Starlink kept me connected to the Internet without fail—until Thursday

A rare global interruption in the Starlink satellite Internet network knocked subscribers offline for more than two hours on Thursday, the longest widespread outage since SpaceX opened the service to consumers nearly five years ago.

The outage affected civilian and military users, creating an inconvenience for many but cutting off a critical lifeline for those who rely on Starlink for military operations, health care, and other applications.

Michael Nicolls, SpaceX's vice president of Starlink engineering, wrote on X that the network outage lasted approximately 2.5 hours.

"The outage was due to failure of key internal software services that operate the core network," Nicolls wrote. "We apologize for the temporary disruption in our service; we are deeply committed to providing a highly reliable network, and will fully root cause this issue and ensure it does not occur again."

Elon Musk, SpaceX's founder and CEO, apologized for the interruption in service on X: "Sorry for the outage. SpaceX will remedy root cause to ensure it doesn't happen again."

Effects big and small

The Ukrainian military has been at the leading edge of adopting Starlink services and adapting the system for use in

war zones. Ukraine’s exploitation of Starlink connectivity has been instrumental in directing military operations, supporting battlefield communications, and controlling drones engaged in reconnaissance and offensive strikes.

The commander of Ukraine’s drone forces, Robert Brovdi, confirmed Thursday’s Starlink outage reached his country’s ongoing war with Russia.

“Starlink went down across the entire front,” Brovdi wrote on Telegram. “Combat operations were carried out without broadcasts; reconnaissance was carried out … using shock weapons.”

Brovdi added that the interruption in service illustrates the importance of having multiple paths of connectivity, especially for time-critical military operations. “This incident, which lasted 150 minutes in the war, points to bottlenecks,” he wrote, urging the military to diversify its means of communication and connectivity.

Oleksandr Dmitriev, the founder of a Ukrainian system that centralizes feeds from thousands of drone crews across the frontline, told Reuters the outage was an example of the shortcomings of relying on cloud services for military operations, particularly battlefield drone reconnaissance.

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