

A Work Project, presented as part of the requirements for the Award of a Master's degree in
Management from the Nova School of Business and Economics.

Group Part

TWITTER UNVEILED: A CASE STUDY ON GROWTH, ACQUISITION AND TRANSITION
TO X

Individual Part – Ana Rita Antunes

NAVIGATING UNCHARTED SEAS: A STRATEGIC ANALYSIS OF X'S BLUE OCEAN
MARKET CREATION

Work project carried out under the supervision of:

Afonso Almeida Costa

17/05/2024

Abstract

This paper presents a case study on Twitter, until March 2024, that delves into its transformative journey, examining the company's business model and how it was restructured after the acquisition by Elon Musk. This includes strategic analysis of value propositions and how the company differentiates itself on the social media industry. Additionally, it encompasses strategic debates about the company's rebranding and introduction of new revenue streams. It also explores the possibility of X adopting a Blue Ocean Strategy.

Keywords

Acquisition, Advertising, App, Blue Ocean Strategy, Brand, Business Model, Content Moderation, Data Licensing, Elon Musk, Engagement, Features, Meta, Monetization, News, Political Tool, Real-time Updates, Social Media Industry, Strategy, Subscription, Threads, Twitter, Website, X.

This work used infrastructure and resources funded by Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (UID/ECO/00124/2013, UID/ECO/00124/2019 and Social Sciences DataLab, Project 22209), POR Lisboa (LISBOA-01-0145-FEDER-007722 and Social Sciences DataLab, Project 22209) and POR Norte (Social Sciences DataLab, Project 22209).

Group Part: Case Study

1. Twitter's Origins

Twitter's origins can be traced back to early 2006 when Jack Dorsey, an NYU student working as an engineer at Odeo, a podcasting company founded by Evan Williams a year earlier, came up with a new online communication tool idea (Vanian 2022). Since Odeo was facing competition from Apple iTunes, Dorsey along with his coworkers Biz Stone, Evan Williams, and Noah Glass found the need to reassess Odeo's trajectory and pivoted its focus. They recognized the need for real-time communication and launched Twtr – later rebranded as Twitter - a messaging service allowing instant updates (Quey 2024).

As Dorsey introduced the concept of status updates through text messages, he posted the first tweet ever on Twitter on May 2006: “just setting up my twtr” (Quey 2024). On July 15th, 2006, the platform was introduced to the public and it counted with around 20,000 tweets per day in the first months (Demilt). Users were now able to instantly publish a tweet with a limit of 140 characters, making tweets the “SMS of Internet” (SuntechIT 2022). Only one year later, in 2007, Twitter became a hot topic at the South by Southwest¹ (SXSW) interactive conference, promoted by the tech community, and the website's tweets spiked to approximately 60,000 per day (Quey 2024). In July, after the popularity raised in the event, Twitter received a \$100,000 Series A funding² round led by Union Square Ventures (Vanian 2022).

Afterall, Jack Dorsey stumbled upon what became Twitter's value to its users: the ability to get lightning-fast updates about news and events. This is why celebrities found the platform beneficial

¹ South by Southwest is an annual event founded in 1987 in Austin, Texas, that happens in March and is known for its conference and festivals that celebrate the convergence of technology, film, music, and culture. (SXSW 2024)

² Series A funding consists in the first round of funding a company receives after the seed stage. The seed funding represents the first official money a business venture or enterprise raises. In the Series A round, it may be important to have a plan to develop a business model with potential to generate long-term profit (Reiff 2023).

for sharing their latest events and thoughts with fans, as Twitter empowered users to engage with events as they happen, ensuring they remained connected in real-time.

Besides celebrities, Twitter also started to attract politicians. During the 2008 U.S. presidential election, Barack Obama's social media presence surged, significantly overshadowing his opponent, John McCain, with over 20 times the number of Twitter followers (Britannica 2024). This pivotal moment highlighted the importance of social media in political campaigns, prompting future candidates to integrate social networking into their media strategies.

Evan Williams, the now CEO, made an appearance on Oprah Winfrey's talk show in 2009, alongside the American actor and producer Ashton Kutcher, making Twitter a mainstream phenomenon (Wortham 2009).

Between 2011 and 2012, Twitter emerged as a powerful political and news tool. During the Arab Spring and the surge of antigovernmental protests in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, protesters harnessed the platform to share real-time reports and coordinate protests. But the Twitter's role of 'disseminating breaking news', as Pew Research Center stated, extended beyond the Arab protests. For instance, the news of Whitney Houston's death broke on Twitter 55 minutes before the Associated Press confirmed it (Vanian 2022). Additionally, Barack Obama publicly announced his victory in the 2012 U.S. presidential election via a tweet that was viewed by approximately 25 million people. During that time, Twitter's active user base surged to 200 million (Vanian 2022). Twitter's value grew as the number of users increased, thus, as more people joined, the better the app became.

Recognizing the need to expand further, the platform initiated the IPO process. On November 7, 2013, after multiple rounds of private funding and substantial public growth, Twitter officially went public (Gainy 2022). This move allowed for new opportunities by attracting public funding from institutional and private investors worldwide.

However, even though Twitter was growing fast, it eventually saw itself struggling in a competitive industry. In 2014, slowing user growth led to several stock drops and 2015 saw Twitter battling against larger rivals like Facebook, remaining unprofitable in its ad business (Vanian 2022). Meanwhile, both Twitter and Facebook faced criticism for allowing influential users like Donald Trump to spread misleading information. Nonetheless, in 2017, Twitter briefly trended upward, with President Trump continuing to use it as his “megaphone”, making him the most-tweeted-about global leader (Vanian 2022).

By 2018, political conflicts started to invade Twitter. Donald Trump and fellow Republicans started raising their voices, expressing growing concerns about perceived political bias on platforms like Twitter and other social media sites.

In 2020, as the spread of Covid-19 affected the globe, misinformation proliferated in online discussions. A year later, Twitter permanently banned Trump’s account following his controversial comments during the U.S. Capitol riots. While Twitter cited concerns about potential incitement of violence, Trump claimed that the platform’s employees were conspiring with Democrats and the Radical Left to “silence him”. Later, Parag Agrawal took over as CEO in 2021 (Vanian 2022). By the end of this year, Twitter had, approximately, a total of 7500 employees and 360 million users (Iqbal 2024) (*Appendix 2, Fig. 2*).

2. The Business Model

2.1. User base

Twitter, though not the most dominant social media platform, in terms of overall number of users, compared to other players, presented one of the most intellectually engaged user bases, with rapidly growing engagement rates (Morganteen 2014).

Research underscores the influence Twitter users had, esteemed for their trustworthiness, intelligence, and awareness. This perception positioned Twitter as a primary source for advice and

information across a spectrum of topics, capitalizing on users' propensity for sharing trending topics, brands, and products (MacMillan 2017). In fact, Twitter's user base mirrored diversity across demographics, professions, and interests, encompassing segments such as information seekers, public figures, opinionated users, niche communities, businesses, brands, and activists (Huang 2023, 409).

In 2016, Twitter transitioned from a conventional social network to the leading destination for real-time news updates (Griffin 2016). This shift sought to attract users who may have overlooked Twitter as just another social media platform by accentuating its role as a news hub (Trefis Team 2016).

2.2. Features and Layout

When Twitter first launched, its defining feature was the strict character limit for each post (or tweet). Initially, users were restricted to just 140 characters, although this limit has since been extended (X Developer Platform). As the platform matured, it introduced various new features. In 2010, advertising became possible through *promoted tweets*. Besides, *Twitter Places* allowed users to associate their tweets with specific locations, creating dedicated Twitter pages for each place (X Blog 2010). *Twitter Analytics* also emerged around the same time, enabling individuals and companies to measure the ROI of their posts based on metrics like clicks, retweets, replies, and favourites. By 2012, Twitter improved its advertising features, by allowing more precise targeting of promoted tweets (X Blog 2012).

The platform's layout also evolved, as the *Fly* design was introduced in 2011 to enhance usability and promote advertising (Segal 2011). Nevertheless, Twitter has largely maintained its original look and feel from its early days (*Appendix 3, Fig. 3*). The balance between innovation and familiarity continues to shape Twitter's journey.

Twitter also embarked in strategic acquisitions since going public in 2013. One of Twitter's first acquisitions was the start-up Vine, an app of six-second videos. Vine's popularity soared, and it appeared that Jack Dorsey's investment of \$30 million would pay off. However, in 2016, Twitter announced the shutdown of Vine (Isaac 2016). Twitter reportedly made a total of 74 acquisitions and 11 investments as of April 2023 (Gorton 2023), of which it is important to point out the purchase of TellApart in 2015, Twitter's biggest acquisition of \$479 million in stock. The digital advertising platform helped Twitter boost its advertising revenue, by creating ads that resembled tweets and encouraged users to perform a determined action (Gorton 2023).

2.3. Revenue Streams

In 2021, the platform generated revenue of \$5.08 billion with an annual revenue growth of 37% compared to 2020 (*Appendix 4, Table 2*).

Twitter divided its revenue into two categories: advertising services and data licensing. In 2021, 90% of Twitter's revenue came from advertising (*Appendix 4, Table 3*). Similar to other social media platforms, Twitter's advertising operates through an auction system, where advertisers compete to display ads to their desired audience. The cost of advertising on Twitter varies based on several factors, including ad type, billable actions, bid amount, quality score, audience targeting, and industry. There are three types of bids available to advertisers: automatic bid, maximum bid, and target bid (Ghataura 2024) (*Appendix 5, Fig. 4*). Additionally, advertisers can choose from three ad options on Twitter, each with different pricing tiers: promoted tweets, promoted accounts, and promoted trends (*Appendix 5, Fig. 5*).

Data licensing and services constituted the remaining 10% of Twitter's total revenue in 2021, amounting to approximately \$571.8 million (*Appendix 4, Table 3*). This comes primarily from subscription fees paid by software developers and other businesses who use the platform, granting them access to valuable demographic and historical user trend data (Lamaj 2023). Additionally,

Twitter also offers other services to developers, including access to Twitter's Application Programming Interface (API), that allows a deeper analysis of Twitter's data (Pinto 2022).

Despite its steady revenue growth and widespread adoption by celebrities, politicians, activists, and everyday users, Twitter faced significant profitability challenges. The company grappled operating losses year after year, except for 2018 and 2019, when the app managed to make a profit of \$1.2 billion and \$1.5 billion, respectively (*Appendix 4, Table 1 and 2*). The main reason that explains Twitter's struggle to remain profitable was the competition it faced from larger companies for advertising dollars, such as Facebook or Alphabet, the parent company of Google and YouTube. These tech giants dominated the digital advertising landscape, leaving Twitter with a smaller share of the pie. Advertisers often allocate their budgets to platforms with broader reach and more robust targeting capabilities. Twitter struggled to match the scale and precision offered by its competitors. Furthermore, Twitter started facing scrutiny over content moderation, especially during times of political unrest and misinformation (Al Jazeera 2022). And for advertisers, this can be a deciding factor when choosing in which platform to invest their money on. Additionally, Twitter's user base growth plateaued (*Appendix 2, Fig 2*), which made it harder for the platform to attract new advertisers, generate additional revenue and thrive in the social media landscape.

3. The Social Media Industry

Social media encompasses various technologies enabling the exchange of ideas and information through virtual networks and communities, with over 4.7 billion users worldwide (Dollarhide 2024).

Initially pioneered by Facebook and Twitter, the social media landscape witnessed exponential growth, attracting businesses eager to connect with a global audience in real-time. Through visual storytelling, enterprises now use social media to build compelling narratives to establish deeper connections with their target audience.

Presently, social media plays a pivotal role in news consumption, with 46% of internet users relying on these platforms for information, according to Global Web Index.

The growth of temporary content underscores the evolving nature of online engagement and the trend towards succinct, visually captivating content is evident, with short and concise posts increasingly capturing the attention of consumers. Furthermore, niche social media platforms catering to specific interests highlight the diversification of the social media landscape (Banerjee, 2024).

Meanwhile, the rise of influencer³ culture has become obvious. These people wield significant power over their followers' purchasing decisions and beliefs, impacting society, particularly among *Gen Z* users (Digital Habibi 2023). Businesses have started to rely on influencers to create partnerships and to promote products and services. Furthermore, some social media platforms have evolved into marketplaces, enabling product discovery and transactions directly within their interfaces.

As the social media landscape evolves, concerns regarding privacy and ethical data usage have come to the forefront. Users and regulatory bodies are increasingly scrutinizing platform policies, leading to shifts in regulations and practices aimed at safeguarding personal information (KnowHow+ 2023). While social media usage is constantly growing, it is crucial to be aware of potential privacy risks. Hence, in the past few years, data protection and the implementation of regulations and policies have become a central component of social media.

Looking ahead, evidence indicates that emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and blockchain have the potential to reshape the social media industry (BuzzBoard 2024). These innovations promise to personalize content, combat misinformation, and redefine user

³ The concept of influencer was born on blogs and grew to be considered a job on social media. It is someone who has the power to affect the decisions of other because of his/her knowledge and relationship with the audience (Geyser, 2024).

interactions, prompting platforms to invest in research and development to stay competitive. Overall, the social media industry is marked by rapid innovation, changing consumer behaviors, regulatory challenges, and technological advancements. Adapting to these dynamics is imperative for platforms to thrive in an increasingly competitive and complex landscape.

3.1. Competitors

It is no secret that Twitter has encountered fierce competition within the realm of social media since its beginning, and, following its establishment, other platforms were launched over the years. While some experienced fleeting moments of popularity before fading into oblivion, others managed to secure a lasting position in the dynamic social media landscape.

3.1.1. Facebook

Facebook was launched in January 2004 by four Harvard University students: Mark Zuckerberg, Eduardo Saverin, Dustin Moskovitz, and Chris Hughes. It is an American online social media platform that rapidly ascended to become the largest social network globally, boasting nearly three billion users as of 2021 (Statista 2024). Access to the platform is provided free of charge, with the company predominantly generating revenue through advertisement on its website. Users can create profiles, upload photos, join existing groups, and initiate new groups. Additionally, they have the capability to engage in chats, send private messages, and express reactions to content using the Like button.

In October 2021, Facebook announced its rebranding to Meta Platforms, encompassing Instagram and WhatsApp within its corporate umbrella (Meta 2021).

3.1.2. Instagram

Instagram, an online social media platform and network service primarily focused on photo and video sharing, was launched in 2010 by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger, and is currently owned by Meta Platforms, Inc. By 2021, the platform counted with 1.21 billion monthly active users

(MAUs) (Statista 2023). Currently, the platform's user interface is user-friendly and streamlined. Each profile can share images and videos via their permanent feed or temporary "Stories", which last for 24 hours. Additionally, users have the option to broadcast live video streams directly from their cameras to the platform and send private messages.

3.1.3. Snapchat

Snapchat, founded in 2011 by Stanford students Evan Spiegel, Reggie Brown, and Bobby Murphy, is a social media app where users can share photos and videos that disappear from the platform after a brief period. In 2013, Snapchat introduced a pivotal feature: "Stories", that allow users to post pictures or videos ("snaps") that remained visible for 24 hours.

The platform stands as one of the most widely used social media platforms globally, boasting 319 million daily active users and generating 5 billion daily "snaps" as of 2021 (Dean 2024).

3.1.4. TikTok

TikTok was launched in 2016 by Zhang Yiming and it was designed for creating, editing, and sharing short videos, and it accommodates a wide range of content. The platform's user base expanded rapidly and, by 2021, it counted with 1 billion MAUs (Statista 2023).

4. From Twitter to X – The Unknown

4.1. The Acquisition

In the history of social media, June 4, 2010 marked a new beginning. A man joined Twitter with the following tweet: "Please ignore prior tweets, as that was someone pretending to be me :) This is actually me." Fast forward 12 years, and this same man has 84 million followers and intends to buy Twitter. His name is Elon Musk.

Elon Musk, a South African and American businessman and investor, is mainly known for being the CEO of SpaceX and Tesla and co-founder of PayPal, Neuralink, and OpenAI (Hetler 2023).

Musk, as @elonmusk, became one of the most popular accounts on Twitter due to his tweets that either were about his companies or were jokes or opinions that often happen to be considered controversial (Kerkhof 2023). Furthermore, Elon became very critical of Twitter's stance to free speech. For instance, he was against the permanent ban of former President Donald Trump from Twitter following the attack on the U.S. Capitol by his supporters (Singh 2022).

In 2022, Musk started buying Twitter shares and by March his stake reached 9.2%, making him the largest shareholder of the company. In the beginning of April, his stake was worth \$2.89 billion (Turner and Trudell 2022), and Twitter invited him to be part of the company's board of directors, as they believed Elon could make the platform stronger in the long-term (Conger 2022). Five days later, the entrepreneur informs he will not be joining the board and offered to buy Twitter at \$54.2 per share, valuing the company at about \$43 billion (Subin 2022). In response, Twitter adopted a poison pill⁴ strategy to prevent this acquisition. Nevertheless, at the end of April, Twitter accepted the offer and valued the deal at \$44 billion (Conger 2022).

In May, Musk, on Twitter, informed that the deal was "temporarily on hold" due to concerns regarding the prevalence of bots and spam accounts on the platform (*Appendix 6, Fig. 6*). Before proceeding with the acquisition, he demanded data that could support these accounts represented less than 5% of users as Twitter had affirmed earlier (Milmo 2022). In July, Musk tried to abandon the acquisition due to, allegedly, lack of information regarding the number of bots on the platform. Consequently, Twitter sued Musk as they considered that the entrepreneur was not honoring his obligations to the company and its stockholders, thus they wanted to force him to complete the agreement.

⁴ A poison pill strategy is designed to deter a significant acquisition of shares and prevent any hostile takeover attempts by an individual or entity (Maverick 2023)

In October, before the trial's date, Musk closed the deal to acquire Twitter at his original offer price (\$54.20 per share) at a total cost of approximately \$44 billion, of which \$13 billion were financed through loans (Jin and Oguh 2022). Instantly, the CEO Parag Agrawal, the CFO Ned Segal, and General Counsel were dismissed (O'Sullivan and Duffy 2022). Additionally, in November, the acquired Twitter began massive layoffs, with the intention to cut its workforce in half. Consequently, around 3,700 jobs were eliminated only days after the takeover. The platform also ended deals with several contractors and the Communications Department was shut down (Serna 2022), transforming Twitter in something that seemed an approximation to Elon's other businesses, Tesla, and SpaceX, which do not have such departments of their own.

4.2. Changes to the Business Model

Twitter has undergone a profound transformation. The company that had a robust and profitable image and was perceived as the leading source for breaking news, was now facing financial challenges, spam management issues, and witnessing the departure of major advertisers and users. In June 2023, Linda Yaccarino, an American media executive, assumed the role of Twitter's CEO. Her appointment aimed to restore advertiser trust and stabilize the platform (AP 2023).

Beyond extensive restructuring, including the layoffs, significant shifts were underway, such as the rebranding of Twitter to "X" and the iconic blue bird logo replaced with a white "X" against a black backdrop, accompanied by the new tagline "Blaze Your Glory" (*Appendix 7, Fig. 7 and 8*). Additionally, familiar terms like "tweets" and "retweets" became "posts" and "reposts", respectively.

While Twitter aimed to be a premier news app, the leadership of Elon Musk and Linda Yaccarino was steering "X" towards a broader identity as an "everything app". In fact, there is a similar platform named WeChat with a combined user base exceeding one billion, predominantly concentrated in China. This vision encompasses not only news, social networking, and

broadcasting, but also banking and shopping services (Peters 2023). Moreover, in a Musk's post, in July 2023, he emphasized X's commitment to free speech, while also teasing about future integration with banking services (*Appendix 8, Fig. 9*).

By the end of 2023, X had lost almost half of its advertising revenue (X 2024). As Musk said, through a tweet, in July 2023, "Need to reach positive cash flow before we have the luxury of anything else.". Nevertheless, Twitter had already registered a decrease in revenue prior to the acquisition. But the truth is that, despite Elon's cost-cutting efforts, including significant layoffs and reductions in cloud service expenses, the company was still struggling to entice back advertisers who had left due to changes to the platform's content moderation rules. Furthermore, the substantial debt was placing a significant strain on the company's expenses.

In order to add a new stream of revenue and boost profitability, the platform launched a subscription service called "Twitter Blue" in October 2022, allowing users to have a blue verification sticker on their Twitter page by paying a monthly fee of \$8. While in the past this tick was given by Twitter to famous people on a case-by-case basis to avoid impersonations, when the subscription service appeared, the number of accounts pretending to be other people increased. To address this issue, Elon Musk promised the platform would suspend the impersonators unless the account was marked as a parody (Kolodny 2022). In 2023, the "Twitter Blue" subscription was now called X Premium and was divided into three categories: Basic, Premium and Premium+, each with different monthly fees and different available features and benefits (*Appendix 9, Fig. 10*).

4.3. Shifting User Base

Within the changes that have been happening on Twitter/X, one that has been particularly noticed among researchers and the public in general is the shift in user base.

A Pew Research Center survey made in the US in the spring of 2023 (5 months after the purchase of Twitter) showed that 60% of US adults that had been using Twitter, admitted making a break

from the platform (*Appendix 10, Fig. 11*). Furthermore, following the acquisition and the transition to X, the active users that continued to use the platform, posted less frequently, on average (Dinesh and Odabaş 2023).

Before the acquisition, studies affirmed that most US users were Democrats, and the platform had a more “mainstream” audience. However, some are noticing a shift, particularly on what concerns topics such as democracy, misleading information, harassment, and abuse (*Appendix 11, Fig. 12 and 13*). This may be justified by the fact that Musk not only decided to reinstate several accounts that had been, in the past, banned for violating the rules of Twitter regarding hate speech and misinformation, but also dismissed the team that was responsible for addressing these issues (CBS News 2022).

Recently, X informed the public that as of 2023 there were over 500 million MAUs on the platform, making X the 14th most popular social media globally and the 6th most used by teenagers (*Appendix 12, Fig. 14-18*). It was also stated by the current CEO that, even though ad agencies have stepped away from the platform, the major ones have reversed this pause and 90 of X’s top 100 ad spenders from a year ago have now resumed campaigns (Hutchinson 2023). Nevertheless, analysts admitted that some of the data given by X may be misleading (*Appendix 13, Fig. 19*).

5. Present Challenges and Future Obstacles

As the transition was happening, other companies took the opportunity to improve their platforms and create new ones with the goal of attracting the users that were dissatisfied with X. Most of the competitors of the old Twitter and X remain the same, but the one that took most advantage of this situation was Meta when created Threads.

Threads is a text-based social media that allows users to share and exchange thoughts and perspectives and post updates. Since this platform is under Meta’s umbrella, it is leveraging Instagram’s user base and information to expand its reach (Samie 2024). Indeed, many users

admitted being disappointed and looking for a replacement when Twitter started suffering changes under the new management (Beal-Cvetko 2023). In just 5 days, Threads had more than 100 million users making it the fastest-growing platform in history (Rao 2023).

By January 2024, X was estimated to be valued at \$12.5 billion (Gabbatt 2024), meaning that its valuation decreased by 71% since Musk bought it for \$44 billion, according to an estimation by Fidelity.

The acquisition and transition to X have brought numerous challenges, including reductions in market value, declining user numbers, and the departure of advertisers to alternative platforms. Furthermore, the proliferation of misinformation and the emergence of a new direct competitor add up to the obstacles X is facing. As the platform navigates through this challenging period, overcoming the hurdles ahead will demand substantial effort and strategic maneuvering from the management.

Looking ahead, Musk and Linda find themselves at a crossroads, facing daunting questions and pivotal decisions that promise to consume time and resources. The allure of the “dream team” sparks speculation: will their combined expertise finally steer the company to overcome the financial hurdles of the past years? And essentially, will the solution lie in maintaining the paid subscription models or is it necessary to opt for a radical change?

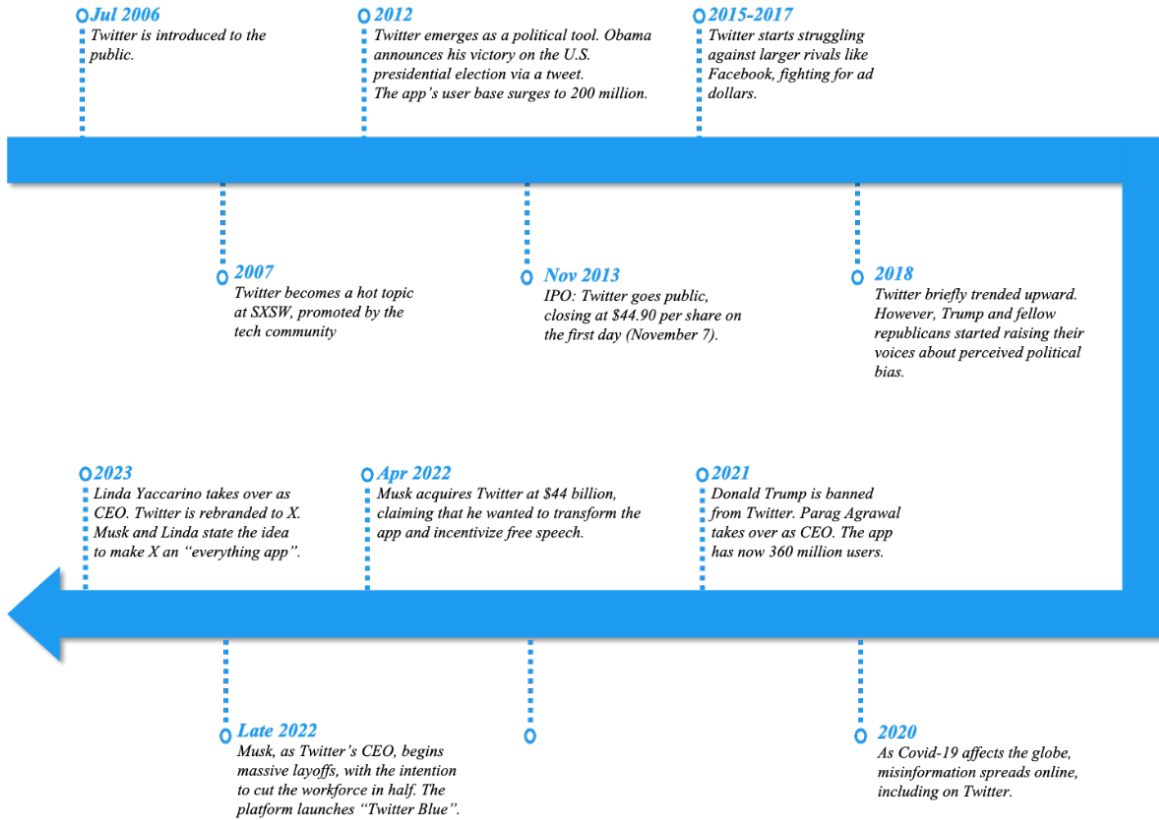
Moreover, the public’s curiosity is piqued: will X persist with its ambitious vision of becoming the “everything app”, or will it revert to its roots as a real-time news app and political tool? These are not only queries that remain for the X’s management to ponder, but also enigmatic riddles awaiting unraveling, inviting speculation and contemplation from all quarters.

As the curtains draw on this chapter of X’s journey, the stage is set for a narrative full of uncertainties and possibilities. The answers to these questions may elude us for now, but therein lies the intrigue and allure of X’s enigmatic future.

Appendix

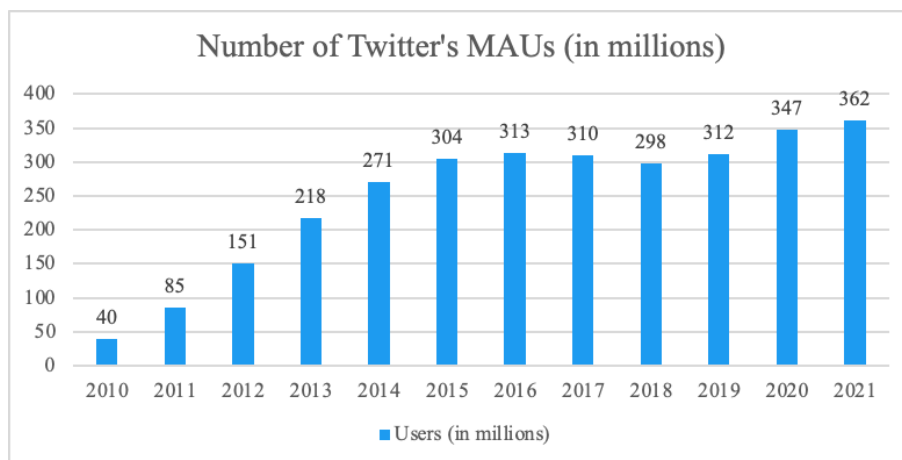
Appendix 1

Figure 1: Timeline of Events from 2006 until 2023



Appendix 2

Figure 2: Number of users of Twitter (2010-2021)



Source: Business of Apps

Appendix 3

Figure 3: Evolution of Twitter's homepage



The first picture corresponds to Twitter's first homepage, dated to 2006. The second picture refers to the *Fly* design introduced by Dorsey in 2011. The last picture relates to Twitter's layout in 2019, prior to Musk's acquisition.

Appendix 4

Table 1: Twitter's Revenues and EBITDA (2017-2021)

<i>In billion \$</i>	Dec 21	Dec 20	Dec 19	Dec 18	Dec 17
Total Revenue	5,08	3,72	3,46	3,04	2,44
Cost of Revenue	1,80	1,37	1,14	0,97	0,86
Gross Profit	3,28	2,35	2,32	2,08	1,58
Operating Expense	3,01	2,32	1,96	1,62	1,54
Operating Income	0,27	0,03	0,37	0,45	0,04
Net Non Operating Interest Income Expense	-0,02	-0,06	0,02	-0,02	-0,06
Other Income Expense	-0,67	-0,01	0,00	-0,01	-0,07
Pretax Income	-0,41	-0,05	0,39	0,42	-0,10
Tax Provision	-0,19	1,08	-1,08	-0,78	0,01
Earnings From Equity Interest Net Of Tax	-	-	-	-	-
Net Income Common Stockholders	-0,22	-1,14	1,47	1,21	-0,11
Basic EPS	-0,28	-1,44	1,90	1,60	-0,15
Diluted EPS	-0,28	-1,44	1,87	1,56	-0,15
Basic Average Shares	0,80	0,79	0,77	0,75	0,73
Diluted Average Shares	0,80	0,79	0,79	0,77	0,73
Dividend Per Share	-	-	-	-	-
Total Operating Income As Reported	-	-	-	-	-
Reported Normalized Basic EPS	-	-	-	-	-
Reported Normalized Diluted EPS	0,20	-0,87	2,37	0,86	0,44
Rent Expense Supplemental	-	-	-	-	-
Total Expenses	4,80	3,69	3,09	2,59	2,40
Net Income From Continuing And Discontinued Operation	-0,22	-1,14	1,47	1,21	-0,11
Normalized Income	0,34	-1,14	1,47	1,21	-0,11
Interest Expense	0,05	0,15	0,14	0,13	0,11
EBIT	-0,36	0,10	0,53	0,56	0,01
EBITDA	0,18	0,60	0,99	0,98	0,41

Source: Twitter

Table 2: Total Revenue and Change in Revenue and Profit of Twitter (2017-2021)

<i>In billion \$</i>	Dec 23	Dec 22	Dec 21	Dec 20	Dec 19	Dec 18	Dec 17
Total Revenue	3,4	4,4	5,08	3,72	3,46	3,04	2,44
<i>Change in Revenue</i>	-23%	-13%	37%	8%	14%	25%	
Net Income Common Stockholders	-	-	-0,22	-1,14	1,47	1,21	-0,11
<i>Profit Change</i>			-81%	-178%	21%	-1220%	

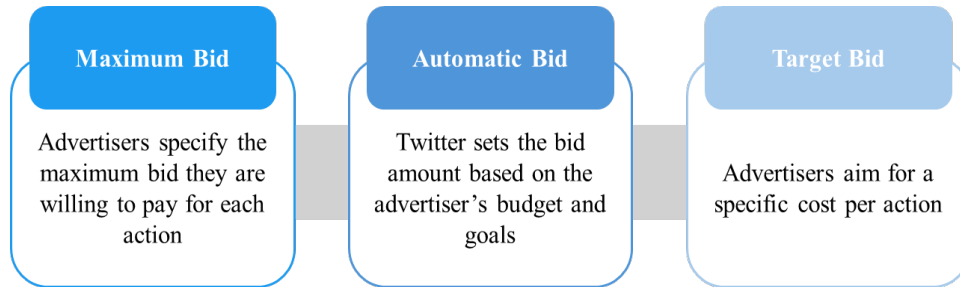
Table 3: Revenue Streams (2017-2023)

<i>In billion \$</i>	Dec 23	Dec 22	Dec 21	Dec 20	Dec 19	Dec 18	Dec 17
Advertising	2,5	4,0	4,5	3,2	2,9	2,6	2,1
<i>% of total revenue</i>	74%	91%	89%	86%	84%	86%	86%
Data Licencing	0,9	0,4	0,5	0,5	0,4	0,4	0,3
<i>% of total revenue</i>	26%	9%	10%	13%	12%	13%	12%

Source: Twitter

Appendix 5

Figure 4: Types of bids available to advertisers



Source: NuOptima

Figure 5: Twitter's ad options and prices



Source: NuOptima

Appendix 6

Figure 6: Elon's tweet admitting the deal was temporarily on hold



Source: X

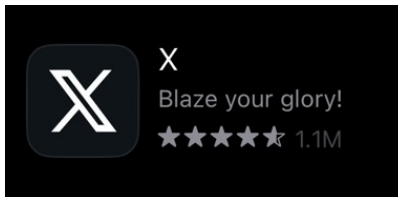
Appendix 7

Figure 7: Logo evolution over the years



Source: LinkedIn

Figure 8: X's new tagline



Appendix 8

Figure 9: Elon's tweet committing to freedom of speech and teasing about the everything app



Source: X

Appendix 9

Figure 10: Division of X Premium into three categories

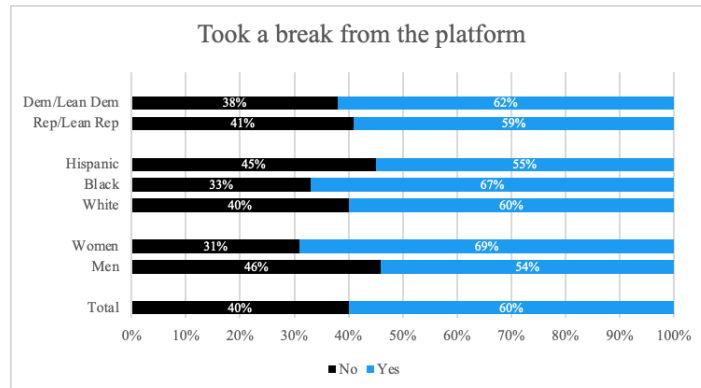
Basic	Premium	Premium+
Enhanced Experience Edit post ✓ Longer posts ✓ Undo post ✓ Post longer videos ✓ Top Articles ✓ Reader ⓘ ✓ Background video playback ✓ Download videos ✓ Small reply boost ✓ No Ads in For You and Following ⓘ ⚡ Largest reply boost ⚡	Enhanced Experience Edit post ✓ Longer posts ✓ Undo post ✓ Post longer videos ✓ Top Articles ✓ Reader ⓘ ✓ Background video playback ✓ Download videos ✓ Half Ads in For You and Following ⓘ ✓ Larger reply boost ✓ No Ads in For You and Following ⓘ ⚡ Largest reply boost ⚡	Enhanced Experience Edit post ✓ Longer posts ✓ Undo post ✓ Post longer videos ✓ Top Articles ✓ Reader ⓘ ✓ Background video playback ✓ Download videos ✓ No Ads in For You and Following ⓘ ✓ Largest reply boost ✓
Creator Hub Get paid to post ⓘ ⚡ Creator Subscriptions ⓘ ⚡ X Pro (web only) ⚡ Media Studio (web only) ⚡ Analytics (web only) ⚡	Creator Hub Get paid to post ⓘ ✓ Creator Subscriptions ⓘ ✓ X Pro (web only) ✓ Media Studio (web only) ✓ Analytics (web only) ✓	Creator Hub Get paid to post ⓘ ✓ Creator Subscriptions ⓘ ✓ X Pro (web only) ✓ Media Studio (web only) ✓ Analytics (web only) ✓
Verification & Security SMS two-factor authentication ⓘ ✓ Encrypted direct messages ⓘ ✓ Checkmark ⓘ ⚡ ID verification ⓘ ⚡	Verification & Security SMS two-factor authentication ⓘ ✓ Encrypted direct messages ⓘ ✓ Checkmark ⓘ ✓ ID verification ⓘ ✓	Verification & Security SMS two-factor authentication ⓘ ✓ Encrypted direct messages ⓘ ✓ Checkmark ⓘ ✓ ID verification ⓘ ✓
Customization App icons ✓ Bookmark folders ✓ Customize navigation ✓ Theme ✓ Highlights tab ⓘ ✓ Hide your likes ✓ Hide your checkmark ✓ Hide your subscriptions ✓	Customization App icons ✓ Bookmark folders ✓ Customize navigation ✓ Theme ✓ Highlights tab ⓘ ✓ Hide your likes ✓ Hide your checkmark ✓ Hide your subscriptions ✓	Customization App icons ✓ Bookmark folders ✓ Customize navigation ✓ Theme ✓ Highlights tab ⓘ ✓ Hide your likes ✓ Hide your checkmark ✓ Hide your subscriptions ✓

The Basic tier costs \$3/month or \$32/year, the Premium tier costs \$8/month or \$84/year, and the Premium+ tier costs \$16/month or \$168/year.

Source: DealzTrendz

Appendix 10

Figure 11: Percentage of Twitter's users that took a break from the platform after the acquisition

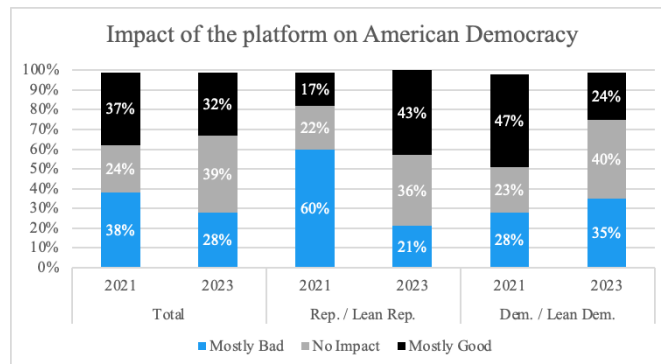


Note from Pew Research Center: White and Black adults include those who report being one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanic adults are of any race.

Source: Pew Research Center survey of U.S. adults conducted March 13-19, 2023.

Appendix 11

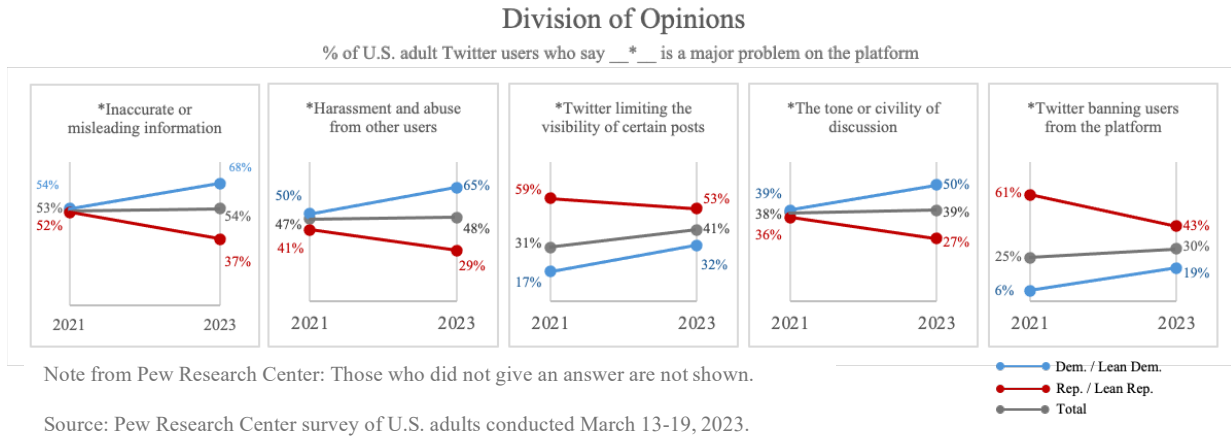
Figure 12: Opinions regarding the impact of Twitter/X on American Democracy



Note from Pew Research Center: Figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding. Those who did not give an answer are not shown.

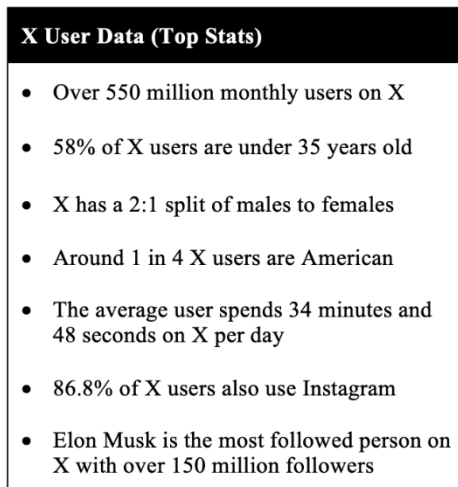
Source: Pew Research Center survey of U.S. adults conducted March 13-19, 2023.

Figure 13: Opinions regarding the impact of Twitter/X on American Democracy



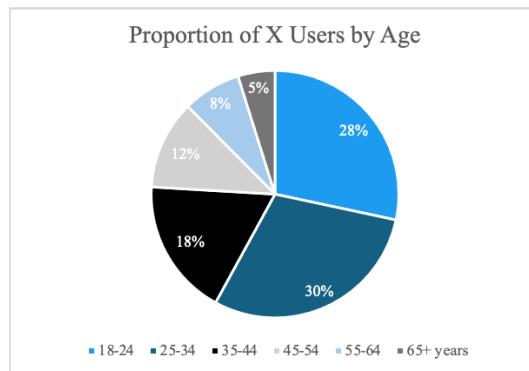
Appendix 12

Figure 14: X User Data given by the company



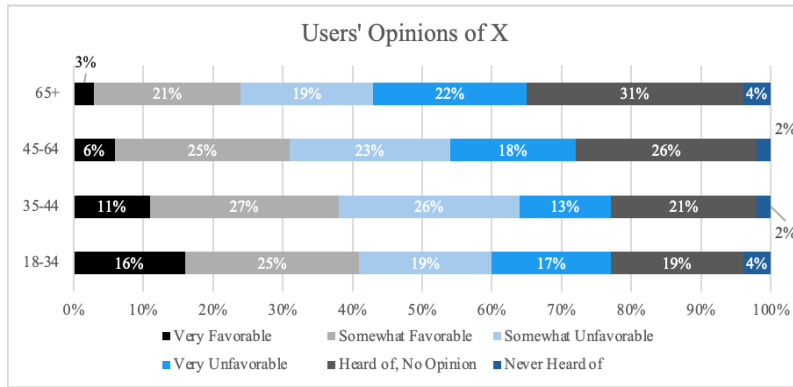
Source: ExplodingTopics 2024

Figure 15: Proportion of X Users by Age



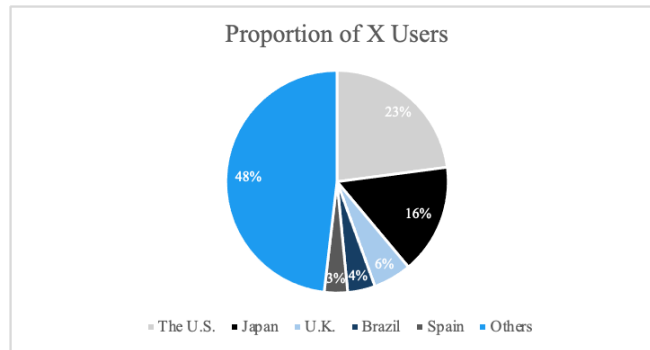
Source: ExplodingTopics 2024

Figure 16: Opinions regarding X



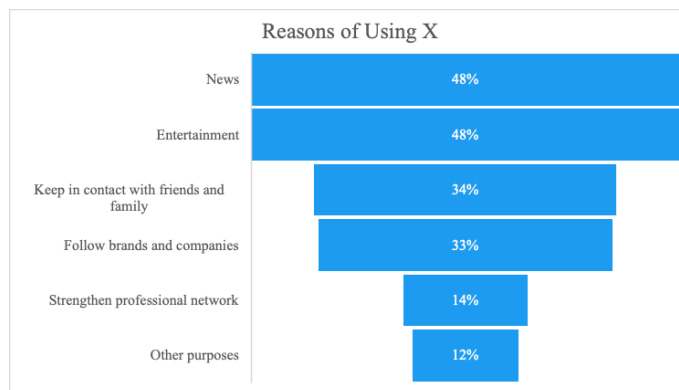
Source: ExplodingTopics 2024

Figure 17: Proportion of X's users by country



Source: ExplodingTopics 2024

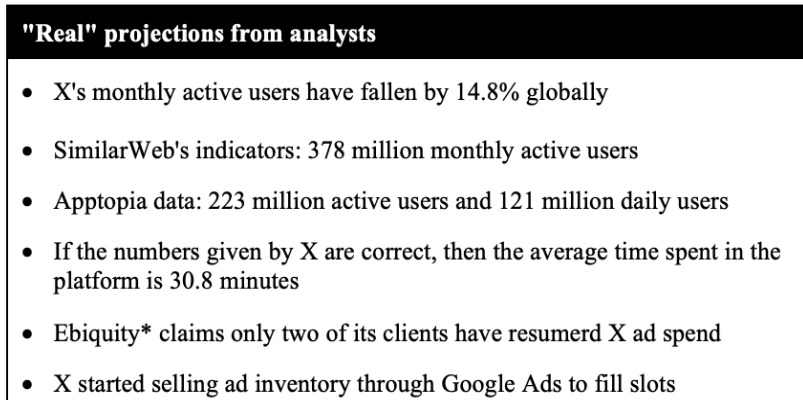
Figure 18: Reasons that make people use X



Source: ExplodingTopics 2024

Appendix 13

Figure 19: Projections from analysts regarding X's user data



*Ebiquity works with 70 of the world's top 100 spending brands

Disclaimer: Third parties do not have access to the full data insights. Their figures are indicative and based on research.

Group Part: Teaching Note

Case Summary

The case study delves into the evolution and challenges faced by Twitter since its foundation in 2006. Initially conceptualized as a real-time communication tool, Twitter quickly gained popularity, becoming a vital platform for news dissemination, political discourse, and cultural movements. However, over the years, the platform encountered hurdles including stagnant user growth, financial struggles, and controversies surrounding content moderation.

In 2022, Elon Musk emerged as a major shareholder of the company and eventually acquired it. Under his leadership, significant changes were implemented including layoffs, a rebranding from “Twitter” to “X”, and a shift towards a broader service offering beyond social networking.

Despite the efforts to revitalize the platform, X is facing challenges such as declining user engagement, concerns over misinformation, and the emergence of new competitors.

As X navigates through these obstacles, strategic decisions and innovative solutions will be crucial to reclaiming its position in the social media landscape and ensuring long-term success.

Target Audience and Teaching Objectives

The teaching approach for this case study is designed to guide students on how to analyze and make strategic decisions in the social media industry, characterized essentially by rapid innovation and changing consumer behaviors. It is designed for graduate-level business or MBA programs with a specific focus on corporate strategy and/or social media strategy. Based on the proposed frameworks, the main teaching objectives are:

- **Strategic external analysis** of main industry drivers and competitive environment in the social media industry, empowering students to understand and navigate through business landscapes of tomorrow.

- **Strategic internal analysis** of Twitter and X's business model, with a focus on value propositions and main strengths and weaknesses of the company. This incorporates identifying specific resources and capabilities that may contribute to its sustainable competitive advantage. It will allow students to develop an understanding of complex business models and identify main drivers of an organization's overall success and sustained growth.
- Identification of **network effects** as an internal resource as well as a barrier of entry for companies within the social media industry. This will allow students to grasp how network effects influence social media companies' value and growth at the cost of its competitors.
- **Strategic decision making**, by providing students with the right skill set to make informed, fact-based decisions based on the external and internal conditions of a company. It is important to synthesize past findings and weigh trade-offs to consider how the chosen option creates a long-term competitive advantage in the future in order to make valuable decisions about the strategic direction of an organization.

Teaching Approach

The teaching plan was prepared considering that students will go through a self-study period before the class in which they will read and prepare the case as well as familiarize themselves with the social media landscape and specifics of Twitter so that they can actively participate in a 90-minute in-class discussion. Students should be familiarized with the following theoretical frameworks: Porter's Five Forces, PESTEL, SWOT, Business Model Canvas, and VRIO. The instructor can find the extended teaching plan with the questions in *Appendix 1, Table 1 and 2*.

In the beginning of the class, after briefly summarizing the case, the instructor should start with the suggested opening question, to allow students to share their perspective and relation with the platform. It could be beneficial to the analysis if at least one student mentioned the difference

<p>Political</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulations and Policies: Governments worldwide are increasingly scrutinizing social media platforms regarding data privacy, content moderation, and election interference. • Censorship and Freedom of Speech: Policies around what content is allowed and what constitutes harmful speech can vary significantly between countries, impacting Twitter's operations and user base. • Global Presence: Social media platforms must adhere to the regulations of each country they are in to assure the sustainability of the operations.
<p>Economic</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Fluctuations: Twitter's revenue, heavily reliant on advertising, is susceptible to economic fluctuations impacting advertisers' spending habits and user spending patterns. • Exchange Rates: Global social media platforms are subject to fluctuations in currency exchange rates, which can affect the financial performance in different markets.
<p>Social</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User Behavior: Changes in preferences and trends can impact platform's user engagement and growth. • Influence on Society: Twitter's role in shaping public opinion and facilitating activism can lead to both positive and negative social impacts, affecting its reputation and user trust.
<p>Technological</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation and Disruption: Emerging technologies present opportunities for enhancing user experiences and addressing challenges such as content moderation and misinformation. • Data Security and Privacy: Increasing concerns about data security and privacy requires strong measures to protect user data and comply with regulations which impacts platform trust and user retention.
<p>Environmental</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy Consumption: Data centers powering social media platforms consume significant energy, contributing to carbon emissions. Increasing focus on environmental sustainability prompts companies to adopt renewable energy sources and implement energy-efficient practices. • Digital Carbon Footprint: Awareness of the environmental impact of digital technologies raises questions about the carbon footprint of online activities, influencing user behaviors and corporate sustainability initiatives.
<p>Legal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Protection: Compliance with data protection laws requires social media companies to implement stringent data handling practices and provide transparency to users about data usage. • Intellectual Property: Legal disputes over intellectual property rights, including copyright infringement claims and patent disputes, affect platform policies on content ownership and distribution.

Q 1.2. What are the competitive forces affecting the social media industry?

Students are expected to recognize that the Porter's Five Forces framework is a widely used tool for evaluating industry competitiveness and attractiveness. Meanwhile, the instructor should introduce the concept of "Network Effects" as it influenced Twitter's growth trajectory and impacts the threat of new entrants.

In the social media industry, the most powerful forces are the bargaining power of buyers, the threat of substitutes and the industry rivalry. Nonetheless, in *Appendix 3, Fig. 2*, the instructor can access an extended version of the framework with the five forces explained.

- **Bargaining Power of Buyers:** Individual users and advertising companies have limited direct impact on a platform's operations, but collective actions such as boycotts or mass migration can highly affect the user base and advertising revenue, thus the bargaining power of buyers is high. Moreover, Twitter's revenue heavily relies on attracting and retaining advertisers, giving advertisers the ability to negotiate pricing, targeting options, and other terms to maximize value and return on investment. Additionally, users and advertisers have low switching costs.
- **Threat From Substitutes:** Social media platforms offer unique features and opportunities for interaction. However, traditional media, emerging technologies, and offline activities provide alternative channels for communication and entertainment, making the threat relatively high.
- **Industry Rivalry:** The rivalry in this industry is very high. Most users have accounts in multiple platforms, facilitating an easy switching based on preferences. Therefore, companies compete through continuous innovation, feature updates and content differentiation. Additionally, rapidly evolving user preferences, technological advancements, and regulatory challenges contribute to the dynamic and competitive nature of the industry.

Considering the frameworks computed, and to finalize the external analysis, students should identify the main threats and opportunities Twitter faced in the past and those that X will encounter in the near future.

	Opportunities	Threats
Twitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand to emerging market by adapting the platform to local languages and cultures. • Diversifying revenue streams and leveraging partnerships with media companies and content creators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intense competition affecting the user base, engagement, and advertising revenue. • User fatigue, financial uncertainty, and cybersecurity threats. • Regulatory scrutiny, changes in data privacy laws, content moderation regulations, and antitrust investigations.
X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Everything app” concept will diversify the offerings. • Expansion beyond traditional social media. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fierce competition. • Not being able to successfully implement Musk’s vision for X. • Balancing free speech with responsible content. • Keeping pace with evolving user preferences and social media landscape changes.

Internal Analysis

The aim of Questions 2.1 and 2.2 is to examine Twitter’s internal situation described in the case with the extended Business Model Canvas and VRIO frameworks. These frameworks will provide students with the understanding of Twitter’s business building blocks as well as the company’s main resources and capabilities.

Q 2.1. Explain Twitter’s business model and how it was adapted overtime.

To perform an analysis of Twitter’s business model and how it adapted overtime, students should apply the Business Model Canvas, to understand the key factors that characterize Twitter’s business model and how they interact to create value. In *Appendix 4, Table 3*, the instructor will be able to find an extended version of the Business Model Canvas framework, with the nine strategic dimensions. Due to lack of relevance, the analysis of Twitter’s Key Partners, Channels, and Cost

Structure can also be found in *Appendix 4*. Applying the model to the real-life case study of Twitter provides students with a practical understanding of how the company operates. In addition, students should identify the main changes in the company's business model that derived from the acquisition of the platform by Musk and consequent transformation to X.

Key Activities: Twitter's activities include user acquisition and engagement, through the implementation of strategies to acquire new users and retain existing ones; content curation and moderation, to ensure it aligns with community guidelines and values; platform maintenance, monetization, that includes advertising and data licensing; and, finally, innovation, which is done mainly through the development and implementation of new, improved features, layouts, and services.

Customer Segments: Twitter's customer base can be divided into four segments: Individuals, or the general users who consume and/or create content on the platform; Businesses (brands and organizations) who use Twitter as a means for marketing purposes, customer services and public relations; Developers who build apps and services on top of Twitter's platform and purchase data licensing and services; and, lastly, Advertisers, that contribute for the majority of Twitter's revenue.

Key Resources: In order to operate effectively, Twitter needs some crucial resources, such as technology infrastructure (servers, databases, software, ...); human resources, that include mainly engineers, designers, developers, and moderators; intellectual property (patents, trademarks, algorithms); content; and brand (brand identity and reputation).

Value Proposition: Twitter presents a unique value proposition to each member of its customer segments in order to generate revenue and retain its users, advertisers, and developers. On the Individual user side, Twitter's value proposition is characterized by real-time information, network, and engagement, by facilitating connections and interactions between individuals and organizations. It is a place of free connectivity, where everyone has the power to share their own

ideas, thoughts, and opinions, and to connect with millions of other users of all backgrounds and nationalities. For Businesses and Advertisers, Twitter's value propositions include targeted advertising opportunities based on interests and user behaviors, that can be customized to fit a brand's budget, size, and type of ad desired. Besides, Twitter provides its advertisers with tools thorough which they can check the performance of their ads, by tracking the actions that Twitter users take after viewing, clicking, or engaging with their ads. For Developers, Twitter offers a powerful API (Application Programming Interface), which developers can use to monitor brands, track events, manage social media, and uncover consumer insights.

Revenue Streams: Twitter's revenue streams are advertising and data licensing services. Advertising serves as the primary revenue stream, leveraging Twitter's extensive user base for global brand promotion. With advanced targeting options, advertisers can effectively reach their desired audience segments. Additionally, Twitter offers data licensing services, providing valuable insights derived from user behaviors to brands and businesses. Through data sharing (with user consent), businesses and developers gain access to valuable user insights, enhancing their understanding of Twitter's user base.

Customer Relations: Twitter focuses on acquiring and retaining users by employing various customer relationship management strategies. These include enabling customer self-service, allowing users to independently create accounts and use the app. Additionally, Twitter engages with its community through support channels, feedback mechanisms, and community initiatives. Moreover, it provides advertising support by guiding advertisers in crafting effective campaigns. With the acquisition of the company by Musk, some changes in Twitter's (now X's) business model came along, in order to create new revenue streams and fight the new growing competitor Threads. These changes happened particularly in Value Proposition and Revenue Streams dimensions. Starting with Value Proposition, under Musk's direction, X aims to transform into an "everything

app", expanding its services to include banking and shopping alongside its existing features. Additionally, Twitter created a new revenue stream - the Twitter Blue (now X Premium) subscription. Under this model, users can verify their accounts by paying a monthly fee, offering them additional features and benefits within the platform.

Q 2.2. Do you consider Twitter had a sustainable competitive advantage? What about X?

To perform an analysis of Twitter's competitive advantage and how it changed with the transition to X, students should apply the VRIO framework updated until 2021 (or before Twitter's acquisition by Elon Musk). This framework is used to identify the main resources and capabilities that provides the company with a competitive advantage, based on four factors: Value, Rarity, Imitability, and Organization. Thus, it will be used to understand if Twitter's (and X's) main resources are valuable, rare, non-imitable and organized, and, if Twitter holds a sustainable competitive advantage against its competitors or not. In *Appendix 5, Fig. 3*, the instructor will be able to find an extended version of the VRIO framework, with three possible resources chosen (students can present equivalent or similar resources). Applying the models to the real-life case study of Twitter provides students with a practical understanding of Twitter's competitive advantage in the social media industry. In addition, students should identify the main changes in the company's competitive advantage that derived from the acquisition of the platform by Musk and consequent transformation to X.

The discussion should focus on three resources as of 2021: Real-time data, Brand recognition, and Customer base and network effects.

Resource	VRIO
<p>Real-Time Updates</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • V: Twitter’s value proposition of real-time information and updates is a valuable resource both for advertisers and users, as it allows for instant updates on breaking news, events, and trends, as well as targeted marketing campaigns. • R: This ability is relatively rare compared to other social media platforms, whose focus is on different offers. • I: Twitter owns algorithms and technological infrastructure for processing real-time data and delivering personalized content that requires investments and complex know-how, making it hard to replicate by competitors. • O: The company is outfitted with cutting-edge technology to maintain seamless system operations and has developed strategies to monetize its real-time data mainly through advertising. <p>= Sustainable Competitive Advantage</p>
<p>Brand Recognition</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • V: Over time, Twitter has become a well-known and valuable brand, with global presence. • R: Twitter has carved out a rare and unique position in the market over the past years, and its distinct features contribute to its rarity. • I: Building a brand that parallels Twitter’s statute and value propositions is hard to replicate by competitors, as it requires a significant amount of time and resources. • O: Twitter was able to strategically leverage its brand reputation to expand service offerings, enter new markets and form a strong user base. <p>= Sustainable Competitive Advantage</p>
<p>Customer Base and Network Effects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • V: Twitter built a loyal customer base and network with around 300 million users in 2021. Its large user base and interconnected nature creates network effects, meaning the platform becomes more valuable as more users join and engage. • R: Network effects and the consequent strong user base are relatively rare, given that as one platform attracts more users, its direct competitors are likely to lose theirs. • I: Twitter's extensive customer base, meticulously built over years, presents a challenge for any competitor attempting to replicate it, as Twitter leverages understanding of user behavior and engagement patterns, honed over years of operation. • O: Twitter has a real-time analytics system that allows the firm to acquire insight into the interest and behaviors of its users, meaning that this resource is well-organized, and the company was able to capitalize on it. <p>= Sustainable Competitive Advantage</p>
<p>Over the years, Twitter demonstrated its capacity to capitalize on the ability to provide real-time updates, on its brand, and on its strong user base and network effects. Considering the framework and the analysis made, these resources provided Twitter with a sustainable competitive advantage against its competitors of 2021.</p>	

Following the transition to X after Musk's acquisition in 2021, the platform underwent significant management changes. This shift resulted in a slight decline in early Twitter's brand recognition as the platform's identity evolved. Moreover, discontentment among users regarding Musk's vision led some to migrate to Threads, resulting in a weakened customer base and diminished value. Additionally, while Twitter's real-time and conversational nature was once difficult to replicate, competitors have since adopted similar features, eroding this advantage.

Nonetheless, Musk's involvement brings new resources such as capital and technological expertise. With proper management, Musk may leverage synergies between X and his other enterprises, such as Tesla and SpaceX. However, fully realizing these synergies remains a challenge.

Finally, as a complementary analysis and considering the frameworks computed, students should be able to identify the main strengths and weaknesses of Twitter as of 2021, as well as new ones that X may hold now (see *Appendix 6, Fig.4* for the complete version of the SWOT analysis).

	Strengths	Weaknesses
Twitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong user base, motivated by network effects. • Unique value proposition, encompassing real-time updates and targeted advertising opportunities. • Brand recognition and reputation. • Long-term experience in the social media market. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower scale compared to social media giants like Facebook. • Financial instability, characterized by constant negative operating profit and monetization challenges. • User growth stagnation. • Proliferation of misinformation.
X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse revenue streams (X Premium). • Rebranding and innovation, through the “everything app” concept. • Musk’s resources and know-how, that may generate synergies between X and his other enterprises. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition instability. • Ad revenue decrease. • Decline in advertisers’ trust and loyalty. • Lack of content moderation, which can lead to increase in misinformation

Q 3. Based on the internal and external environment, analyze if the paid subscription model is sustainable and viable in the long-term.

Many social media platforms have embraced paid subscription models to enrich user experiences and generate additional revenue. LinkedIn serves as a notable example, offering features such as enhanced networking and job search tools to users with paid subscriptions. Similarly, YouTube Premium provides ad-free viewing, offline playback, and exclusive content. However, widespread adoption of the YouTube paid model has been limited by entrenched user habits and the availability of free content. Nonetheless, platforms like LinkedIn demonstrate the potential utility of paid subscriptions for individuals or companies seeking a more streamlined networking experience.

In the case of X, Musk introduced X Premium (formerly Twitter Blue) after his takeover to diversify revenue streams and reduce reliance on advertising income, which was facing challenges. Besides, he stated that introducing the paid blue verification would reduce bots (or fake accounts) in the platform. X Premium offers three tiers at different prices (*Appendix 7, Fig. 5*).

The students can estimate the revenue coming from the paid subscription, which can help students to evaluate trade-offs and assess if it is a sustainable revenue stream for X, in the long run. A possible estimation approach can be found in *Appendix 8, Fig.6*.

According to company data provided in the case, X's annual revenue in 2023 stood at approximately \$3.4 billion. Of this total, \$2.5 billion was generated from advertising revenue, with the remaining \$0.9 billion coming from subscriptions and data licensing and other services. Notably, the estimated annual revenue from paid subscriptions amounted to \$69 million (*Appendix 8, Fig.6*), representing a mere 2% share of the overall revenue. This underscores the relatively small contribution of paid subscriptions to X's revenue.

During Twitter's transition to X, the introduction of paid subscriptions offered a degree of stability amid declining ad revenue. However, the decision to offer paid features also introduces additional

pressure on X to deliver exceptional service to justify the subscription fees. This may divert attention from efforts to recover ad revenue and maintain a broader user base, a strategy that might not be optimal during a period of instability for X. Additionally, Musk's approach to combat fake accounts by restricting verification badges and offering them only to those willing to pay proves ineffective in practice. This system enables anyone with a fake account and \$8 to obtain a blue check mark and potentially impersonate others.

Moreover, it's worth acknowledging the inherent tendency of human beings to seek novelty and continuous improvement. Even if some users are initially enticed to try the premium version of X out of curiosity, X must consistently enhance its paid service and features to ensure sustained value for these users, preventing them from growing disinterested over time. Given X's existing challenges in user retention, advertiser engagement, and heightened competition, it may be prudent for the platform to prioritize enhancing its free service and overall value proposition to remain competitive, rather than allocating resources solely to cater to a small segment of users interested in premium services.

Considering the current internal and external environment surrounding X, the viability of X Premium in the long term appears uncertain, but in any case, it is possible to assess that it will not be life-changing for X in terms of additional revenue. This assessment is based on an analysis of the company's circumstances and may vary depending on individual viewpoints.

In conclusion, while X Premium presents potential benefits such as additional revenue during a period of instability, its long-term sustainability hinges on successful execution and user adoption. Students should carefully weigh the trade-offs involved when evaluating its viability over the long term.

Q 4. Should X go forward with the “everything app” concept or should they try to exploit their previous value proposition of a real-time news app and political tool?

The question invites two distinctive viewpoints: one advocating for the development of an “everything app” and the other supporting Twitter’s original business model. Due to the recent nature of the topic and the lack of concrete data, theoretical and hypothetical answers are expected. For the students arguing in favor of transforming X into an “everything app”, they should first explain the concept and its included services. Additionally, they should discuss how Elon and Linda Yaccarino could effectively implement this model and its long-term advantages for X. It is worth noting that a similar platform already exists in China. On the other hand, for students that believe that X should adopt the traditional business model of Twitter, it is expected that the answer includes a brief explanation of the business model and clarify that it would be beneficial if X leveraged the real-time news differentiators. Moreover, it should be mentioned that even if Elon decides to adopt the old concept, the platform has already lost a significant number of users due to the management of X and the new free speech policy.

In *Appendix 9*, the instructor will find a complete answer for each scenario. Nonetheless, the following table presents the main arguments and recommendations for each viewpoint:

“Everything app”	Twitter’s Business Model
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Super platform consolidating various services. • Leverage Twitter’s existing infrastructures and enhance the platform. • Partner with financial institutions, e-commerce platforms and content creators. • Intuitive design to avoid making the users feel overwhelmed. • Convenience leading to loyalty and reduced churn. • Personalized suite of services for each user through the collection of data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Microblogging, news app and social networking service. • Twitter’s revenues were largely based on advertising services. • Real-time news proved to be a valuable asset and the company has the capabilities and resources to continue with this model. • Risky to alter the core concept of what Twitter was. Deviating from this model may lead to the loss of the current user base. • Need to reattract users that have already left the platform.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A similar platform, named WeChat, already exists in China. • WeChat is not present in the West and X is not targeting the Chinese market, thus the need for X to differentiate is not crucial. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address concerns over the new free speech policy. • Rebuild trust and align with user expectations. • Find a sustainable equilibrium between free speech and content moderation. • Ensure a safe and trustworthy environment for users.
---	--

In summary, the instructor should anticipate different responses to this question, mirroring the ongoing debate between advocating for the “everything app” concept and defending Twitter’s traditional business model. Both approaches present strategic paths for X, each with its unique benefits and challenges. Regardless of the chosen scenario, the instructor should underscore that success depends on aligning with user preferences, maintain platform integrity, and nurturing a secure and engaging user experience.

Key Takeaways

To finalize the class, it is advisable that the instructor presents key takeaways that go beyond the specific context of the Twitter and X’s case study. Thus, the students should remember the following:

Takeaway	Business World
Adaptability is Key	The case highlights the importance of adaptability in the face of industry changes and challenges. It demonstrates the necessity for businesses to continuously assess their strategies and pivot when necessary to remain relevant and competitive in evolving markets.
Innovation and Core Value Proposition	The case demonstrates the need for businesses to innovate strategically, ensuring that new initiatives complement the core offerings and resonate with the target audience without diluting the brand or alienating existing users.
User-Centric Approach	The case underscores the importance for businesses to prioritize user experience, feedback, and preferences when shaping their strategies and offerings.
Diversification and Risk Management	The case emphasizes the importance for businesses to proactively identify and mitigate risks while exploring opportunities for diversification to ensure financial stability, resilience, and long-term sustainability.

Appendix

Appendix 1

Table 1: Questions for the Class Discussion

Section	Question
Opening Question	Do you use Twitter/X daily? Did you notice any change after the acquisition?
External Analysis	Q 1.1. What are the main market conditions and/or trends that explain the rise of Twitter in past years?
	Q 1.2. What are the competitive forces in the social media industry?
Internal Analysis	Q 2.1. Explain Twitter's business model and how it was adapted overtime?
	Q 2.2. Do you consider Twitter had a competitive advantage? What about X?
Revenue Streams	Q 3. Based on the internal and external environment, analyze if the paid subscription model is sustainable and viable in the long-term.
Business Model	Q 4. Should X go forward with the "everything app" concept or should they try to exploit their previous value proposition of a real-time news app and political tool?

Table 2: Plan for the Class Discussion

Part	Plan	Duration	
Preparation for Case Discussion	The instructor should provide the case one week before the class so that students have time to prepare.	1 week	
	Questions regarding the external environment (Q 1.1, Q 1.2) should also be provided before the class to prepare the class discussion.		
In-Class Case Discussion	The instructor presents the agenda, the case and starts the discussion with the opening question	5 min	90 min
	The teacher discusses the external analysis prepared previously with the students	10 min	
	The instructor guides the students through the internal analysis (Q 2.1, Q 2.2)	20 min	
	Instructor gives some time for the students to compute a SWOT framework and analyze together	10 min	
	Students are divided into groups of 3 or 4 members. The groups are supposed to analyze if the paid subscription model is viable and sustainable in the long-term and then discuss the conclusion of each with the rest of the class	20 min	
	For the final question (Q 4), the groups are supposed to choose if the best option for X is to go forward with the "everything app" or adopt Twitter's traditional business model. Each group may opt for one of the options and give arguments to sustain their decision	25 min	

Appendix 2

Figure 1: Extended PESTEL Analysis

P	Political factors involve the scrutiny of social media platforms by governments worldwide, focusing on data privacy, content moderation and election interference. Policies regarding censorship and freedom of speech vary between countries, impacting Twitter's operations and user base.
E	Economic factors include the impact of economic downturns on advertising budgets, affecting Twitter's revenue streams. Moreover, as a global platform, Twitter is susceptible to fluctuations in currency exchange rates, influencing its financial performance across different markets.
S	Social factors encompass changes in user preferences, such as the shift towards visual content or ephemeral messaging, which can influence Twitter's user engagement and growth. Additionally, Twitter's role in shaping public opinion and facilitating activism can have both positive and negative social impacts, affecting its reputation and user trust.
T	Technological factors present opportunities for Twitter to enhance user experience and combat issues like misinformation and harassment. Emerging technologies such as augmented reality, artificial intelligence, and blockchain could significantly impact Twitter's operations.
E	Environmental factors, including energy consumption and climate change risks, are increasingly important for Twitter's corporate image and long-term viability. Disruptions caused by extreme weather events or climate-related regulations could impact Twitter's operations and infrastructure.
L	Legal factors, such as compliance with regulations in GDPR ¹ in Europe and CCPA ² in California, require Twitter to adhere to strict data protection standards, impacting its data handling practices and user privacy. Legal disputes over patents, copyrights, and trademarks can also affect Twitter's ability to innovate and protect its intellectual property assets.

1. General Data Protection Regulation
2. California Consumer Privacy Act

Appendix 3

Figure 2: Complete analysis of the Porter's 5 Forces Framework

THREAT OF NEW ENTRANTS	BARGAINING POWER OF BUYERS	BARGAINING POWER OF SUPPLIERS	THREAT FROM SUBSTITUTES	INDUSTRY RIVALRY
Moderate	High	Relatively Low	Moderately High	Very High
While the barrier to entry in terms of technology and infrastructure is relatively low, the dominance of the major platforms, along with high switching costs for users and the strong network effects, act as a significant barriers. Nevertheless, potential new entrants include startups, existing tech companies diversifying into social media, and established media companies.	Individual users and advertising companies have limited direct impact on a platform's operations, but collective actions such as boycotts or mass migration can highly affect the user base and advertising revenue.	Twitter does not depend on specific suppliers for its core operations. Nevertheless, some advertisers and content creators hold leverage due to their influence in the market.	Social media platforms offer unique features and opportunities for interaction. However, traditional media and emerging technologies provide alternative channels for communication and entertainment. Moreover, within the industry, users can easily switch between platforms based on their preferences and needs.	Most users have accounts in multiple platforms, facilitating an easy switching based on preferences and the companies compete through continuous innovation, feature updates and content differentiation. Additionally, rapidly evolving user preferences, technological advancements, and regulatory challenges contribute to the dynamic and competitive nature of the industry.

Appendix 4

Table 3: Twitter's Business Model Canvas

Key Partners	Customer Segments	Value Proposition	Customer Relations	Key Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content providers • Third-party developers • Advertisers and marketing agencies • Data management companies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals • Businesses • Developers • Advertisers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real-time information • Network and engagement • Free connectivity • Targeted advertising opportunities • Data performance tools • APIs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer self-service • Support channels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User acquisition and engagement • Content curation and moderation • Platform maintenance • Monetization • Innovation of features and services
	Key Resources		Channels	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology infrastructure • Human resources • Intellectual property • Content • Brand 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website • Mobile application 	
Cost Structure		Revenue Streams		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure costs • Employee salaries • Marketing and advertising • Research and Development • Legal and regulatory expenses • Platform maintenance 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertising • Data licensing 		

Key Partners: The most important partnerships that Twitter holds consist of content providers, like news outlets, celebrities, influencers, and brands; third-party developers who build apps, tools, and services; advertising and marketing agencies; and data management companies who provide analytics and data services based on Twitter data.

Channels: Twitter's channels encompass its website and mobile application. The website serves as a platform for advertisers to showcase their ads and for developers to access data and APIs directly. Furthermore, Twitter offers mobile applications tailored for various operating systems such as Android and iOS. These mobile apps empower users to engage with the platform, enabling actions like tweeting, retweeting, liking, and replying to tweets.

Cost Structure: Twitter's cost structure is composed by infrastructure costs (facilities, offices, IT expenses); employee salaries; marketing and advertising; research and development; legal and regulatory expenses (costs associated with compliance and legal matters); and platform maintenance.

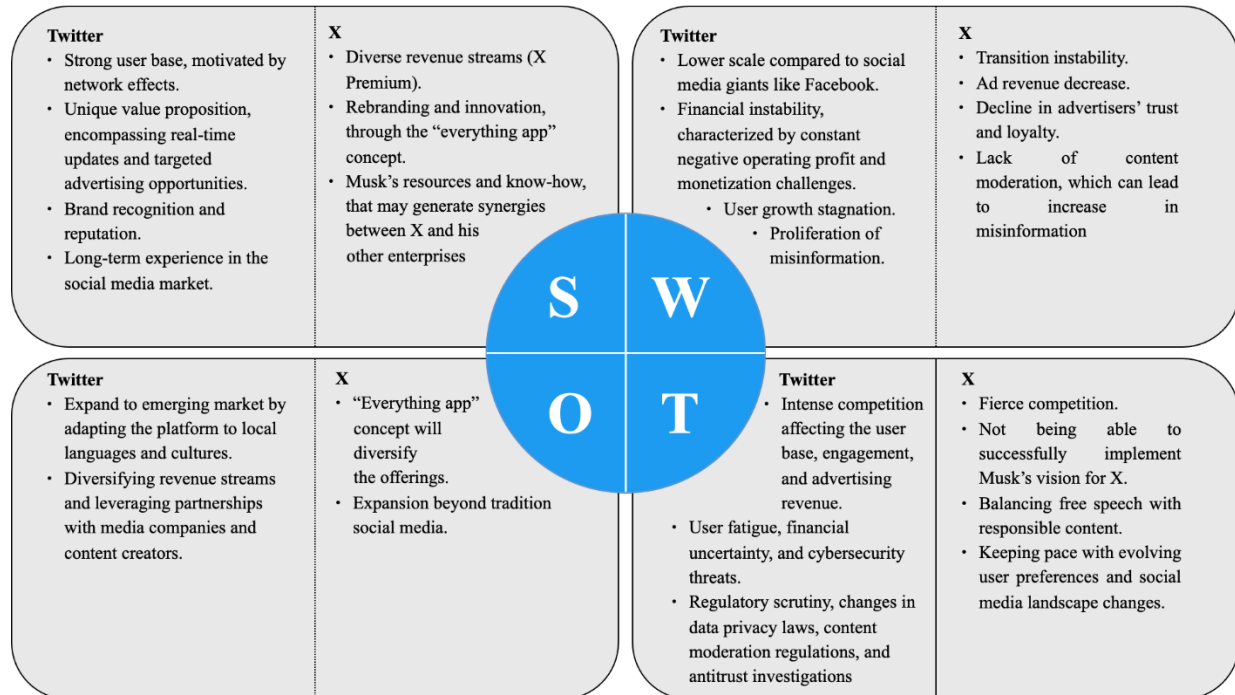
Appendix 5

Figure 3: Extended Twitter's VRIO Framework (2021)

Resource	VALUABLE	RARE	NON-IMITABLE	ORGANIZED	Competitive Advantage
Real-time Updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enable users to stay informed about breaking news, events and trends Targeted marketing campaigns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other platforms focus on other offers Focus on real-time communication and its character-limited format make it unique 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sophisticated technological infrastructure Complex know-how Hard to replicate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous investment in cutting-edge technology Monetization strategies Tools and features, like trending topics 	= Sustainable Competitive Advantage
Brand Recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pioneer and market leader as microblogging app Global presence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pioneer and market leader as microblogging app Twitter's distinct features contribute to its rarity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long-term customer relationships Imitation is complex Twitter's brand equity is reinforced by its user experience, platform features, and community culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Twitter invests in visual identity and brand positioning Monitoring of feedback from users 	= Sustainable Competitive Advantage
Customer base and Network Effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Users contribute to Twitter's revenue 300 million users in 2021 Interconnected nature creates network effects The more users join, the more value it provides to the app 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Twitter holds large customer base, built over years Network effects implicate only one "winner" as other potential direct competitors are "losers" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Imitating network effects of a brand with strong position in the market is almost impossible Requires high investment and strategic efforts in marketing and user engagement initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Twitter leverages customer base and network effects for improvement its business Real-time analytics system, allowing insight on users' interests and behaviours Advanced tools to segment and target users for advertising purposes 	= Sustainable Competitive Advantage

Appendix 6

Figure 4: Complete version of the SWOT framework for Twitter and X



Appendix 7

Figure 5: Division of X Premium into three categories

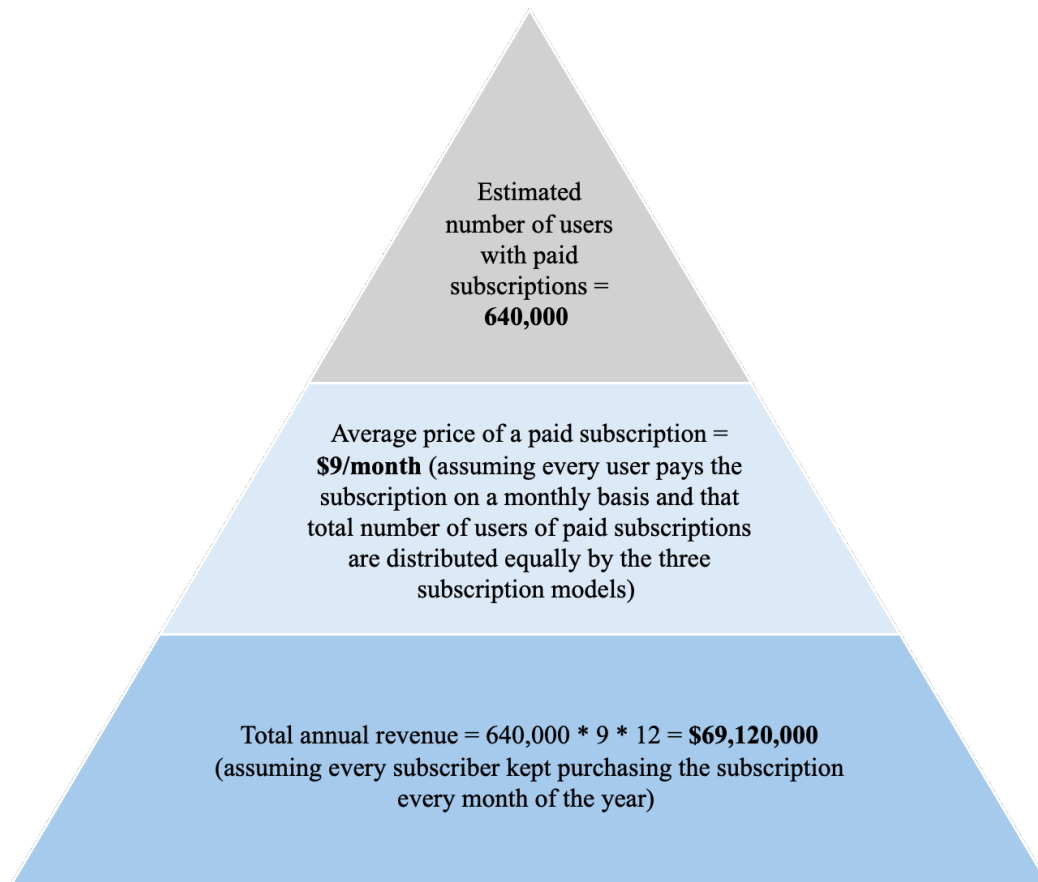
Basic	Premium	Premium+
Enhanced Experience Edit post ✓ Longer posts ✓ Undo post ✓ Post longer videos ✓ Top Articles ✓ Reader ⓘ ✓ Background video playback ✓ Download videos ✓ Small reply boost ✓ No Ads in For You and Following ⓘ ⚡ Largest reply boost ⚡	Enhanced Experience Edit post ✓ Longer posts ✓ Undo post ✓ Post longer videos ✓ Top Articles ✓ Reader ⓘ ✓ Background video playback ✓ Download videos ✓ Half Ads in For You and Following ⓘ ✓ Larger reply boost ✓ No Ads in For You and Following ⓘ ⚡ Largest reply boost ⚡	Enhanced Experience Edit post ✓ Longer posts ✓ Undo post ✓ Post longer videos ✓ Top Articles ✓ Reader ⓘ ✓ Background video playback ✓ Download videos ✓ No Ads in For You and Following ⓘ ✓ Largest reply boost ✓
Creator Hub Get paid to post ⓘ ⚡ Creator Subscriptions ⓘ ⚡ X Pro (web only) ⚡ Media Studio (web only) ⚡ Analytics (web only) ⚡	Creator Hub Get paid to post ⓘ ✓ Creator Subscriptions ⓘ ✓ X Pro (web only) ✓ Media Studio (web only) ✓ Analytics (web only) ✓	Creator Hub Get paid to post ⓘ ✓ Creator Subscriptions ⓘ ✓ X Pro (web only) ✓ Media Studio (web only) ✓ Analytics (web only) ✓
Verification & Security SMS two-factor authentication ⓘ ✓ Encrypted direct messages ⓘ ✓ Checkmark ⓘ ⚡ ID verification ⓘ ⚡	Verification & Security SMS two-factor authentication ⓘ ✓ Encrypted direct messages ⓘ ✓ Checkmark ⓘ ✓ ID verification ⓘ ✓	Verification & Security SMS two-factor authentication ⓘ ✓ Encrypted direct messages ⓘ ✓ Checkmark ⓘ ✓ ID verification ⓘ ✓
Customization App icons ✓ Bookmark folders ✓ Customize navigation ✓ Theme ✓ Highlights tab ⓘ ✓ Hide your likes ✓ Hide your checkmark ✓ Hide your subscriptions ✓	Customization App icons ✓ Bookmark folders ✓ Customize navigation ✓ Theme ✓ Highlights tab ⓘ ✓ Hide your likes ✓ Hide your checkmark ✓ Hide your subscriptions ✓	Customization App icons ✓ Bookmark folders ✓ Customize navigation ✓ Theme ✓ Highlights tab ⓘ ✓ Hide your likes ✓ Hide your checkmark ✓ Hide your subscriptions ✓

The Basic tier costs \$3/month or \$32/year, the Premium tier costs \$8/month or \$84/year, and the Premium+ tier costs \$16/month or \$168/year.

Source: DealzTrendz

Appendix 8

Figure 6: Paid Subscription Revenue Estimation



Appendix 9

- “Everything App”

Elon Musk envisions an “everything app” as a super platform consolidating various functionalities including messaging, social networking, payments, e-commerce, and online banking, among others. To realize this, Musk, along with Yaccarino, could leverage Twitter’s existing infrastructure and enhance the platform to support the integration of different services, ensuring stability and security as the app scales up. Moreover, for the app to offer a wide range of services, partnerships with financial institutions, e-commerce platforms, and content creators would be essential as these could bring in expertise and resources, making the app a one-stop solution for users’ needs. Finally, a seamless user experience is vital for the success of an “everything app”. The design would need to

be intuitive, making it easy for users to navigate between different features without feeling overwhelmed.

The “everything app” would provide immediate convenience, streamlining the digital experience. Thus, it is expected that users will spend more time within the app, increasing the engagement rate. Over time, users would become accustomed to the convenience which could foster loyalty and reduce churn. Furthermore, X will be able to collect valuable user data and by offering a personalized suite of services, it can become indispensable, leading to a dominant position in the market.

A similar platform, named WeChat, already exists in China, which offers an array of functionalities and is deeply integrated into users’ daily lives. However, this company is not present in the West, as well as it is very unlikely that X will be in China, thus the need for differentiation is not crucial.

- **Twitter’s Business Model**

Before its acquisition, Twitter operated primarily as a microblogging, news app and social networking service where users could post short messages, known as tweets, to express themselves within a character limit. The platform’s business model was largely based on advertising services, which constituted the majority of its revenue. Twitter also earned income through data licensing services and had introduced a subscription service to enhance user experience. Naturally, Twitter’s real-time news capability set it apart in the market. Indeed, not many platforms offer the same level of immediacy in news dissemination, making it a valuable asset and the company already has the necessary capabilities and resources to continue with this model, which has proven to be a significant differentiator in attracting users who value up-to-the-minute news updates.

Furthermore, it would be risky for X to alter the core concept of what Twitter was as such a change may not resonate with users that have been on the platform for years before the acquisition, leading to a potential loss of the user base. The platform’s strength lies in its established identity as a microblogging site and news app and deviating from this could result in user attrition. However, if the decision is made to revert to Twitter’s traditional model, efforts will need to be made to reattract users who appreciated the original format but left due to dissatisfaction with new management policies. This includes addressing concerns over the new free speech policy and the elimination of the content moderation department. Rebuilding trust and aligning with user expectations will be key to winning back the platform’s audience.

The goal for X, if it decides to adopt the traditional business model of Twitter, is to find a sustainable equilibrium between free speech and content moderation. This balance is crucial to ensure that the platform remains a space for open dialogue while also safeguarding against harmful content. It is a delicate act that requires careful policy making and transparent user communication.

Bibliography

Al Jazeera Staff. 2022. "Twitter's New Crisis Misinformation Policy: All You Need to Know."

Al Jazeera, May 20, 2022. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/5/20/twitter-rolls-out-misinformation>.

AP. 2023. "Linda Yaccarino may be 'exactly what Twitter needs.' But is the new CEO being set

up to fail?" El País. May 16, 2023. <https://english.elpais.com/science-tech/2023-05-15/linda-yaccarino-may-be-exactly-what-twitter-needs-but-is-the-new-ceo-being-set-up-to-fail.html>

Banerjee, Tushar. 2024. "The Rise of Niche Social Media Platforms: Cultivating Communities and Targeted Marketing." LinkedIn. March 7, 2024.

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/rise-niche-social-media-platforms-cultivating-tushar-banerjee-jrorf>.

Barron, Sophia. 2019. "A Brief History of Snapchat." HubSpot. October 29, 2019.

<https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/history-of-snapchat>.

Beal-Cvetko, Bridger. 2023. "Twitter vs. Threads Showdown Highlights Political Differences on Content Moderation." KSL.com. July 7, 2023.

<https://www.ksl.com/article/50681971/twitter-vs-threads-showdown-highlights-political-differences-on-content-moderation>.

Blystone, Dan. 2024. "Instagram: What It Is, Its History, and How the Popular App Works."

Investopedia. January 12, 2024.

<https://www.investopedia.com/articles/investing/102615/story-instagram-rise-1-photo0sharing-app.asp>.

Britannica Money. 2024. "X." Britannica Money. May 10, 2024.

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Twitter>.

Britannica. 2023. "United States Presidential Election of 2008." Britannica. October 28, 2023.

<https://www.britannica.com/event/United-States-presidential-election-of-2008/Primary-Results>.

Britannica. 2024. "TikTok." Britannica. May 9, 2024. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/TikTok>.

BS Web Team. 2023. "The X Factor: Here Are All the Twitter Changes since Elon Musk Took Over." Business Standard. October 18, 2023. https://www.business-standard.com/world-news/the-x-factor-here-are-all-the-twitter-changes-since-elon-musk-took-over-123101800370_1.html.

Ceci, Laura. 2023. "TikTok Global Monthly Active Users 2018-2021." Statista. October 11,

2023. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1267892/tiktok-global-mau/>.

Conger, Kate, Mike Isaac, and Lauren Hirsch. 2022. "Elon Musk Joins Twitter's Board, Pitching Ideas Big and Small" The New York Times. April 5, 2022.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/04/business/twitter-elon-musk-directors.html>

Cookie Script. 2023. "Common Social Media Privacy Issues." Cookie Script. June 20, 2023.

<https://cookie-script.com/blog/social-media-privacy-issues>.

Dean, Brian. 2024. "Snapchat Demographic Stats: How Many People Use Snapchat?" Backlinko.

March 18, 2024. <https://backlinko.com/snapchat-users>.

DeMilt, Jessica. 2024. "The Origins Of Twitter." Pennington Creative. Accessed January 28,

2024. <https://penningtoncreative.com/the-origins-of-twitter/>.

Dempsey, Jemma. 2023. "Twitter Loses Nearly Half Advertising Revenue since Elon Musk

Takeover." BBC. July 17, 2023. <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-66217641>.

- Digital Habibi. 2023. "The Power of Influencers: How Social Media Stars Are Shaping Consumer Behavior," LinkedIn. October 30, 2023.
<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/power-influencers-how-social-media-stars-shaping-consumer-khtwf>.
- Dinesh, Shradha and Meltem Osabas. 2023. "8 facts about Americans and Twitter as it rebrands to X." Pew Research Center. July 26, 2023. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/07/26/8-facts-about-americans-and-twitter-as-it-rebrands-to-x/>.
- Dixon, Stacy Jo. 2024. "Instagram – statistics & facts." Statista. April 24, 2024.
<https://www.statista.com/topics/1882/instagram/#topicOverview>.
- Dollarhide, Maya. 2024. "Social Media: Definition, Importance, Top Websites & Apps." Investopedia. February 23, 2024. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/social-media.asp>.
- Duarte, Fabio. 2024. "X (Formerly Twitter) User Age, Gender, & Demographic Stats (2024)." Exploding Topics. April 25, 2024. <https://explodingtopics.com/blog/x-user-stats>.
- Eldridge, Alison. 2024. "Instagram." Britannica Money. May 6, 2024.
<https://www.britannica.com/money/Instagram>.
- Fern Fort University. 2024. "Twitter VRIO / VRIN Analysis MBA Solution." Fern Fort University. Accessed April 15, 2024. <http://fernfortuniversity.com/terms-papers/vrio/c/914-twitter.php>.
- Fresh Essays. 2024. "Twitter: Environmental, Internal, and Business-Level Analysis". Fresh Essays. Accessed April 13, 2024. <https://samples.freshessays.com/twitter-environmental-internal-and-business-level-analysis.html>.
- Fung, Brian and Clare Duffy. 2023. "How a single year of Elon Musk turned Twitter into a husk of its former self." CNN Business. October 27, 2023.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2023/10/27/tech/elon-musk-twitter-x-one-year-changes/index.html>.

Gabbatt, Adam. 2024. "Value of X Has Fallen 71% since Purchase by Musk and Name Change from Twitter." The Guardian. January 2, 2024.

<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2024/jan/02/x-twitter-stock-falls-elon-musk>.

Gainy. 2024. "Twitter IPO Review." Gainy. Accessed January 30, 2024.

<https://www.gainy.app/ipo/twitter-ipo-review>.

Geysler, Werner. 2024. "What Is an Influencer? – Social Media Influencers Defined." Influencer Marketing Hub. February 14, 2024. <https://influencermarketinghub.com/what-is-an-influencer/#:~:text=An%20influencer%20is%20someone%20who,he%20or%20she%20actively%20engages>.

Ghataura, Aman. 2024. "How Much Do Twitter Ads Cost in 2023?" Nuoptima, March 22, 2024.

<https://nuoptima.com/twitter-ads-cost>.

Gorton, David. 2023. "Top 5 Companies Owned by X. Corp (Formally Twitter, Inc.)."

Investopedia. March 19, 2023.

<https://www.investopedia.com/articles/insights/082216/top-8-companies-owned-twitter-twtr.asp>.

Griffin, Andrew. 2016. "Twitter Changes Itself from a Social Network into a News App." The Independent, April 29, 2016. <https://www.independent.co.uk/tech/twitter-changes-itself-from-a-social-network-into-a-news-appa7006696.html>.

Gupta, Aman. 2023. "Elon Musk-Owned X Will Be 'Turning a Profit' in Early 2024, Says CEO Linda Yaccarino." Mint, September 28, 2023.

<https://www.livemint.com/technology/tech-news/elon-musk-owned-x-will-be-turning-a-profit-in-early-2024-says-ceo-linda-yaccarino-11695880388176.html>.

- Hachman, Mark. 2015. "Twitter Buys Periscope as Its Livestreaming Response to Meerkat." PCWorld. March 13, 2015. <https://www.pcworld.com/article/432414/twitter-buys-periscope-as-its-livestreaming-response-to-meerkat.html>.
- Hall, Mark. 2024. "Facebook" Britannica Money. May 5, 2024. <https://www.britannica.com/money/Facebook>.
- Hardy, James. 2023. "Unveiling the Genius: Who Invented TikTok and the Story Behind Its Founder." History Cooperative. December 28, 2023, <https://historycooperative.org/who-invented-tiktok/>.
- Hetler, Amanda. 2023. "Elon Musk businesses at a glance." TechTarget. September 19, 2023. <https://www.techtarget.com/whatis/infographic/Elon-Musk-businesses-at-a-glance>.
- Huang, Yihao. 2023. "Twitter's Strategy and Market Share Analysis." *Journal of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences* 23: 409 - 415. <https://drpress.org/ojs/index.php/EHSS/article/view/12926/12575>.
- HubSpot. 2024. "A Timeline of Twitter Updates Over the Years." HubSpot. Accessed April 2, 2024. https://blog.hubspot.com/timeline/twitter-news-updates#Section_2011.
- Hutchinson, Andrew. 2023. "X CEO Says the Platform Is on Track To Return a Profit in the New Year." Social Media Today. September 28, 2023. <https://www.socialmediatoday.com/news/x-ceo-linda-yaccarino-platform-track-return-profit/695137/>.
- Hutchinson, Andrew. 2023. "X Reports New Usage Insights To Mark the First Year of Musk's Takeover" Social Media Today. October 26, 2023. <https://www.socialmediatoday.com/news/x-reports-new-usage-insights-mark-first-year-elon-musks-takeover/698001/>.

Hutchinson, Andrew. 2024. "Data Suggests Threads Is Seeing More Daily Users in the US Than X." Social Media Today. April 23, 2024. <https://www.socialmediatoday.com/news/new-data-suggests-threads-x/714070/>.

Iqbal, Mansoor. 2024. "Snapchat Revenue and Usage Statistics (2024)." Business of Apps. April 18, 2024. <https://www.businessofapps.com/data/snapchat-statistics/>.

Iqbal, Mansoor. 2024. "Twitter Revenue and Usage Statistics (2024)." Business of Apps. February 22, 2024. <https://www.businessofapps.com/data/twitter-statistics/>.

Iqbal, Mansoor. 2024. "WeChat Revenue and Usage Statistics (2024)" Business of Apps. April 18, 2024. <https://www.businessofapps.com/data/wechat-statistics/>.

IronFX Team. 2023. "Snapchat, social media app, history and innovation." IronFX. September 16, 2023. <https://www.ironfx.com/en/snapchat-social-media-app-history-and-innovation/>.

Isaac, Mike. 2016. "Twitter's 4-Year Odyssey With the 6-Second Video App Vine." The New York Times. October 28, 2016. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/29/technology/twitters-4-year-odyssey-with-the-6-second-video-app-vine.html>.

Janiszewska-Kiewra, Ewa, Jannik Podlesny and Henning Soller. 2020. "Ethical data usage in an era of digital technology and regulation." McKinsey Digital. August 26, 2020. <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/mckinsey-digital/our-insights/tech-forward/ethical-data-usage-in-an-era-of-digital-technology-and-regulation>.

Jin, Hyunjoo, and Chibuike Oguh. 2022. "Explainer: How Elon Musk funded the \$44 billion Twitter deal." Reuters. October 28, 2022. <https://www.reuters.com/markets/us/how-will-elon-musk-pay-twitter-2022-10-07/>.

Karl. 2024. "Top 10 Social Networking Sites by Market Share Statistics [2024]." Dreamgrow. January 7, 2024. <https://www.dreamgrow.com/top-10-social-networking-sites-market-share-of-visits/>.

Kerkhof, Robyn. 2023. "Elon Musk's Twitter Takeover: How One User Became the Owner of Influence." Blinkist Magazine. September 5, 2023. <https://www.blinkist.com/magazine/posts/elon-musks-twitter>.

Know How +. 2023. "Data Privacy and Protection." LinkedIn. August 27, 2023. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/data-privacy-protection-know-how-plus>.

Kolodny, Lora. 2022. "Elon Musk bans impersonators without parody label on Twitter raising questions about free speech commitment." CNBC. November 7, 2022. <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/11/07/elon-musk-unlabeled-twitter-parody-accounts-risk-permanent-suspension.html>.

Lamaj, Denisa. 2023. "How Does Twitter Make Money: An Explanation." Publer. April 27, 2023. <https://publer.io/blog/how-does-twitter-make-money/>.

Maverick, J.B. 2023. "Why Is a Shareholder Rights Plan Called a 'Poison Pill'?" Investopedia. September 28, 2023. <https://www.investopedia.com/ask/answers/042015/why-shareholder-rights-plan-called-poison-pill.asp>.

McFadden, Cristopher. 2023. "The long and short chronological history of social media." Interesting Engineering. March 9, 2023. <https://interestingengineering.com/lists/a-chronological-history-of-social-media>.

Meta. 2021. "Introducing Meta: A Social Technology Company." Meta. October 28, 2021. <https://about.fb.com/news/2021/10/facebook-company-is-now-meta/>.

Meyer, Jack. 2020. "History of Twitter: Jack Dorsey and The Social Media Giant." The Street. January 2, 2020. <https://www.thestreet.com/technology/history-of-twitter-facts-what-s-happening-in-2019-14995056>

Milmo, Dan. 2022. "Twitter Set to Comply with Elon Musk Demand for Data on Fake Accounts." The Guardian. June 9, 2022. <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2022/jun/08/twitter-elon-musk-data-demand-fake-accounts>.

Money Watch. 2022. "Musk fires outsourced content moderators who track abuse on Twitter." CBS News. November 14, 2022. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/elon-musk-twitter-layoffs-outsourced-content-moderators/>.

Morganteen, Jeff. 2014. "Twitter CEO: New Users Just as Engaged as Old Users." CNBC. April 30, 2014. <https://www.cnbc.com/2014/04/30/twitter-ceo-new-users-just-as-engaged-as-old-users.html>.

Mukherjee, Amritanshu. 2023. "Twitter vs X: What Has Changed After Elon Musk Set 'Larry The Bird' Free?" AugustMan Malaysia. August 2, 2023. <https://www.augustman.com/my/gear/tech/twitter-x-rebrand-key-features-and-differences/>.

Naysmith, Caleb. 2024. "Elon Musk Is Trying To Make X The 'Everything App' With Its New Features, But Are They Enough To Maintain The Competitive Edge Against Meta's Threads?" Yahoo! Finance. Mar 4, 2024. https://finance.yahoo.com/news/elon-musk-trying-x-everything-194306539.html?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAAD4TFBUjHUNq6YphrN2t71sAKu4B_8BIHFfPJd9_H7wWZDbGfh19xT6Fe-

9bUpr2A2TTwU8XFSDtUsWM5p1c4nKOtePBLG145ME_6h42WhQeXKiDX7Gyi3C
H9hCuB2nMnXvGG07QvCr8ruYF36kiNsjMzgLLaZWpDrn_3jcTklfp.

- Nguyen, Michelle. 2017. "Twitter's Role In Politics - The Northwestern Business Review." Medium. March 10, 2017. <https://northwesternbusinessreview.org/twitters-role-in-politics-b3ed620465c9>.
- O'Sullivan, Donie, and Clare Duffy. 2022. "Elon Musk has taken control of Twitter and fired its top executives" CNN Business. October 28, 2022. <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/10/27/tech/elon-musk-twitter/index.html>
- Pereira, Daniel. 2023. "Twitter Business Model." Business Model Analyst. September 28, 2023. <https://businessmodelanalyst.com/twitter-business-model/>.
- Perez, Sarah. 2019. "Twitter.com launches its big redesign with simpler navigation and more features." TechCrunch. July 15, 2019. <https://techcrunch.com/2019/07/15/twitter-rolls-out-its-redesigned-desktop-website-with-simplified-navigation-more-features/>.
- Peters, Jay. 2023. "For Elon Musk, X equals everything." The Verge. July 26, 2023. <https://www.theverge.com/2023/7/26/23808796/elon-musks-x-everything-app-vision>.
- Pinto, Sofia. 2022. "All you need to get started with Twitter API v2 using Python." Medium. December 1, 2022. <https://medium.com/data-analytics-at-nesta/all-you-need-to-get-started-with-twitter-api-v2-using-python-6cd4be4d90fe>.
- Quey, Jason. 2024. "Twitter's Growth History to a \$44 Billion Valuation." Growth Ramp. April 10, 2024. <https://www.growthramp.io/articles/twitters-history>.
- Rao, Pallavi. 2023. "How Long It Took for Popular Apps to Reach 100 Million Users." Visual Capitalist. October 25, 2023. <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/threads-100-million-users/>.

- Reiff, Nathan. 2023. "Series Funding: A, B, and C" Investopedia. December 22, 2023.
<https://www.politico.com/news/2022/12/02/musk-gop-twitter-moves-00071758>.
- Robledo, Anthony. 2024. "Beyond X: Twitter's Changed a Lot under Elon Musk, Here Are Some Notable Moves." USA TODAY. Accessed March 2, 2023.
<https://eu.usatoday.com/story/tech/news/2023/10/05/elon-musk-twitter-news/71066360007/>.
- Samie, August. 2024. "Threads." Britannica. May 8, 2024.
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Threads-social-network>.
- Segall, Laurie. 2011. "Twitter's Fly redesign aims to be faster, simpler." CNN Money. December 8, 2011. https://money.cnn.com/2011/12/08/technology/twitter_fly_redesign/index.htm.
- Serna, Vanessa. 2022. "Elon Musk fires thousands of Twitter contractors responsible for battling misinformation on the site - a week after sacking half of its permanent staff: Contractors suddenly locked out of work systems turned to Twitter for confirmation." Daily Mail. November 15, 2022. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-11424331/Elon-Musk-fires-thousands-Twitter-contractors-responsible-battling-misinformation-site.html>.
- Shah, Simone. 2023. "The 7 Biggest Challenges Twitter's New CEO Faces." TIME. June 7, 2023. <https://time.com/6285685/twitter-linda-yaccarino-challenges/>.
- Shee, Kat. 2023. "The Rise of Influencers in Media." Forbes. June 23, 2023.
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/theyec/2023/06/23/the-rise-of-influencers-in-media/>.
- Singh, Kanishka. 2022. "Elon Musk says Twitter's ban on Trump after Capitol attack was 'grave mistake'." Reuters. November 26, 2022. <https://www.reuters.com/technology/elon-musk-says-twitters-ban-trump-after-capitol-attack-was-grave-mistake-2022-11-26/>

Slisco, Aila. 2023. "Conservative Twitter Users Rage After 30 Million Add Threads App on Day One." Newsweek. July 6, 2023. <https://www.newsweek.com/conservative-twitter-users-rage-after-30-million-add-threads-app-day-one-1811436>.

Social Media Today. 2016. "Here's Why Twitter Is So Important, to Everyone." Social Media Today. March 18, 2016. <https://www.socialmediatoday.com/social-networks/heres-why-twitter-so-important-everyone>.

Sreedharan, Suresh. 2023. "Evolution of the Twitter logo." LinkedIn. July 26, 2023. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/evolution-twitter-logo-suresh-sreedharan/>.

Statista. 2022. "Distribution of Twitter employees in the United States in 2022, by ethnicity." Statista. March 21, 2022. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/313585/twitter-employee-ethnicity-us/>.

Statista. 2024 "Facebook: Quarterly Number of MAU (Monthly Active Users) Worldwide 2008-2023." Statista. April 26, 2024. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/264810/number-of-monthly-active-facebook-users-worldwide/>.

Statista. 2024. "Number of monthly active Instagram users from January 2013 to December 2021." Statista. Accessed March 1, 2024. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/253577/number-of-monthly-active-instagram-users/>.

Subin, Samantha. 2022. "Elon Musk Offers to Buy Twitter for \$43 Billion, so It Can Be 'Transformed as Private Company.'" CNBC. April 14, 2022. <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/04/14/elon-musk-offers-to-buy-twitter-for-54point20-a-share-saying-it-needs-to-be-transformed-as-private-company.html>.

SuntechIT. 2022. "The Success Journey of Twitter." Medium. December 1, 2022.

<https://medium.com/predict/twitter-case-study-the-epic-journey-of-the-bluebird-of-the-internet-48f37a04fc6f>.

TipRanks. 2024. "Twitter (TWTR) Financials: Income Statement." TipRanks. Accessed March 2, 2024. https://www.tipranks.com/stocks/twtr/financials/income-statement#google_vignette.

Trefis Team. 2016. "Can Twitter's New Marketing Strategy Drive User Growth?" Forbes. July 26, 2016. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/greatspeculations/2016/07/26/can-twitters-new-marketing-strategy-drive-user-growth/?sh=324e09aa62f3>.

Trefis Team. 2016. "How Twitter's Positioning As A News App Could Make Sense." Forbes. June 2, 2016. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/greatspeculations/2016/06/02/how-twitters-positioning-as-a-news-app-could-make-sense/?sh=1387135e59a2>

Turner, Giles, and Craig Trudell. 2022. "Elon Musk Becomes Twitter's Biggest Shareholder." TIME. April 4, 2022. <https://time.com/6164223/elon-musk-twitter-stake/>.

Twirpz. 2015. "The History of Twitter in Profile Pages: 2006 to 2015,". Twirpz. June 3, 2021. <https://twirpz.wordpress.com/2015/06/03/the-history-of-twitter-in-profile-pages-2006-to-2015/>.

Vanian, Jonathan. 2022. "Twitter is now owned by Elon Musk – here's a brief history from the app's founding in 2006 to the present." CNBC. October 29, 2022. <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/10/29/a-brief-history-of-twitter-from-its-founding-in-2006-to-musk-takeover.html>.

Veltman, Chloe. 2022. "How Twitter Became One of the World's Preferred Platforms for Sharing Ideas." KQED. November 22, 2022. <https://www.kqed.org/news/11933056/how-twitter-became-one-of-the-worlds-preferred-platforms-for-sharing-ideas>

- Wojcik, Stefan and Adam Hughes. 2019. "Sizing Up Twitter Users." Pew Research Center. April 24, 2019. <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2019/04/24/sizing-up-twitter-users/>
- Wortham, Jenna. 2009. "With Oprah Onboard, Twitter Grows." The New York Times. April 17, 2009. <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/18/technology/internet/18oprah.html>.
- X Blog. 2010. "Twitter Places: More Context For Your Tweets." X Blog. June 14, 2010. https://blog.x.com/en_us/a/2010/twitter-places-more-context-for-your-tweets.
- X Blog. 2012. "Interest Targeting: Broaden Your Reach, Reach the Right Audience." X Blog. August 30, 2012. https://blog.x.com/en_us/a/2012/interest-targeting-broaden-your-reach-reach-the-right-audience.
- X Developer Platform. 2024. "Counting characters when composing Tweets." X Developer Platform. Accessed February 7, 2024. <https://developer.twitter.com/en/docs/counting-characters>.
- X Marketing. 2024. "Twitter's Audience Is Hugely Influential — Here's What It Means for Brands." X Marketing. Accessed February 15, 2024. https://marketing.x.com/en_gb/insights/twitters-audience-is-hugely-influential-heres-what-it-means-for-brands.

Individual Part – Ana Rita Antunes

1. Background

In the contemporary social media landscape, marked by intense competition, companies are constantly adapting and innovating to capture the attention of a global audience. While Twitter had previously maintained a distinct identity from platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, the scenery shifted following Twitter's acquisition. (Al Jazeera 2022).

In April 2022, Elon Musk expressed interest in acquiring Twitter, a transaction finalized in October of the same year (Conger and Hirsch 2022). After the acquisition, Musk initiated changes to Twitter, now rebranded as X. This new ownership presents opportunities, yet it also precipitates unforeseen challenges. Acquiring the platform grants the entrepreneur access to a vast user base and the associated network effects, providing him the ability to shape public discourse and influence global conversations. However, obstacles of X include finding a balance between preserving free expression and implementing responsible content management, the declining user base and the departure of a significant number of advertising companies from the platform. One viable strategy for X to thrive could involve the adoption of a Blue Ocean Strategy (BOS), which could set it apart from its competitors.

This BOS analysis highlights two potential trajectories: firstly, Elon can revolutionize the platform by introducing state-of-the-art features, leveraging synergies with his other ventures, and appealing to a new user base. Alternatively, Musk could capitalize on the unique circumstance wherein X may be the first significant platform to be largely oriented towards Republicans and a more conservative discourse (Dinash and Odabas 2023), suggesting that Musk has already attracted a “new” demographic of users. Thus, ironically, X becoming more “Red” may be opening the space for a Blue Ocean.

2. Theoretical Background and Methodologies

The concept of Blue Ocean Strategy (BOS) originated 30 years ago through the pioneering work of Chan Kim and Renée Mauborgne.

BOS involves the simultaneous pursuit of differentiation and cost leadership to uncover new market spaces and stimulate fresh demand. The essence lies in seizing uncontested market territories, rendering competition irrelevant.

In contrast, the authors labeled the traditional head-to-head competition as Red Ocean Strategy (ROS), in which companies fight for existing customers and try to maximize established value drivers. Naturally, profits and growth potential becomes increasingly constrained as competition intensifies with the influx of more players.

In conclusion, a Blue Ocean is a market that has not been discovered yet, while a Red Ocean⁵ is a market that already exists with a significant number of competitors.

To assist companies in creating Blue Oceans, the authors developed a comprehensive set of analytical tools and frameworks (*Appendix 1, Fig. 1*). Some of these tools include:

Six Paths Framework	Provides six systematic ways to shift the lens used in looking at the market universe and open-up a new value-cost frontier.
Three Tiers of Noncustomers	Helps companies gain insight into the latent demand they can tap into to create blue ocean.
ERRC Grid	Drives companies to focus simultaneously on eliminating and reducing, as well as raising and creating factors while unlocking a new Blue Ocean.
Strategy Canvas	Captures the current strategic landscape and the prospects for an organization. The value curve is the graphic depiction of a company's relative performance across its industry's factors of competition.

In practice, the BOS has been successfully implemented by many firms. While some companies have fully embraced either a BOS or a ROS such as Cirque du Soleil and McDonald's, respectively, others have adopted these strategies in a partial capacity, like Tesla from Elon Musk (*Appendix 2*,

⁵ Red Ocean because of "blood" in the water from fierce competition.

Fig. 2-4). With a track record of pushing boundaries and creating uncontested markets, Musk's penchant for innovation and disruptive concepts, evident in his other ventures (Constanty 2021), foreshadows X's potential adoption of a BOS, and the redefinition of industry standards.

3. Current State of X

Currently, X finds itself entrenched in the competitive landscape of the social media industry, operating within the confines of a Red Ocean. The industry has been witnessing a convergence of features and services as players compete for market share and user engagement (Lebow 2022). Amidst this environment, platforms face the necessity to innovate, differentiate and attract users and advertisers to sustain relevance and profitability.

Recognizing the need to adapt and remain pertinent, X has embarked on a transformational journey. Following the acquisition, Musk unveiled plans to evolve X into a quintessential "everything app" (Diaz 2023), which would include messaging, live streaming, payments, e-commerce, virtual and augmented reality, and financial technology all in one app (Horne 2024).

Even though the association of the platform with Elon Musk's name carries the promise of innovation and disruptive ideas, it is imperative to harmonize his vision with the expectations of the user base, particularly following the departure of users, advertisers, and prominent figures from the platform due to the relaxation of content moderation rules (Thomas 2022).

Despite the stagnant user growth, the influx of verified bots and the significant reduction of the workforce, X undeterred in its pursuit of innovation. Recent feature releases, including audio and video calling functionalities (Ahtisham 2024), demonstrate the platform's commitment to enhancing user engagement and diversifying its offerings.

In essence, as X seeks to redefine its position and revitalize its appeal to users, it must contend with the complexities of creating new revenue streams, battling bots, addressing user concerns, and sustaining innovation momentum. Thus, it would be beneficial for the platform to "swim away"

from the Red Ocean towards a Blue Ocean created by itself. Only by doing so can X aspire to emerge as a frontrunner in the ever-evolving social media landscape.

4. Creating an Uncontested Market

Developing an unchallenged market presence and embracing a BOS pose significant hurdles. In X's case, two potential scenarios emerge: the first entails a radical overhaul of the platform, and the second involves capitalizing on the audience's shifts observed post-acquisition.

Regardless of the chosen scenario, the Three Tiers of Non-Customers remains consistent as it is tied to X's current situation as illustrated in *Appendix 3, Fig. 6*. While the first tier is composed by users that are dissatisfied with the platform due to reasons such as lack of innovative features, privacy concerns and a toxic environment, the second tier includes users who refuse using the platform because it does not align with their values or preferences. The third tier encompasses groups that have not been considered before, such as older generations or people from countries where the internet access has not been widespread yet.

Following the framework's development, conducting market research becomes pivotal. This entails understanding the needs and desires of each tier, analyzing X's current offerings against their expectations, and crafting strategies for attracting each tier. These strategies may involve introducing new features, revising community guidelines, and marketing to new demographics, all with the aim of converting non-customers into loyal users by offering them unparalleled value that distinguishes X from competitors.

Similarly, the initial industry value curve remains consistent across both scenarios. *Appendix 4* presents a graphical depiction of this curve along with an explanation of the industry's current competing factors being used: user experience (UX), privacy and security, engagement, monetization, algorithm, innovation and differentiation, toxic behavior, advertising, and content moderation.

4.1. Scenario 1: Revolutionizing X through state-of-the-art features

Scenario 1 (S1) represents a bold endeavor, aiming to fundamentally transform the platform. It involves leveraging Elon’s resources and the company’s capabilities to introduce cutting-edge features while fostering synergies with his other ventures. Moreover, it is imperative to target a more specialized user base beyond the typical social media audience.

To initiate the analysis of S1, a Six Path Framework was computed (see *Appendix 5, Fig. 9 e 10* for an extended version and a set of new features):

Industry	Cross-industry exploration to identify synergistic opportunities that can be integrated into X’s ecosystem.
Strategic Group	X is poised to diversify its content offerings to captivate a broader audience. This includes the development of a feature that allows users to “mint” their most impactful posts as NFTs, providing a new form of content ownership.
Buyer Group	X should allow users to propose and vote on new functionalities to ensure that the features developed are in direct response to the needs and desires of the new targeted users (niche groups).
Scope of Offerings	X could explore a partnership with Neuralink to investigate the potential of mind-driven content posting, utilizing advancements in neural interfaces.
Functional-Emotional Orientation	X should be committed to enhancing the emotional connection users have with the platform. This is achieved through AI-driven personalization that curates content feeds not just based on user behavior but also emotional states, ensuring a more empathetic UX.
Time	X could set its sights on pioneering virtual reality integrations, allowing users to engage in immersive social interactions and live events.

Through these initiatives, X could chart a course towards a Blue Ocean of opportunities, where the conventional boundaries of social media are transcended and users are empowered to connect, learn, and express themselves in ways previously unimagined. Moreover, considering the level of investment and innovation put into X, it is hoped that the targeted audience would be willing to pay a monthly fee to have access to the new functionalities, generating additional revenue for the company.

Following the Six Paths Frameworks, it is prudent to explore latent demand that X can tap into to create a Blue Ocean. Leveraging the previously computed Three Tiers of Non-Customers

framework, X stands to benefit from targeting more focused communities. These include older generations, the scientific community, *crypto* enthusiasts, gamers over 50, individuals interested in mental well-being, among others (see *Appendix 6, Fig. 11* to further understand the logic behind each group). Drawing inspiration from platforms like Reddit, X could establish specialized communities within its platform catering to specific interests. This approach would facilitate focused discussions, enhance engagement, foster closer-knit communities, and promote meaningful conversations.

Realistically, it is not feasible to target every group simultaneously. However, the overarching goal is to cultivate diverse niches, often overlooked but with significant user potential, within the platform. Consequently, X should adopt a sequential approach, targeting each group methodically while systematically developing tailored features for each. In essence, this entails adopting a gradual market entry strategy, introducing new features progressively to avoid overwhelming users.

After a thorough analysis of potential features and target audiences, an ERRC Grid was computed (*Appendix 7, Fig. 12*). In this context, X could strategically refine its offering by eliminating outdated and redundant features and eradicating toxic behaviors, harassment, and misinformation. Additionally, the platform should streamline the UX by reducing unnecessary steps, clarifying interfaces, and minimizing excessive advertisements and sponsored content. Conversely, X must elevate both innovation and user engagement levels. Finally, X need to create a unique value proposition, establish community guidelines, and curate new content formats tailored to the preferences of the target audience.

Through the ERRC Grid, it is possible to observe how X will be able to break the low-cost/differentiation tradeoff and attract non-customers (*Appendix 7, Fig.13*).

Cost Efficiency Through Technological Innovation	X could utilize cutting-edge technologies to automate and streamline operations, which would not only reduce operational expenses but also enhance the platform’s capabilities allowing X to offer premium features at a lower cost.
Differentiation through Exclusive Features	X can differentiate itself by offering exclusive, high-value features (<i>Appendix 5, Fig. 10</i>) that are not available on other platforms. This could attract tech-savvy users and those interested in the forefront of technology, who are currently not engaged with existing social media platforms.
Attracting Non-Customers	X needs to identify the pain points that keep non-customers away from existing platforms and work towards solving those issues. For instance, if the complexity of the platforms is a deterrent, X could offer a simplified, more intuitive UX.

The success of S1 hinges on X’s effective execution of these strategic moves. Through the adaptation of the competing factors, X can create a Blue Ocean where it distinguishes itself as a revolutionary platform with state-of-the-art features, and where it has the possibility to differentiate while decreasing costs.

In conclusion, by integrating the three computed frameworks and comparing the value curve of the current state of social media (*Appendix 4*) with the described ideas, a new value curve emerges, and the following Strategy Canvas was developed:

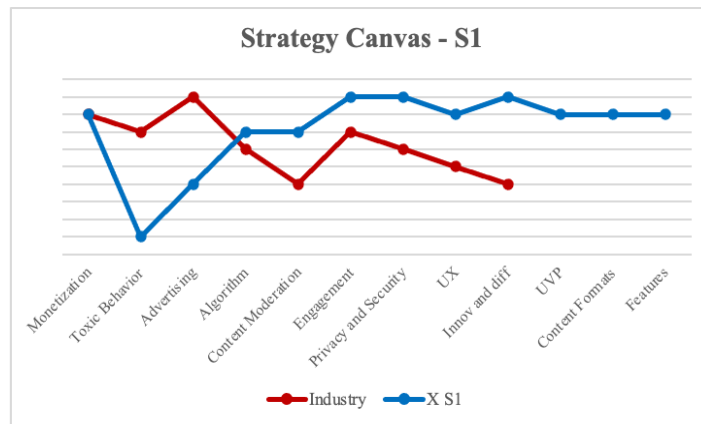


Fig. 1 – Strategy Canvas of S1

4.2. Scenario 2: Leveraging the natural shift of X’s audience

Scenario 2 (S2) arises from the fact that after the acquisition and transition to X there has been a noticeable shift in the platform’s user demographics and the nature of the discourse (Dinash and

Odabas 2023). Musk's advocacy for free speech and the subsequent elimination of the content moderation department (Alba and Wagner 2023) have led to a more pronounced presence of right-leaning users of the political spectrum in the platform. This change has resulted in a discourse that some perceive as more conservative with instances of racist and homophobic content becoming more visible (Frenkel and Conger 2022).

This shift has created a Blue Ocean opportunity in the sense that the platform is creating space for an untapped market of users who seek a social media environment with fewer restrictions of speech. These users value the ability to express their views without the fear of being banned, a sentiment that aligns with Musk's vision for the platform. In fact, a significant number of these users posted about being censored or banned on other platforms and showing their appreciation to X for not doing the same (*Appendix 8, Fig. 14*).

In S2, the Six Paths Framework (*Appendix 9, Fig. 15*), suggests that X has embarked on a strategic path that diverges from the industry's traditional trajectory. By eschewing the established norms of content moderation, X has not only redefined the boundaries of its industry but also expanded horizons to include the three tiers of non-customers (*Appendix 3, Fig. 6*). These groups, now finding a voice on X, represent a spectrum of potential users drawn to the platform's newfound ethos.

The ERRC Grid (*Appendix 10, Fig. 16*) further elucidates the strategic shifts undertaken by X. These shifts not only redefine X's market position but also facilitate the break of the low-cost/differentiation tradeoff. Firstly, X should eliminate stringent content moderation and reduce the level of advertising a user sees in the platform to enhance the overall UX. Moreover, it should invest in new technologies to stay ahead of competitors and offer unique experiences, which would allow for an increase of engagement. X should also develop new features and allow for new content formats that cater specifically to the conservative and right-wing audience. Finally, it must create

a clear and unique value proposition that resonates with the target audience, emphasizing the platform's commitment to free speech and the creation of an open discourse space that encourages respectful discussions.

Considering what was aforementioned, a new Value Curve emerges:

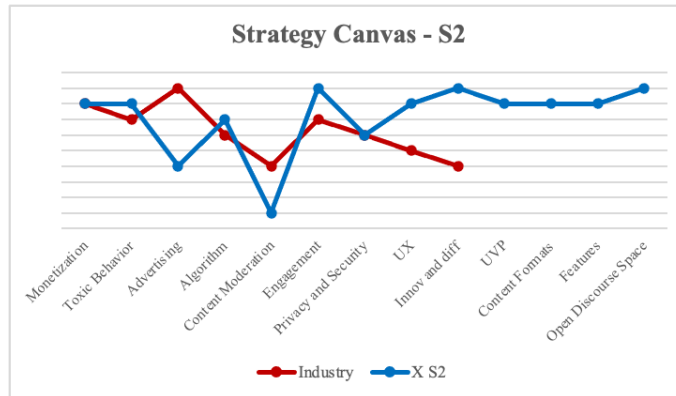


Fig. 2 – Strategy Canvas of S2

Thus, X, unconsciously or not, made a strategic move to cater to a segment that has been largely underserved by existing social media networks. From a business standpoint, targeting a Blue Ocean audience could prove profitable for X. By providing a haven for conservative and less tolerant perspectives, Musk's platform may attract a dedicated user base that may be willing to pay a monthly fee to be part of this platform, thereby increasing engagement and potential revenue streams. However, this approach comes with the risk of alienating users and advertisers who do not align with these values, posing a challenge to the platform's long-term sustainability.

5. Concluding Remarks

Naturally, the shift towards a less moderated platform raises ethical and moral concerns. The increase in unfiltered content has sparked debates about the balance between free speech and the potential harm caused by hate speech and misinformation (Counts and Nakano 2023). While some users welcome the change, others find the ethical implications troubling, particularly when considering the societal impact of such discourse. The question that now arises is if X will take advantage of this new audience and develop features towards their interests or if the company will

try to regain the users lost during the transition due to the decreasing content moderation. In the end, it will be in Musk's hands to decide if the net value of providing a platform for individuals who seek a space to express their thoughts freely is higher than the value coming from a platform with diversified perspectives and positive discussions that Twitter used to be, with the support of strong advertisers.

S1 has the potential of innovating the platform, targeting specific niche communities, enhancing UX through AI-driven personalization, and the possibility of creating new revenue streams through new subscription models. However, the cons include high development and implementation costs, the risk of overwhelming users with too many new features, uncertainty about user adoption, and the need for continuous maintenance and support. On the other hand, S2 would build a dedicated user base, reduce content moderation costs, position X uniquely in the market, and potentially generate revenue from users willing to pay for a platform that upholds free speech. Nonetheless, this approach brings drawbacks, including ethical and moral concerns due to increased visibility of hate speech and misinformation, the potential alienation of advertisers, the risk of polarizing the user base, and possible legal and regulatory challenges.

In conclusion, the transformation of Twitter into X, presents a unique opportunity to navigate the challenges of the competitive social media landscape. By embracing the principles of the BOS, X can carve out a distinct niche and redefine industry standards. Whether through a radical overhaul of the platform to introduce cutting-edge features and target new demographics (S1) or by capitalizing on shifts in discourse to cater to underserved audiences (S2), X has the potential to revolutionize the way people engage online. However, success will ultimately hinge on Musk's ability to innovate and meet users' expectations. Nonetheless, X must prioritize the development of new features and the establishment of an environment conducive to user engagement to be able to differentiate from its competition and create a unique value proposition in the market.

Appendix

Appendix 1

Figure 1: Set of BOS analytical tools and frameworks used in this project

Six Paths Framework	Provides six systematic ways to shift the lens used in looking at the market universe and open a new value-cost frontier. Additionally, it explains how to uncover plausible blue ocean opportunities by looking across an industry's self-imposed boundaries, instead of remaining stuck.
Three Tiers of Non-Customers	Helps companies gain insight into the latent demand they can tap into to create blue oceans. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• First Tier – buyers who minimally purchase an industry's offering out of necessity.• Second Tier – People that refuse to use an industry's offering.• Third Tier – People that have never considered the market's offering as option. Companies may focus on key commonalities across these tiers and existing customers and understand how to attract them in their new market.
ERRC Grid	The Eliminate-Reduce-Raise-Create Grid drives companies to focus simultaneously on eliminating and reducing, as well as raising and creating while unlocking a new Blue Ocean. It complements the Four Actions Framework as it not only pushes companies to answer the questions posed in the latter, but also to act on all four to create a new value curve.
Strategy Canvas	Graphically captures the current strategic landscape and the prospects for an organization. The horizontal axis captures the range of factors that an industry competes on and invests in, while the vertical axis captures the offering level that buyers receive across all these key competing factors. The value curve is the graphic depiction of a company's relative performance across its industry's factors of competition.

Source: Blue Ocean Strategy

Appendix 2

Figure 2: Cirque du Soleil BOS

Cirque du Soleil stands as prominent exemplar of BOS implementation. Founded in 1984 in Canada, the company emerged as an icon of BOS amidst a declining traditional circus industry. Recognizing shifting audience preferences towards entertainment alternatives such as video games and growing concerns regarding animal rights, Cirque du Soleil orchestrated a transformative shift by reimagining itself as an immersive spectacle focused on human performances, music, and dance. By avoiding animal training and incorporating diverse elements like street performers, this company not only reduced operational costs but also cultivated a unique market space. This strategic move propelled the company to global acclaim, revolutionizing the circus industry and achieving revenue milestones in a fraction of the time it took traditional competitors such as Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey (Mauborgne 2015).

Figure 3: McDonald's ROS

McDonald's exemplifies the success achievable through the skilled execution of the ROS. Operating within the fiercely competitive fast-food market, McDonald's strategically positioned itself by prioritizing customer value and brand authenticity. Amidst a crowded landscape populated by rivals like Burger King and KFC, McDonald's differentiated itself by offering quality burgers made from fresh ingredients, allegedly, accompanied by a diverse menu catering to various consumer preferences. This strategic focus on product quality and service standards enabled McDonald's to transcend the cutthroat competition and establish an enduring presence as an authentic fast-food brand.

Figure 4: Tesla BOS

In the automotive sector, **Tesla**, owned by Elon Musk, embodies the principles of BOS through its revolutionary approach. By pioneering electric vehicles, sustainable energy solutions, and autonomous driving technology, Tesla surpassed the boundaries of traditional car manufacturing. Continual innovation in battery technology and unwavering commitment to sustainability propelled by Tesla into a league of its own, rendering traditional competition increasingly insignificant. Musk's fondness for disruptive innovation, epitomized by groundbreaking products like the Cybertruck, underscores Tesla's relentless pursuit of Blue Ocean opportunities.

Appendix 3

Figure 5 – X’s Current Users

The current users of X are mostly under 35 years old and there are a 2:1 split of males to females. Moreover, it was observed that out of four users, one is American, making the US the predominant nationality in the platform, followed by Japan. Moreover, it was observed that after the acquisition and transformation to X, a significant part of the users that were part of the “woke culture” left the platform, leaving an audience with a more conservative discourse and leading more to the right-wing in terms of politics (Mahdawi 2023)

Source: Exploding Topics

Figure 6 – X’s Three Tiers of Non-Customers

Soon-To-Be Non-Customers	Refusing Non-Customers	Unexplored Non-Customers
First Tier	Second Tier	Third Tier
<p>Current users that are on the edge of the market and are already searching for better alternatives. For X, this includes users that are dissatisfied with the platform due to reasons such as lack of innovative features, privacy concerns and a toxic community environment. Thus, these may be the members of the <i>woke culture</i> that are still on the platform but on the verge of leaving.</p>	<p>Composed by the people who have consciously chosen not to use the platform since they are not interested. This may be referred to the users who refuse using the platform because it does not align with their values and prefer platforms that offer different features or a different community culture. More specifically, these are the members of the <i>woke culture</i> that may or may not have already been a user of the platform but now refuse to use it due to the general environment of the social media. Moreover, this also encompasses people that do not identify with the type of features available in the sense that may simply not be interested in microblogging or reading news in the form of posts</p>	<p>Potential customers in distant markets as these have not been targeted by any player of the social media landscape. X may find these non-customers in demographics or user groups that have not been considered before, such as older generations or people from countries where the internet access has not been widespread yet.</p>

Appendix 4

Figure 7 – Industry's Value Curve

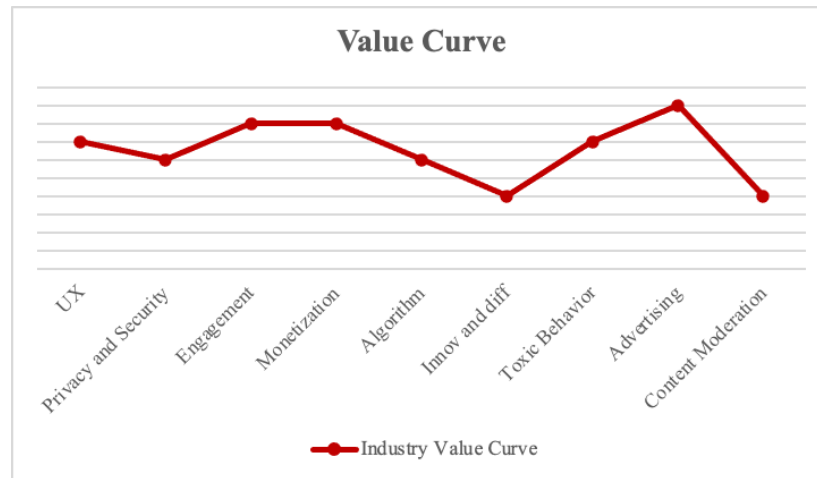


Figure 8 – Social Media Industry Competing Factors

Competing Factor	Description
User Experience (UX)	Encompasses the overall experience of a user when interacting with the platform, including ease of use, design, and content relevance. It's important because a positive UX retains users and attracts new ones.
Privacy & Security	Covers how well a platform protects user data and defends against breaches. It's a key concern for users, influencing their trust and willingness to engage with the platform.
Engagement	Measures how actively users interact with content, through likes, shares, comments,... High engagement indicates a vibrant community, which is attractive to both users and advertisers.
Monetization	Methods a platform uses to generate revenue, such as advertising, subscriptions, or in-app purchases. It's crucial because it determines the financial sustainability of a social media company.
Algorithm	The algorithm determines what content is displayed to users, affecting their content discovery and satisfaction. A good algorithm can enhance user engagement and retention.
Innovation & Differentiation	How a platform stands out through unique features or cutting-edge technology. It's essential for competing in a crowded market and for long-term growth.
Toxic Behavior	Includes harassment, bullying, and other negative interaction. Managing toxic behavior is vital for maintaining a safe and welcoming environment.
Advertising¹	It's a balance between revenue generation and user experience, as excessive ads can deter users.
Content Moderation	Degree to which a platform monitors, filters, and regulates the content posted by its users. The key is to balance the freedom of expression with the responsibility of preventing harm

1. The number of ads a user sees

These factors were chosen because they are interrelated and collectively define the competitive landscape of social media platforms. They influence user choice, platform popularity, and ultimately, the success of a social media business in the market.

Appendix 5

Figure 9 – Six Paths Framework of Scenario 1

		Scenario 1
Industry	Musk could create a synergy between X and Neuralink to pioneer a seamless integration between the platform and brain-computer interfaces. The idea would be to develop a system that would allow users to compose tweets directly from their minds, bypassing keyboards and touchscreens.	
Strategic Group	While Twitter was known for its short-form text posts, X can redefine its strategic group by exploring multimedia rich content such as audio snippets, visual stories, and interactive threads catering to creators, podcasters, and artists seeking expressive platforms. Moreover, it could develop a feature that allows users to mint their most impactful posts as NFTs, providing a new form of content ownership and value.	
Buyer Group	X could target specialized communities such as scientists, artists, educators, or hobbyists and create tailored features for knowledge sharing, collaborative projects and intellectual discourse. Furthermore, X could allow users to propose and vote on new functionalities to ensure that the features developed are in direct response to the needs and desires of niche communities.	
Scope of Offering	X could partner with educational platforms, research journals, and online courses so that users can seamlessly share insights, academic papers, and learning resources within posts. For instance, it could explore a partnership with Neuralink to investigate the potential of mind-driven content posting, utilizing advancements in neural interfaces	
Functional-Emotional Orientation	Beyond functional features, the platform should prioritize emotional well-being by implementing sentiment analysis to detect harmful content and promote positive interactions. This is achieved through AI-driven personalization that curates content feeds not just based on user behavior but also emotional states, ensuring a more empathetic user experience.	
Time	X could set its sights on pioneering virtual reality integrations, allowing users to engage in immersive social interactions and live events. Furthermore, instead of reactive adaptation, proactively shape trends. Elon's X could lead discussions on ethical AI, digital privacy, and responsible social media usage.	

Figure 10 – Set of new features for Scenario 1

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce a blockchain-based system where users can transform their most impactful tweets into NFTs. Users can trade, sell, and display these tweets transforming them into valuable digital assets. Consequently, this would also work as a new revenue stream for X as the platform would charge a commission per trade. This system could have a positive impact in fostering engagement and incentivizing quality content. 2. Collaborate with neurotech companies, specifically, take advantage of Elon's Neuralink to allow users to compose posts and engage with others from their minds which would provide easy accessibility to the platforms. 3. Introduce AI-driven filters on the platform that would analyze posts' sentiments and allow users to view content based on emotions to give a personalized emotional experience. This would provide users with tailored content, as it would also increase empathy and mental well-being. 4. Enable users to send money via post to combine social interactions with financial transactions. Additionally, offer checking accounts, debit cards and savings features within X so that users can manage their finances alongside posts and conversations. 	Scenario 1
--	------------

Appendix 6

Figure 11 – Niche groups

1. **Older generations** are often overlooked in the tech sector. X could make its platform more intuitive and tailor the offerings to their needs as it would be capturing a demographic with significant disposable income and a growing interest in technology (U+).
2. X could attract the **scientific community** by creating a space where these could share their findings and articles and change ideas to help their colleagues.
3. Considering Elon’s background, X could develop features that would appeal users interested in *crypto*, NFTs and blockchain to attract **tech-savvy users** and tap into the growing crypto trend.
4. A niche group that is frequently forgotten are **gamers over 50 years old** that are made of 41 million Americans (Brightman 2016). X could create gaming-related content and features for this group to attract them to the platform.
5. Following Musk’s idea of a “everything app”, X could integrate wellness features into the platform to address people who need and are interested in mental **well-being**, meditation, and mindfulness.

Scenario 1

Appendix 7

Figure 12 – ERRC Grid Extended for S1

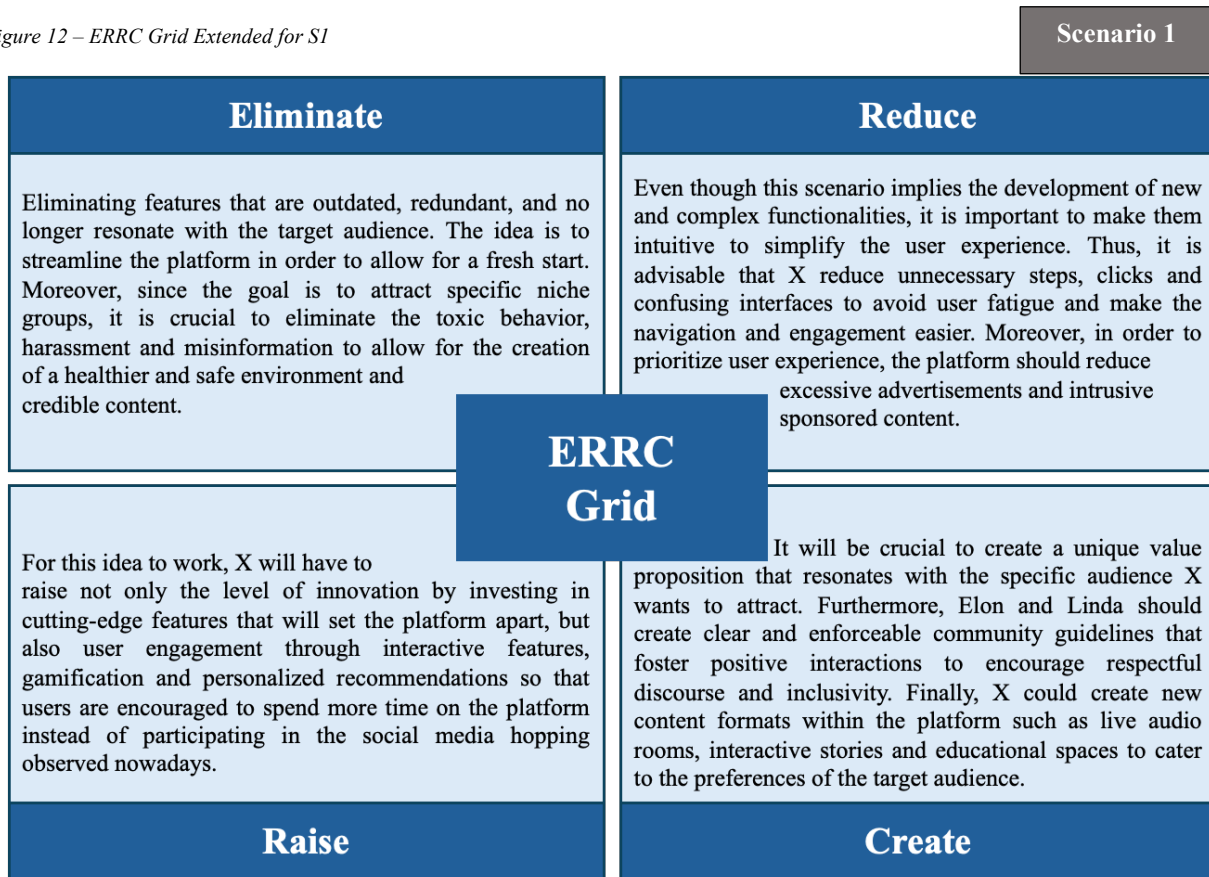
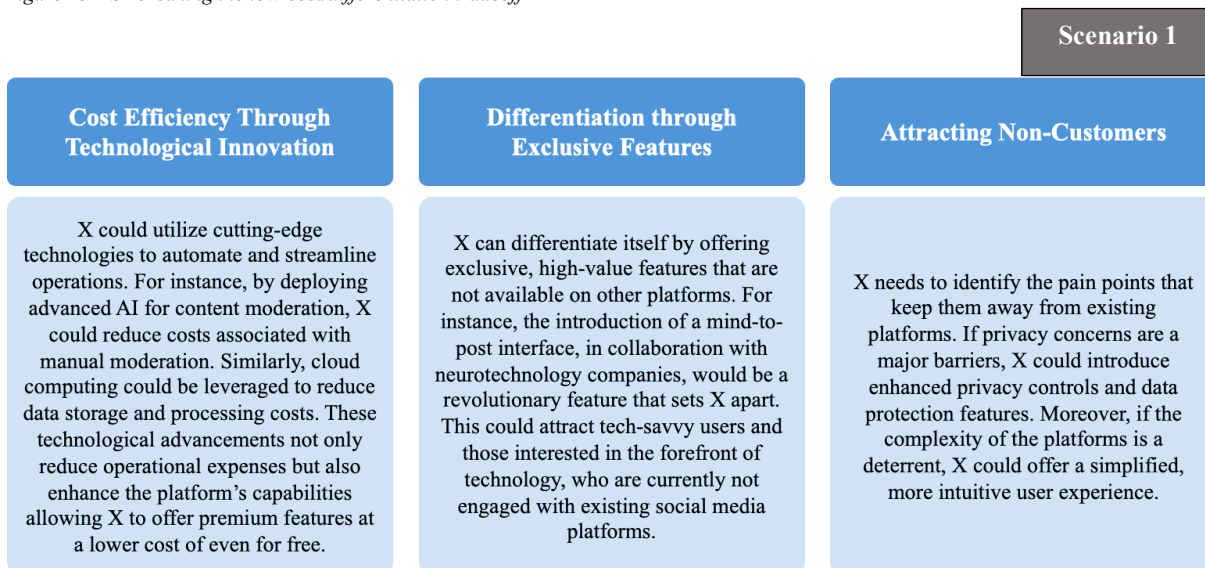



Figure 13 – S1 breaking the low-cost/differentiation tradeoff



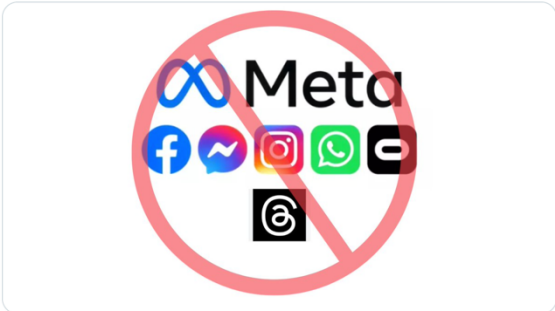
Appendix 8

Figure 14 – People complaining about Threads on X

← **Post**

 **TomorrowNexus** ✓
@Granis87


Clearly, Threads is just a knockoff of X. Its only saving grace? Integration with Instagram. But that's where the perks end. Fewer features, major limitations - and being part of Meta? That's a red flag. Meta's known for censoring unpopular opinions and shaping narratives. There's no real freedom of speech on Threads like on X. It's time for Threads to fade away, and for Meta's dominance in social media to be challenged. In today's world, being able to speak freely and hold different opinions is rare. Kudos to @elonmusk for championing free speech! It's more crucial now than ever. #FreedomOfSpeech #SocialMediaRevolution #threads #meta #x #elonmusk



2:16 PM · Dec 15, 2023 · 161 Views

Source: X

← **Post**

 **Current Sound**
@currentsound

I wrote a post on Threads, saying why I think it will fail.

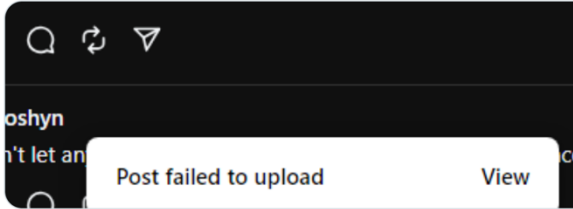
Now I am "unable to post" on threads lol.

And that is why it will fail.

Threads is censoring any post that Mark Zuckerberg doesn't like.


Cancel Threads.

Give us free speech @X @elonmusk



Source: X

← **Post**

 **Dave Rubin** ✓
@RubinReport

There's a much bigger problem on the horizon if Zuckerberg's new Twitter clone Threads takes off...

People are knowingly going to a site they know will censor them (or their ideological opponents) rather than remain on a site dedicated to free speech. They are literally asking to be censored by a company which we know has worked with the government to silence ideas which ultimately turned out to be true. Many people know that, and it's what they actually want.

So this isn't about our political divide per se, as wide as that continues to grow. It's about a divide in truth, between those who want to go towards it, however messy that may be, and those who prefer to stay in an eternal slumber because it's more comfortable and "safe."

"I don't wanna remember nothing. Nothing, you understand?"

Source: X

Appendix 9

Figure 15 – Six Paths Framework of Scenario

Scenario 2

Industry	By integrating with alternative media, the platform can become a hub for diverse content types, attracting users who seek news and opinions outside of mainstream outlets. X could develop partnerships with podcast platforms to integrate their content and offer a seamless experience for users interested in right-wing perspectives.
Strategic Group	Tiered memberships can create a sense of exclusivity and community. X could create memberships levels that offer exclusive content, such as behind the scenes political campaign information or direct Q&A session with influential conservative figures. This could also include partnerships with educational institutions to provide analysis and learning opportunities on topics of interest.
Buyer Group	Offering enhanced analytics helps content creators understand their audience better. Thus, X should implement features that cater to not just content consumers but also to content creators and advertisers in order to make the platform more attractive for everyone.
Scope of Offering	X could introduce tools for event organization and fundraising that can be used by the audience to mobilize support and resources for their causes. Moreover, this can be complemented with features like ticket sales, donation, and merchandise sales.
Functional-Emotional Orientation	X should focus on emotional appeal by promoting community and belonging through features like meetups or virtual town halls. It could also include mentorship programs, support networks, and discussion forums that foster a sense of belonging and shared purpose.
Time	Anticipate future political and social trends and develop predictive features that can suggest content or connection based on emerging conservative movements or ideologies. This could be based on data analytics and machine learning to identify trending topics, emerging influencers, and potential political shifts, keeping the platform ahead of the curve.

Appendix 10

Figure 16 – ERRC Grid Extended for S2

Scenario 2

Eliminate	Reduce
Eliminate stringent content moderation to promote free speech and open discourse to distinguishing the platform from others with stricter policies. This way, the audience will feel safe to share their perspectives without being banned or censored.	Reduce the number of ads a user sees while scrolling in the platform to enhance user experience and avoid the clutter that can drive users away from the platform.
ERRC Grid	
X should focus on improving the user experience by improving the interface and refining the algorithm to better match users with content that aligns with their interests. Moreover, it should invest in new technologies and approaches to stay ahead of competitors and offer unique experiences, which would allow for an increase in engagement. Finally, it should enhance security measures to protect user data and privacy, which is crucial for building trust.	X should develop new features and allow for new content formats that cater specifically to the conservative and right-wing audience, such as forums for political discussion, long-form articles and video blogs. Furthermore, it should create a clear and unique value proposition that resonates with the target audience, emphasizing the platform's commitment to free speech and the creation of an open discourse space that encourages respectful discussions.
Raise	Create

Bibliography

- Ahtisham, Muhammad. 2024. "X's New Audio and Video Calling Feature: Everything You Need to Know." Medium. January 21, 2024. <https://medium.com/illumination/xs-new-audio-and-video-calling-feature-everything-you-need-to-know-459266b83b59>
- Al Jazeera. 2022. "Elon Musk's Twitter deal: Five changes expected at the platform." Al Jazeera. April 26, 2022. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/26/five-changes-to-expect-at-musk-owned-twitter>
- Alba, Davey and Kurt Wagner. 2023. "Twitter Cuts More Staff Overseeing Global Content Moderation." Bloomberg. January 7, 2023. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-01-07/elon-musk-cuts-more-twitter-staff-overseeing-content-moderation>
- Britannica Money. 2024. "X." Britannica Money. May 10, 2024. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Twitter>.
- Conger, Kate and Lauren Hirsch. 2022. "Elon Musk Completes \$44 Billion Deal to Own Twitter." The New York Times. October 27, 2022. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/27/technology/elon-musk-twitter-deal-complete.html>
- Constanty, Ben. 2021. "The Elon Musk Effect: The Timeless Power of Disruption and Brand Authority." Forbes. February 25, 2021. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescommunicationscouncil/2021/02/25/the-elon-musk-effect-the-timeless-power-of-disruption-and-brand-authority/?sh=39c55bbf7ee5>
- Counts, Aisha and Eari Nakano. 2023. "Harmful Content Has Surged on Twitter, Keeping Advertisers Away." Time. July 19, 2023. <https://time.com/6295711/twitters-hate-content-advertisers/>

- Dempsey, Jemma. 2023. "Twitter Loses Nearly Half Advertising Revenue since Elon Musk Takeover." BBC. July 17, 2023. <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-66217641>.
- Diaz, Maria. 2023. "What is Elon Musk's X, the 'everything' app? Here's what you need to know." ZDNET. July 27, 2023. <https://www.zdnet.com/article/what-is-elon-musks-x-the-everything-app/>
- Dinesh, Shradha and Meltem Osabas. 2023. "8 facts about Americans and Twitter as it rebrands to X." Pew Research Center. July 26, 2023. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/07/26/8-facts-about-americans-and-twitter-as-it-rebrands-to-x/>.
- Dizikes, Peter. 2020. "Why social media has changed the world – and how to fix it." MIT. September 25, 2020. <https://news.mit.edu/2020/hype-machine-book-aral-0924>
- Duarte, Fabio. 2024. "X (Formerly Twitter) User Age, Gender, & Demographic Stats (2024)." Exploding Topics. April 25, 2024. <https://explodingtopics.com/blog/x-user-stats>.
- Frenkel, Sheera and Kate Conger. 2022. "Hate Speech's Rise on Twitter is Unprecedented, Researchers Find." The New York Times. December 2, 2022. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/02/technology/twitter-hate-speech.html>
- Horne, Matt. 2024. "The everything app: Here's what we know about Musk's plans for X." Android Authority. February 16, 2024. <https://www.androidauthority.com/the-everything-app-x-3356006/>
- Kerkhof, Robyn. 2023. "Elon Musk's Twitter Takeover: How One User Became the Owner of Influence." Blinkist Magazine. September 5, 2023. <https://www.blinkist.com/magazine/posts/elon-musks-twitter>.
- Khogeer, Khadijah. 2023. "Everything to know about Elon Musk's 'everything app.'" NBC News. July 25, 2023. <https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/social-media/elon-musk-x-twitter-everything-app-rcna96068>

- Kim, Chan and Renée Mauborgne. 2015. “Eliminate-Reduce-Raise-Create (ERRC) Grid.” Blue Ocean Strategy. Accessed April 2, 2024. <https://www.blueoceanstrategy.com/tools/errc-grid/>
- Kim, Chan and Renée Mauborgne. 2015. “Six Paths Framework.” Blue Ocean Strategy. Accessed March 31, 2024. <https://www.blueoceanstrategy.com/tools/six-paths-framework/>
- Kim, Chan and Renée Mauborgne. 2015. “Strategy Canvas.” Blue Ocean Strategy. Accessed March 29, 2024. <https://www.blueoceanstrategy.com/tools/strategy-canvas/>
- Kim, Chan and Renée Mauborgne. 2015. “Three Tiers of NonCustomers” Blue Ocean Strategy. Accessed April 1, 2024. <https://www.blueoceanstrategy.com/tools/three-tiers-of-noncustomers/>
- Kim, Chan and Renée Mauborgne. 2015. “What Is Blue Ocean Strategy?” Blue Ocean Strategy. Accessed March 27, 2024. <https://www.blueoceanstrategy.com/what-is-blue-ocean-strategy/>
- Lebow, Sara. 2022. “What to know about the convergence of social media platforms.” EMARKETER. September 12, 2022. <https://www.emarketer.com/content/what-know-about-convergence-of-social-media-platforms>
- Money Watch. 2022. “Musk fires outsourced content moderators who track abuse on Twitter.” CBS News. November 14, 2022. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/elon-musk-twitter-layoffs-outsourced-content-moderators/>.
- Peters, Jay. 2023. “For Elon Musk, X equals everything.” The Verge. July 26, 2023. <https://www.theverge.com/2023/7/26/23808796/elon-musks-x-everything-app-vision>.

Slisco, Aila. 2023. "Conservative Twitter Users Rage After 30 Million Add Threads App on Day One." Newsweek. July 6, 2023. <https://www.newsweek.com/conservative-twitter-users-rage-after-30-million-add-threads-app-day-one-1811436>.

StartUs. 2024. "Top 8 Media Industry Trends & Innovations in 2024." StartUs Insights. February, 2024. <https://www.startus-insights.com/innovators-guide/media-industry-trends-innovation/>

Thomas, Tobi. 2022. "Elton John quits Twitter over change that 'allows misinformation to flourish'." The Guardian. December 9, 2022. <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2022/dec/09/elton-john-quits-twitter-policy-change-allows-misinformation>

Threaded Topic. 2023. "Emerging Technologies in Social Media." Medium. November 23, 2023. <https://medium.com/@threadedtopic/emerging-technologies-in-social-media-ce8d74f36571>

U+. "Baby Boomers: A Bigger Digital Market Than You Might Think." U+ Insights. Accessed April 6, 2024. <https://www.u.plus/insights/baby-boomers-a-bigger-digital-market-than-you-might-think>