

Damage Control: Twitter Admits Overzealous Shadowbanning Was a Mistake, 3 Days Before Congress Grills CEO Jack Dorsey

 Jack Dorsey

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Twitter has said that its overzealous downranking of accounts was the result of errors in their system, just three days before CEO Jack Dorsey is set to testify before the House Energy and

Commerce Committee on the subject of social media censorship.

Twitter Safety  @TwitterSafety · Sep 2, 2018



In May we introduced efforts to improve conversational health. Based on your feedback, we realize some of these efforts created confusion about results in the Latest search tab. In response, we want to share a recent change we've made.

blog.twitter.com/official/en_us...

Serving healthy conversation

In March, we introduced our new approach to improve the health of the public conversation on Twitter. Here is our update.
blog.twitter.com

Twitter Safety 

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If our model determined there was a higher likelihood of an account's behavior being viewed as abusive, results from those accounts weren't visible by default in the Latest tab.

12:27 PM - Sep 2, 2018

 36  51 people are talking about this



The company said that in its previous system, accounts determined to have a “higher likelihood of being viewed as abusive” were downranked in public conversations — up until now.

Notably, the platform's previous system didn't merely seek to downrank accounts that were actually abusive, but accounts that could be *viewed* as abusive. And not even that — accounts that were *likely* to be viewed as abusive.

Twitter did not explain whose determinations of “abusiveness” were being treated as authoritative.

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Replying to @TwitterSafety

They were visible in Latest if you turned off the quality filter in search, as well as in Top search and elsewhere throughout the product. We made a change on Friday to ensure these accounts are included in the Latest tab by default.

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Why? When we looked more closely at how the behavior model was being used within search, we made the decision that a higher level of precision is needed when deciding whether content should or shouldn't be surfaced.

12:27 PM - Sep 2, 2018

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Twitter said that they turned off the feature, explaining that a “higher level of precision” is needed. The acknowledgment that its system of downranking was flawed comes just a few days before Jack Dorsey is set to answer lawmakers’ questions on the subject of social media censorship. The evidence session is the result of recent controversy over Twitter’s blocking and “shadowbanning” practices, which has [affected](#) top Republican politicians but not Democrats.

The company said that it would continue to factor “behavioral signals” into how the platform ranks tweets, in order to serve “conversational health.” What these signals include remains a mystery.

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Replying to @TwitterSafety

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We still factor behavioral signals into how we rank Tweets because we believe this is critical to serving healthy public conversation. As always, we'll continue

to refine our approach and will be transparent about why we make the decisions that we do.

12:27 PM - Sep 2, 2018

 65  104 people are talking about this



Twitter has thus far refused to acknowledge that its downranking algorithms **implicitly favor the left**. Because Twitter factors in the number of times an account has been blocked or muted when deciding whether to downrank its content, it has set up a system that favors the easily-offended: people who like to shut themselves off from contrary opinions. It isn't merely a stereotype that these people tend to be found more frequently on the left — research has found that Democrats are **three times more likely** than Republicans block or unfriend people over their political opinions on social media.

[Big Government](#)[Breitbart](#)[California](#)[TechHouse](#)[Energy and Commerce Committee](#)[Jack Dorsey](#)[Masters of the Universe](#)[shadowbanning](#)[Twitter](#)