

‘Maximum amazing’: here’s what we think we know about Elon Musk’s plan for Twitter

“I have a ton of ideas,” Elon Musk texted Twitter CEO Parag Agrawal in April, “but lmk if I’m pushing too hard. I just want Twitter to be maximum amazing.” This was a few days after he agreed to join the company’s board – and a few weeks before he decided to buy the company instead, before trying to renege on that deal, before suing and being sued by Twitter, before apparently deciding to go through with it after all. For all the back and forth over the last several months, it’s still clear that Musk likes Twitter as a platform, understands its appeal and power, and has lots of ideas for how to change it.

“I just want Twitter to be maximum amazing.”

In a normal situation, we’d now be able to say with virtual certainty that Musk will, in fact, become the majority owner of Twitter. But, of course, this is Elon Musk, so the “anything can happen and the most insane thing probably will” rule still applies. There’s still a trial scheduled for October 17th and plenty of time left for chaos in this deal.

But let’s play this out a bit and assume the deal actually closes at some point in the near future. We can begin to turn to the next question: what will a Musk-owned Twitter be like? Over the last six months, Musk has given us some clues as to how he might push to change the platform and even the whole purpose and point of Twitter. And on Tuesday, he pointed to where it’s headed. “Buying Twitter is an accelerant to creating X, the everything app,” he tweeted after the news of his renewed offer went public.

As usual with Musk, and especially with Musk and Twitter, you should believe him about as much as you'd believe any other Extremely Online poster – which is to say, not much at all! Musk often says things he doesn't mean; his beliefs change over time; things could change once he actually owns the company; he might not end up owning the company or owning it for very long; he might just shut the whole thing down for the fun of it!

But with a thousand caveats assumed, here's what we think we know about how Twitter, the product and platform, might change with Musk as its owner:

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Musk has long been a fan of the Signal messaging app, and the platform has been on his mind from the earliest days of his involvement with Twitter. Former Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey, earlier this year, texted Musk that the future of Twitter should involve a protocol run by a foundation, so it was separate from any business concerns. "A bit like what Signal has done," Dorsey wrote. "Otherwise you have surface area that governments and advertisers will try to influence and control."

Musk, too, has been thinking about how to bring some of Signal's features – or even its actual platform – into Twitter. "Trying to figure out what to do with Twitter DMs," he texted Brian Acton, Signal's co-founder and executive chairman. "They should be end to end encrypted (obv). Dunno if better [sic] to have redundancy with Signal or integrate it."

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creator economy

Few people would probably think of Twitter as a great platform for video, but Musk is clearly interested in changing that. He has talked with several friends and colleagues about how to make video advertising work on Twitter and how to bring video creators over from platforms like YouTube and TikTok.

"From a social perspective – Twitter allowing for high-quality video uploads (1080p at a minimum) & adding a basic in-app video editor would have quite a big impact I think," Vivien Hantusch, a longtime Musk fan who now works for him in Germany, texted to Musk. "Especially useful for citizen journalism & fun educational content. Might even help Twitter regain market share lost to TikTok." Musk's response: "Agreed." And then, "Twitter can't monetize video yet, so video is a loss for Twitter and for the those [sic] who post."

Pushing Twitter to become more creator-friendly also matches with Musk's other ambitions for the platform. Creators are the most reliable source of big audiences, and Twitter's payment tools would take a cut of subscriptions and tips.

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For a brief moment, the idea of a blockchain-based future of Twitter seemed to appeal to Musk. "I have an idea for a blockchain social media system that does both payments and short text messages/links like twitter," he texted his brother Kimbal. "You have to pay a tiny amount to register your message on the chain, which will cut out the vast majority of spam and bots. There is no threat to choke, so free speech is guaranteed."

Musk also seemed interested in running a decentralized social network as something apart from Twitter – an idea similar to what Twitter has already been exploring with Bluesky. But ultimately, Musk seemed to decide it simply wouldn't work – at least not yet. "Blockchain Twitter isn't possible," he texted the banker Michael Grimes a few weeks after the texts to his brother, "as the bandwidth and latency requirements cannot be supported by a peer to peer network, unless those 'peers' are absolutely gigantic, thus defeating the purpose of a decentralized network."

a: hover]: shadow-highlight-franklin [&>a]: shadow-underline-black dark: [&>a: hover]: shadow-highlight-franklin dark: [&>a]: shadow-underline-white md:text-30">Is this the end of the bots?

Obviously, Musk has spent the last few months ranting and raving about the problem of spam and bots on Twitter. And while he probably has a bigger crypto-scam-reply-guy problem than your average Twitter user, there's no question that inauthentic users are a thing on Twitter. Musk has pledged to

make “authenticating all humans” a priority while also purging the bots from the platform. In fact, that’s one of the reasons he wanted to take the company private in the first place: to remove all the bots and crater Twitter’s user numbers without scaring investors.

How will this play out, and what does it mean for the many harmless and fun bots on Twitter? Hard to say. Anyone who has tried to fight spam and bots knows that differentiating between human and machine is much harder than it sounds.