

Creator UX Competitive Analysis

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An overview of how popular UGC platforms support content creators.

Feature overview

Management	Roblox	Dota 2 + Steam	Minecraft Bed. + Part. Cent.	Unity Asset St.	Unreal Marketplace
Web-based management	Primary	Workshop	Partner Center	Primary	Primary
In-game management					
Standalone tool	Upload in IDE	Primary		Unity package	
Analytics	Monetization		?	?	?
Promotion	Ecosys ads	Bundles		Sales	Sales
Creation					
First-party creation tools	Full IDE		Plugins for 3rd p.	Unity IDE	Unreal IDE
Third-party creation tools	Import assets?	Primary	Code & model	Model	Model
Content					
Cosmetic gameplay content	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Gameplay content	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Gameplay mods	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Interface	No	Yes	No	No	No
Tools	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Assets	Yes?	No	No	Yes	Yes
Publishing					
Review	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Prerequisite		Community votes per upload	Existing creator		
Monetization					
Revenue share	25%	?	?	70%	88%
Payment processor	Tipalti	Valve?	PayPal, ACH, or wire	PayPal or wire	Hyperwallet
Currency	VC	Real	VC	Real	Real
Price set by	Creator	Valve	Creator	Creator (free or \$5 min.)	Creator
Collaborator revenue sharing	Yes	Yes	?	No?	No?
Payout initiation	US\$350 min	\$100 min	Monthly w/ \$50 min	Monthly or quarterly w/ PayPal	Monthly w/ \$100 min, or annual
Resources					
Information hub	Yes	Yes	Technical	Yes	
Education	Extensive	External	Brief tutorials	Publishing how-tos & FAQs	
Documentation	API	Brief but thorough	API	Extensive engine & IDE docs	
Support	Forum	Forum	Community	CS, forums	
Creator agreement	Dev. Ex. Terms of Use	Supplemental Workshop Terms	Need Part. Cent. access?	Asset St. Provider Agreement	Marketp. Distribution Agreement

Roblox

Quick analysis

Roblox is one of the leaders in creator support, and its platform provides almost Steam-level publishing features plus a standalone IDE. As an almost entirely UGC-focused product, creator support is at the core of their business.

Creator pros

- Multi-platform reach with little to no extra work
- Highly flexible content creation
- One-stop creator portal integrated with the player site
- Roblox Studio, their development environment
- Detailed tutorials and full API documentation
- Multiple ways to monetize
 - Analytics, in-site promotions
 - Supports group projects
 - High transparency: roadmap, developer convention, etc.

Creator cons

- Approximately 25% revenue share needs high-volume purchases for significant creator revenue
- Need \$350 in revenue to withdraw?
- Creator portal navigation is clunky

Content

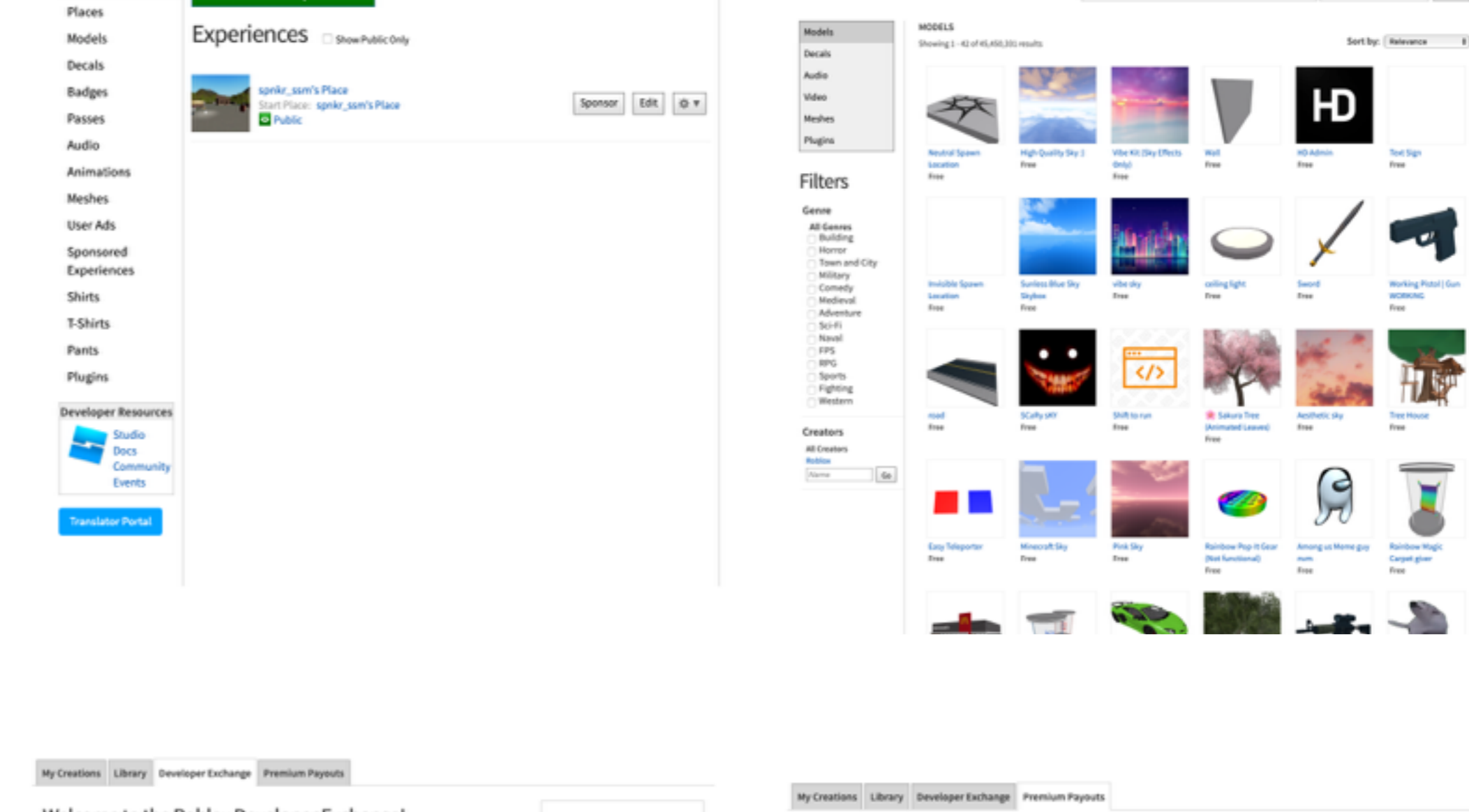
Creators manage their content and assets through a unique section of the Roblox player site.

Content is largely created with Roblox Studio, their own IDE.

Creators have a variety of content to contribute:

- Games ("Experiences")
- In-game achievements ("Badges")
- Levels ("Places")
- Assets for creators
- Cosmetic items for players
- Ads for their content

It appears that creators can receive revenue from assets used by other creators.



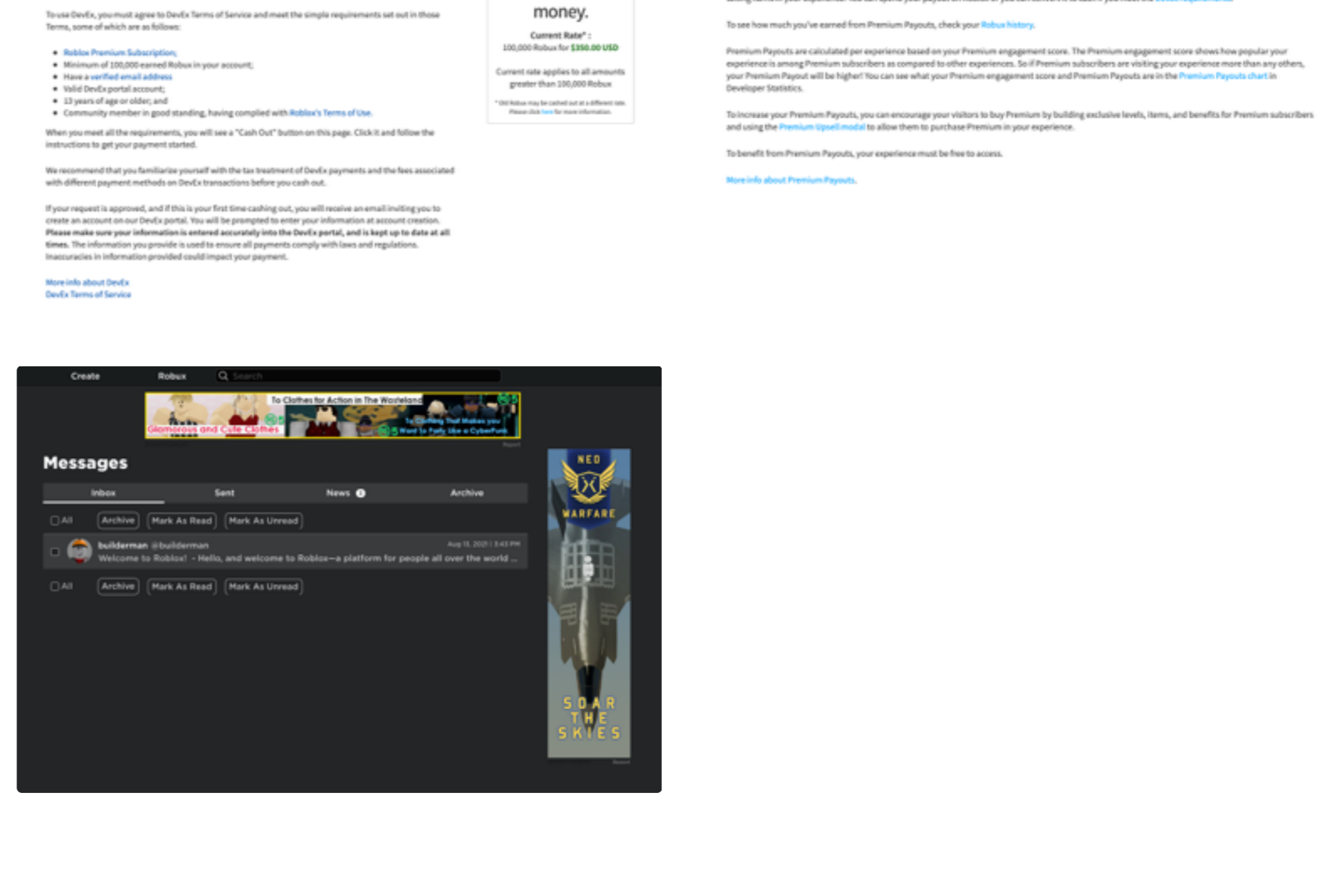
Monetization

Roblox is very upfront about monetization, and there is no shortage of detailed information. The Roblox Developer Exchange FAQ has lots of monetization info.

Creators can earn money through several ways:

- Direct purchase of content by players with virtual currency
- In-game purchases with VC, such as weapons powerups
- Charging VC to use a level in a private server
- VC payout for use by "Premium" platform subscribers
 - Creators can gate content for Premium members, e.g. more race cars
 - Creators get paid based on Premium player engagement, regardless of gated content
 - "Premium Playtime Robux Earned reflects how much you can expect to be paid for Premium user engagement. Note this is not based on daily time spent, but looks back at and aggregates each user's behavior over the past 28 days. As such, it has no direct mathematical relationship with the playtime score, although they have similar trends. Each unit of Premium time spent is rewarded with the same amount of Robux, no matter the size of your game."

Roblox uses Tipalti for processing payouts, and IDology for identity verification.



Creator resources

Roblox provides an impressive amount of education and information for creators.

- A "Developer" hub that presents an organized and professional entry point
- An extensive "Learn" site with a range of basic tutorials
- A proper API reference for their LUA-based code
- A high-level platform roadmap
- Detailed release notes for Roblox Studio
- A dedicated developer forum



Dota 2 and Steam Workshop

Quick analysis

Dota 2 does not exactly use a self-publishing model: most UGC is "submitted" and must receive sufficient community votes to be available in-game. Much of the monetization process is obscured and creator revenue hard to predict. The lack of transparency has led to friction with creators.

Creator pros

- Steam Workshop offers a familiar, trustworthy, and widely-accessible place to present creations, handle financial info, etc.
- Standalone upload utility helps avoid content errors
- Creators can share revenue with one other creator
- Source files are provided for popular assets as a base for customization

Creator cons

- Single platform: Steam on Windows
- Cannot simply publish; creations must be voted on before they appear in-game
- Restricted to largely cosmetic content
- Voting occurs in Steam, not in-game
- Highly opaque: creators don't set prices or have control over inclusion in bundles or random crates
- Virtually no official information about possible revenue

Content

Dota 2 offers user-generated content facilitated by Steam Workshop, but acquired through in-game MTX. Creators can contribute mainly cosmetic or UI mods. There is no creator-to-creator asset ecosystem.

There doesn't seem to be any way to modify game mechanics outside of custom game modes (e.g. no new combat abilities - or cheating).

Assets must be created in third-party software, but source files are available to start from. An upload tool is provided for submitting creations.

Most content must be submitted for review and community voting:

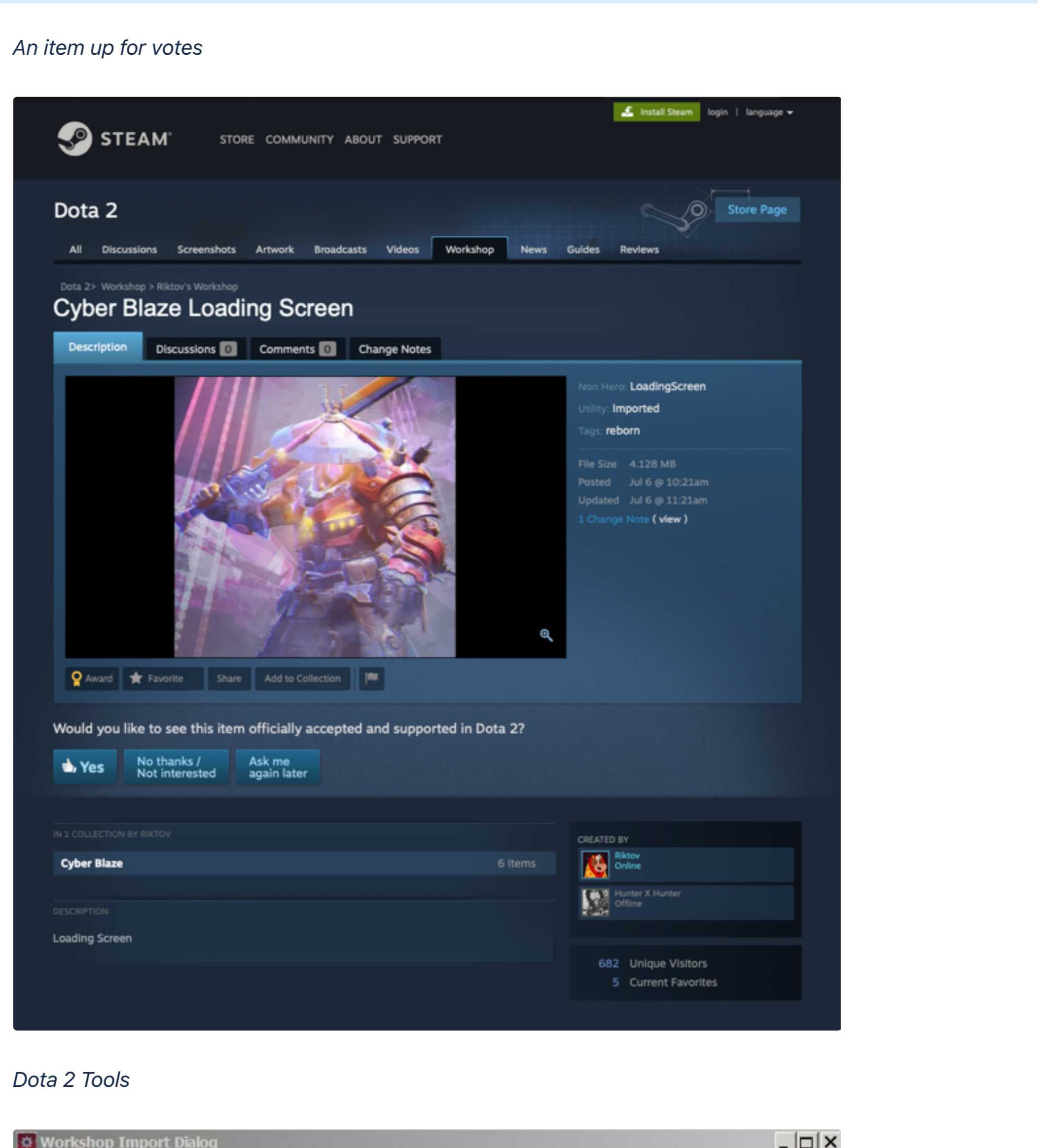
- Hero wearables and special ability appearance
- Limited in-game unit models (wards & couriers)
- Interface customization: loading screens, music, cursors, etc.
- Physical merchandise

Several types of content seem to be excluded from community review:

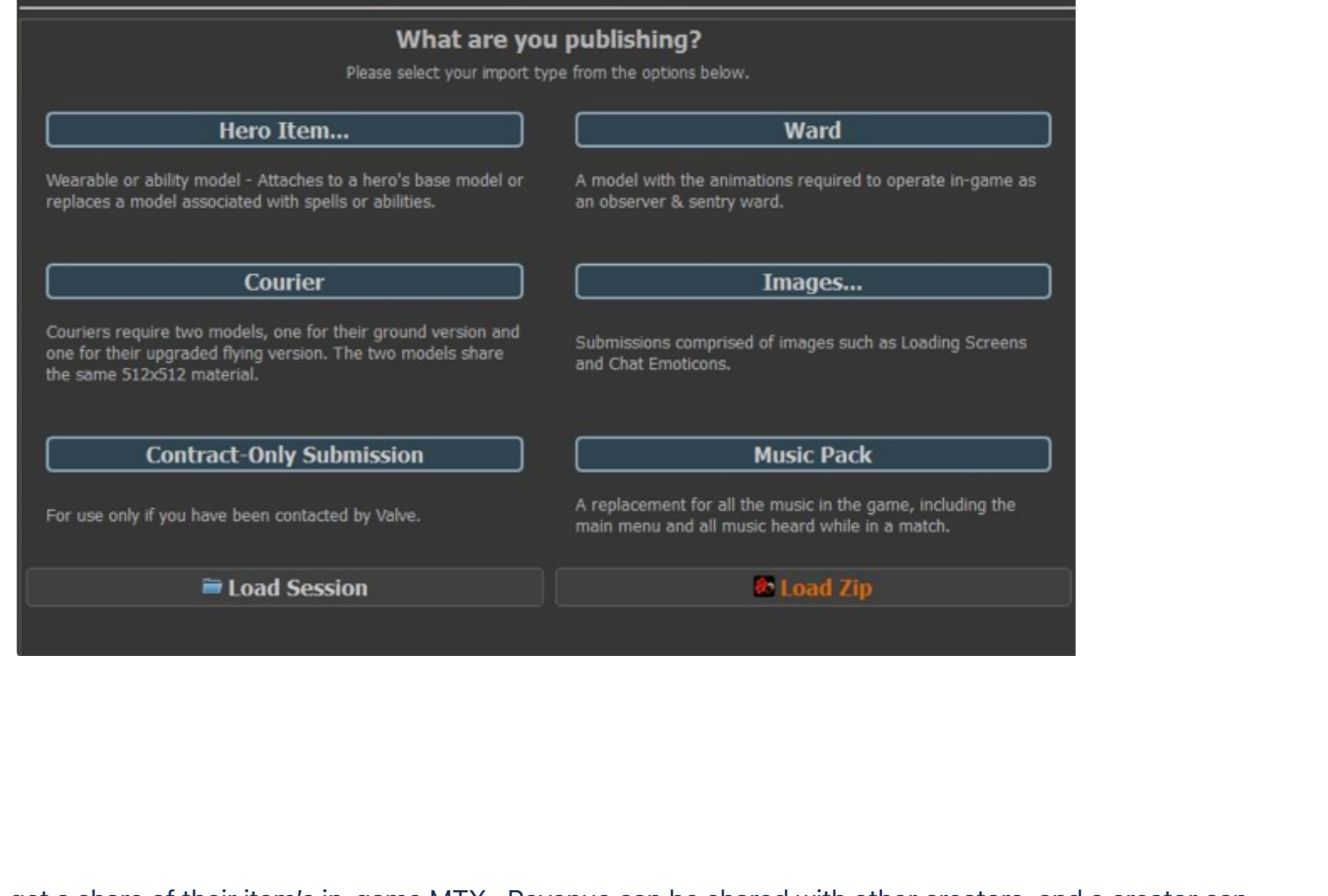
- Custom game modes and bots
- "Branded items" for e-sports teams, players, and sponsors
- "Contract-only" submissions, which sound like a B2B or contractor workflow

Content is submitted via a separate executable, "Dota 2 Tools".

An item up for votes



Dota 2 Tools



Monetization

Dota 2 offers user-generated content facilitated by Steam Workshop, but acquired through in-game MTX. Creators get a share of their item's in-game MTX. Revenue can be shared with other creators, and a creator can designate a "service provider" (e.g. toolmaker) to receive a small portion of Valve's revenue.

It's unclear what the default creator/Valve revenue split is, and it may only be visible on submission. It is also unclear whether creators can set the price of their items, prices are standardized, or entirely set by Valve. This ambiguity has been a source of friction (thread from 2017).

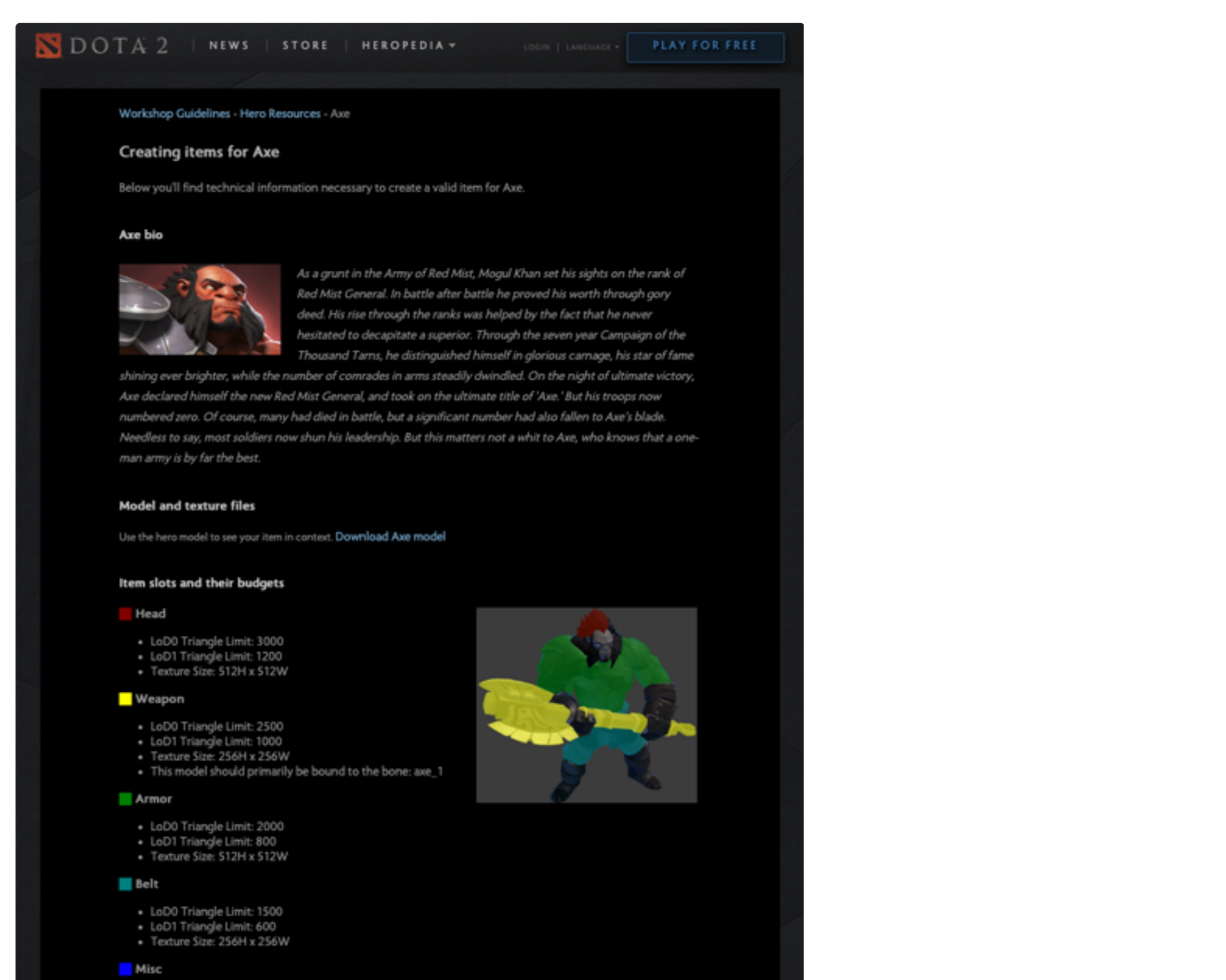
Payouts are processed through the Steam Workshop.

Creator resources

Dota 2 presents a fairly comprehensive guide for requirements and submission. Because assets are generally cosmetic or UI, rather than functional, their documentation doesn't cover creation of the 3D model, audio file, etc.

- A "Guidelines Homepage" hub with links to official and community resources
- FAQs and detailed guides to onboard creators
- Specific instructions and sample files
- General and Dota-specific asset creation guidelines (e.g. UV map details)
- Links to community resources, including general 3D modeling tutorials

Guidelines for customizing a hero



Minecraft Bedrock + Partner Center

Quick analysis

Microsoft introduced their "Marketplace" for the Bedrock edition, which offers in-game purchase via virtual currency. Details for creators, such as how the submission and review process works, is not documented publicly; creators must be accepted to the Partner Center to get instructions on the ecosystem.

Creator pros

- Multi-platform support with a high-visibility brand
- \$50 minimum for payment
- Can start creating non-monetized content without Partner Center approval
- Officially-endorsed development environment extensions are available

Creator cons

- Partner Center is practically opaque until admission
- Difficult to gauge revenue from official sources prior to actually publishing
- Must be an established creator to monetize
- Developer support is not friendly to novices
- "Add-ons" are not as flexible as full mods

Content

Bedrock is extended via a couple types of "packs" that can provide different kinds of content. These packs are bundled into an "add-on" or release.

- Resource packs provide in-game assets like models, sounds, and textures
- Behavior packs change the functionality of in-game objects (entities)

Creators can distribute add-ons independently; these are what third-party mod sites provide. To monetize in the Marketplace, creators must apply to the Partner Center and submit add-ons for review.

Other kinds of content can be created and shared outside of packs, such as maps and player skins.

Monetization

Details on Minecraft monetization are scant without access to Partner Center.

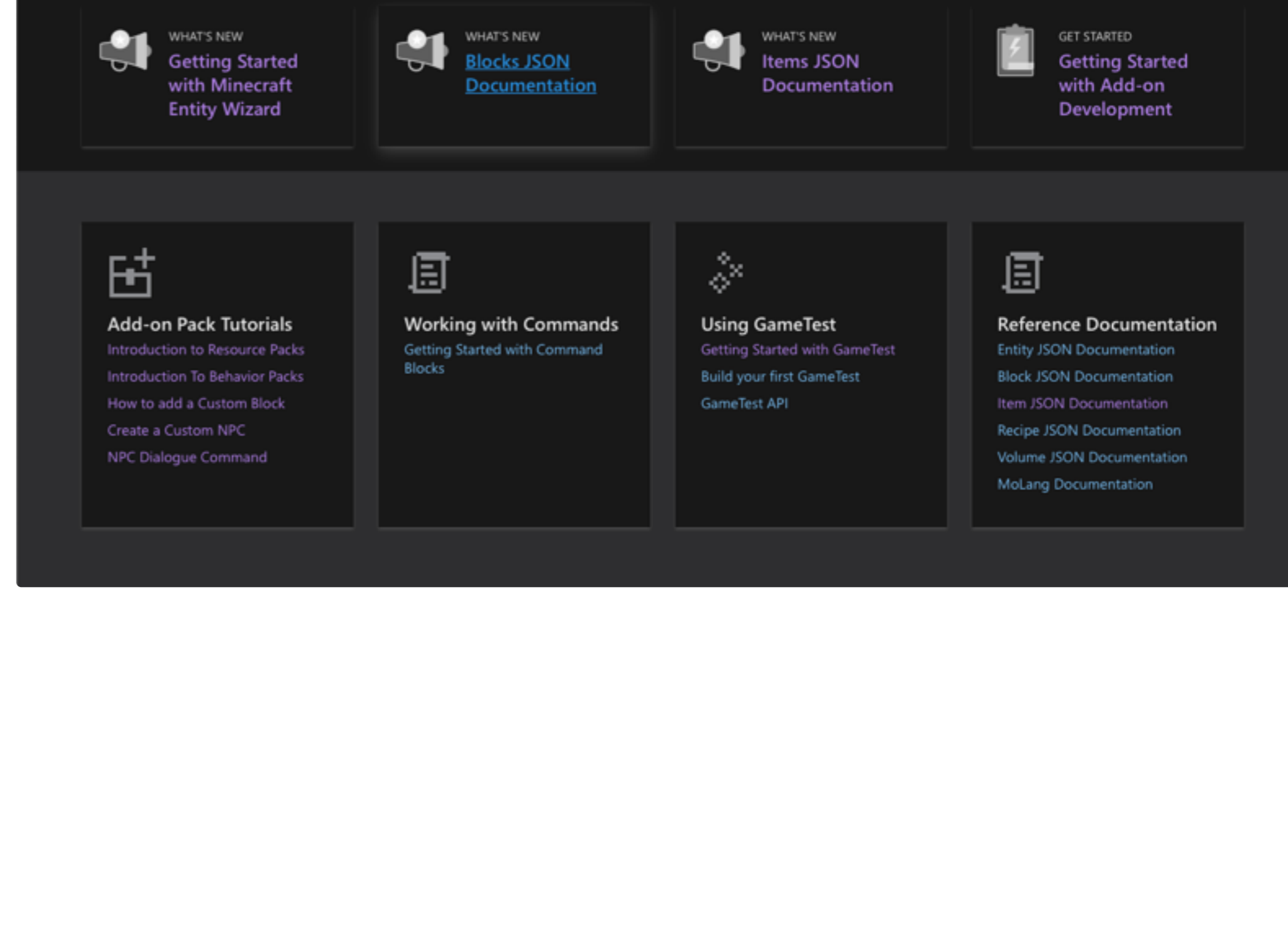
Marketplace items are purchased with Minecraft's virtual currency; creators set once price for content in all regions.

Creator resources

Technical documentation is publicly available for general Minecraft add-on development. However, marketplace-specific resources are almost entirely locked behind Partner Center access. It is not possible to get a complete picture of the creator ecosystem, such as how much money one can potentially make, until accepted.

- Minecraft Bedrock add-on documentation
- API docs
- Modest tutorials

The Minecraft Marketplace seems to lack a central hub for creator resources. There is also no clear, publicly-available overview for how to get started modding or monetizing; the closest thing is a general add-ons FAQ. Many developer resources, Partner Center and otherwise, cross into general MS dev sites that can be bewildering to a novice developer (e.g search results from all of MSDN). Someone new to corporate-sponsored software development would likely need to turn to community-provided tutorials to truly start from zero experience.



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