Twitter briefly shut down @Bitcoin, sparking wild conspiracy theories

Twitter suspended the @Bitcoin Twitter account, which is run by an anonymous user, over the weekend. The account was briefly taken over by a user who claimed to be Turkish, then a user who claimed to be Russian, before apparently being restored to its previous owner Monday afternoon.

“We do not comment on individual accounts so nothing to share,” a Twitter spokesperson said when asked about the suspension. “That’s some bullshit if you ask me,” the user behind @Bitcoin tweeted. “I’d like to know why my account was given to someone else, and then when it’s reinstated I’m missing 750,000 of my followers.”

The @Bitcoin account had more than 821,000 followers when it was suspended. Those followers disappeared, but it appears that Twitter is slowly restoring them.

“That’s some bullshit if you ask me.”
The mysterious suspension naturally stoked conspiracy theories in the bitcoin community. The @Bitcoin account is supportive of Bitcoin Cash, also known as Bcash. Bitcoin Cash was founded by a group of developers, miners, and other members of the community who split off in August 2017, duplicating the bitcoin blockchain and establishing a new cryptocurrency, after a dispute over how to address the growing network’s scaling issues.

The relationship between Bitcoin Cash and Bitcoin, or Bitcoin Core, is acrimonious. Some Bitcoin Cash supporters suspected

that their enemies on the Bitcoin Core side caused @Bitcoin's suspension by falsely reporting it to Twitter for spam or harassment.

> *Twitter is rewarding bad behavior. To review, #Core fans*
> *– Reported @Bitcoin acct for abuse*
> *– Reported my Reddit and GitHub accounts for abuse*
> *– Drowned Bitpay and Xapo apps with one star reviews and votes*
> *etc.*
> *This is how they "debate" with those who disagree.*
>
> *– Jeff Garzik (@jgarzik) April 8, 2018*

There have been calls to report the @Bitcoin account before. In January, a user called on others to report the account, calling it a "Fake @Bitcoin account." Some members of the community agreed, while others objected, saying the owner of the account should be able to tweet about whatever they want. As with many online conversations about bitcoin, it's difficult to tell who is real and who is a sock puppet; the thread was eventually locked because the moderators claimed users were "brigading and vote cheating." Similarly, on Twitter there was a flood of tweets from accounts claiming that they had reported @Bitcoin for spreading what they viewed as propaganda for Bitcoin Cash. Others said they reported it for "spam," "hate speech," or "price pumping." "I complained to Google, because when I would Google bitcoin I would get a prominently displayed Twitter feed of @Bitcoin with three separate posts, and always the first one was that bcash was the real bitcoin," reads one Reddit comment. "I found it a fraudulent statement intended to confuse and induce newbies to buy their cheap knock off product."

Some said they believed the account had been previously been hijacked by Bitcoin Cash supporter Roger Ver. The account, which was registered in August 2011 according to its Twitter

bio, only began tweeting about Bitcoin Cash in January. At the time, @Bitcoin tweeted, “The ownership of this account has not changed hands. I became busy with other things, much has changed since then and I’ve decided to take a more active role in the community once again.” Ver claims he has no connection to the account, and that it “is owned by someone involved in Bitcoin since 2009.”

> *I’ve never owned the @Bitcoin account. It is owned by someone involved in Bitcoin since 2009. He supports #BCH, is well known in the Bitcoin ecosystem, but doesn’t want to deal with incessant trolling so he has chosen not to make his identity public.*
>
> *— Roger Ver (@rogerkver) April 9, 2018*

A deeper conspiracy theory says that Twitter suspended the account because of CEO Jack Dorsey’s support for Bitcoin Core and $2.5 million investment in Lightning Labs, a startup building technology for Bitcoin Core.

“I’d love to hear a public explanation from @twittersupport about why #bitcoin competitor #LightningNetwork investor @jack disabled this account, gave it to someone else, only to return it in the face of public backlash with 750,000 fewer followers,” the @Bitcoin account tweeted after being restored.

Some felt that the @Bitcoin account shouldn’t be used by anyone. “Twitter is a platform for people to promote their own agenda,” tweeted Nick Tomaino, a cryptocurrency venture capital investor. “Only right that @bitcoin stays inactive/suspended.”

Twitter started blocking cryptocurrency-related ads at the end of March, but confirmed it does not have content rules specific to cryptocurrencies.

https://www.theverge.com/2018/4/9/17217354/bitcoin-twitter-shu

t-down-conspiracy-theories