

NEWS

Google gets Gmail back on its feet after outage

Users go without e-mail access for two and a half hours this morning



By Sharon Gaudin

Computerworld |

After a two-and-a-half-hour outage earlier today, Google Inc. says its free [Gmail Web-based e-mail service](#) is back up and running.

Acacio Cruz, Google's Gmail site reliability manager, wrote in a [Google blog post](#) today that engineers are still trying to pinpoint the cause of the outage. "We know that for many of you this disrupted your working day," he added. "We're really sorry about this, and we did do everything to restore access as soon as we could. Our priority was to get you back up and running."

The Gmail outage comes just a week after Google acknowledged that some users had experienced problems getting results from [Google News searches](#) over a span of more than 14 hours last Wednesday. Some users reported that they weren't getting any results when they were searching for keywords, such as *Microsoft* and even *Google*, in Google News. Other users reported that entire news sections, such as Science/Technology, were coming up empty of any stories.

And last December, [Google confirmed](#) that there was a technical problem with [Google Talk](#) and the Web-based Gmail chat system. One day early in the month, messages created by a "subset" of users were left unsent because of glitches in the messaging system, according to Google spokesman Andrew Kovacs.

The scope of today's outage was not immediately clear, but at least some users in Europe and Asia could not get access to their in-boxes or had to wait a minute or more for them to open.

"The problem with services like Gmail is that every outage is highlighted in the press, and rightfully so," said Dan Olds, an analyst at Gabriel Consulting Group Inc. "The companies pitch these services as dependable and easy substitutes for higher-cost alternatives, but a widespread and long-lasting outage like this really hurts that claim. While some people might shrug off a failure like this, it can cause real hardships for some users and have an impact on their lives and businesses"

And while Olds acknowledged that people should expect less from free services than they would from traditional e-mail systems like [Microsoft's Outlook](#), outages like this morning's are a drain on the image of the service.

"As people grow to depend on these services, quality of service becomes much more important," he

noted. "Outages give people pause and corrode the value of the brand. It makes people think twice about depending on Gmail for all of their e-mail needs. Many will look to find alternative services just to ensure that they don't suffer through another outage. E-mail is very important to me and access to my e-mail is critical. I won't run the risk of losing that even for a short amount of time, even though I could save money with Gmail."

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