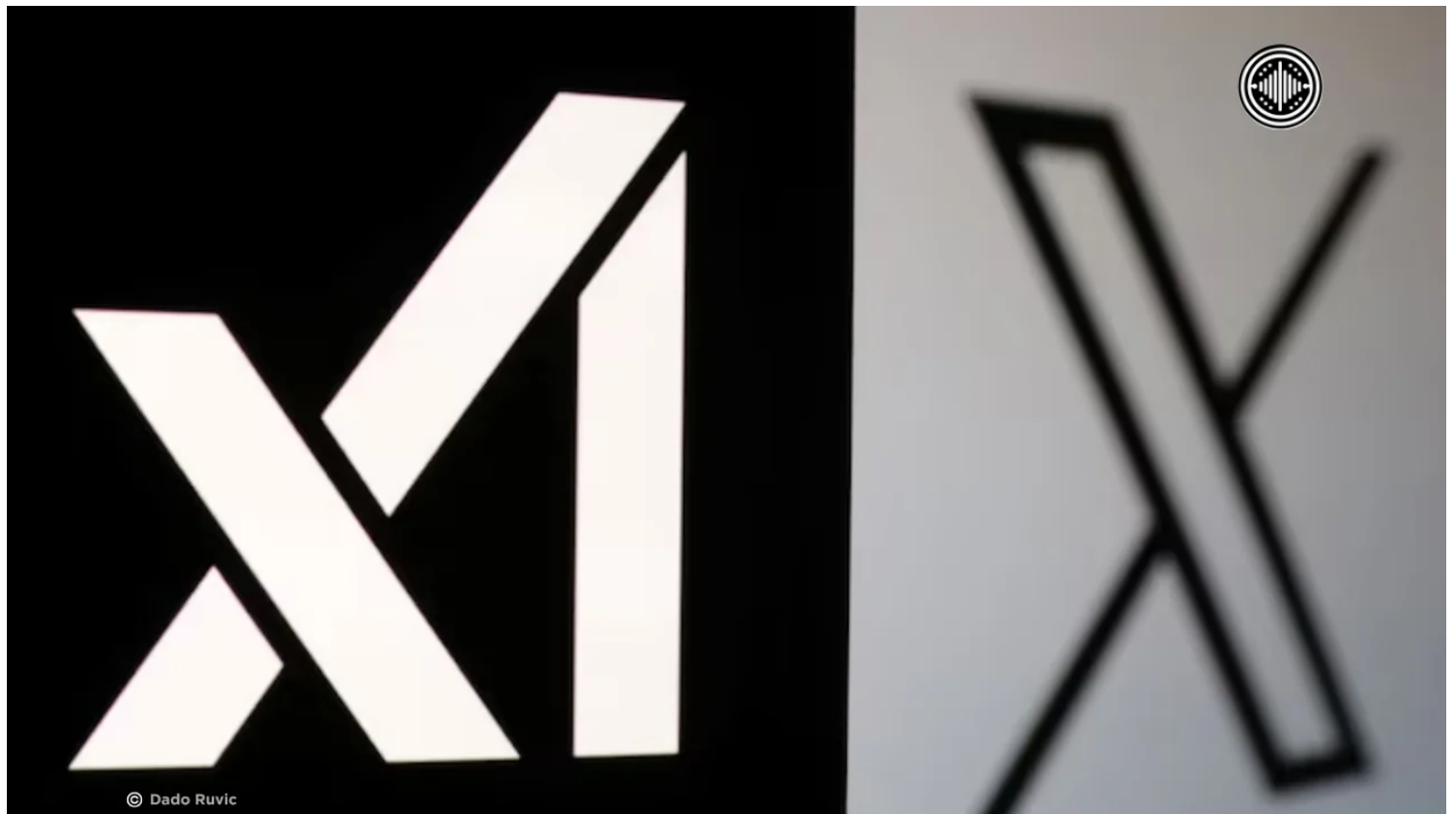


X Raises Free Speech Concerns Over UK Online Safety Act

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The social media platform X, owned by Elon Musk, has strongly criticised the UK's Online Safety Act, warning that its enforcement could undermine freedom of expression. The platform argues that the legislation gives excessive powers to regulators and risks censoring content that is lawful but controversial.

Introduced to protect users, especially children, from harmful material online, the Act places significant obligations on platforms to police content. These include mandatory removal of harmful posts, age verification requirements, and broader content moderation responsibilities. However, X has raised concerns that the measures are vaguely defined and open to interpretation, potentially leading to the suppression of legitimate discourse.

Elon Musk has publicly condemned the legislation, calling it a form of “suppression of the people.” He argues that the broad enforcement powers granted to Ofcom, the UK’s communications regulator, could force platforms to remove content that does not break the law. The company claims this could result in over-censorship and discourage open discussion.

Critics of the legislation have also highlighted the false communications offence, warning that it could be misused to criminalise satire, parody, or opinion pieces if deemed misleading, even in the absence of malicious intent. Digital rights advocates say this provision may have a chilling effect on speech by encouraging platforms to err on the side of caution.

Reform UK leader Nigel Farage has pledged to repeal the Act if given the opportunity, describing it as dangerously close to a “dystopian” framework that controls public debate. Farage argues that the legislation centralises too much power in the hands of regulators and threatens political dissent.

In contrast, Labour ministers have defended the Act, insisting that it is essential to keep users safe online while preserving the right to free

expression. They claim the law has been carefully drafted to balance safety with liberty.

Since its implementation, the Act has faced growing opposition. A public petition against it has attracted over 450,000 signatures, and the number of UK users turning to virtual private networks (VPNs) has reportedly increased as individuals seek to avoid content restrictions and age-gating features.

Technology firms are also expressing unease about the burden of compliance. Several platforms have warned that the regulation could hinder innovation and strain their ability to operate effectively under shifting legal expectations.