



Twitter UK
20 Air Street
London
W1B 5AN

twitter.com

19 January 2018

*Damian Collins MP
Chair, Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA*

By email

Dear Mr. Collins,

Further to my letter of 13 December 2017, I write to update you on our review of activity on Twitter relating to the EU Referendum held in 2016.

According to the questions provided, we contacted City University and asked them to provide the information underlying their study. We then conducted analysis on the dataset that City University provided in order to gather the specific information required to respond to your individual questions in full.

In reviewing the accounts identified by City University, we found that 1% of the accounts in the dataset were registered in Russia.

While many of the accounts identified by City University were in violation of the Twitter Rules regarding spam, at this time, we do not have sufficiently strong evidence to enable us to conclusively link them with Russia or indeed the Internet Research Agency.

Of the total accounts identified by City University, 6,508 accounts were already suspended by Twitter prior to the report's publication, with more than 99% of these suspensions specifically related to the violation of our spam policies.

Of the remaining accounts, approximately 44.2% were deactivated permanently. Of these, 1,093 accounts had been labelled as spam or low quality by Twitter prior to deletion, which would have resulted in their Tweets being hidden in Search for all users and not contributing to trending topics in any way. As we said in our previous letter, these defensive actions are not visible to researchers using our public APIs; however they are an important part of our proactive, technological approach to addressing these issues.

In addition, a very small number of accounts identified by City University are still active on Twitter and are not currently in breach of our rules.



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Our findings echo those of the Oxford Internet Institute that concluded in a report published in December 2017 *"in our investigations of Twitter conversations associated with highly automated accounts we found little evidence of links to Russian sources."* I also note the recent annual report from the Intelligence and Security Committee did not identify any immediate concerns in this area.

Twitter is committed to addressing these issues; we appreciate your inquiry and the opportunity to respond. If Twitter identifies further relevant information relating to the 2016 EU Referendum we will write to you and update your committee accordingly.

We are happy to meet to answer any further questions you may have and look forward to contributing to your committee's forthcoming hearings in Washington DC.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nick Pickles". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Nick Pickles

Head of Public Policy
Twitter UK