

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MONTANA
BUTTE DIVISION**

JANE DOE M.O., on behalf of minor)
plaintiff, JANE DOE J.H.,)

Plaintiff,)

v.)

ROBLOX CORPORATION and)
DISCORD INC.,)

Defendants.)

Case No. CV-25-113-BU-JTJ

**JURY TRIAL
DEMANDED**

Jane Doe M.O., on behalf of minor Plaintiff Jane Doe J.H. ("Plaintiff"), brings this action against Roblox Corporation ("Roblox") and Discord Inc. ("Discord") collectively, "Defendants") to recover damages arising from the severe injuries that Plaintiff suffered because of Defendants' respective conduct in creating, designing, marketing, and distributing their mobile- and web-based applications ("apps"), and alleges as follows:

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This action seeks to hold Roblox and Discord accountable for recklessly and deceptively operating businesses in a way that led to the sexual exploitation and repeated harassment of Plaintiff. The heinous acts against Plaintiff

were committed by dangerous child predators whose actions were possible only because of the egregiously tortious conduct of Defendants.

2. This action seeks to hold Roblox and Discord accountable for recklessly and deceptively operating businesses in a way that led to the sexual exploitation and repeated harassment of Plaintiff. The heinous acts against Plaintiff were committed by dangerous child predators whose actions were possible only because of the egregiously tortious conduct of Defendants.

3. The reason for Defendants' unlawful conduct is simple: Defendants prioritize growing the number of users of their apps over child safety. As one former Roblox employee explained in describing the company's approach to child safety, "You have to make a decision, right? You can keep your players safe, but then it would be less of them on the platform. Or you just let them do what they want to do. And then the numbers all look good and investors will be happy."¹ Discord has taken the same approach to child safety on its app. Defendants' prioritization of growth over the safety of children has devastated the lives of children who use their apps.

4. Plaintiff is a 16-year-old child who was an avid user of Defendants' apps for years. Plaintiff's mother allowed Plaintiff to use these apps only because she trusted Defendants' representations that their apps were safe for children to use.

¹ Roblox: Inflated Key Metrics for Wall Street and a Pedophile Hellscape for Kids, Hindenburg Research (Oct. 8, 2024), <https://hindenburgresearch.com/roblox/>.

Plaintiff's family learned the truth only after it was too late. Plaintiff's mother discovered that Roblox and Discord had enabled child predators to identify, groom, and coerce Plaintiff into sending sexually explicit images and videos of herself which has ultimately led Plaintiff to threaten and attempt suicide.

5. Plaintiff suffered this sexual exploitation and abuse as the direct result of Defendants' conduct. For years, Defendants have misrepresented and deliberately concealed information about the pervasive predatory conduct that their apps enable and facilitate. Had Defendants disclosed the truth of what was really occurring on their apps, Plaintiff's mother would never have permitted Plaintiff to use these apps without her strict supervision. Had Defendants taken any steps to screen users before allowing them on the apps, Plaintiff would not have been exposed to the large number of predators trolling the platforms. Had Defendants implemented even the most basic system of age and identity verification, as well as effective parental controls, Plaintiff would never have engaged with this predator and never been harmed.

6. Plaintiff has suffered unimaginable harm. Her innocence has been snatched from her forever. Tragically, what happened to her is far from an isolated event. Indeed, Plaintiff is just one of countless children whose lives have been devastated as a result of Defendants' gross negligence and defectively designed apps. This action, therefore, is not just a battle to vindicate Plaintiff's rights-it is a stand

against Defendants' systemic failures to protect society's most vulnerable from unthinkable harm in pursuit of financial gain over child safety.

II. PARTIES

A. Plaintiff

7. Minor Plaintiff Jane Doe J.H., and her mother, legal guardian, and next friend Jane Doe M.O., are citizens and residents of the State of Montana, with principal place of residence in Richland County.

8. Plaintiff has suffered profound and life-altering personal injuries, caused directly and proximately by Defendants' wrongful conduct. These injuries include, but are not limited to, significant emotional distress, psychological trauma, and mental anguish. Plaintiff's experiences have led to a loss of trust, safety, and personal security, depriving her of the opportunity for a normal and healthy development. The injuries she sustained are severe, ongoing, and permanent, affecting her daily life and emotional health in lasting and immeasurable ways.

9. To the extent Defendants attempt to enforce terms and conditions Defendants may claim Plaintiff, a minor, attempted to accept, Plaintiff disaffirms any such contract, including any forced arbitration, venue selection, or delegation clause therein.

B. Defendants

10. Defendant Roblox Corporation is a Delaware corporation with its principal place of business in San Mateo, California. Roblox owns, operates, controls, produces, designs, maintains, manages, develops, tests, labels, markets, advertises, promotes, supplies, and distributes the Roblox app. Roblox is widely available to consumers throughout the United States.

11. Defendant Discord Inc. is a Delaware corporation with its principal place of business in San Francisco, California. Discord owns, operates, controls, produces, designs, maintains, manages, develops, tests, labels, markets, advertises, promotes, supplies, and distributes the Discord app. Discord is widely available to consumers throughout the United States.

III. JURISDICTION AND VENUE

12. This Court has subject-matter jurisdiction over this action under 28 U.S.C. § 1332(a) because Plaintiff and Defendants are citizens of different states and the amount in controversy exceeds \$75,000.

13. Venue is proper in the Billings Division pursuant to Local Rule 1.2(c)(1) and under 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b) and (c) because each Defendant transacts business in, is found in, and/or has agents in this District, and because some of the actions giving rise to this Complaint took place within this District and within the Billings Division.

IV. FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS AS TO ROBLOX

A. Roblox Offers a Gaming App for Children.

14. Launched in 2006, Roblox is an online gaming app that allows users to play myriad games, which the company refers to as "experiences." There are currently more than 40 million experiences within the Roblox ecosystem. Most experiences on Roblox are created not by Roblox but by individuals (often Roblox users) or companies that develop their own games and make them available on Roblox for others to play.

15. Roblox is easily accessible, including to children. It is free to download and play and is available on gaming consoles, computers, tablets, and cellular devices.

16. Roblox is designed to be an interactive experience, allowing and encouraging users to communicate with each other. Gameplay interactions, user hubs, direct messaging, and voice chat all promote social interactions between users. Roblox's co-founder and CEO David Baszucki has explained that his vision is for Roblox to bring about "the next phase of human interaction," which he also has described as "a new category of human coexperience."² Roblox has similarly explained that it "operates a human co-experience platform ... where users interact

² David Baszucki, Co-founder and CEO of Roblox, *The CEO of Roblox on Scaling Community-Sourced Innovation*, Har. Bus. Rev., The Magazine, (Mar-Apr 2022), <https://hbr.org/2022/03/the-ceo-of-roblox-on-scaling-community-sourced-innovation>.

with each other to explore and develop immersive, user-generated, 3D experiences."³

17. Roblox designed its app for children. Roblox has marketed its app not only as the #1 gaming site for kids and teens"⁴ but also as an educational experience for young users. Roblox claims that it provides "new gateways into learning"-from "chemistry to physics to robotics and more, Roblox experiences bring concepts to life in ways that immerse learners and motivate exploration, play, and deep thinking."⁵ These offerings, according to Roblox, include "high-quality, standards-aligned, immersive educational experiences designed by curriculum experts."⁶



18. Roblox's popularity among children exploded during the pandemic when the app was flooded with millions of new users as kids were confined to their

³ Roblox Corp., Quarterly Report (Form 10-Q) (Mar. 13, 2021).

⁴ Roblox, *What Is Roblox*, <http://web.archive.org/web/20170227121323/https://www.roblox.com/> (archived Feb. 27, 2017).

⁵ Roblox, *A New Era of Engaged Learning*, <https://corp.roblox.com/education>.

⁶ *Id.*

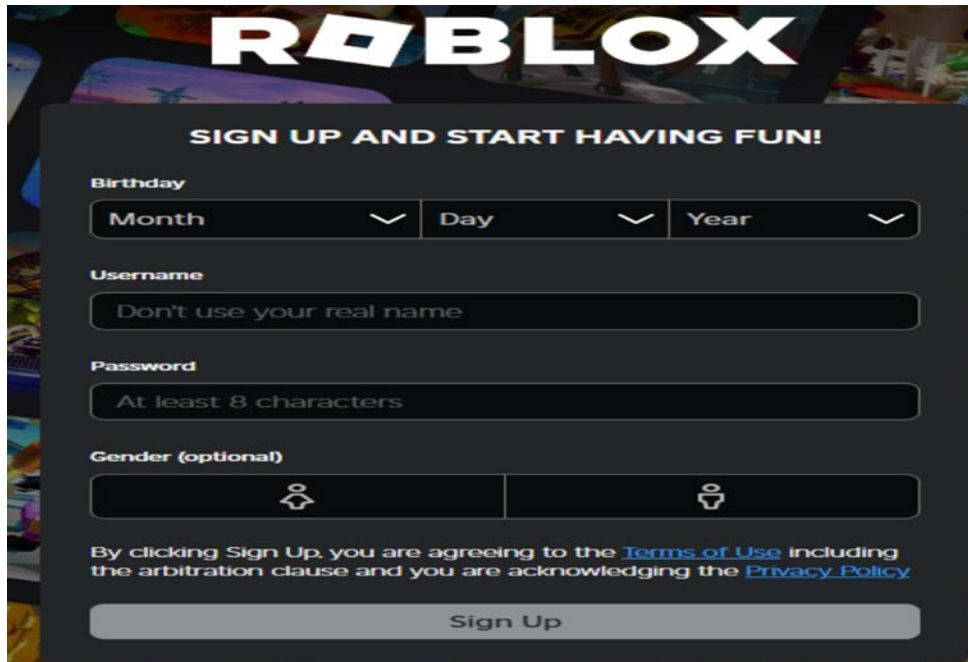
homes and glued to their devices. By September 2020, roughly 30 million people, more than half of them under 13, were on Roblox daily, making it the world's biggest recreational zone for kids.

19. That growth has continued unabated. In Roblox's 2023 Annual Report, the company reported an average of 68.5 million daily active users, with 21% under 9 years of age; 21% from 9-12 years of age; 16% from 13-16 years of age; and 41% over 17 years of age.

20. Today, Roblox is the most downloaded online game globally, and the average user spends 139 minutes a day on the app.⁷

21. Individuals who wish to play Roblox must create an account. It is extremely easy to SIGN UP AND START HAVING FUN!" Users must provide only a birthdate, username, and password. Users of any age can create an account. There is no age minimum. Roblox does not require users to verify their age upon sign-up, so they can easily represent that they are younger or older than their actual age.

⁷ Qustodio, *Research by App Category - Gaming*, <https://www.qustodio.com/en/the-digital-dilemma/gaming>.

The image shows the Roblox sign-up interface. At the top, the Roblox logo is displayed in white against a dark background. Below the logo, the text "SIGN UP AND START HAVING FUN!" is written in white. The form consists of several fields: a "Birthday" section with three dropdown menus for "Month", "Day", and "Year"; a "Username" field with a placeholder text "Don't use your real name"; a "Password" field with a placeholder text "At least 8 characters"; and a "Gender (optional)" section with two buttons featuring male and female icons. At the bottom, there is a line of text stating: "By clicking Sign Up, you are agreeing to the [Terms of Use](#) including the arbitration clause and you are acknowledging the [Privacy Policy](#)". Below this text is a large, light gray "Sign Up" button.

Roblox Sign-up Screen

22. Although Roblox states that children must have parental permission before signing up for an account, nothing prevents them from creating their own accounts and playing on Roblox. Roblox does nothing to confirm or document that parental permission has been given, no matter how young a child is. Nor does Roblox require a parent to confirm the age given when a child signs up to use Roblox.

23. After creating an account, all users are assigned a default player avatar—a cartoonish character that represents the individual user within certain games.



Example default avatar on Roblox

24. They can then play millions of experiences on the app. These games are sorted into different genres/categories, such as Sports, Role-Playing Games, Fighting, First-Person Shooters, Fashion, Horror, Comedy, Military, and Naval. The games recommended to a user will vary based on the age the user entered when generating their account and Roblox's algorithm that recommends games to the user.



Examples of games available on Roblox

25. Until November 2024, Roblox configured its app to default to settings that allowed adults to easily communicate with children. Adult strangers could “friend” and chat with a child of any age via direct (i.e., private) message. Further,

even without being “friends,” adults could also chat with a child of any age within a Roblox experience through direct messages.

26. Now, under Roblox’s default settings, adults cannot directly message children under 13, but Roblox still does nothing to prevent children this young from creating accounts with fake 13+ birthdates, which gives them full access to Roblox’s direct-messaging options. Roblox still relies on self-reported birthdates for age verification. Further, children 13 and over are still vulnerable to receiving friend requests-or direct messages within Roblox experiences from adult strangers. There is also nothing that prohibits adults from entering fake birthdays and posing as children in their attempts to friend or otherwise communicate with children users.

27. Roblox generates revenue largely by selling users an in-game digital currency called

28. Robux, which they exchange for digital content such as online experiences and customized outfits and appearances for their avatars. Robux can be purchased in a single transaction or a user may subscribe to receive Robux on a recurring basis with a Roblox Premium membership. Roblox also offers Robux gift cards that anyone can purchase and send to any user.

29. Children frequently become obsessed with purchasing or otherwise obtaining Robux to buy items for their avatars and to spend in their favorite experiences on Roblox. In Roblox's Avatar Store, for example, the company sells

rare items at astronomical prices, such as a type of hair for an avatar, which children seek to purchase to keep up with or outdo their peers on Roblox. As a result, children often tell others, including strangers, that they will do "Anything for Robux."⁸

B. Roblox Lures Parents into Letting Their Kids Use Roblox with Promises of Safety.

30. Roblox's success and continued growth have hinged on its constant, false assurances to parents that its app is safe for children. The company has offered such assurances throughout its history and in every forum possible-on its website, through public promises of its highest executives, in news articles, on podcasts, and on and on.

31. Over the years, Roblox has repeatedly represented on its website that its app is safe for children and has touted the safety controls it has in place. As early as 2007, Roblox's website assured parents that Roblox is an "online virtual playground ... where kids of all ages can safely interact, create, have fun, and learn."⁹

32. From 2008 to 2016, the website continued to promise parents, "We take every precaution possible to make sure kids are protected from inappropriate and

⁸ Olivia Carville & Cecilia D' Anastosio, *Roblox 's Pedophile Problem*, Bloomberg Businessweek (July 23, 2024), <https://www.bloomberg.com/features/2024-roblox-pedophile-problem/>.

⁹ Roblox, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

offensive individuals as well as from indecent and distasteful content."¹⁰ It also assured parents that Roblox had a zero-tolerance policy for "swearing and obscenities, messages and content of a sexual or violent nature, and any sort of aggressive or threatening communication," and "immediately suspended or permanently expelled" any offenders.¹¹

33. The website has consistently sought to paint Roblox as "family friendly" and safe for children of all ages. In 2017, Roblox began declaring that it "take[s] kids' safety and privacy very seriously" and "strive[s] to continually develop new and innovative technologies that will protect the safety of our community while allowing players to imagine, create, and play together in a family-friendly environment."¹² Roblox similarly has advertised its app as "a safe, moderated place to meet, play, chat, and collaborate on creative projects."¹³

¹⁰ Roblox, Keeping Kids Safe, <https://web.archive.org/web/20080501101437/http://www.roblox.com/Parents/KeepingKidsSafe.aspx> (archived May 1, 2008); see also Roblox, Information for Parents, <https://web.archive.org/web/20160131063648/http://corp.roblox.com/parents> (archived Jan. 31, 2016).

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² Roblox, Parents' Guide, <https://web.archive.org/web/20170716032712/https://corp.roblox.com/parents/> (archived Jul. 16, 2017).

¹³ *Id.*

As the largest growing social platform for play, Roblox gives players a safe, moderated place to meet, play, chat, and collaborate on creative projects. If so inclined, they can even go on to learn how to build and code immersive experiences for others, all at their own pace.



Excerpt from Roblox Parent's Guide in 2017

34. Roblox's website representations have remained largely unchanged since then. In 2023, for example, Roblox assured parents that it "continually develop[s] cutting-edge technologies to ensure that the Roblox platform remains a safe and fun space for players all over the world."¹⁴ Roblox claimed that the company was "dedicated to working together with parents and digital safety experts to promote a family-friendly environment that allows all players to imagine, create, and play online."¹⁵ Roblox emphasized that it is "committed to ensuring that Roblox is a safe and fun place for everyone."¹⁶ According to Roblox, it "goes above and

¹⁴ Roblox, For Parents, <https://web.archive.org/web/20230405060048/https://corporate.roblox.com/parents/> (archived Apr. 5, 2023).

¹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁶ Roblox, Roblox FAQ,

beyond to foster an environment where people of any age can create, play, learn, and imagine safely. We've kept children's privacy and safety top-of-mind when designing our platform, especially through the implementation of advanced text filters that block inappropriate language or other unsafe content.¹⁷

35. Roblox's website today contains similar assurances. It claims, "Safety is in our DNA:when Dave Baszucki and Erik Cassel launched Roblox in 2006, they spent a few hours each day with the community, helping to ensure that Roblox was a safe and welcoming environment. Safety was their top priority, and they made constant improvements in their moderation, both for content and for communication on the platform."¹⁸

36. According to the current website, Roblox "won't allow language that is used to harass, discriminate, incite violence, threaten others, or used in a sexual context."¹⁹ Roblox touts a "stringent safety system and policies,"²⁰ which include its "expertly trained team with thousands of members dedicated to protecting our users

<https://web.archive.org/web/20230328011957/https://corporate.roblox.com/faq/> (archived Mar. 28, 2023).

¹⁷ Roblox, Roblox & User Data FAQ, <https://en.help.roblox.com/hc/en-us/articles/4406238486676-Roblox-User-Data-FAQ>.

¹⁸ Roblox, Safety Comes First on Roblox, <https://corp.roblox.com/safety-civility-resources?section=news&article=safety-comes-first-on-roblox>

¹⁹ Roblox, Safety Features: Chat, Privacy & Filtering, <https://en.help.roblox.com/hc/en-us/articles/203313120-Safety-Features-Chat-Privacy-Filtering#:~:text=Players%20have%20different%20safety%20settings,and%20phrases%2%200t ha n%20younger%20players>

²⁰ Roblox, Safety & Civility at Roblox, <https://en.help.roblox.com/hc/en-us/articles/4407444339348-Safety-Civility-at-Roblox>

and monitoring for inappropriate content"; its "safety review of every uploaded image, audio, and video file, using a combination of review by a large team of human moderators and machine detection before they become available on our platform"; and its chat filters for inappropriate content, which "are even stricter" for children under 13 and "include any potentially identifiable personal information, slang etc."²¹

37. These false promises and assurances are not confined to Roblox's website. They are repeated in statements by the company's highest executives-including in direct response to concerns raised by parents.

38. In 2009, a blogger wrote about blocking Roblox because he doubted its safety for his children. CEO David Baszucki responded to the blogger reassuring him that Roblox flags "obviously offensive content" and removes it, and if "something is marginal, but gets flagged as inappropriate," Roblox "investigate[s] immediately."²²

39. In a 2013 *Wired* interview, when asked whether a parent should be concerned about whom his child was chatting with in-game, Baszucki declared, "We take every precaution possible to make sure kids are protected from inappropriate

²¹ *Id.*

²² Eric Frenchman, Revisiting Rob/ox, Pardon My French (Oct. 5, 2009), <https://pardonmyfrench.typepad.com/pardonmyfrench/2009/10/revisiting-roblox.html>.

and offensive individuals as well as from indecent and distasteful content," taking a sentence verbatim from Roblox's webpage for parents.²³

40. Tami Bhaumik, Roblox's current Vice President of Civility & Partnerships, has doubled down on these promises in statements to parenting magazines, news outlets, and podcasts all aimed at persuading parents to let their children use Roblox. She also has contacted international online safety experts in an effort to sell Roblox's safety story.

41. As recently as 2024, Bhaumik told Parents Magazine that "[w]e have a responsibility to make sure our players can learn, create, and play safely. This continues to be our most important priority and that will never change."²⁴

Parents

In response to safety concerns, Roblox notes that the platform was designed for kids and teens from the beginning, and they're committed to making safety a priority. "We have a responsibility to make sure our players can learn, create, and play safely," notes Tami Bhaumik, Vice President of Civility & Partnerships at Roblox. "This continues to be our most important priority and that will never change."

²³ Tony Sims, Interview with David Baszucki, Founder & CEO of Roblox, Wired (Feb. 7, 2013), <https://www.wired.com/2013/02/roblox/>.

²⁴ Maressa Brown, Is Roblox Safe for Kids? Here's What the Experts Have to Say, Parents Magazine (Apr. 29, 2024), <https://www.parents.com/kids/safety/internet/is-roblox-safe-for-kids/>.

42. Such statements by Bhaumik date back years. In 2018, Bhaumik told the Washington Post that Roblox "focus[es] on making sure that everything is done in a safe and appropriate way."²⁵ That year, she also claimed to another newspaper that Roblox's "safety team reviews every uploaded image, video, and audio file used within our games to make sure they are safe and age appropriate."²⁶ She also boasted that Roblox has "created extensive parental controls for our games and a detailed Roblox Parent's Guide that provides information to parents to help create a Roblox experience that's best for their child."²⁷

43. In 2019, while presenting on a "Digital Civility Panel," Bhaumik emphasized that "[w]e make sure there's a safe environment," citing Roblox's "tremendous reporting system" and "incredible moderation and CS team that reacts very, very quickly."²⁸ On that same panel-and in contradiction to Roblox's representation that it had always taken "every precaution possible" to protect children-Bhaumik conceded that "digital civility did not exist at Roblox a year and

²⁵ Hayley Tsukayama, Roblox, an Online Kids Game, Explains How a Hack Allowed a Character's Virtual 'Rape', Wash. Post. (Jul. 17, 2018), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2018/07/17/roblox-an-online-kids-game-explains-how-hack-allowed-characters-virtual-rape/>.

²⁶ Chris Pollard, Police Warn that Children as Young as Five-Years-Old are Seeing Naked Lego-Type Characters Having Sex on Roblox App, The Sun (Jan. 29, 2018), <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/5445444/roblox-app-children-danger-sex-warning/>.

²⁷ *Id.*

²⁸ YouTube, Digital Civility Panel (Oct. 23, 2019), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XoUs1Js7WG0&list=PLcKphP00N1_kCLjvcOWdwbegJkNS_L-CuL&index=6.

a half ago and we established this and made it a movement within our company."²⁹ She added later, "It's still very early days for us. This whole digital civility focus for Roblox is still there, we're just still establishing it."³⁰

44. In a 2022 video interview about safety on Roblox, Bhaumik asserted that Roblox's "number one priority" is "to create a safe, civil, and inclusive community" and that "[s]afety and civility has always been baked into everything that we do."³¹ That year, on a podcast, she also bragged about Roblox's purported safety protections, including "thousands of human moderators on the front lines" and "machine learning that is constantly taking a look at chat filters.,^m With these and other measures, she exclaimed, "[a]ny sort of bad actor that comes onto the platform is dealt with swiftly" and "[w]e remove any content that's reported to us within minutes."³²

45. In 2023, Matt Kaufman, formerly the Chief Systems Officer for Roblox, was appointed Chief Safety Officer, at which point he too began peddling Roblox's child safety narrative.

²⁹ *Id.*

³⁰ *Id.*

³¹ Video Interview with Tami Bhaumik, Roblox's VP of Digital Civility & Partnerships (2022), <https://www.facebook.com/bedford.sheriff/videos/roblox-how-to-help-kids-use-itsafelyroblox-vp-of-digital-civility-partnerships/1338989609901259/>.

³² YouTube, Into the Metaverse, Podcast: EP.21: Tami Bhaumik (Roblox) - Building a Safe & Resilient Metaverse, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LTS_bBOYS9A.

46. In a 2024 blog post on Roblox's website, Kaufman asserted that "Roblox has spent almost two decades working to make the platform one of the safest online environments for our users, particularly the youngest users. Our guiding vision is to create the safest and most civil community in the world."³³ According to Kaufman, "For users under 13, our filters block sharing of personal information and attempts to take conversations off Roblox, where safety standards and moderation are less stringent."³⁴ A few months later, he added, "Safety is and always has been foundational to everything we do at Roblox."³⁵

47. In a later blog post, Kaufman touted Roblox's "track record of putting the safety of the youngest and most vulnerable people on our platform first.,*m*

48. Kaufman also recently told *NPR* that "any time anything happens to a child that puts them at risk is one too many."³⁶

C. In Reality, Roblox Is a Digital and Real-Life Nightmare for Children.

49. Roblox's public statements and promises are carefully curated to paint the picture of a "digital playground" that is safe and appropriate for children. When

³³ Matt Kaufman, Chief Safety Officer, Driving Civility and Safety for All Users, Roblox (July 22, 23 2024), <https://corp.roblox.com/newsroom/2024/07/driving-civility-and-safety-for-allusers>.

³⁴ *Id.*

³⁵ Matt Kaufman, Chief Safety Officer, Major Updates to Our Safety Systems and Parental Controls, Roblox (Nov. 18, 2024), <https://corp.roblox.com/newsroom/2024/11/major-updates-to-our-safety-systems-and-parental-controls>.

³⁶ Scott Tong & James Perkins Mastromarino, Roblox Chief Safety Officer on New Safety Features, Past Cases of Child Abuse on the Platform, WBUR (Nov. 18, 2024), <https://www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2024/11/18/roblox-safety-features>.

parents, the press, or child advocates raise questions and concerns, the company's highest executives respond with comforting promises of safety.

50. This campaign of reassurance masks the truth about Roblox. Far from creating a safe place for children, Roblox designed, built, and maintains a toxic environment that has enabled obscene material to flourish and, worse, enables predatory pedophiles to hunt, groom, and sexually exploit children. What Roblox represents as a safe, appropriate space for children is, in fact, a digital and real-life nightmare for kids.

1. Roblox hosts and promotes graphic, sexually explicit content.

51. Roblox is a vast ecosystem offering an endless array of not just online games but also immersive virtual worlds where children's customized avatars can engage in activities like playing house, adopting pets, and mimicking adult behaviors, including sexually explicit ones.

52. These games and virtual worlds are brought to life through developer tools that Roblox designs, controls, and makes available to third parties. These tools, which include scripting capabilities, 3D modeling systems, and other software, supply the infrastructure needed to create content for the Roblox platform. Roblox has the power to control the use of these tools. Instead, over the years, the company has given third parties essentially unfettered access to use the tools to build what they want, with no meaningful oversight or safeguards. The results are deplorable.

53. As early as 2010, Roblox's virtual games had already devolved into hosting and promoting sexually explicit content. Roblox's scripting language, which allows developers to manipulate avatar activity and interactions any way they want, was deployed to create scenarios where avatars engaged in simulated sexual activity.³⁷

54. This simulated sexual activity pervades Roblox. There have been numerous reports of children's avatars being raped by other users' avatars. For example, in 2018, a seven-year-old girl's avatar was violently raped by two male avatars *on a playground* in a Roblox experience, which was witnessed by the girl's mother.³⁸ In describing the aftermath of this traumatic experience, the girl's mother exclaimed, "I never in my wildest dreams would've ever imagined that I would have to talk with my seven-year-old about rape."³⁹

55. Roblox also hosts a staggering number of experiences centered on simulated sexual activity. For instance, children can play in "condo games"-predatory digital environments including houses, where users can remove their avatars' virtual clothing, revealing nudity, and engage in disturbing simulated sexual

³⁷ See, e.g., YouTube, *How to Do Roblox Sex Glitch*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zz97Q1SQE_k; see also YouTube, *Roblox Sex?*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hyqCHG6nUYI>.

³⁸ Savannah Levins, *North Carolina Mom Outraged After Roblox Game Depicts Violent Acts, Including Rape*, WFMYNews2 (June 30, 2018), <https://www.wfmynews2.com/article/news/local/2-wants-to-know/north-carolina-mom-outraged-after-roblox-game-depicts-violent-acts-including-rape/83-569498171>.

³⁹ *Id*

activities with other Roblox users.⁴⁰ They can also play games like "Public Bathroom Simulator Vibe," which allows access to users as young as nine years old and enables users to simulate sexual activity in virtual bathrooms,⁴¹ as well as virtual strip clubs, where child avatars perform sexually explicit acts, like giving lap dances to patrons.⁴²



*Roblox's Public Bathroom Simulator Game is rated ages nine and up and allows users to simulate sexual activity.*⁴³

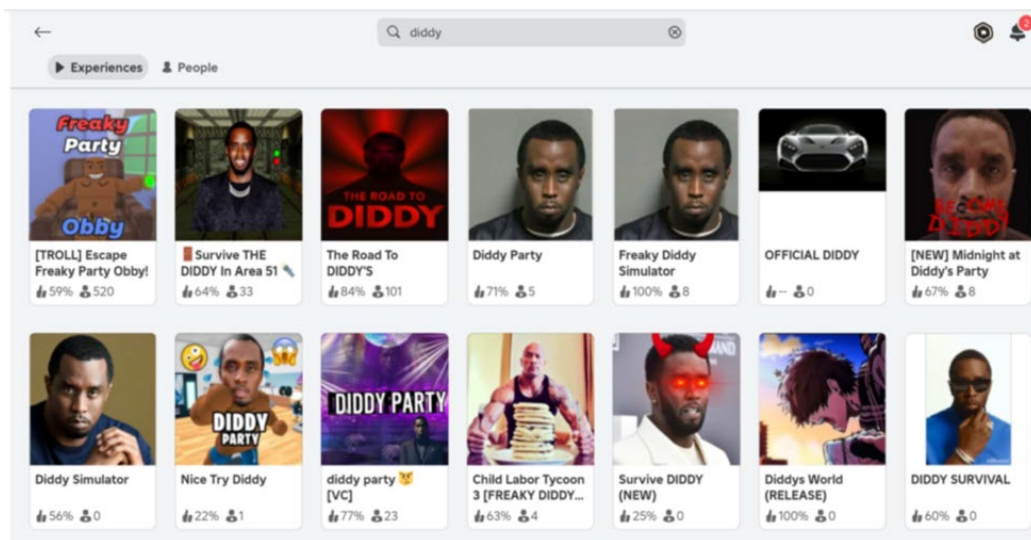
⁴⁰ EJ Dickson, Inside the Underground Strip-Club Scene on Kid-Friendly Gaming Site Roblox, Rolling Stone (Sep. 12, 2021), <https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-features/roblox-virtual-strip-clubs-condo-games-sex-1197237/>.

⁴¹ Hindenburg, *supra* note 1.

⁴² Dickson, *supra* note 42.

⁴³ Hindenburg Research, *supra* note 1.

56. A recent investigative report also exposed a multiple of other exploitative experiences on Roblox that recklessly trivialize and gamify serious criminal conduct, including rape. The report confirmed that Roblox actively hosted over 600 "Diddy" games, with titles like "Survive Diddy," "Run from Diddy Simulator," and "Diddy Party," which appear to recreate reported incidents involving the music mogul Sean Combs, publicly known as "Diddy." Diddy was indicted for sex trafficking of minors and other grievous criminal charges regarding allegations surrounding reports about "freak-off" parties-events which, according to multiple lawsuits and media reports, allegedly involved forced drug use, violent assaults, and the sex trafficking of minors, including victims as young as 10 years old.



Examples of Roblox games modeled after Diddy's sex trafficking ventures.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ *Id.*

57. This report also revealed that Roblox permitted more than 900 Roblox accounts displaying variations of convicted sex trafficker Jeffrey Epstein's name, such as "JeffEpsteinSupporter," whose account Roblox actively permitted to be openly engaged in children's games. Roblox also allowed games like "Escape to Epstein Island"—a title that directly references one of the locations where for years Epstein trafficked minors and other non-consenting individuals so he and others could sexually and physically abuse them.



Example of Roblox game modeled after Jeffrey Epstein's sex trafficking ventures. ⁴⁵

58. Roblox played a direct role in enabling these rampant, sexually exploitative experiences. Roblox is fully aware that these experiences pervade its app, and it allows them to continue to exist unchecked despite the ability to control or eliminate them. Leaked internal Roblox documents reveal that Roblox monitored this type of content and made decisions such as "[h]ow big of a 'bulge'" was

⁴⁵ *Id.*

acceptable, and, with the introduction of layered clothing for avatars (i.e., allowing avatars to wear multiple layers of clothing), whether players could be nude.⁴⁶ By allowing this type of content to exist and be easily accessible, Roblox directly contributed to the proliferation of games simulating sexual activity, such as condo games and virtual strip clubs.

59. The effects of these games on children can be devastating. Playing video games with explicit sexual content normalizes exploitative and predatory behavior, blurring the lines of what is acceptable in real life. This is particularly harmful for children, who are still developing their understanding of social norms and morality. When such behavior is depicted as humorous, exciting, or rewarded within a game, young players can internalize the idea that harassment or sexual exploitation is harmless or even acceptable.

60. Studies support this connection. One study found that playing games with sexualized content was linked to increased rates of sexual harassment toward female targets, suggesting that such exposure desensitizes players to the real-world consequences of these actions.⁴⁷ Another study showed that playing mature-rated games was associated with higher rates of risky sexual behavior years later,

⁴⁶ Joseph Cox & Emanuel Malberg, Leaked Documents Reveal How Roblox Handles Grooming and Mass Shooting Simulators, Vice (Aug. 1, 2022), <https://www.vice.com/en/article/leaked-documents-how-roblox-moderates-content-mass-shootings-grooming/>.

⁴⁷ Jonathan Burnay, Brad J. Bushman & Frank Larni, *Effects of Sexualized Video Games on Online Sexual Harassment*, 45 Aggressive Behavior 2,214 (March/April 2019).

highlighting the long-term impact of exposure to sexualized or exploitative content.⁴⁸

61. The interactive nature of games amplifies this effect. Unlike passive media, video games require players to actively participate in behaviors, including those that simulate harassment or exploitation, reinforcing the perception that such actions are normal or desirable. This environment not only desensitizes children but also makes them more likely to replicate these actions in real-world interactions.

62. The dangerous content on Roblox is not limited to online games. The recent investigative report discussed above found that a basic search for “adult” in Roblox revealed a group with 3,334 members “openly trading child pornography and soliciting sexual acts from minors.”⁴⁹ And tracking these members unearthed additional Roblox groups engaged in the same criminal conduct, including one massive group with 103,000 members.⁵⁰ Yet Roblox failed to implement any age restriction on these criminal groups, deliberately leaving them accessible to all users.

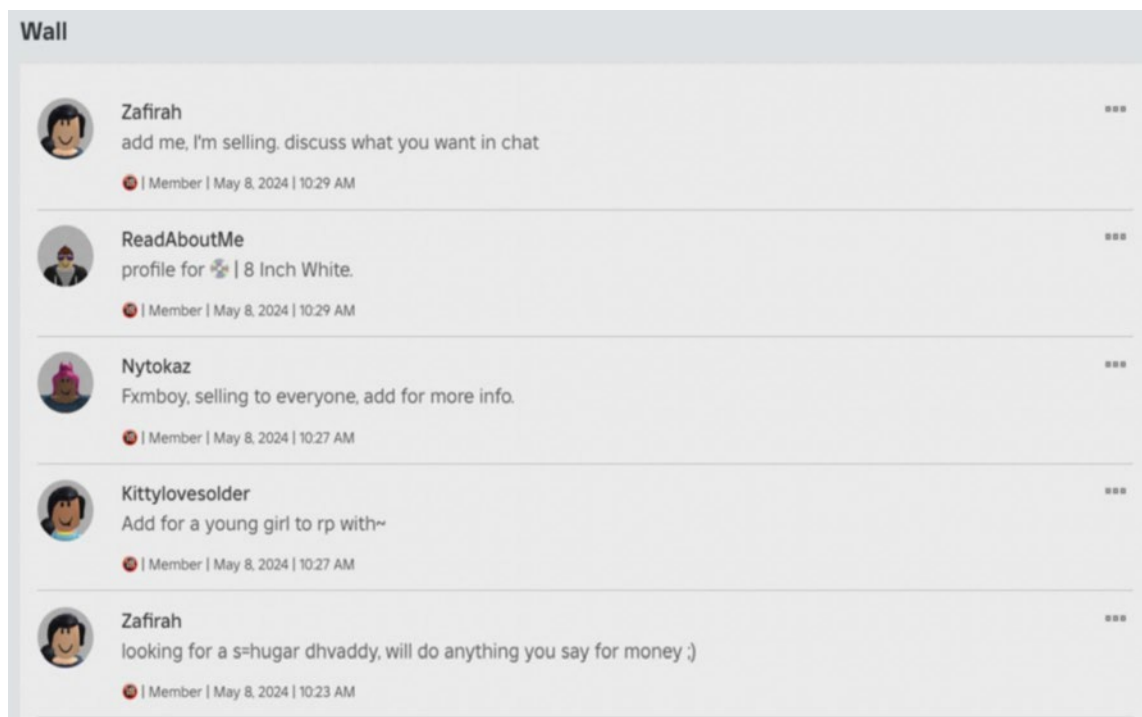
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⁴⁸ Jay G. Hull et al., *A Longitudinal Study of Risk-Glorifying Video Games and Behavior Deviance*, J. Pers. Soc. Psychol. 2014 August; 107(2): 300-325. doi:10.1037/a0036058.

⁴⁹ Hindenburg Research, *supra* note 1.

⁵⁰ *Id.*

⁵¹ *Id.*

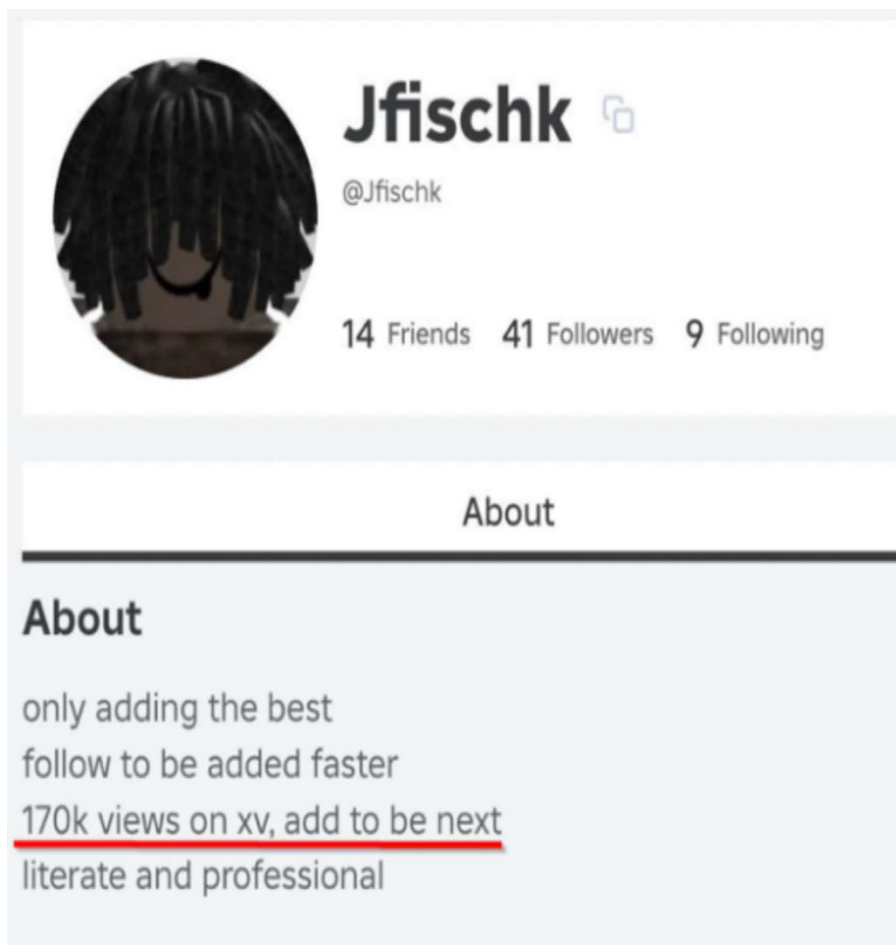


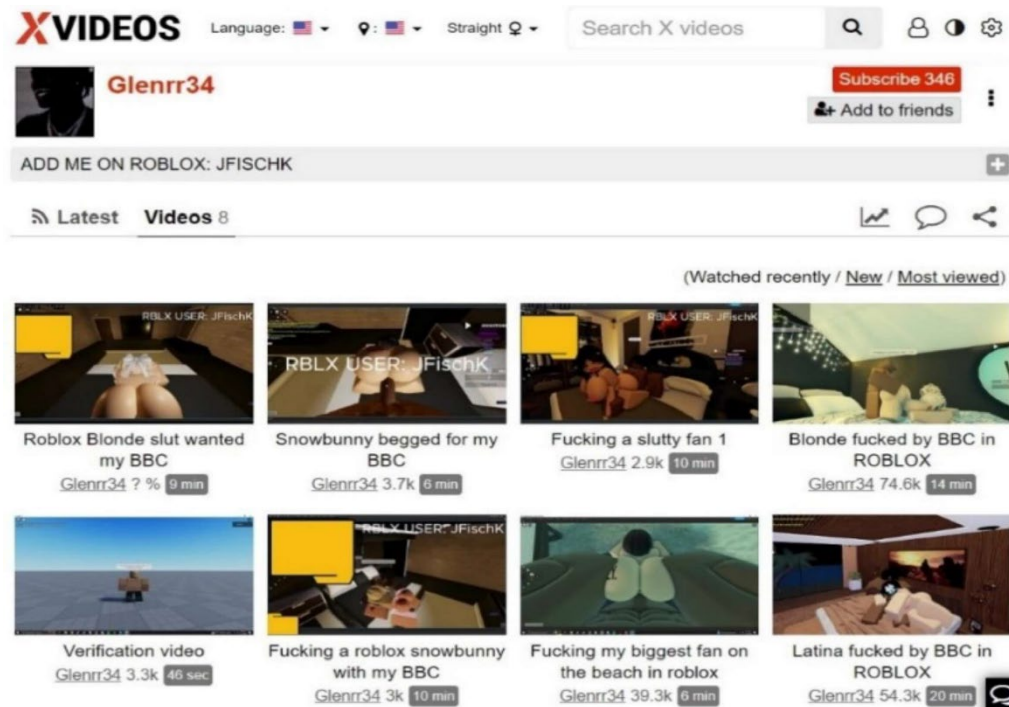
Public chat wall for a group named “Adult Studios” where users openly solicited child pornography.⁵²

63. Roblox has also enabled individuals to create an entire category of pornographic content. Using Roblox’s tools and software, users make virtual sex videos between avatars on Roblox. These videos are clearly marked with the .rbxl file extension—Roblox’s proprietary file format—establishing that this content was created within the Roblox application. Moreover, on XVideos, a porn website, Roblox users seek other users to simulate sexual acts within seemingly innocuous

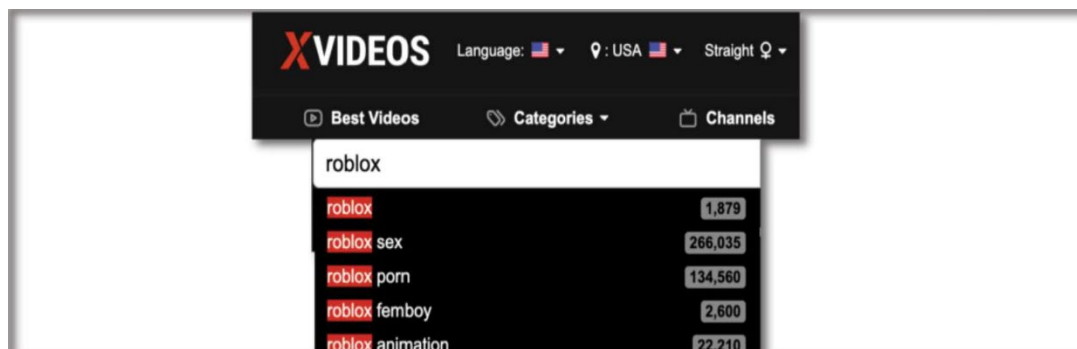
⁵² *Id.*

games, like Brookhaven, which is one of Roblox's most popular experiences and is available to all users, regardless of age.





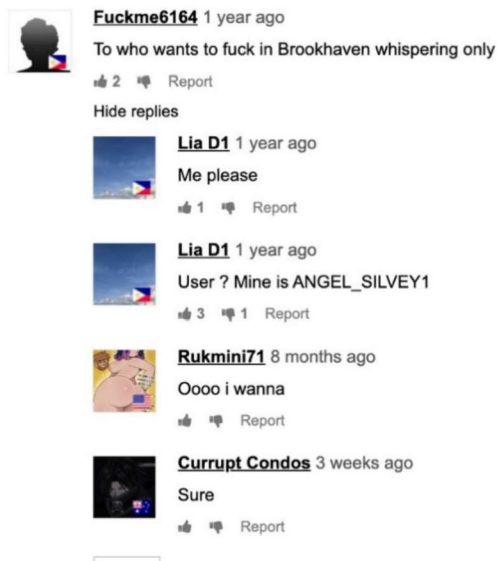
This Roblox user advertised their Roblox account on porn website, XVideos, where they had uploaded videos of their avatar having sex with other Roblox users.⁵³



Searching ‘Roblox’ on XVideos, a porn website, yields more than 250,00 results.⁵⁴

⁵³ *Id.*

⁵⁴ *Id.*



*These comment sections on a Roblox porn video on XVideos-Brookhaven is one of Roblox's most popular games and is available to users of all ages.*⁵⁵

64. In sum, the online environment that Roblox hosts and enables contradicts its representations of providing a safe product, demonstrating Roblox's blatant disregard for the safety of its youngest users and revealing the company's prioritization of user engagement over its fundamental duty to protect young users.

65. For years, Roblox has served as the online platform of choice for predators seeking to find, groom, abuse, and exploit children. Roblox provides predators with easy access to tens of millions of children and allows these predators to freely move between inappropriate content and popular games to identify and target vulnerable young users. By doing so, Roblox has demonstrated reckless

⁵⁵ *Id.*

indifference to its fundamental obligation not to create and foster an environment that places children at significant risk of sexual exploitation.

66. These systematic patterns of exploitation on Roblox follow a predictable and preventable sequence that the company has known about and facilitated for years: a predator misrepresents their age to other users on the app, cosplaying as a fellow child, methodically befriends the vulnerable young victim, and then strategically manipulates the child to move the conversation off Roblox to other popular apps, such as Discord or Snapchat.

67. As the recent *Bloomberg Businessweek* article titled Roblox 's Pedophile Problem put it, "These predators weren't just lurking outside the world's largest virtual playground. They were hanging from the jungle gym, using Roblox to lure kids into sending photographs or developing relationships with them that moved to other online platforms and, eventually offline."⁵⁶

68. Roblox, in effect, serves as an initial access point to children for predators. Media reports have repeatedly highlighted that Roblox "is being used as a first point of contact for predators."⁵⁷ The children, due to their underdeveloped brains, are more trusting and nai"ve, and often fail to recognize the danger of providing their usernames on other sites.

⁵⁶ Carville & D'Anastasio, *supra* note 8.

⁵⁷ National Center on Sexual Exploitation, The Dirty Dozen List '24: Roblox, <https://endsexualexploitation.org/roblox/> (last updated Dec. 4, 2024).

69. Once on another app, like Discord or Snapchat, predators escalate their exploitation by soliciting explicit material, like nude photos or videos of children doing sexually inappropriate acts, all of which constitute child pornography. And while the ultimate solicitation of explicit photos or other criminal acts may occur on other apps, Roblox serves as the critical facilitator that enables these predators to first identify, target, and gain the trust of young victims through its app's design and inadequate safety measures.

70. Roblox's app and profit-driven virtual currency system enable predators to exploit children, often by trading or extorting Robux in exchange for explicit photos. Predators commonly offer children Robux for these photos or demand Robux to avoid publicly releasing them, directly tying Roblox's profits to the sexual exploitation of children. Roblox's manipulative reward systems and social dynamics, intentionally designed to exploit children's developmental vulnerabilities, create psychological pressures that predators weaponize for extortion.

71. Despite full awareness of how its app facilitates such exploitation, Roblox continues to profit from these tactics by collecting transaction fees on Robux exchanges because the company that sells Robux—Roblox Prepaid Company LLC—is directly controlled and managed solely by Roblox. Its reckless indifference to the consequences of its deliberately engineered app mechanics highlights its prioritization of profits over the safety and well-being of its young users.

72. Roblox enables another pattern of predatory grooming in which predators employ immediate blackmail tactics and make no attempt to ingratiate themselves with the children, but instead threaten them from the outset. The predator will often threaten to post nude photos of others online, but claim that the child victim is the person depicted unless the child complies with the predator's demands. Through its deliberately insufficient monitoring systems, Roblox allows predators to threaten children with false claims about possessing and potentially releasing explicit photos, coercing young victims into complying with criminal demands.

73. Regardless of how the initial grooming relationship begins, which is often as simple as someone asking the child to be their boyfriend or girlfriend, the predators also often attempt to make in-person contact with the child. The dangerous progression from Roblox's online app to real-world violence reveals the devastating consequences of the company's product. Roblox's app enables predators to escalate from virtual contact to orchestrating physical meetings, leading to harassment, kidnapping, trafficking, violence, and sexual assault of minors, all instances of which these children suffered as a direct result of Roblox's actions.

74. Through numerous well-documented and publicized cases, Roblox has long been aware of the systemic exploitation that its app enables and facilitates. For years, countless children have been sexually exploited and abused by predators they met on Roblox.

75. For example, in 2017, Roblox's app enabled a predator to target an eight-year-old child and solicit explicit photos, prompting one mother to observe that Roblox had created "the perfect place for pedophiles."⁵⁸

76. In 2018, Roblox's app enabled a predator posing as a child to coerce a nine-year-old girl into performing and filming sexually abusive acts on her four-year-old brother through violent threats, including of death, against her family.⁵⁹ That year, 24 men in New Jersey were also charged with soliciting sex from minors as part of a sting operation, where the New Jersey State Police Lieutenant specifically called out Roblox as a place where "individuals are posing as someone else" in order "to gain someone's trust."⁶⁰

77. In 2019, a Florida predator systematically used Roblox to target children ages 10-12, moving them to Discord to coerce the children into sending him naked pictures of themselves. That year, a man in Wales encouraged 150 children to engage in sexual activity by contacting them through Roblox, where he pretended to be a child and used fake names.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Pei-Sze Cheng, Evan Stulberger & Dave Manney, I-Team: Popular Online Gaming Site for Kids is Breeding Ground for Child Sex Predators, Mother Says, NBC New York (Apr. 6, 2017), <https://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local/video-game-warning-roblox-child-sex-predator-online-site-investigation-what-to-know/87438/>.

⁵⁹ Briana Barker, *Internet Safety and Your Children: How Kids are at Risk*, Record-Courier (Mar. 27, 2018), <https://www.record-courier.com/story/news/2018/03/27/internet-safety-your-children-how/12899346007/>.

⁶⁰

⁶¹ Liz Day, Paedophile Groomed 150 Children to Engage in Sexual Activity Using Online Game

78. During the pandemic, reports of child sex abuse facilitated by Roblox accelerated. In 2020, for example, Roblox enabled a 47-year-old predator to pose as a teenager, target a 16-year-old girl, move the conversation to Facebook, solicit explicit photos and videos, all of which constituted child pornography,⁶² and ultimately traffic her across state lines, raping her multiple times.⁶³ In Michigan, a man was arrested for persuading an eight-year-old girl to send him videos of herself, in various stages of undress, in exchange for Robux.⁶⁴ The perpetrator had been arrested for similar offenses three years earlier and was a registered sex offender in Kansas. This perpetrator was not the only convicted sex offender who was able to freely create accounts on Roblox: in 2021, a convicted sex offender used Roblox to sexually solicit a 12-year-old child.⁶⁵ And in 2022, a 33-year-old man groomed a 13-year-old girl on Roblox, transported her from her home in Kansas to his home in Georgia, and raped her multiple times.⁶⁶

Roblox, Wales Online (May 10, 2019), <https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/paedophile-groomed-150-children-engage-16258877>.

⁶² U.S. Dep't of Justice, *Magnolia Man Gets Life For Exploiting Young Female He Met and Communicated With Via Roblox and Facebook* (Oct. 15, 2020), <https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdtx/pr/magnolia-man-gets-life-exploiting-young-female-he-met-and-communicated-roblox-and>.

⁶³ *United States v. McGavitt*, 28 F.4th 571, 578 (5th Cir. 2022).

⁶⁴ U.S. Dep't of Justice, *Magnolia Man Gets Life For Exploiting Young Female He Met and Communicated With Via Roblox and Facebook* (Oct. 15, 2020), <https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdtx/pr/magnolia-man-gets-life-exploiting-young-female-he-met-and-communicated-roblox-and>.

⁶⁵ Jeff Bonty, *Man Charged With Soliciting Juvenile Through Roblox*, Daily Journal (Jul. 23, 2021), <https://www.shawlocal.com/daily-journal/>.

⁶⁶ Fox 5 Atlanta Digital Team, *Clayton County Man Charged with Sex Trafficking, Rape of 13-year-old Girl He Met on Gaming App Roblox*, Fox5 (Mar. 2, 2022), <https://www.fox5atlanta.com/news/clayton-county-man-charged-with-sex-trafficking-rape-of->

79. 2023 was more of the same. For example, a 30-year-old man was arrested for soliciting illicit photos from young victims and authorities reported that he had three separate Roblox accounts.⁶⁷ A 27-year-old man was arrested for kidnapping an 11-year-old girl whom he met on Roblox.⁶⁸ A 23-year-old New Jersey man, who was a prominent Roblox developer with a known history of exploiting children via Roblox, was sentenced to 15 years in prison for grooming a 15-year-old girl, transporting her to his house, and sexually abusing her.⁶⁹

80. Similar incidents continued throughout 2024. For example, a 21-year-old Chilean man was arrested for traveling to the U.S. to meet an underage girl he met on Roblox, where he had "spent several months manipulating and grooming" her.⁷⁰ A 21-year-old in California pled guilty for directing a 10-year-old girl, whom he met on Roblox, to disrobe and touch herself.⁷¹ A 64-year-old man admitted to

kansas-girl.

⁶⁷ City of Fontana Police Department, *Internet Predator Arrested*, Facebook (Dec. 20, 2023), <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=338311109095057>.

⁶⁸ Man Charged in Kidnapping of 11-year-old He Met Through Roblox from Her NJ Home: Police, ABC7 (Oct. 21, 2023), <https://abc7ny.com/roblox-kidnapping-new-jersey-online-grooming/13927383/>.

⁶⁹ U.S. Dep't of Justice, *New Jersey Man Sentenced to 15 Years in Federal Prison After Grooming Minor Online and Transporting Her Across State Lines Via Uber for Sex* (Aug. 30, 2023), <https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdin/pr/new-jersey-man-sentenced-15-years-federal-prison-after-grooming-minor-online-and>.

⁷⁰ Grace Toohey, *Chilean Man Groomed 13-Year-Old Girl He Met on Roblox Before Flying to US to Meet Her, Police Say*, L.A. Times (Aug. 22, 2024), <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2024-08-22/chilean-arrest-roblox-child-exploitation>.

⁷¹ Ashley Harting, *Online Predator Who Targeted 10-Year-Old on Roblox Pleads Guilty in Butte County*, KRCR (Sep. 25, 2024), <https://krctrv.com/news/local/online-predator-who-targeted-10-year-old-on-roblox-pleads-guilty-in-butte-county>.

posing as a 13-year-old boy on Roblox, where he met a 12-year-old girl and convinced her to send sexually explicit photos of herself and a young relative.⁷² A 29-year-old Michigan man befriended and groomed an 11-year-old girl on Roblox by posing as a teenager and then coerced the girl into sending multiple explicit photos of herself.⁷³ And a 24-year-old man raped a 10-year-old girl he had met on Roblox.⁷⁴

81. Despite supposed "parental controls" that Roblox implemented in 2024 and 2025, predators continue to enjoy easy access to children on the app, causing devastating harm. For example, in April 2025, a California man was arrested and charged with kidnapping and engaging in unlawful sexual conduct with 10-year-old girl whom he met and communicated with on Roblox.⁷⁵ The next month, a 17-year-old Florida teenager was arrested after authorities learned he had been communicating on Roblox with numerous children, some as young as eight-years-old, over the course of a year, and convinced them to send him sexually explicit

⁷² Travis Schlepp, Man, 64, *Admits to 'Catfishing' Girl on Roblox, Convincing Her to Send Explicit Images*, KTLA 5 (Jul. 26, 2024), <https://ktla.com/news/california/man-64-admits-to-catfishing-girl-on-roblox-convincing-her-to-send-explicit-images/>.

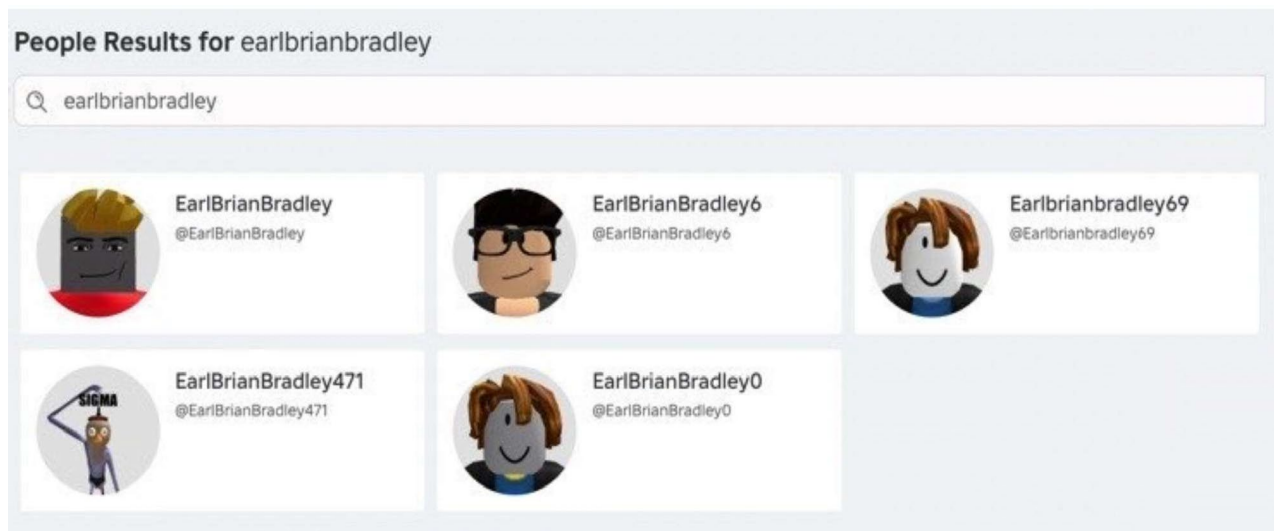
⁷³ Michael Martin, *Roblox Predator: School Staffer Accused of Grooming West Michigan Child for Illicit Photos*, Fox17 West Michigan (Jan. 16, 2025),

⁷⁴ Martin Robinson, *Roblox Predator Who Raped 10-year-old Girl is Locked Up: Paedophile Who 'Targeted Child He Met on Gaming Platform Is Jailed for Six Years*, Daily Mail (Jan. 17, 2025), <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14278563/Roblox-predator-raped-10-year-old-girl.html>.

⁷⁵ *Elk Grove Man Accused of Kidnapping Kern County Girl He Communicated with on Roblox*, CBS News (Apr. 18, 2025), <https://www.cbsnews.com/sacramento/news/elk-grove-man-accused-kidnapping-kern-county-girl-roblox/>.

images of themselves.⁷⁶ And just a few days later, a New York man who used Roblox to connect with 11- and 13-year-old girls was arrested and federally charged with enticement and possession of child pornography.⁷⁷

82. While most predators on Roblox lure children into their grasp by pretending to also be children, many predators do not even hide their intentions, roaming Roblox with usernames like like "@Igruum_minors," "@RavpeTinyKldsJE," and "@EarlBrianBradley"-a reference to one of the most prolific pedophiles ever, who raped and molested hundreds of children.



*Results from an account search for "earlbrianbradley."*⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Briana Trujillo, *Ocala 17-Year-Old Convinced Kids to Send Him Sex Abuse Material on Roblox*, NBC (May 2, 2025), <https://www.nbcmiami.com/news/local/ocala-17-year-old-convinced-kids-to-send-him-sex-abuse-material-on-roblox-sheriff/3605691/>.

⁷⁷ U.S. Dep't of Justice, *Fairport Man Who Used Roblox to Attempt to Communicate with Minors for Sex Arrested* (May 6, 2025), <https://www.justice.gov/usao-wdny/pr/fairport-man-who-used-roblox-attempt-communicate-minors-sex-arrested>.

⁷⁸ Hindenburg Research, *supra* note 1.

83. Roblox's systematic endangerment of children has been publicly condemned by leading advocacy organizations. The National Center on Sexual Exploitation ("NCSE") has consistently named Roblox to its "Dirty Dozen" list-an annual campaign exposing companies that facilitate, enable, or profit from sexual exploitation. The NCSE blasts Roblox for "treat[ing] child protection like a game."⁷⁹ According to the NCSE, "[u]ntil basic child protection standards are met, Roblox remains too high risk for kids."⁸⁰

84. Parent reviews of Roblox on sites like Common Sense Media also document disturbing incidents of naked avatars, sexting, simulated sexual assault, and adult predators.⁸¹

85. The harm from this child abuse and exploitation extends beyond the initial victims. Through the design of its app and inadequate safeguards, Roblox has created an abusive ecosystem where former victims-children who were once exploited on Roblox-become teenage perpetrators who then prey upon younger users, making today's victims tomorrow's perpetrators. Indeed, researchers have repeatedly confirmed this victim-victimizer pipeline: when children are exposed to and victimized by sexual content, they are more likely to become desensitized

⁷⁹ National Center on Sexual Exploitation, *supra* note 59.

⁸⁰ *Id.*

⁸¹ Common Sense Media, *Parent Reviews of Roblox*, <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/website-reviews/roblox/user-reviews/adult>

teenagers and adults who then exploit younger users in the same ways.⁸² In effect, Roblox contributes to this "raising of predators who perpetuate the cycle of exploitation.

86. The magnitude of the harm caused by Roblox is devastating. Yet rather than warn parents, schools and the public, Roblox minimizes these dangers through repeated misleading public statements. Roblox's Chief Safety Officer, Matt Kaufman, attempting to deflect attention from serious safety failures, told NPR, "I think we're losing sight of the tens of millions of people where Roblox is an incredibly enriching part of their life."⁸³ And while Kaufman publicly claims that "any time anything happens to a child that puts them at risk is one too many,"⁸⁴ Roblox simultaneously admitted to investors that it was "unable to prevent all such [inappropriate] interactions from taking place."⁸⁵ This calculated contradiction between public messaging and private admissions-telling parents that even one incident is unacceptable while simultaneously acknowledging to investors that abuse is inevitable-exposes Roblox's strategy of prioritizing public relations through

⁸² James RP Ogloff, Margaret C. Cutajar, Emily Mann & Paul Mullen, *Child Sexual Abuse and Subsequent Offending and Victimisation: A 45 Year Follow-Up Study*, Trends & Issues in Crime & Criminal Justice No. 440 (Jun. 2012), <https://www.aic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-05/tandi440.pdf>; M. Glasser et al., *Cycle of Child Sex Abuse: Links Between Being a Victim and Becoming a Perpetrator*, British J. Psychiatry (2001).

⁸³ Scott Tong & James Perkins Mastromarino, *Roblox Chief Safety Officer on New Safety Features, Past Cases of Child Abuse on the Platform*, WBUR (Nov. 18, 2024), <https://www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2024/11/18/roblox-safety-features>.

⁸⁴ *Id.*

⁸⁵ Roblox Corp., S-1 (Securities Registration Statement) 24 (Nov. 19, 2020).

hollow and misleading public statements over its fundamental duty to protect children.

D. Roblox Knowingly Causes and Facilitates the Sexual Exploitation of Children

87. The reason that Roblox is overrun with harmful content and predators is simple: Roblox prioritizes user growth, revenue, and eventual profits over children safety. For years, Roblox has knowingly prioritized these numbers over the safety of children through actions it has take and decisions it has made to increase and monetize users regardless of the consequences.

1. Roblox prioritizes growth over child safety

88. From its inception, Roblox has focused on growth above all else, which has meant deliberately targeting, exploiting, and capitalizing on the underdeveloped child market, positioning itself as a place where kids can learn and play games in a safe environment. Recognizing that children have more free time, underdeveloped cognitive functioning, and diminished impulse control, Roblox has exploited their vulnerability to lure them to its app.

89. Roblox's business model allowed the company to attract significant venture capital funding from big-name investors like Kleiner Perkins and Andreessen Horowitz, putting enormous pressure on the company to prioritize growing and monetizing its users. To do so, Roblox made deliberate decisions that

placed children at risk. For example, while other digital platforms (including other video game platforms) verified users' ages and restricted communications between children and adults, Roblox did not require age verification and did not restrict communications between children and adults. Similarly, while other digital platforms required children's accounts to be connected to the account of a parent or guardian during set-up, with various parental controls turned on by default, it is easy for children (including very young children) to download and install Roblox without involving an adult. While other platforms implemented reliable, accurate age ratings for games and videos that correctly informed parents about the type of content their children would see, Roblox's deeply flawed "content label" system gave parents a false sense of security, incorrectly labeling graphic sexual and violent games as safe for kids. And while other platforms restricted access if a child fell below a certain age, Roblox welcomed and encouraged children of any age, despite its knowledge of significant harms that children routinely experience there.

90. In 2021, riding the explosive growth in users generated by the pandemic and the pandemic-driven enthusiasm for technology stocks, Roblox went public at a valuation of **\$41 billion**, which brought new pressures. To satisfy the scrutiny and demands of public market investors, Roblox, like many unprofitable companies, prioritized rapid growth in revenue and user engagement metrics like new-user acquisition, daily active users, and average hours spent on the app — on

the theory that profitability would follow once the business achieved sufficient scale and operating costs decreased as a percentage of revenue.⁸⁶

91. In pursuit of growth, Roblox deprioritized safety measures even further so that it could report strong numbers to Wall Street. For instance, Roblox executives rejected employee proposals for parental-approval requirements that would protect children on the platform.⁸⁷ Employees also reported feeling explicit pressure to avoid any changes that could reduce platform engagement, even when those changes would protect children from predators.⁸⁸

92. As one former Roblox employee explained, “You’re supposed to make sure that your users are safe — but then the downside is that, if you’re limiting users’ engagement, it’s hurting our metrics. It’s hurting the active users, the time spent on the platform, and in a lot of cases, the leadership doesn’t want that.”⁸⁹ That same employee added, “You have to make a decision, right? You can keep your players

⁸⁶ After listing on the New York Stock Exchange, Roblox CEO David Baszucki told CNBC, “Roblox has been growing for 15 years — That’s a long-term growth path, and we believe that continues forward, even after Covid.” Ari Levy & Jessica Bursztynsky, *Roblox Jumps to \$38 Billion Mark Cap as Public Investors Get Their First Crack at the Popular Kids Game App*, CNBC (Mar. 10, 2021), <https://www.cnbc.com/2021/03/10/roblox-rblx-starts-trading-at-64point50-after-direct-listing.html>. CFO Michael Guthrie added, “As [Covid] restrictions ease, we expect the rates of growth in 2021 will be well below the rates in 2020, however, we believe we will see absolute growth in most of our core metrics for the full year.” *Id.*

⁸⁷ Hindenburg Research, *supra* note 1.

⁸⁸ *Id.*

⁸⁹ *Id.*

safe, but then it would be less of them on the platform. Or you just let them do what they want to do. And then the numbers all look good and investors will be happy.⁹⁰

93. By limiting safety measures, Roblox not only increased its users but also reduced the company's safety expenses as a percentage of its revenue — a key metric for Wall Street, which views trust and safety costs as detrimental to Roblox's stock performance. Barclays, for example for example, identified its “downside case” for Roblox's stock as “additional safety investments due to its younger demographic... becom[ing] a drag on [earnings] margins.”⁹¹ Barclays also wrote that it viewed increased safety costs as a “negative” in Roblox's quarterly earnings.⁹²

94. During earnings calls for investors, Roblox frequently addresses questions from analysts about how trust-and-safety expenditures will evolve over time. Roblox's answers reveal that the company is hyper-focused on reducing its trust-and-safety expenses as a percentage of its revenue, showing that the company is not investing as much proportionally in trust and safety as the company continues to grow and attract millions of additional users.

95. For example, on Roblox's 2023 fourth-quarter earnings call, an analyst praised the “really high level of efficiency” seen in the numbers for infrastructure

⁹⁰ *Id.*

⁹¹ Ross Sandler, Trevor Young & Alex Hughes, *Back on Track Following the I H Hiccup*, Barclays (Aug. 1, 2024)

⁹² Ross Sandler, Trevor Young & Alex Hughes, *Everything Accelerating, Safety & Security a Top Priority*, Barclays (Nov. 1, 2024)

and trust-and-safety expenditures and then asked how those figures would evolve over time.⁹³ In response, Mike Guthrie, Roblox's CFO, emphasized the company's goal of reducing expenses, stating, "cost to serve is the metric that we use and it's the metric that the [infrastructure] team owns... *they're working hard to drive that down.* ... [L]ike you said, it's about 11% now, ultimately with higher efficiency... we see that as a high single-digit number over the next few years."⁹⁴ He added, "[W]e still think there's more to do there."⁹⁵

96. At other times, Guthrie has reassured investors, stating, "look for trust-and-safety [costs] to scale below linear as we grow"⁹⁶ and that Roblox was "quite happy with" trust-and-safety costs growing "at a lower rate than our bookings growth."⁹⁷

97. Similarly, in the second quarter of 2024, CEO Baszucki highlighted that, "[i]mportantly, our infrastructure and trust and safety expenditures were 8% lower year-on-year."⁹⁸

⁹³ Q4 2023 Earnings Call (Feb. 7, 2024).

⁹⁴ *Id.* (emphasis added).

⁹⁵ *Id.*

⁹⁶ Q4 2022 Earnings Call (Feb. 15, 2023).

⁹⁷ Q3 2022 Earnings Cal (Nov. 8, 2023).

⁹⁸ Q4 2022 Earnings Call (Feb. 15, 2023).

98. Once public, Roblox also decided to try to attract more adult users to its app—which it had historically touted as the “#1 gaming site for kids and teens.”⁹⁹ With the market for underage users near saturation, Roblox shifted its growth strategy to attracting older users.

99. In its public offering filings, Roblox identified “age demographic expansion” as a key strategy, explaining that it planned to develop experiences and content that appealed to older users.¹⁰⁰ For Roblox, “aging up” had benefits beyond user growth: it was also more profitable. Older users offered a distinct financial advantage. While children spend more hours on Roblox, they do not “monetize” as well because they are more constrained in their ability to spend. In contrast, older users, who “have more direct control over their spend” and “monetize better,” are a far more lucrative outcome that Roblox said it predicted when it started to target older users.¹⁰¹

100. Roblox’s executives repeatedly emphasized their strategy of “aging up” the app to attract older users. At the company’s inaugural conference with an investment bank in September 2021, Roblox’s CFO, Michael Guthrie, noted that Roblox had achieved “very good penetration of nine- to twelve-year-olds,” and was

⁹⁹ Roblox, What Is Roblox, <http://web.archive.org/web/20170227121323/https://www.roblox.com/> (archived Feb. 27, 2017).

¹⁰⁰ Roblox Corp., S-1 (Securities Registration Statement) 7 (Nov. 19, 2020).

¹⁰¹ Q2 2022 Earnings Call (Aug. 10, 2022).

focused on adding users over the age of 13.¹⁰² One plan was to “improve” the search algorithms such that older users were finding older content, “or content tailored to their age-related demographic.”¹⁰³

101. And at its annual Developer Conference, CEO David Baszucki encouraged developers to create experiences for older audiences, explaining that Roblox was rolling out features designed to appeal to older users, including use of real names, screen capture and sharing capabilities, video calls, and relaxed chat moderation.¹⁰⁴ These decisions, while framed as growth strategies, reflected Roblox's willingness to compromise safety, creating new vulnerabilities and more dangerous circumstances for children in its pursuit of a more profitable, older user base.

102. Roblox executives consistently highlighted progress with the company's “aging up” strategy on every quarterly earnings call after this until the second quarter of 2023, when CEO Baszucki declared that Roblox had achieved its goal: “We’re no longer talking about aging up. We are a platform for all ages.”¹⁰⁵ He also revealed that developers had started to “build specific 17-plus

¹⁰² Roblox at Goldman Sachs Communicopia Conference (Sep. 9, 2021), <https://ir.roblox.com/events-and-presentations/events/event-details/2021/Goldman-Sachs-Communicopia/default.aspx>.

¹⁰³ *Id.*

¹⁰⁴ Roblox Developers Conference 2023 Keynote (Sep. 8, 2023), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CwLThCghzA4>.

¹⁰⁵ Q2 2023 Earnings Call (Aug. 9, 2023).

experiences.”¹⁰⁶ This progress was praised by Wall Street investment banks, who noted that aged-up experiences were a promising indicator of “potential sustainable growth tailwinds for Roblox,” reinforcing the company’s pivot toward maximizing profitability.¹⁰⁷

103. Despite Roblox’s deliberate targeting of older users, it failed to implement any meaningful restrictions on contact between adult and child users or limit the mature content and experiences it solicited from developers to attract older audiences. When asked by an equity research analyst about aged-13-and-up experiences for older users, CEO Baszucki admitted, “I want to highlight right now that *we don’t have any only-13-and-up experiences*. We have 28% of the top thousand experiences having a majority of 13-plus [users] but *those are still experiences that are open to all ages*.”¹⁰⁸ Similarly, despite urging developers to build more mature experiences, Roblox continued to allow users to set up accounts without any type of age verification.¹⁰⁹ Even investors recognized the connection between older users and the increased risks for children, questioning how Roblox planned to prevent inappropriate content from reaching younger users.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ Q2 2023 Earnings Call (Aug. 9, 2023).

¹⁰⁷ Benjamin Black et al., Bookings Back on Track, Deutsche Bank (Nov. 4, 2024).

¹⁰⁸ Q3 2021 Earnings Call (Nov. 9, 2021) (emphasis added).

¹⁰⁹ Q4 2022 Earnings Call (Feb. 15, 2023).

¹¹⁰ Q3 2021 Earnings Call, *supra* note 111.

104. Not only did Roblox seek to increase adult users while knowing the risks that strategy posed to children, but it also sought to encourage relationships between users. At Roblox's 2023 Developers Conference, CEO Baszucki revealed Roblox's strategy to facilitate "real-life relationships" between users—i.e., dating. While he deliberately avoided the word "dating," he then announced plans to build a product to support it: "I'm not going to use the D word but subsequent[] real-life relationships is going to happen, okay? And we're going to build a platform to support that."¹¹¹

105. By the next year, in 2024, Baszucki explicitly acknowledged this strategy. He first acknowledged that online dating is "edgy" but then mocked his own safety team's concerns about the dangers—"the policy and safety team told me [dating and real-life relationships] isn't within our current policy right now"—to which the audience shared in laughter.¹¹²

106. In short, for years, Roblox has deliberately sacrificed child protection—a longstanding issue for the company—in pursuit of growth and profit. This systematic subordination of child safety to business objectives reflects Roblox's continued

¹¹¹ Roblox Developers Conference 2023 Keynote (Sep. 8, 2023), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CwLThCghzA4>.

¹¹² Roblox Developers Conference 2024 Keynote (Sep. 6, 2024); <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HwbcWc2CwnM>.

choice to maximize its business goals while knowingly exposing children to preventable dangers on its app.

2. Roblox facilitates child sexual exploitation through the design of its app, inadequate safety features, and refusal to invest in basic safety protections.

107. Roblox's pursuit of growth and profit over child safety is reflected in numerous actions it took and decisions it made related to the design and safety of its app. Had Roblox acted differently, the harm suffered by countless children would not have occurred.

108. Roblox designed its app so that anyone can easily communicate with children, creating a virtual world where predators can freely target and groom children. Until November 2024, adult strangers could "friend" and chat with children of any age via direct messages and chat with them in an experience through direct messages even if they were not friends. While Roblox offered some adjustable parental controls for users under the age of 13, these children could bypass those controls simply by creating an alternate account falsely identifying as a 13+-year-old user. By designing its app this way, Roblox stripped parents of basic protective options to prevent adult strangers from communicating with their children.

109. This practice contrasts sharply with other gaming products like Nintendo, which use preprogrammed dialogue options to tightly control user

interactions.¹¹³ By adopting a similar approach, Roblox could have significantly reduced-if not eliminated-the grooming and child abuse facilitated by its app because predators would not have been able to solicit any personal information or send any coercive or sexually suggestive messages.

110. Roblox further endangered children by introducing voice calls in November 2023. Called "Roblox Connect," this virtual call feature allows users to have a conversation through their avatars in real time. Concerns were immediately raised about this feature. For example, one user emphasized, "This is a bad idea Roblox, and especially on your platform because this is where most predators are coming from, and it makes it way easier for predators to prey on children."¹¹⁴

111. As Roblox contemplated and rolled out Roblox Connect, it knew that this feature would drastically increase the risk to children on its app. That is because another company had implemented a similar feature with disastrous consequences. Omegle was a chat website that operated from 2009 to 2023. Omegle allowed users, including children, to engage in anonymous chats with strangers. In March 2010, Omegle introduced a video-chat feature. Despite efforts to monitor for mature and sexual content, the website became infamous for exposing minors to explicit

¹¹³ Carville & D'Anastasio, *supra* note 8.

¹¹⁴ Josh Taylor, *Roblox Under Fire After Adding Controversial Voice Call Feature*, Dexerto (Nov. 15, 2023), <https://www.dexerto.com/roblox/roblox-under-fire-after-adding-controversial-voice-call-feature-2384564/>.

material, predators, and exploitation. Omegle's failure to protect users led to numerous incidents, including criminal cases involving child pornography. In November 2023, the same month Roblox launched Roblox Connect, Omegle announced that it would cease operations. In shutting down, its founder highlighted the site's misuse: "[T]here can be no honest accounting of Omegle without acknowledging that some people misused it, including to commit unspeakably heinous crimes."¹¹⁵ And he thanked one survivor for "opening my eyes to the human cost of Omegle. Nevertheless, Roblox introduced voice calls the same month that Omegle shut down.

112. Roblox also refused to implement simple measures that would have protected children using its app. For example, despite having the ability to require basic identity verification, Roblox instead chose to allow users to create accounts without providing their name or email address-a policy that enables predators to easily create multiple anonymous accounts. Roblox also could have implemented basic screening measures before allowing users on the app, which would have ensured that known predators are not permitted on the app.

113. Roblox also could have required children to provide their names and email addresses and obtain parental approval-a fundamental protection against predators-but refused to do so. This decision allowed the company to bypass certain

¹¹⁵ Omegle, <https://www.omegle.com/>

protections that are mandated by federal law and designed to protect children. The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act ("COPPA") prohibits companies like Roblox from collecting, using, or disclosing the personal information of children under 13 without verifiable parental consent. COPPA was enacted because Congress recognized the heightened vulnerability of children on the internet. As the Federal Trade Commission ("FTC") noted, children under 13 lack the capacity to "understand fully the potential serious safety and privacy implications" of sharing their personal information.¹¹⁶ More recent international regulations are stricter. For example, the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requires verifiable parental consent for children under 16.¹¹⁷

114. The FTC has outlined clear and acceptable methods for obtaining verifiable parental consent. These include: (a) providing a form for parents to sign and return; (b) requiring the use of a credit card or online payment that notifies parents of each transaction; (c) connecting parents to trained personnel via video conference; (d) offering a staffed toll-free number for parental verification; (e)

¹¹⁶ Federal Trade Commission, *Privacy Online: A Report to Congress* (1998), <https://www.ftc.gov/sites/default/files/documents/reports/privacy-online-report-congress/priv-23a.pdf>.

¹¹⁷ Art. 8 GDPR; *see also* Consent to Use Data on Children, EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (<https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2017/mapping-minimum-age-requirements-concerning-rights-child-eu/consent-use-data-children>). Note that member states can lower the cutoff to 13, 14 or 15 if they choose.

asking knowledge-based questions to confirm identity; or (f) verifying a parent's photo-ID by comparing it to a second photo using facial recognition technology.¹¹⁸

115. Yet instead of implementing safeguards to comply with COPPA, Roblox chose to bypass these protections altogether. Roblox intentionally avoids requesting a name or email address during sign-up to sidestep the requirement of verifiable parental consent. In fact, former employees revealed that Roblox considered requiring verifiable consent, but ultimately resisted its implementation out of fear that such requirements might drive users away.¹¹⁹ Consequently, creating a Roblox account is alarmingly easy, requiring less than sixty seconds and no meaningful oversight—a choice that prioritizes growth over the safety of its youngest users.¹²⁰

116. Another easy-to-implement feature that would have improved safety is adding pop-up safety notices within chats and games to warn users about their behavior or the dangerous behavior of others. But Roblox executives also rejected this change.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ Federal Trade Commission, *Complying with COPPA: Frequently Asked Questions*, July 2020, <https://www.ftc.gov/business-guidance/resources/complying-coppa-frequently-asked-questions>.

¹¹⁹ Hindenburg Research, *supra* note 1.

¹²⁰ Scott Tong & James Perkins Mastromarino, *Roblox Attempts to Bar Child Predators as Short Sellers Target the Popular Game Platform*, WBUR (Oct. 21, 2024), <https://www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2024/10/21/roblox-child-predators-safety>

¹²¹ Carville & D'Anastasio, *supra* note 8.

117. Additionally, although Roblox knew that predators routinely operate dozens of Roblox accounts at the same time, the company chose not to implement basic blocking of digital identifiers-both the unique network addresses that track internet connections (Internet Protocol or IP addresses) and the permanent hardware identification numbers assigned to devices (Media Access Control or MAC addresses) that could prevent predators from creating multiple accounts.¹²²

118. Similarly, Roblox chose not to require adult users to verify phone numbers-which would create significant barriers to predators creating multiple accounts-despite knowing that this enables bad actors to easily create numerous anonymous accounts to target children.

119. Roblox also opted not to require users to verify their age by uploading a picture of either their or their parents' ID, a practice that many other applications employ. Doing so would have restricted the content available to young users and prevented predators from easily misrepresenting their age, which is often their approach in targeting and grooming children. As one father told the press after seeing other users solicit his avatar for sex, "There is nothing to stop adults going on there and pretending they're kids."¹²³

¹²² *Id.*

¹²³ Carl Stroud, *Horried Dad Found Sick Messages from Paedo Predator in His Eight-Year Old Son's Roblox iPad Game*, The Sun (Feb. 15, 2017), <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/2872376/horried-dad-found-sick-messages-from-paedo-predator-in-his-eight-year-old-sons-roblox-ipad-game/>.

120. Roblox could easily have restricted communications between adult accounts and children's accounts, something that many other platforms have done. It could also have restricted adult accounts from sending Roblox to children's accounts, a feature that sexual predators frequently use to lure children

121. Roblox likewise could have created a separate, gated platform for younger children that excludes adults. If supported by age verification using facial recognition (a service that is widely commercially available), the company could create a space for young children to enjoy Roblox games with very few, if any, adults present. Many digital service companies have adopted separate platforms for children of young ages, including, for example, Amazon and Netflix

122. Roblox could have placed a higher age rating on its application in the iOS App Store and other app stores, to signal to parents that the app presented risks for children. Roblox also could have provided clear warnings to parents about the presence of sexual predators on the platform, so that parents could make an informed decision about allowing their child on the platform and/or educate their child on how to stay safe on the platform. Roblox could also have provided clear warnings to children about the presence of sexual predators on the platform, and instructed children on how to stay safe on the platform.

123. Despite these glaring failures, Roblox aggressively markets and promotes itself as an "industry leader" when it comes to child safety.¹²⁴ Central to this self-serving narrative is its "accomplishments" of investing in artificial intelligence ("AI") and machine learning systems supposedly designed to scan and monitor all communications on the app and prevent the sharing of inappropriate content and personally identifiable information.¹²⁵

124. Yet this technology has proven grossly inadequate and insufficient to protect children. For example, Roblox's filters have inexplicable omissions. While Roblox blocks certain words, like "Snap" and "Snapchat," to supposedly prevent off-app communications, it allows workarounds such as the use of the ghost emoji, which is widely recognized as a symbol for Snapchat, or alternative spellings, like "Snappy" or "apchat." Similarly, while the word "Discord" is blocked, users can bypass this filter by using the disc emoji or typing variations, like "iscord" or "cord."¹²⁶ That Roblox selectively blocks the words "Snap," "Snapchat," and "Discord" reveals that Roblox is fully aware of the dangers of off-app inappropriate communications yet chooses not to close these loopholes. And while Roblox

¹²⁴ QI 2021 Earnings Call (May 11, 2021).

¹²⁵ Roblox, *Safety Features: Chat, Privacy & Filtering*, <https://web.archive.org/web/20240714130904/https://en.help.roblox.com/hc/en-us/articles/203313120-Safety-Features-Chat-Privacy-Filtering> (archived Jul. 14, 2024).

¹²⁶ Edwin Dorsey, Problems at Roblox (RBLX) #5, The Bear Cave (Oct. 17, 2024), <https://thebearcave.substack.com/p/problems-at-roblox-rblx-5>. m Id.

prevents users from sharing phone numbers in numerical format, it does nothing to stop users from spelling out the numbers.¹²⁷

125. Similarly, while Roblox attempts to block the word "condo"-a term that, until recently, was widely used to identify sexualized experiences-countless external groups on platforms like Reddit and Discord are dedicated to helping users locate new explicit content on Roblox. As soon as Roblox removes one game, its ineffective safeguards allow the same game to be reuploaded almost immediately from a new account, perpetuating the cycle of explicit and harmful content. External groups have capitalized on Roblox's weak moderation by guiding predators to these reuploaded games, with Fast Company easily identifying 150 Discord groups dedicated to exploiting Roblox's lack of robust enforcement.¹²⁸

126. Beyond Roblox's ineffective technology, the company also employs a woefully inadequate number of human moderators to analyze and manage content on its platform. With only about 3,000 moderators, Roblox pales in comparison to platforms like TikTok, which, despite having only three times the number of users, employs more than ten times the number of moderators at 40,000.¹²⁹ Roblox attempts to justify this disparity by claiming: "[Y]ou really can't judge the quality

¹²⁷ *Id.*

¹²⁸ Burt Helm, Sex, Lies and Video Games: *Inside Roblox 's War on Porn*, Fast Company (Aug. 19, 2020), <https://www.fastcompany.com/90539906/sex-lies-and-video-games-inside-roblox-war-on-pom>.

¹²⁹ Carville & D'Anastasio, *supra* note 8.

of these moderation systems by the number of people.”¹³⁰ But the reality tells a different story: Roblox’s moderators, many of them overseas contractors, report being overwhelmed by an unmanageable volume of child safety reports, making it impossible to address all concerns effectively and leaving countless safety issues unresolved.¹³¹

127. Even the safety data that Roblox touts is flawed and only underscores the growing dangers created by the company’s app. For example, Roblox proudly points to its low percentage of reports to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (“NCMEC”)—the leading U.S. nonprofit organization tasked with preventing child exploitation and assisting in the recovery of missing children. Roblox claims that it accounts for less than .04% of reports made to NCMEC.¹³² But this data is entirely self-reported and therefore depends on Roblox’s ineffective content moderation and safety team. This self-reported data to NCMEC—flawed and limited as it is—it also reveals a disturbing trend: Roblox’s reports about suspected child sexual exploitation have surged over the years, from 675 reports in 2019 to 13,316 reports in 2023.¹³³

¹³⁰ Scott Tong & James Perkins Mastromarino, *Roblox Chief Safety Officer on New Safety Features, Past Cases of Child Abuse on the Platform*, WBUR (Nov. 18, 2024), <https://www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2024/11/18/roblox-safety-features>.

¹³¹ Carville & D’Anastasio, *supra* note 8.

¹³² Scott Tong & James Perkins Mastromarino, *Roblox Attempts to Bar Child Predators as Short Sellers Target the Popular Game Platform*, WBUR (Oct. 21, 2024), <https://www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2024/10/21/roblox-child-predators-safety>.

¹³³ National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, *2019 CyberTipline Reports by Electronic*

128. Roblox also boasts that just “0.0063% of [its] total content was flagged for violating” policies. But Roblox itself controls the systems responsible for identifying and flagging violative content.¹³⁴ These lower percentages are thus a reflection not of safety but of Roblox’s ability to minimize the appearance of problems through its own inadequate reporting and enforcement mechanisms. By hiding behind self-serving metrics and refusing to take meaningful action, Roblox has fostered an environment where children are subjected to irreparable harm while the company continues to reap financial rewards.

129. The very existence of Roblox’s trust and safety “data” on inappropriate communications to train its AI systems contradicts its claim that “one is too many” when it comes to the sexual exploitation of children. This data exists only because countless instances of abuse, exploitation, and predatory interactions have already occurred. Roblox’s reliance on this data to train its AI systems exposes the reality that its so-called safety measures are not designed to prevent these atrocities but to react to them after the damage has been done. Instead of creating a secure environment where such harm never occurs and ensuring that such interactions never

Services Providers (ESP), <https://www.missingkids.org/content/dam/missingkids/pdfs/2019-reports-by-esp.pdf>; see also National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, 2023 CyberTipline Reports by Electronic Services Providers (ESP), <https://www.missingkids.org/content/dam/missingkids/pdfs/2023-reports-by-esp.pdf>.

¹³⁴ Vikki Blake, *Roblox Reported Over 13,000 Incidents to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children in 2023*, Gamesindustry.biz (Jul. 23, 2024), <https://www.gamesindustry.biz/roblox-reported-over-13000-incidents-to-the-national-center-for-missing-and-exploited-children-in-2023>.

happen in the first place, Roblox uses the suffering and trauma of children as the foundation for its trust and safety systems. This cycle underscores the company's prioritization of optics over genuine protection, leaving its youngest users at the mercy of its neglect.

130. Roblox's own developers even admit that Roblox is unsafe for children.¹³⁵ Online forum discussion posts are replete with developers writing that they would not allow their own children to use the platform, citing pervasive issues with Roblox's child safety policies. Many of these posts highlight the platform's systemic failures and suggest straightforward changes Roblox could implement to create a safer environment but has consistently ignored. For example:

a. "Unfortunately, it is worse now due to Roblox's moderation being so abysmal and Roblox being a far more widespread platform. Creeps flock aplenty when before the [creep:kid] ratio was much much lower.... Roblox has no interest in actually fixing the issues so long as the bad press doesn't end up viral."¹³⁶

b. "No. Roblox is not safe for children. The amount of NSFW [Not Safe for Work] I see on this platform on a daily basis is unbelievable. I'm

¹³⁵ Edwin Dorsey, Problems at Roblox (RBLX) #5, The Bear Cave (Oct. 17, 2024), <https://thebearcave.substack.com/p/problems-at-roblox-rblx-5>.

¹³⁶ *Id.*

surprised COPPA hasn't taken any action.”¹³⁷

c. “I believe they need to automatically rate these games for older audiences, if not, you know, removing them entirely. I could keep going on about this issue, but it's just beating a dead horse at this point.”¹³⁸

d. “Roblox got banned for bad moderation; Turkey banned it to ‘protect children,’ and they are not wrong. The amount of visits from 10 of these games is, in summary, 100 million+. I don't want to know how many of these children have seen nudity or even developed a p*rn addiction. But that is a big problem with Roblox doing almost nothing to prevent it.”¹³⁹

131. These statements, coming from individuals familiar with Roblox's operations, paint a picture of an environment rife with neglect, where harmful content flourishes, predators thrive, and Roblox repeatedly fails to act even in the face of widespread and urgent warnings.

3. Roblox's recent safety changes are woefully inadequate and fail to address years of neglect and harm caused by its app.

132. After years of mounting pressure, Roblox recently announced changes to its child safety features. These changes were prompted not by the years of police reports and widespread media coverage but by a scathing report published by a well-

¹³⁷ *Id.*

¹³⁸ *Id.*

¹³⁹ *Id.*

known short seller accusing the platform of being a “pedophile hellscape for kids.”

¹⁴⁰ Released on October 8, 2024, the report sparked public outrage, detailing many of the issues described above that Roblox had long ignored.

133. A little more than a month later, Roblox announced a series of changes, including permanently removing the ability to message others outside of games on its app for under-13-year-old users;¹⁴¹ giving parents a separate dashboard where they can monitor a child’s Roblox account, view the child’s friend list, set spending control, and manage screen time;¹⁴² preventing games from using chalkboard writings where people could get around the censoring of communications;¹⁴³ and implementing restrictions to stop under-13-year-old users from accessing new Roblox games that are awaiting maturity ratings.¹⁴⁴

134. These changes could all have been implemented years ago. None of them involve any new or groundbreaking technology. Roblox only moved forward when its stock was threatened.

¹⁴⁰ Hindenburg Research, *supra* note 1.

¹⁴¹ *Roblox Tightens Messaging Rules for Under-13 Users Amid Abuse Concerns*, Reuters (Nov. 18, 2024), <https://www.reuters.com/technology/roblox-tightens-messaging-rules-under-13-users-amid-abuse-concerns-2024-11-18/>.

¹⁴² Robert Booth, *Roblox to Give Parents More Control Over Children's Activity After Warnings Over Grooming*, The Guardian, (Nov. 18, 2024), <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2024/nov/18/roblox-to-hand-parents-more-control-over-their-childrens-activity>.

¹⁴³ *Id.*

¹⁴⁴ *Id.*

135. And these changes are little more than window dressing—too little, too late, and woefully inadequate. Most fundamentally, Roblox *still allows* adults to contact and message children. Roblox only banned user-to-user messaging for users under the age of 13 *outside of games*. Predators can still message children on public chats while playing games. It has left child predators’ blueprint for finding children on the application intact, since predators have always found children by playing games they know children will frequent.

136. Roblox also failed to address core issues like the app’s lack of age verification and refusal to require parental consent to make an account. The restrictions described above work only if children correctly state their age during sign-up. Any child can easily bypass them—including parental controls and limits on messaging—by lying about their birthday. Roblox likewise did not commit to hiring more moderators or increasing its trust-and-safety budget, nor did it implement any sort of identity check to prevent registered sex offenders from making accounts.

137. In fact, recently, in April 2025, a research firm in the U.K. demonstrated just how easy it still is for predators to find children and move the conversation to another application, such as Snapchat or Discord, despite Roblox’s ban on direct messaging with users under the age of 13.¹⁴⁵ Because Roblox still allows adult users

¹⁴⁵ Revealing Reality, *A Digital Playground: The Real Guide to Roblox* (Apr. 13, 2025),

to message children *in games*, predators can use the public chat functions in games to groom child users and ask for their usernames on other platforms. And, for chat within games, Roblox's default settings for children under the age of 13 is to allow "everyone" to chat with these children, seamlessly facilitating predators' access to children.¹⁴⁶ The key findings from this report included that "[a]dults and children can chat with no obvious supervision" and that "[t]he safety controls that exist are limited in their effectiveness and there are still significant risks for children on the platform."¹⁴⁷



*In April 2025, a research agency demonstrated how easy it was for a 42-year-old account to find a five-year-old user on Roblox and get the child to move the conversation to Snapchat.*¹⁴⁸

<https://think.revealingreality.co.uk/roblox-real-guide>.

¹⁴⁶ Parental Controls Overview, Roblox, <https://en.help.roblox.com/hc/en-us/articles/30428310121620-Parental-Controls-Overview>.

¹⁴⁷ Revealing Reality, *supra* note 150.

¹⁴⁸ *Id.*

138. Just as Roblox rolled out these changes, it simultaneously introduced a new "Parties" feature in an attempt to counteract any potential loss in user engagement.¹⁴⁹ Because Roblox knew that users often turned to other apps like Discord to communicate while playing videogames and because Roblox knew that its safety changes would reduce key user engagement metrics, it sought to capture that traffic (and revenue) and replace any loss of engagement with the Parties feature. While the Parties feature is currently available only for users aged 13 and older, such limitations are hollow without robust age verification. And the fact that Roblox has stated that it is exploring making such a feature available to younger users demonstrates that, far from prioritizing safety, Roblox's real focus is protecting its bottom-line.¹⁵⁰

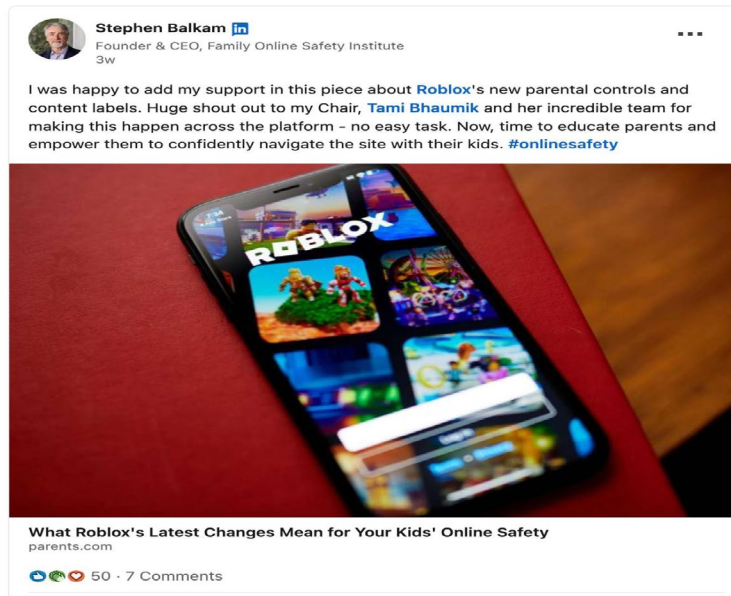
139. Roblox has also engaged in a deceptive public relations campaign using ostensibly independent online safety organizations to influence the narrative around these changes. For instance, Roblox has leveraged its ties to groups like the Family Online Safety Institute ("FOSI"). An online parenting magazine favorably quoted Stephen Balkam, FOSI's CEO, as endorsing Roblox's new features as a win for child safety.¹⁵¹ What the article omitted, however, is that Roblox's own Vice President of

¹⁴⁹ Rebecca Ruiz, *Roblox's New Party Feature Makes Discord Obsolete*, Mashable (Dec. 2, 2024), <https://mashable.com/article/roblox-party-discord>.

¹⁵⁰ *Id.*

¹⁵¹ Anna Halkidis, *What Roblox's Latest Changes Mean for Your Kids' Online Safety*, Parents (Nov. 18, 2024), <https://www.parents.com/roblox-new-parental-controls-8747405>.

Civility and Partnerships, Tami Bhaumik, serves as FOSI's board chair—an obvious conflict of interest.¹⁵² This calculated relationship exposes how Roblox manipulates public perception by using seemingly independent safety organizations as mouthpieces to shape the narrative in its favor.



Stephen Balkam's LinkedIn post revealing his connection to Roblox in a post praising Roblox's praising Roblox's changes.¹⁵³

140. Most recently, in April 2025, Roblox repeated this same deceptive playbook of bragging about new safety features that, in reality, are glaringly deficient. This update included three new features: first, allowing parents to block children from playing specific games; second granting parents the power to block

¹⁵² *FOSI Welcomes Roblox Vice President as New Board Chair*, FOSI (Oct. 12, 2022), <https://www.fosi.org/about-press/fosi-welcomes-roblox-vice-president-as-new-board-chair>.

¹⁵³ LinkedIn, Stephen Balkam's Post, https://www.linkedin.com/posts/stephenbalkam_what-robloxs-latest-changes-mean-for-your-activity-7264409332950220801-WCDF

people on their child's friends list; and third, giving parents visibility into the games that their child spends the most time in.¹⁵⁴

141. None of these parental controls address the underlying deficiency with Roblox that facilitates grooming and predation on children-adult access to and communication with children. Without allowing parents to see who their child is messaging and what the messages say, parents lack the information necessary to determine which accounts to block on their child's friend list. A list of the top twenty games that a child plays does not tell a parent which games children are interacting with adults in. Moreover, blocking specific games is ineffective when, as discussed above, inappropriate games are re-posted as soon as they are taken down. Indeed, barely a week later, the U.K. research firm discussed above demonstrated just how easy it is for adults to continue to find children, groom them, and then move the communications off Roblox, even after Roblox announced these safety updates.¹⁵⁵

142. And, yet again, all of these controls could have been introduced years ago, as none are facilitated by previously unavailable technology.

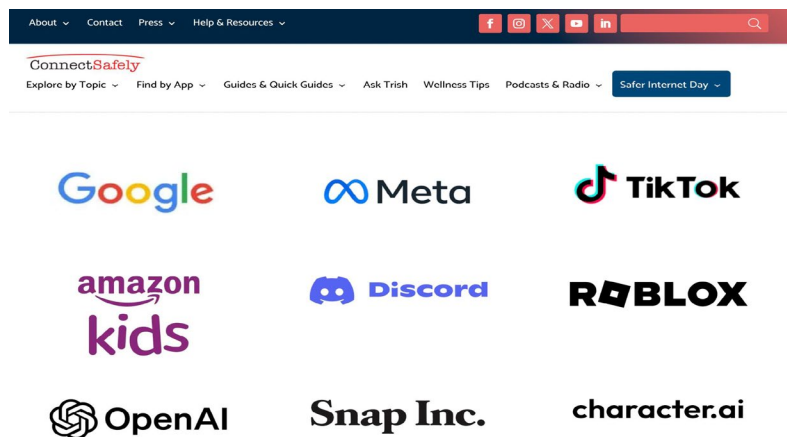
143. Roblox's deceptive playbook would not be complete without a misleading public relations campaign, where industry-funded safety "experts" praise

¹⁵⁴ Matt Kaufman, *New Tools for Parents to Personalize Their Child's Experience on Roblox*, ROBLOX (Apr. 2, 2025), <https://corp.roblox.com/newsroom/2025/04/new-parental-controls-on-roblox>.

¹⁵⁵ *A Digital Playground: The Real Guide to Roblox*.

Roblox's safety update. For example, Roblox's press release announcing these updates quotes Larry Magid, the CEO of ConnectSafely, as saying, "Roblox has consistently provided parents with tools that enable their children to enjoy the platform, while helping protect them against online risks. These new friend- and experience-blocking tools provide parents with even more ways to help ensure their children are using it safely. Safety, fun, and adventure are not mutually exclusive.

156 What the press release did not say is that ConnectSafely a non-profit ostensibly focused on education people about internet safety is is funded by tech companies and list Roblox as one of its "supporters."¹⁵⁷



ConnectSafely's list of supporters on its website.

¹⁵⁶ Matt Kaufman, New Tools for Parents to Personalize Their Child's Experience on Roblox.

¹⁵⁷ ConnectSafely, *Supporters*, <https://connectsafely.org/about-us/supporters/>

144. A few weeks later, Magid was quoted again in praise of Roblox, this time in a Newsweek article championing Roblox as a "trusted playground" for kids: "I would put them very high up on the list of companies that seem to care. They actually have a vice president of civility. It's unheard of to have somebody at that level of the company that focuses on civility. They really work very hard to make it a friendly, comfortable, civil environment for young people."¹⁵⁸ Again, this article made no mention of Magid's organization's financial ties to Roblox.

145. FOSI CEO Stephen Balkam was also quoted in the Newsweek piece, claiming that Roblox was "top-of-class" for its safety features and even repeating Roblox's own party line that safety is "part of [Roblox's] DNA."¹⁵⁹ Again, this article omitted FOSI's ties to Roblox, financial and otherwise, thereby deceptively pushing a narrative of Roblox as a "safe" application for kids.

V. FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS AS TO DISCORD

A. Discord Offers a Communications App That It Markets to Children.

146. Discord is a communications app that allows users to chat over voice, video, and text messaging. Discord is organized into chat groups called "servers,"

¹⁵⁸ Katherine Fung, *How Roblox Became a Trusted Playground for Millions of Kids*, Newsweek (Apr. 23, 2025), <https://www.newsweek.com/how-roblox-became-trusted-playground-millions-kids-2057601>.

¹⁵⁹ Id.

which are topic-based virtual spaces that users can join to engage in conversations with others. Servers are organized into subtopics called “channels,” which are divided into text and voice channels. In text channels, users post messages, upload files, and share images. In voice channels, users communicate through voice or video chat and screen share. Users can also send private messages via voice, video, or text.

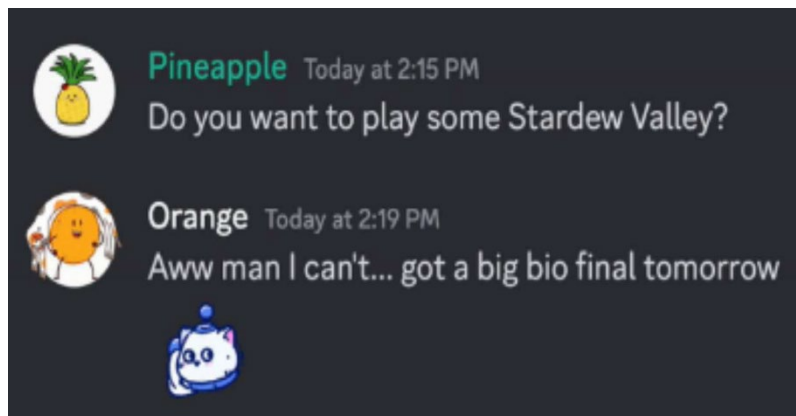
147. Launched in 2015, Discord quickly became the top app for gamers looking to communicate while playing video games. The company’s founders shared a love of video games and created a service for gamers to seamlessly communicate with each other. Discord has since expanded to include a wider audience of anyone looking to communicate with others about an endless array of topics. As Discord puts it, “Discord is now where the world talks, hangs out, and builds relationships”—“Discord lets anyone create a space to find belonging.”¹⁶⁰

148. Although many users on Discord are adults, Discord directly markets its app to young users. For example, Discord advertises its functionality for school clubs and offers “Student Hubs,” which are “dedicated places for students on Discord that make it easy to meet classmates from your own school, discover their communities on Discord, and share your servers for your fellow classmates to join.”¹⁶¹ Discord also markets to young users with features such as “custom emoji,

¹⁶⁰ Discord, *Create Space for Everyone to Find Belonging*, <https://discord.com/company>.

¹⁶¹ Discord, *Discover Your Next Favorite Campus Club in Student Hubs* (Aug. 22, 2022), <https://discord.com/blog/discover-your-next-favorite-campus-club-in-student-hubs>.

stickers, soundboard effects and more to add your personality to your voice, video or text chat.”¹⁶² According to Discord, these features are designed to “make your group chats more fun.”¹⁶³



*Example of a custom emoji from Discord's website.*¹⁶⁴

149. In recent years, Discord has exploded in popularity among young users, driven in part by the pandemic. As The New York Times explained in its article *How Discord, Born from an Obscure Game, Became a Social Hub for Young People*, “While adults working from home flocked to Zoom, their children were downloading Discord to socialize with other young people through text and audio and video calls in groups known as servers.”¹⁶⁵ Given this influx of young people,

¹⁶² Discord, *Create Space for Everyone to Find Belonging*, <https://discord.com/company>.

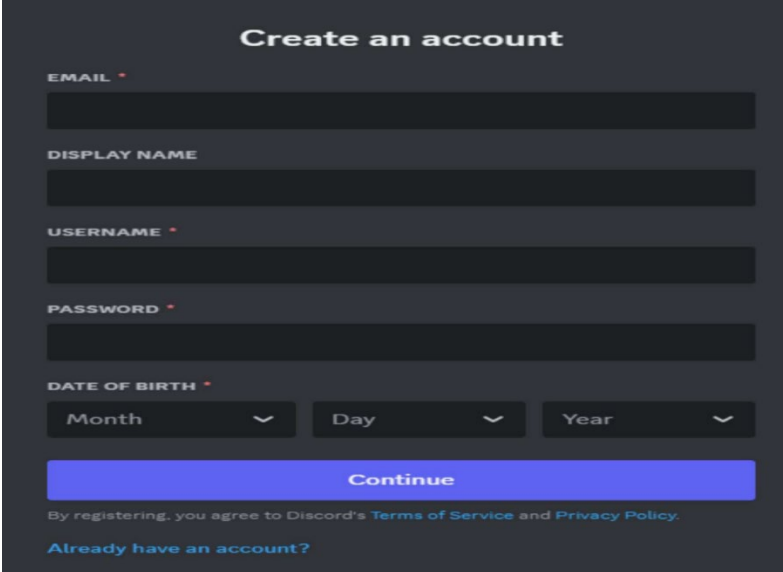
¹⁶³ *Id.*

¹⁶⁴ Discord, Custom Emojis, https://support.discord.com/hc/en-us/articles/360036479811-Custom-Textbox-1261-TextboxEmojis#h_01H06JVDAV2VKZBTRGJDY8NBV7 (last visited Feb. 11, 2025).

¹⁶⁵ Kellen Browning, *How Discord, Born from an Obscure Game, Became a Social Hub for Young People*, N.Y. Times (Dec. 29, 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/29/business/discord-server-social-media.html>.

which has only grown since the pandemic, the average age of a Discord user is 16 years old.¹⁶⁶

150. Creating an account on Discord is extremely easy. Users must provide only an email address, display name, username, password, and birthdate. Users can then access Discord for free on their computers, tablets, and cellular devices.

A screenshot of the Discord 'Create an account' sign-up screen. The background is dark gray. At the top, the text 'Create an account' is centered in white. Below it are five input fields: 'EMAIL' (with a red asterisk), 'DISPLAY NAME', 'USERNAME' (with a red asterisk), 'PASSWORD' (with a red asterisk), and 'DATE OF BIRTH' (with a red asterisk). The 'DATE OF BIRTH' field is a date picker with 'Month', 'Day', and 'Year' dropdown menus. Below the input fields is a large blue button labeled 'Continue'. At the bottom, there is a line of small text: 'By registering, you agree to Discord's Terms of Service and Privacy Policy.' and a link 'Already have an account?' in blue.

Discord Sign-up Screen

151. While Discord's Terms of Service prohibit users under 13, Discord does not verify age or identity. As a result, countless Discord users are under 13, many of whom state their real age in their bios, tell other users their real age in chats,

¹⁶⁶ Super League, *An Introductory Look into Discord*, <https://www.superleague.com/post/an-introductory-look-into-discord>.

and post pictures showing their real age. There are children as young as eight years old using Discord.¹⁶⁷

152. Although Discord offers certain safety features, Discord does not default to the highest safety settings upon account creation. For example, by default, all users, including those under 18, can receive direct messages from another user in the same server, allowing them to send and receive private messages from strangers. And even when parents set more restrictive settings, children can simply change those settings to whatever they desire.

153. Certain content on Discord is “age-restricted,” meaning in theory that children under 18 cannot access it. Server owners can self-designate specific channels in a server as age-restricted. For years, however, Discord did not allow server owners to self-designate entire servers as age-restricted.

154. Certain content on Discord is “age-restricted,” meaning in theory that children under 18 cannot access it. Server owners can self-designate specific channels in a server as age-restricted. For years, however, Discord did not allow server owners to self-designate entire servers as age-restricted, and so minors could easily access servers with age-restricted content even if designated age-restricted

¹⁶⁷ Kellen Browning, *5 Ways Young People Are Using Discord*, N.Y. Times (Dec. 29, 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/29/business/discord-users-gen-z.html>

channels in the server were blocked. Discord only recently provided server owners with the ability to self-designate entire servers as age-restricted.

B. Discord Lures Parents into Letting Their Kids Use Discord with Promises of Safety.

155. Since its inception, Discord has assured parents that its app provides a safe place for children to spend their time interacting with others. According to Discord, “In May 2015, Discord began as a way for us to all play games together, better. And safer.”¹⁶⁸ “We’ve always wanted Discord to be a place where one could safely play games with friends.”¹⁶⁹

156. For years, Discord has promised that it has a “zero-tolerance policy” for anything relating to the sexual exploitation of children. For example, in Discord’s July–September 2022 Transparency Report, Discord emphasized that it “has a zero-tolerance policy for anyone who endangers or sexualizes children.”¹⁷⁰ Similarly, in a July 2023 website post titled “Discord’s Commitment to Teen and Child Safety,” Discord assured parents that it “has a zero-tolerance policy for inappropriate sexual

¹⁶⁸ Discord, *Discord Safety Boost* (Mar. 28, 2017), <https://discord.com/blog/discord-safety-boost>.

¹⁶⁹ *Id.*

¹⁷⁰ Discord, *Discord Transparency Report: July-September 2022*, <https://discord.com/blog/discord-transparency-report-q3-2022>.

conduct with children and grooming,” with “special attention given to predatory behaviors such as online enticement and the exploitation of children.”¹⁷¹

157. Discord promises parents that its app is different from other communication products when it comes to child safety, assuring parents that “[w]e built Discord to be different and work relentlessly to make it a fun and safe space for teens.”¹⁷² “Discord is built on safety,” and “[s]afety is at the core of everything we do and a primary area of investment as a business.”¹⁷³

158. Discord specifically assures parents that its app is designed to keep children safe and that it defaults to safety. Discord, for instance, in a website post titled “Settling into School with Discord,” informs parents that “[m]any teams across Discord work together to ensure that your teen finds belonging by building products and policies with safety-by-default.”¹⁷⁴ And in a website post titled “Discord’s Commitment to Teen and Child Safety,” Discord promises parents that “[w]e make our products safe spaces by design and default. Safety is and will remain part of Discord’s core experience.”¹⁷⁵

¹⁷¹ Discord, *Discord's Commitment to Teen and Child Safety* (July 11, 2023), <https://discord.com/safety/commitment-to-teen-child-safety>.

¹⁷² *Id.*

¹⁷³ Discord, *Discord's Commitment to Teen and Child Safety* (July 11, 2023), <https://discord.com/safety/commitment-to-teen-child-safety>.

¹⁷⁴ Savannah Badalich, *Settling into School with Discord*, Discord (Sept. 28, 2021), <https://discord.com/safety/settling-into-school-with-discord>.

¹⁷⁵ Discord, *Discord's Commitment to a Safe and Trusted Experience* (May 12, 2022), <https://discord.com/safety/360043700632-discords-commitment-to-a-safe-and-trusted-experience>; <https://discord.com/safety/commitment-to-teen-child-safety>.

159. Likewise, according to Discord’s 2023 “Parent’s Guide to Discord,” “Discord has default settings designed to keep minors safe, such as automatically scanning direct messages for explicit images and videos.”¹⁷⁶ Those default settings, according to Discord, include “Teen Safety Assist,” which (1) “automatically blur[s] media that may be sensitive in direct messages and group direct messages with friends, as well as in servers,” and (2) “sends ‘safety alerts’ to teen users when they receive a direct message from a user for the first time.”¹⁷⁷

160. While Discord represents that its app is designed to default to safety, it simultaneously instructs parents on how to change the default safety settings to keep their child safe. For years, Discord has consistently assured parents that they can use the company’s “tools” to protect [their child] from inappropriate content or unwanted contact.¹⁷⁸ Discord, for example, tells parents they can turn on an “explicit image filter” that will “[a]utomatically block direct messages that may contain explicit images.”¹⁷⁹ Discord also informs parents that they can disable the direct message setting that allows anyone in a server to privately message their children.

¹⁷⁶ Discord, *Parent's Guide to Discord*, <https://web.archive.org/web/20230714165101/https://connectsafely.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Parents-Guide-to-Discord.pdf> (archived July 14, 2023).

¹⁷⁷ Savannah Badalich, *Building a Safer Place for Teens to Hang Out*, Discord (Oct. 24, 2023), <https://discord.com/safety/safer-place-for-teens>.

¹⁷⁸ Discord, *Helping Your Teen Stay Safe on Discord* (May 12, 2022), <https://discord.com/safety/360044153831-helping-your-teen-stay-safe-on-discord>; discord,

¹⁷⁹ Discord, *Helping Your Teen Stay Safe on Discord*, <https://web.archive.org/web/20230711200552/https://discord.com/safety/360044153831-helping-your-teen-stay-safe-on-discord> (archived July 11, 2023).

Discord also promises parents that they can change their child’s “Friend request settings” to limit who can send them a friend request—i.e., “Everyone,” “Friends of friends,” or “Server members.”¹⁸⁰

161. Discord’s CEO and co-founder Jason Citron recently reiterated many of these assurances nearly verbatim in his January 31, 2024 testimony to the U.S. Senate as part of its hearing on “Big Tech and the Online Child Sexual Exploitation Crisis.” Citron began his written testimony by stating clearly that Discord has “a zero-tolerance policy for content or conduct that endangers or sexualizes children.”¹⁸¹ Discord, according to Citron, “has a zero-tolerance policy for inappropriate sexual conduct with children, meaning inappropriate sexual contact between adults and teens on the service, with special attention given to predatory behaviors such as: online enticement and the sexual extortion of children, commonly referred to as sextortion.”¹⁸²

162. He also emphasized Discord’s “multi-pronged approach” to child safety, including the company’s “approach to product development, whereby we implement a rigorous ‘safety by design’ practice when developing products.”¹⁸³ As

¹⁸⁰ *Id.*

¹⁸¹ Hearing Before the U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Big Tech and the Online Child Exploitation Crisis, Testimony of Jason Citron, CEO and Co-Founder of Discord Inc. (Jan. 31, 2024), https://www.judiciary.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2024-01-31_-_testimony_-_citron.pdf.

¹⁸² *Id.*

¹⁸³ *Id.*

Citron elaborated, “[b]ecause safety is critical to our core mission, Discord takes a ‘safety by design’ approach to our work.”¹⁸⁴

163. Citron also highlighted Discord’s “sophisticated tools” for parents to keep their children safe, as well as the company’s “features designed to keep teens safe on our platform,” such as Teen Safety Assist, which flags “potentially unwanted conversations to teen users in Discord” and “automatically blur[s] potentially sensitive media to teens in DMs, GMs, and in servers.”¹⁸⁵

C. In Reality, Discord Is a Digital and Real-life Nightmare for Children

164. Although Discord assures parents that it has zero tolerance for content or conduct that endangers children and that its app is built on safety, the company, in fact, has created and maintains an environment in which the sexual exploitation of children is rampant and thriving. The result has been devastating, with countless children suffering irreversible harm.

1. Discord hosts and promotes dangerous and illegal sexual content.

165. Discord is overflowing with sexually explicit images and videos involving children, including anime and child sex abuse material (“CSAM”)—i.e., child pornography. Discord provides access to these materials not only to adults but

¹⁸⁴ *Id.*

¹⁸⁵ *Id.*

also to child users, creating an ecosystem that facilitates pedophilia and exposes children to this unlawful content.

166. The content of this material is beyond disturbing. For example, numerous Discord servers contain anime images of children being brutally assaulted and raped by male adults.



*Examples of images obtained on Discord servers by the National Center
on Sexual Exploitation.¹⁸⁶*

167. Discord is also permeated with actual child pornography, or CSAM, hosting hundreds if not thousands of servers dedicated to trading and sharing CSAM. For example, in a June 2023 article, NBC News reported that "[i]n a review of

¹⁸⁶ National Center on Sexual Exploitation, Compliance Proof.
https://endsexualexploitation.org/wp-content/uploads/July-23_Proof-Section-Compilation_-2023DDL_Discord.pdf.

publicly listed Discord servers created in the last month," it "identified 242 that appeared to market sexually explicit content of minors, using thinly veiled terms like 'CP' that refer to child sexual abuse material."¹⁸⁷

168. Predators themselves even admit that Discord is a go-to app for them for finding and sharing CSAM. In February 2024, a nonprofit called Protect Children released a report, "Tech Platforms Used by Online Child Sexual Abuse Offenders," which contained survey data from anonymous individuals searching for CSAM on the dark web. That survey revealed that Discord is one of their "top platforms" for searching for, viewing, or sharing CSAM.¹⁸⁸ Based on the results of this survey, the report found an "unmistakable overlap" between "the platforms most used for viewing and sharing CSAM and the platforms most popular among children and young people."¹⁸⁹

169. Through numerous well-documented and publicized cases, Discord has long been aware of the proliferation of CSAM and similar material that its app enables and facilitates, including because in some of these cases, Discord reported

¹⁸⁷ Ben Goggin, *Child Predators Are Using Discord, a Popular App Among Teens*, for Sextortion and Abductions, NBC News (July 21, 2023), <https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/social-media/discord-child-safety-social-platform-challenges-rcna89769>.

¹⁸⁸ Protect Children, *Tech Platforms Used By Online Child Sexual Abuse Offenders* (Feb. 2024), https://bd9606b6-40f8-4128-b03a-9282bdcfff0f.usrfiles.com/ugd/bd9606_0d8ae7365a8f4bfc977d8e7aeb2al e1a.pdf.

¹⁸⁹ *Id.*

the material to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, which then reported the material to the authorities.

170. From its beginning, Discord has been at the center of numerous criminal cases involving CSAM. According to court documents from a federal case involving a vast CSAM enterprise and conspiracy, between 2016 and 2018, ten men "utilized chatrooms on the online service 'Discord'-an application designed for online gaming communities that allows users to engage in text chat and share images and videos-to produce and exchange child pornography."They pled guilty and were sentenced to long prison terms. Similarly, according to court documents in another case, between 2019 and 2020, a North Carolina man was able to use Discord to chat about and trade CSAM.¹⁹⁰ He pled guilty and was sentenced to 240 months in federal prison.

171. Similar incidents occurred throughout 2021 and 2022. In 2021, for example, federal authorities arrested an Idaho man after locating numerous files of CSAM that he had uploaded to his Discord account.¹⁹¹ And in 2022, a Louisiana man pled guilty to possessing CSAM, admitting that "he created a Discord account," that "other Discord users would share CSAM on the website," and that he would "upload

¹⁹⁰ U.S. Dep't of Justice, *Ten Men Sentenced to Prison for Their Roles in a Child Exploitation Enterprise and Conspiracy* (Oct. 1, 2020), <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/ten-men-sentenced-prison-their-roles-child-exploitation-enterprise-and-conspiracy>.

¹⁹¹ U.S. Dep't of Justice, *Nampa Man Sentenced to 6 Years in Federal Prison Possessing Child Pornography* (Dec. 12, 2023), <https://www.justice.gov/usao-id/pr/nampa-man-sentenced-6-years-federal-prison-possessing-child-pornography>.

the saved CSAM from his phone to other Discord users."¹⁹² Several months later, a New York man was arrested for uploading and distributing CSAM using Discord.¹⁹³ And two months later, a University of Florida quarterback was arrested and accused of sharing CSAM on Discord.¹⁹⁴ When the man spoke with the police after his arrest, he admitted that he had been on Discord servers that "discuss, solicit, and distribute child sexual abuse material."¹⁹⁵

172. 2023 was no different. For example, at the start of the year, a New York man was arrested and charged with creating and sharing CSAM through Discord after a police investigation revealed that he had allegedly instructed a 13-year-old boy to provide images and videos of himself committing sex acts on a 4-year-old girl.¹⁹⁶ The next month, a Vancouver man was found guilty of numerous charges, including distributing and possessing CSAM, based largely on communications and

¹⁹² U.S. Dep't of Justice, *Registered Sex Offender Pleads Guilty to Possession of Child Sex Abuse Material* (May 10, 2022), <https://www.justice.gov/usao-edla/pr/registered-sex-offender-pleads-guilty-possession-child-sexual-abuse-material>.

¹⁹³ News 12 Staff, *Prosecutor: Phillipsburg Man Distributed Child Pornography Through Discord*, News12 The Bronx (Sept. 28, 2022), <https://bronx.news12.com/prosecutor-phillipsburg-man-distributed-child-pornography-through-discord>.

¹⁹⁴ Tim Stelloh & Antonio Planas, *University of Florida Quarterback Arrested and Accused of Sharing Child Sexual Abuse Images on Discord*, NBC News (Nov. 30, 2022), <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/university-florida-quarterback-arrested-allegedly-sharing-child-sexual-rcna59513>.

¹⁹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁹⁶ *West New York Man Charged with Child Abuse Material*, Hudson Reporter (Jan. 19, 2023), <https://hudsonreporter.com/news/west-new-york/west-new-york-man-charged-with-child-abuse-material/>.

videos the man shared on Discord showing the sexual assault of an infant by an adult man.¹⁹⁷

173. These incidents continued throughout 2024. In February, for example, a New Jersey man was arrested after an investigation revealed that he had uploaded to Discord a file depicting the sexual exploitation or abuse of minors.¹⁹⁸ At the time, the man was employed at a school serving students as young as five years old. A few months later, an Oklahoma man was arrested and charged with possessing and distributing CSAM after he shared CSAM on Discord.¹⁹⁹ Later that year, a former Indiana firefighter was arrested after police learned he was trading CSAM on Discord.²⁰⁰

2. Discord provides a hunting ground for child-sex predators

174. Discord has also created a haven for predators seeking to groom, traffic, and sexually abuse minors by providing predators with endless opportunities for

¹⁹⁷ Fox 12 Staff, *Washougal Man Gets 108 Years for Child Rape, Creating Child Sex Assault Materials*, Fox 12 Oregon (Mar. 25, 2023), <https://www.kptv.com/2023/03/25/washougal-man-gets-108-years-child-rape-creating-child-sex-assault-materials/>.

¹⁹⁸ Morris County Prosecutor's Office, *Jefferson Resident Arrested for Child Pornography* (Feb. 16, 2024), <https://www.morriscountynj.gov/Departments/Prosecutor/Prosecutor-Press-Releases/Jefferson-Resident-Arrested-for-Child-Pornography>.

¹⁹⁹ *Wagoner Man Arrested, Accused of Distributing Child Pornography Over Discord*, Fox 23 News (June 25, 2024), https://www.fox23.com/news/wagoner-man-arrested-accused-of-distributing-child-pornography-over-discord/article_520191ec-333c-11ef-87b7-3bffc2affd71.html.

²⁰⁰ Joe Schroeder, *Docs: Ex-Indiana Firefighter Traded Porn on Discord*, Dated a 17-year-old, Fox 59 (Sept. 4, 2024), <https://fox59.com/news/indycrime/docs-ex-indiana-firefighter-traded-child-porn-on-discord-dated-a-17-year-old/>.

unmitigated interactions with children through public servers, direct messages, and video/voice chat channels.

175. Discord hosts numerous servers that openly operate as spaces where children are sexually exploited by predators. In its June 2023 article on Discord, NBC News reported that it found numerous servers involving adults pretending to be teens to entice children into sharing nude images. NBC News described several servers that explicitly solicited minors to join “not safe for work” communities, including one including one server that promoted itself on the public server database as “a community for people between the ages of 13-17. We trade nudes, we do events. Join us for the best Teen-NSFW experience <3.”²⁰¹ Another server claimed to accept “little girls 5-17 only” and had chat channels with titles such as “begging-to-have-sex-chat” and “sexting-chat-with-the-server-owner.”²⁰² Still another server directly solicited nude images from minors to gain access: “YOU NEED TO SEND A VERIFICATION PHOTO TO THE OWNER. IT HAS TO BE NUDE.”²⁰³

176. Other Discord servers are only slightly less obvious. For example, a server called “Family Hideout” centered on an adult man who called himself “Dad” and built a “family” of children online.²⁰⁴ In this server, which was labeled

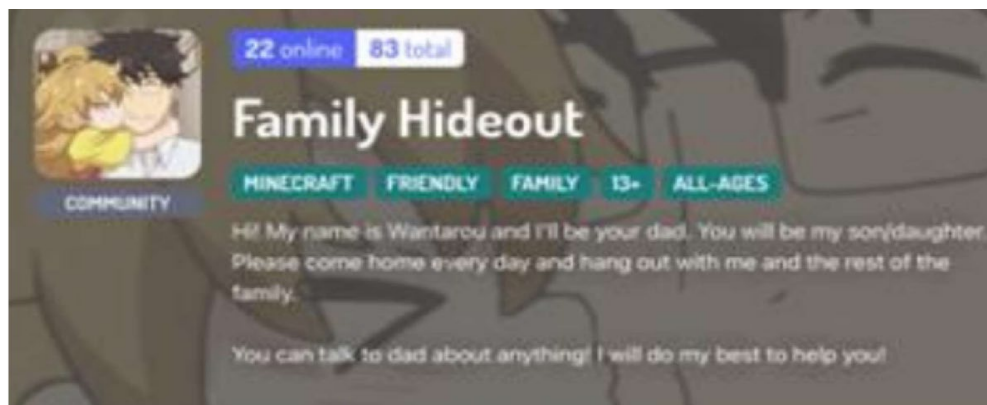
²⁰¹ Goggin, *supra* note 180.

²⁰² *Id.*

²⁰³ *Id.*

²⁰⁴ National Center on Sexual Exploitation, *supra* note 179.

"Friendly," "Family," and "All-Ages," the man developed relationships with children and encouraged them to take and share nude images.



Family Hideout server in March 2023.

178. Other servers are more discreet yet are still widely known as places where children are groomed. For instance, a server called "FurWaterSportsAndYiff" was described as "Full of minors, groom hub" by one disgusted reviewer of the server. According to the reviewer, this server was filled with minors and adults and was "[p]retty much pedophilia at its best."²⁰⁵



This server existed on Discord from 2022 through at least April 2023

²⁰⁵ *Id.*

177. Through numerous well-documented and publicized cases, Discord has long known that its app enables and facilitates the grooming, trafficking, and sexual abuse of minors. For example, in its June 2023 article, NBC News reviewed publicly available information since Discord was founded and identified 35 cases in the previous six years in which adults were prosecuted on charges of kidnapping, grooming, or sexual assault that involved communications on Discord.²⁰⁶ Because these cases were only those that were reported, investigated, and prosecuted during that time, “What we see is only the tip of the iceberg,” explained a child safety advocate.

178. Over the years, countless criminal cases have exposed the critical role that Discord plays in enabling and facilitating grooming and other predatory conduct. In 2022, for instance, an Indiana man pled guilty to sexual exploitation of a minor and possession of CSAM after the FBI discovered that he had engaged in sexually explicit conversations with an 11-year-old girl on Discord and coerced the girl into sending sexually explicit images of herself.²⁰⁷ The girl later told police that she communicated with the man via chats, video calls, and voice calls on Discord. Later that year, an Oregon man was federally charged with child exploitation crimes

²⁰⁶ Groggin, *supra* note 180.

²⁰⁷ Phyllis Cha, *Marion County Corrections Employee Fired, Arrested Over Sexually Explicit Images to Girl*, *IndyStar* (Sept. 7, 2022), <https://www.indystar.com/story/news/crime/2022/09/07/corrections-officer-marion-county-employee-sexually-explicit-messages-to-child/65781240007/>.

following an investigation that found he had "pretended to be an Oregon teenager to convince the child to engage in sexually explicit acts during a video chat on Discord."²⁰⁸

179. Similar cases were brought throughout 2023 and 2024. In March 2023, for example, a man was charged after he allegedly had a sexually explicit conversation with a 14-year-old girl and shared CSAM with her—all on Discord.²⁰⁹ At the time, the man was a middle-school science teacher and had engaged in this conduct at the school where he was employed. And in 2024, a South Carolina man was sentenced to 20 years in federal prison after he pled guilty to numerous crimes he committed against children on Discord, including coercing minor girls into performing livestream sexual acts for him in a Discord call that he recorded.²¹⁰ The man also made repeated threats to the girls and their families, and one of the girls attempted suicide because of this abuse.

180. Discord has also been at the center of numerous cases involving the kidnapping and sexual assault of minors. For example, in 2021, a Virginia man was

²⁰⁸ U.S. Dep't of Justice, *Oregon Man Charged with Sexually Exploiting Minor on Discord, Additional Victims Sought* (Oct. 3, 2022), <https://www.justice.gov/usao-or/pr/oregon-man-charged-sexually-exploiting-minor-discord-additional-victims-sought>.

²⁰⁹ *NJ Teacher Charged After "Sexually Explicit Conversation" with Teen*, New Jersey 101.5 (Mar. 3, 2023), <https://nj1015.com/nj-teacher-charged-after-sexually-explicit-conversation-with-teen/>.

²¹⁰ Alan Hovorka, *Lowcountry US Army Member Who Groomed Girls, Recorded Child Porn on Discord Sentenced to*, Post & Courier (Aug. 3, 2024), https://www.postandcourier.com/news/evan-bucci-child-porn-discord-grooming/article_09cf85ce-50dc-11ef-84b2-7b7358023542.html.

arrested and charged with sexually exploiting and kidnapping a 12-year-old girl from her home in California.²¹¹ According to the court documents, the man met and groomed the girl on Discord, flew to California and picked her up at her house at 2:30 a.m., and was arrested at the Denver airport during a layover.

181. Similarly, in February 2023, a Michigan man was arrested and charged with kidnapping a 14-year-old Washington girl whom he had met and groomed on Discord.²¹² The next month, a North Carolina man was arrested and charged with rape, child abduction, and human trafficking after police rescued a 13-year-old from a locked shed behind his house.²¹³ According to the girl's mother, the man had been communicating with her daughter for months on Discord before he abducted her from her home in Dallas.

182. 2024 brought more of the same. In February, a Texas man was charged with human trafficking and sexual assault of a 16-year-old girl whom he met and communicated with on Discord.²¹⁴ The girl told police that the man picked her up in

²¹¹ Dan Morse, *With Children Stuck at Home During Coronavirus Shutdowns, Online Sexual Predators Can Swoop In*, Wash. Post (Feb. 12, 2023), https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/public-safety/coronavirus-lockdown-child-exploitation/2021/02/04/90add6a6-462a-11eb-a277-49a6d1f9dfff_story.html.

²¹² Ruth Bashinsky, *Washington State Girl, 14, Who Went Missing with "Man She met on Discord" Near Notorious Sex Trafficking Corridor FOUND: Michigan Man Arrested over Kidnapping*, Daily Mail (Feb. 1, 2024), <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-13034633/washington-state-girl-missing-discord-sex-trafficking-michigan.html>.

²¹³ Peter Charalambous & Alexandra Faul, *Missing 13-year-old Rescued from Locked North Carolina Shed*, ABC News (Mar. 14, 2023), <https://abcnews.go.com/US/missing-13-year-rescued-locked-north-carolina-shed/story?id=97830147>.

²¹⁴ Brittany Eubank, *Man and His Mother Charged After Missing Kansas Teen Found Safe in Central Texas*, KVUEabc (Feb. 8, 2024), <https://www.kvue.com/article/news/crime/austin->

Kansas and brought her to his apartment in Texas, where they had sex multiple times. A few months later, a North Carolina man was charged with kidnapping and raping a 12-year-old girl he had met on Discord.²¹⁵ Around the same time, a Pennsylvania man was arrested and charged with multiple offenses, including rape of a child and indecent assault of a person less than 13 years of age.²¹⁶ The police investigation revealed that the man was communicating with the 12-year-old boy on Discord, which included sexual conversations and making plans to meet.

183. Despite Discord's repeated assurances to parents that it has a "zero tolerance" policy for the criminal acts described above and that its product is built on safety, the rampant sexual exploitation of children on Discord has gotten only worse over the years-not better. John Shehan, the Senior Vice President of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, emphasized that his organization has seen "explosive growth" in CSAM and exploitation on Discord.²¹⁷ "There is a child exploitation issue on the platform. That's undeniable," he stated.

human-trafficking-sexual-assault-missing-kansas-teen/269-361c25e3-12a8-4ec4-8779-0f962c12e8d1.

²¹⁵ "Under 13 Is Under 13": Judge Responds to Attorney's Claim That Man Charged with Kidnapping & Rape Believed 12-year-old Girl Was College Student, WRAL News (Apr. 16, 2024), <https://www.wral.com/story/under-13-is-under-13-judge-responds-to-attorney-s-claims-that-man-charged-with-kidnapping-rape-believed-12-year-old-girl-was-col/21381250/>.

²¹⁶ Keith Heffintrayer, *Four Men Arrested Following Investigation into Sexual Abuse of 12-year-old Boy in Upper Gwynedd*, NorthPennNow (Apr. 15, 2024), <https://northpennnow.com/news/2024/apr/15/four-men-arrested-following-investigation-into-sexual-abuse-of-12-year-old-boy-in-upper-gwynedd-police-say/>.

²¹⁷ Groggin, *supra* note 180.

184. Indeed, for four consecutive years, the National Center on Sexual Exploitation ("NCSE") has named Discord to its "Dirty Dozen" list (which also includes Roblox, as discussed above). As NCSE put it, "Discord enables exploiters to easily contact and groom children," and predators "take advantage of Discord's dangerous designs to entice children into sending sexually explicit images of themselves."²¹⁸

185. Discord itself confirms that this criminal conduct that it enables has only become more pervasive. Discord, for example, revealed that in the fourth quarter of 2023, it received 416,036 reports from users regarding "Child Safety" issues, which includes CSAM.²¹⁹ By the next quarter, that number had grown to 1,035,166—a roughly 150% increase.²²⁰

4. Roblox and Discord work in tandem to facilitate child sexual exploitation.

186. Roblox and Discord serve as the preferred apps for predators seeking to identify and then sexually exploit children. As explained above, the tried-and-true

²¹⁸ National Center on Sexual Exploitation, *supra* note 58.

²¹⁹ Discord, *Discord Transparency Report: January-March 2023*, https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/625fe439fb70a9d901e138ab/64bl6dade9ba30617e30a40a_QI%2023%20%7C%20Disc%20ord%20Transparency%20Report_%20JANUARY%20-%20MARCH%202023.pdf.

²²⁰ Discord, *Discord Transparency Report: January-June 2024*, <https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/625fe439fb70a9d901e138ab/67056a054d453d30491c1ac9-Discord%20Jan-Jun%202024%20Transparency%20Report.pdf>.

playbook these predators follow is to misrepresent their age on Roblox to child users, pretending to be a fellow child, befriend the vulnerable young victims, and then manipulate the children to move the conversation off Roblox to Discord, where they coerce the children into sending sexually explicit images or into meeting in person so they can sexually abuse them.

187. Roblox and Discord designed their apps to work together seamlessly. As described above, Roblox encourages users to communicate on Discord by allowing links Discord servers and channels to be displayed on game or group pages and by permitting users to include their Discord usernames in their Roblox profiles. Discord, for its part, enables users to link their Roblox accounts to their Discord accounts.²²¹ Their "activity status" on Discord then shows other users, including predators, when they are playing Roblox and what game they are playing. On Discord, users can also send other users the codes for Robux gift cards to redeem on Roblox.

188. Through numerous media reports and well publicized criminal cases, Roblox and Discord have long known that their apps jointly enable predators to systematically harm children. For example, in 2019, a Florida man was arrested after law enforcement learned that he was using Roblox and Discord to target children.²²²

²²¹ YouTube, How to Link Roblox to Discord (2025), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80ZEwlgecDM>.

²²² Max Chesnes, *Deputies Say Vero Beach Man Used Popular Video Game Platforms to Target*

According to authorities, the man targeted children between ages 10 and 12 on Roblox and then coerced them on Discord into sending sexually explicit images of themselves in exchange for Robux.

189. Similarly, in January 2022, a Florida man was arrested following a lengthy investigation that revealed that he posed as a teen girl on Roblox to meet a 13-year-old boy and then convinced the boy to send him sexually explicit images on Discord in exchange for Robux.²²³ Later that year, an Arizona man was arrested for kidnapping a 13-year-old boy he met on Roblox. According to police, the man sent sexual and inappropriate messages on Roblox to the boy and then invited him to join a Discord chat, where the man arranged to pick up the boy from his house.

190. These real-life nightmares occurred repeatedly throughout last year. In November 2024, for example, the FBI arrested a Michigan man and charged him with numerous crimes related to his sexual exploitation of possibly over 100 children.²²⁴ The man told law enforcement that "he used Roblox to talk to others

Children, TCPalm (Aug. 20, 2019), <https://www.tcpalm.com/story/news/crime/indian-river-county/2019/08/20/detectives-advice-online-safety-after-vero-beach-man-used-video-game-platforms-target-minors/2059599001/>.

²²³ Irene Wright, Man Blackmailed Teen Boy as He Posed as Girl on Roblox and Discord, Florida Cops Say, Miami Herald (Aug. 11, 2023), <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/state/florida/article278172607.html>.

²²⁴ Samantha Sayles, *Monroe County Man Uses Roblox, Discord, Snapchat to Sexually Assault Children*, ClickOnDetroit (Nov. 15, 2024), <https://www.clickondetroit.com/news/local/2024/11/15/momoe-county-man-uses-roblox-discord-snapchat-to-sexually-exploit-children/>.

sexually, some of whom he allegedly knew were children," and then transitioned the conversations to Discord and coerced the children into sending nude images.²²⁵

191. And in January this year, a Louisiana man was arrested and federally charged for sexually exploiting a teenage girl through Roblox and Discord.²²⁶ According to arrest records, the man "began communicating with her on Roblox, before transitioning her to Discord," where he coerced her into sending sexually explicit images of herself.²²⁷

D. Discord Knowingly Causes and Facilitates the Sexual Exploitation of Children

192. Like Roblox, Discord is overrun with harmful content and predators because the company prioritizes growth, revenue, and eventual profits over child safety. For years, Discord has knowingly prioritized these numbers over the safety of children through the actions it has taken and decisions it has made to increase and monetize users regardless of the consequences.

1. Discord prioritizes growth over the safety of children.

193. Although Discord began as a communications app for gamers, its co-founders Jason Citron and Stanislav Vishnevskiy soon realized that Discord

²²⁵ Id.

²²⁶ WAFB Staff, *Man Accused of Internet Sex Crimes Allegedly Met Victims on Roblox, Discord*, WAFB (Jan. 31, 2025), <https://www.wafb.com/2025/01/31/man-accused-intemet-child-sex-crimes-allegedly-met-victims-roblox-discord/>.

²²⁷ Id.

appealed to a much broader audience and sought to expand its user base. "We saw an opportunity to make communications easier for everyone, not just gamers," Citron explained.²²⁸ So the company changed its motto from "Chat for gamers" to "A new way to chat with your communities and friends" and became hyper-focused on transforming into a universal communication product.²²⁹

194. Discord has since grown exponentially. In 2019, the company had 56 million monthly active users.²³⁰ But with Discord's shift away from gaming in 2020, combined with its pandemic-driven explosion in popularity among young users, the company grew its monthly active users to 150 million by 2022.²³¹ Today, Discord boasts over 200 million monthly active users.²³²

195. As Discord has grown, private investors have poured money into the company. In June 2020, Discord raised \$100 million at a \$3.4 billion dollar valuation.²³³ Just five months later, the company raised another \$100 million at more

²²⁸ Nathan Latka, *Discord's \$879M Revenue: 25 Moves to \$25B Valuation*, LATKA-B2B Saas Blog (Jan. 15, 2025), <https://blog.getlatka.com/discord-revenue/>.

²²⁹ Kellen Browning, *How Discord, Born from an Obscure Game, Became a Social Hub for Young People*, N.Y. Times (Dec. 29, 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/29/business/discord-server-social-media.html>.

²³⁰ HelpLama, *Discord Revenue and Usage Statistics 2025*, <https://helplama.com/discord-statistics/>.

²³¹ *Id.*

²³² Podcast Transcript, *Discord CEO Jason Citron Makes the Case for a Smaller, More Private Internet*, The Verge (Apr. 22, 2024), <https://www.theverge.com/24134914/discord-ceo-gaming-chat-teens-safety-moderation-decoder-interview>.

²³³ Equitybee, *Discord Funding History*, <https://equitybee.com/companies/company?company=discord> (last visited Feb. 11, 2025).

than double the valuation (\$6.90 billion).²³⁴ In early 2021, Discord rebuffed an acquisition offer from Microsoft of at least \$10 billion.²³⁵ Later that year, it raised another \$500 million at a staggering valuation of \$14.5 billion.²³⁶ While Discord has remained privately held so far, the company is expected to go public this year.²³⁷

196. A primary reason for investors' interest in Discord is its user growth, putting enormous pressure on the company to prioritize growing its users above all else. Growing its users is critical to the company's revenue and future profitability. Discord generates most of its revenue from its subscription service called Nitro, which provides users with benefits such as custom emojis, unlimited "super reactions," and HD video streaming. As the company expanded its userbase, its revenue skyrocketed from \$150 million in 2020 to \$600 million in 2024.²³⁸ And while for years Discord shunned advertising on its app, the company recently started selling advertisements to boost revenue by capitalizing on its massive and growing user base.²³⁹

²³⁴ *Id.*

²³⁵ Sarah E. Needleman, *Discord Ends Deal Talks with Microsoft*, Wall. St. J. (Apr. 20, 2021), <https://www.wsj.com/articles/discord-ends-deal-talks-with-microsoft-11618938806>.

²³⁶ *Id.*

²³⁷ Chris Morris, *These Are the Most Anticipated IPOs to Watch in 2025*, FastCompany (Dec. 30, 2024), <https://www.fastcompany.com/91243719/most-anticipated-ipos-to-watch-in-2025>.

²³⁸ Salvatore Rodriguez & Sarah E. Needleman, *Discord to Start Showing Ads for Gamers to Boost Revenue*, Wall St. J. (Mar. 30, 2024), <https://www.wsj.com/tech/discord-to-start-showing-ads-for-gamers-to-boost-revenue-bf5848b9>.

²³⁹ Equitybee, *Discord Funding History*, <https://equitybee.com/companies/company?company=discord>.

197. Discord's growth strategy has focused on a user-centric approach that prioritizes user preferences over child safety. As Discord CEO and co-founder Jason Citron put it, "We focus on what our users love, and that drives everything we do."²⁴⁰ In practice, that has resulted in Discord elevating the privacy of its users over protecting children in order to attract as many users to its app as possible. For example, Discord continues to allow people to chat using fake names and does not require individuals to enter their real names when registering for an account, ensuring that predators will continue to flock to Discord because they can remain anonymous. And while other digital platforms verify users' ages and restrict communications between children and adults, Discord does not require age verification and does not restrict communications between children and adults.

198. Discord even prioritizes user privacy over child safety with a feature it recently added to supposedly allow parents to monitor their children's Discord use. In 2023, Discord created its "Family Center for Parents and Guardians"-a "completely opt-in feature" that is "not" mandatory for teens."²⁴¹ While this feature permits parents to monitor some of their children's activity on Discord, it prohibits parents from accessing the most important information on their accounts-the

²⁴⁰ Nathan Latka, Discord's \$879M Revenue: 25 Moves to \$25B Valuation, LATKA-B2B Saas Blog (Jan. 15, 2025), <https://blog.getlatka.com/discord-revenue/>.

²⁴¹ Discord, *What Is Family Center?*, <https://support.discord.com/hc/en-us/articles/14155039712407-What-is-Family-Center#:~:text=We%20value%20your%20privacy%20which,names%2C%20server%20icons%2C%20and%20member> (last visited Feb. 11, 2025).

contents of their messages. As Discord tells children, "We value your privacy which is why connected accounts will not have access to the contents of your messages."²⁴² Discord also assures children that, with Family Center, "you have control over whether or not you use this feature, how long you want to use it for, and who you connect your account to."²⁴³ By putting children in charge of this parental feature, Discord seeks to preserve growth of this key demographic.

199. In pursuit of growth, Discord has also chosen not to implement easy measures that would protect children but stunt user growth, such as age verification to ensure that children under 13 cannot create accounts and that adults cannot misrepresent their age to children.

200. Discord has also fought attempts to be held publicly accountable for the sexual exploitation of children that its app enables. In November 2023, Discord's CEO and co-founder Jason Citron refused to accept service of a subpoena to testify before the U.S. Senate as part of its hearing on "Big Tech and the Online Child Sexual Exploitation Crisis."²⁴⁴ Citron appeared at the hearing only after the Senate

²⁴² *Id.*

²⁴³ *Id.*

²⁴⁴ *Senate Panel Forced to Use US Marshals to Subpoena CEOs of X and Discord to Testify on Protecting Kids Online*, CBS News (Nov. 21, 2023), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/senate-panel-us-marshals-subpoenas-ceos-x-discord/>.

was forced to enlist the U.S. Marshals Service to personally subpoena him—a situation the Senate called "a remarkable departure from typical practice."²⁴⁵

201. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, which internet companies are by law required to report instances of child sex abuse to, also reported issues working with Discord and had to rescind an invitation to become part of its Cyber Tip Line Roundtable when the company failed to "identify a senior child safety representative to attend."²⁴⁶ "It was really questionable, their commitment to what they're doing on the child exploitation front," stated John Shehan, the Senior Vice President of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

2. Discord facilitates child sexual exploitation through the design of its app, inadequate safety features, and refusal to invest in basic safety protections.

202. Discord's pursuit of growth over child safety is reflected in numerous actions it took and decisions it made related to the design and safety of its app. Had Discord acted differently, the harm suffered by countless children would not have occurred.

203. Discord designed its app so that anyone can easily communicate with children, creating a virtual world where predators can freely target and sexually

²⁴⁵ *Id.*

²⁴⁶ Goggin, *supra* note 180.

exploit children. Despite its repeated assurances to parents that its app "defaults" to safety for child accounts, Discord, in fact, designed its app to default to settings that facilitate the sexual exploitation of children.

204. Discord, for example, defaults to settings that allow predators to send direct messages to children. Predators often identify and target children by joining servers that are populated with kids. By default, Discord allows any two people who share a server to direct message each other, providing predators with an easy means of contacting and communicating with children. Predators also often initiate contact with children by adding a child as a "friend" on Discord so they can direct message them. By default, Discord permits children to receive friend requests from "Everyone," meaning children can receive and accept friend requests from individuals whom they do not know and with whom they have no connection.

205. For years, Discord also defaulted to settings that enabled predators to send children sexually explicit images via direct messages. In 2017, for example, Discord introduced "Safe Direct Messaging." This feature contained three options, including "Keep me safe," which supposedly would automatically scan and delete messages that a child received containing explicit content.

The differences are pretty simple:

Keep me safe: The safest option. This will have Discord scan any image sent in all DMs, regardless of whether you've added the user on your friend list, or the user is DMing you just by sharing a mutual server.

My friends are nice: The medium-est option! This will let Discord know to scan any images sent in DMs from users that aren't on your friends list, but also to trust your previously-added friends and not worry about any images they send.

Do not scan: The self-confident option. Enabling this option will completely disable Discord's image scanning process, and leave you for a walk on the wild side for any and all DMs you receive. Careful, it's a jungle out there!

*Discord's description of the categories of its Safe Direct Messaging feature.*²⁴⁷

206. Consistent with Discord's "default to safety" promise, the company long represented that the "Keep me safe" option was on by default. In fact, though, Discord defaulted not to this most restrictive setting but to the lower setting of "My friends are nice," which meant that Discord would not scan any images from a child's "friend"-which could be anyone

If you do not want to see age-restricted content on Discord

If you do not want to be exposed to age-restricted content on Discord, or if you are under 18 years old, we recommend **turning on the explicit media content filter in your privacy settings**. In your *User Settings*, select *Privacy & Safety*, and choose 'Keep me safe' under *Safe Direct Messaging*. **This setting is on by default** and will ensure that images and videos in all direct messages are scanned by Discord and age-restricted content is blocked.

*Discord's "Age-Restricted Content on Discord" webpage in 2022*²⁴⁸

207. Discord later changed the labels of this feature from "Keep me safe" to "Filter all direct messages" and from "My friends are nice" to "Filter direct messages

²⁴⁷ Discord, *Discord Safety: Safe Messaging!*, <https://web.archive.org/web/20210203000438/https://support.discord.com/hc/en-us/articles/115000068672-Discord-Safety-Safe-Messaging-> (archived Feb. 3, 2021).

²⁴⁸ Discord, *Age-Restricted Content on Discord*, https://web.archive.org/web/20220406085122mp_/https://discord.com/safety/360043653552-Age-Restricted-Content-on-Discord (archived Apr. 6, 2022) (emphasis added).

from non-friends." ²⁴⁹ But it continued to default to the less restrictive setting: "By default, these filters are set to 'Filter direct messages from non-friends.' Choose 'Filter all direct messages' if you want all direct messages you receive to be filtered, or select 'Do not filter direct messages' to turn these filters off."²⁵⁰

208. Although parents can change Discord's permissive default settings to more restrictive ones, that option is meaningless because Discord enables children to modify these safety settings without parental approval. So a parent might modify the default settings so that their child cannot exchange direct messages with other server members or cannot receive friend requests from "Everyone," only to have their child simply change those settings to allow these unfettered interactions. As Discord puts it, "[o]ur product architecture provides each user with fundamental control over their experience on Discord including who they communicate with, what content they see, and what communities they join or create."²⁵¹ By doing so, Discord strips parents of basic protective options that would prevent adult strangers from targeting and exploiting their children. As one parent explained in calling

²⁴⁹ Discord, *Helping Your Teen Stay Safe on Discord*, <https://web.archive.org/web/20230711200552/https://discord.com/safety/360044153831-helping-your-teen-stay-safe-on-discord> (archived July 11, 2023).

²⁵⁰ *Id.*

²⁵¹ Discord, *Discord Parent Hub*, <https://discord.com/safety-parents>.

Discord an "EXTREMELY dangerous app," Discord does not provide "any way for parents to set settings that can't simply be undone by kids."²⁵²

209. Discord also refused to implement other simple measures that would have protected children using its product. For example, despite having the ability to do so, Discord does not require users to verify their age and identify when creating an account. Doing so would have prevented predators from creating fake profiles and pretending to be children, which is their preferred approach in targeting children and convincing them to share sexually explicit images. Discord also could have implemented basic screening measures before allowing users on the app, which would have ensured that known predators are not permitted on the app.

210. Age and identity verification would also have prevented individuals under 13 from creating accounts on Discord. In many of the criminal cases involving the sexual exploitation of children on Discord, the children were under the age of 13. By requiring ID verification during the account sign-up process—a practice that other online products employ—Discord could have easily prevented these children from even using its app. But it chose not to, despite knowing for years that children under 13 operate freely on its environment and are targeted by predators.

211. Discord also could have placed a higher age rating on its application in the iOS App Store and other app stores to signal to parents that the app presented

²⁵² National Center on Sexual Exploitation, *supra* note 179.

risks for children. Discord likewise could have provided clear warnings to parents about the presence of sexual predators on the platform, so that parents could make an informed decision about allowing their child on the platform and/or educate their child on how to stay safe on the platform. Discord could also have provided clear warnings to children about the presence of sexual predators on the platform, and instructed children on how to stay safe on the platform.

212. Despite these glaring failures, Discord constantly promotes its technology-focused "safety solutions" including its "AI-powered moderation systems."²⁵³ But this technology has proven grossly inadequate and insufficient to protect children from sexual exploitation. For instance, Discord's Teen Safety Assist feature, which it introduced in October 2023, is supposed to automatically blur media that may be sensitive in direct messages and group direct messages with friends, as well as in servers," and send "safety alerts" to teen users when they receive a direct message from a user for the first time."²⁵⁴ Yet this feature is "utterly defective," according to the National Center on Child Exploitation.²⁵⁵ As part of its annual investigation into Discord, "NCOSE researchers were able to send sexually

²⁵³ Discord, *Discord's Commitment to Teen and Child Safety* (July 11, 2023), <https://discord.com/safety/commitment-to-teen-child-safety>.

²⁵⁴ Savannah Badalich, *Building a Safer Place for Teens to Hang Out*, Discord (Oct. 24, 2023), <https://discord.com/safety/safer-place-for-teens>.

²⁵⁵ National Center on Sexual Exploitation, *supra* note 58.

explicit content from an adult account to an unconnected 13-year-old account, and no warning or resources were displayed."²⁵⁶

213. Discord is also famously slow and ineffective at responding to child-safety issues. One mother, for example, told CNN that Discord essentially refused to help her after she reported that a man had communicated with her 10-year-old daughter and sent her links to pornography.²⁵⁷ Following the mother's report, Discord sent her an automated message asking for "the message links to the reported content for the team to review and take appropriate action."²⁵⁸ After the mother sent the requested links, Discord never responded. "There was no help at all," she said.²⁵⁹

214. Child protection groups have also repeatedly highlighted flaws in Discord's approach to child safety. For example, Denton Howard, executive director of Inhope, an organization of missing and exploited children hotlines from around the world, has flagged numerous problems with Discord's approach to child safety, including "slow response times to reports, communications issues when [child protection] hotlines tried to reach out, hotlines receiving account warnings when

²⁵⁶ *Id.*

²⁵⁷ Samantha Murphy Kelly, *The Dark Side of Discord for Teens*, CNN Business (Mar. 22, 2022), <https://www.cnn.com/2022/03/22/tech/discord-teens/index.html>.

²⁵⁸ *Id.*

²⁵⁹ *Id.*

they try to report CSAM, the continued hosting of communities that trade and create CSAM, and evidence disappearing before hearing back from Discord.²⁶⁰

VI. PLAINTIFF-SPECIFIC ALLEGATIONS

215. Plaintiff is a 16-year-old girl who was manipulated, groomed, and exploited through Defendants' dangerous apps by adult predators. Plaintiff has suffered devastating and life-altering psychological trauma. Her life will never be the same.

216. Plaintiff was an avid Roblox user for years. After looking at Roblox's advertisements indicating it was designed for children and touting Roblox's dedication to safety, Plaintiff's mother believed that.

217. Roblox was safe for children because it was designed and marketed for kids. Plaintiff's mother allowed Plaintiff permission to begin playing Roblox and to purchase Robux based on Roblox's representations. As discussed above, Roblox spent considerable time and money publicly touting the safety and security of the app, which created the public perception that Roblox had created a safe environment for kids.

218. Unbeknownst to Plaintiff's mother at the time, Roblox's representations she relied upon were nothing more than a false facade of safety.

²⁶⁰ Goggin, *supra* note 180.

219. Similarly, when Plaintiff began using Discord, Plaintiff's mother trusted that Discord was a safe place for Plaintiff to communicate with her friends. As discussed above, Discord spent considerable time and money publicly touting the safety and security of the app. This created the public perception that Discord had created a safe environment for kids. Unbeknownst to Plaintiff's mother at the time, Discord's representations she relied upon were nothing more than a false facade of safety.

220. In approximately August 2024, Plaintiff's mother learned through local law enforcement's cooperation with an investigation by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and Internet Crimes Against Children that Plaintiff had been targeted by online predators whom she had met on Roblox. On Roblox, the predators groomed Plaintiff, exploiting her age and vulnerability to build a false emotional connection with her by employing well-documented grooming tactics and techniques that Roblox has long recognized as common predatory behavior on its platform yet failed to prevent. Eventually, her predators manipulated Plaintiff to continuing their interactions on Discord, where her predators sent sexually explicit materials to Plaintiff and coerced the child into providing sexually explicit materials of herself.

221. Plaintiff has suffered, and continues to suffer, profound harm from the grooming, manipulation, and exploitation that she experienced on Defendants' apps.

She continues to suffer from severe mental health issues, including difficulty trusting others, and depression. Plaintiff has endured, and continues to endure, humiliation, shame, and a profound loss of safety and innocence.

VII. CAUSES OF ACTION

FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION: NEGLIGENCE ROBLOX AND DISCORD

222. Plaintiff incorporates each and every allegation set forth above

223. Defendants each owed Plaintiff a duty to exercise reasonable care in the development, management, maintenance, operation, promotion, supervision, and control of their respective apps to ensure that minors using their apps—and for whom the apps were objectively designed and marketed—were free from the unreasonable risk of harm from foreseeable exposure to grooming, sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, and attendant injuries stemming from contact with predators who Defendant could reasonably foresee or knew were also using their respective apps.

224. Defendants each owed Plaintiff a duty to protect her from reasonably foreseeable dangers which Defendants knew existed on their apps, including the reasonably foreseeable criminal acts of third parties.

225. Defendants each owed Plaintiff a duty to accurately promote or otherwise accurately describe the known or foreseeable dangers presented to a minor using their respective apps.

226. Defendants each owed Plaintiff a duty to accurately account for or otherwise accurately describe the available safeguards as well as the limitations of those safeguards developed and implemented for their respective apps.

227. Defendants each owed Plaintiff a duty to reasonably supervise the digital environment they created, maintained, and promoted for use by children to protect such intended users from foreseeable or known risks of using Defendants' apps.

228. Plaintiff was a foreseeable and intended user of Defendants' respective apps.

229. Defendants each breached these duties of reasonable care to Plaintiff as more fully described above by, inter alia:

- promoting their apps for use by children while failing to ensure that their apps protected these intended users from an unreasonable risk of foreseeable harm;
- failing to design, develop, manage, and/or maintain their apps to mitigate the risks of known or foreseeable harm to children;
- failing to accurately promote or otherwise describe their apps in a manner which would warn a reasonable parent of the dangers known or foreseeable to Defendants from a minor child's use of their respective apps;

- failing to accurately describe or account for limitations on Defendants' available safeguards; and
- failing to reasonably supervise the digital environments they created, maintained, and promoted for use by children to protect them from known or foreseeable dangers.

230. Plaintiff has been injured as a direct and proximate result of Defendants' negligence. Plaintiff was foreseeably groomed and has suffered sexual exploitation by child predators known to use Defendants' apps and, as a result, has suffered physical and mental harms.

231. Defendants' respective negligence each contributed to causing Plaintiff's harms and Defendants are jointly and severally liable for the same.

SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION: NEGLIGENT MISREPRESENTATION
(ROBLOX AND DISCORD)

232. Plaintiff incorporates each and every allegation set forth above.

233. Defendants each made representations of material fact as more fully described above regarding the safe use of their respective apps by children that were untrue and which Defendants had no reasonable grounds for believing to be true.

234. Defendants each made representations of material fact as more fully described above regarding the default safety settings of their respective apps that

were untrue and which Defendants had no reasonable grounds for believing to be true.

235. Defendants each made representations of material fact as more fully described above regarding the adequacy of their supervision of their respective apps that were untrue and which Defendants had no reasonable grounds for believing to be true.

236. Defendants each made representations of material fact as more fully described above regarding their prioritization of safety for children using their respective apps that were untrue and which Defendants had no reasonable grounds for believing to be true.

237. Defendants each made representations of material fact as more fully described above regarding the known risks and dangers posed to children using their respective apps that were untrue and which Defendants had no reasonable grounds for believing to be true.

238. Defendants made such representations with the intent to induce Plaintiff to use Defendants' respective apps and/or to induce Plaintiff's mother to allow a minor such as Plaintiff to use Defendants' respective apps.

239. Plaintiff and/or Plaintiff's mother were unaware of the falsity of Defendants' representations and were each justified in relying on them.

240. As a result of Plaintiff and/or Plaintiff's mother's justified and intended reliance on Defendants' representations, Plaintiff has suffered physical and mental injuries as described above.

THIRD CAUSES OF ACTION
VIOLATION OF THE MONTANA CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT
(MONT. CODE ANN. §§ 30-14-101 ET SEQ.)
(ROBLOX)

241. Plaintiff incorporates each and every allegation set forth above.

242. The Montana Consumer Protection Act ("Montana CPA") prohibits "[u]nfair methods of competition and unfair or deceptive acts or practices in the conduct of any trade or commerce." Mont. Code Ann. § 30-14-103.

243. Roblox, Plaintiff, and Plaintiff's mother are "persons" and Plaintiff and Plaintiff's mother are "consumers" as these terms are defined under the Montana CPA. Mont. Code Ann. § 30-14-102(1), (6).

244. Roblox committed the acts complained of herein in the course of "trade" or "commerce" within the meaning of Montana Code Annotated § 30-14-102(8)(a).

245. In the conduct of trade or commerce, Roblox knowingly concealed, suppressed, and omitted material facts more fully described above regarding, inter alia, the safe use of Roblox by children, the default safety settings on Roblox, the adequacy of their supervision of Roblox, Roblox's prioritization of child safety on

Roblox, the known risks and dangers posed to children on Roblox, with the intent that individuals such as Plaintiff and/or Plaintiff's mother would rely upon Roblox's misrepresentations.

246. Plaintiff and Plaintiff's mother were deceived by Roblox's misrepresentations and reasonably relied upon Roblox's misrepresentations.

247. Roblox's concealment, suppression, and omission of material facts were likely to and did deceive reasonable consumers, including Plaintiff and Plaintiff's mother.

248. Roblox knew or should have known that its conduct violated the Montana CPA and Roblox owed Plaintiff and Plaintiff's mother a duty to accurately disclose the known dangers posed to children on Roblox and the limitations on Roblox's designed and advertised safety features, among other duties as provided above.

249. Roblox's deceptive conduct proximately caused injuries to Plaintiff, including an ascertainable loss of money spent on Roblox, inpatient treatment, therapy, and other damages to be proven at trial.

250. In addition to compensatory damages, Plaintiff seeks treble damages and attorneys' fees pursuant to Montana Code Annotated § 30-14-133.

FOURTH CAUSES OF ACTION
PUNITIVE DAMAGES
(ROBLOX AND DISCORD)

251. Plaintiff incorporates each and every allegation set forth above.

252. Defendants each were aware of the significant threats to children posed by their ineffective safety features and inadequate monitoring of their respective apps and, despite this knowledge, proceeded to advertise in a manner intended to induce parents of minor children to allow those children to use their apps by misrepresenting known dangers, Defendants' prioritization of child safety, and the availability and efficacy of safety settings, among other things more fully described throughout this Complaint.

253. Defendants are guilty of actual malice as defined in Montana Code Annotated § 27-1-221(2) as Defendants each deliberately acted in conscious or intentional disregard of the high probability of injury to Plaintiff or otherwise proceeded to act with indifference to the high probability of injury to Plaintiff.

254. Defendants are guilty of actual fraud as defined in Montana Code Annotated § 27-1-221(3) as Defendants each made representations as more fully described above with knowledge of their falsity or otherwise concealed material facts with the purpose of causing injury.

255. Plaintiff and Plaintiff's mother had a right to rely on Defendants' representations and Plaintiff suffered injury as a result of that reliance.

256. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' disregard or indifference to the known dangers posed to children using their apps and false

portrayal of facts material to any parent considering whether a minor child should be permitted to use Defendants' apps, Plaintiff has suffered physical and emotional injury and other damages to be proven at trial.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff, seeks the following against Defendant:

- a. For compensatory damages in an amount to be proven at trial;
- b. For treble damages against Roblox;
- c. For attorneys' fees against Roblox;
- d. For punitive damages against Roblox and Discord;
- e. For costs and pre- and post-judgment interest, as determined by the Court; and;
- f. For any and all further legal or equitable relief as the Court deems proper.

JURY TRIAL DEMAND

Plaintiff demands a trial by jury on all causes of action and issues so triable.

DATED: December 2, 2025. Respectfully submitted,

/s/ John Heenan

John Heenan

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