

BlocklyProp Solo FAQ for Schools

These tips are meant to help teachers and school IT administrators set up BlocklyProp Solo for classroom use. For a guided introduction, see the [Getting Started with BlocklyProp Solo](#) tutorial. For assistance, email support@parallax.com, or call our Educator Hotline at (916) 701-8625 8am to 5 pm PT.

What is BlocklyProp Solo?

BlocklyProp Solo is an online, visual programming tool. It is used to build programs on a personal computer that are then downloaded to Propeller microcontroller based robots and boards, such as the ActivityBot 360° Robot, the Propeller FLiP Module, or the Scribbler S3 robot via a USB cable. Wireless programming is also possible with the Badge WX, or by using a WX WiFi module on the Propeller Activity Board WX.

See our [comprehensive list of BlocklyProp-compatible products](#).

License cost: none, it's free

BlocklyProp Solo is based on Google's open-source Blockly tools. Consequently, BlocklyProp Solo online is also open-source. There is no individual user fee, user account, or site license fee required.

Where to get BlocklyProp Solo

Programming is done online at the BlocklyProp Solo website: <https://solo.parallax.com>.

Do I need to install anything?

Yes, you will need to install the free BlocklyProp Launcher software. For Chromebook, it is available from [the Chrome WebStore](#). For Windows and Mac, it is available from our [Parallax website](#).

The Launcher software manages the USB port communication to the Propeller hardware. So, it must be installed on each machine, and **cannot be run from a network server**. Admin privileges may be required to install the Launcher.

The Windows and Mac versions of the BlocklyProp Launcher software also includes the required FTDI USB drivers. Chromebooks already have the necessary drivers included.

Firewall or Antivirus Alerts

The BlocklyProp Launcher has the capability of communicating with certain Parallax devices via WiFi. Because of this, your system's security features may alert you that BlocklyProp Launcher can access network resources. You must select the option that *confirms you approve* to allow the software to communicate on the network in order for it to function properly. The BlocklyProp Launcher software only communicates on the local subnet with Parallax WiFi-enabled hardware, over USB to directly-connected Parallax hardware, and to the local browser; it does not communicate with any Internet-based servers.

Upon download of the BlocklyProp Launcher Installer software, your network or computer system may flag it as containing trojan malware. Parallax takes software creation and distribution seriously, digitally signing most software before publication and protecting against viruses on development systems. Such alerts have proven to be false positives in the past; however, we encourage you to contact support@parallax.com in the event you have concerns. Parallax uses the [Virus Total service](#) to verify software integrity, can share scan reports with you, and would like to work directly with your system engineers to resolve false positive malware detections should they occur.

COPPA compliance

COPPA compliance regulations do not apply to BlocklyProp Solo and respective Launcher systems because they do not collect or store any user data.

Alert about Chromebook “Guest” browsing

Always log into a Chromebook before going to the BlocklyProp Solo site; do not use the login screen's “guest” browsing option. In guest browsing mode, you can access the BlocklyProp Solo website but won't be able to download code to the Propeller microcontroller. This is because, in guest mode, the user does not have access to the BlocklyProp Launcher application.

Alert about student computer accounts

School-managed Chromebooks and student accounts must have permission to install the BlocklyProp Launcher. School-managed Windows and Mac computers must have the BlocklyProp Launcher installed for the student account by an administrator. Without this app, the student will not be able to download their BlocklyProp Solo project code to their Propeller microcontroller hardware.

Warning for Promethean Interactive Display users

Computers now, or formerly, attached to Promethean Interactive Displays, may be unable to reliably download BlocklyProp Solo projects to their connected Propeller boards. The Promethean ActivBoard software (which may have been installed with ActivInspire or ClassFlow Desktop software) may intermittently or permanently open virtual serial ports to scan for a digital whiteboard. To prevent this conflict, Promethean suggests uninstalling the ActivBoard driver (if not using any Promethean ActivBoards) or changing the computer's startup options to disable the driver upon start-up, then manually start the driver only when needed.

BlocklyProp Solo replaces account-based BlocklyProp

BlocklyProp Solo replaces the original BlocklyProp system at <http://blockly.parallax.com/blockly>, which requires user accounts (and is COPPA compliant). That system is being decommissioned by the end of 2020. To transition from the original BlocklyProp to BlocklyProp Solo, see the [BlocklyProp Bulk Project Download](#) feature.