

News

Elon Musk claims use of 'cis' and 'cisgender' on Twitter is 'harassment', threatens to suspend users

Jun 21 • Written by Sophie Perry

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Elon Musk has said 'cis' and 'cisgender' are slurs on Twitter (CHRIS DELMAS/AFP via Getty Images)

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Twitter owner Elon Musk has declared both 'cis' and 'cisgender' are slurs on the social media platform, warning people who engage in “repeated, targeted harassment” by using them face account suspensions.

The billionaire, who bought Twitter in October 2022, made the statement on Wednesday (21 June) in reply to a tweet by James Esses, an anti-trans commentator.

“Yesterday, after posting a Tweet saying that I reject the word ‘cis’ and don’t wish to be called it, I receive a slew of messages from trans activists calling me “cissy” and telling me that I am ‘cis’ “whether or not I like it”,” Esses wrote.

“Just imagine if the roles were reversed.”

In **response**, Musk said “repeated, targeted harassment against any account” will result in the harasser, at minimum, having their account temporarily suspended.

“The words “cis” or “cisgender” are considered slurs on this platform,” he stated.

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Elon Musk

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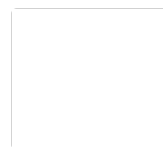
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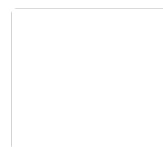
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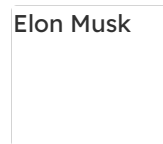
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What does cisgender mean?

Cisgender refers to people whose gender identity aligns with the one assigned at birth. Transgender, on the other hand, is the opposite and refers to people whose gender does not match their assigned sex.

Currently, Twitter's guidelines define slurs and tropes as language which "intends to degrade or reinforce negative or harmful stereotypes about a protected category".

Other social media platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram, do not define 'cis' as a slur.

Ironically, when Musk took over Twitter he tweeted that the platform "believes in free speech".

Musk's statement comes just two months after Twitter quietly **dropped its policy** protecting trans people from deadnaming and misgendering.

In April, the social media platform changed its hateful content policy to remove a sentence about targeted misgendering or deadnaming of individuals.

At the time, GLAAD CEO and president Sarah Kate Ellis described the move as "the latest example of just how unsafe the company is for users and advertisers alike".

On 16 June, GLAAD published **research** which showed Twitter, along with other major social media platforms, consistently failed to protect LGBTQ+ people from abuse.

Releasing its third annual Social Media Safety Index (SMSI), the LGBTQ+ organisation gave Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and TikTok all low and middling scores.

In the report, all of the major social media platforms, except Twitter, improved on their 2022 scores by some margin.

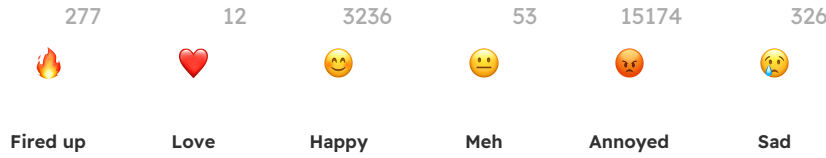
Twitter was ranked the lowest, at just 33 per cent, 12 points decrease from its score in 2022.

GLAAD cited the removal of its deadnaming and misgendering policy as a key reason for this drop, urging the company to reinstate the policy in order to improve safety for LGBTQ+ people.

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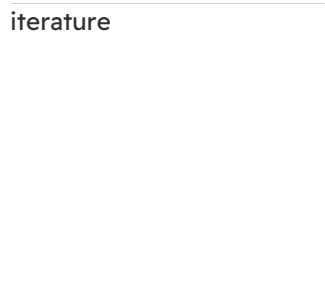
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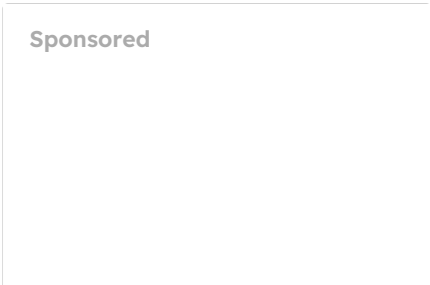
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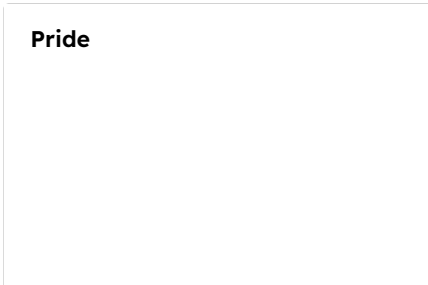
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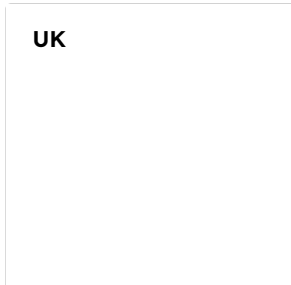
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