Twitter cuts off Diplotwoops and Politwoops in all remaining 30 countries

Popular web service that tracked politicians' deleted tweets shut down in 30 countries

SUMMARY

This weekend, Open State Foundation was informed by Twitter that it suspended API access to Diplotwoops and all remaining Politwoops sites in 30 countries. After Twitter suspended API access for the US version of Politwoops for displaying deleted tweets of US lawmakers on May 15, Open State Foundation was still running Politwoops in 30 countries, including the European parliament. Politwoops automatically monitored politicians' profiles for deleted tweets and made them visible. In 2014 Open State Foundation launched Diplotwoops, screening deleted messages by diplomats and embassies around the world. These sites have been extensively used and cited by journalists around the world.

On Friday night, August 21, Open State Foundation was informed by Twitter that it suspended API access to Diplotwoops and all remaining Politwoops sites in 30 countries. After Twitter suspended API access for the US version of Politwoops for displaying deleted tweets of US lawmakers on May 15, Open State Foundation was still running Politwoops in 30 countries, including the European parliament.

Twitter said that its decision to suspend access to Politwoops followed a 'thoughtful internal deliberation and close consideration of a number of factors' and that it doesn't distinguish between users. Twitter wrote: 'Imagine how nerve-racking – terrifying, even – tweeting would be if it was immutable and irrevocable? No one user is more deserving of that ability than another. Indeed, deleting a tweet is an expression of the user's voice.'

Politwoops began in the Netherlands in 2010 at a hackathon. Since then it has been further developed by Open State Foundation, turning it into a useful tool for journalists and spreading it to 30 countries, from Egypt, Tunisia, Greece, the UK and France to the Vatican and the European Parliament. In 30 countries, it automatically monitored politicians' profiles (elected members of national parliaments) for deleted tweets and made them visible. In 2014 Open State Foundation launched Diplotwoops, screening deleted messages by diplomats and embassies around the world. These sites have been extensively used and cited by journalists around the world.

Arjan El Fassed (director of Open State Foundation): 'What elected politicians publicly say is a matter of public record. Even when tweets are deleted, it's part of parliamentary history. These tweets were once posted and later deleted. What politicians say in public should be available to anyone. This is not about typos but it is a unique insight on how messages from elected politicians can change without notice.'

Open State Foundation will continue to explore and engage with others to keep public messages by elected politicians visible. The public has rights guaranteed under many constitutions to access information that was made at least temporarily available to the public.

The list of countries where Twitter blocked Politwoops includes Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Denmark, Portugal, Egypt, Estonia, France, Greece, India, Ireland, Italy, South Korea, Macedonia, Norway, Belgium, United Kingdom, Germany, The Netherlands, Sweden, Spain and Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey and the Vatican. It also includes members of the European Parliament.

RELEVANT LINKS

Open State Foundation
http://openstate.eu

Politwoops
http://politwoops.eu/countries

QUOTES

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> — Arjan El Fassed

Open State Foundation bevordert digitale transparantie door het ontsluiten van open data en de ontwikkeling van innovatieve en creatieve toepassingen te stimuleren.

Open State Foundation promotes digital transparency by unlocking open data and stimulates the development of innovative and creative applications.

Open State Foundation pressroom