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Elon Musk, King of Censorship: 10 Times the 'Free Speech Absolutist' Silenced Twitter Users

150



Thomas Germain

June 25, 2023 · 10 min read

In this article:

Elon Musk American business magnate



Elon Musk celebrating.

Elon Musk talks a big game about freedom of expression. The billionaire refers to himself as a "free speech absolutist," and spent the last year making bold promises about undoing Twitter's perceived history of suppressing distasteful ideas. But the old saying goes, you should judge a man by his actions, not his words. By that metric, it

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Governments often ask social media companies to take down posts or accounts they don't like. Before Musk took over, Twitter complied with about half of these requests. The numbers shot up under his leadership; these days, [Elon's Twitter cooperates with government censorship requests 80% of the time](#). All this from a man who foamed at the mouth over the self-important "Twitter Files," internal company emails that Elon said would reveal Twitter's earlier collaboration with the US Government. ([The Twitter Files](#) did not reveal that.)

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Musk isn't just censoring on behalf of government strong men, though. The tweeter-in-chief seems more than happy to decide what kind of speech is and isn't allowed on Twitter based on his own personal opinions, and has a history of changing Twitter's policies to silence people and ideas he doesn't like.

Take Musk's growing obsession with the transgender community, for instance. He declared that [the words "cis" and "cisgender" are now considered slurs on Twitter](#). These words are not slurs. "Cisgender" is a neutral, clinical term that means the opposite of transgender. There is no other well-known word for people who are not transgender.

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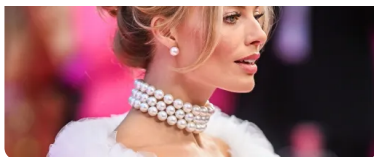
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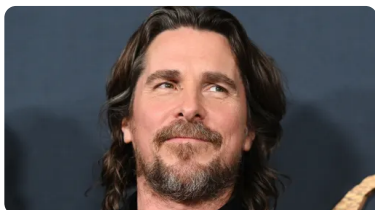
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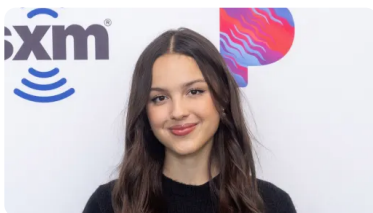
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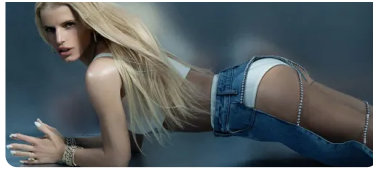
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