

# MUSKIAN STUPIDITY, MARKET CUPIDITY

[NB: check the byline, thanks. /~Rayne]

I'm on the verge of blocking every occurrence of the name "Elon Musk" from my Twitter timeline because I have fucking had enough of him.

Never mind all his idiotic uninformed and uneducated prattle about free speech. He obviously can't be bothered to read the 45 words which are the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment.

Nor can he be arsed to read the Constitution's Article I, Section 8 regarding the regulation of commerce.

He also can't be bothered to grasp what it means to "practice medicine without a license," thereby exposing many more layers of laziness.

Can't believe it has to be said, but don't take medical advice from this disingenuous bellend.

There's a black box warning on antidepressants warning of the increased rate of suicidality in kids. No evidence that Wellbutrin or any other antidepressant causes suicides in adults. [pic.twitter.com/BEaDRM9bWy](https://pic.twitter.com/BEaDRM9bWy)

— Holly Figueroa O'Reilly  
(@AynRandPaulRyan) April 30, 2022

Spreading medical bullshit as unlicensed medical practice is regulated to prevent bellends killing or maiming or sickening people.

The worst part of all the Muskian bullshit is that Musk has enough assets not to care. He can throw lawyers at whatever problem confronts him to make it disappear and continue on his Muskian way. He can indulge his shallowness and narcissism with impunity, having ample fanboi

trolls to dispatch at anyone who questions his motives or actions.



Muskian narcissism, bordering on Trumpian malignant narcissism, caring only about his own goals and not at all about anyone else though his personal value is completely reliant on others.

Insert Seinfeld meme here, "You know, we're living in a society."

It's not merely a meme; it's the crux of the problem before us, whether we live in a democratic society in which free speech and the rights of individuals are respected, in which individuals act collectively through democratic process to achieve common goals – or not, as Musk appears to believe.

Though he hasn't been the only person to do so over the last two decades, Elon Musk laid bare again ugly flaws in our democratic society, the biggest of which is that capital at a certain level provides an escape from not only from the limitations of this planet's gravity but our society's social compact.

He's even escaped any accountability for his naked colonialist aspirations toward Mars.

The fascist right-wing cheers him for rejecting any responsibility to his fellow humans who have been the source of his wealth, lauding Musk's

so-called genius while embracing *Kapital über alles*.

Sure, his company SpaceX is worth some praise. Recycling of rocket components through controlled return to earth has been a paradigmatic shift in aerospace – a step forward which should encourage competitors to step up their game.

However Musk told his employees last November that SpaceX was at risk of bankruptcy. It's not clear now if this was merely a means of pressuring his workforce to increase output since he tweeted a week later that "bankruptcy for SpaceX, while 'unlikely,' is also 'not impossible,'" in response to reporting about the potential for SpaceX's bankruptcy.

Starlink, his satellite-based internet service operated by SpaceX, has been but a narrow blessing with a much bigger potential risk to earth with its cluttering of the night sky – a colonialist occupation taking two steps back.

(Yes, again I say colonialist. What global authority gave permission to Musk to trash the heavens viewed by all earthlings for the sake of internet access? Was it the same global authority who told the British they could create an empire at the expense of indigenous people and then-extant nations? What global authority will deal with possible Starlink satellites' failures should they fail and slip from their orbits?)

The rest of his business efforts have likewise been base hits followed by a swing and a miss, including Tesla which relied on a \$465 million loan from the US government during the Obama administration to survive its early years.

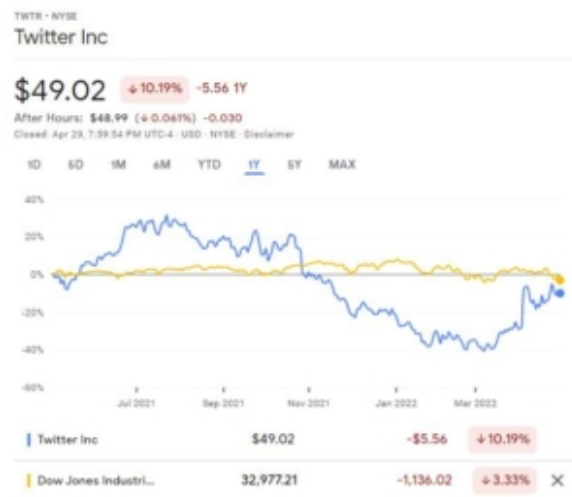
A capitalist genius, reliant on socialized aid, ironically weaponizing free speech to the detriment of those who saved his company's ass.

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Here's what really annoys the fuck out of me

about all the fanboi-ing over the supposed Musk genius.

He offered roughly \$44 billion for Twitter, \$54.20 per share. This is what he's attempting to buy:



Twitter (NYSE:TWTR) stock price, 1-year chart (source: Google Finance)

Here's Twitter's financial performance for fiscal year 2021:

Net income:

December 2021 – \$181.69M

September 2021 – (536.76M)

June 2021 – \$65.65M

March 2021 – \$68.0M



Twitter's financial performance, 2021 (source: Google Finance)

Note the return on equity:

Financial Highlights		Trading Information	
Fiscal Year		Stock Price History	
Fiscal Year Ends	Dec 31, 2021	Beta (3Y Monthly)	0.80
Most Recent Quarter (trq)	Dec 31, 2021	52-Week Change <sup>1</sup>	-58.19%
Profitability		S&P500 52-Week Change <sup>2</sup>	-1.45%
Profit Margin	-4.36%	52 Week High <sup>3</sup>	73.34
Operating Margin (trm)	5.38%	52 Week Low <sup>3</sup>	31.30
Management Effectiveness		50-Day Moving Average <sup>4</sup>	40.49
Return on Assets (trm)	1.24%	200-Day Moving Average <sup>5</sup>	50.28
Return on Equity (trm)	-2.90%	Share Statistics	
Income Statement		Avg Vol (3 month) <sup>6</sup>	49.36M
Revenue (trm)	5.08B	Avg Vol (10 day) <sup>7</sup>	52.19M
Revenue Per Share (trm)	6.37	Shares Outstanding <sup>8</sup>	793.58M
Quarterly Revenue Growth (yoy)	21.66%	Implied Shares Outstanding <sup>9</sup>	N/A
Gross Profit (trm)	3.28B	Float <sup>10</sup>	790.99M
EBITDA	697.33M	% Held by Insiders <sup>11</sup>	12.42%
Net Income Adj to Common (trm)	-221.43M	% Held by Institutions <sup>12</sup>	89.67%
Diluted EPS (trm)	-0.28	Shares Short (Apr 14, 2022) <sup>13</sup>	32.67M
Quarterly Earnings Growth (yoy)	-18.20%	Short Ratio (Apr 14, 2022) <sup>14</sup>	0.48
McDonald's®		Short % of Float (Apr 14, 2022) <sup>15</sup>	4.39%

Twitter's financial statistics (source: Yahoo Finance)

By comparison, Facebook/Meta's ROE is 31.10%.

Aljazeera reported an increase in active daily users over the last quarter:

Twitter reported an average of 229 million daily active users in the quarter, which was about 14 million more than a revised 214.7 million daily users in the previous quarter.

I can't find the number I saw from late 2021 which said Twitter had 206 million active daily users. The uptick seems off considering the amount of work Twitter has done to remove bot accounts. Personally, I would guesstimate 5-10% of active daily user accounts are inauthentic, of which a third to half may represent attrition or float as bots are weeded out.

Which means Musk has offered an insane amount between ~\$216 to ~\$229 per authentic active daily user on a userbase which could plummet simply because he, Musk, bought it.

Or worse, from an advertising perspective: accounts could remain but degrade engagement to less than daily activity, making advertising space much less valuable, less functional.

Granted, his right-wing fanboi base could surge

if many of their suspended or ejected accounts are allowed to return, but advertisers may balk if the volume of hate speech returns with them.

Very genius. Much capitalist. So Musk.

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Twitter employees have expressed concern about Musk's acquisition – well-earned concern considering Musk attacked a key BIPOC employee via tweets about Twitter's handling of abusive or sensitive content in spite of a non-disparagement clause. What incredible blindness if not outright lack of sensitivity.

You'd think a South African by birth would be a bit more sensitive to the issue of race on top of the non-disparagement clause, but Twitter employees already had plenty to be concerned about given the problem of overt racism at Tesla documented in a successful lawsuit by a former contract employee , a class action lawsuit by employees, and a lawsuit by the state of California. Racist graffiti and epithets aren't free speech in the workplace – they're endorsements of racism in the corporate culture.

Musk may want to fire a lot of Twitter employees to cut costs and clean house, but losing the faith and respect of Twitter's workforce before the ink has dried won't serve the end he desires and needs, a seamless transition which doesn't disrupt the platform so that advertisers will continue to buy ad space.

In spite of his fanbois' approbation including tech and econ journalists, Musk's musings about new monetizing efforts demonstrated a gross lack of understanding about the platform.

Like charging users to quote tweet or retweet content.

Sources: Elon Musk has lined up a new CEO for Twitter and told banks about ideas for monetizing tweets like charging a fee for quoting or embedding tweets

(Reuters)<https://t.co/upFdwwU8aI><https://t.co/ioy0RZa3bH>

– Techmeme (@Techmeme) April 29, 2022

Way to kill his newly-acquired platform right out of the gate. This is such a stupid idea that one has to wonder if he understands the internet at all.

It doesn't help Musk's image with a substantive portion of Twitter users that while he benefits from government aid and contracts, his businesses don't necessarily result in revenues.

Tesla brought home a \$5.5 billion profit last year. Any guesses how much they paid in taxes?

\$0. Close corporate loopholes and tax the rich.

– Pramila Jayapal (@PramilaJayapal)  
April 29, 2022

Rumor has it Musk has also considered monetizing tweets based on popularity, paying users for most viral tweets as if this couldn't be gamed.

ur telling me a shrimp fried this  
depression gives u short term memory  
this how i'm tryna be this apple really  
snapped with rihanna where's the album  
doja cat is the world's next superstar  
the two worst feelings are having a job  
and not having a job tom holland and  
zendaya are so <https://t.co/FNbmHvDkX2>

– mother earth (👁️) (@nonbinarybooty) April  
30, 2022

(I know, this looks like gibberish to the olds but imagine Musk paying out a buck for every Like that kind of quote tweet generated.)

Will Musk expect to pay next to nothing in taxes

if he ever makes Twitter profitable, while steadily undermining democracy with his craptastic notion of free speech?

Wouldn't he be better off building a platform from scratch with less than a billion bucks investment given his access to and approval of so many techbros, thereby building a low-tax "free speech" vehicle on his own terms without Twitter's baggage?

Especially since he has 84 million followers, an audience of which many are committed fanbois – can't he start something and get them on board as his first users?

And if he can't do that, why not?

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Consensus among punditry and opiners is that Musk will drop a billion in penalty fees for exiting the deal and walk away.

But is there a reason Musk has gotten this far down the road with this acquisition project? Is there something else besides free speech motivating Musk to hang on?

This account suggests in this Twitter thread that Tesla's challenges with current U.S. dealership laws are why Musk wants Twitter.

Elon Musk has overcome every obstacle put in front of him. Space X, PayPal, – say what you want, the man is determined.

But there is one obstacle he can not overcome and it's a thorn in his side.

Dealership Laws.

– YS (@ReallyActivist) April 30, 2022

In other words, instead of lobbying in all states where manufacturers can't sell their cars directly to the public without a third-party dealer, Musk would use the clout of his Twitter



platform to press on the public to campaign for a change benefiting Tesla.

Timing is critical since pressure to exit fossil fuels has increased due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and the other major automakers are gearing up their plans for increased electric vehicle sales. Musk would surely like to get ahead of the competition more so than Tesla already is with its 2-3 million total EV sales to date.

But is this lobbying alternative approach really cost effective at \$44 billion?

Or is he planning to use Twitter as his own personal advertising platform for Tesla and other products like Powerwall? Musk is now looking at promising some of his Tesla stock in lieu of his own cash to obtain financing; is this a gamble that Twitter will promote Tesla's value enough that he won't feel the loss of the Tesla stock offered to banks?

Or is Musk planning to sell another product – like users' data – and he's figured he'll make enough from that product to offset his Tesla stock swapped for financing?

Whatever the case, I'll be gone if he sells users' data. I'll leave a worthless hollow social media shell behind.

Free speech, the kind to which no advertiser wants to sell.