

THREE THINGS: CRUSTPUNK NAZI BAR UPDATE, \$42K EXTORTION EDITION

[NB: Check the byline, thanks. /~Rayne]

It's been a while since we had a chat about the crustpunk Nazi bar known as Twitter. The dead-ending bird decided press the issue for us.

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Community members have been asking in comments about the now-empty widget in the right-hand vertical navigation zone.

It's dead, Jim.

The widget in the right-hand navigation column which featured latest tweets by emptywheel contributors no longer works because Elon Musk changed the business model at Twitter yet again, requiring users of Twitter's API to pay \$42,000 to continue to do so.

That kind of money can buy a lot of original reporting as well as platform updates and hosting.

The original developers of that widget also stopped servicing it years ago.

It will be replaced at some time in the near future with a Mastodon or Fediverse-friendly widget though we don't have an estimated time to completion.

Bear with us on this matter, please and thanks.

You can continue to follow Marcy, bmaz, Ed Walker, and Jim White on the bird app without having to log in -- just click on the embedded links. Unfortunately this will also count as engagement at the crustpunk Nazi bar which Musk will use to continue to claim the bird app is a going concern.

Whenever the major news outlets and U.S. officials both elected and appointed – yes, taxpayer-funded persons are using the crustpunk Nazi bar – get their heads out of their asses and migrate from the Nazi bar, more of Team emptywheel will move as well. But as long as the media and government entities continue to use the Saudi-funded right-wing mouthpiece the bird app has become, some of the team will tweet there.

As for the exorbitant and extortive fee Musk wants for API access, the damage is not just emptywheel readers being unable to read tweets through this site.

Now academic researchers and NGO monitors of hate speech, illegal activity, disinformation, and foreign influence may no longer be able to access bird app content. That's not a bug but a feature.

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Speaking of hate speech and illegal activity and other content typically moderated by reputable social media platforms, Mike Masnick at Techdirt created and shared an excellent game in which players can experience what moderators must do to boot crap out of comments and still keep their jobs:

Moderator Mayhem: A Mobile Game To See How Well YOU Can Handle Content Moderation

(Side note: Techdirt left the bird app this past week because of the \$42K fee. Good for them.)

Moderation here at emptywheel is not as strenuous as Masnick's Moderator Mayhem game because this site's traffic simply isn't a big factor 95% of the time. We can also predict most traffic spikes which lead to trolling upticks based on news events and specific posts as well, unlike most Big Tech social media platforms.

But the fuzzy nature of some comments which

moderators must screen can be challenging and is likely to be more so over time here and at the big platforms as influence operations incorporate AI to weasel around moderation.

Unlike the Big Tech social media platforms this site doesn't demand community members provide a cell phone number or verifiable email address or other personal data which links them personally to content they share in comments. It's a careful balancing act between recognizing legitimate human participants commenting in good faith and assuring them privacy. Moderation at Big Tech socmed platforms compromises privacy to eliminate the necessity of validating legitimate community members.

Balancing community members' privacy and site security means we spend a bit more obvious effort asking community members who want to comment to create and maintain a username which can be readily recognized over the history of their comments. The emergence of AI will make this more important to prevent spoofing of established community members.

All of which means emptywheel community members will continue to be nagged for a unique username consisting of a minimum 8 letters which they will use every time they comment, or risk moderation.

For more perspective on moderation, it's worth reading Vanity Fair's article about new socmed platform Bluesky's problematic approach (or lack thereof) to moderation. You'd think Jack Dorsey would have had this nailed down before launch given his experience at Twitter but no – he's proven he's another "free speech absolutist" which is just code for crustpunk Nazi bar owner/operator.

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Aside from how the bird app and moderation affects emptywheel's site, the bird app continues to find out about its fucking around.

Or rather, certain persons foolish enough to

trust Elmo and the bird app after he fired ~85% of its employees are finding out about Elmo's fuckery.

In a debacle rivaling SpaceX's 4/20 Starship launch explosion, we've all heard by now about Florida's Gov. Ron DeSantis' spectacular implosion on soft launch last Wednesday when Twitter Spaces failed to work as expected during his presidential campaign launch announcement.

One of Twitter's top engineers, Foad Dabiri, quit on Thursday, amid much speculation the exit was due to the Twitter Spaces failure and not a resignation but a separation.

You'll note the first comments at that Yahoo News piece are Elmo fanboi trolls who blame the Twitter Spaces' failure on sabotage.

The other shoe dropped Friday: it seems Elmo didn't pay the bill for the Redis Labs software which handled audio streaming traffic.

The best engineers in the world can't turn a deadbeat into a viable production platform. No wonder the engineer left; one might wonder if Dabiri was a green card employee who had no choice to stay until it was obvious it would damage his personal cred.

The failure reflected badly not only on Elmo and Twitter but on DeSantis. Why would any sentient being risk their next desired job on a platform which has been riddled with problems since Elmo bought it, let alone a platform run by a guy who has twice tweeted supportive comments about a rival candidate Sen. Tim Scott and is in part funded by another major campaign contributor, Larry Ellison?

That's just begging for an opportunity to find out.

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As with all social media platforms, your mileage may vary. Engage wisely.