

Amazon Web Services suffers partial outage

Parts of Amazon Web Services were hit by an outage in a North Virginia datacenter with many popular websites clocking off the Web for the evening.



By [Zack Whittaker](#) for [Between the Lines](#) | June 15, 2012 -- 02:25 GMT (19:25 PDT) | Topic: [Cloud](#)

Parts of Amazon Web Services (AWS) suffered an outage on Thursday which led to a spread of high-profile sites clocking off the Web for the evening.

Amazon was quick to update its cloud status --- its first update [at 8:50 p.m. PDT](#) --- stating the problems were due to a power outage in a Virginia datacenter.

It's the same datacenter that [forced Quora, Foursquare and other major website](#) to crumble in April 2011 as the cloud infrastructure began to fall from the sky. Since last year's outage, a detailed post-mortem noted the need for [greater transparency and better communication with its customers](#).

As of this morning, "almost all affected EBS volumes have been brought back online" but some still report problems. It may take a few more hours for the service to fully recover.

Amazon's RDS service also fell down, but has since recovered from a multi-availability zone failure. However, a "small number of [database] instances remain unavailable" at 1.09 a.m. PDT.

Customers were quick to vent their frustration on Twitter, which thankfully isn't hosted by the AWS service.

Sites like Quora (it got hit *again*, bless it) and Hipchat, along with Heroku --- a division of Salesforce, and leading social movement Pinterest and file-hosting site Dropbox hit the stumbling block as a result of the outage.



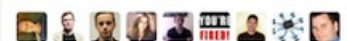
Sandeep Parikh
@cscsmnky

Amazing how much of the world is powered by EC2. Food truck guy just told me they ran out of spicy tofu, thanks to AWS. What a world.

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It's a case of putting all of the Web's eggs all in the same basket. Or, at least in one case, [all the tofu in one food truck](#). (*I think he was kidding.*)

Amazon Web Service, when it works ---and give it credit, we're talking the very vast majority of the time --- it works well. Amazon says it is "committed" to a 99.95 percent uptime, but other smaller, nimbler companies, as you might expect, offer a 99.99 percent uptime.

It doesn't mean that Amazon's cloud service will fall down on average 7 minutes a month, but it doesn't help when customers start calling to ask why their service is down, only to reassured that "most of the time it's up."

Earlier this week, Amazon announced its S3 online storage service [hit the 1 trillion object milestone mark](#), equating to roughly 140 objects per person for everyone on the planet.

Image source: [Twitter](#).

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