

Twitter to scrap controversial suggested user list

November 16 2009, By JULIA ZAPPEI , Associated Press Writer



(AP) -- Social-media site Twitter plans to scrap its hand-picked list of "suggested users" to follow after controversy erupted over the selection of people on the list, a company executive said Monday.

Twitter co-founder Biz Stone said the company was seeking a more systematic way to introduce its prominent posters, including sports figures, celebrities and politicians, to newcomers to the site.

"That list will be going away," Stone told reporters on the sidelines of a conference for young entrepreneurs in Malaysia's capital, Putrajaya. "In its stead will be something that is more programmatically chosen, something that actually delivers more relevant suggestions."

Twitter's list, which numbers around 500 suggested users, proved controversial after its launch earlier this year. Recently, political watchdogs in California criticized the list, claiming it favors Democrats over Republicans in the state's gubernatorial race next year.

Stone and other company employees choose who will be featured on the list. [Twitter](#) has said the list is based on users "who show that they provide value by posting often and engaging with their followers."

Stone indicated the suggestions could eventually be tailored to new users' interests, though he did not elaborate. Nor did he say when the list would be removed or replaced.

Twitter plans to add other new features, including an easier, faster way to forward messages, and wants to be translated into more languages, Stone said. It is presently available in English, Japanese and Spanish.

"Ninety-seven percent of our efforts are basically on delivering user value," he said. "Everyone is still experimenting. It's still young, it's still early. Anything goes right now as we figure out what works and what doesn't work."

The popularity of San Francisco-based Twitter, which allows users to post 140-character messages sharing everything from mundane details about their lives to major news, has soared. The number of users increased more than tenfold within a year to 54 million currently.

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