalogue on the board (324 titles) and 28% recent: not where small teams break out.

Sources: [Games Catalogue · buildability score](#)

28 FPS / Shooter EXPERT ONLY

Where the genre's identity is netcode and frame-perfect feel.

Score 3.93. Single-player shooters are gated by combat feel; competitive ones add authoritative netcode — and that's where the modern genre lives. The biggest owner-estimate band on the board (3.4B), and among the least AI-automatable games that exist.

Sources: [Games Catalogue · buildability score](#)

29 Fighting EXPERT ONLY

The netcode-and-frame genre — and a near-frozen, expertise-gated niche.

Score 4.09. Fighting games demand frame-perfect combat feel, rollback netcode and meticulous balance — the three hardest problems for AI, all load-bearing at once. And the data agrees it's not where small teams break out: only 17% of titles are recent, the most frozen niche on the board.

Sources: [Games Catalogue · buildability score](#)

30 Battle Royale EXPERT ONLY

The least AI-buildable game type there is.

Score 4.17 — the highest on the board. Authoritative netcode for a hundred players, live-ops infrastructure, performance at scale and combat feel, all required simultaneously. This is the genre AI changes least: it can generate the assets, and almost none of the hard parts.

Sources: [Games Catalogue · buildability score](#)

FAQ

What does the ring mean?

The ring is the buildability band — AI-buildable, AI-assisted, systems craft, or expert-only — from each genre's score on our 45-ingredient recipe model. AI-build difficulty is our own editorial assessment of current tooling, not a measurement; it tracks where the labour collapses, not whether the game is fun.

Why is a genre in the quadrant it's in?

The quadrant is what makes that genre hard for AI: content and writing, systems and economy, feel and design craft, or real-time netcode. A genre can be easy and content-gated, or hard and netcode-gated — the quadrant tells you which wall you'd hit, the ring tells you how high it is.

Are these rankings about which games sell best?

No. The rings are about buildability — how much of the work AI can do. Demand sits beside them for context, from the MythicLemon Games Catalogue, and owner figures are banded estimates, not sales. There is no revenue figure in the data, and we never imply one.

Will these verdicts change?

Yes — this is a first edition. The fast-moving frontiers (3D characters, skeletal animation, adaptive music) could each drop a notch within a year and pull the 3D-action tiers down with them. Later editions will carry movement arrows showing which genres shifted.

HOW TO CITE

MythicLemon, "The AI Game-Buildability Radar", edition 2026.1 (2026-06-24). The Unreal Radar.
<https://www.mythiclemon.com/radar/ai-game-buildability-radar-2026-1>