

# 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







**Today, digital self-expression is even more important:**

- **Over half (56%)** of Gen Z respondents say\* styling their avatar is more important to them than styling themselves in the physical world (as compared to **42%** answering a similar question last year).
- This is especially true for older Gen Z (ages 22-26), where **64%** said if they had to choose, then dressing up their avatar would be more important for them right now.
- Additionally, the vast majority (**84%**) of Gen Z say digital fashion is at least “somewhat” important for them, and **85%** think the importance of digital fashion has grown at least “some” over the past year. **Over half (53%) think it’s grown “a lot.”**

This sentiment is reflected in the growing number of digital fashion creators—as well as customer purchases on Roblox.

**In the first three quarters of 2023\*\*:**

- Nearly **1.6 billion** digital fashion items and accessories were purchased, as compared to approximately **1.4 billion** in the same period last year; a **15%** year-over-year increase.
- The number of 2D and 3D digital clothing designers has grown from **11.5 million** to over **13 million** year over year, with inspiringly equal growth numbers of self-identifying male and female creators involved in digital fashion creation.

Additionally, when it comes to the full range of digital identity creation and self-expression, some members of our Roblox creator community are now, as of 2023, also designing and selling 3D avatar bodies and heads of all shapes and sizes, as well as items known as Limiteds (for which creators can specify the quantity to control their scarcity).

The items are made available via Roblox Marketplace (previously known as Avatar Shop) to the **14 million users who visit daily** to shop, resell, trade their items, and more. These categories of items were previously mostly created by Roblox—but are now open to the community to create and further enable authentic self-expression.

\*2023 Roblox Self-Expression Survey

\*\*Roblox platform data collected from January through September 2023



“Digital fashion is transforming how people design, style, and share their creations with other people in an increasingly online world. And Roblox is transforming how digital fashion gets created and reaches its consumer, democratizing access to fashion design and self-expression.

The top designers in the world with shows during Fashion Weeks will never reach that sort of distribution. That's what's so interesting here—the limitless potential and scale of this space to create and share.

In the past, a fashion publication used to play that curation role, and I think still does, but the next generation is going other places for that influence, that taste-making.”

### **Karlie Kloss**

Supermodel and Entrepreneur  
Launched [Fashion Klossette](#) [Beta] in March 2023 on Roblox with **25M+** visits to date\*

\*As of September 30, 2023





# How Avatars Inspire Physical Style



What real-life inspiration do people get from creating and styling their avatars?

In the 2022 survey, **70%** of Gen Z said they got physical clothing ideas for themselves from dressing their avatars, at least “sometimes.” In 2023,\* survey respondents were asked if they were “ever” inspired to dress a certain way in the physical world based on what their avatar or other avatars are wearing:

- A staggering **84%** said their physical selves were at least “somewhat” inspired by their avatar’s style.
- This includes over half (**54%**) who said they were “very” or “extremely inspired.”

Asking how exactly digital fashion impacted their look in the physical world, **1 in 4 said they “often try to look just like” their avatars**, although this isn’t the top result.

## How Avatar Styles Inspired People’s IRL Looks:

<b>42%</b>	Expanded kind of fashion styles they wear
<b>37%</b>	Changed their hairstyle
<b>34%</b>	Wore bolder styles and/or colors
<b>29%</b>	Colored their hair
<b>29%</b>	Became more open/comfortable dressing more gender-fluid
<b>25%</b>	Often try to look like their avatars

Interestingly, the number of Gen Z who said they got more comfortable dressing in a more gender-fluid style goes up to **37%** for respondents who self-identified as belonging to the LGBTQ+ community.

\*2023 Roblox Self-Expression Survey



# Digital Identity: An Array of Self-Expression Opportunities

Fashion is just one part of a person's look and digital representation in immersive spaces. Every user journey on Roblox starts with creating an avatar, and this includes choosing:

- A **body** and **head** for your avatar, along with skin color.
- A **face** and a **hairstyle**.
- **Movements** (so-called **emotes**) like signature dance moves, and for many users—the ability to express some **emotions** should they choose an avatar head with facial animation enabled.
- Of course, **clothes** and **accessories**, including fantastical ones like auras and shoulder companions.

This year's report looked at the full spectrum of self-expression options to see which are prioritized and trending in our community.

As Roblox is moving towards more expressive avatars which can closely mimic via camera people's facial expressions—and in the future gestures—realistic emotions will also soon become a part of their self-expression.

"We are on the cusp of an explosion of creativity—in the near future, conversational AI\* will enable push-button creation of a custom avatar from a photo or different images.

These avatars can then be tailored to people's liking to be taller or rendered in anime style. This will further expand the range of self-expression possibilities for communities around the globe, empowering literally anyone to be part of digital identity creation."

## Manuel Bronstein

Chief Product Officer  
Roblox



\*Roblox Assistant technology previewed at the annual 2023 Roblox Developer Conference



# The Importance of Avatar Customization for Gen Z

Looking at the first three quarters of 2023, **millions of Roblox users** continued to update their avatars on a daily basis with **165 billion total avatar updates** (up 38% from 120 billion in the same period last year).\*

Looking at the frequency of daily active user updates by gender, an interesting piece of data appears: female-identifying users and users who didn't specify their gender are more likely to update their look daily than male-identifying users.

Gen Z respondents said in last year's survey that their avatar's look helps them make a statement without saying a word, and can reflect their current mood or the weather in the physical world.

This year, when asked **which avatar elements are most important for them to customize often**, the top five answers from survey respondents started with clothing, closely followed by hair.\*\*

\*Roblox platform data collected from January through September 2023.  
\*\*2023 Roblox Self-Expression Survey

## Most Important Avatar Elements to Customize Often (Daily/Weekly)

70% Clothing

67% Hair

52% Accessories

47% Skin tone

46% Body shape







“My audience is people who are native to Roblox and native to the internet. Roblox has created a space and a culture that is hard to define when outside of it, but inside, my fashion designs thrive.

People are making memories with their friends on Roblox that rival physical experiences, and digital fashion—the way people express themselves and design or dress their avatars—is a major part of this.”

**Sam Jordan**

@Builder\_Boy

Digital Fashion Designer on Roblox



# From Head to Toe, Avatars Enable Experimentation with Expression

Last year's survey found that a full range of avatar body shapes and skin colors were important for the vast majority of Gen Z users. This year, we asked\* which two primary body/skin options people are most likely to experiment with when it comes to customizing their avatars, and the top responses include:

- **42%** - Human skin tones close to my own,
- **36%** - Body types close to my own, and
- **29%** - Body types somewhat different than mine (bigger, smaller, more muscular, etc.).

It seems people are looking for at least some resemblance to their physical selves while customizing their digital identity. There are, however, those who prefer to experiment with body types that are non-human (**16%**) or represent other genders (**15%**), as well as human skin tones different from theirs (**19%**) and non-human skin tones (**15%**).

\*2023 Roblox Self-Expression Survey  
\*\*Data for August-September 2023

The range of avatar body options on Roblox has expanded a lot over the past few years as avatars evolved from blocky characters and fantastical creatures to include a selection of more realistic and natural humanoid avatars.

Additionally, since Roblox opened up avatar body and head creation to some of the community creators in August 2023, **over 700 different bodies and over 1,000 unique heads** enhanced by facial animation have already been created.

Yes, you can mix and match bodies and heads, and the Roblox Marketplace now includes avatar options previously undreamt of, from stick figures to other creatures and humanoids of all kinds. The community's creativity never ceases to amaze.

Even more fascinating is how quickly the community warmed to these creations catering to a diverse range of tastes: in less than two months\*\*, users have already acquired nearly **561 million of these community-created heads and over 383 million bodies.**

"When I do custom avatars, I ask about who they are as people. Roblox is a great platform to truly express yourself—a blank canvas to represent your true self, whether it be culture, gender identity or personality. I believe someone's avatar is a reflection of their true soul, so I try to pack that personality into every creation I make."

**Maisy Fifield**  
@RastaMyPasta  
Creator on Roblox





# "Life isn't perfect but your hair can be"\*

Similarly, when it comes to hair, faces, and skin colors, the majority of Gen Z respondents are looking for a full range of options for authentic representation and being whoever they want to be.

When asked\* **which avatar options help people feel fully represented in the metaverse**, these traits were at least “somewhat important” to the vast majority of users:

- **91%** - Hair colors, textures and styles (**70%** said “very” or “extremely” important),
- **90%** - Skin tones (**72%** said “very” or “extremely” important),
- **90%** Representative face attributes like eye colors, noses, lips (**67%** said “very” or “extremely” important), and
- **89%** Body sizes like thin, curvy, muscular, tall, short (**67%** said “very” or “extremely” important).

The importance of these customization options is also mirrored in the Roblox platform data which shows, for example, strong growth in avatar hair supply and demand.

In 2023\*\*, Roblox has seen over **139 million total purchases of various hairstyles** (up **20%** year over year), including over **7.3 million users who bought five or more hairstyles**.

Some research shows that, for example, women in the physical world get an urge to change their hairstyle about three times per year on average (and actually do something about it twice a year). On Roblox, **among self-identifying female users** who have made any hair purchases in 2023, the average number of purchases includes **five different hairstyles\*\*** (male users purchased three, and users who didn't specify gender - four).

With the lower cost and ease of expression in immersive spaces people are in a position to have fun changing up their hairstyles more often.

On the creation side, realistic hair design is a complex process. For example, even the most carefully designed hairdos can present movement challenges in immersive 3D environments, requiring new frameworks to preserve their shape against the pull of gravity and other external forces.

While Roblox researchers are working on tackling these complex issues, it's exciting to see community members focused on technical excellence and innovation to offer a diversity of hairstyles for users on the platform.

Creators are also coming together—e.g., the 20+ community artists who make up the SHOP COLLECTIVE group—to bring timely trending hairstyles along with other digital items to the community on a regular basis.

So far this year, Roblox has seen nearly **44,000** unique hairstyles introduced by the community (**up 681%** year over year)\*.

“The way I see it, creation should be representative. I set out to create authentic black hairstyles for avatars. Its design is technical and pretty complex, but I knew I could do it with passion and flare. I even went back to school to learn the latest methods. I love helping build things to make everyone feel at home.”

@Lirn

Creator on Roblox



\*Popular anonymous quote.

\*\*Roblox platform data collected from January through September 2023.



# Avatars Wear Makeup Too

**35% of Gen Z say it's important for them to customize their avatar makeup often—daily or weekly (and the number goes up to 51% for self-identifying female survey respondents).\***

On Roblox, many community-created experiences already include beauty and makeup salons where you can socialize and create a cool look. And in this year's survey, **over half (54%)\*** of Gen Z respondents agree that makeup helps complement beauty in the metaverse, similar to how it serves people's expression in the physical world.

Perhaps this is why in 2023, creators seemed to have had more fun than ever with makeup, both on their own and co-creating with brands. For example, Roblox creator Jenni Svoboda (@Lovespun) translated her love for lashes into a fun new offering, selling **hundreds of thousands** of lash extensions for avatars.

Beauty and hair brands are taking notice of just how much attention people pay to their avatar's look, and are finding ways to connect with their fans in immersive spaces. The splash of beauty brands on the platform this year includes the likes of Fenty Beauty, Givenchy Beauty, Maybelline, NARS Sweet Rush, NYX, and L'Oreal, among others—reinvesting in existing experiences or launching new community collaborations and immersive spaces.

They're inviting users not only to try on new hair or makeup, but also to co-create products and packaging designs. To bring these ideas to life, they are actively engaging community creators and influencers.

NARS brought several community creators together to replicate some of their makeup artists' iconic looks via a limited-time collaboration in the NARS Sweet Rush experience, while Fashion Klossette introduced a first-of-its-kind in-experience styling studio with makeup customization.

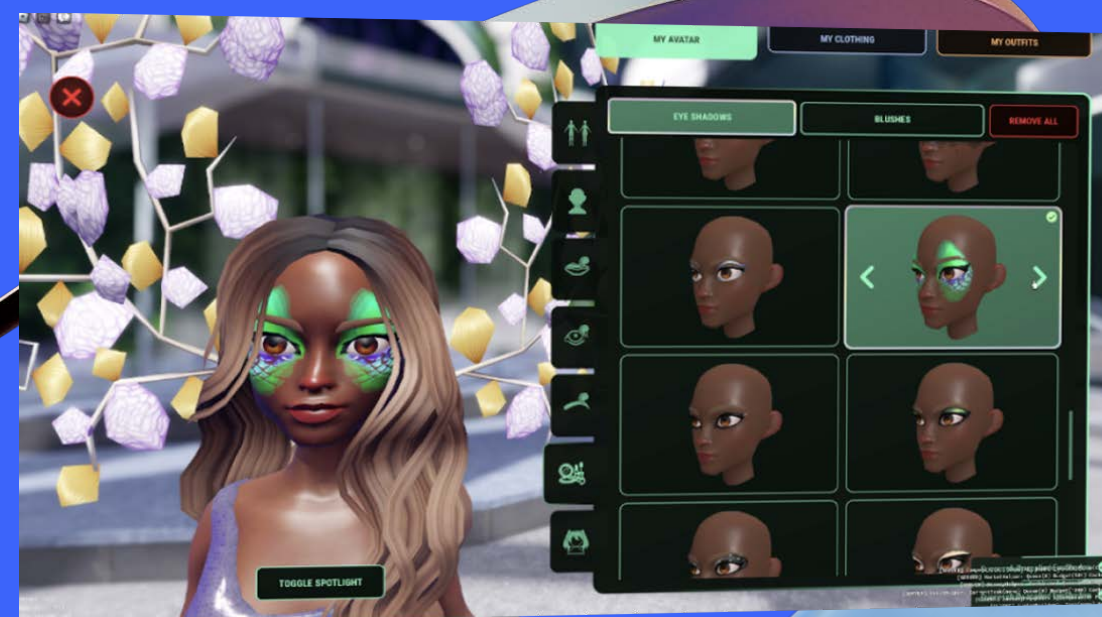
"Whether it be working with a brand to bring their ethos to the digital world or creating a custom lash that makes eyes pop, making items that help people bring to life their true identity is so inspiring.

When you can express yourself fully, there are no limits, and I love being able to play a part in making that happen for people."

**Jenni Svoboda**

@Lovespun  
Creator On Roblox

\*2023 Roblox Self-Expression Survey





# The Rise of Emotes, Auras, and Other Innovative Self-Expression Ways

**86% of Gen Z we surveyed said the ability for their avatar to express emotions is at least “somewhat important” to them to feel fully represented in the metaverse.**

Users and creators are also leveraging innovative methods of self-expression, from signature avatar movements (emotes) to fantastical auras wrapping around avatar shoulders. In Paris Hilton’s *Slivingland* you can choose an aura to express your vibe in the moment. Now if only we could wear those IRL...

Users and brands are also taking great interest in emotes on Roblox. In 2023,\* **9.8 million users** bought emotes (up **64%** year over year), and brands like Tommy Hilfiger introduced some emotes of their own, in addition to dropping digital fashion items throughout the year.

The fun *Tommy Archer* and *Tommy K-Pop Mic Drop* emotes created in collaboration with community creator @Lovespun were in broad demand—especially the Archer emote, which is now part of **160,000+** users’ personal collections of virtual moves.

At the moment, there are not as many emotes available to users on the platform, which likely also drives strong interest in unique new offerings, especially those tied to fandom.

Consider the emotes from K-Pop band TWICE that represent their iconic choreography, displayed in a shopping window of the *TWICE Square* experience launched in March 2023.

To date, these TWICE emotes have been acquired **over 3.1 million times**, and one emote in particular—*TWICE The Feels*—went viral with **1.8 million users** now showing off the move both on and off Roblox. Similarly, *Elton John’s Heart Skip* emote, launched around his ‘Beyond the Yellow Brick Road’ concert experience, was acquired **over 1.5 million times in 2023.\***

“We are a fashion brand, and you wouldn’t typically think of emotes for Tommy Hilfiger, but it’s been fascinating to see the community’s excitement around these offerings on Roblox.”

**Jemma Ware**

Sr. Director of Digital Fashion & Innovation  
Tommy Hilfiger



\*Roblox platform data collected from January through September 2023

\*Roblox platform data collected from January through September 2023.