Twitter Will Test Enabling Accounts to Control Who Can Reply to Their Tweets

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Twitter revealed the next steps in its ongoing effort to give people on its platform more control over their conversations in a session at CES 2020 Wednesday.

The social network said it will begin testing a new conversation participants menu on its compose screen that will give the tweet creator four options for who can reply to their tweets: Global, meaning anyone on Twitter; Group, limiting replies to people followed or mentioned by the tweeting account; Panel, whereby only people mentioned in the tweet can reply; and Statement, which prohibits all replies.

The conversation participants menu is being tested with the intention of making it available to all accounts on the platform, whether they belong to individual users or businesses.

A Twitter spokesperson said in an email, “As part of our work to help people feel safe participating in the conversation on Twitter, we want to give them more control over the conversations they start—for example, who can reply to their tweets. We will be experimenting with this in early 2020.”

Twitter director of product management Suzanne Xie said at the CES session that the social network will experiment with the new feature during the first quarter, with the aim of refining it and preparing it for a global rollout later this year.

Xie joined Twitter last August when the social network acquired the company she founded and led, Lightwell, a startup provider of mobile design tools for building interactive, narrative applications.

She said during the session, “We thought, well, what if we could actually put more control into the author’s hands before the fact and give them really a way to control the conversation space as they’re actually composing a tweet? … Right now, public conversation on Twitter is when you tweet something that everyone in the world will see and everyone can reply, or you can have a very private conversation in a direct message. So, there’s an entire spectrum of conversations that we don’t see on Twitter yet,” Ingrid Lunden and Sarah Perez of TechCrunch reported.

Vice president of product Kayvon Beykpour added, as reported by Lunden and Perez, “The primary motivation is control. We want to build on the theme of authors getting more control, and we’ve thought … that there are many analogs of how people have communications in life.”

Dieter Bohn of The Verge reported that Xie also cited as motivation for the test “getting ratio’d, getting dunked on, the dynamics that happen that we think aren’t as healthy are definitely part of … our thinking about this,” adding that in cases where misinformation cannot be rebutted due to inability to comment, users can turn to quote tweeting, and this is “something we’re going to be watching really closely as we experiment.”

Twitter also said during its CES session that it plans to bring the conversation threading that it has been testing in its twttr prototype application will come to its flagship app in the coming months.

https://www.adweek.com/digital/twitter-will-test-enabling-accounts-to-control-who-can-reply-to-their-tweets/