

# Massive outage adds to growing Facebook woes

March 14 2019, by Glenn Chapman, With Rob Lever In Washington

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The cause of a major outage on Facebook and related apps was not clear nearly 24 hours after access was cut off

Facebook appeared to be back in operation Thursday after a massive outage affecting its applications around the world, creating fresh woes

for the social network leader under fire for its handling of sensitive user data.

The [outage](#) affected users for some 12 hours in most areas of the world, with the biggest impact in North America and Europe, according to the tracking website [downdetector.com](#), which suggested that most Facebook users were back to normal.

Facebook, however, offered little information on the extent or cause of the outage, which is believed to be the worst ever for the internet giant that reaches an estimated 2.7 billion people with its core social network, Instagram and messaging applications.

Facebook acknowledged the outage on Wednesday while saying it did not appear to be the result of a denial-of-service attack. The hashtag #FacebookDown was a popular theme on Twitter.

In some cases, the apps could be accessed but would not load posts or handle messages.

A tweet from Facebook's Instagram account said early Thursday, "Anddddd... we're back," without offering details.

In November, a Facebook outage was attributed to a server problem, and a September disruption was said to be the result of "networking issues."

Bloomberg News reported that Facebook was considering refunds for advertisers whose messages could not be delivered. Facebook did not immediately respond to requests for comment.



Instagram said its services were back online, but offered no details on the outage affecting users worldwide

## **Investigations abound**

While the outage continued, The New York Times reported that US prosecutors have launched a criminal investigation into the social network's practice of sharing users' data with companies without letting them know.

A [grand jury](#) in New York has subpoenaed information from at least two major smartphone makers about such arrangements with Facebook, according to the Times.

Regulators, investigators and elected officials in the US and elsewhere in the world have already been digging into the data sharing practices of Facebook.

The social network's handling of user data has been a flashpoint for controversy since it admitted last year that Cambridge Analytica, a political consultancy which did work for Donald Trump's 2016 election campaign, used an app that may have hijacked the private details of 87 million users.

"It has already been reported that there are ongoing federal investigations, including by the Department of Justice," a Facebook spokesman told AFP.

"As we've said before, we are cooperating with investigators and take those probes seriously. We've provided public testimony, answered questions and pledged that we will continue to do so."

Facebook has shared limited amounts of user data with smartphone makers and other outside partners to enable its services to work well on devices or with applications.

Regulators, and now prosecutors, appear intent on determining whether this was done in ways that let users know what was happening and protected privacy.

The social network has announced a series of moves to tighten handling of data, including eliminating most of its data-sharing partnerships with outside companies.

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