

Parler social network shifts courts in legal attack on Amazon

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Parler, the social network popular with conservatives and Donald Trump supporters, has relaunched its website after being cut off by Amazon Web Services

Parler social network popular with Donald Trump supporters took aim at Amazon in a state court Wednesday after dropping a federal lawsuit over the internet titan's decision to stop hosting its website due to user posts inciting violence.

Parler filed the new lawsuit in Washington state, where Amazon has its headquarters, hoping the case will stand better chances under local laws regarding defamation, breach of contract, and consumer protection.

However Amazon told AFP there was "no merit" to the claims.

"As shown by the evidence in Parler's federal lawsuit, it was clear that there was significant content on Parler that encouraged and incited violence against others, which is a violation of our terms of service," it said.

Amazon Web Services (AWS) stopped hosting Parler's website because Parler was "unable or

unwilling to promptly identify and remove" such content, according to Amazon.

Parler claimed to have more than 20 million users before being pulled from the Apple and Google online marketplaces and effectively shut down when AWS cut ties over allegations the platform failed to stop incitement of violence by the ex-president's supporters ahead of the January 6 siege of the US Capitol.

However since then Parler has come back online, relaunching with a new web hosting partner.

Parler contended in the state suit that Amazon engaged in unfair business practices in its dealings with the social network, and that an email saying Parler was unwilling or unable to properly moderate content amounted to defamation.

"The true reason why AWS decided to suspend and/or terminate its contract with Parler was not because of any alleged breach of contract, but because AWS did not want Parler to be able to provide a new platform for conservative voices, including Donald Trump, or to compete effectively against other microblogging platforms such as Twitter," lawyers argued in the Washington state suit.

Parler, which calls itself "the free speech social network," has steered clear of the aggressive content moderation by big platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, which banned Trump following the Capitol riot.

At least one US lawmaker has asked the FBI to investigate the role Parler played in the January 6 attack as well as ties it may have to Russia.

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