

Fallout from global IT failure continues for third day

Kevin Reed
21 July 2024

The fallout from the biggest worldwide collapse of information systems in history, which occurred on Friday, continued into Sunday, with planes grounded, trains stopped and stores closed, among many other serious problems.

Banks, hospitals and other vital operations were scrambling on Saturday and Sunday to identify and correct the impacts of the loss of an estimated 8.5 million Windows computers from a flawed security software update from CrowdStrike.

Air travelers are continuing to experience chaos at airports around the world from the outage. In the UK, flight delays and cancellations at London Gatwick, Heathrow Airport, Manchester Airport and Belfast International Airport were reported to be continuing, with a ripple effect, throughout the weekend.

While airline check-in systems are reported to be back up and running, flights “may still be subject to delays and cancellations,” according to a website statement from Manchester Airport. The airport also advised passengers to regularly check the status of their flights before they leave for the airport.

Airports in the US and Asia, including in Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Singapore, South Korea and Thailand, reported that operations resumed or were “mostly back to normal.” But flight-tracking service FlightAware listed more than 33,000 total flight delays on its website and more than 2,700 cancellations as of Saturday night at 10:30 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time.

In Saudi Arabia, Matarat Holdings, provider of aviation services in the kingdom, said operations at its airports in Riyadh, Jeddah, Dammam and Cluster 2 in the capital had “resumed effectively,” according to an unconvincing statement from the Saudi Press Agency on Saturday.

In a written statement to National Public Radio in the

US, Noah Brown, director of global communications at Massachusetts General Brigham, a hospital system in Boston, said the healthcare provider was back to operational on Saturday after canceling all non-urgent surgeries and other appointments on Friday because of the outage.

Brown said, “Our response teams are continuing to work diligently throughout the weekend to address the many additional downstream impacts across our system from the CrowdStrike failure.”

The IT security agency of the government in Germany warned that numerous companies were still struggling with the consequences of the far-reaching outage. “Many business processes and procedures have been disturbed by the breakdown of computer systems,” the BSI agency (Federal Office for Information Security) said on its website.

While the agency said Saturday that many impacted areas had returned to normal, it also said that cybercriminals were seeking to exploit the situation through phishing, fake websites and other scams, and that “unofficial” software code was in circulation.

A leading doctors’ organization in Austria said on Saturday that the global outage exposed the vulnerability of healthcare systems reliant on digital technologies. “Yesterday’s incidents underscore how important it is for hospitals to have analogue backups,” stated Harald Mayer, vice president of the Austrian Chamber of Doctors.

The organization said the government should impose high standards in patient data protection and security and on health providers, including staff training and installing systems to manage future crises.

Blue screens appeared on displays at retail establishments, airport kiosks, electronic billboards and other locations that run the Windows operating system

unattended, and the antivirus software was installed automatically.

Blue Screen of Death (BSOD) became a euphemism over the weekend for the perpetual reboot cycle that each Windows-operated computer went into once it installed the update to CrowdStrike's Falcon antivirus software that had the faulty code in it.

The blue screen had the following message on it: “? Your device ran into a problem and needs to restart. We're just collecting some error info, and then we'll restart for you. 0% complete.” After the machine was rebooted, the same blue screen message would appear without end.

Microsoft Vice President of Enterprise and OS Security David Weston was quick to point out that less than 1 percent of Windows machines worldwide were impacted by the outage. Weston then went on to say that “the broad economic and societal impacts reflect the use of CrowdStrike by enterprises that run many critical services,” as though Microsoft had no responsibility for what happened.

Microsoft is the most valuable company on Wall Street, with a current market capitalization of \$3.25 trillion. After a brief sudden drop in its stock value on Friday of 4 percent, investors jumped back in. This shows how concerned the ruling class is about the serious warning that this tech outage represents.

The ubiquity of Windows-based computers and their essential role in the functioning of society has now become more evident than ever. It highlights the burning need for the capitalist monopolies of the computer technology industry to be taken out of the hands of the financial elites and brought under the control of the working class, so it can be run as a public utility and as part of a planned socialist economy.



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)