Fallout 76 Repair Kits raise new “pay-to-win” concerns

Enlarge / Welcome to the Atomic Shop, where your real money can turn into cosmetic items and, soon, this one specific item that helps you win the game.

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Since *Fallout 76*‘s release last November, the game’s “Atomic Shop” has allowed players to use in-game currency and/or real-world money solely for cosmetic items like skins, costumes, and emotes. “It doesn’t offer anything with a competitive advantage, and more so, it aims to bring joy not just to you, but the other dwellers around you” is how Bethesda’s website describes the shop.

That seems set to change at least a bit with tomorrow’s “Patch 8” update to the game, which will introduce a new Repair Kit utility item to the shop. While “Improved” Repair Kits can only be found through gameplay, “Basic” Repair Kits will be for sale in the Atomic Shop, offering instant restoration of any one item in your inventory to full durability.

That addition has some fans up in arms that developer Bethesda has broken a promise to keep so-called “pay-to-win” elements out of the premium game. As Bethesda’s Pete Hines told Gamespot last October [emphasis added]:

> *If you don’t want to spend money in the Atomic Shop for cosmetic stuff, you don’t have to. We give you a shitload of*

> *Atoms just for playing the game. Folks that want to spend money on whatever the hell it is because they don't have enough Atoms, they can, but* ***it's not, "I'm now better playing against other players because I spent money." It's not pay-to-win.*** *And it's not loot crates.*

As "pay-to-win" items go, Repair Kits aren't on the order of, say, an ultra-powerful weapon that can only be purchased with real money. In essence, the Kits merely offer a shortcut for the same kind of repairs players can already perform with scrounged crafting materials. Still, players willing to pay for Repair Kits could have much a easier time maintaining their arsenals against other players who merely search for their own materials.

Though the new items haven't launched yet, *Fallout 76* players are already gathering on Reddit and other forums to express their concern about what the items will do to the game. "This is my No.1 rant about *GTA V* online, and I really would hate to see *Fallout 76* fall the same way," wrote one Resetera user. "How long before guns break easily before you get to the next repair station… or finding the materials gets a whole lot harder?"

"We were told the atomic shop would be cosmetic only, and I honestly don't think selling these are that big of a deal," a player on Reddit added. "But I don't want these in the Atomic Shop because I see it as a slippery slope, where Bethesda says, 'Well they didn't mind repair kits, why not sell gun upgrades?'"

Bethesda representatives have yet to respond to a request for comment from Ars Technica. But the company did write in its announcement post that "we plan to make adjustments based on your feedback, so we hope you'll share your thoughts with us when they go live later this month."

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