

# How Twitter's new drastic changes will affect what users can view on the site

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Twitter has limited how much content users can view each day in a move the company's owner claims is about addressing "system manipulation". Does this latest move spell the end of the social media platform for good – and where can people go now? What has Elon Musk done to Twitter? Last week Twitter made a number of abrupt changes reducing the usability of the service. First, the company required users to log in to view the site – previously even people without Twitter profiles could view tweets. It then imposed a limit on the vast majority of users who do not pay for the platform, restricting unverified accounts to viewing 600 tweets a day, later upped to 1,000. Why has Twitter made these changes? Musk tweeted that these changes were "temporary limits" designed to address "extreme levels of data scraping" and "system manipulation". It isn't clear whether this is what is occurring but data scraping is where automated services, such as AI, scoop up all the publicly available data on a website. Musk tweeted that "almost every company doing AI" was taking "vast amounts of data" from Twitter, which Musk said was forcing the company to deploy more servers – at a cost – to cope with the demand. Generative AI tools such as chatbots and image generation services are based on large language models (LLM), which are "trained" on vast amounts of data take from internet sites including Wikipedia, Twitter and Reddit. One expert said using Twitter for LLM training could be problematic for other reasons. "It's questionable whether we should continue to use data sources like Twitter – the language and sentiment embodied tends to be terse, often confrontational and contains a lot of disinformation," says Dr Andrew Rogoyski of the Institute for People-Centred AI at the University of Surrey. "While we as humans know how to filter such data (mostly), training and AI on raw Twitter feeds can lead to problems with the way the AI interacts with people." Some users believe the view limitation move is an attempt to encourage Twitter Blue subscriptions – where users can view 10,000 tweets daily. Others believe Twitter could have had capacity constraints forced upon it by suppliers who rent server capacity to the company. Twitter's former head of trust and safety Yoel Roth wrote in a thread on Twitter's rival Bluesky: "It just doesn't pass the sniff test that scraping all of a sudden created such dramatic performance problems that Twitter had no choice but to put everything behind a login." He added: "Scraping was the open secret of Twitter data access. We knew about it. It was fine." What do the Twitter changes mean? Over the weekend, users were hit with "rate limit exceeded" messages after they hit their limit. Some were able to wait a while and refresh their timelines, while others could not view more tweets for the rest of the day. Initially, using the Twitter-owned TweetDeck product bypassed the limits. As of Monday, users reported issues with accessing their feeds on TweetDeck. The changes are likely to affect those who use Twitter as a resource to get immediate breaking news. Where can we go instead? Up until the last few days, Twitter had

still had been largely functional and many users had not been pushed to leave the site. But as Twitter makes it harder for users to view tweets, a successor may emerge. One option is Bluesky – launched in February by the former Twitter chief Jack Dorsey. The site had to shut off new sign-ups over the weekend as users began leaving Twitter. New sign-ups were back on as of Monday. Only people with invitation codes from other users can sign up at this stage, and Bluesky stresses it is still in development. It has a similar look and feel to Twitter, and has an app, but currently does not allow direct messaging or allow people to upload videos. Mastodon was also touted as an alternative to Twitter, and while it has built communities in the months since Musk's takeover, it has not yet replaced Twitter. However, it has received 85,000 new sign-ups over the past day, according to one tracker site, taking the number of accounts to 13m. Twitter has more than 250 million users, according to Musk. It appears that Meta, the company behind Facebook and Instagram, is preparing to step in to fill the gap Twitter is leaving, with reports the text-based app Threads or "Project 92" is about to be released imminently. Screenshots from the app suggest it will look very Twitter-like and allow users to connect with people they follow on Instagram. That would remove one of the biggest hurdles people have had switching from Twitter – finding all the accounts you used to follow. Could the move damage Twitter commercially? The New York Times reported that some Twitter sales employees were asking for advice on what to tell clients as they realised some ads were not being displayed on the platform. The new chief executive of Twitter, Linda Yaccarino, came from the world of TV advertising – signalling that Musk has made rebuilding relationships with advertisers a priority. This latest problem could complicate that process. Before its acquisition by Musk, Twitter had relied on advertising for the majority of its income but some advertisers have either paused or reduced spending because of concerns about how the Tesla chief is running the platform.