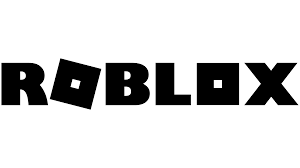
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**“The internet is starting to feel more like real life”: Teens reveal the truth about their online world in new report, say they want parents to get more involved**

* **The Demystifying Teens Online Interactions report comes as part of a new partnership between online safety organisation Internet Matters and global platform for shared experiences Roblox, as they join forces to help support parents and carers to ensure young people have a safe and fulfilling experience online**
* **The report takes a deep dive into the online lives of a group of teens, hearing in their own words how the internet has allowed them to become ‘a completely new person’ and to create ‘strong friendships’ which ‘bring out the best’ in them**
* **Despite teen gamers having the ‘greatest sense of belonging’ online, the report reveals how some find setting time limits challenging, often struggling to ‘put their phone down’ while others admit they can feel ‘disconnected’ with their offline world and want parents to be more involved**
* **Partnership officially launches with an online panel discussion event on Oct 12, 2021**
* **DRAFT -**

**Embargoed October 7, 2021:** Teens have laid bare their online lives in a new report - detailing the many benefits and challenges they face.

Commissioned by Roblox as the first initiative in a new partnership with Internet Matters, the report explores friendships, self-expression and creativity in the online world, examining areas where they feel fulfilled and those where they need greater support.

The online gamers who participated were found to be the most confident group of connected teenagers as they feel gaming communities provide a space for them ‘to be themselves’, as they could identify others with similar interests.

The report identified how they feel a deeper ‘sense of belonging’ compared to other connected teens in the study and feel they’re ‘more accepted’ online than they are offline. In turn, this allows them to ‘feel free to express’ themselves online.

With one teenager revealing: “The internet is starting to feel more like real life.”

Despite parents of the gamers being more concerned than the average UK parent about their teen being contacted by strangers online\*, the report highlights how gamers make many positive friendships through their shared interests and reassuringly are very cautious about unwanted contact and of people who don’t ‘appear genuine’.

Lack of authenticity was a turn-off for all young people, especially when it came to making new online friendships.

One teen highlighted how she knows what to do if she comes across “creepy people” online, yet acknowledged this isn’t universal adding, “sometimes children don’t always grasp potentially dangerous situations”. This reinforces the need to continually support young people to develop critical thinking skills in order to navigate online friendships safely.

While teen gamers identified that their online community offers huge benefits to their mental health, they also recognised some downsides.

This group found setting time limits challenging with one claiming: “If I’m playing a game… it is quite hard to stop” and another adding: “it’s tough to know when to put my phone down.” One of the teens expressed it led to feelings of disconnection from their offline world.

The majority of the teens including the gamers also revealed how they fear judgment from others, especially when it comes to expressing themselves online which can be a barrier to creativity. They admit that comments from others have negatively impacted their confidence with one teenager saying they welcome filters to stop trolls.

The group told how they felt their parents didn’t understand their online world and how they hoped their parents would engage with them more online.

One teenager said: “I would like to do more online with them but it’s hard for them to understand” while another added: “I think if parents understood what their children get up to online, it could allow kids to be safer on the internet”.

The research, which was carried out by specialist agency YouthSight, saw 19 UK teenagers aged 13-16 take part in a three-day online community, where they opened up and shared stories about their online world. The aim of the research was to hear, in teens’ own words, how they seek to thrive online and get to the bottom of their online interactions for parents and carers.

The report is the first initiative by online safety organisation Internet Matters and Roblox, a global platform that connects millions of people every day through shared experiences, and continually expands its partnerships with the world’s leading safety experts and organisations as part of its [Digital Civility Initiative](https://corp.roblox.com/digital-well-being/). The two organisations will work together, gaining further insights from young people to help improve their experiences online.

**Carolyn Bunting, CEO of Internet Matters** said: “Ensuring all families have a positive online experience must be a priority. By listening directly to young people, we can better understand how to navigate risks and offer tailored support to help them thrive online.

“This report has allowed us to take a deeper look at everyday practices by teenagers and get a true picture of their interactions, how the online world makes them feel and the habits they’ve developed as a result of the time they spend online.

“This is a great first step for our partnership and we look forward to continuing to work with Roblox to ensure young people are listened to and given the opportunity to take advantage of all the benefits the online world has to offer.

**Laura Higgins, Director of Community Safety and Civility at Roblox**, said: “We are excited to partner with Internet Matters to help empower kids, teens, parents, and caregivers with the skills and confidence to create positive, healthy online experiences.

We believe shared experiences in the Roblox metaverse—which is rapidly becoming one of the key social hangouts for teens— enable people to build rich, meaningful connections and express themselves. With that, we have a duty to make sure they can make these connections and explore their creativity freely and safely.

Through partnerships like our work with Internet Matters, we have a unique opportunity to engage with a broader community of young people, help shape their positive behaviours both on- and offline, and enable parents to guide them as they are building important social, creative and other skills online.”

The full report, with accounts from UK teenagers aged 13-16 can be found here.

**PANEL DISCUSSION: 5:30pm BST, October 12, 2001**

Internet Matters and Roblox are officially launching their partnership with a panel event titled “Demystifying teens online interactions” at 5.30pm BST on October 12 to discuss the findings of the report and offer parents, professionals and industry the opportunity to pose questions on how to support kids and teens to thrive online. Panel speakers include: Carolyn Bunting, CEO of Internet Matters; Tami Bhaumik, VP of Digital Civility at Roblox, Elizabeth Milovidov, Independent digital parenting expert, and Amber Coleman-Mortley, civics expert, educator, and tech Mom. To join the online event, **please register** [**here**](https://roblox.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_f0ilz9usQ7GoHZpXYa4xkw)**.**

**Visit**[**internetmatters.org**](http://internetmatters.org)**for more information on how to get involved with your child’s online world.**

**For information on how to keep your family safe on Roblox, visit** [**corp.roblox.com/parents/**](http://corp.roblox.com/parents/)

ENDS

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**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Report based on research conducted by YouthSight. 19 young people, aged between 13 and 16 were recruited to take part in a three-day online community. They were asked about their online lives, the role of online communities and how they express themselves online. The community members included a mix of general internet users, content creators, and gamers across a broad demographic representation.

Using an online community we were able to get more insight from each respondent compared to traditional focus groups by allowing them to complete tasks in their own time including video exercises to provide authentic perspectives and to share their experiences in their own words.

**Additional Statistic:**

**\*** *Strangers contacting my child through online games +5% (57% of parents of regular online gamers, aged 13-16 years old vs. 52% of UK parents). Source: Internet Matters Parents tracker – 2,000 parents of 4-16 year olds. Data collected July 2021. Parents of regular online gamers, aged 13-16 years olds – n-406.*

**About Internet Matters**

Internet Matters (internetmatters.org) is a not-for-profit, industry-funded members body that helps families stay safe online, providing resources for parents, carers and educational professionals. It was established in 2014 by BT, Sky, TalkTalk and Virgin Media and its members include BBC, Google, Samsung, Facebook, Huawei, Barclays Digital Eagles, ByteDance, Supercell, ESET and Roblox. It is a member of the Executive Board of UKCIS (UK Council for Internet Safety), where it leads the working group for vulnerable users and was a member of The Royal Foundation Taskforce on the Prevention of Cyberbullying, founded by the Duke of Cambridge. It works with partners from across the industry, government and third sector to raise awareness and provide advice on the issues affecting children in the digital age, including cyberbullying, screen time, digital resilience, extreme content, privacy and exploitation.

**About Roblox**

Roblox’s (NYSE: RBLX) mission is to build a human co-experience platform that enables shared experiences among billions of users. Every day, tens of millions of people around the world have fun with friends as they explore millions of immersive digital experiences. All of these experiences are built by the Roblox community, made up of millions of creators. We believe in building a safe, civil, and diverse community—one that inspires and fosters creativity and positive relationships between people around the world. For more information, please visit corp.roblox.com.

**MEDIA CONTACTS**

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