

US teachers union says it is leaving X over sexualised AI images of children

The American Federation of Teachers says it is leaving X, citing the social media site's creation and dissemination of "sickening" images of children in various states of undress.

In an interview with Reuters, AFT President Randi Weingarten said that the site had already been degraded by extremists and trolls since Elon Musk's 2022 takeover, before which the platform was known as Twitter. But the recent proliferation of non-consensual images of women and children in bikinis or underwear generated by X's artificial intelligence chatbot, Grok, had made the site unusable, she said.

"The Grok AI image generator, with no safeguards, was the last straw," she said. "From tomorrow on, we're not using Twitter, or X."

X didn't immediately respond to a request seeking comment on the AFT's announcement. Another company owned by Musk, xAI, sent a generic response when contacted for comment on the AFT's decision.

X has come under increasing scrutiny internationally after Grok began publicly sharing a flood of hyper-realistic images of women and sometimes minors in bikinis or in sexually degrading or violent poses. X has since adjusted the chatbot's behaviour so that images Grok generates or edits are not posted to the public timeline, though the bot will still digitally strip people of their clothes.

The AFT says it represents 1.8 million education workers, making it one of the largest US labour unions. Weingarten created her account on what was

then Twitter 15 years ago. Weingarten said she had already scaled back her posting due to propaganda and disinformation on the site. In the past, when asked about disinformation, Musk has said he is defending freedom of speech.

As of Wednesday, Weingarten said, her account and her union's account, which have about 100,000 and 75,000 followers respectively, would both go silent. Asked whether the union's voice might not carry as far when it left X, Weingarten said it had to put children's safety first.

"It's not an easy decision but it's the right decision," she said. "You have to draw a line. If you're on Team Humanity and you believe we have to protect children, in particular, you have to draw this line."

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AFT President Randi Weingarten

