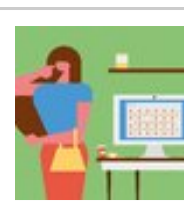


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TECHNOLOGY

Twitter Experiences Worldwide Disruptions

By MARK SCOTT JAN. 19, 2016

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Twitter experienced global disruptions on Tuesday that prevented many of its 300 million users from staying connected or from logging on to the social network in the first place.

The company cited a technical problem in a recent code change as the cause of the problems, which began around 3 a.m. Eastern Standard Time and prevented many users from sharing updates on their smartphones, computers and other mobile devices. About 1 p.m., the company said it had reversed the change, which fixed the issue. Twitter declined to specify how many of its users were affected.

“Thank you for your patience,” Twitter said in a status update.

Although the disruptions were among the most extensive the company has encountered, Twitter is not the only popular social network to have faced technical problems. Facebook, whose users now number more than 1.5 billion worldwide, has also had a spate of shutdowns over the last 18 months, though often the problems have been corrected within hours.

Because Twitter is an important news source, as well as a popular sounding board, the shutdowns disrupted the global conversation. When other technology and media companies have faced similar problems in the past, people have often turned to Twitter to vent their frustrations — an outlet unavailable this time because the platform itself was the cause of the problem.

“Thanks for noticing,” read a brief note that appeared on users’ Twitter pages when the website had problems loading. “We’re going to fix it up and have things back to normal soon.”

The hashtag #TwitterDown started to trend on the site when it was working, as well as on its rival Facebook, where people playfully mocked Twitter’s disruptions.

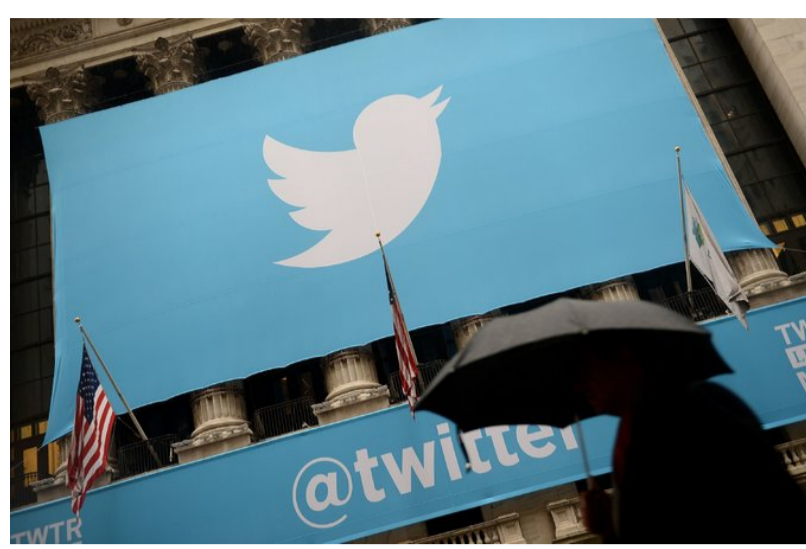
“Apt song for the #TwitterDown crises we are facing at the moment,” Paul Lee Lotter, a Facebook user from South Africa, said in a post that included a link to the Led Zeppelin song “Communication Breakdown.”

Twitter has been facing growing investor anger since its blockbuster initial public offering in 2013. The company’s stock has lost almost a quarter of its value in the last month, reflecting criticisms of the way Jack Dorsey, the Twitter co-founder who recently returned to become its chief executive, is running the platform.

That includes experiments to introduce a longer form of tweet, in what would be a move away from the simple design that the service was originally founded on. Mr. Dorsey has also tried to broaden Twitter’s appeal, a problem the company has struggled with for years, much to the consternation of its investors.

And while Facebook has found increasing success with its advertising, analysts remain skeptical that Twitter can match its larger competitor’s track record of attracting millions of dollars in ads from big international companies like Coca-Cola, Ford and General Electric.

Mike Isaac contributed reporting.



Twitter did not say how many of its users were being affected by the disruptions or what had caused them. Emmanuel Dunand/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

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