

Unprecedented Outages Raising Questions: Solar Flares or Cyber Attacks?

In a shocking turn of events, AT&T users were grappling with widespread service outages on Feb. 22, with additional disruptions reported by pharmacies across the country in the aftermath of a suspected major cyber attack.

As the technological giant works tirelessly to restore services, questions arise about the potential involvement of solar flares, drawing parallels to a historic incident in 1972.

The solar flare incident in 1972 had a profound impact on AT&T's landlines, inducing voltage fluctuations along physical lines. However, the current scenario appears to be different, with Brooks Garner's analysis on Fox News suggesting a connection to a SIM card database registry issue.

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"Now, it is possible the X-class flare had impacts on the voltage on some electronics, but since this is so specific to AT&T and not other carriers, it's likely not space weather related," explained Brooks Garner, emphasizing the unique nature of the current situation.

This same solar flare that occurred yesterday also contributed to widespread radio blackouts across the West Coast as well as parts of the Pacific.

NASA defines solar flares as intense bursts of radiation resulting from the release of magnetic energy associated with sunspots. These powerful phenomena are considered the largest

explosive events in our solar system, manifesting as bright areas on the sun with varying durations, from minutes to hours.

While solar flares are known for their mesmerizing displays, casting neon hues across the earth's atmosphere in the form of the northern and southern lights, the current issue seems to be centered on AT&T's network. NASA, which monitors solar flares primarily through X-rays and optical light observations, has not reported any unusual solar activity that might explain the disruptions.

AT&T, in a statement to Fox News, acknowledged the service interruptions and reassured users that they are working urgently to restore services. In the meantime, the company encourages users to utilize Wi-Fi calling as a temporary solution.

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"As an explosive event, [solar flares] can cause the X-ray level at Earth to go up dramatically, factors of at least a thousand or so as in this M-class event, or even more in X class flares. This can seriously affect the normally present level of ionization (breakdown of atoms) in the ionosphere at 50 to 60 (and more) miles above us and change what we are used to in how radio waves propagate, usually for the worse," professor of space science and physics at Canada's Athabasca University Martin Connors said in a statement to Newsweek.

The impact of the outages extends beyond inconvenience, with reports of iPhone users experiencing their devices stuck in SOS mode. Furthermore, emergency services across the United States have faced challenges due to confirmed network outages, leaving mobile phone users unable to make crucial 911 calls.

As the situation unfolds, users and experts alike await

further insights into the root cause of these disruptions. Whether attributed to solar flares or a sophisticated cyber attack, the incident serves as a stark reminder of the vulnerability of our interconnected digital infrastructure and the ongoing need for robust cybersecurity measures.{eoa}

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