

Twitter rolls out tool to curb online abuse, bullying

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FILE PHOTO: People holding mobile phones are silhouetted against a backdrop projected with the Twitter logo in this illustration picture taken September 27, 2013. REUTERS/Kacper Pempel/Illustration/File Photo [ENLARGE](#)

WASHINGTON: Twitter on Tuesday said it was rolling out a new tool to help users filter out harassment and abusive conduct on the messaging platform.

"The amount of abuse, bullying, and harassment we've seen across the internet has risen sharply over the past few years," Twitter said in a statement.

"These behaviors inhibit people from participating on Twitter, or anywhere. Abusive conduct removes the chance to see and share all perspectives around an issue, which we believe is critical to moving us all forward. In the worst cases, this type of conduct threatens human dignity, which we should all stand together to protect."

The new tool expands a "mute" feature that enables users to block accounts sending inappropriate messages.

"Now we're expanding mute to where people need it the most: in notifications," the statement said.

"We're enabling you to mute keywords, phrases, and even entire conversations you don't want to see notifications about, rolling out to everyone in the coming days. This is a feature we've heard many of you ask for, and we're going to keep listening to make it better and more comprehensive over time."

The move comes after a series of complaints and high-profile instances of abuse on the social network.

In July, "Ghostbusters" star Leslie Jones briefly quit Twitter after what she claimed was a stream of abuse fueled by comments from an editor at the conservative news site Breitbart.

The rise in online vitriol has forced social networks to balance questions of harassment with freedom of expression.

Twitter's statement said that the platform is "open to everyone and every opinion" while noting that "we've seen a growing trend of people taking advantage of that openness and using Twitter to be abusive to others."

The statement added: "We don't expect these announcements to suddenly remove abusive conduct from Twitter. No single action by us would do that. Instead we commit to rapidly improving Twitter based on everything we observe and learn."

- AFP