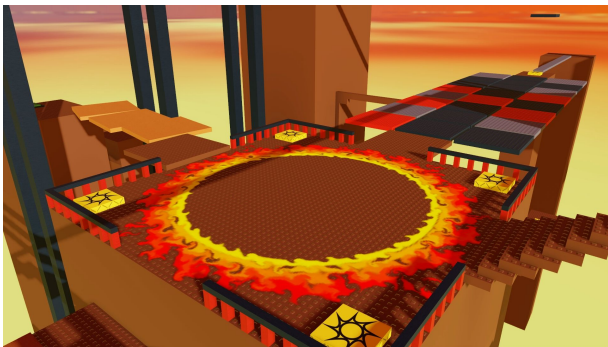


BY: MYO BALINES

Roblox: Downfall of a Platform



In August 2025, Roblox experienced a peak in concurrent players, at around 47 million across all games on the platform. This was due to two games in particular spiking in player count, those being *Steal a Brainrot* and *Grow a Garden*. Despite all this growth, the community was outraged. Popular YouTuber “Schlep” was banned from the platform and sent a cease-and-desist letter (a formal notice to stop an activity and never continue) from Roblox on August 9, 2025.



Before we get any further, I would like to explain what Roblox exactly is. In 2004, David Baszucki and Erik Cassel created a physics engine called DynaBlocks. However, simulating physics is not very fun, so in 2006, they turned it into Roblox, where you could code your own games and share them with

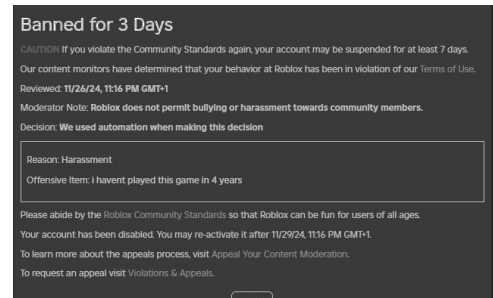
the world for others to play. The platform introduced Robux (a paid digital currency) and Tix (short for tickets, a removed free digital currency) in 2007. Popular games during this time were PvP games such as *Crossroads* and *Sword Fight on the Heights*. (shown above) The 2010s are widely considered the “golden age” of

Roblox, with many popular games such as *Work at a Pizza Place* and *Natural Disaster Survival* coming out at this time. Fast forward to 2025 or so, and games like *Grow a Garden* and *Steal a Brainrot* are breaking world records, much to some users' dismay.



Schlep (profile picture shown above) caught online predators on Roblox, something their safety team should have been doing. In

the should have been doing. In the process of one of these predator catches, someone poses as a minor, attracts an online predator, collects incriminating messages, lures the predator to meet up in real life, and confronts them. At the time of his termination, he had six arrests under his belt, cooperating with the police to catch predators.



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So why would Roblox ban him? As most already know, Roblox has had a history of bad moderation and has been using AI to handle moderation recently. (see picture above) Players have been suspended for just saying the word "hi." According to the cease-and-desist sent by Roblox, he engaged in "simulated child endangerment conversations" and "moved users off-platform." Both of these claims are wrong. Schlep never caused someone to become a predator; he only brought to light what existing predators were already doing. Schlep is also not encouraging predators to move off-platform onto services like Discord, Snapchat, and others, with the predators suggesting moving off-platform.

Schlep's termination caused immediate backlash in the Roblox community. Multiple creators such as KreekCraft (16M subscribers, joined 2014), Thinknoodles (12M subscribers, joined 2011), Kindly Keyin (5M subscribers, joined 2015), Remainings (2M subscribers, joined 2014), and more left the Roblox Star Program (an exclusive program for content creators) to protest the termination. On social media, such as Twitter, people began using the hashtag #freeschlep as a petition to unban Schlep and for Roblox to step up its moderation.

Prior to Schlep's ban, in July 2025, David Baszucki, the CEO and co-founder of Roblox, floated the idea of adding dating features to Roblox for those who have verified with an ID that they are 21+. After Schlep's ban, David is still looking forward to this. After Schlep's ban, multiple child safety lawsuits were filed against Roblox, with five state attorneys general suing Roblox. Those states were Louisiana, Kentucky, Texas, Tennessee, and Florida. Attorney General of Louisiana Liz

Murrill says Roblox is "a breeding ground for predators," being the first to file a lawsuit.

After these lawsuits were filed, Roblox has been scrambling to add "safety" features to appease shareholders and lawyers, with the community suffering from most of these. In early December 2025, Roblox added age chat verification to separate age groups from chatting with each other. For example, anyone under 9 cannot chat with anyone 13 and up, anyone 13–17 cannot chat with anyone below 9 or 18 and up, and anyone 21 and up cannot talk to anyone 18 and under. If you just skip age verification, you cannot chat with anyone. In January 2026, this verification became mandatory for all Roblox players, locking some players out forever.



This would have been good if not for two fatal flaws: the fact that it uses a selfie to determine age and the fact that it uses AI to check your age. Now, if a data breach happens, thousands of players' faces could be leaked. The AI is not very accurate either, with it being fooled by drawing a beard on your face with a Sharpie or just getting your older sibling or parents to verify. Furthermore, people have been selling age-verified accounts on eBay for \$5 (see above image), completely defeating the purpose of the update.

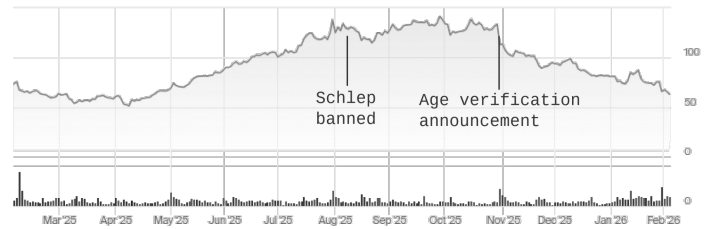
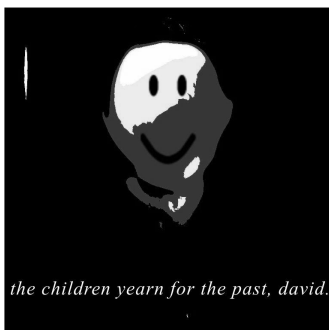
Even when not dealing with child safety,

CONTINUE - Roblox: Downfall of a Platform By Myo Balines

Roblox has been stirring up controversy about its platform. In late January 2026, Roblox announced that they would remove all static “Dynamic Faces” (user-generated heads with animation capabilities) if they did not contain animation, greatly angering the community. On top of that, they announced they would be deprecating “Classic Faces” (the original static Roblox-made 2D faces) because they want users to “express themselves and communicate with their friends in deeper ways,” which Classic Faces apparently limit.



Many users agree that Dynamic Faces lack the same charm the original Classic Faces had, even though Roblox announced that they would aim to replicate the original 2D face as a new Dynamic Face. For example, the very popular “Shiny Teeth” face (shown above) changed the shining white teeth on the original (shown right) to be your skin color (shown left as gray). Many users have complained that the new faces look nothing like their static counterparts, and many look like they were badly upscaled using AI. Some social media users have gone as far as to place curses and hexes on David Baszucki in response to this change by editing his face in creepy and unnatural ways. (shown below, image by Aria Balines)



Despite all these corporate changes to appeal to shareholders, Roblox's stocks have been falling since November 2025, according to NYSE. (shown above) Schlep's termination made a slight dip in stocks, but the age verification announcement sent the stocks plummeting in a downward trend. Even if Roblox successfully appeases its shareholders, the community will be an afterthought.

On top of this, recently leaked documents from 2022 suggest that Roblox might remove R6 (the original avatar system with 6 parts) in favor of R15 (the newer system with 15 parts). This reveal, although planned for almost four years ago, caused lots of controversy, especially among veteran players, who say that Roblox is getting rid of everything that built its multi-million-dollar gaming empire. Some have gone as far as to say that Roblox has valued profit over players since 2013, when co-founder Erik Cassel died of cancer.

Roblox has been on a downward spiral for the past few months, and many say that a change in leadership could change everything. A petition with over 300,000 signatures on Change.org to remove David Baszucki as CEO has gone viral since Schlep was banned, and it seems like this is the only way for Roblox to continue as a platform. Bad choice after bad choice, he has constantly disappointed the community, with the new updates being the final nail in the blocky coffin.

BY: MCKAYLA LUCAS

The Abyss Times

Have you ever wondered what's really below the surface of the ocean? Or what mysterious creatures live in a world full of crushing pressure and eternal darkness? Beneath the waves lies a hidden world few humans have ever seen, where strange creatures lurk in the darkness and you never know what is coming for you.

The ocean's depths continue to guard their secrets, leaving us to wonder not just what has been discovered. But what is still waiting below. There are endless mysteries to the sea; nevertheless, we have only explored 5% of it. So we only know about so many creatures. But the ones that we do know about and lie deep below the surface seem to be rather intriguing.



Barreleye fish. Before we start, I must say, if you look this up, prepare your eyes for something... peculiar. Their fluid-filled heads allow them to see all around just by looking inside their skull. Their fake eyes, located at the front of their face, don't really serve any purpose except that they're actually nostrils. (Since when did fish need nostrils? I thought they had gills.) Their real eyes are large, green, and tubular. The green tint of their eyes is likely there to help filter out any surface sunlight that somehow gets through to them. Also, to help detect the faint bioluminescent glow of jellyfish and other prey. These fascinating

creatures are located in the Twilight Zone of the ocean and are found ranging from the Bering Sea to Japan, and Baja California.

These interesting fish seem cool and all, but what about a shark? The Goblin shark, or *Mitsukurina owstoni*, is a rare species of shark located 270–960 meters deep in the ocean, though it has been sighted at 2,000 meters. These sharks have slingshot-like jaws that can spring forward at 3.14 m/s, which is over 10 ft. per second, which is pretty fast if you were to see it in person. Those jaws can grab prey extremely fast, so they have no chance of escape.



Something cool about these sharks is that they are the only survivors of a 125-million-year-old lineage. (A lineage is basically a descendant.) These sharks have translucent skin. While they may look frightening, they are yet another reminder of how unusual and mysterious life in the deep sea can be. From fish with transparent heads to sharks with jaws that launch forward, the ocean is filled with creatures that seem almost unreal. Even with all the technology we have today, so much of the sea remains unexplored. Who knows what other strange and fascinating animals are still waiting to be discovered in the darkness below? The ocean is one of the greatest mysteries on Earth, and that is what makes it so interesting.

BY: ANNE JOURDAIN

Getting to Know Mrs. Villalobos

What college did you graduate from, and what was your major?

I graduated from Montclair University with a bachelor's degree in fine arts and a minor in psychology. I also have a master's degree in liberal arts from Thomas Edison State College with a concentration in bookmaking.

What do you like best about your job?

I like seeing students develop their art skills and creativity. Some things that students come up with are very creative.

What do you like least about your job?

I don't like doing grades.

If you had to pick another profession other than teaching, what would it be?

I was a graphic designer for 6 years, but before I became a teacher, I wanted to be a psychologist.

What do you like to do outside of school?

I like to bake.

What are your favorite movies and/or TV shows?

La La Land, The Count of Monte Cristo, and Inception

What is your favorite food?

I love pasta.

Do you have any pets?

I have 4 dogs. Three of them are rescues from an animal shelter.

By: Madison Mwangi, Dayana Calderon Tran, John Casimir, and Mar cayla Girard

Student Interviews

We asked a few 8th grade students some questions about school, clubs, and their favorite subjects. Here is what they had to say.

How many clubs are you in?

- Zahara: "I am in 8 clubs."
- Carter: "I m in 4 clubs."
- Hudson: "I am in 4 clubs."

Why are you in the Drama Club?

- Zahara: "Because I did it last year."
- Carter: "I was in it last year."
- Hudson: "I did it last year."

Who is your favorite teacher?

- Zahara: "I don't have one."
- Carter: "Mr. Felici."
- Hudson: "Mr. Timen."

What is your favorite subject in school?

- Zahara: "Math or Science."
- Carter: "Lunch!"
- Hudson: "Art."

Why is it your favorite subject?

- Zahara: "Because there is a right or wrong answer."
- Carter: New food choices every day
- Hudson: "Because art is fun."

What is your favorite part of this subject?

- Zahara: "Independent/not independent worksheets."
- Carter: "Eating."
- Hudson: "Making art/doing art."

The Liberty Ledger

By REMINGTON BASSIN



Barack Obama

Harriet Tubman

Katherine Johnson

Martin Luther King Jr

Thurgood Marshall

Charles Drew

Ida B. Wells

Lonnie G. Johnson

Rosa Parks

Frederick Douglass

John Lewis

Mae Jemison

Shirley Chisholm

S	S	P	J	S	N	Q	D	F	I	C	A	W	M	S	I	P	F	B	K
L	H	S	Q	O	X	O	C	G	Z	V	Z	H	K	D	S	O	A	U	A
L	M	Q	A	C	H	A	R	L	E	S	D	R	E	W	P	R	E	C	T
E	S	L	C	L	G	N	V	P	O	B	W	W	V	P	A	Z	K	S	H
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A	I	X	T	E	S	E	O	M	W	P	E	O	L	G	U	A	H	N	I
D	X	D	Y	V	M	I	Y	D	P	I	B	V	O	G	R	P	O	S	N
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T	H	U	R	G	O	O	D	M	A	R	S	H	A	L	L	Y	V	U	I



By Dylan Szymanski

Word scramble!

Steal a brainrot edition



TNUG TUGN RSHUA

UPOCNCICAP ASSAINSOS

SXI VESNE

LEATORRLA RALATLA

BRR RRB ANTPIPA

LIRILI RLAAIL

