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# Facebook database outage cut off about 150,000

A downed Facebook database left a small but vocal percentage of its userbase without access to the social network for as long as 10 days.



Caroline McCarthy



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Thousands of Facebook users who have been unable to access their accounts for nearly a week and a half now are now

seeing their profiles restored--but some data related to recent profile updates may have been lost.

What happened? According to Facebook, the replacement of profiles and login screens with a "down for maintenance" notice--which appears to have started on October 3--stemmed from "a technical issue with a single database." The company has stressed that there is no chance that it was due to hackers or other malicious activity.

Profiles should be restored over the course of the next day, the company estimates.

"Our engineering team has worked around the clock, and as of today, all of these users should begin to regain access to their Facebook accounts," Facebook spokeswoman Brandee Barker said reading from a statement. "We apologize for the inconvenience this may have caused and we are taking additional measures to uphold the reliability users come to expect from Facebook."

Less than 0.05 percent of Facebook's users have been affected by the outage, the company estimated. The social network's last head count, about a month ago, was 300 million active users, so that comes out to be a total of about 150,000 affected users. Not very many but enough to put some of them in a panic over not being able to access a primary mode of communication and (in some cases) business.

Profiles have not been lost or deleted, Facebook has continually said--even though the company has been otherwise tight-lipped about the maintenance issue until this point. When affected users' access is restored, however, some things may be different and very recent updates may be missing. According to a notice that Facebook is displaying to members who may have been affected:

You may not have been able to access your account over the last several days. We're sorry for this inconvenience; an extended technical issue affected a small number of Facebook accounts, including yours. We have done our best to restore your account to its most recent state, but some data and settings may not be current. In order to be cautious, we defaulted some of your privacy settings to their most restrictive settings. You may wish to review your privacy settings and reset them.

Facebook added that "some of (affected members') content may not be up to date: in other words, some minor data loss regarding recent updates to profiles. This, according to Facebook, may include photos that were recently added or deleted, recent updates to friends lists (additions and deletions), and "other content you've added, sent, received, or posted."

As for the company's relative silence about the matter until now, Barker explained in a phone call that the company wanted to nail down the specifics of the outage and figure out the situation, rather than provide details to users that could turn out to be inaccurate.

Many of the complaints pertaining to the outage alleged poor customer service on Facebook's part, and as a sort of olive branch, the company is encouraging feedback pertaining to the specific outage. The alert displayed to affected members whose accounts have been newly restored directs them to a form to report any further details or additional problems.

Whether Facebook will step it up a notch for future unexpected technical problems remains to be seen.

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