



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on October 16, 2020

Twitter Alters Policy on “Hacked” Content After Censoring N.Y. Post Story on Bidens

Twitter will change its policy on blocking “hacked” material because the social media site’s hysterical reaction to bad news regarding its preferred candidate, Joe Biden, invited a tornado of criticism.

The website blocked access to the [first installment](#) of the *New York Post*’s exposé about Hunter and Joe Biden. The first story, [Twitter claimed](#), used “hacked” emails in reporting that Hunter Biden arranged a meeting between his father and a Ukrainian businessman.

Twitter even shut down the newspaper’s entire account.

Result: A stern warning from Senator Josh Hawley, and then a quick retreat that changed policy.

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The Story, the Reaction

In some sense, Twitter’s reaction was understandable, given its left-wing slant.

The leftist social media site quickly became a platform for very bad news: The Democrat presidential candidate lied when he said he never discussed with his son the latter’s shady business activities in Ukraine.

The [Post published](#) an email from a Ukrainian businessman that thanked Hunter for setting up a meeting with his father the vice president, then head of the Obama Administration’s Ukraine policy. The email came from the hard drive of a laptop left at a computer repair shop.

The story is significant given Joe Biden’s threat, in 2016, to cut off \$1 billion in loan guarantees to Ukraine if it did not cashier Ukraine’s top prosecutor, who was investigating Burisma Holdings. Burisma is the energy company that inexplicably put Hunter Biden on its board, despite his history of drug use and lack of experience in the energy field.

As the story went viral, though, Twitter’s social justice warriors panicked. The news might damage their candidate.

And so Twitter falsely called the emails “hacked” so it could justify blocking users from seeing them.

When conservatives and even some liberals opened fire on Twitter for censorship and interfering in an election, [CEO Jack Dorsey confessed](#) the site’s error.

Senator Josh Hawley (R-Mo.) accused Twitter of an illegal contribution to the Biden campaign and said Dorsey’s explanation wasn’t good enough. [Hawley complained](#) to the Federal Election Commission.



Photo: eranicle/iStock/Getty Images Plus



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.[@Twitter](#) [@jack](#) this is not nearly good enough. In fact, it's a joke. It's downright insulting. I will ask you - and [@Facebook](#) - to give an explanation UNDER OATH to the Senate subcommittee I chair. These are potential violations of election law, and that's a crime <https://t.co/Rylva8UJv9>

— Josh Hawley (@HawleyMO) [October 15, 2020](#)

Others rightly said Twitter never blocks ranting leftists who call cops racists and murderers.

Rules Change

And so yesterday in a length thread, Vijaya Gadde, Twitter's "Legal, Policy and Trust & Safety Lead," announced the change.

"We will no longer remove hacked content unless it is directly shared by hackers or those acting in concert with them," she wrote. "We will label Tweets to provide context instead of blocking links from being shared on Twitter."

So, what's changing?

1. We will no longer remove hacked content unless it is directly shared by hackers or those acting in concert with them
2. We will label Tweets to provide context instead of blocking links from being shared on Twitter

— Vijaya Gadde (@vijaya) [October 16, 2020](#)

In a rambling preamble to the change, Gadde focused on "hacked" material:

We want to address the concerns that there could be many unintended consequences to journalists, whistleblowers and others in ways that are contrary to Twitter's purpose of serving the public conversation.

We put the Hacked Materials Policy in place back in 2018 to discourage and mitigate harms associated with hacks and unauthorized exposure of private information. We tried to find the right balance between people's privacy and the right of free expression, but we can do better.

We've recently added new product capabilities, such as labels to provide people with additional context. We are no longer limited to Tweet removal as an enforcement action.

We believe that labeling Tweets and empowering people to assess content for themselves better serves the public interest and public conversation. The Hacked Material Policy is being updated to reflect these new enforcement capabilities.

Why the changes? We want to address the concerns that there could be many unintended consequences to journalists, whistleblowers and others in ways that are contrary to Twitter's purpose of serving the public conversation.



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— Vijaya Gadde (@vijaya) [October 16, 2020](#)

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But again, the “content” was not “hacked.” The emails were on a MacBook Pro someone sent to a repair shop. That person never retrieved it, and so the owner gave it to the FBI and a copy of the hard drive to Giuliani, who gave it the *Post*.

Yet the policy shift raises the question of when Twitter will take action against the hard left.

Answering Dorsey’s confession, conservative writer Steve Sailer asked whether Twitter had censored stories about the “murder” of George Floyd, who had taken a fatal dose of fentanyl.

“How many tweets did you blithely transmit promoting the lies that Michael Brown at Ferguson said “Hands up, don’t shoot” or that George Zimmerman was white?” he continued.

“How many stores therefore have been looted and building[s] burned in part due to your activities?”

[@Jack,](#)

Have you ever censored news articles referring to the "murder" or "killing" by the police of fentanyl abuser George Floyd, when neither has been proved in a court of law and autopsies suggest neither is likely?

If not, why not?

— Steve Sailer (@Steve_Sailer) [October 15, 2020](#)

[@Jack,](#)

How many tweets did you blithely transmit promoting the lies that Michael Brown at Ferguson said "Hands up, don't shoot" or that George Zimmerman was white?

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Nor does Twitter block leftists who call people with whom they disagree “racists” and “fascists,” a clear



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violation of the Twitter Rules.

Myriad hard left sites frequently break the [site's rules](#) by tweeting “aggressive insults that target an individual,” or by “encourag[ing] others to harass or target specific individuals or groups with abusive behavior.”



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