Twitter tries to block images of Foley killing

August 20 2014, by Toby Sterling

In this Friday, May 27, 2011, file photo, journalist James Foley poses for a photo during an interview with The Associated Press, in Boston. A video by Islamic State militants that purports to show the killing of Foley by the militant group was released Tuesday, Aug. 19, 2014. Foley, from Rochester, N.H., went missing in 2012 in northern Syria while on assignment for Agence France-Press and the Boston-based media company GlobalPost. (AP Photo/Steven Senne, File)

Twitter and some other social media outlets are trying to block the

spread of gruesome images of the beheading of journalist James Foley by Islamic State militants, while a movement to deny his killers publicity is also gaining momentum.

In a Tweet, CEO Dick Costolo said his company "is actively suspending accounts as we discover them related to this graphic imagery," and he gave a link to a New York Times story about Foley's killing.

Twitter spokesman Nu Wexler on Wednesday confirmed Costolo's Tweet, which was published late Tuesday California time, and referred further questions to a company policy page. Twitter allows immediate family members of someone who dies to request image removals, although the company weighs public interest against privacy concerns.

Twitter users who oppose spreading the images are using the trending hashtag #ISISMediaBlackout.

However, preventing links to the images has not had universal success.

By mid-afternoon in Europe on Wednesday, Tweets could still be found linking directly to the footage on some video sharing sites, such as Vimeo.

Vimeo could not be immediately reached for comment.

On YouTube, which is owned by Google, the video was reportedly posted for some period of time Tuesday before being removed. By Wednesday afternoon in Europe, searches for the incident mainly turned up links to news reports of Foley's slaying. Some included original footage from the video, but left out shots of the act of killing.

Google and YouTube could not immediately be reached for comment.

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