

Massive outage hits Google services worldwide

December 14 2020, by Juliette Michel



Social media was flooded with cries for help as Google service broke down worldwide for about 45 minutes

A massive blackout on Monday temporarily disrupted popular Google services such as Gmail and YouTube, derailing the remote learning,

work and entertainment that people have come to rely on during the pandemic.

The outage began shortly before 4:00 am Pacific time (1200 GMT) and lasted about 45 minutes, according to the Silicon Valley-based internet giant.

Services that require users to log in to accounts such as video-sharing platform YouTube or email service Gmail had "higher error rates" than usual resulting in people being denied access, Google said in response to an AFP inquiry.

"We apologize to all who have been affected and will conduct a thorough follow-up to ensure this problem does not recur in the future," a Google spokesperson said after the services were working normally again.

The outage was quickly reported by Internet users around the world, according to the specialist site Downtdetector.

Google indicated on its dashboard during the outage that it involved services for "the majority of users."

Hitting in the middle of the European workday, the issues frustrated users who took to social media to air their grievances.

Hashtags including #googledown and #YouTubeDOWN were trending as hundreds of millions of internet users tried vainly to connect to the US search engine.

Messages fired off included one saying Google was slow answering queries about the problem because contacts there could not access their Gmail accounts either.

Essential connections

Business users were particularly distraught, but individuals also were affected.

"When all our @Google Drive & inventory management integrations disappeared suddenly during an early morning work session & @_ColleenFlynn lost a few years off her life," BoxxedUp lamented on Twitter.

"When you can't even Google what happened with google," Avnish Singh Rathore tweeted.

All of Google's main services appeared to be affected including Gmail, Google Maps, Google Drive, and YouTube.

But the breakdown apparently did not impact all users, as some indicated the services remained operational even during the worst of the incident.

Already ubiquitous, the services have become more critical this year amid the COVID-19 pandemic, and many employees work from home while students take classes online.

Disruptions to online service providers are not unusual. Amazon Web Services (AWS), the Amazon subsidiary specializing in on-demand cloud services for businesses and individuals, experienced a major technical outage in November.

Even while the Google breakdown lasted less than an hour, US media said it hit the New York subway, and the Roku streaming television service, as well as the Wall Street Journal and Washington Post.

Some on social media took shots at Google and congratulated themselves

for using competitors.

"We're so happy that we rely on @Nextclouders , @DuckDuckGo and @ProtonMail to get things done in the Noshpit HQ. #googledown," Noshpit Magazine tweeted.

In addition to its search engine, Google offers a multitude of services, ranging from messaging to video sharing, maps, photos and documents storage and games.

Google also sells data center space and services in a cloud computing business that competes with those of Amazon and Microsoft.

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