

**Twitter, Inc.**  
**Responses to Questions for the Record**  
**U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Oversight and Reform**  
**May 22, 2019**  
**Hearing on “Securing U.S. Election Infrastructure and Protecting Political Discourse”**

**Questions from Representative Mark Meadows**

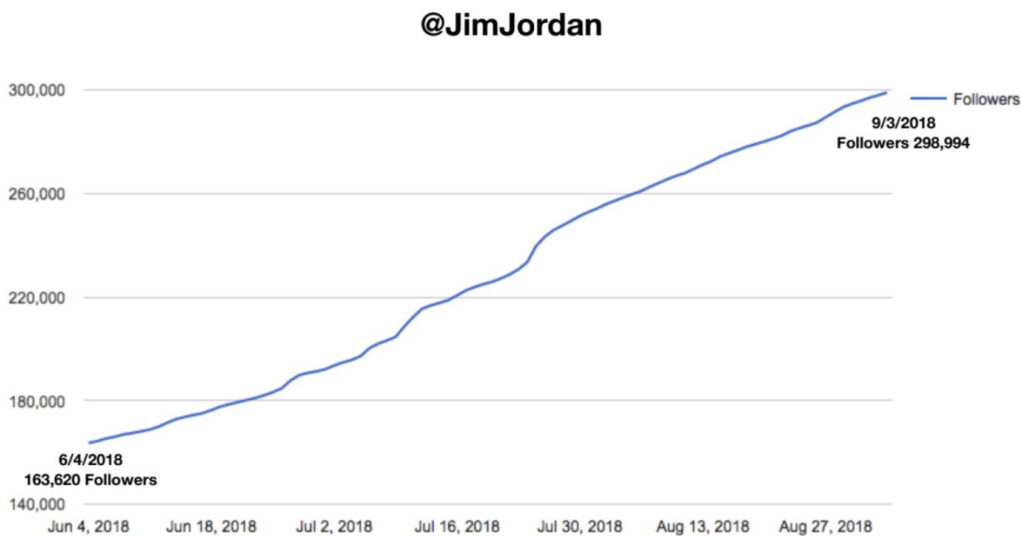
***Question: Auto-suggesting is a vital component to account visibility and the creation of followers. The four impacted accounts each were not auto-suggesting. At what time and using which resources did Twitter discover that these accounts were not auto-suggesting?***

Answer: On July 25, 2018, approximately 600,000 accounts were identified as having experienced an auto-suggest problem. This issue was initially identified by public reporting. On July 26, 2018, Twitter publicly announced that some accounts were not being auto-suggested even when people were searching for their specific name. Our technology relied upon decision-making criteria that included consideration of the behavior of people following these accounts. Specifically, the followers of these accounts had a higher proportion of abusive behavior on the platform. To be clear, this issue was limited solely to the search auto-suggestion function. The accounts, their Tweets, and all surrounding conversation about those accounts remained displayed in search results. Once identified, this issue was promptly resolved within 24 hours. The vast majority of impacted accounts were not political in nature.

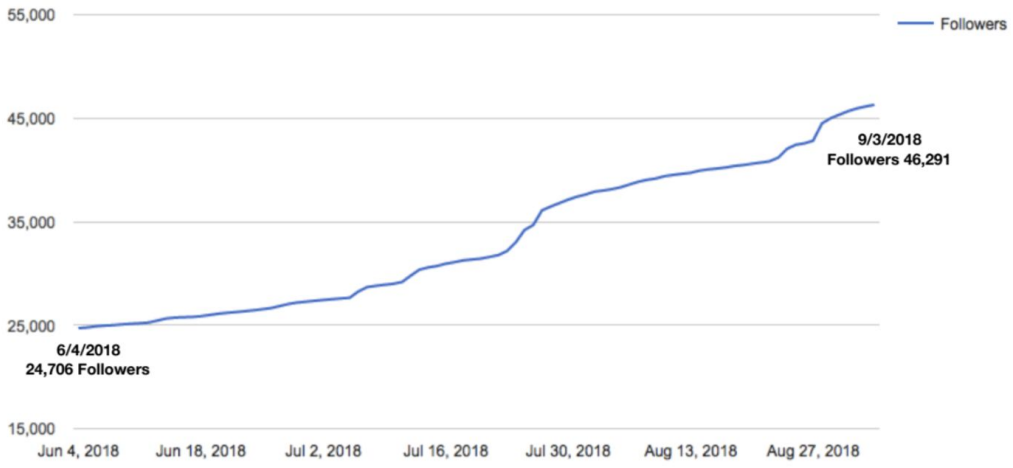
**Question:** *Please describe the particular impact an account shifting from auto-suggesting to non auto-suggesting will have on an account’s visibility and follower rate. How do your analytic capabilities take fluctuations in these metrics into account and check for discrepancies?*

Answer: The algorithms used by Twitter to make personalized account suggestions utilize a number of criteria to help improve the customer experience. Among numerous additional criteria, Twitter may make suggestions based on location, such as the country or city in which an individual is located as well as suggestions based on an account’s activity on Twitter. The activity on Twitter includes the Tweets originating from the account, and other accounts that are followed, engaged with, or viewed.

We have provided the following information on the four accounts specifically discussed at the hearing, of which all were previously identified by the individual account owners as impacted by the auto-suggest issue. The graphs contain publicly available data on the follower counts for the three-month period surrounding the incident, which occurred in late July. The other impacted Members of Congress also saw their followers increase during this time period.



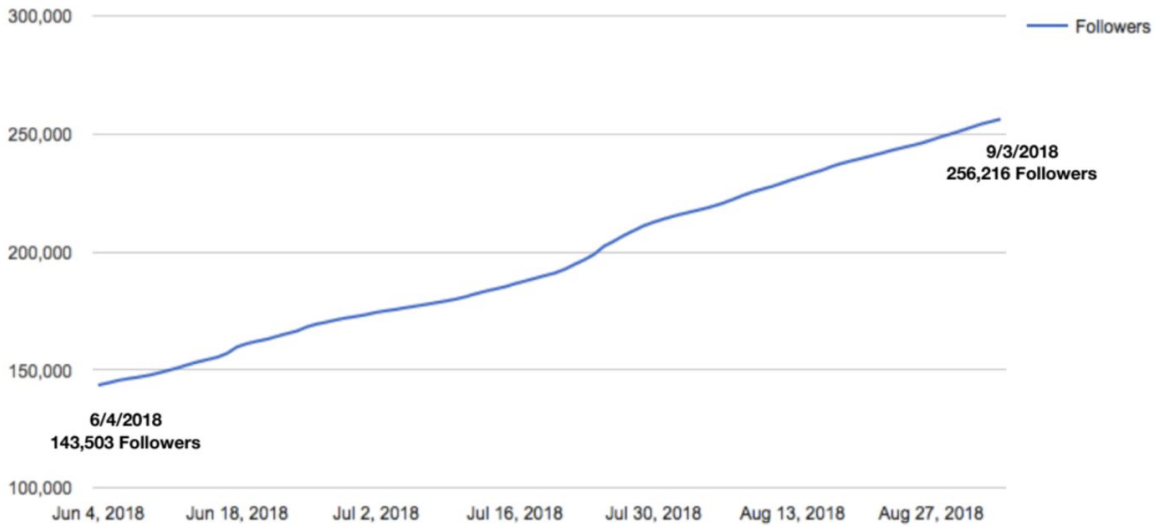
# @MattGaetz



## @MarkMeadows



## @DevinNunes



**Question: *What steps has Twitter taken to integrate human and computer review of content action to ensure “shadow banning” does not occur?***

Answer: Twitter’s purpose is to serve the public conversation and we strive each day to ensure that anyone, regardless of political affiliation, has the opportunity to participate in the millions of conversations that occur every day around the world. We do not make enforcement decisions based on political views or ideology. We do not shadowban. We use a range of behavioral signals—such as how accounts behave and react to one another—to identify content that detracts from a healthy public conversation, such as spam and abuse. These behavioral signals are an important factor in how Twitter organizes and presents content in communal areas like conversation and search. Our primary goal is to ensure that relevant content and Tweets contributing to healthy conversation will appear first in conversations and search.

Because our service operates in dozens of languages and hundreds of cultural contexts around the globe, we have found that behavior is a strong signal that helps us identify bad faith actors on our platform. The behavioral ranking that Twitter utilizes does not consider in any way political views or ideology. It focuses solely on the behavior of all accounts. Twitter is always working to improve our behavior-based ranking models such that their breadth and accuracy will improve over time. We use thousands of behavioral signals in our behavior-based ranking models—this ensures that no one signal drives the ranking outcomes and protects against malicious attempts to manipulate our ranking systems.