

New Twitter biggie Musk may have thoughts on edit button

April 5 2022, by Tali Arbel



Elon Musk, Tesla CEO, attends the opening of the Tesla factory Berlin Brandenburg in Gruenheide, Germany, March 22, 2022. Musk, who is now Twitter's largest shareholder and newly appointed board member, may have thoughts on a long-standing request from users: Should there be an edit button? On Monday evening, Musk launched a Twitter poll about whether they want an edit button. More than 3 million people have voted as of Tuesday, April 5, 2022. The poll closes Tuesday evening Eastern time. Credit: Patrick Pleul/Pool via AP

Elon Musk, the billionaire Tesla CEO and power Twitter user who is now Twitter's largest shareholder and newly appointed board member, may have thoughts on a long-standing request from users: Should there be an edit button?

On Monday evening, Musk [launched a Twitter poll](#) about whether they want an edit button, cheekily misspelling "yes" as "yse" and "no" as "on." More than 3 million people had voted as of Tuesday morning. The poll closes Tuesday evening Eastern time.

Twitter's CEO, Parag Agrawal, retweeted the poll with a seeming reference to an earlier tweet by Musk, [saying](#) "The consequences of this poll will be important. Please vote carefully." Musk had used the same language in a [March tweet](#) describing another one of his polls that asked whether Twitter adheres to free speech principles.

Twitter spokesperson Catherine Hill declined to comment on whether Agrawal was joking, and did not answer whether Twitter would follow the results of Musk's [poll](#). Musk tweeted Tuesday that he was looking forward to making "significant improvements to Twitter in coming months!"

Many Twitter users—among them, Kim Kardashian, Ice T, Katy Perry and McDonald's corporate account—have long begged for an edit button. The company itself recently teased users with an [April Fool's Day tweet](#) saying "we are working on an edit button."

Former Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey had said that Twitter had considered an edit button, but in a [January 2020 Q&A](#) maintained that "we'll probably never do it." He cited wanting to keep the spirit of Twitter's text-message origins—texts can't be edited—and the confusion that could result from users making changes to a tweet that has already been highly circulated by others. Dorsey [stepped down as CEO](#) in November

2021.

For what it's worth, the chief technology officer of Facebook owner Meta, Andrew Bosworth, tweeted Monday [that big changes to posts that have already gone viral were not an issue](#). (Facebook lets you edit posts.) "You just include an indicator that it has been edited along with a change log," he wrote.

[Musk's response](#): "Facebook gives me the willies."

But other people say adding an edit button would change the nature of Twitter, making it less valuable as a historical warehouse that stores official statements by politicians and other high-profile people. Twitter, for better or worse, "has become the de facto news wire," said Jennifer Grygiel, a Syracuse University communications professor and an expert on [social media](#) who researches propaganda.

Tweets are often embedded in [news stories](#), which could cause problems if the users edit important or controversial tweets without leaving evidence of the original statement. Grygiel suggested instead giving Twitter users a window of time to edit their tweets before they publish them.

Letting powerful Twitter users edit their tweets means they would not be historical statements anymore, Grygiel said. "We need to think about what the implications are, what these tweets are, who has power."

Musk said that a related proposal for a post-publication edit window of a few minutes " [sounds reasonable](#)."

Musk is someone who could seemingly use an edit button. His [tweet](#) about taking Tesla private at \$420 per share, when funding was not secured, led to a \$40 million SEC settlement and a requirement that

Musk's tweets be approved by a corporate lawyer. Musk is still embroiled in a fight over that settlement.

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