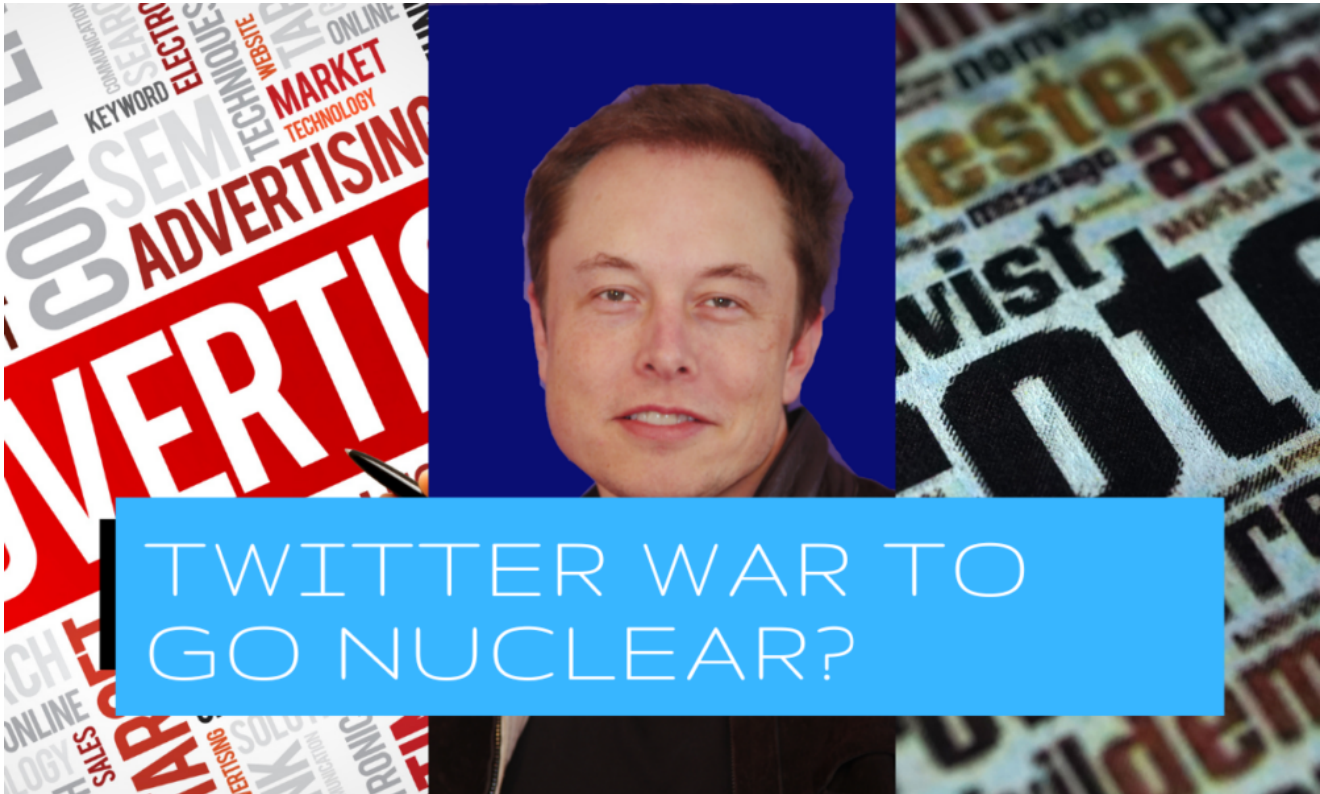


Twitter War to go nuclear?

cnav.news/2022/11/06/accountability/news-media/twitter-war-go-nuclear/

By Terry A. Hurlbut

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Yesterday the Twitter War showed a strong sign of escalation. Elon Musk noted on Friday that his new platform’s highest-volume advertisers had stopped advertising. Now he threatens a “thermonuclear name-and-shame campaign” if advertisers do not return. If he’s serious, he will likely place the platform firmly in the “parallel economy.” He might not have wanted to do this, if his earlier letter to advertisers is any indicator. But if they force him either to “go parallel” or go under, he’ll do the former, out of sheer necessity. If that happens, the conventional economy, and the legacy media, will lose all the control they ever had over Twitter.

Current state of Twitter revenue

Reportage on the current state of the Twitter War comes from *The Daily Mail* and *The Epoch Times*. Elon Musk has now, by most estimates, fired 3,700 people – slightly less than half the staff. In response, Jack Dorsey, the founder, actually *apologized* to staff for “growing the company too quickly.”

Folks at Twitter past and present are strong and resilient. They will always find a way no matter how difficult the moment. I realize many are angry with me. I own the responsibility for why everyone is in this situation: I grew the company size too quickly. I apologize for that.

— jack (@jack) [November 5, 2022](#)

I am grateful for, and love, everyone who has ever worked on Twitter. I don't expect that to be mutual in this moment...or ever...and I understand. ❤️

— jack (@jack) [November 5, 2022](#)

Many commentators and politicians – including pResident Joe Biden – expressed “worry” that Twitter had slipped their leash. They especially noticed that the company had laid off nearly half their staff before Midterms. (*The Daily Mail*, in noting Biden’s “worry,” ran through a litany of lies Biden himself has told.) For his part, Elon defiantly tweeted, “Power to the people!”

⚡⚡⚡ Power to the People ⚡⚡⚡

— Elon Musk (@elonmusk) [November 5, 2022](#)

But Elon also had to take note that several advertisers had quit the platform. These now include Volkswagen, General Motors, General Mills, Pfizer, Ford, and Mondelez (which now owns Nabisco and its brands). In reply, Musk took note of the shortfall in Twitter’s revenues:

Twitter has had a massive drop in revenue, due to activist groups pressuring advertisers, even though nothing has changed with content moderation and we did everything we could to appease the activists.

Extremely messed up! They’re trying to destroy free speech in America.

— Elon Musk (@elonmusk) [November 4, 2022](#)

One other user suggested that Twitter is lacking as an advertising platform.

It's because Twitter has the worst ad platform of any social media company. Its targeting and AD roi is so terrible that its virtually a black hole.

You only have people running fluff ads on Twitter, aka no ROI ads they can turn off.

Fix this and youll get all that money back.

— Alex Becker 🍊🏆👑 (@ZssBecker) [November 4, 2022](#)

Musk admitted the possibility and promised to address it.

Agreed. Working on it.

— Elon Musk (@elonmusk) [November 4, 2022](#)

Musk raises the stakes

But according to *The Epoch Times*, Musk didn't have to wait long for the Federalist Society to notice. Federalist Fellow Mike Davis made a suggestion at 11:44 a.m. EDT:

Dear @elonmusk:

You have nearly 114,000,000 Twitter followers.

Name and shame the advertisers who are succumbing to the advertiser boycotts.

So we can counter-boycott them.

And get your \$8 monthly subscription going asap.

So we can start to makeup for lost revenue now. <https://t.co/0IAKTnXTes>

— 🇺🇸 Mike Davis 🇺🇸 (@mrddmia) [November 4, 2022](#)

Quoting Musk's tweet, Davis said:

You have nearly 114,000,000 Twitter followers. Name and shame the advertisers who are succumbing to the advertiser boycotts. So we can counter-boycott them. And get your \$8 monthly subscription going asap. So we can start to makeup for lost revenue now.

Davis went on, through a lengthy thread, to drive home the point about Twitter becoming a subscription service. In that way, the users would be the customers. When an on-line service is offered free of charge, the users are the *product*.

<https://t.co/TYUqmPUiLT>

— 🇺🇸 Mike Davis 🇺🇸 (@mrddmia) [November 4, 2022](#)

Hours later, Elon Musk sent this message:

Thank you. A thermonuclear name & shame is exactly what will happen if this continues.

Thank you.

A thermonuclear name & shame is exactly what will happen if this continues.

— Elon Musk (@elonmusk) November 4, 2022

Musk further rolled out the Twitter Blue subscription service. The new service offers at least two key privileges:

- Verification (the Blue Checkmark) with a simpler standard than having to demonstrate prior fame on Wikipedia, and
- Capacity to upload longer videos.

Subscriptions sell for \$7.99 a month, though some subscribers can join for \$4.99 a month. Who may subscribe at the lower rate, is not clear. Perhaps he offers the lower rate to those who already have the Blue Checkmark.

Many have alleged that some have *bribed* their way to the Blue Checkmark, for \$15,000 a shot. Musk has expressed support for an investigation.

Further reaction

Thus far, Andrew Torba at Gab Social has made *no* comment. He has confidently predicted that Twitter will fail, and that Musk will gain nothing by trying to “appease the activists.”

Three of the largest advertisers to quit Twitter are automakers. As such they are Elon Musk’s competitors. So their decision to leave the platform *could* reflect their fear that Musk will shadow-ban them for that reason. But Musk doesn’t do things that way.

Enticing Twitter users to subscribe for pay would go a long way to making up for lost advertising revenue. It would also provide balance, which the old print media had, but is lacking on “free” services.

What remains unclear is how much freedom of speech users will have. At minimum, the platform will not tolerate gratuitous insults, obvious slurs, or generalizations. The real test will come whenever anyone expresses a contrary opinion on:

- The origins, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of infection by SARS-CoV-2,
- Whether any SARS-CoV-2 “vaccine” is safe or unsafe, effective or ineffective, or
- How secure are elections in the United States, or even whether officials can make them more secure without making it more difficult for those eligible to vote, to vote. (The eligibility of convicts, ex-convicts, and aliens, documented or un-, are the subjects of separate debates.)

But one thing Elon Musk can and should eliminate from Twitter, is pornography. Which Gab Social does not allow.

As ever, Andrew Torba continues to wait and watch.