

# 2023 Digital Expression, Fashion & Beauty Trends

How Gen Z Express Themselves  
in Immersive Spaces

**ROBLOX**



# The Power of Authentic Digital Self-Expression

“Last year we embarked on a journey to better understand how communities—especially Gen Z, who are growing up in the digital world—are expressing themselves in immersive spaces. We had been observing the expanding interest in avatar customization and digital fashion on the platform for over a decade, and we had our hypotheses on what this form of self-expression meant for people. But we were only scratching the surface of understanding what drives people when they create their digital look and frequently customize their avatar style, as well as how this impacts the physical world’s trends and behaviors.

Our 2022 report provided insights that researchers and the broader industry, both fashion and tech, found valuable. We uncovered, for example, that many Gen Z users already feel their avatar style is more important to them than their physical look, or that the majority often wear physical clothes inspired by their decked out avatars.

This year, we are looking deeper into the full spectrum of self-expression through digital identity, avatars, and fashion—from the psychology behind creating an avatar look and ‘beauty’ considerations, to the impact of authentic self-expression on the physical style trends, purchasing decisions, and even mental well-being. Now we are seeing in the data just how much authentic self-expression in immersive spaces means to many people—helping them build confidence and connections, in addition to their style.”

## Christina Wootton

Chief Partnerships Officer  
Roblox

“Authentic self-expression is often described as a universal connector for people: when we share who we truly are, we make genuine connection possible. As we build our platform and products for immersive communication and connection, ensuring that people have the broadest set of opportunities to authentically express themselves via their digital identity is front and center for us. We want everyone to be whoever they want to be, and create avatars—and digital fashion—they love.

Every so often, there’s a generational shift guiding how people connect with one another, and one is happening right now with immersive 3D simulation and communication. Data from this report shows that digital identity and avatar style are playing an increasingly impactful role in people’s daily lives.

Most importantly, our growing creator community (including the world’s top brands and influencers) is continuously expanding self-expression opportunities for people by creating bodies, heads, clothes, and even movements that represent a diverse range of global consumer interests. No single company could come up with this breadth of choices on its own.

As we are opening up creation opportunities to millions, it is clearly changing the game for digital fashion and expression, and we are excited for these opportunities to continue to grow.”

## Manuel Bronstein

Chief Product Officer  
Roblox



“Last year’s report on digital fashion trends that Parsons collaborated on with Roblox was groundbreaking, and this year’s research on broader self-expression trends in immersive spaces is no different.

For Gen Z, we learn that there is a symbiotic relationship between digital and physical fashion. The report shows that users and designers don’t silo how they think about fashion, but inspiration from each space influences how they dress and create clothing in the other. We also learn how important digital fashion is for Gen Z users’ mental well-being and self-expression. Having the agency to select their avatar's body, hair color and texture, skin color, make-up, clothing style and mood to best represent them has a critical role.

Whether it’s a safe space to play with fashion or carry over their style from the physical world, digital fashion is critical for Gen Z to explore, express and expand who they are.”

**Ben Barry**

PhD Dean, Associate Professor of Equity & Inclusion,  
School Of Fashion,  
The New School's Parsons School Of Design

# Key Insights\*

- **Digital self-expression for Gen Z continues to grow in importance.** Over half (**56%**) of **Gen Z** now say styling their avatar is **more important** to them than styling themselves in the physical world (vs. **42%** answering a similar question last year). The vast majority also say digital fashion is at least “somewhat important” for them (**84%**), and think the importance of digital fashion has grown at least “some” over the past year (**85%**). Over half (**53%**) think it’s grown **“a lot.”**

- **Expression, creation (and sales) on Roblox are growing alongside this trend.** In 2023, total avatar updates grew 38% YoY to **165 billion**, and people bought nearly **1.6 billion** digital fashion items and accessories, up 15% YoY.

- **Most Gen Z’s physical style is inspired by avatar style.** **84%** agree that their physical style is at least “somewhat” inspired by what their avatar and other avatars wear, and **54%** say they are “very” or “extremely inspired.” Using this inspiration, Gen Z are expanding their go-to fashion styles and wearing bolder fashions, playing with their hair color/style, getting more comfortable wearing gender-fluid clothing, and even often trying to look just like their avatars.

- **Brand recognition matters in the metaverse—and it’s likely to impact IRL purchase consideration.** **3 in 4** Gen Z say wearing digital fashions from a recognized brand is at least “somewhat” important to them, and **47%** of survey respondents say it’s “very” or “extremely important.” Most (**84%**) also agree that after wearing or trying on a popular brand’s item virtually, they are at least “somewhat likely” to consider this brand in the physical world, including **50%** who are “very” or “extremely likely” to do so.

- **Gen Z consumers are more open to spending on digital fashion.** Most Gen Z users are willing to spend on styling their avatar: **52%** say they’re comfortable budgeting up to \$10 each month, another **19%** say they’d be willing to spend up to \$20, while an additional **18%** are open to buying up to \$50-\$100 worth of items every month.

- **The more exclusive the better:** The recent launch of community-created Limiteds on Roblox highlighted users’ immediate demand for more exclusive items that are limited in quantity. The majority of community-created Limiteds are resold for more than their original cost, and one such single-edition item—**Monstercat’s Ruby Pendant**—was acquired for the **equivalent of approximately \$10,000.**

- **Authenticity drives self-expression in immersive spaces and positively impacts well-being.** When deciding on their avatar look, Gen Z strive to be unique, noting the metaverse feels “less judgemental” and prioritizing that their avatar looks good to them (**62%** say they care a lot about this) vs. others (**37%** say they care a lot that their avatar looks good to others). The vast majority (**88%**) think expressing themselves in immersive spaces has likely helped them comfortably express themselves in the physical world, allowing for true self-expression and to build connections with others, boosting confidence, and bettering mental health in other ways.

\* **Report Methodology** - this report includes two complementary sets of data:

- **Behavioral data** collected from the Roblox platform from **January 1 through September 30, 2023.**

- **Self-reported survey data** collected from **1,545 Gen Z** users between the ages of 14 and 26, living in the United States (1027 respondents) and the United Kingdom (518 respondents). To obtain these responses, Roblox commissioned a nationally representative survey from Qualtrics fielded **September 27-29, 2023.** Included stats represent the full respondent sample given sentiment between the two markets was largely similar. The sample has been balanced for gender in both markets (using the Census Bureau’s American Community Survey for the U.S. and Office for National Statistics in the UK) to reflect the demographic composition of these markets’ population in that age range. Later in the report survey data is referenced as **‘2023 Roblox Self-Expression Survey’.**



# Understanding the Impact of Digital Self-expression on Roblox & Beyond

This year's report dives deeper into the full spectrum of self-expression through digital identity/avatar. Similar to [last year's survey](#), we turned to Gen Z users who are growing up in the digital world and asked **over 1,500 people ages 14-26 in the U.S. and the UK** about general trends and how they express themselves in immersive spaces.

We specifically focused on people who confirmed that they spend time (at least monthly) on platforms like Roblox, knowing these would be some of the most metaverse-savvy consumers out there with a depth of experience to share.

To complement the findings, the research also leverages vast behavioral data from Roblox, where **70.2M daily active users spend 2.5 hours**, on average, per day connecting and communicating in immersive environments.

Many are Gen Z users, with people ages **17-24 representing our fastest growing demographic** and 13+ making up 57% of the community.\*

This is the generation that has spent over a decade dressing up and expressing themselves on the Roblox platform while interacting with their friends. They know and deeply understand digital identity, fashion trends in the space, and the power of digital self-expression that's available to them.

For example, one of last year's curious findings was centered around the overall importance of self-expression via digital clothing and accessories—as compared to dressing up in the physical world.

We learned that **for two in five Gen Z respondents, self-expression in the digital world was already more important in 2022 than expressing themselves in the physical world.** We intentionally repeated this question in our 2023 survey to see if things may have shifted. **And they have.**

"The digital avatar is a boundless reflection of our true identity."

**Vivian Arellano**

@EvilArtist  
Creator on Roblox

