

Uproar over talk of tampering with Twitter stream

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Twitter erupted with worry Thursday after word spread that the globally popular messaging service might try to tame its raw stream of real-time posts.

Technology news website Gigaom pieced together comments by Twitter executives and came up with a picture of plans to use computer algorithms to present posts based on relevance rather than freshness.

Twitter chief executive Dick Costolo tried to derail conjecture with a public post in which he said "Goodness, what an absurd synthesis of what was said."

Twitter users riled by the idea of deviating from the long-standing practice of displaying tweets in the order they are posted were not appeased.

"One suggestion: it would be perfect if you make a post with an explanation with your own words," a Twitter user with the handle @javig said in a message aimed at Costolo.

Twitter is under pressure to attract new users and increase the time people spend at the service.

It stands to reason that Twitter might aim to make it easier for people to find posts they are interested in.

Shifting to Facebook-style filtering to showcase posts deemed more relevant would be a radical change for Twitter, but such a tool could be introduced as an option users could ignore if they wish.

"Individual users are not going to wake up one day and find their timeline completely ranked by an algorithm," Twitter chief financial officer Anthony Noto was reported as saying Wednesday at a financial conference in New York.

Changes could come to the Twitter stream, but they would be eased in slowly and tested along the way, according to Noto's comments at the gathering.

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