

# Elon Musk launches test to see if users are willing to pay \$1 a year for X

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X has confirmed a Fortune report revealing that the platform formerly known as Twitter has begun charging a \$1 annual fee to new users in New Zealand and the Philippines. Unless new users in these locations cough up the dollar, they'll be blocked from accessing basic platform features, including posting, replying, or quoting posts.

The new fee kicked in yesterday, X Support posted on X.

"Starting today, we're testing a new program (Not-a-Bot) in New Zealand and the Philippines," X Support said. "New, unverified accounts will be required to sign up for a \$1 annual subscription to be able to post and interact with other posts. Within this test, existing users are not affected."

Earlier this year, outlets speculated that X-owner Elon Musk might implement a small fee to access the platform, and Fortune's report seemed to confirm that change could be coming soon globally, assuming that X's "test" goes well. X Support directly stated that the move was not intended to drive X profits despite the urgent situation of the company being \$13 billion in debt.

According to X, this "test was developed to bolster our

already successful efforts to reduce spam, manipulation of our platform, and bot activity, while balancing platform accessibility with the small fee amount. It is not a profit driver.”

Musk has been concerned about bot activity on the platform since before he purchased Twitter, even attempting to cancel or renegotiate the deal over suspicions about high numbers of bots. Since his purchase, he has rebranded the platform into X and repeatedly claimed that charging subscription fees could be the only meaningful way to reduce bot activity on the platform. Musk seems particularly motivated to move to a subscription model to get ahead of what could become a crushing new wave of bot activity supercharged by AI.

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Yesterday, Musk again posted on X that subscriptions are “the only way to fight bots without blocking real users.” He admitted that “this won’t stop bots completely” but claimed that charging the \$1 annual fee means that “it will be 1000X harder to manipulate the platform.”

X Support’s post unsurprisingly supports Musk’s statements about subscriptions successfully reducing bot activity on X, writing, “So far, subscription options have proven to be the main solution that works at scale.”

Fans of games like *World of Warcraft*—which have historically been overrun by bots—have complained that subscription fees have not limited bot activity. In June, The Wall Street Journal reported that “fake and spam accounts remain plentiful,” according to researchers who claimed that, despite the platform implementing the Twitter Blue subscription service, bots remained pervasive. Twitter Blue may have even made it harder to detect bots, experts told WSJ, by changing the verification process.

Worse, experts told WSJ that Musk may have incentivized some

spammers to purchase subscriptions because, “while the cost of signing up might be an obstacle for some, well-funded scammers might be willing to pay because a perk for subscribers is that their tweets get more exposure, which is often the ultimate goal anyway.”

X Support’s post linked to a blog that provided more details about Musk’s test, which has been dubbed the “Not-a-Bot” test.

According to the blog, new users in the Philippines and New Zealand will be prompted to verify their phone number and then charged a \$1 annual fee at sign-up. Any users who opt out of payment will have access to X for reading purposes only, limiting features to seeing tweets, watching videos, and following accounts.

It’s unclear how long X will run the test, but it’s possible it may end abruptly at any point. X’s Not-a-Bot terms and conditions say that “X may modify, pause, or discontinue the Program at any time with no refund to you.”

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