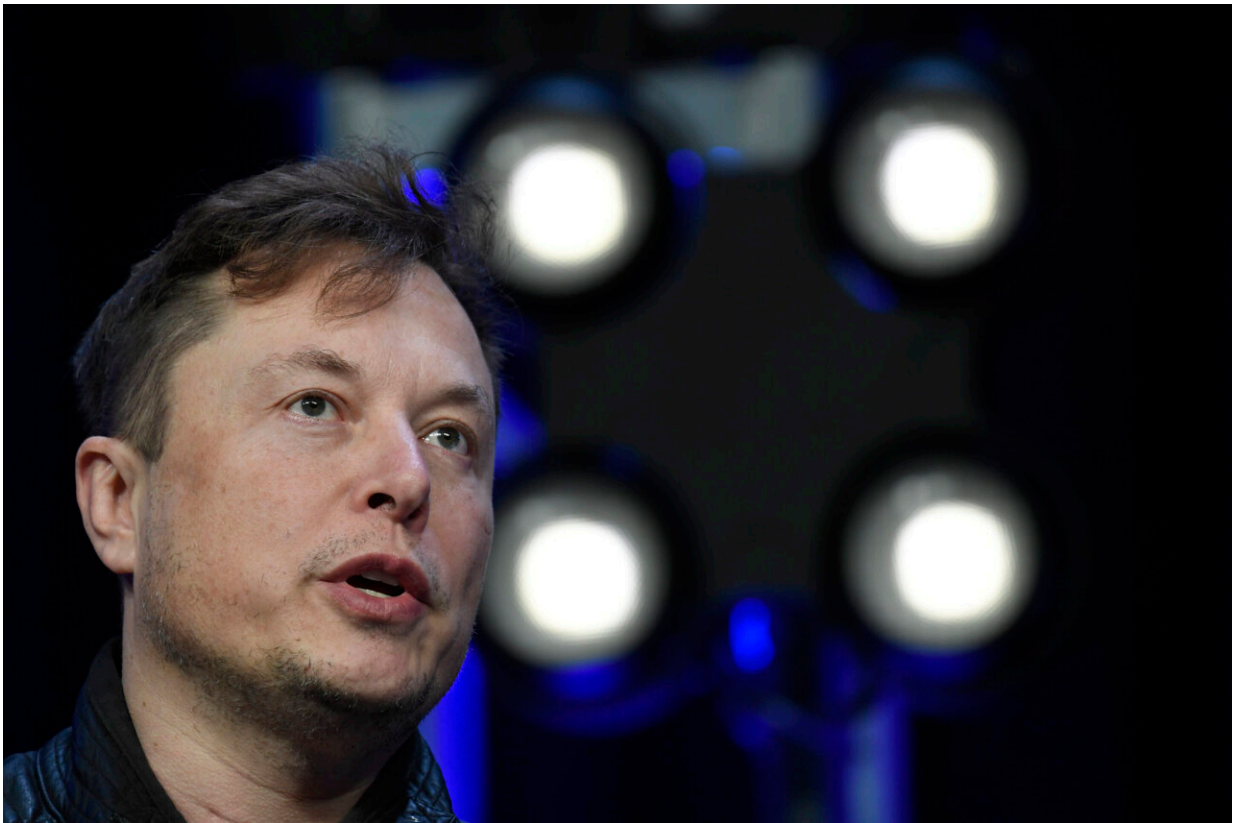


Musk's latest Twitter cuts: Outsourced content moderators

November 14 2022, by BARBARA ORTUTAY and MATT O'BRIEN



Elon Musk speaks at the SATELLITE Conference and Exhibition on March 9, 2020, in Washington. Musk, Twitter's new owner, is further gutting the teams that battle misinformation on the social media platform as outsourced moderators learned over the weekend they were out of a job. Credit: AP Photo/Susan Walsh, File

Twitter's [new owner Elon Musk](#) is further gutting the teams that battle misinformation on the social media platform as outsourced moderators learned over the weekend they were out of a job.

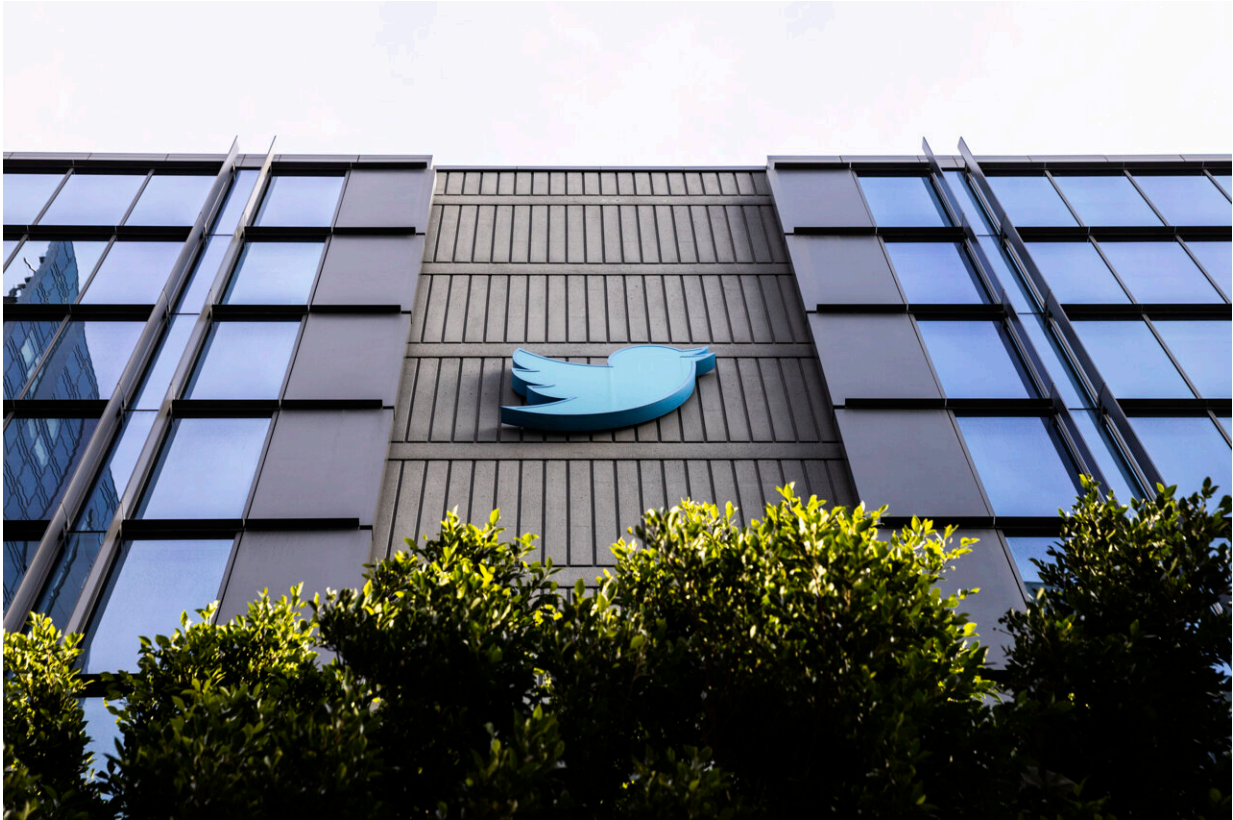
Twitter and other big social media firms have relied heavily on contractors to track hate and enforce rules against [harmful content](#).

But many of those content watchdogs have now headed out the door, first when [Twitter fired much of its full-time workforce by email on Nov. 4](#) and now as it moves to eliminate an untold number of contract jobs.

Melissa Ingle, who worked at Twitter as a contractor for more than a year, was one of a number of contractors who said they were terminated Saturday. She said she's concerned that there's going to be an increase in abuse on Twitter with the number of workers leaving.

"I love the [platform](#) and I really enjoyed working at the company and trying to make it better. And I'm just really fearful of what's going to slip through the cracks," she said Sunday.

Ingle, a data scientist, said she worked on the data and monitoring arm of Twitter's civic integrity team. Her job involved writing algorithms to find political misinformation on the platform in countries such as the U.S., Brazil, Japan, Argentina and elsewhere.



The Twitter logo is seen at the social media company's headquarters in San Francisco on Friday, Nov. 11, 2022. Credit: Stephen Lam/San Francisco Chronicle via AP

Ingle said she was "pretty sure I was done for" when she couldn't access her work email Saturday. The notification from the contracting company she'd been hired by came two hours later.

"I'll just be putting my resumes out there and talking to people," she said. "I have two children. And I'm worried about being able to give them a nice Christmas, you know, and just mundane things like that, that are important. I just think it's particularly heartless to do this at this time."

Content-moderation expert Sarah Roberts, an associate professor at the

University of California, Los Angeles who worked as a staff researcher at Twitter earlier this year, said she believes at least 3,000 [contract workers](#) were fired Saturday night.

Twitter hasn't said how many contract workers it cut. The company hasn't responded to media requests for information since Musk took over.

At Twitter's San Francisco headquarters and other offices, contract workers wore green badges while full-time workers wore blue badges. Contractors did a number of jobs to help keep Twitter running, including engineering and marketing, Roberts said. But it was the huge force of contracted moderators that was "mission critical" to the platform, said Roberts.



The Twitter logo is seen at the social media company's headquarters in San Francisco on Friday, Nov. 11, 2022. Credit: Stephen Lam/San Francisco Chronicle via AP

Cutting them will have a "tangible impact on the experience of the platform," she said.

Musk promised to loosen speech restrictions when he took over Twitter. But in the early days after Musk bought Twitter for \$44 billion in late October and [dismissed its board of directors and top executives](#), the billionaire Tesla CEO sought to assure civil rights groups and advertisers that the platform could continue tamping down hate and hate-fueled violence.

That message was reiterated by Twitter's then-head of content moderation, Yoel Roth, who tweeted that the Nov. 4 layoffs only affected "15% of our Trust & Safety organization (as opposed to approximately 50% cuts company-wide), with our front-line moderation staff experiencing the least impact."

Roth has [since resigned from the company](#), joining an exodus of high-level leaders who were tasked with privacy protection, cybersecurity and complying with regulations.

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