

Twitter Suggestions from Twitter come back all Democrats

Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey Testifies at House Energy and Commerce Committee  
C-SPAN

Subject: Social Media and Content Monitoring  
Commentary included within brackets ( )

Representative Jeff Duncan (R-SC),

“How do you explain how a female twenty something year old, who just put in an email address and 202 area code, why does she only get liberal suggestions?”

(The liberal suggestions were the top Democratic party leaders, Nancy Pelosi, Chuck Schumer etc..)

Dorsey,

“We, we simply don’t have enough information in that case to build up a more informed, um, suggestion for her, so the...the 202 number was all we have, so, therefore..” makes a circle in the air with his hand.

Duncan cuts him off,

“I get that you don’t have much information on that. One hundred percent of the suggested followers, were biased,” Duncan is holding papers in the air speaking, “where was kim Kardashian? Huge twitter.. where was Taylor Swift? Where was Ariana Grande? In fact I can look at Twitters most followers and there not these people you suggested for her and there was nothing in her, on her search history on her government work computer to suggest that she was left leaning, right leaning, or anything, um, Katy Perry number 1...she wasn’t on this list. How do you explain that?”

Dorsey,

“I think it was just looking at the 202 as a DC number and then taking DC based accounts and the most followed probably, the most engaged with DC accounts as, as,”

Duncan cuts in,

“In the 202 area code, area?”

Dorsey,

“In the 202 area,”

Duncan,

“Ok, ah, where’s Bryce Harper, where’s Ovechkin, where are the Capitals? Where are thee, ah, the Nats, umm, wheres DC United, where are the sports teams? If you’re going to use 202 area code and say that’s one of the filters where are those folks? Ya know, outside the local arena, there are no athletes, there are no, ahh, singers, there are no celebrities, there were only suggested political figures of a very liberal persuasion that were suggested for her to follow, nobody else. That shows bias sir.”

Dorsey,

“Well yeah, I mean, we, we, do have a lot more work to do in terms of onboarding, n, your pointing out some weaknesses, and signals that we used to craft those recommendations, this, um, so I, ya know, if she continues, if she were to start following or following to her account or engaging with particular tweets that model would completely change, ah, based on, those um, we just don’t have enough information.. sounds like we are not being exhaustive enough with the one piece of information we do have, which is her, her area code,” nods head repeatedly.

Duncan,

“Mr. Dorsey let me ask you this, after this hearing and, and me clearly showing this bias, and a lot of other questions.. if someone in a 202 are code that’s 28 years old, set up a Twitter account with very limited information but has an email address and a 202 area code are you gonna tell me today that their gonna get other suggested followers,” holds up papers, “than, the liberals that I mention?”

Dorsey,

“That, that isn’t a good outcome for us.”

Rep. Buddy Carter (R-GA)

“He said, he said, ya, know I’m a conservative teenage high school student and I’ve got, I’m on Twitter. I’ve got over forty thousand followers, yet I have tried.. this young man had tried, five times to get verification and yet hes been turned down all five times and his question to me was, I’ve got friends who are more liberal than me who have got less followers than me, and yet they’ve been verified, why is that? What, what should I tell him?”

Dorsey,

“So, we, um, first and foremost, we believe we need a complete reboot of our verification system, it’s not serving us, it’s not serving the people that we serve. Well, um, we.. it, it [sic] really depends on when his friends were verified. We had an open verification system, ah, not to long ago that looked for various criteria. We verified people based on that and it’s not a function of how many followers you have. We have some verified folks that only have five thousand followers, um, we..”

Carter cuts in,

“That was his point, I mean he had forty thousand. He couldn’t - he doesn’t understand, I don’t know what to tell him,”

Dorsey,

“Yeah,”

Carter,

“Ya know it seems to me like he would’ve been verified and from what he explained to me and to staff is that, they were... they applied at the same time,”

Dorsey,  
"Yeah,"

Carter,  
"So why was he denied and they were approved?"

Dorsey,  
"I, I. I would need to understand his particular case, so what I would want to know, um, his name, and,"

Carter answers,  
"I'd be glad to give you that information, because I like to give the young man an explanation, ok, I think he deserves it. Alright let me ask ya something, and I apologize, but being the last one sometimes you're a little bit redundant, but you were asked earlier because, ya know, this committee, and particularly the help sub committee has been the tip of the spear, if you will, of the opioid crisis that we have in our country. As you're aware, were losing a hundred and fifteen people every day to opioid addiction, and, and we just talked about algorithms and you've been talking about it all day about, ya know, why is it, why is it that we haven't been able to get these sights off; what, what's missing, I mean, what are you identifying that you're missing not to be able to get these, these Tweets off?"

Dorsey,  
"I, I, don't know if it's um, if it's more of ah, ah.. new, um, behavior.. a new approach, um.."

Carter,  
"This has been going on quite awhile,"

Dorsey,  
"It's certainly not an excuse. We need to look at these more deeply in terms of like how our algorithms are automatically determining when we see this sort of activity and taking action that much faster,"

Carter,  
"Ok, fair enough, and my last question is this and I want to talk about, um, intellectual property, particularly as it relates to.. to live stream, now you've been here all day. You've been to the Senate this morning, you've been here, and this afternoon, and all day long, ya know, you've been saying, and ya know, we have no other reason but to believe you. Yeah, we need to work on this, we gotta work on this, that's the.. the piracy that takes place with with live streaming, movies, and intellectual property like that.. that's been going on for quite awhile hasn't it?"

Dorsey,  
"It has,"

Carter,  
"Why should I believe you and we've had another CEO of another, um, social media that was here a couple months ago, and it's the same thing, ya know, we're working on it, we need to get it done, but yet this is something that's been going on and you ain't got it done yet. Why.. why, should I believe

you now, and I say that because Doctor Bucshon, Representative Walberg, I echo their comments. I don't want the Federal government to get into this business, I don't want to regulate you guys. I, I think it will stifle innovation, but why should I believe you - you haven't got this fixed,"

Dorsey,

"Ah, well, the reason we still have to work on it is because these methods of attack constantly change and we'll never arrive at the one solution that fixes everything, but we need to constantly iterate based on new vectors of stealing IP, or rebroadcasting IP for instance, because they're constantly changing and we just need to be ten steps ahead of that."

Carter,

"Ya know I want to believe you and.. and I'm gonna believe ya, but I.. I have to tell ya, I hope you believe me, we don't want the Federal.. and you don't want the Federal government being in this. I think the success of, of the internet, n.. and of your products, has been, because the Federal government has stayed out of it, but we gotta have help, we have to have a commitment, and when I look at this I think, why would I believe him, if, if they're working on this and they haven't even got it fixed yet,"

Dorsey,

"Absolutely,"