

Spanish newspaper La Vanguardia quits disinformation network X

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Spanish newspaper La Vanguardia says X has become "an echo chamber" for "conspiracy theories and misinformation" [File: Paco Freire/SOPA Images/LightRocket via Getty]

Barcelona, Catalonia, November 15 (RHC)-- The Spanish newspaper La Vanguardia has announced it will stop publishing its content on social media platform X, which it said had become a “disinformation network.”

The social media giant, owned by Elon Musk, has become “an echo chamber” for “conspiracy theories and misinformation” whose reach multiplies due to the lack of effective moderation, the Barcelona-based newspaper said on Thursday.

“Hatred of ethnic minorities, misogyny and racism” were among the viral posts “that violate human rights” but captured users’ attention and more money through advertising, it added.

Musk, who describes himself as a “free speech absolutist”, had criticised the moderation policies on the platform, formerly known as Twitter, and objected to censorship that goes beyond the requirements of the law. After buying it in a \$44 billion deal in 2022, Musk led a huge layoff of workers, including staff overseeing content moderation, and restored known conspiracy theorists to the platform.

La Vanguardia said it decided to quit X after United States President elect-Donald Trump announced the appointment of Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy to head a so-called Department of Government Efficiency with the aim of restructuring federal agencies and slashing spending.

“The growing presence of bots on X is multiplied to the point of ridicule,” the newspaper said, pointing to a large number of fake accounts joining public conversations on the devastating floods that killed more than 200 people in Spain this month. “Since the arrival of Elon Musk, X has been filled with toxic and disorienting content in an increasingly overwhelming way,” the statement added.

The daily said it would continue following people, businesses and institutions on X to inform readers of messages and debates. Its journalists will also be free to keep using it “within the guidelines of restraint and respect for human rights and freedom of expression” required of them in all settings.

On Wednesday, British news outlet The Guardian said it would no longer post content on X, citing similar concerns. It said it had been considering the decision to stop posting on the social media outlet for a while, but the US election “underlined” its decision.

X “is a toxic media platform” and “its owner, Elon Musk, has been able to use its influence to shape political discourse,” The Guardian wrote. “We think that the benefits of being on X are now outweighed by the negatives and that resources could be better used promoting our journalism elsewhere.”

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