Dropbox hit by outage; file sync busted

UPDATED 4: The cloud storage service hits a brick wall on Friday for millions of customers. Although the service wasn't responding, Dropbox says files are still safe.

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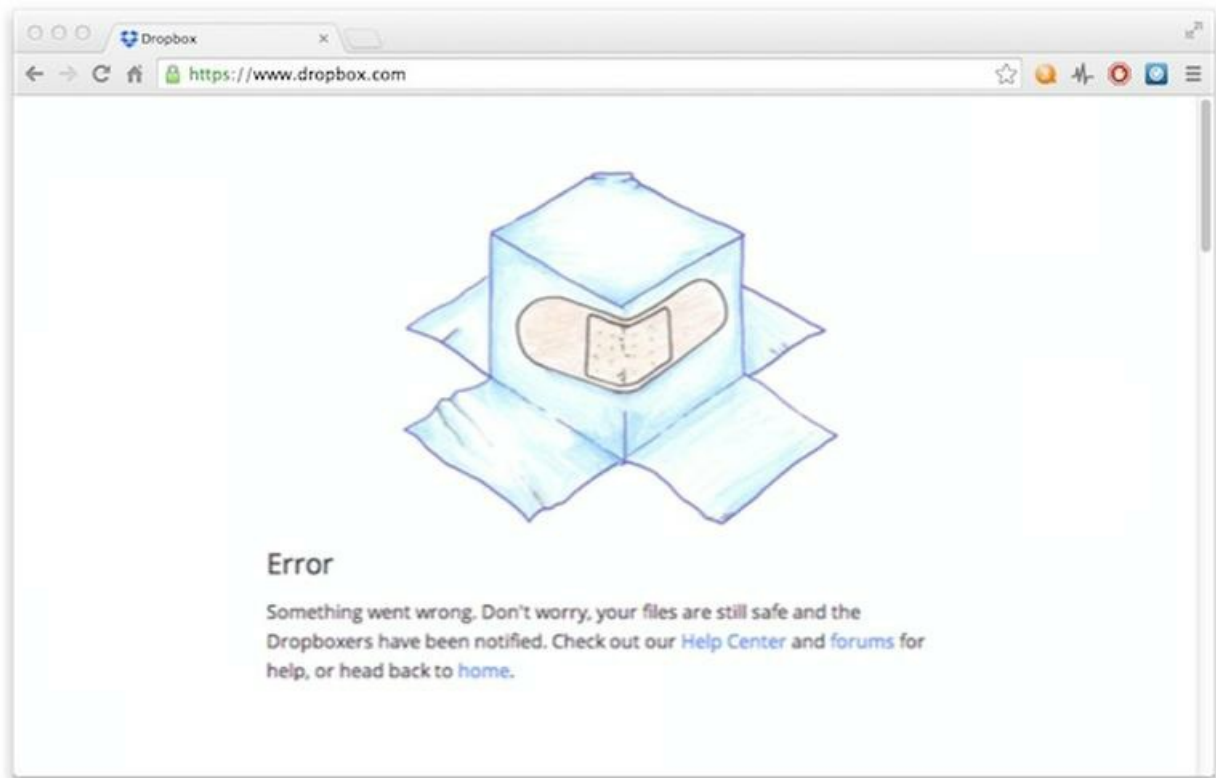By Zack Whittaker for Between the Lines | March 14, 2014 -- 15:46 GMT (08:46 PDT)| Topic: Cloud

Image: ZDNet/CBS Interactive

Dropbox on Friday suffered an outage, leaving the website throwing back server errors and the desktop and mobile file sync feature busted.

The cloud storage service confirmed in a tweet just after 11am ET that it was suffering an outage, but did not state what the issue was, how many people might be affected, or how long it would take to resolve.

> We are aware of a service issue and are working to resolve it.
>
> — Dropbox Support (@dropbox_support) March 14, 2014

At the time of initial publication, the Dropbox.com website was throwing back "5xx" errors, indicative of an internal server problem. The company did state that on "files are still safe."

Embarrassingly, during the first half-hour of the outage, Dropbox's status page read that "Dropbox is running normally." One Twitter user alerted the company of the error.

Files across Windows and Mac machines were not synchronizing, and file sharing also appeared to be non-functioning, with a simple message: "The server took too long to respond."

Dropbox's mobile apps also appeared to be affected by synchronizing issue. Files already downloaded to devices and desktop were available, but the apps were in a de facto 'offline mode'.

It appeared to be a global outage, affecting U.S. and European customers, based on an analysis of tweets sent during the outage.

A little after 30 minutes, the website was up and running and local machine functionality, including sync, returned to normal.

The company said in a tweet at 11:43am ET: "Site issues resolved."

The consumer and enterprise cloud storage firm, which is now valued at an estimated $10 billion , most recently suffered extended downtime in January, after a bug downed the network for about three hours — despite claims by a hacker group that the service had been attacked.

"A subtle bug in the script caused the command to reinstall a small number of active machines. Unfortunately, some master-slave pairs were impacted, which resulted in the site going down," according to Dropbox head of infrastructure Akhil Gupta, who published a post-mortem following the outage .

A Dropbox spokesperson told ZDNet in an email, just before 1pm ET:

> "This morning from 7:53 am until 8:35 am PT we experienced a site outage during which time the service was not available. Our users' files were safe during this period. We've resolved the issue and apologize for any inconvenience."

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