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# COVID-19

The wellbeing of our members is paramount to the Fair Play Alliance. We are all experiencing an unprecedented event with the current pandemic, and we felt we should acknowledge this and offer a safe space for our members to discuss concerns, share ideas and most importantly, support one another.

While many of us may be personally affected by COVID-19, not least due to the requirement to stay home, our industry is also being affected, in both positive and challenging ways.

Never before have gaming platforms been in such demand. For many, they are an escape from reality, a way to have fun, de-stress and to socialize online with friends. The demand on infrastructure is huge, but companies are doing everything in their power to keep systems and servers up and running. As education also moves online, gamification is everywhere, and platforms that teach programming, game development and design are proving to be very popular with educators, and invaluable to parents teaching from home.

## Mitigating risks

It is important to recognize that this is not “business as usual”. We are already seeing reports from Law Enforcement that there has been an increase in incidents of online grooming and exploitation, young people particularly are spending more time online, and with increased screentime, there is an equal increase in potential for harm. Negative news stories are increasing already;

- [With children off school and gaming online, parents face shock bills](#) - The Guardian
- [Video-Game Addiction Poised to Spread During Coronavirus Lockdown](#) - Bloomberg
- [FBI fears greater risk of child sexual exploitation while schools are closed](#) - KATU2

We are asking that companies consider how they can help mitigate risks:

- Can you provide education to your community to help them protect themselves better?
- Do your moderation teams have the bandwidth to manage the increase in reports expected?
- How are you supporting your T&S staff while they work from home?
- Can you utilize additional automation to help manage low level incidents?
- What can you do to help other companies - do you have technology you can share or best practices for working from home?
- Are you taking steps to maintain bandwidth during this period?

## What members and others are doing

It would be useful for members to share the specific initiatives you have launched to help communities during COVID-19 lockdown, here are examples from the Fair Play Alliance Community:

- [Roblox](#) has launched [additional remote learning tools and private servers](#) to enable kids to safely socialize and hold online birthday parties during lockdown.
- [Ubisoft](#) launched [Play your Part, Stay at Home](#), offering free games to encourage players to stay home.
- [International Games Developer Association](#) has a whole raft of resources and advice on their [website](#).
- [Two Hat](#) wrote this [thoughtful blog](#) about supporting Moderators during this difficult time of remote working.
- [Women in Games](#) told us they are putting on a series of 1 hour "Coffee Morning" themed Zoom meetings through its Ambassadors which seem to be very popular. The invites go from a centrally managed Eventbrite account to which Ambassadors are given access and take are held on Zoom. Participation is limited to the first 8 takers and there is a set agenda. Tickets go very quickly and more and more Ambassadors are wanting to host.

- [Travian Games](#) shared with us: “We provided a certain (pretty generous) amount of free premium accounts and premium currency for Italian players when they went on lockdown, to make their time at home a bit easier. A few days later we did the same for all our players. Internally we have permanent “socializing” video calls to keep each other company while working. A small group of us is also having lunch together via video call.”

There are also some government initiatives you could participate in:

- **#PlayApartTogether** with the [World Health Organisation](#) which encourages users to adopt best practices to keep themselves and other safe
- **“Stay at Home, Save Lives”** is a partnership between the [Department of Culture, Media and Sport](#) and several large games which includes posting “Stay at home” messages prominently throughout games.

## Some final thoughts

This pandemic shows no end in ceasing and we all need to plan for this being our new “normal”. If we continue to collaborate and support each other, it might just make it that little bit easier...