

Roblox suffers a three-day outage, blames downtime on surge in web traffic, overwhelmed servers

Article

The news: Popular gaming platform **Roblox** was offline for three days and unavailable during the peak Halloween weekend, per The Wall Street Journal.

How we got here: Roblox, an online game platform with more than 43 million daily players, went dark last Thursday and struggled to get back online until late Sunday.

- More than half of US kids 16 and younger play Roblox, [per](#) The Verge. The platform hosts 9.5 million developers and offers over 24 million “experiences,” including games, in-game concerts, promos, and events.
- Initial reports attributed the outage to a promotion with Chipotle—the restaurant chain was giving away \$1 million worth of free burritos in Roblox in an event that started an hour before servers went down. Roblox denied the promo was the reason for downtime.
- Roblox founder and CEO David Baszucki said the outage “involved a combination of several factors. A core system in our infrastructure became overwhelmed, prompted by a subtle bug in our back-end service communications while under heavy load...the failure was caused by the growth in the number of servers in our data centers.”

The bigger picture: 2021 has seen an [increasing number](#) of internet service outages, exposing the fragility of an [overburdened](#) server infrastructure that relies on a [handful](#) of service providers.

In Roblox’s case, a sudden uptick of users and the resulting server expansion seem to have caused a chain reaction that overwhelmed its capacity and kicked users out of its servers. It’s a problem that will continue to affect internet services.

- The rise of video streaming, spike in video game use, and remote-work-related internet access for services like **Zoom** have placed a palpable strain on internet networks that rely on content delivery networks (CDNs) to reach end users.
- Outages now last longer and are more complex to solve. **Facebook**-owned platforms including **WhatsApp** and **Instagram** went offline for six hours last month, affecting more than **3.5 billion** people and even locking some employees out of their offices.

What’s next: Simply adding servers to handle more traffic and users seems to be causing more complex problems to the internet infrastructure. Recent outages have also been [taking longer](#) to resolve, indicating that massive growth is quickly becoming unmanageable.

- Building redundancies by diversifying bandwidth providers, anticipating sudden user growth, and increasing network resilience could help web-based services like Roblox recover from outages faster.