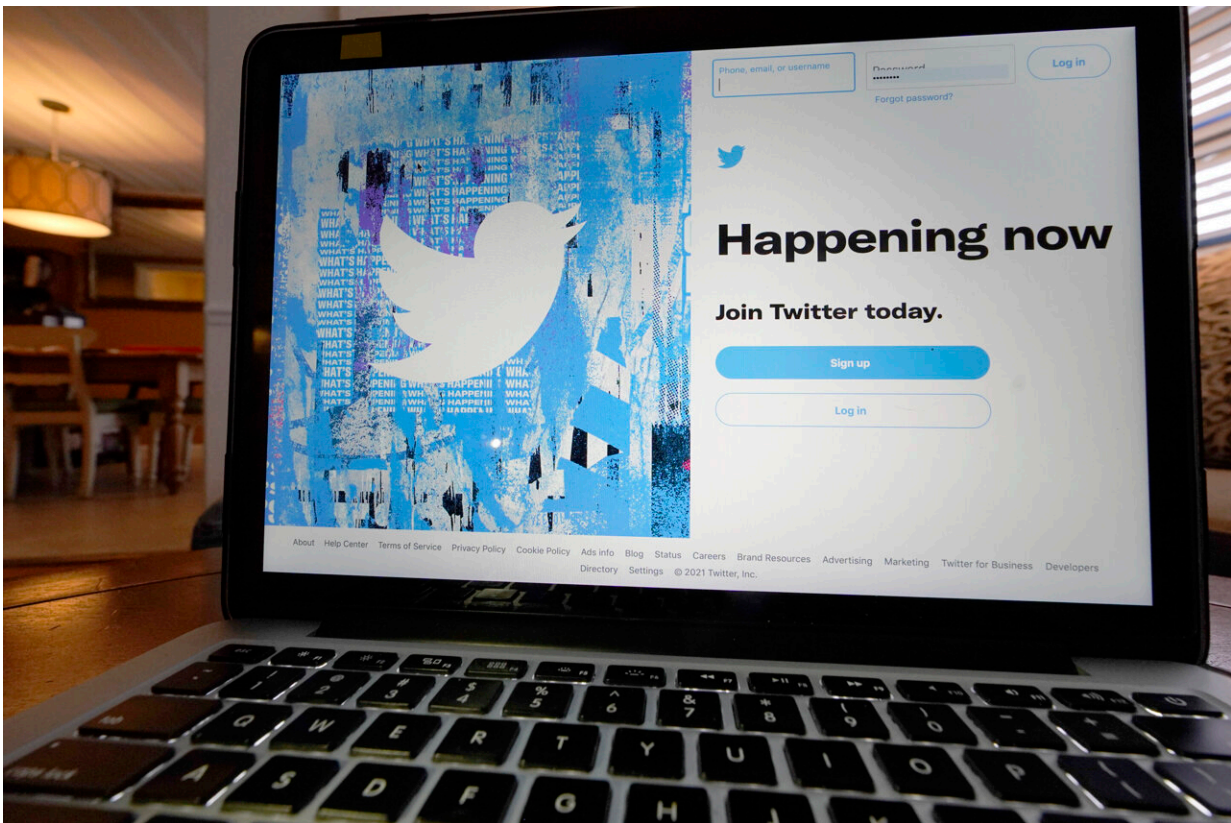


That was fleeting: Twitter kills off ephemeral messages

July 14 2021, by Barbara Ortutay



The login/sign up screen for a Twitter account is seen on a laptop computer Tuesday, April 27, 2021, in Orlando, Fla. After its labels on election-related misinformation became a regular sighting in the weeks leading up to and following the 2020 U.S. presidential election, Twitter is now working on overhauling them in an attempt to make them more useful and easier to notice, among other things. Beginning Thursday, July 1, the company is taking comments from its U.S. users on the redesigns. Credit: AP Photo/John Raoux

Twitter is disappearing its disappearing tweets, called fleets, after they didn't catch on.

The company began testing tweets that vanish after 24 hours last March in Brazil. Fleets were designed to allay the concerns of new users who might be turned off by the public and permanent nature of normal tweets.

"However, we haven't seen an increase in the amount of new people joining the conversation with Fleets like we hoped," Twitter said in a statement Wednesday. "So as of August 3, Fleets will no longer be available on Twitter."

Kayvon Beykpour, head of consumer product at Twitter, stressed that this is part of how the company works.

"(Big) bets are risky and speculative, so by definition a number of them won't work," he tweeted. "If we're not having to wind down features every once in a while, then it would be a sign that we're not taking big enough swings."

Fleets are reminiscent of Instagram and Facebook "stories" and Snapchat's snaps, which let users post short-lived photos and messages. Such features are increasingly popular with social media users looking for smaller groups and more private chats. But people use Twitter differently than Facebook, Instagram or messaging apps—it's more of a public conversation and a way to stay up to date with what's going on. Fleets, it turns out, did not make sense.

There was also a matter of the name. Called fleets because they were fleeting, the word is also a brand name for an enema—something many people pointed out on Twitter when the feature launched.

In a [tweet announcing the decision](#), Twitter wrote "we're sorry or you're welcome, acknowledging mixed user reactions to the feature.

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