

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

ROBLOX

7+

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Roblox is one of the most popular video games on the market. By 2020, the game's makers were claiming that more than half of children in the UK play it. As a 'sandbox' title, Roblox offers a huge amount of creative freedom: it lets players create their own gaming experiences with the Roblox Studio to build custom levels and games, which can then be shared with other players online. Roblox fosters creative thinking and enjoys a robust online community of fans.

CONTACT WITH STRANGERS

Roblox encourages players to communicate online (including a group chat facility). This could expose children to risks such as scammers, online predators, harassment, griefers and more. The in-game chat has some filters, but isn't perfect: players can still send harmful messages to others – such as scam links or general hostility – while predators can reach out to children directly.

PUBLIC SERVERS

Roblox has private or VIP servers which allow people to play exclusively with their friends, but this isn't always true. Most Roblox players will instead be on public servers that anyone can join. Servers can host games which focus on all kinds of aspects, including direct player interaction. Some games and servers, therefore, will put children more at risk of contact from strangers than others.

ONLINE DATERS

These are also called 'OSRs' and are quite common in Roblox. An OSR is an individual who joins a game with the intention of finding someone to date online – and eventually meet in person. Such online dating is against the Roblox community guidelines, but this policy doesn't deter OSRs. Some player-built Roblox game worlds have even been designed with online dating specifically in mind.

IN-APP PURCHASES

Roblox is actually free to download and play, but there is more to it than that: there are some hidden costs. Players are encouraged to make purchases in the game, for example, using real money. People can also buy virtual items (the in-game currency) to spend on cosmetic items in the game, while it's possible to purchase a private or VIP server.

Advice for Parents & Carers

SET PARENTAL CONTROLS

Roblox comes with several parental control options, which are explained on the game's official website. It's essential to enter the correct date of age for your child, as that allows Roblox to automatically apply the appropriate age filters. The game also allows parents and carers to set monthly spending restrictions and monitor their child's account.

DISABLE PRIVATE MESSAGING

Roblox's private messaging function raises the risk of children being contacted by people they may not want to speak with – potentially leading to bullying, harassment, hostility and more concerns. The game allows you to disable messages from anyone who hasn't been added as a friend on your child's account.

PRIVATE SERVERS

If your child has some private friends to play Roblox with, paying for a private or VIP server decreases the risk of contact from strangers. Even then, however, some players could invite other people – who might not necessarily be child-friendly – into the private server. If your child is a Roblox fan, it's important to talk with them regularly about who they are playing the game with.

MONITOR SPENDING

If they don't understand they're using real money, it's easy for children to accidentally spend a sizable amount in the game. Using parental controls to place limits on their spending will help avoid any nasty financial surprises. Ensuring that you have two-factor authentication on your payment accounts also makes it harder for your child to spend money inappropriately.

DEALING WITH STRANGERS

At some point in their development, your child will need to learn how to deal with strangers online. Show them how to block and report any users who are upsetting them or asking uncomfortable questions. Talking to them about what's OK to discuss – and what they should never tell a stranger online – will help them understand how to communicate with other people online safely.

Meet Our Expert

Cara Selwin (aka, Lunawell) has worked as an editor and journalist in the gaming industry since 2016, providing websites with award coverage, reviews and gaming guides. She is the owner of Lunawell Gaming and is currently working on various gaming-related projects including game development and writing non-fiction books.



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