

Trump complains about Twitter removing his followers

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US President Donald Trump expressed displeasure that Twitter's efforts to weed out fake and abusive accounts have curbed growth in his number of followers

US President Donald Trump complained Friday that Twitter is removing some of his followers and has made it harder to join, an apparent critique of the social network's efforts to weed out fake and abusive

accounts.

Trump, who has some 55 million Twitter followers, revived his argument about "bias" by internet firms in a morning tweet that suggested growth in his network was slowing.

"Twitter has removed many people from my account and, more importantly, they have seemingly done something that makes it much harder to join—they have stifled growth to a point where it is obvious to all," he wrote.

"A few weeks ago it was a Rocket Ship, now it is a Blimp! Total Bias?"

Trump's remarks appeared aimed at Twitter's efforts to weed out fake and "spam" accounts to improve the health and safety of the platform.

For months, Twitter has sought to eliminate automated and bogus accounts designed to manipulate the public conversation on Twitter, in response to concerns over Russian interference in the 2016 election.

Twitter said this week the number of active users fell by nine million in the past quarter as a result of these efforts.

Asked about the president's comments, a Twitter spokesman said: "Our focus is on the health of the service, and that includes work to remove fake accounts to prevent malicious behavior.

"Many prominent accounts have seen follower counts drop, but the result is higher confidence that the followers they have are real, engaged people."

According to the social media monitoring website TwitterCounter, Trump has not lost any followers in the past month but the rate of

growth of followers appears to have slowed.

He went from 54.7 million followers on September 26 to some 55.3 million Friday, with little or no change over the past week.

The topic of fake followers has long been controversial on social media, and one research group said this month that more than 60 percent of Trump's followers were "bots, spam, inactive or propaganda."

The report by SparkToro said the @realdonaldtrump account "has significantly higher numbers (of fake or suspect followers) than any other American politician we could find."

SparkToro said in analyzing Trump's account, 72 percent of followers had been inactive for at least 120 days, 36 percent use Twitter's default profile image and 92 percent don't link to a website in their profile or use one with spam patterns.

Trump has previously accused internet firms of bias or suppressing conservative voices, despite little evidence to back up the claim.

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