



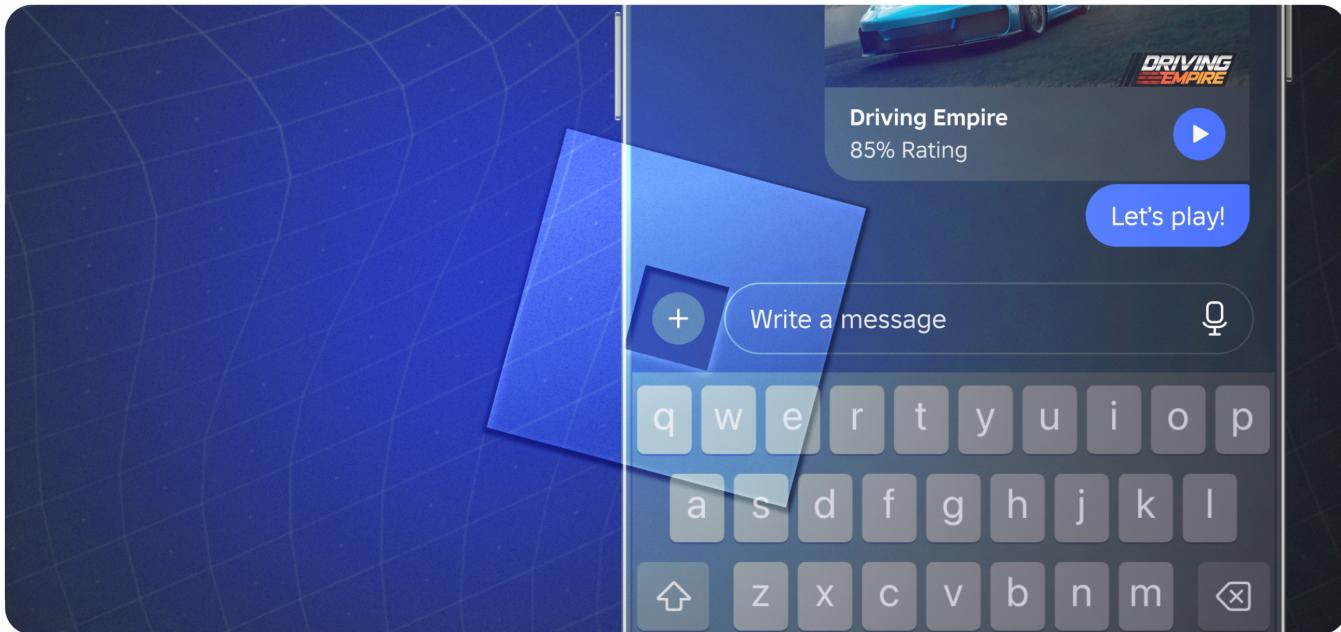
Roblox

Timeline
Jun - Sept 2024
(3 months)

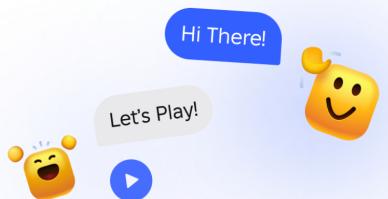
Role
Product
Design

Org
User Group > Social >
Communication

With
Manager [David Navarro](#)
Mentor [Ahmed Saleh](#)



OVERVIEW

**Designing for chats, message content,
& user connection**

Over the course of my internship, I worked on 3 separate, fast-paced design projects. My overarching goal was standardizing designs for chats across the platform. *Universality* has now entered the chat. 🌎

PROJECT 01

Chat Content Composer 💬

Designing a feature that to send rich content in messages
(Games, photos, emojis, & more)



The desktop screenshot displays the Roblox interface. On the left is a 'Chat' window showing messages from various users like Taylor, Leslie, and Jordan. On the right is a sidebar titled 'Experiences' which includes sections for 'Today's Picks' and 'Recommended for you', each listing three game cards with titles and metadata. A message bubble from Taylor says 'Dope Tyyyyy'. Another message bubble from Taylor says 'Testing'. A message from another user says 'Awesome let's play!', followed by 'Let me see' and 'Choosing m'.

PROJECT 02

Universality for VR & Console 🎮

Adapting existing chat direct messaging designs to VR & Console platform needs on Roblox

This image shows a VR or console interface. The top half is a screenshot of a game environment where a player is driving a car on a track. Overlaid on the bottom left is a mobile-style 'Chat' window showing messages from Taylor, Samuel, Leslie, Sarah, Jordan, and Marcus. A message from Taylor says 'Driving Empire 95% Rating'. Another message says 'Let's play!'. A response from the user says '(m joining right now)'. At the bottom of the screen is a game controller. The bottom half of the image is a solid light blue gradient.

PROJECT 03

Adaptive Chat Density

How might we handle density in smaller chat windows for a more immersive gameplay experience?

A small mobile phone screenshot showing a simplified chat interface. The screen is mostly purple, and the chat window is a dark rectangle at the bottom. It shows a message from Taylor. The phone is centered against a large, solid purple rectangular background.



↓ SKIP TO FINAL DESIGNS

01 Problem Space

PROBLEM 01

Current Chat Limitations



I can't express myself the way I want to...



Current chat on Roblox lacks **rich content features** & makes **expressive** communication **challenging**.

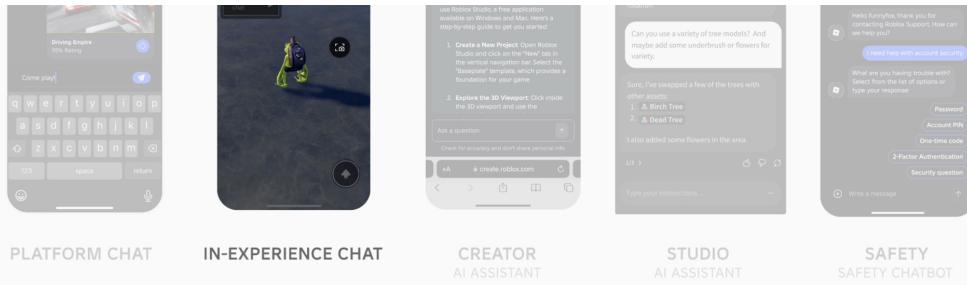
⚠️ As a result, most Roblox users resort to other communication apps (e.g. *Discord*) to chat simultaneously during gameplay.

PROBLEM 02

A Divided Design System

Current chat designs are also **inconsistent** across **different** Roblox surfaces.





02 Understanding our users

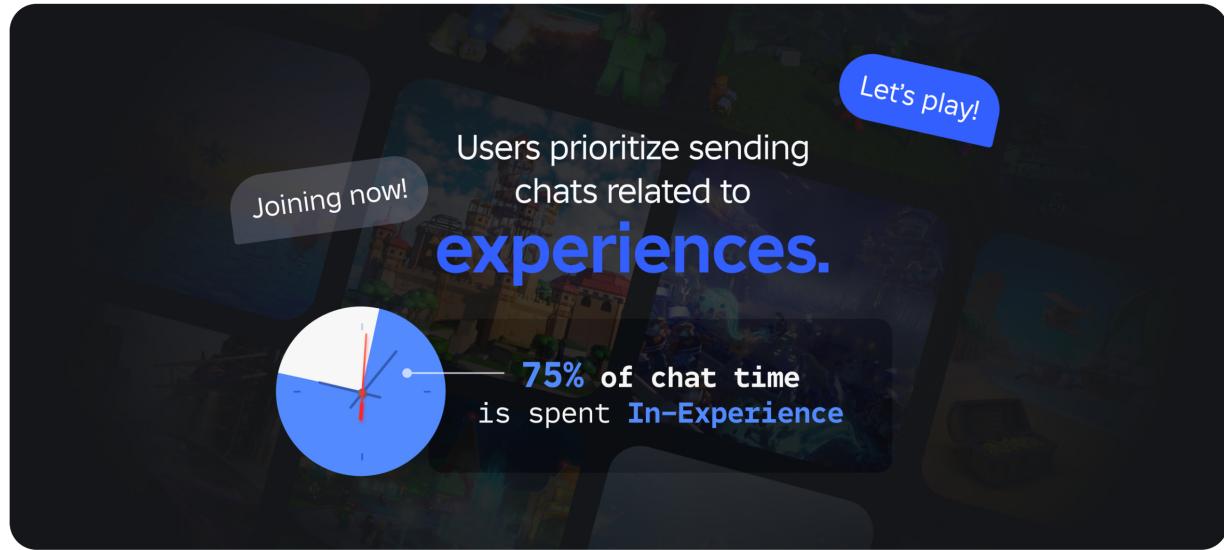
DIVING INTO UX RESEARCH

🔍 Users prioritize gameplay

🎮 Since users come to Roblox to **play together** in experiences (games), most users spend their time in **experience-related** conversations. Chat messaging should support this ability to chat with rich **content features**.

💬 Chat message examples:

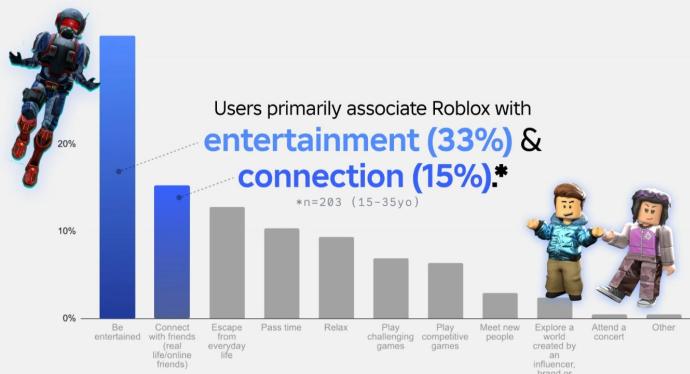
- What game should we join next?
- What avatar item is that?
- And, *most importantly*: What's your Dress to Impress outfit? 🎉



💡 Talking to our UX team & gathering data really helped me in understanding primary user needs.

THE DATA:

Q: Which one of the following **BEST** describes why you use Roblox?



💬 Targeting top priorities:

Designing rich content features for chats can target the top 2 Roblox user priorities: **entertainment & connection**.

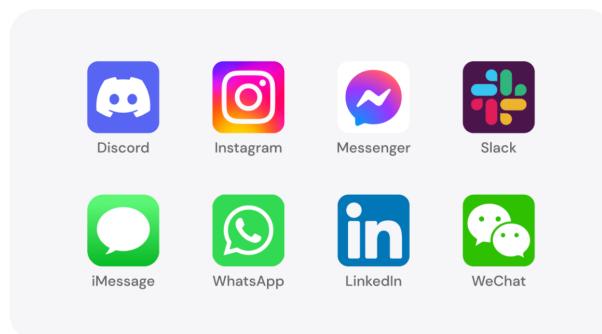
We can allow users to connect about entertainment (such as planning out gameplay) while also allowing users to be entertained through connecting (such as sending emotes and media related to their favorite experiences).

COMPETITIVE AUDIT

Visual Analysis - Messaging Apps

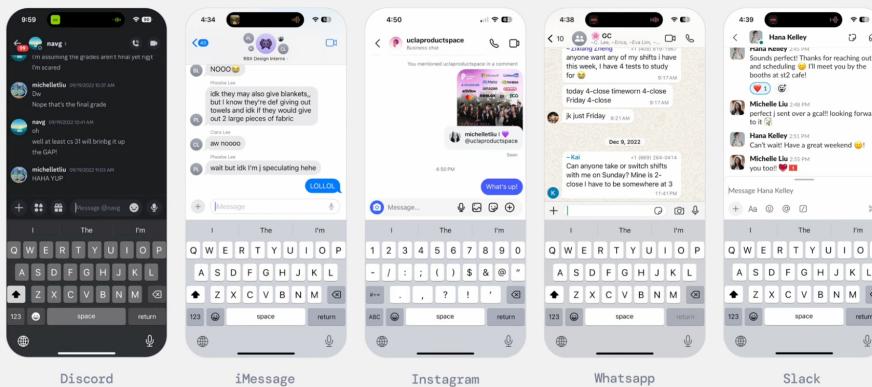
Since Roblox chat is currently lacking in rich content features, most users actually use other messaging apps simultaneously during gameplay.

As the largest online communication hub for gamers, **Discord** is the app that most Roblox users turn to for co-experience chatting.



Competitors (Messaging)

The Main Players



💡 Most apps offer easy-access icons visible within the message bar, while further features are tucked away into a "+" button for scalability.

03 Designing with principles

IDENTIFYING CORE PRODUCT PRINCIPLES

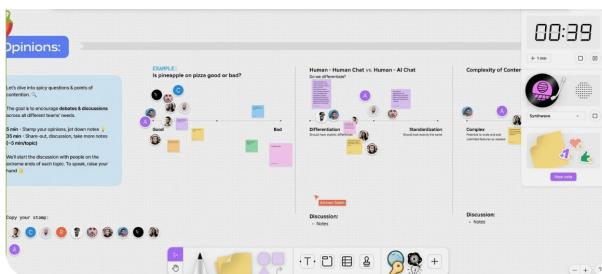
Hosting a Universal Chat Sync Workshop

10 Designers 7 Different Teams



I invited designers across Roblox to come together on FigJam to define a unified chat design vision.

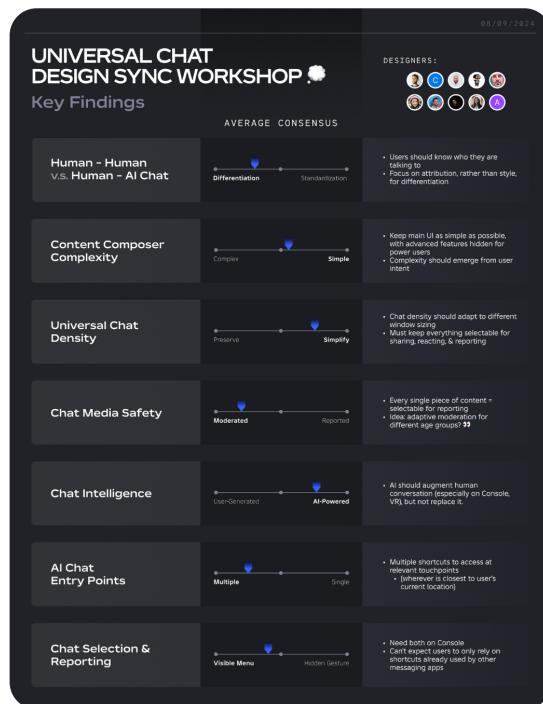
Normally designers in different teams don't have the opportunity to sync on a regular basis about their work, so this workshop provided a valuable chance for discussion (& debates 🍋).



Designers voted on (& debated) difficult chat design problems

THE RESULTS

Alignment on a Principled Approach



DON'T WORK IN SILOS:

💡 Share the knowledge

After the workshop, I sent these findings to our **design group** (channel: `#art-design`; members: 120) to help any other designers working on similar problems! *Sharing my work & creating visibility* are some of the most important skills I've learned this summer.

_SIMPLE over Complex

- Keep main UI as simple as possible, with advanced features hidden for power users

🌐 Human – AI Chat Differentiation

- Users should always know when they are talking to another human or an AI

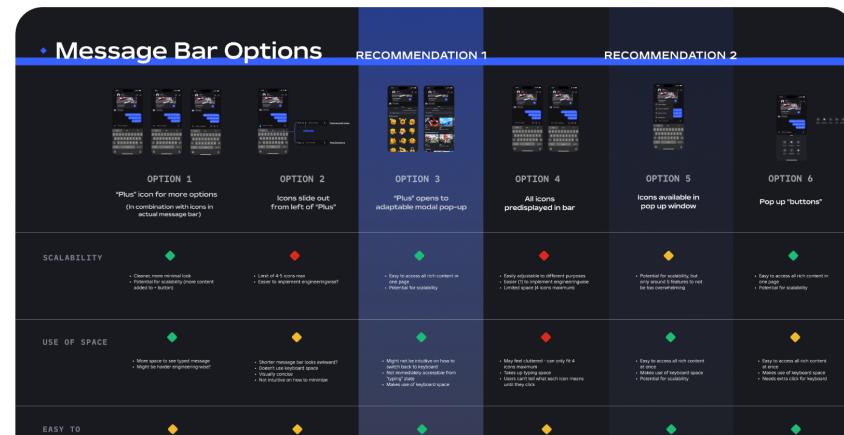
⭐ Scale for Safety

- Every single piece of content should be moderated & selectable for reporting (Prevention, not reaction)

04 Ideation & Iteration

A PEEK INTO THE FIGMA FILE...

The Trade-off Decision Making Process



Before jumping into fleshed-out prototypes, I designed **6 different ideas** for the message bar composer. View the entire tradeoff matrix to the left!

(It's a lot, I know, so keep scrolling for a more abridged version 😊)

Lots of thought went into the decision making process, with feedback given in conversations from my **design manager**, **PM**, **senior engineer**, and other **senior**

+ Could see spelled out versions of more difficult-to-understand words	+ Can see icon version of words that don't have clear options are better/easier	+ Could see spelled out versions of more difficult-to-understand words	+ Can see icon version of words + immediately see all options	+ Could see spelled out versions of more difficult-to-understand words
FEATURE ACCESSIBILITY	◆	◆	◆	◆
DESKTOP ADAPTABILITY	◆	◆	◆	◆

designers.

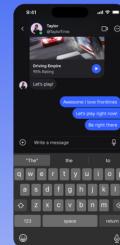
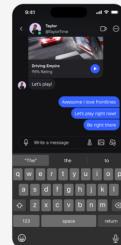
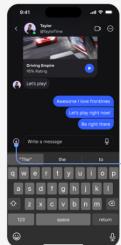
Michelle Liu

Design Manager

Product Manager

Senior Engineer

INITIAL EXPLORATIONS



SCALABILITY

◆

◆

◆

◆

USE OF SPACE

◆

◆

◆

◆

FEATURE ACCESSIBILITY

◆

◆

◆

◆

DESKTOP ADAPTABILITY

◆

◆

◆

◆

RECOMMENDATION

FEASIBILITY PERSPECTIVE

</> Eng Review </>

Product Designers 🤝 Engineers

I worked with a senior engineer (shoutout @bbrimley!) for feasibility feedback on my designs, where he was able to identify some extra edge cases that I should consider and brought a fresh eng-focused perspective.

Overall, he did say all the designs were very feasible to implement from an engineering standpoint—it would just take lots of time (the eternal conundrum ...)

Hey Eng!

How feasible are these designs?



What would happen in these edge cases?

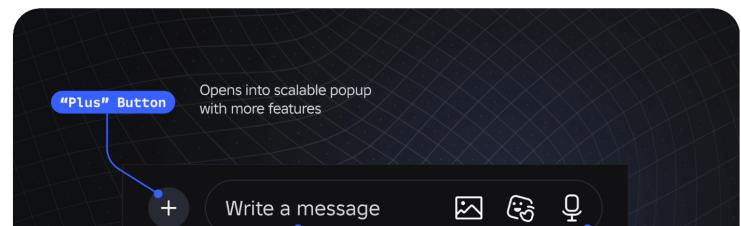
05 Design Handoff

FINAL DESIGN ALIGNMENT

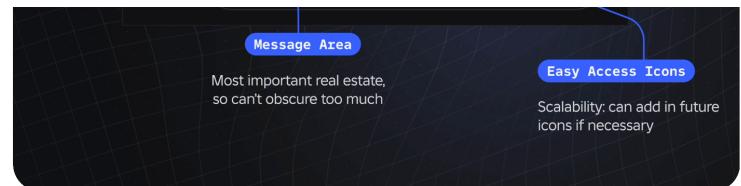
Message Bar Anatomy

The final content composer design is a simple, clean UI that can scale to incorporate more features as well as retain hidden features for power users to discover (*progressive disclosure*).

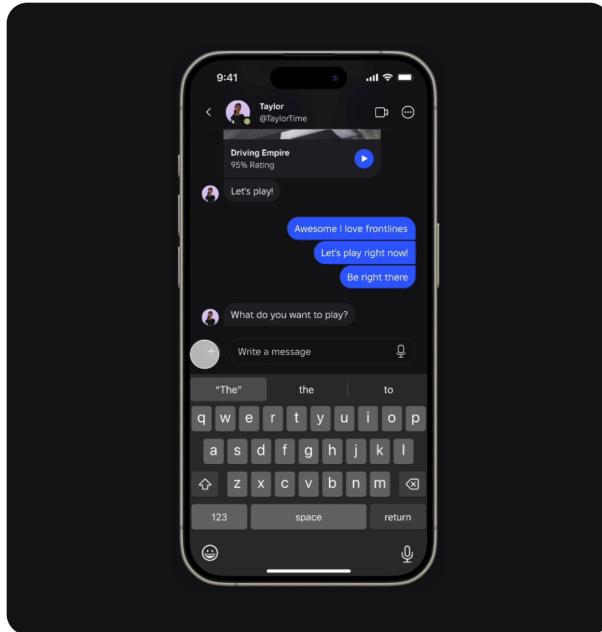
Features include:



- 🎮 Sending Experiences
- 📸 Sending Captures (In-game screenshots)
- 🎨 Sending Emotes/Stickers
- 💬 Sending User Profiles
- 📺 Voice Messaging



PROJECT 01 Universal Content Composer



01 Sending an Experience

Jump into gameplay—directly from the chat

- Users can now directly access, search for, and send experience gamecards directly from the chat
- Seamlessly plan for gameplay together with friends
- Discover and play directly from the chat—without the need to leave the conversation

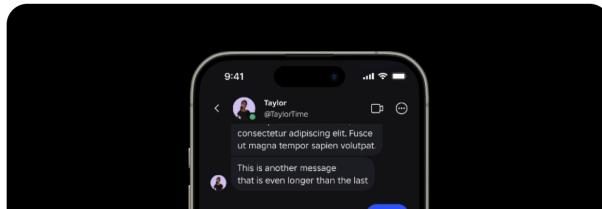
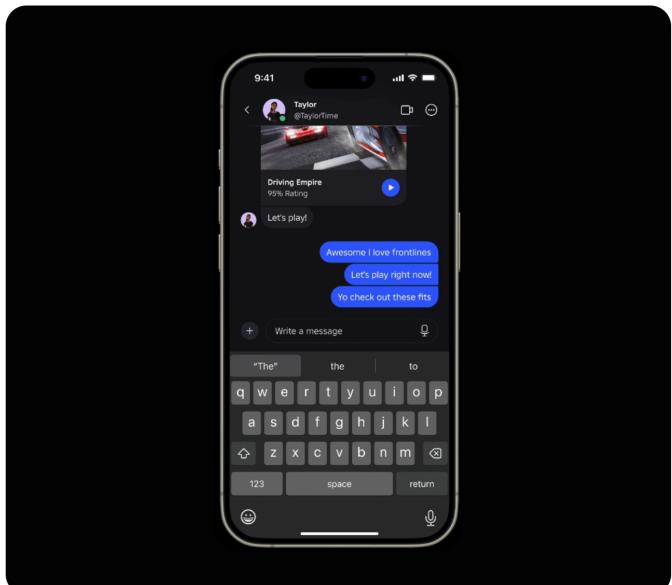


02 Sending a Capture

Share memories with friends

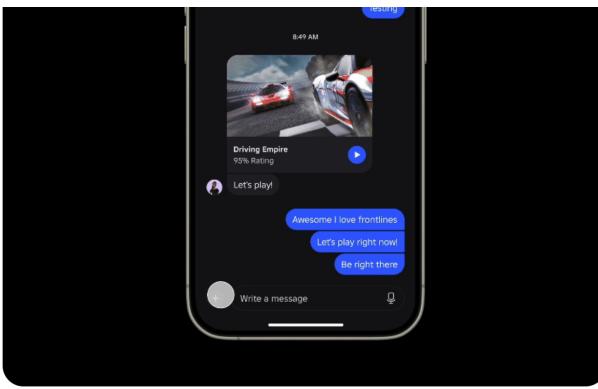
Captures are Roblox's in-experience photo screenshot feature

- While previously users could only view the captures in their own gallery, users can now share captures with their friends
- For instance: sending captures to show off outfits (#bratsummer)



03 Sending a User Profile

Most important real estate, so can't obscure too much



MENTION OTHER FRIENDS DIRECTLY IN THE CHAT

- Users can simply type "@" for autocomplete profile options
- The best fit profiles for user input appear automatically
- Mention friends and access user profiles (in a modal pop up) directly from the chat window, without having to leave the conversation

SUMMER 2024

Side Quests have entered the chat 💬

Although my main project this summer was designing a content composer for chats, I also tackled a few other projects to expand on my overarching goal to standardize chat designs across Roblox.



PROJECT 02 Platform Chat In-Experience



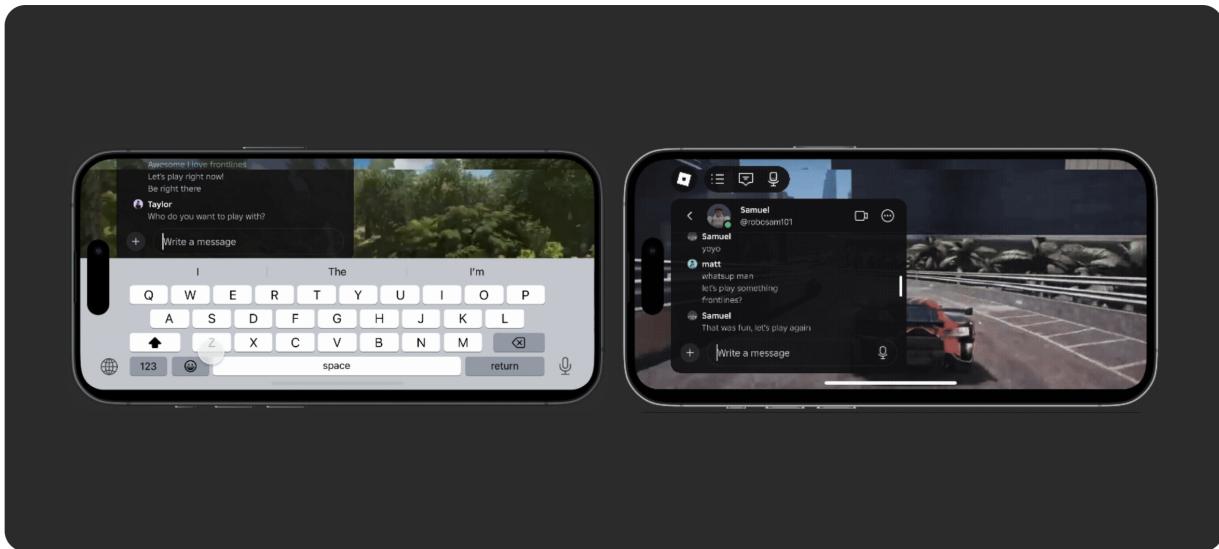
PLATFORM CHAT IN-EXPERIENCE

Designing for Console Accessibility

- Making platform chat accessible to console players (where chat is currently unavailable)
- Adapting mobile/web designs to align with the z-stack necessary for console usage
- Adding in quick reply features to account for difficulty in accessing keyboard

PROJECT 03 Chat Density Explorations

💡 What could the future of **seamless** communication look like on Roblox?



🔍 Adaptive Chat Density Explorations

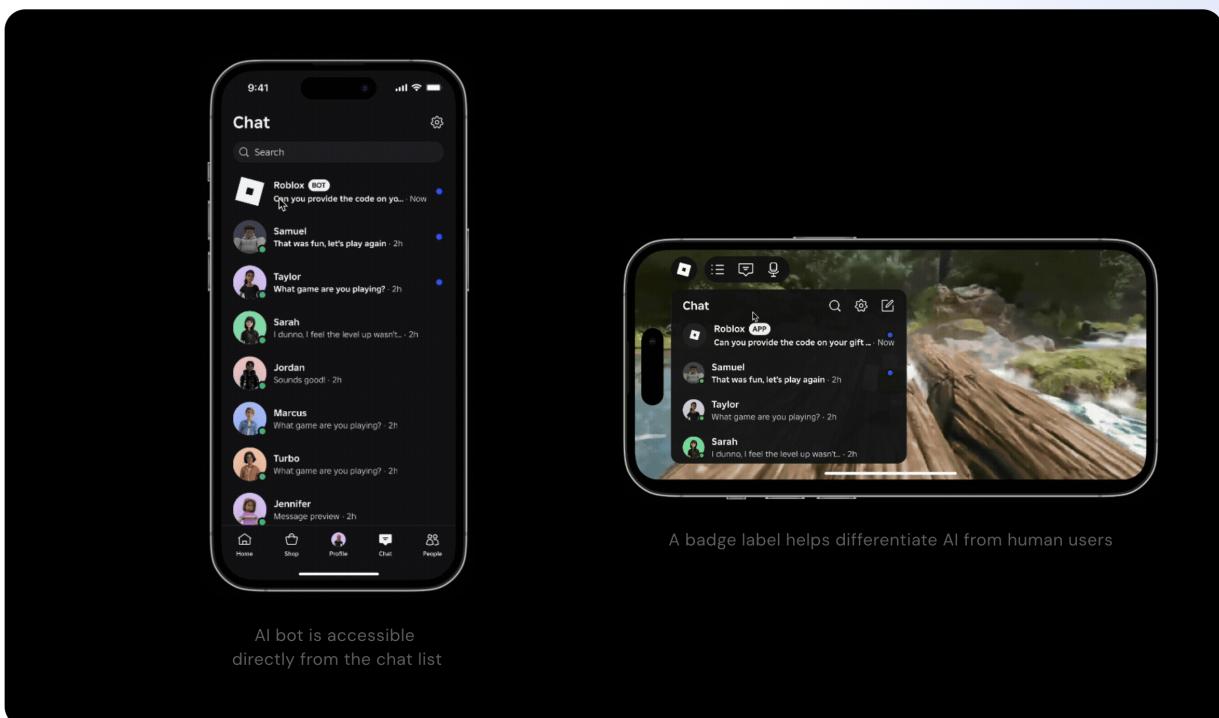
- Flexible minimizing/maximizing to keep the focus on interacting with the experience
- Personalized communication: users can chat live with friends in the same or different experiences during gameplay

FUTURE AI Chat Vision

AI EXPLORATIONS

👉 Designing for Human < AI Interaction

As a final part of my work on chats, I also wanted to explore what the messaging experience would look like with a **Roblox AI support bot**.





Advocate for buy-in

It's my responsibility to create as much visibility as possible for my own work



(Over) Communicate

You can't just assume everyone's on the same page. Avoid working in silos!



Focus on the Vision

Don't box yourself in with current states. Always think about future visions.



Design for Foundations

Take the macro view. Design from principles for scalable foundations.

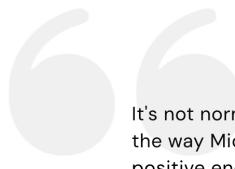
FEEDBACK

Kind words from my manager



David Navarro

Design Director, Roblox



It's not normal to see an intern influence the team and the work the way Michelle did. And everything with the best infectious positive energy I've seen in a while. I really think Michelle is ready to make impact as a designer and would love to cross paths again.

Read more ...



Roblox Summer '24
@michelle.liu is typing...

Thank you! ☀️

Thank you to everyone I worked with for an amazing summer!

With ❤️, Michelle

Also check out ...



Apple

Data-Driven Designs for User Delight



Adobe

Driving User Acquisition & Product Growth

[VIEW ALL PROJECTS](#)

. * Get in touch * ..



CHANGELOG - 12.11.25