This is a report on the cause of the Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram blackout that occurred a few days ago.

On the 4th of October, 2021, three apps that are owned by Facebook namely; WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook stopped working abruptly shortly before 5 pm. It was almost as if the cables connected to their data centers were pulled all at once and took them off the internet. Facebook users received an error message when they visit the website. Likewise, WhatsApp and Instagram did work but failed to update their respective content or send/receive messages during this blackout. Although rare, Facebook blackouts tend to impact largely.

According to Facebook, there were changes of configuration on the backbone routers that are responsible for coordinating network traffic between their data centers and this resulted in issues that interrupted communication. This caused their services to halt. The internet is made of hundreds of thousands of networks. Massive firms such as Facebook use autonomous systems which consist of large networks. When a user wants to use any of the three apps, the back-end system that enables computers to connect to their networks makes use of the Border Gateway Protocol (BGP). The BGP analyses all available routes that data could travel and selects the best one in order to direct users to the website they visit or want to. Facebook stopped providing the system the information it needed to function. This caused everyone’s devices to not be able to connect to Facebook and its other sites.

The effects of this outage or blackout were vast as they usually are. They affect individuals and businesses worldwide slowing down production. According to some reports, Mr. Zuckerberg lost around 6 billion dollars from his personal wealth. Shares also dropped nearly 5%. Some estimate Facebook’s loss of revenue is around more than $60 million. Whistle-blowers also leaked some internal documents which have caused Facebook to be under scrutiny from regulators worldwide and they have begun to question whether how it responds to hate speech, misinformation, and handling user data or whether it’s prioritizing “*growth over safety*” according to the whistleblower. Now Facebook's technical abilities are being questioned.

In conclusion, Facebook’s outage/blackout which was caused by changes of configuration issues to the backbone routers that coordinate network traffic affected lots of individuals and businesses with Facebook receiving a huge blow in the loss of shares and revenue.