



Written by [James Murphy](#) on April 17, 2023

## Media Companies Hate Twitter's "Government Funded Media" Tag

On Monday, the latest government-funded media company to receive a "Government Funded Media" tag from Twitter, the Canadian Broadcasting Company (CBC), announced that it would pause all activity on its corporate Twitter accounts as well as its Radio-Canada news-related accounts. Thus far, Twitter has labeled NPR in the United States, ABC in Australia, RNZ radio in New Zealand, and assorted others as "government-funded" media.

The BBC in the U.K. has also been tagged, but with a "publicly-funded media" moniker.

In the CBC's case, Twitter has added that it is merely 70-percent funded by the government.

"Twitter can be a powerful tool for our journalists to communicate with Canadians, but it undermines the accuracy and professionalism of the work they do to allow our independence to be falsely described in this way," said CBC spokesman Leon Mar on Monday.

"Consequently, we will be pausing our activity on our corporate Twitter account and all CBC and Radio-Canada news-related accounts," Mar added.

Twitter [defines](#) government-funded media "as outlets where the government provides some or all of the outlet's funding and may have varying degrees of government involvement over editorial content."

Mar argued that the CBC doesn't meet those standards, since it's publicly funded through a parliamentary appropriation, which must be voted on by Parliament, and because editorial independence is enshrined under the Canadian Broadcasting Act.

Unfortunately for Mar and the CBC, the new label isn't a lie — it accurately portrays the Canadian government's relationship with the media company.

"It's just a simple fact that the CBC gets Canadian government funding. If they're embarrassed by it, they should reject it," [tweeted](#) American journalist Glenn Greenwald. "Google has place[d] similar labels on BBC, NPR and CBC on their YouTube channels but they're afraid to complain to Google the way they do for Twitter.

The CBC is asking Twitter to reexamine the case, despite the fact that it has received more than \$1.2 billion in government funding in 2021-22 and more than \$1.4 billion the previous year.





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Unanimously, the media companies in question appear enraged that the fact that they are funded by their government might mean that they are perceived as anything less than completely objective about the news of the day.

“Our journalism is impartial and independent. To suggest otherwise is untrue. That is why we are pausing our activities on @Twitter,” read a [tweet](#) from CBC Radio-Canada. “In addition, our journalism is independent and subject to our Journalistic Standards and Practices, as well as an independent complaints process through @CBCOmbud and @ombudsmanrc.”

Australia’s ABC was similarly fervent in its independence, despite its reliance on government funding.

“The ABC is a publicly funded broadcaster, governed by the ABC Charter which is enshrined in legislation. For more than 90 years the ABC has always been and remains an independent media organisation, free from political and commercial interests,” ABC [tweeted](#).

In America, NPR was the most affected by the labeling. Originally, Twitter had designated NPR as “state-affiliated media,” which is a tag applied to media organizations in China, Russia, and other authoritarian countries. Twitter later changed NPR’s tag to “government-funded media.”

However, that label still didn’t satisfy the decidedly left-wing NPR, which announced that it would be leaving Twitter. NPR CEO John Lansing complained that the label cast “a shadow of negativity” on NPR’s ability to remain independent.

“The downside [of leaving Twitter], whatever the downside, doesn’t change that fact,” Lansing said. “I would never have our content go anywhere that would risk our credibility.”

But Twitter’s new owner Elon Musk isn’t buying NPR’s claim that its credibility is being challenged. In fact, in NPR’s case, he’s doubled down, even calling to “defund NPR,” in a tweet.

While the government-funded new media bemoan the completely accurate new tags on their Twitter accounts, some believe that they are getting exactly what they deserve given their uncritical reporting of government-approved narratives on Covid-19, climate change, and every other major story of the day.

“A Twitter triumph for @JustinTrudeau and, indeed, all Canadians! @elonmusk has awarded @cbc the prestigious government-funded media designation! Our humble local broadcaster joins luminaries such as @NPR in receipt of this singular honor. Veritable shades of Pravda!” [noted](#) Canadian psychologist Jordan Peterson.



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