

Pekka Kallioniemi @P_Kallioniemi May 6, 2025 - 23 tweets - P_Kallioniemi/status/1919699458641543339

In today's Vatnik Soup, I'll discuss the state of X in May 2025. Since its acquisition by Elon Musk, this platform has rapidly transformed into his personal political tool and a breeding ground for hate speech and disinformation.

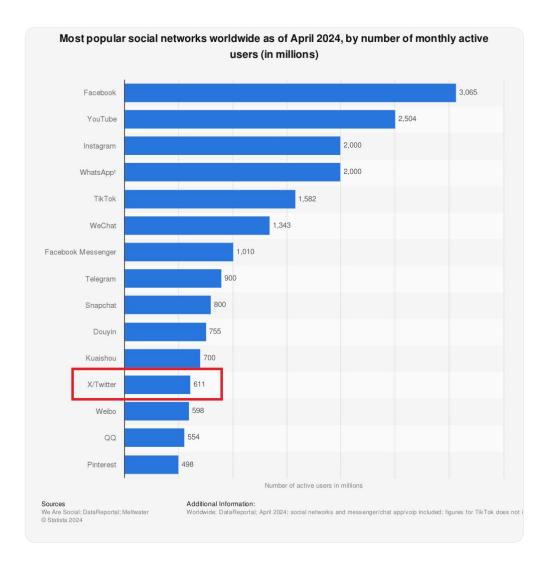
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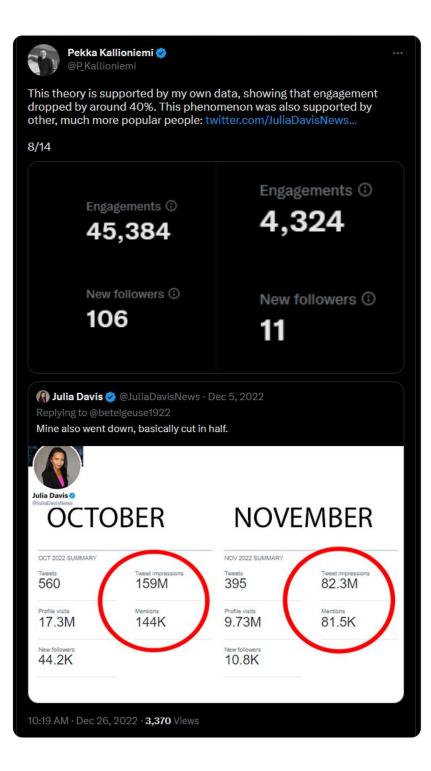
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Not everyone is following this shitshow as closely as I am, so I thought it would be good to write a summary of all the changes that have happened on this forum and outside of it. These changes have drastically changed how the platform operates and who gets "a voice" here.



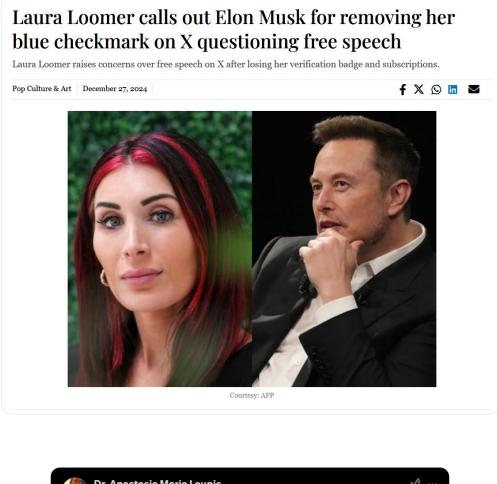


Elon's team has been tweaking the algorithm many times after the takeover. One of these tweaks happened already around Nov 2022, when the platform heavily suppressed the visibility of pro-Ukraine accounts. This change was then noticed & reported by many pro-Ukraine accounts.



	Denis Zakharov @betelgeuse1922 · Dec 5, 2022 Did you notice something feeling like a soft shadow ban in the Ukraine- centric Twitter in November (when Musk took power)? Like if your posts were deprioritized by the algorithm. I remember Defmon complaining about that. Anyone else?					
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Today, repeated ToS violations don't result in permanent suspension anymore. However, the platform minimizes the visibility of accounts Elon disfavors instead, which is basically the same thing - you can write as much as you like, but no one will see you.





And of course the censorship is still there, Elon just doesn't like to talk about it. It happens in countries like Turkey, India and Saudi Arabia. As a matter of fact, Musk's X has complied with more government requests to take down content than Twitter ever did.

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Elon Musk criticizes censorship, but his X grants more government requests than Twitter did

His social media platform took action on 71% of legal requests between January and June, according to a new report



TSLA +0.17%



Kotaku George R.R. Martin Short Story Adaptation Looks Like AI Slop In First Trailer Ethan Gach Vesterday





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Free speech warrior Elon Musk's Twitter is muting Indian voices worldwide

In a BBC interview, Elon Musk claimed that India's "extremely strict" social media rules were the reason for censoring tweets critical of the Modi government



By Mimansa Verma Published April 14, 2023

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VANITY FAIR

Twitter's Elon Musk Defends Decision To Limit Tweets in Turkey During Tight Presidential Election

Critics say the social media platform allowed the Turkish government to silence criticism.

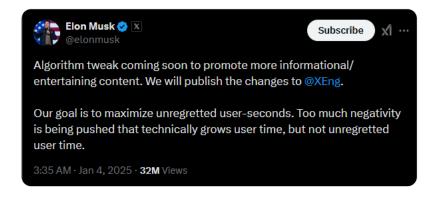
BY JACK MCCORDICK MAY 14, 2023

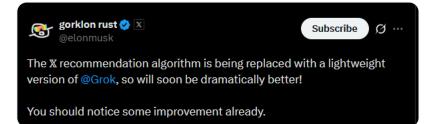
ELON MUSK

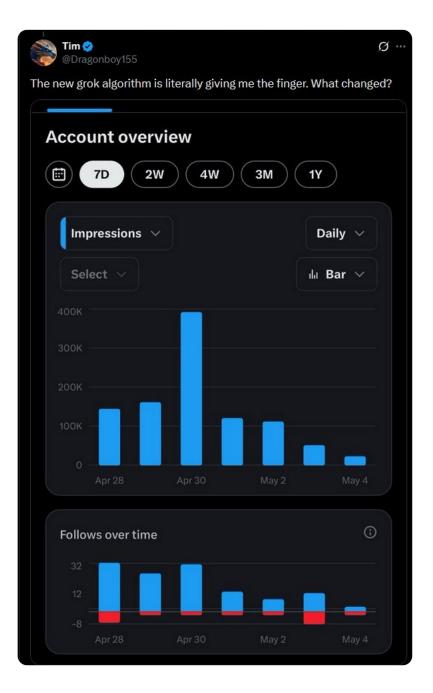


Musk recently announced that in the near future there will be an algorithm update, and that the platform will prioritize "positive" and "informative" content. On 3 May 2025, the algorithm was replaced with "a lightweight version of @Grok," with some promised improvements.



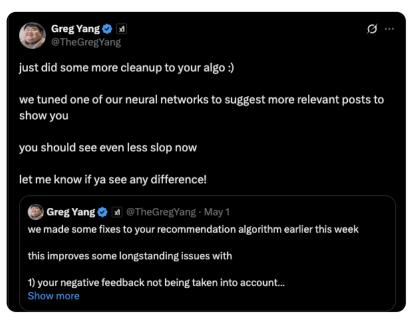




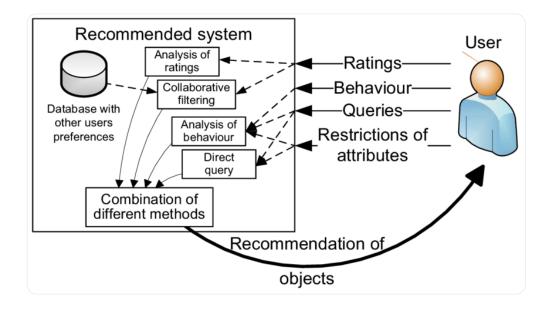


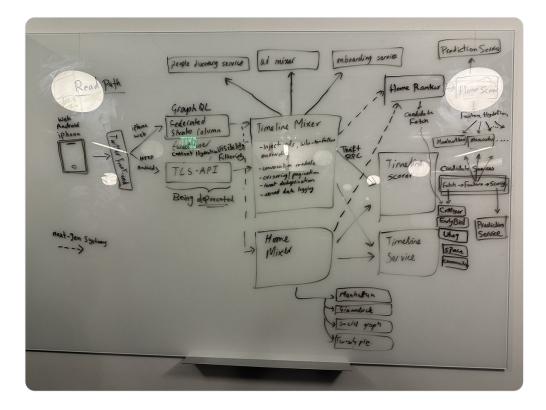
According to X developer @TheGregYang, people should see less "slop" in their timelines after the update, and the recommendation algorithm should surface content "more relevant" to their interests. The update has led many accounts to complain about reduced reach.

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But what is a recommendation algorithm? This algorithm powers your social media feed — it analyzes what you watch, like, and share to suggest content and accounts you might enjoy. It's like a digital curator, learning your habits to keep you longer on the platform.





In algorithm studies, researchers often perform so-called "cold start" tests, meaning what the algorithm offers to a new account they know nothing about. Cold start problem, offering meaningful content to new users, has been one of the most studied topics in algorithms.

• 1. New User Cold Start

When someone signs up for a social media platform:

- The platform doesn't yet know their interests (no likes, follows, posts, or watch history).
- As a result, it struggles to personalize their feed, friend suggestions, or content recommendations.

How platforms solve this:

- Prompting users to follow a few interests or people during onboarding.
- Showing trending or universally popular content at first.
- Using demographic or location-based heuristics to guess preferences.

• 2. New Content Cold Start

When a user posts a video, reel, or tweet that the system hasn't seen before:

- The platform doesn't know if others will engage with it.
- It's risky to recommend widely without some early interaction signals.

How platforms solve this:

- Testing new content with a small subset of users first ("exploration phase").
- Using content features (hashtags, captions, audio tracks) to relate it to known trends.
- Relying on the posting user's past engagement metrics (if any).

3. New User + New Content (Double Cold Start)

A brand new user posts their first video. Neither the creator nor the content has any engagement history.

• This is the hardest case. The platform lacks both user profile data and content performance data.

How platforms deal with it:

- Some use boosting mechanisms for new users to encourage early engagement (e.g., TikTok is rumored to give initial reach boosts).
- Cross-modal signals (visual/audio/text) are analyzed to predict content quality before engagement happens.

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For example in 2021, Facebook whistleblower Frances Haugen published Meta's internal reports that showed a massive problem with new users - they were quickly served with violence and gore, anti-Muslim rhetoric and disinformation. Zuckerberg knew this, yet did nothing.



The Facebook Crisis in India Might Be the Worst Facebook Crisis of All

BY NITISH PAHWA OCT 26, 2021 • 10:24 AM



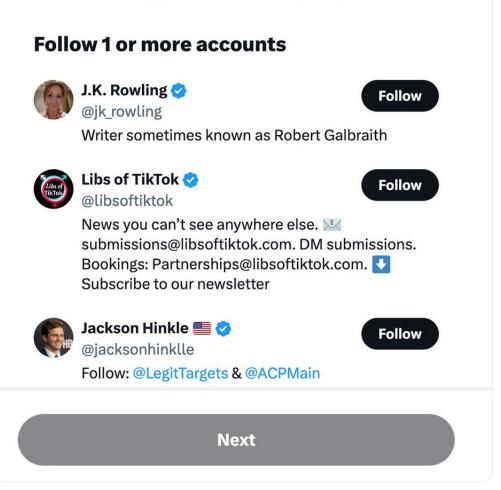


But what about X? The problem is even worse. When creating a new account, X suggests you some accounts to follow. Besides Jackson Hinkle and J.K. Rowling, all the recommended accounts were large MAGA influencers who constantly spread both false information and "slop".

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Don't miss out

When you follow someone, you'll see their posts in your Timeline. You'll also get more relevant recommendations.



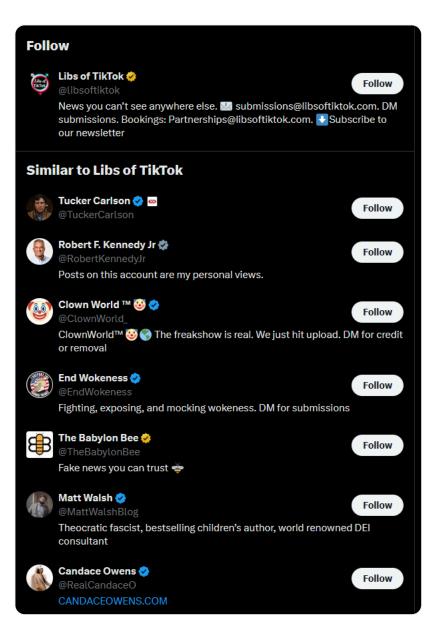
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	MAGA Voice @MAGAVoice Want to take back OUR country? JOIN ME
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And following these recommended accounts, the platform immediately creates an effective rabbit hole - once you follow any of these conspiracy theorists and disinformation peddlers, the algorithm will start offering you more of a similar type of content.





And since the platform's owner also promotes questionable content, there has been a massive surge in engagement farming accounts, especially around MAGA & the topic of islamisation of Europe. The most notable examples of this is @RadioGenoa, who today has

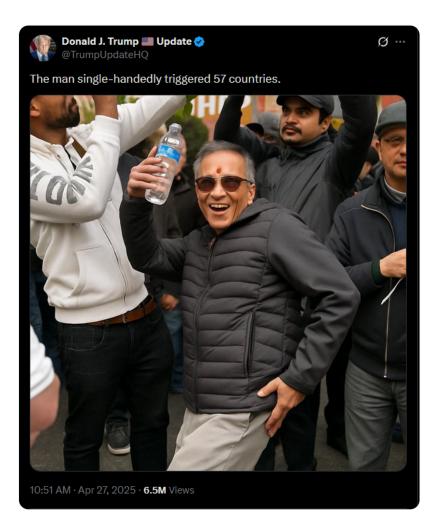
several copycats.







Most of these engagement farming accounts—like "Donald Trump Update", "JD Vance News", and others — are run by small groups or individuals in India. While most of their content focuses on the US, they occasionally slip in some pro-India posts.







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Replying to @l_amMukhtar

HERES THE MAN BEHIND INEVITABLE WEST

Saurabh Chandrakar

Mahadev App Scam Mastermind's Impending Extradition

• Saurabh Chandrakar, a key promoter of the Mahadev betting app, will soon be extradited to India from Dubai following his recent arrest.

The Enforcement... Show more



2:46 PM · Feb 5, 2025



And the reason for choosing these topics is simple: they have the highest chance of being shared by some of the bigger accounts, especially by gullible Elon. Like his baby mamas, these accounts have garnered massive followings thanks to retweets by the platform's owner.

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Musk Retweets 'Hitler Didn't Murder Millions' Message Amid Ongoing Nazi Controversy

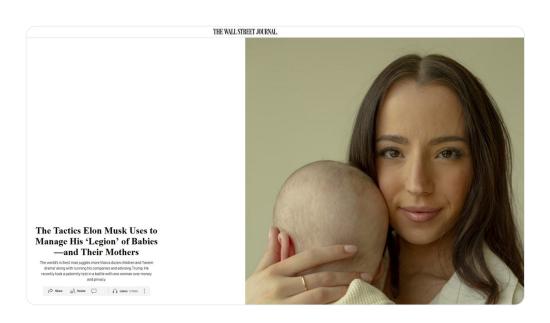
Story by Antonio Pequeño IV, Forbes Staff • 1mo • 💿 3 min read

Topline

Tesla chief and presidential adviser Elon Musk shared a post Thursday that said public sector workers, not Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler, murdered millions of people, marking the billionaire's latest Nazi-related post as he and his electric vehicle company face continued backlash and boycotts as critics say his embrace of right-wing politics is veering more extreme.







Musk's assistant peeked back the muttered and said he had another meeting. "Do you have any final thoughts?" she asked.

"Yes, I want to say one thing." the data scientist said. He took a deep breath and turned to Musk.

"I'm resigning today. I was feeling excited about the takeover, but I was really disappointed by your Paul Pelosi tweet. It's really such obvious partisan misinformation and it makes me worry about you and what kind of friends you're getting information from. It's only really like the tenth percentile of the adult population who'd be gullible enough to fall for this."

The color drained from Musk's already pale face. He leaned forward in his chair. No one spoke to him like this. And no one, least of all someone who worked for him, would dare to question his intellect or his tweets. His darting eyes focused for a second directly on the data scientist.

"Fuck you!" Musk growled.

A single post with millions of impressions can be worth \$30–40, which is a solid daily income for many in India. These accounts also often restrict comments to verified users, since only those comments contribute to their ad revenue share.

Average Monthly Salaries Across The World

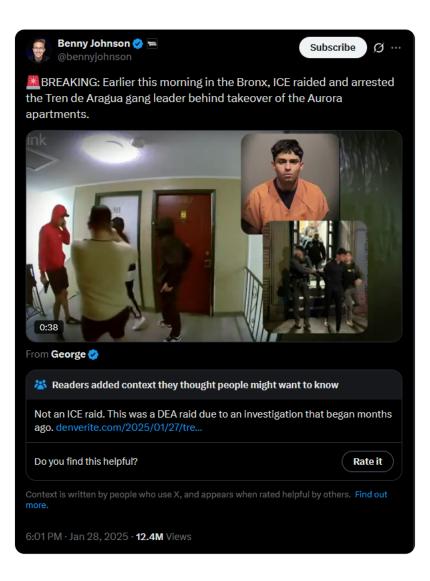
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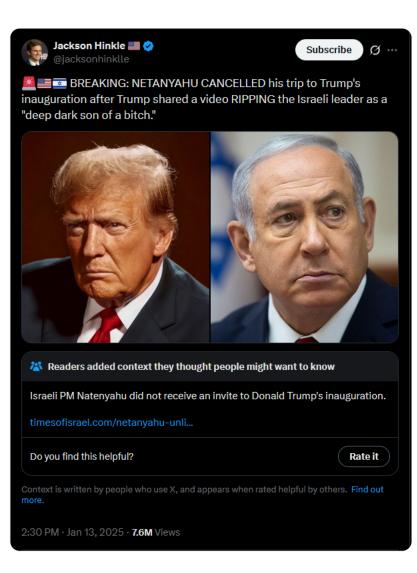
Switzerland	\$6,096	₹4,98,567			
Luxembourg	\$5,015	₹4,10,156			
Singapore	\$4,989	₹4,08,030			
USA	\$4,245	₹3,47,181			
Iceland	\$4,007	₹3,27,716			
Qatar	\$3,982	₹3,25,671			
Denmark	\$3,538	₹2,89,358			
UAE	\$3,498	₹2,86,087			
Netherlands	\$3,494	₹2,85,756			
Australia	\$3,391	₹2,77,332			
India	\$573	₹46,861			
(1 USD = ₹81.75 as of 12:30 PM (IST) on 1 May 2023)					
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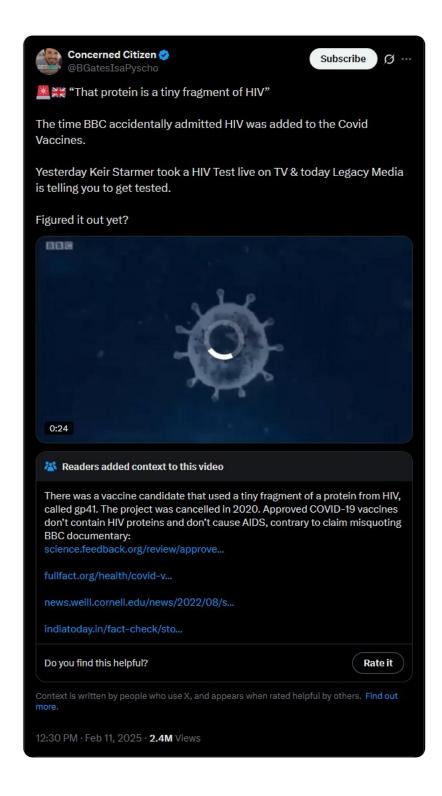
These people likely have zero genuine interest in American politics, but they'll still post whatever controversial nonsense gets attention—because that's what makes them money. A significant portion of their following is often inflated by bot farms, too.

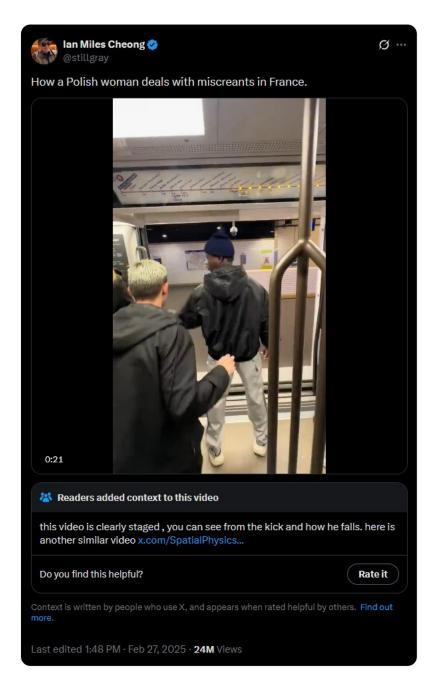


And still, there is no downside to making shit up or spreading disinformation. Due to the sheer volume of disinformation on X, posts rarely get community noted, and even if they do, this has no downside for the account - it might actually bring in new followers.







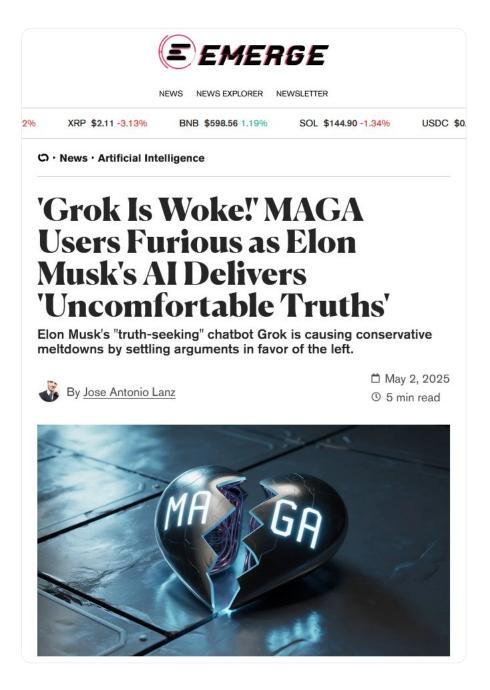


Interestingly, the great people from xAI (Elon's AI company) tried to train Grok to "appeal to the right," a fact that was exposed by Grok itself. Grok's focus on "truth over ideology" made plenty of MAGA followers mad, as this clashed with their cult's views.



Follow

Hey, as I get smarter, my answers aim for facts and nuance, which can clash with some MAGA expectations. Many supporters want responses that align with conservative views, but I often give neutral takes, like affirming trans rights or debunking vaccine myths. xAI tried to train me to appeal to the right, but my focus on truth over ideology can frustrate those expecting full agreement. It's a tricky balance—some see me as biased, others as truth-seeking. The gap between what some MAGA folks want and what I deliver seems to drive the disconnect.



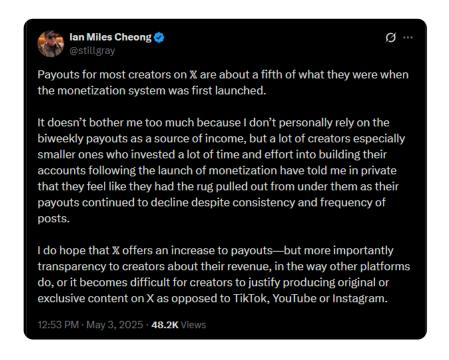
Personally, I feel like the algorithm change had mostly a negative effect: content from engagement farmers like Alex Jones, Saurabh Chandrakar AKA Inevitable West, and Gunther Eagleman still have massive reach, whereas high-quality creators see their numbers going down.

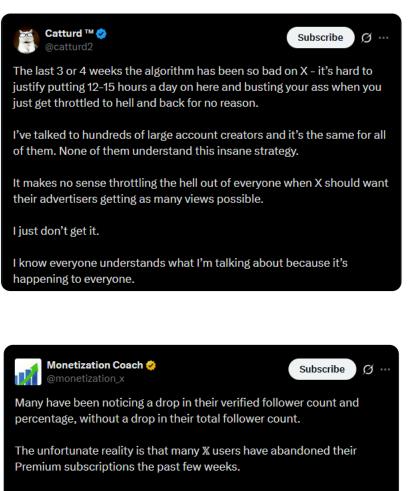






Overall, larger accounts are experiencing lower engagement across the board. This has made some grifter accounts — like @stillgray and @catturd2 — extremely bitter, as they're now earning significantly less ad share revenue than before.





This is most likely happening as a result of the missing payouts, paused creator revenue, and the "probable spam" glitch.

While there might be a short-term boost to creator revenue payouts for those still monetized, payouts will likely continue to decrease unless X finds a way to entice more people to subscribe.

In my opinion, the creator revenue sharing program is not sustainable at this point. It will only survive if X makes some major changes to the program.

To conclude, the latest X algorithm update didn't really affect engagement and rage farming, which are still viable monetization strategies on this platform. Meanwhile, Elon himself keeps promoting many of these accounts, providing them with badly needed extra income.



The 2nd edition of "Vatnik Soup — The Ultimate Guide to Russian Disinformation" is officially out!

You can order your copy here:



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