

Twitter's get-out-the-vote campaign push will be in your face Tuesday

September 23 2020, by Jessica Guynn, Usa Today



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Twitter is rolling out its biggest push yet to encourage more Americans to cast their ballots in the November election, part of an unprecedented effort by social media companies to increase turnout.

- Every person on Twitter in the United States on Tuesday, which is National Voter Registration Day, will get a prompt in their timeline to register to vote or confirm their [registration](#) via TurboVote, an online tool from the nonpartisan nonprofit Democracy Works.
- A push alert in the notifications tab will steer users to a Twitter Moment with additional [voter](#) registration information.
- Twitter will take over the promoted trend with voter registration resources from TurboVote.
- And it will use a Twitter hashtag emoji with #NationalVoterRegistrationDay and #VoteReady to propel conversation.

This latest get-out-the-vote drive from a major social media company is a nod to the vast influence these platforms have on American political life and an acknowledgment of the harm from foreign interference and rampant misinformation in previous [election](#) cycles.

Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are also making sweeping changes to their platforms weeks before the November election to limit voter misinformation and interference from President Trump and other politicians. Last week, Twitter fact-checked four Trump posts in a single day.

Over the years, [social media companies](#) have shown they can turn out the vote by marshaling their girth. Studies show that nudging voters with notifications or getting them to post "I voted" buttons on their timelines can increase turnout at the ballot box.

Facebook, which has a goal of registering 4 million voters before the November election, said Monday that it estimates it has already registered 2.5 million across Facebook, Instagram and Messenger, surpassing the 2 million registrations in 2016 and 2018.

Jennifer Grygiel, a communications professor at Syracuse University who studies social media, warns these voter drives may come with hidden agendas and problems. A campaign on Instagram could skew turnout younger or more liberal while a campaign on Facebook could skew turnout older and more conservative, they said.

"Corporations are political entities and we should not assume that platform voter registration campaigns are being done with only public good in mind and aren't also strategic," Grygiel said. "Social media companies have a lot at stake right now as they face increasing regulation. Their efforts to register voters could be serving corporate goals and we need to make sure they are not strategically registering voters in a way that could skew the election."

Twitter says the goal of Tuesday's campaign is to put voter registration resources at its users' fingertips in the run-up to this year's highly contentious election cycle in which a record number of Americans are expected to vote by mail due to the coronavirus pandemic.

According to a poll conducted by Ipsos and Twitter in August, 68% of people who used TurboVote resources via Twitter turned out to vote in the 2018 midterm elections.

While 9 in 10 people who use Twitter say they plan to vote in the November election, over half say they still need more information about the candidates on the ballot.

Last week Twitter announced a voting information hub within the app that will include facts on mail-in ballots and how to register for the Nov. 3 election in English and Spanish. It also said it would take steps to secure the accounts of high-profile users including administration officials, members of Congress, political parties and campaigns, major news outlets and political journalists.

In August, Twitter launched its first voter registration search prompt in partnership with Vote.Gov. When users search for key terms related to voter registration, they see a prompt in English or Spanish pointing them to official sources.

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Citation: Twitter's get-out-the-vote campaign push will be in your face Tuesday (2020, September 23) retrieved 20 April 2024 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2020-09-twitter-get-out-the-vote-campaign-tuesday.html>

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