Twitter Thread by Andrew Stroehlein



Andrew Stroehlein
@astroehlein



Having a Twitter account is not a right.

If you incite violence on Twitter, the company can - and should - stop you. Good call.



Plans for “future armed protests” are spreading on Twitter and elsewhere, the company warned, “including a proposed secondary attack on the US Capitol and state capitol buildings on January 17, 2021”.
https://t.co/N8upH04568

Yes, people who boosted their careers off of Trump - his sycophants, his kids & people like Haley, who helped him attack and undermine human rights around the world - are boo-hooing right now.

Always beware of powerful people pretending to be victims.

https://t.co/0A5D5eJFvL



But no one should react with glee. The president of the United States has been inciting violence, and Republican Party leaders, along with a willing, violent mob, have been aiding his attempts to overthrow the democratic process.

That's the real story here.

The dangers are real, and we've all seen them. That Twitter even had to contemplate banning any politician for inciting violence is awful. That they had to ban the sitting president for it is even worse.

This puts it well.
https://t.co/wJPejtAvWy

> I don't trust them to get these decisions right, which is why I think they should have a heavy presumption in favor of leaving speech up--especially political leaders' speech. But if an official is truly inciting imminent violence, I don't see how they can justify not acting.
>
> — Jameel Jaffer (@JameelJaffer) January 9, 2021

Yes, the power that Twitter and other social media companies have over the public debate is something that should worry all of us. But online or offline, no one has a right incite violence.

Just who should be making decisions like this is a debate to have, for sure, and the sooner, the better. But at the moment, Twitter has the power, and thus the responsibility, to act. So, good that they did.

And yes, there are also questions about consistency of decision-making in such cases, but to be fair to Twitter, when it comes to incitement to violence & threats of violence, the company has become much better at cracking down on that in

recent years. Not perfect, but better.

In my experience - and I report maybe 5 or 10 accounts to Twitter every week - they respond to threats of violence in particular quite quickly. Sometimes within a hour even. (at least threats in English)

A good point here, as well...

It also happens to human rights activists, too.
https://t.co/csD3eOoHX7

> You know what actually *is* a Free Speech issue around Twitter suspending people?
>
> All the black, Jewish, Muslim, LGBTQ, women, and members of all other marginalised groups whose accounts have been wrongly removed due to baseless mass-reporting by those who hate them.
>
> — Andrew James Carter (@Carter_AndrewJ) January 9, 2021

And this:
https://t.co/IOya3Whbb0

> Yes! And the Syrians, Iranians, Filipinos, Turks, Egyptians, Saudis, etc who have either been subject to bad sanctions law or these corporations' complicity with their autocratic leaders.
>
> — Jillian C. York (@jilliancyork) January 9, 2021

Of all the many arguments around Twitter banning Trump for his inciting violence, the dumbest I've seen so far is, "they shouldn't do it because it enrages Trumpists".

Trying to appease extremists never works.