

Florida student who tracked Elon Musk's jet on Twitter launches new account on Threads

July 14 2023, by Silas Morgan



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

The college student behind the Twitter account tracking Elon Musk's private jet, whose account was banned after the billionaire purchased

that social media site, has started an account on Mark Zuckerberg's new Twitter competitor, Threads.

Jack Sweeney is a 20-year-old rising junior at the University of Central Florida majoring in information technology. The Clermont native gained notoriety online for his Twitter [account](#) where he tracked Elon Musk's private jet across the globe.

Sweeney's father worked in aviation, so he began tracking his father's flights through publicly available information. A fan of Elon Musk, he decided to begin tracking the billionaire's flights as well.

While he initially only sought Musk's flight patterns for his personal curiosity, a friend on the online social platform Discord gave him the idea to share the data with others.

"They said that you should post on Twitter, because there's so many Elon Musk fans on Twitter, they'd be interested in it," Sweeney said in an interview Wednesday.

Sweeney's account ultimately gained around 500,000 followers, captivating many online. Sweeney didn't expect it to become an online phenomenon.

"It was cool when it was just, like, talked about when he would fly somewhere and people were like, referencing it," Sweeney said. "But I never expected it to be more than that, like, you know, where it would be like hundreds of thousands of followers. It just kept on event after event."

It ultimately caught the attention of Musk, who reached out to Sweeney over Twitter direct messages in December 2021 to offer him \$5,000 to stop posting his flight patterns.

"It was like 1 a.m. and I was in my college dorm, and then I saw that he messaged me and I couldn't believe it," Sweeney said. "You know, I was going nuts pretty much. It was just unbelievable to see that."

Sweeney made a counteroffer: He would stop for \$50,000 or a Tesla. Musk rejected the offer.

"We kept talking. He was wondering how it works. You know, could I take it down? And then he asked if I made any money and I was like, you know, I don't really feel like taking it down for nothing because I spent time on it. And then he offered me \$5,000. I thought that wasn't enough and I counter offered, but he didn't accept any of that."

In October 2022, Musk bought Twitter. In December, Twitter permanently banned Sweeney's account where he tracked Musk's jet. Sweeney subsequently made a new account that tracked Musk's flights 24 hours after they occurred to get around Twitter's new rules on the subject.

Sweeney says that while he is still a fan of Musk, he is disappointed in him for apparently going back on his promise to support [free speech](#) on Twitter by banning his account.

"He could do whatever he wants with Twitter," Sweeney said. "He can go back on his word, but like, it just doesn't make him look that good in the town square, free speech idea, I would say."

Sweeny also disapproves of Musk's handling of Twitter in general.

"Everything he does on Twitter, it seems like, really sporadic and, like, wild," Sweeney said. "I just think that he could do everything that he does with Twitter a lot better."

Sweeny has started an account on Mark Zuckerberg's newly launched Twitter competitor Threads, which Twitter has threatened to file a lawsuit against claiming that Facebook parent company Meta used [trade secrets](#) from former Twitter employees to create the site.

Threads acquired 100 million users in its first five days, according to Forbes.

Sweeney's new Threads account, "elonmuskjet", already had 111,000 followers as of Wednesday afternoon. His second Twitter account, made after his original account's ban, had only reached about 25,000 followers.

"There's a lot of great comments people are leaving," Sweeney said. "They're like, 'Oh, I'm already enjoying threads so much better.'"

Sweeney says he believes his second Twitter account was shadowbanned, which refers to when a social media site hides or restricts a user's content without informing them.

"I'm sure, like, I'm somehow limited on Twitter," Sweeney said. "Like I tell someone that I had a new Twitter account. They search for me and they couldn't find me. My personal."

Sweeney says he'll continue tracking Musk's jet and will be developing his personal website.

"I'm still working on stuff in the background and make my own websites," Sweeney said. "I could just have way more possibility if I make some interactive on my own website. Track more people because then you don't have to set up a social media account. Just so many more possibilities for giving people features or generating ad revenue, stuff like that. Social media is good for like their reach, but not for, you

know, developing more features."

Sweeney also has accounts where he tracks the flights of Donald Trump, Jeff Bezos, Taylor Swift, Kim Kardashian and Gov. Ron DeSantis.

2023 Orlando Sentinel.

Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

Citation: Florida student who tracked Elon Musk's jet on Twitter launches new account on Threads (2023, July 14) retrieved 29 April 2024 from

<https://techxplore.com/news/2023-07-florida-student-tracked-elon-musk.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.