

NEW TWITTER POLICY IS FREEDOM OF SPEECH, BUT NOT FREEDOM OF REACH: ELON MUSK

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A view of the Twitter logo at its corporate headquarters in San Francisco, California, U.S. November 18, 2022. | Photo Credit: Reuters

[After turning Twitter upside down](#), Elon Musk on Tuesday tried to clarify his plans for content moderation, a key issue for the future of the influential platform after the departure of advertisers and top executives.

Mr. Musk on Friday said he had reinstated certain banned accounts on his site, but added that no decision had been made on welcoming back former U.S. president Donald Trump.

Twitter watchers have been tracking closely to see whether Mr. Musk will reinstate [Mr. Trump, banned for inciting](#) last year's attack on the Capitol by a mob seeking to overturn the results of the 2020 election.

The reinstatement of accounts ousted for violating Twitter's content moderation rules has been seen as a bellwether of where Mr. Musk, a self-described "free speech absolutist," wants to take the site.

In the same blast of tweets, Mr. Musk unveiled a new method for handling future hateful or "negative" content that seemed to seek a balancing act between unadulterated free speech and some form of policing on the site.

Finding a solution to content moderation became especially urgent after Mr. Musk's first major rejig to the site → expanding a paid subscription service → sparked an embarrassing spate of fake accounts that sent advertisers running.

"New Twitter policy is freedom of speech, but not freedom of reach," Mr. Musk tweeted on Friday.

"Negative/hate tweets will be max deboosted & demonetized, so no ads or other revenue to Twitter," he wrote.

In essence, Mr. Musk seemed to be pointing to a policy similar to strategies at YouTube, the Google-owned video platform, where some provocative content is given less priority in the site's

algorithm, but is not entirely taken down.

"You won't find the tweet unless you specifically seek it out, which is no different from the rest of the Internet," Mr., Musk said.

Ella Girwin, his newly installed chief of trust and safety, called Musk's approach "a core principle for Twitter... helping us ensure we maintain a healthy platform."

To make his point, Mr., Musk then announced the reinstatement of three twitter accounts that had been banished for violating Twitter's content moderation policies.

Canadian psychologist Jordan Peterson was suspended from Twitter in June, before Musk's ownership, following a post about transgender actor Elliot Page that broke the site's rules on hateful conduct.

Peterson had often made comments against the rights of transgender people and was asked by Twitter to remove the post on Page.

The Babylon Bee, a conservative parody site, was banned in March for similar tweets against Rachel Levine, a trans woman serving as US assistant secretary of health.

The third account, belonging to comedian Kathy Griffin, was banned earlier this month when Mr. Musk cracked down on accounts that impersonated others.

Ms. Griffin, who has two million Twitter followers, switched her username to Elon Musk, taking advantage of the website's relaxed oversight under the billionaire.

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