

“TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES”: UNITED AIRLINES GROUNDED, NYSE HALTED, WHAT’S NEXT?

Oops, 504!

Something did not respond fast enough,
that's all we know...

[graphic: WSJ.com’s July 8th error
message]

This is a working post for discussion of today’s outages. United Airlines grounded its flights for roughly two hours this morning; the FAA’s advisory indicated an automation-related issue, and subsequent communications from United said it was a “network connectivity” problem.

UAL also briefly grounded flights on June 2nd, due to “automation issues.”

Now the New York Stock Exchange has halted all trading shortly before noon, cancelling all open orders, due to “technical difficulties.”

There are reports that CNBC and WSJ websites are down, but they could simply be swamped by traffic.

Who’s or what’s next?

UPDATE – 12:55 pm EDT –

Looks like CNBC may only have had a brief burp due to high traffic as there are no further

complaints about service interruption. WSJ's website has been slowly working its way back to normal service; the media outlet posted an abbreviated version for 15-20 minutes once its technical problems had been resolved. No indication yet that anything apart from high traffic volume may have spiked the site.

UPDATE – 1:35 pm EDT –

You know what cracks me up, in a *ha-ha-ouch* kind of way? FBI Director Jim Comey puling about the need for back doors into technology in front of Congress today, while a major airline and the most important stock market in the world demonstrate exactly how ugly it could get if hackers with malicious intent used the back doors he demands for evil rather than good. The “technical difficulties” both UAL and NYSE experienced today could be duplicated by hackers using back doors.

The U.S. Government is an aircraft carrier, very slow to turn even when under fire. Hackers are speedboats. Asking for back doors across all technology while facing myriad fleet-footed nemesis is like chasing 38-foot Cigarette Top Gun speedboats with a carrier. Unless the carrier can see Cigarettes coming from a distance and train gun on them, Cigarettes will fly up its backside. The U.S. Government has already proven it can't see very far ahead, stuck in a defensive posture while using its offense in ways that only ensure more attacks.

UPDATE – 2:20 pm EDT –

Fortune reports the NYSE halt was due to a “failed systems upgrade.”

Right. Upgrade. Let's roll out an upgrade in the middle of the week, in the middle of the month, when both China's stock market and Europe's banksters are freaking out. Let's not manage traders expectations in advance of the day's trading, either.

Somebody needs to retake a course in Change Management 101 – or there's some additional

explaining required.

Reuters assures us, too:

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security said there were no signs that the problems at NYSE and United Airlines stemmed from "malicious activity," CNN reported.

Good to know, huh? Can't believe they went to CNN for that.

UPDATE – 3:30 pm EDT –

The buzz since 2:00-ish pm is that Anonymous *might* be to blame for the NYSE "glitch." The Hill, Salon, and a few other outlets reported about a cryptic tweet from @YourAnonNews late last evening:



Anonymous
@YourAnonNews

Wonder if tomorrow is going to be bad for Wall Street.... we can only hope.

11:45 PM - 7 Jul 2015

But another Anonymous affiliate laughed it off, saying:



Discordian
@AnonDiscordian

@BiellaColeman @NerdProf It was in reference to Greece and China, but this is too hilarious to issue an official statement we didn't do it

2:37 PM - 8 Jul 2015

Timing is incredible, though; the NYSE, WSJ, and UAL outages all happened concurrent with a Congressional hearing at which FBI Director Jim Comey discussed the need for back doors into everything. What an incredible series of coincidences today.

UPDATE – 3:55 pm EDT –

Best take by far on today's NYSE "technical difficulties", gonzo reporting with a feminine touch from Molly Crabapple:

I was met by fires in the streets, the screams of the dying tourists and the shouts of former traders offering sacrifices to their new gods

UPDATE – 5:00 pm EDT –

NYSE re-opened again around 3:00 pm EDT, with trading a bit jittery. Financial news outlets speculated the market closed at 17,515.42, down -261.49 (-1.47%) due to concerns over China's tanked stock market and Greece's EU debt woes. The Shanghai market had closed the previous day at 3,507.19 down -219.93 (-5.90%).

Feeling iffy over the Shanghai index, Hong Kong's Hang Seng Index closed at 23,516.56 down -1,458.75 (-5.84%); Japan's Nikkei 225 closed at 19,737.64 down -638.95 (-3.14%).

But these Asian markets weren't affected by the NYSE's technical difficulties today. Wonder how they will open on July 9th their local time – flat or down? I wouldn't put my money on an uptick, but I'm not a financial adviser, either.

I imagine the bars and pubs around Wall Street saw greater-than-average action. I might put money on that.