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RIM restores service after BlackBerry outage in Europe

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By [Tarmo Virki](#)

(Reuters) - Research In Motion Ltd said it had restored service to all BlackBerry users affected by a service outage in Europe on Friday, the same day as Apple Inc began delivering of its new iPhone around the world.

The outage hampered service for some BlackBerry users in Europe, the Middle East and Africa for several hours. It is the latest in a series of setbacks that have driven the Canadian company's share price sharply lower over the past year.

RIM shares fell 20 Canadian cents, or about 3 percent, to C\$6.55 shortly after the open on the Toronto Stock Exchange.

The struggling BlackBerry maker, whose market share has plunged as the iPhone and a slew of devices that run on Google's Android operating system grow more popular, said it had fixed the problem.

"Our apologies to any customers impacted by the BlackBerry service issue today," the company said in emailed statement.

The outage comes during a transitional period for RIM, which is preparing to launch a next-generation BlackBerry with a new operating system that the company hopes will help it regain its stride.

RIM said it was investigating the cause of the outage and did not say how widespread the problem was, though Britain's Vodafone Plc said some of its clients were affected by the outage.

"This outage could not happen at the worst quarter ... when all devices are coming out and the Christmas season is approaching. They are close to their last chance, if they miss it, they will not recover," said IDC analyst Francisco Jeronimo.

Last October a system-wide failure of the service left tens of millions of frustrated BlackBerry users on five continents without email, instant messaging and browsing for four days.

It took days for RIM's chiefs to apologise over the problems and the company's handling of the issue was heavily criticised.

"This is an opportunity to demonstrate that RIM has learnt lessons from last year. If it is handled poorly again, it could see a faster erosion of its installed base," said Canalys analyst Pete Cunningham, acknowledging that the impact from problems lasting just a few hours would likely be minimal.

Earlier this week some customers of T-Mobile, the fourth-biggest U.S. mobile service provider, faced a service disruption that affected emails and internet browsing for some BlackBerry users.

The BlackBerry once dominated the corporate market because companies believed RIM was best at protecting enterprise data and prevent the theft of corporate secrets.

The outages highlight RIM's Achilles heel: BlackBerry messages are routed through its own data centres. That means information is more secure, but it also creates a single point for potential failure.

Messages sent through phones from Apple and other vendors do not travel through any central network, so they do not have that same weakness.

(Additional reporting Euan Rocha in Toronto and Sarah Young in London; Editing by David Holmes; and Peter Galloway)

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