

Elon Musk says Twitter, now X, could charge all users subscription fees

Publication Date: 2023-09-19

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Section: Technology

Tags: X, Elon Musk, Internet, Technology sector, news

Article URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2023/sep/19/elon-musk-twitter-x-subscription-fees-users-posts>



Elon Musk has indicated that X, formerly known as Twitter, is considering charging all users for accessing the platform. The X owner said erecting a paywall around the business would ward off the bots, or automated accounts, that have become a bugbear for Musk. Speaking in a meeting with Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister, the Tesla CEO and world's richest person suggested that X was going to charge its user base. Currently, Twitter only charges users for its subscription service X Premium, which offers perks such as a verified account checkmark and costs \$11 a month in the US for iPhones and £11 in the UK. "We're moving to having a small monthly payment for use of the system," Musk said. Saying that bots cost "a fraction of a penny" to set up, Musk added that raising the cost of an account to "a few dollars or something" could put off operators of the software. He added: "Plus, every time a bot creator wanted to make another bot, they would need another new payment method." Musk, who has a history of making impromptu statements, did not confirm whether X would definitely push ahead with a charging policy. X has been contacted for further comment. Musk also said X had 550 million monthly users generating up to 200m posts a day. Previously, the platform had measured its user base by a different method, monetisable daily active users, which stood at 238 million before Musk bought the business in October 2022. Musk has raised the prospect of a paywall as the platform battles an entrenched decline in advertising, its main source of income. Musk has said an advertiser boycott, spurred by concerns over his leadership of the platform and its management of inappropriate or hateful content, has caused ad revenue to decline by 60%. Musk's conversation with Netanyahu was billed as a discussion about technology and artificial intelligence but it quickly turned to free speech and antisemitism amid accusations that X was not doing enough to tackle racist speech on the platform. Netanyahu said he hoped Musk would find ways within the confines of the first amendment to clamp down on antisemitism and other forms of hatred on X. "I encourage you and urge you to find the balance," Netanyahu said. "It's a tough one." Musk has used his account on X to say that he is "pro-free speech, but against antisemitism of any kind".