

Twitter's \$1,000 checkmark will be free for the 10,000 most-followed companies

It seems like some companies may not have to pay Twitter \$1,000 a month for the privilege of retaining their verified status and checkmarks. Twitter is giving a free pass to the 500 advertisers that spend the most on its platform as well as the top 10,000 organizations by follower count, according to a report from *The New York Times*.

The decision comes as Twitter is preparing to make major changes to the way verification works on Twitter. It's said that it'll start winding down the legacy verified program in April and announced plans for Twitter Verification for Organizations. The latter is meant to let companies that are willing to pay \$1,000 a month keep their verification as well as denote specific accounts as "affiliated."

For example, a newsroom like *The Verge* could verify the journalists working for it, proving that the person reaching out for an interview actually does work there. (Though, to state this clearly, Vox Media currently has no plans to do this.) Brands could also use it to verify affiliated accounts; Twitter currently does this with its Twitter Support and Twitter Blue accounts.

Companies that don't get the free pass could rack up a big Twitter bill

That feature doesn't come cheap, though. On top of the \$1,000 a month price for Verification for Organizations, you also have to pay \$50 a month for each affiliated account. The price

could add up fast.

Twitter offering at least part of that package for free to advertisers and organizations with a lot of followers could help keep the steep price hike in verification from affecting the Twitter community too much. People who use the service as a source of information want to know that it's actually coming from a verified account, and it sounds like a lot of the major players won't be losing their checkmarks, even if they don't want to fork over \$12,000 a year to Twitter.

It's also obviously an olive branch to advertisers whose relationship with Twitter has been strained of late. Twitter's ad revenue has reportedly dropped precipitously since Elon Musk's takeover, as major advertising firms have warned clients to be wary of it. It's very possible that a \$1,000 monthly bill could be the straw that breaks the camel's back for a lot of advertisers, but if Twitter's providing it for free, they won't have to make that decision.

It could, however, make it harder for new companies to build an audience on the platform, as they'll either have to compete with brands that are verified when they're not or cough up the \$1,000 a month to get the checkmark, too.

Brands are some of the most vulnerable to impersonation, as we saw from the wave of fake accounts that popped up when Twitter Blue verification first launched, letting people buy a blue checkmark. Twitter has put some guardrails in place in an attempt to keep that from happening again – if you change your profile picture, display name, or @ handle, you'll temporarily lose the checkmark until Twitter reviews your profile to make sure you're not breaking its rules against impersonation.

But as Twitter prepares to take away the "legacy" checkmarks of both people and institutions unless they start paying for Blue or Verification for Organizations, impersonators and other bad actors are almost certainly going to test those

safety systems. There are a lot of people we're used to seeing with blue or gold checkmarks next to their names, such as *The New York Times*, the White House, or LeBron James.

If they choose not to pay for a checkmark, there's a possibility pranksters and scammers could make an account that, at first glance, looks more official than the real one. For the companies that Twitter's specifically interested in protecting, though, it sounds like that won't be as much of a concern.

<https://www.theverge.com/2023/3/31/23664923/twitter-verification-for-organizations-free-for-most-followed>