

Analysis on the Young Age of Roblox Platform Audience Targeting

Jinyu Huang *

School of Civil and Transportation Engineering, Beijing University of Civil Engineering and Architecture, Beijing, China

* Corresponding Author Email: 202002020218@stu.bucea.edu.cn

Abstract. The rapid development and construction of metaverse games have gradually blurred the virtual world and the real world, and it is found that its impact on young people is particularly significant through literature research and data surveys. This article takes the phenomenon of the young age as the background and, based on data analysis, takes the Roblox platform as an example. Through the research, it is found that the related theoretical and practical research of metaverse games is on the rise in general, the current situation of younger users is not optimistic, and the narrow range of audience positioning on the platform is the main reason for the problem. Based on this, the strategic thinking of enhancing the fineness of game screens, providing personalized game recommendations, expanding the Roblox platform ecosystem, and accelerating platform transformation is proposed, providing certain references for the future development of Roblox and other game industry companies.

Keywords: Roblox, Young Age, Audience Targeting.

1. Introduction

At present, many governments believe that the Metaverse industry is a strategically significant field that is of great value to future economic growth, social change, and the continued growth of the digital industry, and thus have introduced relevant policies to support the development of the Metaverse [1]. “Shanghai City’s Action Plan for Cultivating the ‘Metaverse’ New Track (2022-2025)” has just been announced. According to the action plan, by 2025, the scale of related industries in Shanghai’s Metaverse will reach 350 billion yuan, and more than 10 companies with the international competition will emerge. The head of the power and the chain owner enterprise. The 49th “Statistical Report on Internet Development in China” shows that the number of minor Internet users in my country has reached 183 million, and the Internet penetration rate of minors has reached 94.9% [2]. The development of information technology has a huge subtle influence on young people; young people are constantly observing and learning like sponges absorbing water. As a product of information culture, metaverse games are more authentic than traditional electronic games, and teenagers’ logical thinking and imagination are more affected. The phenomenon of teenagers playing metaverse games and its impact on young people cannot be ignored.

With the rapid development of the metaverse industry and the construction of related underlying technologies, the boundaries between virtual and reality have gradually blurred [3]. Metaverse games undeniably impact young people still in the early stages of mental and physical construction. Therefore, to protect the healthy development of youth groups physically and mentally, it is essential to research issues related to the younger age of Metaverse games. In addition, Roblox’s too-large group of young players is bound to affect the company’s long-term development and scale expansion, so some suggestions are put forward for countermeasures to related problems.

This study takes the Roblox platform as a case, combined with the current development trend of the metaverse industry to study the status quo of the younger age of the metaverse game industry and the analysis of countermeasures, enriches the relevant theories of the metaverse game industry and supports it with examples, and also provides a theoretical reference for relevant researchers. Roblox is the first listed stock in Metaverse. Facing the upsurge of Metaverse, Roblox is proactive and innovates a new game UGC platform model, providing Roblox client, Roblox studio, and Roblox

cloud. It has made significant achievements in platform construction. Taking the Roblox platform as the research object and proposing solutions to its audience problems can provide some reference for the future development of Roblox and other game industry companies.

This thesis mainly elaborates on the content of the research from four aspects. The first part is the introduction, which introduces the background, questions, and significance of the study primarily; the second part is the research status, relevant theoretical basis, and concept definition of metaverse games; the third part is the introduction of the Roblox game development platform, the development history and advantages of the society, and the current situation of younger age, its causes and effects are analyzed, and finally, suggestions are put forward. The fourth part is the last part of this article, which mainly summarizes and looks forward to this research.

2. Literature review

Since the emergence of the metaverse concept, it has rapidly aroused extensive discussion and research in academic circles. Metaverse consists of two words, Meta and Universe. For the exploration of the definition of the metaverse, different scholars have discussed it from different angles. Based on the combining and analysis of the existing metaverse concept research, Zuo believes that the metaverse is a new carrier formed under the continuous development of digital technology to promote the deep integration of digital resources and physical resources, and its essence is the generalization of spatial computing and special functions [4]. Through comparative research, Huang believes that the most significant difference between the metaverse and the physical universe of traditional materialism is that, on the one hand, as a social consciousness, the metaverse is essentially an idealistic “universe” model; on the other hand, as an artificial system, Metaverse can simulate objective physical reality and objective laws, thereby promoting the development and progress of natural science [5]. Based on the analysis of the game industry, Liu believes that AR/VR, AI, 5G, cloud computing, and other related technologies of Metaverse will push the game industry to its peak, allow game audiences to cover all age groups, and realize the healthy development of the game industry [6].

However, the impact of younger age on online games cannot be underestimated. Ji and Tao analyzed the phenomenon of Internet addiction in children and adolescents. They believed that young people are high-risk groups for Internet addiction, which will affect their physical, psychological, and social functions, so early prevention is essential [7]. To make matters worse, the immersive nature of metaverse games will further deepen their impact on younger age groups. Liu summed up the immersion aesthetics of virtual reality games, and he believes that enhancing immersion through peripherals in metaverse games will further change people's lifestyles [8].

3. Case analysis

3.1. Case description and analysis of the current situation of younger age

Roblox was born in the United States. In 1989, the two founders, David Baszucki and Erik Cassel designed a 2D physical experiment simulation platform Interactive Physics. Inspired by the students' design of diverse experiments on the platform, the two founders began to imagine building a UGC Game platform. In 2004, Roblox was officially established. Subsequently, functions such as the currency system Robux and the game editor “Roblox Studio” were successively launched and gradually developed into a large-scale multiplayer online game creation UGC platform. The three major components of the client, the creative platform, and the cloud architecture constitute a closed ecological loop.

The proportion of young users is too large: According to the population pyramid statistics, in North America (US + Canada), the total population in 2019 is 366.475 million, of which 115.067 million are 0-24, and 75.631 million are 25-39 years old. The DAUS of Roblox in North America is 12.1 million. If calculated based on the population under 25, the penetration rate of daily active users is

10.5% among the total population aged 0-24 and has a meager penetration rate among the 75.631 million population aged 25-40.

In addition, in Roblox's current age structure of active users, users aged 13 and under account for more than 50%, and users aged 17+ account for only 30%. At the same time, children under 13 years old account for the majority of daily active users on the platform.

3.2. Reasons for the younger audience

3.2.1. External environmental factors

(1) Network game is becoming more diversified network game gameplay attracts young users. In reality, the negative emotions of users who cannot meet their material or emotional needs can be released by immersing themselves in online games. Currently, there are more and more types of online games which are more targeted and can meet the various needs of various groups; there are also more and more promotion methods for online games. As cultural products, online games have the attributes of general commodities. To obtain the most output with minor investment and obtain the most significant economic benefits possible, developers will increase the gameplay of online games when designing to attract more and longer players; online games are also popularized, Design games with related content for people of different ages.

(2) Weakening of family relations. First of all, current parents are busy with work, and the relationship between parents and children is weakened. Busy parents need to care more about their children and have time to play with them. Secondly, China implements the one-child policy. Most families today are only children, and children lack playmates. Furthermore, various educational institutions are gradually replacing family education, and parents invest less in their children's home education. Family education is critical to online education for young age groups. If young parents are enthusiastic about online games, then children will also be affected by vicarious learning. Therefore, the weakening of family relationships and the lack of family education give the young age groups the possibility of time to be exposed to online games [9, 10].

3.2.2. Internal environmental factors

(1) The roughness and youthfulness of the game screen are apparent. Roblox uses the UGC model to build a social game creation platform, limited by the game packaging engine used to lower the entry threshold for game creation. The content of UGC games is usually rough and young, and mature users can understand more complicated content and prefer to approach the realistic screen.

(2) The quality of the work varies. As a social game creation platform, Roblox does not provide users with games but is only responsible for providing users with tools to create games. Although this model can give full play to users' creative enthusiasm, it cannot guarantee the quality of published works, and adult users are susceptible to this. Although Roblox has generous developer incentives, the developer's share fee currently accounts for a relatively high proportion of the total expenditure. With the expansion of the platform and the increase in the number of works, Roblox will not be able to maintain the current high developer incentive expenditure ratio.

3.3. The impact of younger audiences

3.3.1. Social development perspective

(1) The reliance of young players on the Internet continues to deepen, and the penetration of the Internet continues to increase. As Internet penetration into younger groups continues to increase, the time spent by younger Internet users on the Internet is also increasing [11]. The ever-increasing online time reflects that the influence of the Internet on minors is spreading quietly. The minds of minors are immature, and they cannot discriminate against external interference and the health of network information. Coupled with the neglect of communication in family education, minors gain emotional support in activities such as chatting and games, which have a strong influence on the network, causing them easy to suffer from Internet addiction.

(2) Young players are overly addicted to online games and are easily divorced from reality. The conflict between virtual and reality can easily change the player's psychology, cause dissatisfaction with reality, cause excessive behavior, and cause Internet autism, cognitive deficits, and Internet addiction. In addition, long-term exposure to electronic products and lack of exercise can easily lead to problems such as vision loss and childhood obesity. Long-term radiation from electronic products is also not conducive to children's physical development.

3.3.2. Roblox platform development perspective

(1) Younger audience affects user experience: First of all, Roblox is not only a gaming platform, but its core function lies in its unique combination of gaming and social interaction. The existence of a large number of young children makes users have to turn off social functions. Childish remarks brought about by the phenomenon of young age have hindered users from using this core function, which undoubtedly caused considerable damage to their user experience.

(2) Younger audiences lead to income stagnation: There are differences in the willingness to pay for games among users of different age groups, with the strongest will to deliver between the ages of 20 and 29, followed by those under the age of 19 and those aged 30-39. Although users in the younger age group are highly willing to spend, they have the low economic capacity and payment ability. The main source of revenue for Roblox is subscription services, and the Roblox platform, whose main audience is users under the age of 13, is bound to face enormous difficulties in its profit model.

(3) The impact of younger audiences on global expansion: Currently, international anti-addiction measures for young people addicted to games are gradually becoming stricter, especially in the Asia-Pacific region [12]. Taking China as an example, Tencent's data in the fourth quarter of 2020 financial report shows that under the age of 16 Users only contributed 3.2% of Tencent's total game turnover in the Chinese mainland market. With the gradual strictness of anti-addiction policies for teenagers in Europe, America, and other regions, the younger audience and a single profit model will make it difficult for Roblox to enter other markets with its original business model. Therefore, it is necessary to infiltrate users of high age groups and further diversify the current single-profit model.

3.4. Propose

(1) Detailed game screens, providing customized recommendations. In the short to medium term, Roblox needs developers to build higher-quality experiences and content if it wants to penetrate the high-age group in terms of audience groups [13]. For example, game engines such as Unity and UE4 implement technical packaging for more complex modules and provide level-by-level tool support for developers of different levels.

In addition, in the face of the problem that platform games have comprehensive coverage but are challenging to find and the quality is uneven, Roblox can refer to YouTube, Instagram, and other UGC-driven social platforms to launch customized recommendation services to recommend different content to people of all ages. Users, stimulating the stickiness of users in high-age groups.

(2) Further deriving to the field of education and expanding usage scenarios. Roblox has entered the children's programming education field through summer internships, cooperation with educators, and cooperation with film and television companies. With the gradual maturity of critical technologies such as VR/AR, Roblox can rely on existing resources to deepen the layout of online teaching, virtual experiments, and safety education [14, 15]. In addition, the Roblox platform can be introduced into the e-commerce sector, taking advantage of technologies such as VR/AR to improve services such as cloud try-on and product cloud experience, thoroughly combining the respective advantages of the current online and offline e-commerce platforms, and expanding the field of e-commerce market [16].

(3) Accelerate the complete transformation from a game platform to a social platform. In the long run, Roblox is not as simple as becoming a unique gaming platform, but through the Metaverse, it establishes a new category of entertainment and communication. However, limited by the current underlying technologies such as VR/AR, blockchain, and 5G, it is easier to realize the construction of the so-called "Metaverse" in the game field. Roblox is now in the "dormant period" in the game

field. With the gradual improvement of the underlying technology and the complete decentralization of the Robux economic system, Roblox can achieve a qualitative leap from 90 million users to one billion or more.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, as Internet penetration increases, the younger age of metaverse game users is an irreversible trend. It is necessary to entirely reduce the adverse effects of metaverse games and give full play to their unique advantages. Currently, the targeting range of the Roblox platform audience is too narrow, leading to serious younger users and affecting the layout of the company's future development strategy. Therefore, given the status quo of the Roblox platform, it is necessary to expand the targeting range and fully integrate more ecological sectors such as education and e-commerce. Integrate and strengthen the social benefits generated by the Roblox platform. In the future, with the continuous breakthrough of underlying technologies such as VR/AR, blockchain, and 5G, Roblox will be able to drive the metaverse industry forward with its platform construction advantages. Due to the limited ability of the author, who has not been able to participate in the operation of Roblox. The analysis is based on secondary data such as literature and industry reports. There are certain limitations in the predictability of the development of the metaverse industry. In the research, the details of the implementation of Roblox's strategy are not specific enough. There are few related studies in this field, and the future research prospects are relatively broad.

References

- [1] Li Yongjian. Yuan Universe: A New Territory of National Industrial Policy Competition, Science and Technology China, 2022 (9): 53 - 58.
- [2] Feng Xiaona. Research on Behavior Patterns and Countermeasures of Younger Subjects of Internet Violence. Hubei University of Arts and Sciences, 2022.
- [3] Pericles 'asher' Rospigliosi. Metaverse or Simulacra? Roblox, Minecraft, Meta, and the turn to virtual reality for education, socialization and work. Interactive learning environments, 2022, 30 (1): 1 - 3.
- [4] Zuo Pengfei. The Main Features, Development Trend and Risk Research and Judgment of Metaverse. Social Science Series, 2022 (10): 5 - 13.
- [5] Huang Huanxian. Metaverse and its inner philosophical connotation and social influence research. Guangxi Normal University, 2022.
- [6] Liu Yan. Metaverse ushers in new opportunities for the healthy development of the game industry. Column Monograph, 2021.
- [7] Ji Wenbo, Tao Ran. Current status and impact of Internet addiction in children and adolescents. Chinese Journal of Practical Pediatrics, 2014 (9): 501 – 505.
- [8] Liu Yuan. Research on the Aesthetic Characteristics of Virtual Reality Games. Jiangnan University, 2022.
- [9] Gao Mingqing, Yuan Xiaobin. Research on the Current Situation and Countermeasures of the Younger Age of Online Game Users, China Fashion, 2013 (9): 12 - 15.
- [10] Li Chen. "Concrete Media" and "The Disappearance of Childhood": The Younger Spread of Mobile Games-Based on the Case Study of Players of "Glory of the King" in a Primary School in Eastern Henan, Audio-visual e Focus, 2021 (2): 135 - 136.
- [11] Huang Yating. Research on the status quo of 3-6-year-old urban children playing video games-taking Hangzhou as an example. Zhejiang Normal University, 2015.
- [12] Zhang Luxin, Xue Wen. Research on the Sustainable and Healthy Development of Online Games Based on the "Anti-addiction" Policy. Applied News Research, 2021 (12): 82 - 84.
- [13] Li Zeyi. Observation and Reflection on the Phenomenon of Young Audiences in Chinese Animation, Film and Television, Literary Review Film and Television Literature, 2022: 155 - 156.

- [14] Yang Jing. Development and Application of High School Information Technology Educational Games Based on Roblox-Taking “Information Technology and Teenagers” as an Example. Jiangxi Science and Technology Normal University, 2021.
- [15] Roma U. Long. Roblox and Effect on Education. Drury University, 2021.
- [16] Wen Bofu. Research on the Development Strategy of China Mobile Migu Company. Jilin University, 2022.