

# Twitter CEO says blocking policy over-distilled

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(AP) -- Twitter CEO Dick Costolo sought to calm the global outrage over the company's new country-by-country censorship policy on Monday, complaining in part that the issue is being treated with the same kind of shorthand that has made Twitter popular.

Speaking at the All Things D conference, Costolo repeated the company's [justification](#) for the policy change it announced last week: By taking down tweets only in the country where [Twitter](#) believes they may have violated local laws, it is making sure the maximum 140-character-long messages are still available to the rest of the world.

Twitter's reasoning has been mostly lost in a barrage of comments - many from Twitter users themselves - that the company is caving into attacks on [free speech](#), especially in countries with repressive regimes.

"It's a super complex issue," Costolo said. "When the news came out, people tried to distill it down to, 'What did they just say?' It's easy to distill it down to 'Twitter is endorsing XYZ.'"

"It takes a while for the scholars and the people who study these matters to weigh in and start to say, 'Wait, this is actually a thoughtful and honest approach to doing this and it's in fact being done in a way that's forward-looking.' So we wait for that to happen," he added.

The complaint about knee-jerk responses to complex issues is somewhat ironic given that the company's meteoric growth has been fueled often

by buzz-worthy but flippant comments.

Costolo also emphasized that if Twitter reacts to take-down requests, it will make public the reasons a [tweet](#) is being removed. The company already has 45 people who respond to such requests, including those from copyright holders of music or movies in the United States.

He said the policy wouldn't affect its stance toward [China](#) or [Iran](#), where the service is already blocked completely.

"I don't think the current environment in China is one in which we think we could operate," he said.

Costolo spoke just days before [Facebook](#) is expected to file the paperwork necessary for an initial public offering of stock, a move that is likely to make initial investors and employees in the company rich.

San Francisco-based Twitter also faces the same securities regulations that are forcing Facebook to go public - a rule that says companies with more than \$10 million in assets and more than 500 shareholders of a certain class of stock must disclose their financial results and other details.

Twitter, which was founded in 2006, will bump up against the rule "at some point," Costolo said. But he added he would rather spend time building value at the company than dealing with such issues.

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