

Facebook

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Facebook unavailable during longest outage in four years

The site was down for 31 minutes on Thursday morning, as users turned to other social media platforms

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Facebook was unavailable worldwide for more than 30 minutes on Thursday morning, the longest outage on the site for four years.

Both the website and the company's smartphone and tablet apps were affected, as users decamped to other social networks to complain about the failure.

The site collapsed at 8:53am BST, showing visitors the following error message: "Sorry, something went wrong. We're working on getting this fixed as soon as we can." It stayed unavailable until 9:24am BST, when the site and apps began working as normal.

"Earlier this morning, we experienced an issue that prevented people from posting to Facebook for a brief period of time. We resolved the issue quickly, and we are now back to 100%. We're sorry for any inconvenience this may have caused," Facebook said in a statement. It is not known what caused the outage.

Publishers saw referral traffic from Facebook fall off a cliff as the outage hit. The collapse is clearly visible in the Guardian's traffic from Facebook, for example:



▲ Facebook referrals to the Guardian.

But users didn't simply close their browsers and get off their computers. Instead, analytics indicate they turned to other social networks, and trawled for information on what had happened to Facebook. Again, that exodus is clearly visible in the Guardian's referrals. This chart shows traffic from Twitter over the same period, although the scales are not the same:



▲ Twitter referral traffic following Facebook's outage. Photograph: The Guardian

Apparently, some users even went to Google+.

The last time the site was down for any length of time was in 2010, when an error in error checking software brought down the main database for two and a half hours. At the time, it was the worst outage for more than four years. That problem was caused by "an unfortunate handling of an error condition," Facebook explained in a blogpost. "An automated system for verifying configuration values ended up causing much more damage than it fixed."

The outage was long enough for brands to attempt "rapid response" publicity stunts. Nestlé forced out a joke about KitKats and breaks:



Nestle KitKat PH

(@kitkat_ph)

Looks like [#Facebook](#) is having a BREAK right now. Have a BREAK, too!
:) [#facebookdown](#) pic.twitter.com/rBhH4CMqKS

June 19, 2014

While Malaysian telco Digi posted a cat meme:



DiGi

(@DiGi_Telco)

[#FacebookDown](#)! maybe...it's time to go outside? :O Pic credit:
<http://t.co/QMttZlw9Q9> pic.twitter.com/DIBwWTxOLo

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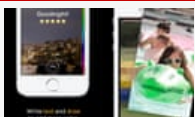
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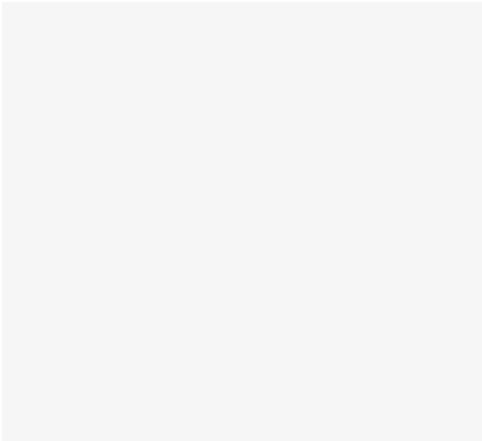
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