

I have just this week seen another classic example of international price gouging on the Australian market.

The online games software retailer Steam (www.steampowered.com) has been offering the new game Batman Arknum City to Australian customers for US\$49.95 for the past few weeks as a pre-order. Suddenly a couple of days ago this price jumped, without explanation, to AU\$99.95. Using a VPN connection to browse the USA Steam site (if it detects you are connecting from Australia it automatically re-directs you to the AU\$ prices) the game is still on sale for the previously mentioned price of \$49.95. The site prevents you from ordering software via this method though as it recognises an Australian billing address for your credit card and refuses to sell the software to you at the US price. This is obvious price protection to ensure that Australians cannot get the better prices offered abroad from this retailer. It is worth mentioning that this is game software which is downloaded electronically to your PC, no shipping charges, no physical copy. So, other than the fact that Australian retail distributors have gotten used to having the price point for games software at around \$100, what other reason can there be for this blatant overcharging?

This same thing has also happened in the past week with another pre-release game offered by Steam called 'War In The North' which was available for US\$45 and suddenly jumped to AU\$80 overnight. Thankfully more and more overseas websites are appearing that are more than happy to fill the orders of those enlightened Australians who refuse to be ripped off in this manner.

Regards,
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