# UK lawmakers scrutinise foreign cloud reliance after AWS outage causes critical disruptions



On October 20, 2025, a significant global outage of Amazon Web Services (AWS) caused widespread disruption to numerous online platforms and critical UK IT infrastructure, raising concerns about the reliance on foreign-hosted technology. This outage impacted key services such as HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC), Halifax, Lloyds Banking Group, and a variety of other platforms including Snapchat, Roblox, Fortnite, Starbucks, Slack, and Ring.

The outage began early on Monday morning, with Downdetector—a site monitoring service interruptions—recording a sharp surge in reports, particularly between 9 a.m. and 10 a.m. For example, Lloyds experienced nearly 7,000 outage reports at 9.31 a.m., while Halifax notified customers with an error message apologising for technical difficulties. While VodafoneThree reported their networks were functioning normally, they acknowledged that some of their apps and websites were affected.

AWS is the world’s largest cloud computing provider, offering diverse services from storage and databases to machine learning and security tools. The disruption stemmed from a malfunction within AWS's US-EAST-1 region, specifically related to its internal Elastic Compute Cloud (EC2) network and a critical Domain Name System (DNS) failure. This DNS acts like the internet's phone book, directing users to the correct servers for online services. Experts explained that such DNS issues can cause thousands of systems to slow and eventually stop responding as they fail to locate services.

The outage, which persisted for hours, affected a remarkable range of global digital services from financial platforms and social media to gaming and streaming. Services impacted included Snapchat, Reddit, Netflix, Disney+, Robinhood, Coinbase, Venmo, Lyft, Duolingo, Prime Video, and popular games like Roblox and Fortnite. AWS officials stated that by mid-morning DNS issues had been largely mitigated, though some problems lingered, especially in the US.

The scale and impact of this outage have prompted renewed scrutiny by UK lawmakers. The Treasury Committee has questioned why Amazon Web Services was not designated a Critical Third Party (CTP) under new regulatory rules aimed at bolstering resilience among key service providers in the financial sector. Committee chairwoman Meg Hillier highlighted concerns about large parts of UK IT infrastructure being hosted abroad and the risks this represents. The committee has also sought details from the Treasury regarding its collaboration with HMRC to understand the failure and prevent future incidents.

Cybersecurity experts and technology leaders have pointed to this incident as a stark reminder of the deep interdependencies within global IT systems. Professor Alan Woodward of the University of Surrey noted how even small, often human-made errors in a major provider's infrastructure can cascade into widespread disruption. Meanwhile, NordVPN's CTO Marijus Briedis warned that such vulnerabilities might become targets for cyberattacks, including phishing and malware campaigns, during periods of technical instability.

The UK Treasury, along with the Bank of England, has been monitoring the situation and maintaining close communication with affected firms to manage any ongoing risks. This incident underscores the pressing need for a reassessment of dependency on foreign cloud infrastructure and the adequacy of existing regulatory frameworks to safeguard critical national services.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.the-independent.com/tech/amazon-outage-aws-uk-it-infrastructure-b2848869.html), [[6]](https://www.upday.com/uk/politics/mps-question-foreign-hosting-after-aws-outage-hits-hmrc/tbfpn0z), [[7]](https://www.itv.com/news/2025-10-20/amazon-web-services-outage-causes-massive-internet-disruption)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.the-independent.com/tech/amazon-outage-aws-uk-it-infrastructure-b2848869.html), [[2]](https://www.reuters.com/business/retail-consumer/amazons-cloud-unit-reports-outage-several-websites-down-2025-10-20/), [[5]](https://www.reuters.com/business/retail-consumer/amazon-cloud-outage-online-services-hit-recovery-uneven-2025-10-20/), [[7]](https://www.itv.com/news/2025-10-20/amazon-web-services-outage-causes-massive-internet-disruption)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.the-independent.com/tech/amazon-outage-aws-uk-it-infrastructure-b2848869.html), [[3]](https://apnews.com/article/654a12ac9aff0bf4b9dc0e22499d92d7), [[4]](https://time.com/7326950/global-internet-outage-amazon-web-services-websites-apps/), [[5]](https://www.reuters.com/business/retail-consumer/amazon-cloud-outage-online-services-hit-recovery-uneven-2025-10-20/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.the-independent.com/tech/amazon-outage-aws-uk-it-infrastructure-b2848869.html), [[6]](https://www.upday.com/uk/politics/mps-question-foreign-hosting-after-aws-outage-hits-hmrc/tbfpn0z)
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* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.the-independent.com/tech/amazon-outage-aws-uk-it-infrastructure-b2848869.html), [[3]](https://apnews.com/article/654a12ac9aff0bf4b9dc0e22499d92d7), [[4]](https://time.com/7326950/global-internet-outage-amazon-web-services-websites-apps/), [[5]](https://www.reuters.com/business/retail-consumer/amazon-cloud-outage-online-services-hit-recovery-uneven-2025-10-20/), [[6]](https://www.upday.com/uk/politics/mps-question-foreign-hosting-after-aws-outage-hits-hmrc/tbfpn0z)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.the-independent.com/tech/amazon-outage-aws-uk-it-infrastructure-b2848869.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.reuters.com/business/retail-consumer/amazons-cloud-unit-reports-outage-several-websites-down-2025-10-20/> - On October 20, 2025, Amazon Web Services (AWS) experienced a significant global outage that disrupted numerous online platforms, including major services like Snapchat, Reddit, Zoom, and Venmo. The issue originated from a malfunction in a subsystem monitoring the health of AWS's network load balancers within its EC2 internal network, specifically in the US-EAST-1 region. This incident underscored the risks associated with heavy reliance on a few cloud providers, as the outage affected businesses and users worldwide, highlighting the vulnerability of global digital infrastructure to single-point failures in widely adopted cloud systems.
3. <https://apnews.com/article/654a12ac9aff0bf4b9dc0e22499d92d7> - A major global internet disruption occurred on October 20, 2025, due to a massive outage of Amazon Web Services (AWS). The disruption began early in the morning and lasted until 6 p.m. Eastern, affecting a wide range of online services, including social media apps, video games, financial platforms, streaming services, and educational tools. Amazon cited problems with its Domain Name System (DNS) as the cause. Over 11 million issues were reported from services such as Snapchat, Netflix, Disney+, Robinhood, Coinbase, McDonald's app, and popular games like Roblox and Fortnite.
4. <https://time.com/7326950/global-internet-outage-amazon-web-services-websites-apps/> - On October 20, 2025, a major global outage disrupted various prominent websites and apps due to issues with Amazon Web Services (AWS). The disruption began early morning, with AWS reporting heightened error rates and latency in its US-EAST-1 region, particularly affecting its DynamoDB API. This DNS-related problem had ripple effects across globally used platforms. Significantly impacted were online services like Amazon, Snapchat, Facebook, Reddit, Zoom, Duolingo, and the Ring app, as well as gaming platforms such as Fortnite, Roblox, and Clash of Clans.
5. <https://www.reuters.com/business/retail-consumer/amazon-cloud-outage-online-services-hit-recovery-uneven-2025-10-20/> - On October 20, 2025, Amazon Web Services (AWS) experienced a major cloud outage, primarily affecting its US-EAST-1 data center region in northern Virginia. This disruption interfered with a wide array of online services across sectors including finance, social media, gaming, e-commerce, and education. The issue stemmed from a Domain Name System (DNS) problem that blocked access to DynamoDB’s API due to failures within AWS’s Elastic Compute Cloud (EC2) internal network. The outage impacted popular services like Amazon, Prime Video, Snapchat, Reddit, Venmo, Lyft, Fortnite, and Duolingo.
6. <https://www.upday.com/uk/politics/mps-question-foreign-hosting-after-aws-outage-hits-hmrc/tbfpn0z> - MPs have raised serious concerns about UK IT infrastructure being hosted abroad following a major Amazon Web Services outage on Monday. The disruption affected critical government services including HMRC alongside major banks such as Halifax and Lloyds. Downdetector recorded thousands of outage reports across multiple platforms between 9am and 10am on Monday. Services affected included Snapchat, Starbucks, Slack, Ring, and gaming platforms Roblox and Fortnite. Lloyds Banking Group saw 6,925 outage reports at 9.31am, with Halifax displaying error messages stating technical problems prevented processing customer requests.
7. <https://www.itv.com/news/2025-10-20/amazon-web-services-outage-causes-massive-internet-disruption> - Many of the world’s biggest apps went down on Monday, including Canva, Snapchat, and Duolingo, due to an apparent issue affecting Amazon Web Services. A huge number of internet services were affected by the outage, including banks, government websites, messaging services, and social media. Downdetector, a website that tracks complaints about websites and web pages not operating properly, showed that several UK banks were experiencing issues, including Barclays, Lloyds and the Bank of Scotland, according to Downdetector. Digital veteran cards could be ‘case study’ for ID rollout, says minister.