

# Facebook platforms shut down by worldwide outage

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The entire network of services and apps owned by Facebook was shut down for hours worldwide on Monday beginning at approximately 11:40 a.m. Eastern time.

Users reported that the company's platforms Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Messenger and Oculus initially displayed error messages and then became inoperable. In the case of Facebook, which has nearly 3 billion monthly active users internationally, the platform was reported to have "disappeared from the internet."

The impact of the shutdown was felt around the world where, in some countries like Myanmar and India, Facebook is synonymous with the internet. Some of the apps, such as WhatsApp and Messenger, are the primary means through which billions of people communicate with family and friends each day. Some businesses that rely upon Facebook for marketing and sales promotion were unable to operate.

Meanwhile, due to its dominance in the social media marketplace, Facebook is used by people to sign into other apps and services and manage their accounts, such as shopping websites, business software, news sites, smart TVs and other internet-of-things connected home appliances and electronic devices.

The shutdown also paralyzed nearly all of Facebook's internal business and employee communications systems and left the staff in the position of having to use text messaging and other alternatives in order to work on a solution to the problem.

*New York Times* tech reporter Sheera Frenkel tweeted that a Facebook staff person told her over the phone that employees were "unable to enter buildings this morning to begin to evaluate extent of outage because their badges weren't working to access doors."

Associated Press (AP) reporter Phillip Crowther tweeted, "Source at Facebook: 'it's mayhem over here, all internal systems are down too.' Tells me employees are communicating amongst each other by text and by Outlook email."

At 12:22 p.m., Facebook tweeted a message that downplayed the extent of the outage: "We're aware that some people are having trouble accessing our apps and products. We're working to get things back to normal as quickly as possible, and we apologize for any inconvenience."

At 6:33 p.m., the company followed up with another tweet: "To the huge community of people and businesses around the world who depend on us: we're sorry. We've been working hard to restore access to our apps and services and are happy to report they are coming back online now. Thank you for bearing with us."

As of this writing, all of the primary apps—Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram and Messenger—were back online. While Facebook has yet to report the cause of the outage, no evidence has been presented indicating that the failure was the product of malicious activity.

The AP reported that Facebook's outgoing chief technology officer, Mike Schroepfer, tweeted "sincere apologies" to everyone impacted by the outage and placed the blame on "networking issues."

The news agency also interviewed Doug Madory, director of internet analysis for Kentik Inc, a network monitoring and intelligence company, who said the cause of the outage appears to be related to the deletion of basic data "that tells the rest of the internet how to communicate with its properties. Such data is part of the internet's Domain Name System, a central component that directs its traffic. Without Facebook broadcasting its location on the public internet, apps

and web addresses simple could not locate it.”

The Verge reported that “Cloudflare senior vice president Dane Knecht notes that Facebook’s border gateway protocol routes— BGP helps networks pick the best path to deliver internet traffic—were suddenly ‘withdrawn from the internet.’”

J. Eckert, VP of Ecosystem at blockchain platform Chia, tweeted, “This Facebook outage is a WAY bigger issue than I think some realize, or they are willing to admit. Their entire DNS record has been wiped from the internet across all root servers. Either the most sophisticated & coordinated hack of all time, OR the biggest human error ever.”

*Forbes* reported late Monday afternoon that the Facebook outage played a role in the decline in the value of company shares of 4.8 percent or a wipeout of approximately \$117 billion. The decline also translates into a drop in the personal fortune of founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg of \$5.9 billion.

A lost day for Facebook also means a loss of \$330 million in its marketing services revenue.

There was also pressure building against the value of Facebook stock from a whistleblower leak of internal company information and criticism by former employee Frances Haugen who said during a “60 Minutes” interview broadcast Sunday that there is a corporate culture of putting “profits over people.”

The whistleblower story, called “The Facebook Files,” was broken by the *Wall Street Journal*—a publication that has devoted all 132 years of its existence to putting “profits over people”—and exposed that company executives were focused on growth at the expense of the public good. Haugen provided internal Facebook documents including ones that show the company’s own research demonstrated the platform magnified hate and misinformation and was harmful to mental health.

The shutdown of Facebook and all of its associated platforms on Monday has revealed the dependence of billions of people on the stability of online social networks for critical daily tasks of a personal, social and professional character. Whatever the cause of the outage, it raises the necessity for the expropriation of these advanced technologies from the private ownership of a handful of billionaires and their conversion into public property operated on a socialist basis to serve the needs of the international working

class.



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