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Will Xâ??s addition of audio and video calling create stickiness in the app?

Description

Elon Musk announced Wednesday that an early version of video and audio calling is now available on X, formerly known as Twitter.

The move is another step toward Muskâ??s goal of turning X into an â??everything appâ?• that can handle everything from online payments to news to food delivery.

Not all users can access it just yet, and X hasnâ??t given a timeline on the widespread rollout of this feature. The company has also not confirmed what tech veteran Chris Messina found in Xâ??s code â?? that audio and video calls will only be available to subscribers.

Per TechCrunchâ??s previous article:

> Other lines of code refer to a warning that appears when someone tries to DM another user on the app which explains that â??audio and video calls are a premium feature,â?• and entices them to â??subscribe to gain access.â?• That means users will have to pay for X Premiumâ?¦

Itâ??s also unclear how users will be able to truly screen calls. For those who have gotten early access to the feature, the options for allowing calls include verified users, people you follow and people in your address book.

X no longer responds to requests for comment after Muskâ??s takeover, only replying with an automated message to incoming press queries, so we couldnâ??t ask for more details as to why X is introducing this feature, and why now?

Sure, Musk hasnâ??t been shy about wanting to turn X into a platform similar to Chinaâ??s WeChat â?? a messaging app that has become a central place for all digital transactions, be they shopping or news or communications. But Muskâ??s overarching vision for X has always been a financial services app.

Around the time Musk was buying Twitter, the billionaire described to his biographer Walter Isaacson what he thought the platform could become. â??If you combine a social network with a payments platform, you could create what I wanted X.com to be.â?•

Musk rebranded Twitter to X in July, but X.com has been around since 1999 when it was a prelude to PayPal. In those days, Musk thought X.com could be a one-stop everything-store for all financial needs, including banking, digital purchases, checking, credit cards, investments and loans.

Video and audio calling doesnâ??t seem to necessarily align with that goal. In fact, the idea of receiving a phone call on a social media platform when youâ??re just there to consume information rapidly is a

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bit jarring to the senses â?? doubly so if that call is coming from some random verified X user.

Tangentially, though, Musk could be taking a page out of Uberâ??s book of non-stop product announcements and trying to create stickiness within X. Uber began as a ride-hail service and then moved onto food delivery. Now the company has expanded on those pillars, offering users the ability to charter a boat, return packages to the post office and make dinner reservations.

Itâ??s also similar to how Amazon has played the game, using its other products, like Alexa, to drive secondary revenue to the core business whenever a customer says, â??Alexa, order me another bulk round of peanut butter.â?•

How that might play out at X is that a user would come for the shitposting and live Spaces, but they might stay for the convenience of internet-enabled phone calls, the long-form posts and video, and the high-yield savings account. And because these features will likely only be available to subscribers, the old throw-it-at-the-wall-and-see-what-sticks tactic could become a revenue driver for X.

Or it might not.

It all hinges on whether Musk is able to deliver on his broader plans in the long run. Not only will it be a technical problem to solve, but the U.S. isnâ??t China. Regulators are keeping a close eye on tech companies to ensure no one firm owns too much of the internet.

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Author
susantswain1

Tech Assistant for Blind foundation, Inc. Contact Us: https://www.techassistantforblind.com/contact or by Email: info@techassistantforblind.com