

Elon Musk: I will tweet what I want even if it loses me money

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Elon Musk has said he will continue sending controversial tweets even if it loses him money, as he defended himself against accusations of antisemitism over tweets about George Soros. The Twitter owner and Tesla chief executive said he is “allowed to say what I want to”, as he defended a tweet posted on Tuesday saying the billionaire financier “reminds me of Magneto” – the Jewish villain in the X-Men series. In an interview with US broadcaster CNBC on Tuesday, he said: “I’ll say what I want to say and if the consequence of that is losing money, so be it.” Soros was born into a Jewish family in Hungary in the 1930s and survived the Nazi occupation of his birth country, while the backstory of Magneto, from a German Jewish family, portrays him as a concentration camp survivor. Soros is a regular target for rightwing conspiracy theorists in attacks that are often flagged as thinly veiled antisemitism. Musk also continued his attack on Soros in replies to his tweet. Brian Krassenstein, a US journalist, responded that Soros is “attacked nonstop for his good intentions”, to which Musk replied: “You assume they are good intentions. They are not. He wants to erode the very fabric of civilization. Soros hates humanity.” Jonathan Greenblatt, the chief executive of the Anti-Defamation League, said Musk was feeding “antisemitic tropes” and would “embolden extremists who already contrive anti-Jewish conspiracies”. Musk has nearly 140 million followers on Twitter and brushes with controversy regularly in his posts. The CNBC interviewer, David Faber, told Musk he was now being accused of antisemitism, to which Musk replied: “No, I’m definitely not I’m like, I’m like a pro-semitite, if anything.” Asked about the “humanity” tweet, Musk said: “Yeah I think that’s true, that’s my opinion.” Musk also defended his interaction last week with conspiracy theorist tweets about a mass shooting in Texas this month. Musk was speaking days after appointing Linda Yaccarino, a US advertising executive, as the chief executive of Twitter. He told CNBC that Yaccarino would be “great” for the advertising-dependent platform, although he would continue to play a role at the business. Twitter relies on advertising for about 90% of its revenue but has been hit by a slump in ad spending after Musk’s takeover, amid concerns about hate speech, moderation standards and a botched relaunch of the platform’s subscription service last year. “It’s very much an advertising dependent business,” Musk said. “Linda is obviously incredible at that. She’s just a great executive in general ... my skills and interests are in technology.” Musk said the plan was for Yaccarino to operate the company, while he focused on building new products. “I will continue to play a role, advancing the software. And, you know, getting the features and product stuff basically,” he said. Musk added that Twitter, historically a loss-making company, was “close” to breaking even and that Yaccarino might rehire some of the approximately 6,000 staff that were made redundant after the takeover. “I think we absolutely need to hire people. And if they’re not too mad at us, probably rehire some of the people that we let go,” he said.