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Liberty Says Nationwide AT&T Outage Affecting its Customers

Liberty says disruption caused by nationwide AT&T outage, affecting non-migrated customers

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Liberty VI has issued a statement concerning widespread service outage of its mobile phone customers. The company's senior director of communications and corporate responsibility, Giovanna Ramírez de Arellano, said a [nationwide outage impacting AT&T's network](#) is notably affecting Liberty Communications customers who have not yet transitioned to the company's system.

"AT&T confirmed that they are experiencing a nationwide outage. This is affecting some of our customers who have not yet migrated to our system, Arellano said. "We are in continuous communication with AT&T and they assure us that they are working diligently to resolve this

issue as soon as possible."

Liberty has been issuing mandatory updates to USVI customers' phones, which usually disrupts service for 24 hours and in some instances longer, though Liberty assures a much shorter timeline of 2 hours. The company's botched migration effort has [triggered an investigation](#) by the V.I. Public Services Commission."

The company has at times communicated with customers via email, claiming that the update has been completed and service should be back to normal; however, some customers' phones are rendered inoperable following the update. In such instances, Liberty directs customers to call customer service for further support."

Liberty country manager Ravindra Maywahlall told the PSC that the communications firm has been working to address customers adversely impacted by the update. "We are looking into ways to identify customers who have been without service for a long period," he said, adding that a list of customers eligible for credit was being compiled. However, Mr. Maywahlall was not able to answer the question as to how that list had been generated.

Customers are receiving the following message via text: "Soon we will be starting the update in our system for this line. It is required that during these days you keep this device turned on at night and connected to WiFi when possible. It is important to you check if you need to complete a software update for your phone. Click here to verify your model <https://www.libertypr.com/en/samsung-imeisv>. You must also activate roaming in Settings>Connections>Mobile Networks>International Data Roaming. For tablets turn on the Mobile Data function. We recommend you download the WhatsApp application to stay informed of the next steps to follow. The update can take from 30 minutes to 2 hours. If after this period you have situations with your service restart the device. For assistance call us at 1-833-641-3035 or contact us through WhatsApp at 787-355-3535."

Bala Balakrishnan, Liberty's migration program manager, provided technical details about the migration process, noting that engineers had been engaged in a lengthy process of testing each model of phone used by customers to determine compatibility with their network, as phones from years past had varying levels of support. He said that customers were notified via text if their phones would not work on Liberty's network, but many did not act on the warnings because they had not read the text messages.

Mr. Balakrishnan said that Liberty had established a multi-level support process to assist customers dealing with post-migration issues, escalating more complex problems to a "war room" of specialized technicians. This support structure is being scaled up as migration volume increases, he said, but acknowledged that unanticipated problems still arise.

At the beginning of the migration process, between 7 and 8 percent of customers across the USVI and Puerto Rico began experiencing issues. That proportion is now down to less than 5 percent, Mr. Balakrishnan reported.

However, commissioners made it clear that they were not satisfied with Liberty's efforts in this regard. "When Microsoft rolls out a new version of Windows, and it blows up on them, they stop," remarked PSC Commissioner Hughes. "They stop migration, they do not encourage people to continue to run into their brick wall." In contrast, Liberty's approach, Mr. Hughes contended, was to move "fully forward at whatever speed you can use. And I find that to be a...tragic approach actually, from a customer service perspective, which we are principally concerned with." Mr. Hughes said that he found it "almost inexcusable that you guys continued once you knew you

were going to have these problems.”

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