[**Digiday Advertising Gaming Forum**](https://digiday.com/events/digiday-gaming-advertising-forum-august-2021/)

*Fireside 1:1 Discussion - “Bringing Brands into the Metaverse”*

**Date:** Thursday, September 16, 2021

**Prep Session with Seb:** 9/8

**Prep Session with Comms:** 9/14

**Call Time:** 8:35am PT

**Fireside Time:** 8:55am PT -9:15am PT

**Format:** [**Vimeo**](https://vimeo.com/live/guest/guigwd8k7qs) **(**Speakers only link)

* **Directions:** Please join the link at 8:35am PT (20 minutes prior to your session). When you enter the link, enter your name and click “join event.” Cayley Plotkin (coordinator) will be backstage to greet you, so please keep an eye out to the chat in Vimeo Studio. Upon logging on you should be able to see and hear the current stream of the event.
  + **When you join you, make sure your camera and microphone are on and stay on** (those buttons are in the top right corner above their video). Nobody will see or hear you until their moderator introduces them. We need these on so we can make sure their video quality is clear and that we can hear them.
  + **Once logged on we ask that speakers do not switch out of or into headphones** as this can cut out their audio.
  + If you have any issues, please let Mindy know and she will text Cayley to troubleshoot.
  + Most issues are fixed by closing out the tab and rejoining, but they have many different ways they troubleshoot if something is not up to standard!
  + Mindy will be joining via the [public viewing link](https://digiday.com/digiday-gaming-advertising-forum-the-growing-pains-of-gaming/) (PW: kubient)
* **Tips:** Sit in a quiet well-lit area with no windows or light sources directly behind you. Google Chrome is the preferred browser for logging on.

**Moderator Information**

**Moderator:** Seb Joseph

**Email:** [seb@digiday.com](mailto:seb@digiday.com)

**Twitter:** [@seb\_joseph](https://twitter.com/seb_joseph)

* Seb is Digiday’s brand editor based in the UK covering advertising, marketing and brand campaigns.
* You previously spoke with Seb for “*In the Heights”* where he quoted you throughout the standalone [piece](https://digiday.com/marketing/marketers-are-leaning-into-the-metaverse-roblox-ramps-up-brand-partnerships/).
* Recent coverage:
  + August 13: [Soccer media business Goal is exploring in-game commerce](https://digiday.com/marketing/soccer-media-business-goal-is-exploring-in-game-commerce/)
  + July 28: [‘No one’s going in blind’: Brands are bringing gaming and esports in-house](https://digiday.com/marketing/no-ones-going-in-blind-brands-are-bringing-gaming-and-esports-in-house/)

**Abstract:**

Bringing Brands into the Metaverse: The Metaverse is quickly moving from vision to reality, and the world’s top brands are realizing the power of connecting with millions of people through shared experiences in authentic and innovative ways that the Metaverse enables. On platforms like Roblox, brands can push the boundaries of their creativity, test products, grow their audiences and offer experiences and collectibles that might not be attainable in the physical world. Join us for a fireside chat with Roblox’s Christina Wootton, vp of brand partnerships, where she will talk about how brands can extend their presence into the Metaverse, evolve content to keep consumers engaged, and discuss new trends emerging in the space.

**About Fireside:**

* This will be a 20-minute fireside 1:1 discussion with Digiday brands editor Seb Joseph to talk about how brands can extend their presence into the Metaverse, evolve content to keep consumers engaged, and trends in the space.
* This is an opportunity to discuss the following:
  + Roblox’s overall approach to brand partnerships
  + Reinforce how Roblox is ushering in the metaverse, and the importance of authentic experiences that enable users to express themselves and connect with their favorite brands
  + Point out trends like the importance of online identity in the Metaverse and how Gen Z and digital natives move seamlessly between IRL and digital, have genuine friendships and active social circles in the Metaverse, and often value digital items more than physical. How we think some of these trends we are seeing will define what brand marketing/fashion and other industries look like in the future.

**Outline:**

* Quick intro from Seb giving an overview of the fireside
* Christina to share short intro/role at Roblox
* Seb to jump into conversation - questions are as follows:
  + What is the Metaverse? How are you and your team educating brands of the concept of the Metaverse and Roblox’s role within?
  + During your tenure at Roblox, how have the ways brands use Roblox changed throughout?
  + With the shifts in ways brands use Roblox, how have you adapted?
  + What does advertising look like on Roblox and how/why it’s different to other platforms?
  + How do you work with brands? Direct or with agencies - are brands carving out dedicated resources to show up in gaming?
  + Why are fashion brands showing so much interest? (Hit on sustainability)
  + What is the concept of branded experiences on Roblox - how prevalent could these be in the future?
  + What is the creator community on Roblox and will they become gaming’s equivalent of influencers one day?
* End (no Q&A)

**Key Messaging:**

**Christina Intro**

* Hi, I’m Christina Wootton, a VP at Roblox overseeing brand partnerships and I’ve been with the company for about 8 years.
* I have more than a decade of entertainment experience working with Fortune 500 companies and studios including Netflix, Warner Bros., Universal Pictures, Disney, and Gucci to name a few.

**What is the Metaverse? How are you and your team educating brands of the concept of the Metaverse and Roblox’s role within?**

* Roblox (and the Metaverse itself) is bigger than gaming - it is the place to be when you can't be in-person. Whatever you see in real life, we can imagine it in digital life.
* **We are ushering in the Metaverse and this new category of human co-experience. We believe Roblox is the future of how we will play, work, learn and share experiences together.**
* We have been building this platform for over 15 years. We don’t see any limitations on what Roblox can be and what people will use it for. People want to participate in authentic experiences with their friends!
* There’s a wide range of virtual immersive experiences for everyone! From experiencing Gucci’s latest exhibition in [Gucci Gardens](https://blog.roblox.com/2021/05/gucci-garden-experience/), to [Vans World](https://www.roblox.com/vans) where users can explore the House of Vans based in London to virtual concerts like Twenty One Pilots which will launch tomorrow, there’s truly something for everyone within Roblox.

**During your tenure at Roblox, how have the ways brands use Roblox changed throughout?**

* Brands have been on the platform for the past 5 years. We’ve worked with several brands to create experiences including Gucci, Netflix, NFL, Warner Bros., and Nike. Each experience has been unique and varies from creating virtual items, collaborating with top experiences, and building persistent spaces.
* In the earlier days, we saw brands coming on to create exclusive Avatars, digital items, and even scavenger hunts.
  + For example, we partnered with Nike to build exclusive Avatars decked out in Air-Max inspired sneakers in celebration of [Air Max Day](https://blog.roblox.com/2019/03/nike-air-max-day/).
  + To celebrate their 100th season, the [NFL partnered with Roblox](https://blog.roblox.com/2019/08/roblox-nfl-2019-season/) to create limited-time bundles and emotes for users to show their fandom. Users could choose from 32 team uniforms and emotes like the Heisman Pose to the Cha-Cha.
  + And one of our first Warner Bros. experiences was a massive first-of-its-kind event fo[r Ready Player One](https://blog.roblox.com/2018/03/roblox-ready-player-one-adventure-begins/). The event challenged players across the world to discover three hidden keys and unlock a series of gates across four secret games - the first user to complete received a unique, highly coveted digital item (golden “Master of the Hunt” hat).
* We’re seeing this evolution of how brands can utilize our platform and have seen them experiment early on and now with our technology constantly evolving, we’re seeing higher fidelity experiences.
* As technology matures, and people spend more and more time sharing experiences online, the Metaverse will play host to even bigger and more immersive virtual spaces and events. That represents a massive opportunity for brands, celebrities, creators and music artists, who are able to engage with potential customers or fans in unprecedented ways on a truly global scale.

**With the shifts in ways brands use Roblox, how have you adapted?**

* It’s always evolving - the opportunities in the metaverse are limitless. You can literally build anything you want without having the restraints you would in the real world.
* As we continue to grow, we are investing in the tools and resources for developers and creators to build the next generation of experiences users can experience on the platform.
* One untapped opportunity for brands is building persistent immersive worlds that can offer fans evergreen spaces to enjoy their favorite content, help maintain and even increase their emotional investment, as well as draw in new audiences.
* These spaces are the natural evolution of interactions in social media, allowing fans to connect with their favorite brands, celebrities, artists and content curated specifically for them in immersive 3D environments that are open to them at all times. We believe such virtual spaces and platforms to become a crucial channel alongside traditional and social media, and real-life events.
  + A great example of this is “[Vans World](http://www.roblox.com/Vans)” which we launched earlier this month has seen 25 million visits to date.
    - The interactive 3D persistence space is inspired by Vans’ signature locations such as House of Vans, the Vans Off the Wall Skatepark in California, Vans retail shops and revered skate destinations from all over the globe.
    - In this persistent space, users have the ability to use the Vans shoe customizer to create their own unique style, and the full skate shop to build their perfect board.
  + Another great example is our [Stranger Things: Starcourt Mall](https://www.roblox.com/games/5853107391/Stranger-Things-Starcourt-Mall) experience that leveraged a persistent space in collaboration with the creator community which has seen 30 million visits to date:
    - Much like the local mall back in the 80s where teens came together, the virtual Starcourt Mall is a similar setting reimagined for the Metaverse, opening up unique possibilities for one of Netflix’s top franchises to engage and grow their global audience. It offers quests to earn Stranger Things-inspired gear, play mini-games, compete in rotating leaderboard challenges, and purchase additional avatar items.

**How is Roblox different from other platforms and what is the concept of branded experiences on Roblox? How prevalent could these be in the future?**

* At its core, Roblox is about co-experience and we are experimenting with different formats, from virtual concerts (Lil Nas X, Twenty One Pilots) and movie/TV experiences (In the Heights, Bakugan), to persistent spaces like our partnerships with Vans, Stranger Things and Wonder Woman.
* These experiences are all supported by the ability to reach millions of people in creative ways and contextual ways, draw in new audiences, and create new revenue streams.
* When we speak with brands that are looking to extend their presence into the Roblox Metaverse, we recommend that they try to enhance our community’s shared experiences, without interrupting what they are doing and come up with native, immersive ways of experiencing their products or touchpoints.
* Our community spends billions of hours on the platform every month, and there are many ways to make their time even more exciting and fun. It’s not just about having a known IP, but rather how that IP makes shared experiences in the Metaverse better, more engaging.
* Brands that allow themselves to experiment and collaborate with our community and creators will flourish in the real world.

**How do you work with brands? Direct or with agencies - are brands carving out dedicated resources to show up in gaming?**

* It really varies brand by brand. We work with a variety of different teams within marketing, licensing, and some brands who are starting to build out Metaverse teams.
* Just like 15 years ago when brands were building teams to advertise on Facebook and Twitter, and now platforms like TikTok, every brand will need a metaverse strategy in the future and the ones that have them now are at the forefront.

**Why are fashion brands showing so much interest? (Hit on sustainability)**

* Fashion brands are showing interest because Roblox is a place where the next generation of designers are cutting their teeth, trends are being shaped, and the virtual economy is growing quickly.
* Virtual fashion and branded merchandise is a great way for brands to promote designers, test new ideas, discover new revenue streams and experiment and expand their reach to Gen Z.
* Roblox experiences are social in nature, our community members love dressing up and showing off their latest virtual fashion items, merch, hair styles and overall looks. They adapt their avatars as their real-life interests and preferences evolve and they use their unique identities to connect with friends or belong to a broader community.
* Virtual goods pave the way to a more sustainable future that’s fresh and fun. We see and hear from the next generation of consumers (i.e.Gen Z users on Roblox) that they often value virtual items more than physical ones, especially if they’re hard to get.
* As Gen Z demonstrates their preference to spend their cash on virtual items, they offer a glimpse of future consumer trends, and a path to a more sustainable consumer goods ecosystem.
  + For example, studies show that Gen Z consumers are willing to pay a premium for eco-friendly items.
* As consumers start to view less as more, it doesn’t mean they’ve stopped wanting to express who they are. They can pursue coveted trendy virtual items, or even limited-edition collectible and couture pieces, at a lower price and without adding more waste to the world or violating their personal sustainability ethics.

**What is the creator community on Roblox and will they become gaming’s equivalent of influencers one day?**

* Creators play a significant role on Roblox. We are fully user generated. Anyone can design, build and publish immersive, interoperable experiences, and metaverse items for others to consume.
* While some brands may not have Metaverse developers ready to execute on their ideas, there are global communities of creators who are already experts at crafting engaging, immersive experiences. We often see brands approaching these UGC developers directly, while in some cases, our developer relations team can also help identify trusted community experts and teams.
* The millions of experiences on Roblox are all built by our community of over 9.5 million developers. These are social experiences that people enjoy sharing with their friends, and there’s something for everyone. From birthday celebrations to educational and learning experiences, or virtual concerts like Lil Nas X visited over 36 million times and fashion exhibitions like Gucci Garden which had 20 million visits in the first two weeks. People from all over the world come to Roblox to build and create.
* Futurist and Metaverse expert Cathy Hackl [thinks](https://www.forbes.com/sites/cathyhackl/2021/01/29/how-brands-can-thrive-in-the-direct-to-avatar-economy/?sh=786391b3417c) “the world's next Coco Chanel is probably a 10-year-old girl who is currently designing avatar skins in Roblox.”
  + Not unlike Justin Bieber’s discovery on YouTube, up-and-coming designers are being discovered by large fashion houses based on their virtual designs on metaverse platforms like Roblox.